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Special Issue

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Editorial Policy

The MEXTESOL Journal is dedicated to the classroom teacher in Mexico. Previously unpublished articles and book reviews relevant to EFL teaching and research in Mexico are accepted for publication. Articles may be of a practical or theoretical nature and be written in English or Spanish. The Journal reserves the right to edit an accepted manuscript in order to enhance clarity or style. The author will be consulted only if the editing has been substantial.

Research-Based Articles: A research-based article should report original research or discuss research-related issues. These articles are usually submitted as refereed (judged as acceptable, conditional, or not acceptable) by two members of the Editorial Board who are experts in an area related to that of the article. The refereeing process is blind but, if an author wishes, a referee may be assigned as a mentor to guide the author through the revision process. A footnote will state that the article was refereed.

Professional Practice Issue Articles: In order to open the publication process to more authors, refereed or non-refereed articles are accepted in this section. These normally describe professional teaching experiences or library research related to teaching which the author wants to share with the readers. These articles will be read, judged and styled by members of the Editorial Staff for originality, quality and clarity of ideas.

Reviews: The Journal welcomes review articles summarizing published research or professional practice, position papers which promote or defend positions on a current, controversial topic, and book reviews of classroom texts, recorded material, computer software or other instructional resources. Reviews are non-refereed but are subject to editing.

Submission Guidelines: In order to facilitate the publication process, if possible, submissions should first be sent by e–mail to the address of the Journal. The article and any graphics must be written using Microsoft Word or Word Perfect and sent as an "attachment". Please specify if you are submitting for a **Refereed** or **Non-refereed** article.

Any correspondence to the Journal concerning manuscripts should be faxed or e-mailed to the Editors at the address below. Information concerning advertising in the Journal or MEXTESOL membership should be sent to the National MEXTESOL Office at the same address.

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La revista MEXTESOL está dirigida al maestro de inglés. Se aceptan manuscritos y reseñas relevantes a la enseñanza del inglés como idioma extranjero e investigación que no hayan sido previamente publicados. Los artículos pueden ser de naturaleza teórica o práctica y pueden ser escritos en inglés o en español. La revista se reserva el derecho de editar un manuscrito aceptado para brindarle mayor claridad o mejorar su estilo. El autor será consultado únicamente para sugerir cambios.

Artículos basados en la investigación: un artículo basado en investigación debe reportar investigación original o discutir asuntos relacionados con la investigación. Estos artículos generalmente se someten a arbitraje (juzgados como aceptable, condicional o no aceptable) realizado por dos miembros del consejo editorial expertos en un área relacionada con el artículo. El proceso de arbitraje es anónimo, pero si el autor lo desea se le puede asignar a un árbitro como mentor para guiarlo en el proceso de revisión. El artículo se publica con una nota al pie de página para indicar que es arbitrado.

Artículos relacionados con la práctica docente: con el propósito de abrir las posibilidades de publicación a mas autores, se aceptan artículos arbitrados y no arbitrados. Generalmente describen experiencias docentes o investigación bibliográfica relacionada con la enseñanza. Estos artículos son leídos y juzgados por miembros del personal editorial para asegurar su originalidad, calidad y claridad de ideas.

Reseñas: la revista acepta reseñas de investigación publicada o de práctica docente, ponencias que argumentan a favor o en contra de temas actuales o controvertidos y reseñas de libros de texto, materiales audiovisuales, programas de computadoras, y otros recursos didácticos. Las reseñas no son sometidas a arbitraje pero son sujetas a edición.

Indicaciones para enviar una propuesta: para facilitar el proceso de publicación se recomienda enviar el manuscrito por correo electrónico a la dirección de la revista. Se debe utilizar un procesador Microsoft Word o Word Perfect para el artículo y gráficas que lo acompañen y ser enviado como un attachment. Además se debe enviar una copia del manuscrito a la Dirección postal de la revista ya que las gráficas, tablas o diagramas que contenga el artículo pueden sufrir alteraciones al ser enviado por correo electrónico. Si no se tiene acceso al correo electrónico, se debe enviar el manuscrito acompañado de una copia en diskette de 3.5". Favor de indicar si se desea que el **artículo sea o no arbitrado**.

Cualquier correspondencia a la revista que tenga que ver con artículos para publicación debe ser enviada vía fax o correo electrónico a la dirección que aparece abajo. La información concerniente a propaganda en la revista o a membresías debe ser enviada a la Oficina Nacional de MEXTESOL cuya dirección también aparece abajo.

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Articles must be typed, double-spaced and preferably no more than twenty pages long. The format should conform to the Publication Manual for the American Psychological Association (A.P.A.) guideline format.

In-Text Citations:

References within the text should be cited in parentheses using the author's last name, year of publication and page numbers (shown below):

Rodgers (1994) compared performance on two test instruments.
or In a recent study of EFL writing (Rodgers, 1994) ......

Or for Direct Quotes:

Rodgers (1994) argued that, "most existing standardized tests do not accurately assess EFL writing performance" (p. 245).

Reference Page:

The list of references found in an article must appear at the end of the text on a separate page entitled "References". The data must be complete and accurate. Authors are fully responsible for the accuracy of their references. The APA format for reference page entries is shown below.

Books:

Brown, J. (1991). Nelson-Denny Reading Test. Chicago: Riverside Press

Journal Articles:

Ganschow, L. (1992). A screening instrument for the identification of foreign language learning problems. Foreign Language Annals. 24, 383-398.

From the Editor

The idea of a special issue on ***Critical Pedagogy in the Mexican ELT Classroom*** started with the need to reflect on the stance that we, English teachers in Mexico, have about our own profession and practice. He members of the UABJO research group (Cuerpo Académico en Linguistica Aplicada) believe that it is necessary to delve into the political and ideological issues that concern the learning and teaching of English in Mexico. For this reason we invited some researchers and practitioners from around the country to begin a dialogue, whose result is the positional paper entitled *A Call for a Critical Perspective on English Teaching in Mexico* included in this issue.

During our discussions, we also decided that this positional paper had to be published in Mexico to be read by Mexican teachers. We were in complete agreement that the most appropriate forum was *MEXTESOL Journal*. However, being aware that we wanted to include more voices and views and that we needed to extend the discussion to more practical grounds, we decided on a special issue, that would represent the wide range of points of view and experiences of teachers and researchers working within the paradigm of critical pedagogy in Mexico. Based on ethnographic accounts and discussions in other parts of the world (Pennycook, 2001; Norton and Toohey, 2004; Canagarajah, 1999 and others), we believe that our profession must take a stand on political and ideological issues that concern the learning and teaching of English in Mexico.

The articles included in this issue have responded appropriately and in a variety of ways to the rationale that underlies this enterprise. They present subjective (as opposed to 'objective') and personal accounts that show a critical stance to English language teaching and learning in Mexico. Some of the authors also dealt with some social inequities (ethnicity, race, and class) and explore the relationship between language learning and social and educational change. In addition, some of the contributors demonstrate how ethnographic approaches can throw some light on the way teachers and learners make sense of their own experiences, illustrating issues such as agency, identity, resistance, etc.

As stated before, *A Call for a Critical Perspective on English Teaching in Mexico,* is a collaborative work in which ten authors representing four public Mexican universities put forward their critical position on the ELT profession in Mexico. Addressing relevant issues such as the native/non-native speaker teacher dichotomy, linguistic hegemony and already established and imposed standards of English, they pose essential questions for the English teacher to reflect on when carrying out their everyday activities in a country "so close to the United States, yet so far from God!". The papers that follow this positional paper are certainly a good example of how we can begin to express our critical position on these issues.

In ***Entering the Circle: Mexican Graduate Students' Experiences and Perceptions of Language, Identity and New Discourses in U.S. Universities***, the authors, Rebeca Gutiérrez Estrada and Nolvia Cortez address a specific scenario of ELT: Mexican graduate students studying in U.S. Based on the experiences of four students, the authors identify strategies of linguistic survival, resistance and appropriation that contribute to their identities as 'scholars-in-the-making'.

From a general perspective, Nolvia Cortez' contribution, ***Learning English is No Neutral Choice: Contributions of Critical Perspectives to Classroom EFL in Mexico,*** has as its purpose to make the reader realize that Bakhtin and Bourdieu's ideas are central to ELT discourse in Mexico. She specifically addresses three important issues that seem to be uncontestable: the value of the textbook, the connection between students' efforts and outcomes and the reason for learning English.

Drawing on personal anecdotes as a language teacher, Carol Lethaby's ***Appropriating English in Mexico***, rejects "traditional extremes" for considering ELT in Mexico and opts for Canagarajah's "third way" which states that English learners can learn and use the language "in their own terms according to their own aspirations, needs and values" (1999, p.176). After a discussion involving concepts such as linguicisim and culturism, she encourages Mexican teachers to reflect on ways to 'appropriate' English taking into account their students own reality and situation.

Gerry Mugford's contribution, ***Critical Pedagogies: Interpersonal Language and Teacher Development*** applies Canagarajah's third way for understanding English learning to practical contexts. He focuses on the pedagogical positions of teachers from two training courses on interpersonal language use. His results, very promising, show that student-teachers "are trying to identify new ways of responding to their own students´inter-personal language needs".

In the area of research methodology, Oscar Narvaez' ***Teachers as Ethnographers: Listening to Students´ oices for (Self) Development***, encourages teachers to explore their classrooms and pay attention to the voices of their students. This ethnographic approach is presented step by step, so that the inexperienced ethnographer finds her way, so that she can focus on "what the students have to say, as opposed to what the teacher wants to hear".

In ***Teacher Educators and Pre-Service English Teachers Creating and Sharing Power Through Critical Dialogue in a Multilingual Setting***, Mario E. López Gopar, Julia Stakhnevich, Heidi León García and Angélica Morales Santiago, illustrate what a critical dialogue looks like when teacher educators and pre-service English language teachers decide to work together. The result reflects on everybody's empowerment and praxis. Dealing with aspects of critical pedagogy, feminist theory and critical applied linguistics, they analyse four categories (native vs non-native speakers, authentic materials and textbooks, issues of bilingualism, and the participants' praxis) and conclude that. “the role of language educators is essential in the construction of a more egalitarian society”. The last contribution of this colection on critical pedagogies, ***Can I Have a Voice in the Nation’s Classroom?*** by William Sughrua, explores a very different kind of intellectual genre in dealing with the discussion on critical pedagogies. Using self-reflective, literary analysis, social theory and historical fiction he composes a critical tale for language teachers to ponder their own locations within the classroom. Sughrua frames his concerns within the relation between the localized social and political context of language students and the broader context that defines and confines these local actions and desires. It is a cautionary story, stressing that no matter how bold and progressive you think our voice as teacher can be by pushing that voice too hard or too dogmatically, you may find yourself located in the ‘Nation” that surrounds the classroom instead of being inside the “nation” of the students.

As a way to conclude this introduction to the present collection I would like to refer to Sughrua´s father´s advice, which is to give ourselves as teachers a break in the classroom by working with and in the interests of the students.

Angeles Clemente

A Call for a Critical Perspective on English Teaching in Mexico

Angeles Clemente, UABJO; Troy Crawford, UAG; Laura Garcia
UNAM; Michael Higgins UABJO; Donald Kissinger, UABJO;
Mary Martha Lengeling, UAG; Mario Lopez Gopar, UABJO;
Oscar Narvaez, UV; Peter Sayer, UABJO and; William Sughrua, UABJO

In Mexico there is a saying: "¡Pobre México, tan cerca de los Estados Unidos y tan lejos de Dios!" ("Poor Mexico - so close to the United States yet so far from God!"). For us, this piece of popular wisdom conveys some of the issues that the students of English in Mexico confront: they are so close to English by virtue of being so near to the United States, yet so far from English because of the assumptions about the standards of English, the accepted styles of English usage, and the ghost of the native speaker which hovers so close to their pursuits. Furthermore, the phrase "so close yet so far" captures the essence of our need to look at the global and local dynamics of agency, identity, and culture in the pursuit of English as an additional language (Angeles Clemente and Michael Higgins).

Thus, in this collective statement we want to subvert the dichotomy of these locations of nearness and distance and (re)position the role of English language teachers in terms of the socio-political and cultural factors that have influenced the construction of this profession in Mexico. This involves exploring a set of critical questions, such as 1) Are we inevitably reproducing/maintaining English hegemonies? 2) Does focusing only on techniques of language teaching encourage the continuing domination of English? 3) Is it possible to focus on the social and cultural issues which constitute language learning? 4) How do we become aware of, understand or question the connection between language learning and the social realities of gender, class, ethnicity and other social locations? 5) How can we construct social spaces within this profession so that we are represented by our own voices? 6) How can we close the social and political distance between the statuses of native speaker versus the non-native speaker of English?

One means of exploring these questions is to look at what have been the stories of English teaching and learning in Mexico. One story of English in Mexico is of how language can act as a vehicle of globalization and cultural imperialism. It appears on billboards, children's backpacks, teenagers' T-shirts, and in the proliferation of little schools promoting *inglés y computación.* Second language acquisition and teaching (SLAT) theory and methods developed in the core are spreading Western-value laden "McCommunication" (Block, 2002) to the periphery, and in the process finishing the job started by Cortes' *conquistadores* by destroying Mexico’s linguistic ecology. As a result, it could be said that English teachers in Mexico are the modern incarnation of *La Malinche*. To make things more complex, we need to keep in mind that the Mexico that we envision is a Mexico where linguistic and cultural diversity is valued. In this sense we should, first of all, reject the notion of one "unified" Mexico[1]. Along the same lines, and in order to view multilingualism and interculturalism as something positive and valuable, we need to start seeing ourselves beyond the narrow notion of "English" teachers. For instance, in Oaxaca, the graduates of the B.A. program have the potential to become Spanish teachers, Zapotec teachers, Mixe teachers, etc. Therefore, we need to start seeing ourselves as *language teachers* or, better, *language educators*. If we truly want to work critically, we need to see that hegemony is embedded both in the Spanish and English language. We have the potential to uncover this hegemony hidden in languages. Many graduates of TESOL programs end up teaching in private and public schools (at elementary, secondary, *bachillerato* levels) and even universities. It is in those places, where we need to bring a critical eye.

However, English in Mexico is also a story of how the country is successfully acquiring the global linguistic currency of English. Education reforms promoting Mexico’s *macroacquisition* (Brutt-Griffler,2002) of the language will better position the country, as ex-President Salinas de Gortari promised[2], to enter the First World. The spread of English, in this version, is an expression of Mexico’s agency. Not only does this linguistic capital better enable the country to compete in world markets, but Mexico will also be able to communicate its culture to the rest of the world. Above all, through English the local can affect the global as much or more than the global affects the local.

The stories of English in Mexico are conflicting, even contradictory, yet all are “true”: Mexicans hold versions of these different perspectives all at once. Learning English in Mexico is framed by and imbued with these social meanings, the linguistic ideologies constructed through (among other things) Mexico’s colonial past and the historical relationship of their country with the US. As in other English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) contexts throughout the world, English is a bittersweet pill linked to domination, but also with the potentiality to be used as a “weapon of the weak” (Scott, 1990).

Where are we as teachers of English in these stories? What have been our contradictions in the process of providing English language instruction? Historically, external language and political organizations have been influential in the professionalization and legitimatization of ELT in Mexico. It is clear that in the past we had little ownership of what English was and how it was to be taught. We are now in a better position to take an active role in the construction of this professional field by creating a more autonomous, localized, and structured network of academic agents who continually reflect critically on their learning, using and teaching of the language in order to work towards social justice in Mexico. In other words, the objective is to question through an ongoing national dialogue the position of ELT in Mexico and to carry out research which impacts the teaching of English positively in Mexico. Furthermore, from these positions of social assertiveness, our voices as educational actors (students, teachers, teacher trainers, administrators, policy-makers) will be heard as representative of our profession in Mexico.

Now, while realizing the relevance of being autonomous, we need to find a way to connect the local with the other "local" EFL contexts without having the gatekeepers of the global, who tend to come from dominant countries, regulating our interactions (Free Local Journals on the web maybe a way for us to start doing that). To locate ourselves in these social dynamics, we need to use our collective voices to address the cultural and political issues surrounding the learning of English in Mexico. These include:

1. What is the relationship between language and culture? Whose culture and whose values as cultural statements are transmitted in the instruction of English?

2. How can we encourage both a critical learning of English and a respect for the diversity of social locations in terms of social class, gender, sexuality, age and ethnicity?

3. What are the social, political and cultural roles of the English language teacher? Are we just teachers of a neutral subject matter? Or are we embedded in a conflicting field of political and cultural confrontation? And how can we critically address those contradictions?

4. In what creative and affective way can we *mexicanize* both the learning and the use of English in Mexico? That is, how can we maintain and reproduce Mexican English?

5. Mexican English raises questions about language learning, language teaching, and language use. Within this framework, the issue of native/non-native teachers shifts to novice>expert (Canagarajah, 2002) teachers. How will we create a context for understanding and determining who is a novice and who is an expert?

6. How do we struggle against the hegemony of nativespeakerism? That is, how do we subvert the political and social values that invoke the omnipresent ghost of the native speaker of English?

These questions can be answered by collecting the personal histories and reflections of both students and teachers regarding their experience learning and teaching English in a Mexican educational context. We contend that through the use of ethnographic or realistic narrative we can explore and define these and other issues in a critical and productive way. In doing so, we can step out of our fixed terrain of linguistics and applied linguistics and venture into other disciplines such as sociology and domains such as feminism, poststructuralism and postcolonialism, or perhaps better, we can activate such disciplines and domains directly within our belief systems as EFL educators (Pennycook, 2001), with the intention of forming and acting upon "an ethical, epistemological, and political attitude toward all questions in language education, literacy, translation, or language use in the workplace" (ibid: 176). Yet, as Pennycook would maintain (2001), we should never become caricatures of any discipline or domain, nor accept any supposed finality of knowledge; rather, we should constantly reconsider, question, and transform our perspectives as well as our roles as critical applied linguists. As such, our task could be guided by the following objectives (suggested by Pennycook, 2005):

1) Transgression: political and epistemological tools to go beyond the boundaries of mainstream thought and politics;

2) Reflexivity: a stance that maintains a constant scepticism towards cherished concepts and modes of thought;

3) Engagement: an ability to engage with the competing demands of dominion, disparity, difference, and desire; and

4) Flexibility: ways to adapt to linguistic, somatic and performative turns in language use.

It is our belief that the papers presented in this special issue represent the beginning of this exploration of how to create critical applied linguistics in Mexico. We hope that the readers, teachers of English in Mexico, would be motivated to reflect on these issues and make a change in their own everyday contexts.

NOTES:

1. We cannot forget that for the sake of "unity," many different linguistic and cultural groups have been and are still being discriminated against. If we are to fight against English hegemony, we must acknowledge first that Spanish historically has been extremely hegemonic in Mexico. We believe that acknowledging that fact will give us more credibility with other fields, such as anthropology and ethnolinguistics.

2. We have all probably seen Mexican products which have made their way into American supermarkets. Even though their labels are in English, these products remain in the "Mexican Food" aisle. We wonder how much profit these companies have gained and how much of this profit has made its way

down to the people. Sierra and Padilla (2003) have also argued that the leaders like Salinas and Zedillo who were educated in English have brought the American way of doing business to Mexico. Having said all this, we think English does still have an important role to play in Mexico. The power English can give to people like the Zapatistas makes our profession worthwhile. It is through English and technology that the world has learned about these injustices. Because of this, the international communities have pressured Mexican officials to respect indigenous communities.

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Entering the Circle: Mexican Graduate Students' Experiences and Perceptions of Language, Identity and New Discourses in U.S. Universities[1]

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Abstract

The authors argue that international graduate students (nonnative English speakers) are able to develop multiple identities in order to function in their new and challenging cultural worlds (Zou, 2002). An interpretive qualitative study of four Mexican graduate students in U.S. universities reveals that part of their legitimization experience as scholars also entailed the mastery of the English language. Factors such as accent and standard usage of the English language were perceived as gatekeeping devices in the forging of an international academic identity. The participants described strategies of linguistic survival, resistance and appropriation as ways to negotiate their own identities as Mexican scholars-in-the-making. Using data collected from Gutiérrez Estrada (2005), the authors will provide an overview of the perceptions and experiences of a group of Mexican instructors completing their graduate degrees in the United States with respect to how well they were prepared for the language, cultural and social immersion they were facing.

Introduction

In the last twenty years, several granting agencies in Mexico (e.g. see the Appendix for a brief description of the main scholarships), along with the National Ministry of Education (Secretaría de Educación Pública -- SEP), have provided Mexican instructors with the opportunity to achieve academic growth and development by pursuing a graduate degree abroad. The goal of the Ministry of Education, as well as the other granting agencies, is that the recipients of these scholarships will be able to: carry out research projects in their particular fields, publish articles in recognized scholarly journals, present at conferences, and accomplish other tasks that academic faculty around the world are required and expected to perform. However, as recipients of such scholarships, these non-English speaking international students face many challenges in their path towards obtaining a graduate degree as well as trying to accomplish these tasks.
As a result of this, the topic of this study originated as a Master's thesis (Gutiérrez Estrada, 2005) in which eight Mexican university instructors, completing graduate degrees in the United States, were invited to participate in a basic *interpretive qualitative research* (Merriam, 2002). The study explored the

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[1] This is a refereed article.

participants' experiences and perceptions with respect to how well they were prepared for the language, culture and social immersion they were facing. Issues of how identity and power relations are interwoven with the experience of living abroad and coping with the academic, social, and cultural demands of a new culture were also explored. The present study focuses on one particular representation of the complex relationship between language, power and identity -- that is, how language learning, language use and accent play an intrinsic role in the make-up of identity and participation as Mexican graduate students in U.S. universities.

Participants and methodology

The participants in the original study (Gutiérrez Estrada, 2005) were eight; all the participants are Mexican citizens; Spanish is their first language and at the time the study took place, they were all graduate students in different universities in the U.S. For the purpose of this particular paper, we will focus on the findings of four participants; two women, Choffis and María; and two men, Baali jeeka and Ernesto. Pseudonyms are used to protect the confidentiality of the participants, as well as any information revealing their location. The pseudonyms were chosen by the participants. All the participants have worked as university instructors at a public university for periods ranging from one to twenty-five years. The participants shared the following characteristics: 1) they learned English (EFL) in Mexico; 2) they had experience teaching at a Mexican public university; and 3) they had received funding from a granting agency in Mexico. We will now provide a brief profile of these participants' backgrounds.

Participant Profiles

The Women

Choffis is in her early thirties; she had been living in the northeastern part of the United States for about six years prior to her participation in this study where she had completed both a Masters and a Doctoral program in Linguistics. Choffis had worked as an undergraduate Linguistics instructor for two years in Mexico. She learned English as a Foreign Language in Mexico, as did most of the other participants in the original study, starting at the junior high school level and later taking additional courses during her undergraduate program. However, Choffis had read an important amount of academic texts in English prior to the start of her graduate program, which made her more confident about her reading and writing skills, but not her listening and speaking skills. Choffis is currently working as a full-time professor in Mexico.

María is in her late forties; she has completed her coursework in a doctoral program in Public Health in a southwestern university where she lived for three years. María has taught at the university level for twenty-five years. She is a psychologist and completed her M.A. in Mexico. María has learned English "all her life" and, like Choffis, believes that it was her discipline and the amount of reading in English she had to do during her academic career that motivated her to learn more English. María is currently finishing her doctoral thesis and is back in Mexico.

The Men

Baali jeeka is in his early forties; he completed a Ph.D. in Linguistics in a southern university in the United States where he lived for four years. He taught some undergraduate courses for about a year in a Mexican university. With regards to his experience learning English, Baali jeeka had learned English in Mexico (EFL), but felt that these courses had not helped him much. Baali jeeka and Ernesto were the only participants who took English courses in the United States a few months prior to starting their graduate degrees in order to be fully accepted into their programs. He is also back in Mexico working as a full-time professor.

Ernesto is in his early thirties; he completed a Masters in Applied Physics in the field of Atmospheric Sciences and is currently working towards obtaining his Ph.D. at the same university (located in a southwestern state). He has lived in the U.S. for 5 years. Ernesto has eight years' teaching experience at a public university where he taught undergraduate courses in Physics. Ernesto, as most of the participants, learned English as a Foreign Language in Mexico during junior high school and high school; he also took courses during his undergraduate program. However, just before Ernesto started his M.A. he took two English courses at an American state college. He said he had improved his reading and writing skills with these courses, but not his speaking and listening skills.

Methodology

The data was collected through a 60-90 minute, in-depth, one-on-one, audio taped semi-structured interview with the participants, which mainly focused on: a) the participants' perceived experiences regarding language, culture, and the social aspects of living as graduate students in the U.S. before they moved there; b) whether these perceived experiences were modified and, if so, how they were modified during their stay in the U.S.; c) how these experiences as international students shaped their academic studies; d) the participants' description of their relationship with their advisor/supervisor, professors, and peers; and e) a description of their history as English students prior to their graduate studies. Issues of identity and power relations were addressed in the follow-up questions after the interviews took place.

The methodology chosen for the study was a *Basic Interpretive Qualitative Research*, which focuses mainly on the researchers' interpretation. In a Basic Interpretive Qualitative Study, "… the researcher is interested in understanding how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon, this meaning is mediated through the researcher as instrument" (Merriam, 2002, p. 6). Merriam also states that as researchers, we seek to "… discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved" (p. 6).

Literature Review

International graduate students and their experiences

Previous research has shown that the language difficulties experienced by non-English speaking international students, pursuing graduate degrees in English-speaking countries, may partially stem from the traditional English curriculum which does not provide these students with the necessary tools required for graduate study abroad (Braine, 2002; Cotterall, 2000; McClure, 2001; Myles & Cheng, 2003; Swales, 1997). In the specific case of Mexican university instructors, who form the core of the present study, they obtained their English training through EFL courses focusing mainly on general or Standard English. Indeed, there exist few programs in Mexico that prepare these instructors in academic English and fewer -- if any -- which guide them through the multiple variables involved in living in another culture.

Many public universities in Latin America need to grow both in terms of their research output and academic fields. This growth crucially depends on the quantity and quality of publications produced by its faculty. Most universities in the world regard the publication of articles in major scientific journals, and in English, as an important avenue towards faculty development. English has become the major language of publication in the world of research and technology. According to Tardy (2004), in 1995, English made up over 95% of the publications in the *Science Citation Index* (p. 250). However, the number of non-native speakers of English is also growing; therefore, scholars who have learned English as a foreign language and remain in their native countries encounter great challenges in order to be recognized around the world. For Fairclough (2001), citing Bourdieu, this is an illustration of globalization as "a real but incomplete process which benefits some people and hurts others" (p. 207). And while it is true that globalization manifests itself in numerous inequities, countries like Mexico make an effort to provide opportunities for instructors to develop in their areas of expertise and ideally contribute to the country's economic and scientific growth. These opportunities provide Mexican instructors with grants and/or scholarships in order to pursue graduate degrees abroad.

Entering the Circle/Legitimate Peripheral Participation

The concepts of *legitimate peripheral participation* (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and Kachru's *Inner* and *Expanding Circles* (1985) are used throughout this study. These terms will be briefly described in this section.
Tardy (2004) believes that there are co-existing roles of English: one is that it is a necessary tool (e.g. for publication, for accessing information) and the other is the negative consequences that derive from it, mainly because research that is not published in English is often overlooked. "…[I]mportant work situated in Third World countries is essentially becoming 'lost science'" (p. 251). For Tardy, international graduate students offer useful insights regarding English as the International Language of Science (EILS) mainly because they are part of the *Inner Circle* while completing their graduate programs and, later, professionals of the *Expanding Circle* upon their return to their countries. In the present study, the concept of *Inner Circle* scholar refers to academics (native speakers of English) based mostly in the United States, where a large percentage of publications are launched. Therefore, the concept of *Expanding Circle* scholar refers to a nonnative speaker of English academic who does not reside in an English-speaking country. The Expanding Circle consists of those countries that recognize the importance of English as *the* international language but that have not gone through a British colonization experience. English does not serve a specific institutional function but it is learned as a basic foreign language. It predominates in international relations for these countries and it is gradually penetrating in business, media and scientific circles. (See Kachru, 1985 for more on English in the *Inner*, *Outer, and Expanding Circles.)*

According to Hamel (2003), what is most important in Kachru's circles is the future projection of English. Kachru (1985) and Crystal (1997) sustain that the predominant role of English is historically explained by the relationship between the first (Inner) and second (Outer) circle; the future of English as a global language, however, develops in the *Expanding Circle.* If the current trends of English as an expanding language continue, the Expanding Circle will be quantitatively greater, and this, of course, will have yet a greater effect on the effects of English language monopolization in the scientific arenas of these countries.

Therefore, international graduate students will eventually participate actively in developing research, publishing articles or presenting at conferences. In a similar vein, Lave and Wenger (1991) use the term *legitimate peripheral participation*, referring to the "process by which newcomers gradually move toward fuller participation in a given community's activities by interacting with more experienced community members" (Morita, 2004, p. 576). The ultimate goal many instructors in Expanding Circle countries wish to attain one day is to be able not only to consume but also to produce knowledge and research in their fields. Wenger (1998) provides the following example:

> *Today, doctoral students have professors who give them entry into academic communities. Granting the newcomers legitimacy is important because they are likely to come short of what the community regards as competent engagement. Only with enough legitimacy can all their inevitable stumblings and violations become opportunities for learning rather than cause for dismissal, neglect, or exclusion(p. 101).*

Entry to the academic communities is not a conflict or difficulty-free task; surrounding the entry are power relations that promote, deny, or delay international graduate students access to the academic Circles (either Inner or Expanding). The theoretical contributions of Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) have been adapted to research focusing on different academic scenarios involving nonnative speakers of English as graduate students or scholars (Belcher, 1994; Canagarajah, 2003; Flowerdew, 2000; Morita, 2004).

Identity (ies)

The notion and definitions of identity underlying this study fall into the stream of critical approaches, poststructuralism, and sociocultural theory.

Norton (2000) describes identity as a way "to reference how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed over time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 5). Within poststructuralist theory, she goes on to say that the individual is represented as non-unitary, "diverse, contradictory, dynamic and changing over historical time and social space" (p. 125). The author recognizes the inability among Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theorists to develop:

> *…a comprehensive theory of identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context … they [SLA theorists] have not questioned how relations of power in the social world impact on social interaction between second language learners and target language speakers (p. 4).*

In this vein, Pennycook (2001) conceives the language learner not as an entity with individual dispositions to create a correct utterance in another language that can be tested under rigorous "objective" conditions, but considers factors such as access and content in the learners' social context as more indicative of the learners' ultimate success.

> *All things are not equal. The learner may already be positioned within a classist division that relegates L2 learners to a secondary status. What access does this language user have to particular uses of a language, how might they be positioned, how might they become more aware of the ways in which they are discriminated against, and*

> *how then could they find ways to struggle against an inequitable system? (p. 44)*

Although most of the literature on identity which was reviewed for this study deals with immigrants and adult learners who will remain in Canada, England, or the United States, the conceptualizations presented by the authors are applicable to international graduate students for mainly two reasons.

The first reason deals with participants' efforts to be recognized in an academic world different from their own and hoping to become, as Tardy (2004) explains, researchers of the Inner Circle. They have struggled to become 'legitimate speakers' (Bourdieu, 1977; Norton, 2000). Underlying this struggle are the notions of power, prestige, and the symbolic capital referring to the participants' status as professionals in their homelands and their search for recognition as they become part of 'mainstream' academia. The second reason deals with the definitions of identity provided by the different authors who view identity as multiple, dynamic, (re)negotiable, contradictory, and changing over historical time and social space (Ivanič, 1998; Marx, 2002; Norton, 1997, 2000; Schecter & Bayley, 1997; Zou, 2002). As described by Norton (1997) in her longitudinal study with five immigrant women in Canada, identity and these women's experiences as second language learners and newcomers to Canada fell into three major themes. (Social) identity was multiple, a site of struggle, and changing over time. The author believes that:

> *…every time language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with their interlocutors; they are also constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. They are … engaged in identity construction and negotiation (p. 410).*

Zou (2002), in her article *Multiple identities of a Chinese immigrant: A story of adaptation and empowerment*, provides a compelling tour of her experience as a Chinese immigrant researcher in the United States and her previous life in China. She states that in the past, psychology referred exclusively to the notion of self-identity "as a rigid and permanent state incompatible with alternative identities" (p. 254). She views multiple identities as "a powerful instrument that facilitates adaptation to new sociocultural environments, new roles, and different circumstances" (p. 251). In light of this, she claims that multiple identities are "a significant new cultural capital" which allows individuals to function in their new and challenging cultural worlds (p. 251). Zou's research focuses on immigrants in academia; its relevance to the present study lies in how the participants, as international students and former instructors, have experienced a transition between their world as legitimate individuals in their culture (using their own language) and their current situation in a new environment.

In her study, Marx (2002) provides a personal account of her experience in Germany as a second language learner. She discusses identities and cultural issues, and in particular the appropriation of accent. Influenced by Kramsch (1997) and Wenger (1998), she affirms that "…identities do not exist alone but are interwoven with other aspects of the self" (Marx, 2002, p. 266). She claims that a person is able to affiliate herself with more than one culture or language; therefore, this person holds multiple identities which are dynamic in nature (p. 266). Marx and Wenger support the notion that we as individuals -- in this case as international graduate students speaking a different language and living in a new environment -- engage in the negotiation and renegotiation of identity and self. Marx's account as a second language learner proves particularly relevant to the experiences of the participants in the present study since she, as they, intended to return to her native country after being in Germany for several years. Finally, an important argument raised by Marx is the notion of 'reconciliation' of identities by means of "uniting past and present into one self" (p. 277), which refers to the learners' ability to function in both contexts (L1/C1[2] and L2/C2) and to achieve academic recognition in both worlds.

Findings

The findings in this paper are distributed in terms of the following themes: the *formation of multiple identities*; *accent as a nonnative English speaker*; and how these factors played an important role in the participants' path on becoming *Inner Circle* scholars.

The present study views identities as multiple, dynamic, diverse, changing over time, contradictory, (re)negotiable, complex, fluid, and as an empowering instrument for adaptation to new environments (Norton, 2000, 1997; Ivanič, 1998; Zou, 2002; Marx, 2002; Schecter & Bayley, 1997). Within this view of identities, the participants, although not consciously, hold multiple identities (Gutiérrez Estrada, 2005). Entangled within this notion of multiple identities are issues regarding ethnic identity, accent, dialect, and power relations. The stories of the participants in the present study have revealed the nature of their identities as multiple and seen through their adaptation to the changes in their environments (Stryker, 1987).

Most of the participants in this study expressed that in one way or another speaking fluently in English, or having a less noticeable "accent" in English, provided them with more opportunities to engage in reciprocal communication with their peers and professors.

> *Q1: Before I started the program, I was afraid that my knowledge and fluency of the language weren't good enough and that I was going to have difficulties taking and passing courses. I was*

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[2] Capital C stands for Culture. L1 and L2 stand for first and second language respectively

> *extremely worried about my academic performance, and the opinion professors would have of me, I never stopped to think about my performance in everyday things, like to use English to go to the grocery store, to talk to the landlady, to the librarian, etc. (Choffis)*

Choffis explained that reading and writing had not been difficult skills to develop. She also explained that after a while, she had become more relaxed and more fluent in English. She is the only participant who has accomplished more academic work in the Inner Circle due to the fact that she has presented at several prestigious world conferences in her field and has also co-authored (with her former thesis supervisor) several articles in English. However, as reflected in the quote above, at the beginning of her studies she feared that she would not become a 'heard' voice, a *legitimate speaker* (Bourdieu, 1977) in her particular discourse community due to her language proficiency and not her knowledge of her field.

On the other hand, Baali jeeka recalls an incident in which he felt "uncomfortable" and "frustrated" at an international conference where at the beginning of his presentation he apologized for his "bad accent in English". During the presentation Baali jeeka also remembers looking at one of the people in the audience "rolling her eyes" in sign of disapproval. He attributed this sign of "disapproval" to his "bad pronunciation in English."

As Pavlenko (2000) contends, access to linguistic resources, in particular to interactional opportunities, may be mediated by linguistic identities of the speakers and, more generally, by non-native speaker status of the L2 users. On many occasions, there may be unwillingness on behalf of the native speaker to interact with the non-native speaker or to listen to them as competent members of a community. Lippi-Green (1997) writes extensively about American attitudes towards "English with an accent," unraveling how power relations and social discrimination can be based on accents that are deviant from the standard and denying competent members access to certain interactional opportunities because of their accents.

Lippi-Green (1997) explains how accent has played a powerful role in access to education, employment, and in general as a first point of gatekeeping. In a country such as the United States, where all the participants were residing at the time of the study, all other indicators that index difference, such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or socioeconomic background, are legally and socially forbidden as discriminating factors. Yet accent is not a discriminating factor, because there is nothing said about its use as "…an excuse to turn away, to refuse to recognize the other" (Lippi-Green, 1997. p. 64). In providing a theoretical framework to understand how the standardizing process is grounded in our culture, Lippi-Green (1997) recurs to ideology studies, more specifically to standard language ideology (SLI) defined as "a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogeneous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class" (p. 64). In Foucaultian terms, discourse is replete with power, power which is to be struggled for and which is to be seized (Foucault, 1972).

Language is not exclusively an instrument of communication; it is also an instrument of power (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 648). In this paper, Bourdieu's notion of *legitimate speaker* is viewed not only as the ability to command a listener, but also as the means with which international graduate students search and struggle for recognition as they attempt to access symbolic and material resources in order to be recognized and achieve the prestige so necessary in their particular academic discourse communities.

This notion of *legitimate speaker* is revealed in the following quotes from the participants:

> *Q2: I was worried also about the possible evaluation/opinion of my professors, that they would think that I wasn't smart or intelligent enough to have been accepted in the program because I couldn't express myself fluently …I feel Americans evaluate my intelligence connected to my fluency in the language (Choffis).*
>
> *Q3: The perception of 'intelligence' that a culture has, if you have an adequate mastery of the language, I think they (native speakers of English) believe they are among equals and they feel free to discuss anything without the barrier of 'cautiousness' in order not to offend 'those who don't know (nonnative speakers)' (María).*

These quotes are clearly linked to the participants' accent as nonnative speakers of English and the role of accent in access to discourses of intelligence, worthiness and credibility as academics. Both María and Choffis acknowledge that native English speakers' perceptions of them and their intelligence has much to do with their accent as foreign speakers of English, and more so, because their particular accent as native Mexican Spanish speakers is heavily stigmatized in the U.S. As Lippi-Green (1997) states: the degree of accent is irrelevant when the focus is not on content, but on form. Stereotypes of Mexicans and Latinos are usually negative, the more stereotypical the role -- a paisano, a mojado or a bandido -- the more extreme the features of a 'typical Mexican accent' (Penfield and Ornstein-Galicia, 1985, as cited by Lippi-Green, 1997). It is evident that students pursuing entrance into Inner circle academic arenas must make an effort to acquire an "acceptable" accent that conveys fluidity in English.

During the interview (Gutiérrez Estrada, 2005), María spoke about improving her academic status if she spoke English "correctly" (with no "accent"). She provided the following example of her experience in the classroom:

> *Q4:…In classroom interaction there are noticeable signs of disapproval when a nonnative speaker of English participates because s/he has difficulties expressing her/himself. During my stay I have had experiences with people who show their rejection towards Hispanos or foreigners in general. I have been able to notice how upset they get if you obtain a good grade or a good comment (María).*

Accent is one of those discourses which empower or disempower, depending on which accent is being used. According to Lippi-Green (1997), a standard language ideology proposes that an idealized nation-state has one perfect, homogeneous language and not being a possessor of that idealized language denies individuals access to that particular community. Likewise, some of the participants in this study perceived such limited access to engaging more with their peers or professors who were conscious of their difficulties as EFL learners. Lippi-Green (ibid) explains how access to education is controlled in part on the basis of variety and accent. For international students who are entering an English-speaking university setting, similar expectations with regards to their language use are daily experiences. Class participation and peer interaction is often limited, not because of a lack of proficiency, but because of a fear of not being understood because of a "thick accent," as Baali Jeeka and María contended.

However, resistance is also a possibility, as happens with many speakers who purposefully and consciously use non-standard English accents to express who they are. Ernesto, for example, claimed that he purposely speaks "English like Spanish" (i.e. with a Mexican pronunciation of English phonemes) in order to be identified as Mexican. This rejection can be thought of as transforming one's self and one's ethnic identity through becoming "Anglicized" and hence relinquishing one's accent. A clear example of Ernesto's rejection towards American culture was his perception of life in the U.S. before he moved there:

> *Q5:…I believed that the culture of the U.S. was the culture of McDonald's, junk food, the culture of the uncultured … no roots … everything light, very ignorant Americans (Ernesto).*

Ernesto's perceptions were somewhat modified through interaction with Americans:

> *Q6: My perception hasn't changed much; however, I can say that I have seen differences, I have seen very interesting people, not everything is the culture of McDonald's, although the big majority is … but something I have learned to value in the U.S. is not the cultural richness, but the richness in cultures … that you probably won't find anywhere in the world*.... *The U.S. is probably one of the*

> *countries where you can find a big number of cultures together, more people from everywhere…and the way each of these cultures manifests their traditions, although lighter than the original culture, but it's there (Ernesto).*

Ernesto's multicultural surroundings have opened his eyes; he favors interaction with international students over "average Americans," although his American friends have lived abroad. He views this experience as enriching. Ernesto is experiencing a transition to his new environment, adapting to new roles, and challenging these cultural worlds (Zou, 2002). In doing so, he has developed multiple identities which "constitute the richness and the dilemmas of [his] sense of self" (Ivanič, 1998, p. 11). In Ernesto's search to unite and reconcile both worlds, he recognizes that being bicultural represents a struggle if he feels his Mexican-ness is at stake or that he is entering the "McDonald's" culture as he termed it.

Several times during the interview, Baali jeeka, like Ernesto, asserted his rejection of the U.S. culture which according to him obstructed his language-learning process. This was not only something that he felt, but was also perceived by some of his international classmates (e.g. an Argentinean friend told him about it). With regards to language learning he stated:

> *Q7:…I have seen that people learn a language not because it's convenient to them…but because they like the language and they like the culture where the language is spoken (Baali jeeka).*

Baali jeeka claimed that he had little interaction with the culture outside of academia, which in his view, limited his language ability even more.

> *Q8*:…an important thing is how immersed you are in the culture when you are doing a Ph.D. I didn't have much practice talking to others, maybe at lunchtime, but everybody works independently, and when in class you are talking about certain topics…so you are immersed only in the academic culture (Baali jeeka).

Baali jeeka compared his language experiences to those of other classmates and thought that a lot had to do with how you perceive or feel about the culture where you will be living, which impacts the way you become part of it or remain outside, a foreigner.

> *Q9**:**…I feel it has to do with personality…and if beforehand you have a rejection towards the culture, it doesn't help…but I saw other classmates who were very "Americanized" …they wanted to stay in the U.S. and they were living the "American life"…they are Americans before they arrive (Baali jeeka).*

In his perception of peers who "adapted better," he believes it was their effort to remain in the U.S. that facilitated their immersion in the culture as well as their language ability. However, Baali jeeka's experiences during his Ph.D. were also evidence of his struggle and contradictions with regards to language and identities:

> Q10: My identity never changed while living in the U.S., but I never adapted well. I didn't socialize outside my study group and even with them my ability to express myself in English was always limited. As a reactionary response if I had the chance to speak Spanish I would do so and I didn't care, even if there was only one person in the whole group who was able to understand me (Baali jeeka).

Both Ernesto and Baali jeeka's perceptions of the "American culture" have led to a re-affirmation of their identities as Mexican. A strategy against the overpowering image of U.S. culture, iconized by fast food, hamburgers and empty calories, as Ernesto puts it, have led both these participants to use language as a tool against appropriating ideals they actively resist. Ernesto, in his case, consciously resisted adopting what he believed to be "an American accent," because doing so would subtract from his Mexican identity. Thus, even if he was speaking the language of the U.S., his Mexican accent would still serve as an anchor to his national, ethnical, and cultural identity. Baali jeeka also believed that language use was a determinant index of identity, causing him to refuse to speak English even when he was immersed in an English-speaking world. His negative experience, such as the "rolling of the eyes" of a colleague at a conference upon hearing him present in English, was an example of how he felt he was not being heard and was not being perceived by other native English speakers as "worthy of speech" nor much less as "worthy of engagement," as exemplified by Norton in her work with ESL learners of Canada. (Norton, 2000). As a consequence, Baali jeeka overtly rejected the use of the English language in determined circumstances. Experiences such as these led all the participants in this study to be strongly conscious of the social consequences of not speaking English in a predetermined way, especially as aspiring academics.

Implications for further research

An important issue emerging from this research and that requires further exploration is the fact that the two major granting agencies in Mexico (CONACYT and PROMEP) will continue to provide individuals with the opportunity to study abroad. A possibility for these granting agencies would be to create prerequisites for scholarship hopefuls to fulfill: a) EAP courses prior to leaving to study abroad, which would mainly focus on language and academic skills; b) orientation to scholarship candidates regarding the academic and job market in both the Inner and Expanding Circles. This would promote research contextualized in Mexico's current social, educational, and economic issues.

Another area for expanding the issues addressed in this study is the traditional English curriculum still so entrenched across Mexico at several public universities. For most of the participants, this traditional curriculum did not facilitate their immersion into academia, but rather left them feeling inadequately prepared and in need of further English instruction. Baali jeeka and Ernesto are testimony to this situation; they had to take additional English courses to comply with the language requirements set by their particular program of study. A greater focus on English for Academic Purposes curriculum for students preparing for study abroad might help to ease the transition of Mexican instructors studying in an English-speaking context. This particular aspect has become even more apparent in the curriculum renewal process that many public universities across Mexico have undergone. The new curricula present two parallels: on the one hand, English has become a requisite for undergraduate students; on the other hand, current teaching faculty (e.g. Engineering, History, Psychology) at many public universities do not themselves possess the level of proficiency envisioned for students. Therefore, there is an imminent need for EFL instructors to engage in the recognition and implementation of EAP curricula to meet the demands of the existing Expanding Circle scholars (e.g. university faculty) and those of Expanding Circle scholars-to-be (e.g. undergraduate students).

"Will [teachers] construct EAP exclusively as academic and workplace preparation or also as a place where students can shape and transform what is being offered to them?" (Benesch, 2001, p. 136). As a result of this, the present study seeks to raise awareness towards the construction of the latter: a critical EAP program responding to the imminent power relations in academia across the globe. Among the viable solutions for Expanding Circle scholars, Swales (1997) calls for 'rhetorical consciousness-raising' on the part of the [English-speaking] cultures, to promote and accept linguistic diversity (p. 380), whereas Tardy (2004) and Flowerdew (2000) propose collaborative work and mentoring between Inner Circle advisors and their departing students. The promotion of exchange programs at the undergraduate and graduate level among universities in Mexico and other Inner Circle universities would also be a viable solution. Mexican public universities also benefit from the expertise of visiting Inner Circle scholars. These alternatives already occur at many public universities in Mexico, but are not fully exploited. In these alternatives we can find that there would not only be an academic exchange of ideas and expertise, but that cultural, social, and power relations are also encouraged.

It is important to note that the granting agencies that have provided financial support to all the participants and to us would greatly benefit from an understanding and appropriate institutional response to the issues raised in this study. These funding agencies provide these scholarships in the hopes that one day we all become Inner and Expanding Circle scholars, thus strengthening our country's economic and scientific growth. But in order to carry out these solutions, policy makers and language teachers in Mexico (and in the rest of the world) have to be made aware of the effects of globalization in our country (ies).

> …[We] should understand the timeliness of globalization as a theme for sociolinguistics as an internal development, motivated by sociolinguistics' own familiar priorities -- being accountable to language data in social environments, pursuing issues of social value in language variation, and critiquing the linguistic and discursive bases of social inequality (Coupland, 2003, p. 465-466).

As Expanding Circle scholars in-the-making, we strongly support the need for Expanding Circle academics to enter and participate in the 'production' of research in English, as a way to legitimize our work in our areas of expertise (Tardy, 2004), and to be recognized as such in the international circles of academia. However, it is evident that many Expanding Circle scholars may feel more comfortable *reading* rather than *producing* English-language texts; as a result, these scholars are often excluded from participation as central members of the international academic community (Duszak as cited in Tardy, 2004, p. 251). We must not forget that despite the fact that English is an almost universal language in the scientific arena, the growing hegemony of one sole language weakens the principal of language equality. It is necessary for academics who speak languages other than English to validate their own language as another one of the many possible languages for the production of academic discourses. New scholars from the Expanding Circles like us and like the participants in this study also recognize the importance of languages other than English for Academic Purposes; after all, every one of us were active scholars in Mexico in our own native language before becoming apprentice members of the Inner Circle academic contexts. Thus another point on the agenda for our national granting agencies would be to more aggressively support the publication and scientific divulgation of journals and texts written in our own national language by fostering a more defined language policy. Our own academics should promote Spanish as a worthy language of academia, even in international contexts. Policies such as these could very well lead to more democratic participation of all academics, regardless of the language that they choose to use.

Finally, in the creation of a new identity, all of us (participants and researchers) were able to experiment transformations: in how our new language in use not only fulfills our basic communicating needs, but also creates discourses that transform us. Factors such as fluency and accent proved to be indexical in our success and our new perception of ourselves, as well as to how others perceived us. Now the next task is to forge a new discourse of multiple languages, among them Spanish and English, which will surely give way to innovative academic discourses that will be more inclusive to all "newcomers".

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Appendix

Granting Agencies

In this appendix two main scholarships are summarized. We all received at least one of these scholarships or a combination of one of these with another funding agency (either a Mexican university or the host university in the United States). As recipients of these scholarships, we signed an agreement and are therefore required to return to Mexico to work at either a public university or at a research center. The federal government in Mexico has created repatriate programs (as in the case of CONACYT) that provide returnees with jobs in their areas of expertise once they complete their graduate or postgraduate programs.

PROMEP

In 1996, SEP[3] created a national program in Mexico, which allowed most full-time tenure track instructors working at public or technological universities to have access to scholarships that would allow them to complete graduate and postgraduate programs in the Mexican Republic or outside the country. As a result, PROMEP (Programa de Mejoramiento al Profesorado-Development Program for Professors) was created. PROMEP's main objective is to prepare full time instructors to develop expertise in diverse research areas, particularly within public universities. Its goal has been to ensure that all full time tenure track instructors complete at least a Masters program by the year 2006. This goal was established in order to enrich the academic and research environment in Mexican public universities. SEP also provides a variety of research grants to those professors who had already completed graduate programs before the creation of PROMEP.

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[3] Secretaría de Educación Pública-Ministry of Education in Mexico, at the federal level.

CONACYT

The Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología-CONACYT (National Council for Science and Technology), was created in 1970 by the Federal Congress of Mexico. Its objective (as is PROMEP's) has been to facilitate financial support to those individuals interested in pursuing academic and professional development in their areas. As declared in their mission statement, CONACYT wishes to promote and strengthen scientific development and technological modernization in Mexico by providing resources to encourage and sustain specific research projects and the promotion of scientific and technological information (see http://info.main.conacyt.mx/). CONACYT works most of the time in conjunction with public universities and since it was created before PROMEP, it gave instructors - who were not tenure track - the opportunity for academic advancement. CONACYT not only offers full time scholarships, but complementary scholarships to those students who are receiving funding from their host university. I believe that this will somewhat ensure that the scholarship recipients return to Mexico since they have a commitment with a federal institution, as well as a guarantee to be repatriates who will hold a job in a public university or research institute. In order to accomplish and reinforce this, CONACYT created the National System of Science and Technology (SNI initials in Spanish[4]) which offers grants for recognized researchers in Mexico. CONACYT hopes that by the year 2025, Mexico's economic system will be one of the ten strongest in the world.

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[4] The SNI offers grants to Mexican researchers according to certain standards: number of publications, research projects. If granted, SNI offers a monthly complimentary salary to those researchers who maintain the standards established by CONACYT and SNI. For further information, see http://info.main.conacyt.mx/

Learning English Is No Neutral Choice: Contributions of Critical Perspectives to Classroom EFL in Mexico[5]

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Abstract

The paper explores three naturalized discourses in EFL teaching in Mexico that many teachers and learners convey: 1) the undisputed truth value of the textbook; 2) the belief that students' individual efforts can lead them to become fluent speakers; and 3) the assumption that English language learning stems from a purely individual choice. From a critical perspective, the author explores Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia to make the point that textbooks should be more inclusive of more linguistic and cultural varieties, given the fact that English is now a global language. Bourdieu's notion of legitimate speaker and symbolic capital are also discussed, now that English language learning occupies such an important role in Mexican discourses of education and that learners, convinced that EFL will provide many opportunities, are often left with less than what they invested in.

Introduction

Every semester at a public university in northwestern Mexico, hundreds of people line up outside of the gates of the school waiting for their "ficha" to enroll in a semester-long English course. Some show up with a rolled-up blanket under their arm and dark circles under their eyes. "Aquí estoy desde anoche para agarrar una ficha," say the students to each other. Those who arrive late run the risk of not being able to enroll and have to wait another semester. Teachers and office staff walk by, freshly showered with a coffee in their hands, to help with the enrollment process which will last all day and the rest of the week. It's just another semester with the ever growing amount of people waiting to enroll in English courses.

The semester starts and beginning level classes typically have over forty students enrolled. Students from all over the city enroll: men, women, high school students, college students, housewives, retirees, business men, university professors. Each of these individuals comes with their own expectations of what English will do for them. Yet as a novice teacher I hardly questioned this scene; it was good because it meant I would be assigned classes, and I would have more money in my paycheck. The Russian teacher, on the other hand, taught one class with a handful of students. What made me, an English teacher, different from the Russian teacher? What did English mean to so many of these students who were willing to invest time, effort, money and sleeplessness?

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[5] This is a refereed article.

This paper will unravel some of the discourses that explain English language learning and teaching in Mexico, contending that it is no neutral matter -- not for the teacher and not for the student, despite the fact that as practitioners in the field we rarely question our roles as conveyors of the English language. In Mexico, learning English as a foreign language has become so entrenched in our everyday lives that part of the national discourses on education include the learning of English and computer skills. It has not been unheard of for presidential candidates to propose English as the vanguard of education for all Mexican children. Learning English has been placed up there on the political agenda along with fighting poverty and corruption. It has acquired such a neutrality that we go along with our everyday lives teaching and learning English as a foreign language, but rarely reflecting on the ideologies that have made our profession what it is today -- a booming field that carries promises that at times are complied with and at times broken.

With a critical perspective, the following paper will explore three naturalized discourses we language teachers may internalize when teaching English in Mexico, but which can certainly be extended to many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts around the world: 1) the unquestionable truth-value of the EFL textbook, 2) the belief that students' individual efforts can lead them to become fluent speakers; and 3) the assumption that English language learning stems from a purely individual choice.

The Critical in Language

Traditionally, the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has been dominated by psycholinguistic approaches which claim that it is the individual differences between learners that ultimately predict the learner's success. Cognitive factors such as "intelligence" and "language aptitude" and affective factors such as "attitude," "motivation" and "anxiety" (Gardner & McIntyre, 1993) have been considered sufficient to explain the learners' differences in learning outcomes. As canons of SLA, these theories have rarely been questioned by many, except for a handful of authors who agree with Rampton (1995a, p.294) that SLA "could probably benefit from an enhanced sense of the empirical world's complex socio-cultural diversity."

And so, it is for this need to open up new perspectives in SLA that a "progressive" group of authors such as Ben Rampton, Bonny Norton, Aneta Pavlenko, Suresh Canagarajah, Claire Kramsch, James Lantolf, and Alistair

Pennycook[6] have noted the importance of turning to theories that view the field not as the development of accountable quantitative models based on empirical studies but rather models that account for the language learner as a member of complex social networks encompassing multiple identities. Such theorists have looked to a poststructuralist framework as a means of explaining the social dynamics of language learning and teaching experiences. While poststructuralism is a broad term and overlaps with a variety of theoretical positions, I use Weedon's (1987) conception of poststructuralism, defined as a range of theoretical positions which address the questions of how social power is exercised and how social relations of gender, class and race might be transformed. Poststructuralism indicates the types of discourse from which particular questions come and locates them both socially and institutionally. Language is considered intrinsic because it is the common factor in the analysis of social organization, social meanings, power and individual consciousness. It is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested, yet it is also the place where the sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed in socially specific ways.

If only Bakhtin saw these EFL textbooks

Mikhail Bakhtin, one of the greatest scholars of language of the twentieth century, offers an engaging perspective which contributes to a critical perspective of EFL, both in terms of the types of language considered as "teachable" and in the conception of the language learning and teaching endeavor as ideological. Because of the role of English in today's world, and because of the elements of symbolic power in EFL, I will allude to examples within EFL that relate to Bakhtin's philosophy. He helps us to go beyond the traditional view in SLA that the language to be taught is what is in the textbook, without considering the multiple varieties and usages within a single language. Bakhtin also helps counter the current prevailing view that learning English as a foreign language is "unquestionably the best choice" over the learning, and in many cases, maintenance of any other language.

One of Bakhtin's most important contributions to the theory of language is the conception of verbal discourse as a social phenomenon -- "social throughout its entire range and in each and every of its factors, from the sound image to the furthest reaches of its abstract meaning." (1981: 259). According to Bakhtin's view of discourse, each social language, each "concrete sociolinguistic belief system," is a form of conceptualizing its surroundings in words and is “characterized by its own objects, meanings and values.” This means that such language is value laden and reflexive of its historical time and context; it is “a particular point of view on the world and on oneself, the position enabling a person to interpret and evaluate his own self and his surrounding reality” (Bakhtin, 1984, as cited in Evans 1998: 404). Each of these social languages -- and its discourses -- stand in dialogic tension with the other languages in the community, from varieties of a language (standard American English vs. other world varieties) to competing ideological discourses (English as a means to integrate into American communities vs. English as a means to communicate with the rest of the world). As teachers in the Mexican EFL classroom, we are in constant tension between our positions as nonnative speakers who are trying to teach prescripted ways of talk presented in the textbooks. Are those accents we hear familiar to us? Can we reproduce them and follow the pronunciation exercises in the book? Have we stopped to think what variety we are teaching our students? Why the American Midwestern standard variety if many of our students may interact primarily with non-native English speakers?

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[6] It is not my intention to categorize all these authors as working within the same theoretical frameworks. I include them because they work within a critical tradition, with wide range approaches such as socio-cultural frameworks, critical language awareness, poststructuralist and postcolonial theories.

Because of this particular language dynamic, Bakhtin (1981) considers that every utterance is an example of “dialogized heteroglossia,” defined as a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor (p.358).

The recognition that language and its discourses are conformed by a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of links and interrelationships counters the traditional idea of a simple relationship between a speaker and his “own” unitary and singular language, “the monologic utterance of the individual” (ibid, p.269), as contemporary social psychologists and psycholinguistics in SLA claim. In arguing for the “heteroglossic” nature, which is the multiplicity of social voices in discourse, Bakhtin sees as essential the location of these social voices in a context and historical time, recognizing, in turn, that languages and their speakers change over the course of time. Such an idea counters static forms of language and cultural representation in textbooks that are usually taught regardless of their actual usage in the actual linguistic communities. [7]

The question is: Through what venues are these students introduced to the traditional static images of the “English speaking world” represented in texts?

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[7] There are countless examples, but perhaps one that is the most common is the teaching of formulaic conversations, which learners memorize and conceive of as unbreakable. Many learners later come back to complain that in engaging in a conversation with a native speaker, he/she answered something different than what the learner saw in every single textbook, such as “Hey” instead of “Hello,” thus causing surprise and even bewilderment about the language they were hearing.

Without a doubt, the EFL classroom provides the students with perceptions of this world, and the textbook is crucial in offering depictions of "this world" through portrayals of language and culture, more so when its content may be unfamiliar even to the teacher. For the foreign language teacher, in a country such as Mexico, the textbook not only guides the course activities, but also guides the language and cultural content which the teacher may be unfamiliar with, not having been immersed in an English speaking context portrayed in the textbook. On the other hand, if the textbook does not offer any English-speaking contexts which the teacher and students may be familiar with, their experiences and their imagined portrayals may be discredited.

The power of the textbook is that it is a tool which is often viewed as authoritative, factual, truth-based, and obligatory. Van Dijk (2004) views textbooks, along with other public discourses, as more relevant than other texts in processes of social reproduction because of their impact on people's beliefs. Due to their "obligatory" status, textbooks have an effect on societal reproduction: "Besides their overt contents aiming at the acquisition of standard knowledge in society and culture, textbooks and their hidden curricula also play an important role in the reproduction of dominant ideologies, such as those of race, gender and class. It is therefore important to examine in some detail how textbooks do this." (Van Dijk, 2004, p.2)

Inclusion or omission of information in the text leads to a validation or invalidation of the students' own experiences. McKay and Wong (1996) refer to the power of discourse, enacted for example in foreign language textbooks, as historically grounded statements that set forth presuppositions, thematic choices, values, and boundaries as to what can be said about something, by whom, how, where, and when, and that beneath it all lies some form of institutional authority. Hence, a thorough analysis of the textbook is necessary in order to determine how the textbook is portraying the "English speaking world" and if these particular students are a part of it. Such an analysis is particularly important because for many of the students the textbook is a "legitimate" text which provides them with linguistic and cultural information related to the target language. It also has the power of strengthening or weakening the students' investments in the target language.

In a study on the politics of the ESL classroom, Auerbach (1995) questions the authoritative role of the textbook in the classroom by setting forth important aspects such as whose voice is represented in the text and how is the text's content related to the students' own lives. She notes that traditional language exercises in typical textbooks are based on functional approaches that focus on rehearsing correct forms rather than creating and exchanging ideas. She finds how such practices preclude Bakhtin's notion of the "appropriation" of the language in that the language can truly become one's own when the speaker "populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his semantic and expressive intention" (Bakhtin, 1981, as cited by Auerbach, 1995, p.22). Textbook practices rarely give the user an opportunity to 'expropriate' the language because of the prescriptive nature that it adjudicates to the presented language. Students are assumed to need and want what is presented in the text, when oftentimes that may overtly reject its content. Canagarajah's (1991) study found instances when Sri Lankan high school EFL students scratched out the written dialogs or modified the textbook illustrations to replace them with dialogs and illustrations that were more relevant to their political and social climate.

Norton and Toohey (2002) suggests that because of the complex nature of identity, specifically that of the learners and of the portrayed speakers of the "target language," there is a need for texts that describe this very complexity of learners in the textbook, as opposed to static products that are traditionally portrayed as cultural icons of the "target language." In this sense, textbooks must portray the complexities of their linguistic and cultural content as well as the complexities of their users. And so, in a setting of foreign language learning, language and culture is not only what the learner has been exposed to, but also what possibilities the language learner will have to use the language, outside of the formal learning environment.

Bourdieu's reminds us that there is nothing apolitical about EFL

Bourdieu, one of the icons of critical language theory, complements the study of SLA by revealing that language is a social-historical phenomenon. He offers an alternative to the pervading idea in linguistics (carried over to SLA) of *competence* and *performance* developed by Chomsky and defined as "…the ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-communication" (Chomsky, 1965, as cited by Angelil-Carter, 1997, p.263).

In this definition, Chomsky separates 'competence,' an idealized capacity, from 'performance', the production of actual utterances. Competence, being an ideal, is located as a psychological or mental property or function (Lyons, 1996). This is in contrast to performance, which refers to an actual event. In this sense, language can be "objectively" studied because it is seen as a neutral language phenomenon where everyone knows the speech community's language perfectly. Such is the pervading idea in traditional teaching methods, especially for non-native settings.

Within Bourdieu's framework, the ideas of a homogeneous speech community, ideal speaker, or a single language do not exist. As users of the English language in Mexico, we are quite aware of the different contexts where English is used. Is it possible to speak of one single community now that we are immersed in a global context? While Chomsky's contribution to language superficially takes into account the social conditions of use in the belief that performance is what is socially significant, Bourdieu adds that actual speakers have a capacity to produce expressions which are appropriate for particular situations, that is, a capacity to produce expressions *á propos.* Bourdieu also reminds us that in SLA there is nothing neutral about particular languages, even though linguists tend to ignore that through a complex historical practice certain languages emerged as dominant languages, often through colonialist or imperialist strategies. Thus, the idealized speech community is nothing more than "an object which has been pre-constructed by a set of social-historical conditions endowing it with the status of the sole legitimate of 'official' language of a particular community" (1994, p.5).

Bourdieu views language as a complex set of social, historical and political conditions of formation, where "ideal" conditions do not necessarily exist for the speaker because of their social place on the linguistic "market". Bourdieu (1994) emphasizes once and again "…the economic and social conditions of the acquisition of the legitimate competence and of the constitution of the market in which this definition of the legitimate and the illegitimate is established and imposed" (p.44). In this context, Bourdieu's following notions prove helpful for a rethinking of English as a foreign language: the concept of legitimate language and with that its legitimate users; and the concept of the linguistic market and the material and symbolic profits which may (or may not) emanate.

Legitimate language

Angelil-Carter (1997) summarizes Bourdieu's notion of legitimate language in his contention that a communicative event takes place when the speaker is recognized as a legitimate speaker. This recognition is granted under the following conditions that define legitimate usage:

1. An utterance must be spoken by the person legitimately authorized to do so.

2. It must be spoken in a legitimate situation.

3. It must be spoken to legitimate receivers.

4. It must be spoken according to legitimate syntactic and phonetic forms.

Traditional teaching practices generally focus on the last condition, especially when emphasizing that students must acquire the grammatically correct forms, and especially in conditions where the learner may not be exposed to opportuities to actually use the language outside the classroom. Bourdieu, however, reminds us of the importance of the other three conditions, as communication and legitimacy cannot be separated. Pierce, as cited by Angelil-Carter (1997), adds that claiming the right to speak should be an essential component of a revised notion of communicative competence. She therefore puts forward the notion of legitimate speaker in SLA, referring to immigrant women who may have learned the classroom version of the language but who have not had the opportunity to practice it. Our learners are not far from this situation for a variety of reasons. The primary reason is that they still may not have access to an actual English speaking community. (Internet communication, however, may provide new communities the opportunity to use the language, with the advantage that learners do not necessarily have to expose who they are racially or ethnically; but that is a further research topic.) Another of the multiple reasons is that if the U.S. is the learners' cultural reference for the use of English, harsh realities such as the color of their skin, the Hispanic surnames, the non-native American accent, and the current anti-Mexican immigrant climate in the U.S. may never provide our student with a "legitimate status."

The learners' goal may be the acquisition not only of a language, but also a wider range of material and symbolic resources, which will in turn increase their value of cultural capital, that is, *if* they have the access to resources which will legitimate them as a speaker. Bourdieu sheds light on the idea that the choice to learn a second language is not a completely voluntarily one; second language learners rarely decide on learning a language because it was an individual choice, but do so because their context somehow views the learning of that particular language as the practical thing to do, thus "le sens practique." Bourdieu's notion of habitus can be summarized as a set of dispositions that predispose individuals to act and react in certain ways. The dispositions generate practices, perceptions and attitudes which are 'regular' without being consciously governed by any 'rule.' Dispositions can be gradually inculcated and structured according to the social conditions within which they were acquired. Thus, the habitus 'orients' actions and inclinations rather than imposes them. The actions, then, acquire "le sens practique."

When individuals act, they do so in specific social contexts or settings referred to, by Bourdieu, as 'market' and 'game'. The market can be seen as a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelationships are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or 'capital.' Bourdieu alludes to *economic capital*; *cultural capital* (the knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions as exemplified by educational or technical qualifications); and *symbolic capital* (the accumulated prestige or honor cristalized in diplomas, certificates and awards). These forms of capital can be converted into one another, such as transforming the knowledge of English as *cultural capital* into *economic capital* when finding a job that pays more because of that particular knowledge.

According to Stroud, as cited by Bourdieu (1994), "the sense of value of one's own linguistic products is a fundamental dimension of the sense of knowing the place which one occupies in the social space," and this is one of the processes which helps "to constitute that sense of one's own social worth which governs the practical relation to different markets (shyness, confidence, etc.) and more generally, one's whole physical posture in the social world" (p.198). In other words, members of a community have a practical sense of their positions in social space; thus, it is no accident that many learners decide to be silent and not impose their presence in the language community in which they may aspire to be members. Even foreign language learners who may never even think of becoming a member of the "target community" assume that the language they do know is for very specific uses and rarely do they go beyond that practical sense. "Language ideologies provide the systematic associations of behavioral aesthetic and moral values, or bodily emotions, such as shame with specific varieties of language" (ibid, p.199); this, according to Bourdieu, is one of the most powerful mechanisms of the maintenance of the symbolic order.

This symbolic order is seen by Bourdieu as a form of complicity which is neither passive nor active. The recognition that a language has more 'value' than another in the linguistic market is inscribed in inculcated dispositions that permit that particular language to have more material and symbolic profit than others. While Bourdieu uses standard language varieties as an example of this phenomenon, I would argue that the learning of a so-called powerful language such as English is very often a product of calculation by the individual, oriented by discourses of English equaling success. It is only through the acquisition of this linguistic product that the individual will acquire more symbolic, cultural and economic capital. An everyday example of this are the countless commercials on television channels offering English learning methods which will grant the learner "the key to future success" even though there happens to be a disclaimer in tiny letters that learning English is no guarantee of employment.

Bourdieu's theory comes full circle in its premise that legitimate language is only possible through the speaker's appropriate positioning on the linguistic market -- that is, the speaker must now possess the capital necessary to be recognized as legitimate:

> *Speakers lacking the legitimate competence are de facto excluded from social domains in which this competence is required, or are condemned to silence.... What is rare then ... is [not linguistic competence] ... but the competence necessary to speak the legitimate language, which depending on social inheritance, re-translates social distinctions into the specifically symbolic logic of differential deviations, or in short, distinction (1994, p.56).*

In transferring Bourdieu's system of linguistic and social difference to EFL it is quite evident that the linguistic market has heavily endowed the English language with a high value. The competence of the agents in this market is to know English and to be able to produce it, without ignoring the fact that first they need to be legitimated as speakers. The distribution of this linguistic capital is related in specific ways to the distribution of other sources of capital, such as *economic capital* in order to be able to access language education and *cultural capital* in order to have the background academic skills needed to study a language. Bourdieu contends that the more linguistic capital that the speakers possess, the more they can exploit the system of differences to their advantage and therefore secure a profit of distinction.

Being that the access to English and the legitimacy of its speakers is so unequally distributed, there is a sense that there is a greater value and, with that, a greater profit for the foreign language learner who fully acquires the language, under the condition that (s)he has been legitimated as such. Bourdieu rightly reminds the SLA field that language learning is a product of a complex historical process, at times with extensive conflict, subtle policies, or non-written requirements, and that the learner is in a constant struggle to keep up with the requirements of the linguistic market.

Conclusion

This essay exposed how prevailing discourses in English language learning and teaching in Mexico can be unraveled by exploring some of the most important contributions of critical thinkers of language. We go about our everyday lives rarely thinking about the texts we use, which typically guide much of our teaching activities. After all, we may think that they provide us with what students need to know. We also teach with the hope that our students will become English speakers who will be served by all the efforts they have made. We assume that they will be prepared to enter English speaking communities because we were able to convey all the knowledge about English they need to know. Yet somewhere down the line, very few of our students reach these milestones, and oftentimes, as teachers we are not completely convinced that correct usage of language is all students need to know in order to seize the English language.

When exploring Bakhtin's contribution to a rethinking of language -- that is, how language is social throughout and context and history are essential for its understanding -- we come to realize that language is forever changing. We cannot afford to view language and the culture it represents as static images, with little space for change over time. As language teachers, we convey these images, yet it is also in our power to present alternative images of the "English speaking world," highlighting the multiple varieties and multicultural contexts where English is used. Viewing English through a global perspective, rather than as the language of two powerful countries, can provide a necessary contextualization for a new approach to EFL teaching. Further research could contribute towards new pedagogical frameworks for teaching English as a global language, recognizing its transformative nature.

Bourdieu's contributions to language, viewing it as a commodity that has values on a linguistic marketplace, help reframe the conception of English as a neutral means of communication to a medium of power through which our learners pursue their own interests. Within this conception, issues of race, ethnicity, gender, social class and economic power play an important role in legitimizing who will become a speaker, who will be heard, and who will be silenced. In recognizing such a scenario, we teachers also have the power to transform such futures. Hopefully, by not ignoring how the linguistic marketplace deviously works, we may be able to construct alternatives for our students.

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Appropriating English in Mexico[8]

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Abstract

In this article the author looks at the issues of linguicism and culturism in EFL as well as the privileges afforded the native English speaker and asks how teachers of English in Mexico can ‘appropriate’ English to teach in a way that is more attuned to the context in which the teaching is taking place.

Introduction

Canagarajah argues that there are two “traditional extremes” (1999: 174) to how learning the English language is viewed. Firstly, learners can choose to reject learning the language outright by saying that it is encouraging linguistic imperialism to use it. It is not uncommon in Mexico for negative feelings towards English-speaking cultures and the language associated with them to be expressed as an unwillingness to learn English. The opposite extreme is to embrace and accept English for the benefits it can bring. This, too, is common in Mexico -- the growing number of schools that are using English as the medium of instruction provides evidence of this and schools are clearly capitalizing on the idea that proficient English users will have the edge in the future over those who don’t know English.

Canagarajah insists that there needs to be a third way, namely that the English language can be ‘appropriated’ by English teachers and learners so that learners “use the language in their own terms according to their own aspirations, needs and values” (ibid: 176). It is this ‘third way’ that is the focus of this article. Firstly, the reasons why the spread of English is seen as dangerous will be outlined and the implications of this for English language teachers will be discussed. Finally, Canagarajah’s third way will be discussed in the context of English language teaching in Mexico.

The dangers of English

There is no denying the figures when it comes to the number of speakers of English in the world, with the latest estimates at over 500 million who use English as a first or second language and over 1 billion who are learning English as a foreign language (Graddol, 2006). While recognising the spread of English, many dangers of a globally dominant language have been identified. Phillipson in 1992 first warned the profession of "linguistic imperialism" which he describes like this: "The dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (47). Pennycook continued on this theme that the "divorce of language from broader questions has had major implications for teaching practice and research" (1995: 39). The rapid spread of the English language and the way its dominance is encouraged and maintained is an important area of exploration. Pennycook, like Phillipson, points out that this dissipation of the language is not an accidental occurrence and that "it has been deliberate government policy in English-speaking countries to promote the worldwide use of English for economic and political purposes" (1995: 43).

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[8] This is a refereed article.

Pennycook outlines two main dangers of the spread of English: firstly, he states that the dominance of English threatens the existence and status of other languages and secondly that knowledge of English is becoming a key to positions of power and prestige. As far as the first danger is concerned, this situation is especially relevant in Mexico if we consider the status of many of the indigenous languages. There are over 5 million speakers of over 80 indigenous languages. Some have over a million speakers, such as Nahuatl and Maya while others have but a few speakers and are dying out. Although it is Spanish that is directly taking over as the majority language, clearly the increasing importance of English will do nothing to help keep these languages alive (http://www.literacyonline.org/explorer/oax_back.html).

Linguicism

Pennycook's second danger refers to 'linguicism,' which Phillipson describes as the central issue in linguistic imperialism, the idea that one language is better than another, an idea that is used for economic and political gain. Robert Burchfield has put it like this: "Any literate, educated person on the face of the globe is deprived if he does not know English" (in McCrum et. al., 1986: 32). English has become the key to positions of prestige and power -- the 'gatekeeper.' This comment caused great indignation when we language teachers, in 1991, used it as the basis for a discussion essay in a private high school in Guadalajara during an English course about countries in the world where English is used. The students insisted that they knew many 'literate, educated' people who did not know English, but it was ironic that none of them was among them and that the school itself (one of the most prestigious school systems in Mexico) had just implemented a plan to introduce content area classes in English throughout its nationwide campuses and a policy which would insist on a 500 point TOEFL score as a prerequisite for graduation from the university!

Culturism.

As well as the danger of linguicism discussed here, I'd like to add a further threat that is particularly prevalent and dangerous to the field of ELT, namely 'culturism.' Holliday (2004) asserts that in the TESOL profession we constantly reduce other cultures and people from those cultures to stereotypes. This creates a 'them' (students from other cultures) and 'us' (native speaker teachers) situation with the assumption being that language teachers need to teach the English language using English language speaking cultural values and norms. Where does this leave the non-native English speaker teacher? Phillipson contends that one of the main tenets on which the ELT profession is based is that "the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker" (1992: 193) and Widdowson adds that "they [native speakers] not only have the patent on proper English, but on proper ways of teaching it as well" (1993: 18). It is interesting to note that Howatt (1984) documents this fundamental difference in methodology, when he says that using English only (no use of the mother tongue) was the "hallmark which set ELT apart from foreign language teaching in Britain" (212). I worked as a non-native speaking teacher of French and German in the UK, and the textbooks I used were written by British non-native speakers. It is also noteworthy that the students did not expect (nor particularly want) to have a native French or German speaker teacher. Compare this with the position of non-native English teachers in Mexico who are asked to use materials and pedagogies that are more often than not British or US American, as well as being in a "constant struggle with their own language deficiencies" (Medgyes, 1986: 112).

Let's now look more closely at how the dangers of linguicism and culturism affect English language teachers in Mexico.

Implications for English teachers

As Pennycook states, "At the very least, intimately involved as we are with the spread of English, we should be aware of the implications of this spread for the reproduction and production of global inequalities" (1995: 55). We need to be aware of the role of English and the potential dangers of a dominant world language. We need to show respect for and promote other languages and cultures. This is a very high ideal indeed and relies strongly on individual and institutional attitudes to what teaching and learning English means. This is also of course putting the native EFL teacher in a controversial position, suggesting that s/he oppose the very ideas that have put her/him in her/his position of privilege, 'bite the hand that feeds her/him,' fight English through English, but on a very local level it is clear that the EFL teacher in Mexico can help to dispel many of the myths and prejudices surrounding English-speaking cultures by exposing learners to different varieties of English and aspects of the society and, particularly in the case of teacher trainers, by explicitly exposing the way theorists and materials writers reinforce national and linguistic stereotypes.

This applies very directly to the Mexican situation and to the localisation of language teaching to particular contexts and the changing role of the native and non-native speaker teacher. There are far more speakers of English as a foreign or second language than native speakers of English and the number of foreign language learners is the figure that is increasing most rapidly (set to reach about 2 billion in about 10 years time). This means that the probability of English learners speaking to a fellow English learner is higher than the probability of the English learner speaking to a native speaker. Graddol points out that of the 763 million international travellers in 2004, 74% of them were visitors from non-English speaking countries to other non-English speaking countries (Graddol, 2006: 29). For these travellers the use of English is often necessary, but for them the native speaker has become, in many ways, irrelevant.

In language teaching, then, the native speaker teacher is no longer automatically the expert or authority for the learner. Someone who understands the learner's context and English learning needs is far better qualified to teach that person English. This will more often than not be a non-native English speaker -- a teacher who has learnt English her/himself and who understands the problems and needs of the learner. Widdowson (1993) has spoken of 'appropriate' methodology for the context. He argues that the English language no longer belongs to native speakers, but rather to everyone who speaks it and uses it in their lives; with the growth of non-native speaker English language use in the world, this seems to be ever more important.

From appropriate to appropriation

So how does all this apply to Mexico? How can teachers help to make English 'appropriate' to their learners? I'd like to talk in practical terms about how this can happen in Mexican ELT classrooms.

The underused resource

Firstly, I'd like to discuss the use of the mother tongue. When I first arrived in Mexico in 1988 without knowing a word of Spanish, I was given beginner students to teach. I found it extremely difficult to establish rapport with this group of students and to really help them, particularly with their anxieties and problems. At the time it was accepted as good practice for monolingual native speaker teachers to work with beginners. It led to 'authentic communication,' a truly communicative experience for the learners. At the time I accepted this, but I no longer do. As Atkinson says, the mother tongue "has...a variety of roles to play which are at present consistently undervalued" (1987: 247). From my own experience as a language learner, teacher, teacher trainer and materials writer, I realise now that the mother tongue is essential in the learning of a new language and the language teacher who can help the learner to use the mother tongue effectively is not only helping the learner but also validating the importance and value of the mother tongue.

This is clearly a controversial issue which becomes obvious when one talks to teachers who have been trained in communicative methodology and it certainly seems that the *monolingual fallacy* ("the belief that use of the learner's native language interferes with the learning of English" (Canagarajah, 1999: 126; from Phillipson, 1992)) and communicative methodology have become very much tied up together in teacher training. Communicative methodology states that we should be creating authentic opportunities for learners to communicate with each other, that learners should learn to communicate by communicating with each other and with the teacher in the second language. This fails to take into account everything that the learner brings with her/him in terms of knowledge about the first language and knowledge about how language works. A perfect example of this is in the teaching of, for example, the difference between first and second conditional structures. When trying to teach this difference wholly in English, the teacher finds her/himself looking at complex discussions of 'degree of probabilty' and often constructing elaborate contrived contexts to illustrate this, such as the difference in degree of probability between something going wrong when a girl goes to be an au pair for a year compared to the degree of probability of seeing a ghost (Soars and Soars, 1986:48). My point here is that there is a Spanish equivalent of the two structures and that by merely showing students how the first and second conditional structure is expressed in Spanish the learner can immediately understand differences in meaning by using her/his language awareness of her/his first language.

I am not suggesting that we return to some kind of grammar translation method, but calling for the use of common sense and thoughtful practice in the use of the mother tongue in the classroom. Instead of punishing students for using the mother tongue we should be helping students to use their existing knowledge of their first language to help them to learn the second language. Learning a new language can be an intimidating process for learners and instead of giving the knowledge that learners have already no status, or worse, undervaluing it, the use of the mother tongue for encouragement and help can go a long way towards putting the learner at ease and therefore creating a positive relationship between the learner, the teacher and the subject, not to mention the help that students can get in making connections between how their own language works and how the second language works.

Culture in ELT materials

The second way Canajarajah suggests teachers can appropriate English is on the question of culture. Instead of accepting and reinforcing cultural information and stereotypes presented in ELT materials, Canagarajah suggests we should look at them critically and compare and contrast and question what is presented within the learners' own reality. For example, if a textbook discusses music sales in the United States, this is a good time to look at music and the impact of music from other parts of the world on Mexican music and to look at controversial issues such as the use of English by Latin American musicians, the different occasions in which people listen to music in English and Mexican music, the stereotyping and prestige attached to different types of music (look at how ‘cumbia’ is viewed compared to rock music in English and what of the ‘rock en tu idioma’ movement?). The emphasis should be on not just accepting the information, but rather on bringing it to the student and their reality and world.

Most textbooks are written with a view to selling as many copies as possible in as many different countries in the world as possible; therefore, it should be clear that it is impossible for a textbook to be entirely appropriate to the situation it is being used in. One option, of course, is to abandon the textbook altogether and to use materials designed specifically for the context. There are two problems with this: firstly, the amount of time needed and resources available for the classroom teacher to be able to do this; it is clearly helpful for a teacher to have a set of material ready for her/him to use; secondly, the student, too, often likes and feels comfortable with a textbook that provides a record and lends authority to the course s/he is following. What Canagarajah suggests is that the teacher should not accept what is in the textbook, but rather use the textbook as a starting point for negotiating culture, for discussing similarities and differences between the culture discussed *in* or *between* the lines of the textbook and the culture of the country where the language is being learnt. Instead of reading and learning that Italian food is the most popular type of food in the US (Richards, Hull and Proctor, 1997: 80), students should be considering their own attitudes to foods and how this has changed or not and *why* certain foods are more or less popular in their reality. Canagarajah suggests taking this further and actually asking students to look at what the textbook is telling the learner, by problematizing the dialogues, conversations and other texts that appear in the textbook in order to look at deeper issues which involve critical reflection. For example, in a dialogue that shows two young men discussing where they are going to have dinner, look at the implications of this in a country where many people don’t have enough food and *can’t* choose between Indian food and Chinese food, but would be happy with *any* food. What does this say about the market for the book and who the intended audience is and what messages they are transmitting about attitudes to food and users of the English language?

Pedagogy

The third point I’d like to make about appropriating English refers to the teaching and learning styles which are implicit in the materials and methods used in English language teaching. Here again, ‘culturism’ rears its head. Canajarajah says that we should not accept the pedagogy offered to us by the textbook, but that we should negotiate with learners to find methods and activities that are acceptable and appropriate to the reality of the learner. Techniques such as role play, jigsaw learning and self-discovery grammar learning may not correspond to learners’ previous experiences of learning. Materials writers assume a lot about how learners do and *ought to* learn in EFL textbooks and this often corresponds to classroom practices that are “not always transparent to people not brought up in this particular professional discourse” (Holliday, 2004: 121) and indeed may not even be practically possible in the situation. For example, how viable is a 'walking dictation' in a class of 50 students who have limited space and who cannot create too much noise because of disturbing other classes in close vicinity? Holliday argues that "we must stop being culturist and learn to see through our own professionalism" (ibid: 116), particularly the native-speakerist perspectives that the profession upholds. Without accepting the methodology in our materials as the only way that English can be taught, teachers can instead look at *their* reality and situation and find methods that are suitable and appropriate for their learners. This does not mean resisting any form of change in the classroom that represents a different way of working from traditional practices, but rather "local teachers have to adopt creative and critical instructional practices in order to develop pedagogies suitable for their communities" (Canagarajah, 1999: 122).

Conclusion

Graddol argues that we are in a period of transition in which there is a new paradigm emerging which will include the "declining reverence of 'native speakers'" (2006: 66). In Mexico there is still a tendency to accept English wholeheartedly for the advantages it brings (and with it the importance of the native speaker) or a total rejection of it. It seems that it's time to look for the 'third way' that Canagarajah speaks of and for Mexican teachers to think about ways to 'appropriate' English in order to protect themselves and their students from the dangers of linguicism and culturism.

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Critical Pedagogies: Interpersonal Language and Teacher Development[9]

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Abstract

In this paper, I argue that Mexican university teacher-training programmes need to go beyond focusing on developing communicative competence and appropriateness when examining ways to 'teach' L2 interpersonal language use. Teachers need to be more aware of the interpersonal needs of Mexican learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). To pursue this argument, I investigate the beliefs and attitudes of teacher trainers and student teachers on BA programmes in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at two Guadalajara universities. I examine whether the pedagogical positions of university teacher trainers and student teachers towards interpersonal language use: a) solely develop linguistic knowledge; b) promote adherence to target-language (TL) communicative norms; or c) offer L2 users interpersonal choices so that they can interact in their own way in a given situation. The results indicate that practising student teachers are trying to identify new ways of responding to their own students' interpersonal language needs. Furthermore, I argue that if teaching EFL in Mexico is to respond to specific local language needs, teacher trainers need to help future and practising teachers develop a more critical stance towards 'teaching' interpersonal language use.

Introduction

Mexican foreign-language teacher trainers shoulder an important responsibility in influencing the pedagogical approaches and practices of future teachers in the classrooms of Mexico. Future teachers are faced with a choice between adopting / adhering to English-language teaching models 'imported' principally from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, or developing teaching principles and practices that respond to local language learning needs. Imported language teaching models often embrace what Scollon and Scollon (1995) identify as utilitarianism -- information-focused communication which emphasises directness, succinctness and efficiency. Under such a model, a limited amount of attention is devoted to developing L2 learners' interpersonal needs. However, a more localised and Mexican-focused approach needs to consider the language learners' background, experiences and motivations so that language programmes will be able to respond to very specific and identifiable objectives that will allow L2 users to express themselves as individuals whilst adhering to L2 patterns and practices of use.

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[9] This is a refereed article.

Current L2 teaching and learning practices in Mexico must face up to the challenge of helping EFL learners establish, develop, maintain and even enhance social relations in the target language. As a consequence, L2 learners should be offered realistic choices in how to interact within a range of interpersonal contexts which may be friendly and hospitable, impersonal and formal, or unpleasant and conflictual. Through the use of questionnaires, I conducted research on the positions adopted by teacher trainers and their students towards developing interpersonal language use in the L2 classroom. I aim to conceptualise interpersonal choices within Pennycook's (2001) critical framework which explores whether developing second-language use is a matter of a). increasing and practising language knowledge; b). conforming to appropriate interactional norms and patterns of use; or c). making critical choices in often challenging and unpredictable social contexts. For the EFL classroom, Pennycook's framework offers teachers the following options in teaching interpersonal language use: a). increasing and practising language knowledge, which assumes that interpersonal practices are the same in L1 and L2 and that learners need only the necessary linguistic resources; b) conforming to appropriate interactional norms and patterns of use, which assumes that learners need to submit and adhere themselves to target-language practices and patterns of use; and c) making critical choices, which examine how second-language learners can interact as themselves (i.e. as Mexican EFL users) in often challenging and unpredictable social contexts.

This paper promotes a critical pedagogy because it places the Mexican learner at the centre of the learning process and rejects current practices requiring EFL classrooms to adjust, bend or refashion themselves to 'imported' materials, methodologies and evaluation systems. It is the Mexican learner's needs, wants, beliefs, attitudes, experiences and ways of learning and interacting that should be reflected in Mexican EFL pedagogy. This may result in a conflict between the 'imported' methods and Mexican learners' needs, but such a conflict should be resolved in favour of the Mexican EFL learner.

A Mexican Critical Approach

Why is a critical approach to interpersonal language use important for teacher training in Mexico? A critical approach is important if Mexican EFL users are to react decisively to their own English-language needs and requirements. For instance, the language learner studying in Guadalajara has language purposes which cannot always be satisfied through using textbooks and teaching materials developed for a global market. Furthermore, within the Mexican context, the Guadalajara L2 user working for a transnational company may have very different language needs and target-language relationships when compared to the Tijuana EFL user living on the Mexican-United States border where English may be used in daily interactions. A critical examination of the teaching-learning context needs be described in terms of: a). realistically identifying existing and future interactional and transactional contexts; b). distinguishing between different types of interpersonal relationships; c). pinpointing language and thematic content that is relevant to the Mexican EFL user; d). examining possible communicative choices that allow the Mexican EFL user to interact in her/his own way; e). adhering to and developing existing Mexican learning modes and practices; f). building on existing Mexican teaching approaches and styles; and g). examining ways of evaluating achievement and progress according to local needs and standards.

While such a list may appear idealistic, pretentious and extremely ambitious, it is only through relating English-language teaching to the Mexican context that second-language learning can truly respond to local aims and requirements. For instance, conventional teaching approaches often call on teachers to conduct a needs analysis with the aim of identifying motivational reasons for studying English, e.g. getting a better job, wanting to travel or work in an English-speaking country or interacting with people from another country. This may not be the reality for hundreds of thousands of Mexican students who are studying English solely because it is a required course subject. Motivation 'labels' such as *intrinsic*, *extrinsic*, *instrumental* and *integrative* may fail to reflect classroom realities if learners are only studying English in order to pass an internationally-recognised examination so that they can graduate from their university or if students are studying English in order to socialise and make friends -- what Allwright terms "getting along" as opposed to "getting ahead" (1998: 126). Using the second-language classroom as a real-life social context may be much more realistic for many Mexican learners rather than reproducing textbook target-language role-plays.

Teaching responses to social needs

In responding to the Mexican learners' social needs, English-language teachers have choices in trying to help learners establish, develop, maintain and enhance social relations in a second language. Pedagogical choices can be seen through the adoption of linguistic, liberal or critical positions regarding language and knowledge (Pennycook 2001). From a linguistic position, teachers may decide that interpersonal language use does not have to be taught and that learners only need the necessary grammatical and lexical knowledge. Discussion of social and cultural issues is avoided. Phillipson argues that such an apolitical approach 'glorifies' English as the language of wider communication which offers "science and technology, modernity, efficiency, rationality, progress, a great civilization" (1992: 284). Such non-critical approaches try to distance English language teaching from the socio-political and economic agendas of Anglo-American countries. In fact, as Canagarajah argues, non-critical approaches try to project a liberating role for English-language teachers: "Since mainstream pedagogues assume that learning is value-free, pragmatic, and autonomous, they can practice teaching as an innocent and practical activity of passing on correct facts, truths, and skills to students" (1999: 17).

In order to respond to the Mexican context, more 'enlightened' teachers may adopt a liberal position (Pennycook 2001) so that L2 interpersonal language use reflects similarities, differences and contrasts, which need to be analysed, understood, appreciated and maybe even celebrated. This liberal position is often pursued by teaching L2 learners an 'appropriate' language use that is sensitive to other participants, situations and language purposes. However, as Fairclough (1992: 48) argues, appropriacy is not only a difficult concept to describe but often reflects the practices and patterns of use of a dominant sector of society. In the case of the L2 users, appropriacy may mean adhering to the dominating practices of middle-class Anglo-American white speakers as teachers ignore possible social issues of power and inequality involved in L2 interpersonal language use. Such a position fails to consider that the L2 users may be at a serious disadvantage when interacting interpersonally because of the overwhelming pressure to conform to TL patterns of use. This position does not entertain the idea of unequal power relations between native and non-native speakers or even among non-native speakers interacting in English.

The critical position tries to respond to the problem of unequal power relations and sees L2 interpersonal language use as problematic. First of all, EFL users may want to conform to target-language patterns and practices but, at the same time, they may want to interact in their own way. They want to be fluent Mexican EFL users and not imitators of U.S. and British language users. Also, second-language interpersonal language use does not reflect a level communicative playing field. The EFL user may feel communicatively disempowered if she/he does not speak the standard variety and has limited knowledge and experience of target-language socio-cultural practices. At the same time, she/he may feel doubly alienated as she/he cannot call on her first-language experiences, values and understandings. As a consequence, Pennycook argues that second-language learning involves social, cultural, political, and ideological concerns (2001: 117). L2 users need help in examining available interactional choices in order to be successful second-language users and interact in their own way.

Importance of Interpersonal Language Use

Teacher trainers need to offer future EFL teachers ways to help their language learners achieve specific language objectives and/or engage in social language use. These goals are often discussed in terms of transactional and interactional language use, which Nunan differentiates in the following way: "Most interactions can be classified as either transactional or interactional. Transactional talk is produced in order to get something, or to get something done. Interactional language is produced for social purposes" (1999: 228). While Nunan's distinction focuses on language purpose, teachers also need to take into consideration *how* interactants want to interact in interpersonal terms or what Spencer-Oatey refers to as 'rapport-management' (2000). For instance, within the speech act of refusal, Spencer-Oatey argues that the speaker has several options:

1. Explicit refusal, e.g. *I can't make it.*
2. Expression of appreciation, e.g. *Thanks for the invitation*.
3. Excuse or explanation, e.g. *I'm busy*.
4. Expression of regret, e.g. *I'm sorry*.
5. Expression of positive feelings or wishes, e.g. *It sounds like fun / I wish I could make it*.
6. A conditional, e.g. *If you had told me earlier, I could have gone with you*.
7. Offer of an alternative, e.g. *How about Sunday?*
8. Request for further information, e.g. *Who'll be there?*
9. Repetition, e.g. *Dinner on Sunday*. *Well, thanks very much, but …*

(ibid: 23)

EFL users are faced with interpersonal choices in both transactional and interactional language use. Interactional language use is not static: it involves joint interaction as relationships develop, enhance, go off course, deteriorate, or become lost. Textbooks which aim to satisfy a global market hardly consider the Mexican EFL user who wants to interact in her/his own way in the target language. The research in this paper specifically examines whether or not Mexican teacher trainers (Mexican and non-Mexican teacher trainers working in Mexico) seek to encourage future teachers to respond to the challenge of helping Mexican learners interact interpersonally in their own way.

Research Questions

In order to conduct this investigation, which includes a consideration of whether teacher trainers and student teachers hold linguistic, liberal or critical positions towards the teaching of interpersonal language use, I pursue one overarching research question: ***How can EFL teachers help learners engage in interpersonal language use in the target language*?** This question is relevant to both teacher trainers and student teachers. Teacher trainers need to consider how they can prepare student teachers for 'teaching' interpersonal language use and student teachers need to be made aware of now they can help L2 learners. To pursue this line of enquiry, I posed five specific questions in the questionnaire given to teacher trainers and student teachers.

1. *Do teachers need to teach learners how to socialise in the L2?*

With this question, I wanted to find out whether interpersonal language needs to be taught at all. Questionnaire participants (teacher trainers and student teachers) were given three choices regarding the need to 'teach' interpersonal language: i). interpersonal language use does not need to be taught and learners only require experience and practice; ii). L2 interpersonal language use reflects similarities and differences between L1 and L2 and these need to be highlighted, understood and even celebrated; or iii). interpersonal language use involves interactional choices as L2 users decide how to achieve their own personal objectives.

2. *How should teachers approach the teaching of social language?*

If teacher intervention would be necessary, the second question tried to ascertain the nature of such teacher intervention. In this question, I tried to determine whether 'teaching' interpersonal language use is about i). developing linguistic skills (e.g. grammar and vocabulary); ii). developing communicative competence and conforming to native-like patterns; or iii). providing learners with interactional options so that can participate in their own way according to their communicative purpose.

3. *Are even proficient L2 users at a possible conversational disadvantage when interacting in the target language?*

Since I wanted to ascertain whether teacher trainers and student teachers view L1-L2 interaction as problematic, the third question explored whether linguistic knowledge is enough to achieve successful L2.

4. *Should L2 users be taught to always conform to TL interaction practices?*

Besides developing the learners' linguistic knowledge, I also wanted to know how L2 users can be prepared to interact in target-language situations. I was interested in knowing whether L2 users should adhere to TL norms or possibly pursue another way of interacting. Adherence to norms implies the subservience to second-language patterns and practices.

5. *Should L2 users be 'taught' to be impolite in a second language?*

I was also interested in knowing whether learners should sometimes be given the necessary knowledge and means to choose not to conform to TL norms. Therefore, my final question examined whether second language users should be given the means to assert themselves in impolite ways.

Locating the Research

This research focuses on the two universities in Guadalajara which currently offer a BA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL): *Universidad de Guadalajara* (U de G) which offers an eight-semester programme and *Universidad del Valle de Atemajac* (UNIVA) which runs a modular nine-quarter programme. The U de G's BA in TEFL has approximately 90 students with a staff of 15 teachers; the UNIVA programme has 15 students and five teachers. Both programmes prepare teachers to work in universities, high schools, middle schools as well as in private language institutions.

Methodology

In this research project, I am interested in identifying teacher trainer and student teacher attitudes rather than describing actual practices. Therefore, I decided to examine interpersonal language use through the use of questionnaires. As Scott & Usher (1999: 67) argue, questionnaires aim to provide researchers with a large sample of standardised information. Such information can be analysed for frequency counts or underlying relationships between the respondents' answers. However, this study is mainly a qualitative study where I am interested in examining and taking into consideration a range of responses rather than in trying to find an 'average' attitude.

However, a quantitative dimension to the study can be observed, as I analysed the results of 15 questionnaires given to the teacher trainers and 73 questionnaires to student teachers. I received back 14 questionnaires from teacher trainers and 45 from student teachers. All 14 teacher trainers had more than four years' experience teaching at the university level. Twelve of the teacher trainers were Mexican. Eleven held a BA in TEFL; and nine had an MA in TEFL. Of the 45 student teachers who responded, 37 were studying in the U de G (20 in their first semester and 17 in their third semester); and eight were studying at UNIVA.

Results

1. *Do teachers need to teach learners how to socialise in the L2?*

Teachers were divided as to whether second-language socialisation is about understanding L1 and L2 similarities, variations and differences, or whether it involves interacting in individual and personal ways. By comparison, more student teachers appeared to firmly believe that socialisation involves understanding similarities, variations and differences.

	1	**2**	**3**	**Other**
	Interpersonal language use comes through experience and practice	Interpersonal language use = understanding similarities, variations & differences	Interpersonal language use= interacting in individual & personal ways	Both 2 & 3
Teacher trainers	0	6	6	2
Student teachers	2	36	7	

2. *How should teachers approach the teaching of social language?*

When it comes to examining possible classroom approaches to promoting L2 socialisation, the teacher trainers' answers ranged across the three options: developing linguistic skills, developing communicative competence and offering creative and conventional choices. While student teachers' responses also reflected a wide range of answers, there was a notable preference for the need to develop communicative competence.

	Socialisation involves developing linguistic skills	Socialisation involves developing communicative competence	Socialisation involves offering creative & conventional choices
Teacher trainers	3	6	3
Student teachers	10	22	13

3. *Are even proficient L2 users at a possible conversational disadvantage when interacting in the target language?*

Teacher trainers once again offered a range of answers. By comparison, the student teachers' answers seemed to strongly/generally agree with the proposition.

	Strongly agree	Generally agree	Unsure	Generally disagree	Strongly disagree
Teacher trainers	1	6	3	4	1
Student teachers	3	23	9	7	3

4. *Should L2 users be taught to always conform to TL interaction practices?*

Teacher trainers tended to strongly agree or generally agree with the proposition. The student teachers' answers were mixed but tended to agree with the proposition. The significant number of 'unsure' answers from student teachers may indicate that they had pedagogical doubts or, perhaps, they had never seriously considered the issue.

	Strongly agree	Generally agree	Unsure	Generally disagree	Strongly disagree
Teacher trainers	3	4	3	1	1
Student teachers	2	18	10	8	6

5. *Should L2 users be 'taught' to be impolite in a second language?*

In the final question, both teacher trainers and teachers were completely divided as to whether language learners should be 'taught' to be impolite, if necessary, in the target language.

	Strongly agree	Generally agree	Unsure	Generally disagree	Strongly disagree
Teacher trainers	0	5	3	1	3
Student teachers	4	13	7	10	10

Discussion

The results of the questionnaire indicate that teacher trainers do not have a unified approach towards the teaching of interpersonal language use. An initial and summary reaction to the data suggests that there is a healthy diversity of opinions among teacher trainers and students. Both BA programmes appear to promote pedagogical plurality and accept different positions towards the 'teaching' of interpersonal language use.

A closer examination initially indicates that student teachers reflect a liberal position to language teaching. For instance, in the first question, 36 student teachers believe that socialisation involves understanding similarities, variations and differences. Such answers reflect the teaching of appropriateness, as student teachers believe language learners should seek accommodation in EFL use rather than look for their own ways of expressing themselves. In contrast, teacher trainer answers reveal a range of linguistic, liberal and critical positions to interpersonal language use.

The liberal position to L2 interpersonal language use, as suggested by the answers to question one, is not reflected to the same degree in the answers to question two. Student teachers' answers regarding how teachers should approach the teaching of social language also reflect both linguistic and critical positions that embrace developing linguistic skills, developing communicative competence and offering creative and conventional choices; a similar pattern of answers is reflected by the teacher trainers. Such a diversity of answers may suggest that some student teachers question the notion of communicative competence and seek out other ways to understand similarities, variations and differences between L1 and L2.

The need for a more critical position towards developing successful social relations appears to be reflected in the student teachers' answers to question three, as the responses raise the possibility that attaining communicative competence does not necessarily help L2 learners achieve successful social relations: 29 students strongly or generally agree that learners are at a disadvantage when conversing in the target language and that this disadvantage cannot be wholly accounted for in linguistic terms.

A possible need to adopt a more critical position also appears to be reflected in the answers to question four. L2 communicative competence involves accommodation and appropriateness; and the answers of the teacher trainers and student teachers suggest that they are not wholly convinced that language learners should be taught to conform to target language patterns and practices. Student teachers may be seeking another way to achieve successful socialisation in the target language.

With regard to the final question, there is a diversity of opinions about whether language learners should be 'taught' to be impolite in the target language, as the answers embrace linguistic, liberal and critical positions. Obviously, further research needs to consider in detail teacher trainers' and student teachers' understandings and perceptions of impoliteness. Nevertheless, teaching impoliteness sends a strong signal to language learners that they are not always expected to conform to second-language patterns and practices. The 5 teacher trainers who agree and 17 student teachers who strongly or generally agree that learners should be taught to be impolite appear to support the notion that language learners should be offered a wide variety of ways of interacting in the target language.

Conclusions

While the results of the questionnaire reflected a range of linguistic, liberal and critical positions, there was an underlining tendency to question existing positions towards the teaching of interpersonal language use: responses indicated that learners can be at a disadvantage when interacting in the target language and doubts were raised about the need for absolute conformity to TL patterns and practices. One conclusion from this study is that teacher trainers should reflect more closely on the effect of their teaching on their student teachers, given the wide divergence between teacher trainer and student teacher answers. More importantly, although student teacher responses indicate that they often see L2 socialisation in terms of understanding similarities, variations and differences, follow-up answers suggest that student teachers believe that second-language interpersonal language teaching needs to go beyond achieving communicative competence and conforming to target language patterns and practices. Student teachers are perhaps looking for their own way to promote L2 interpersonal language use -- one that examines similarities, variations and differences but also responds to the problems of language disadvantage and conformance to target language patterns. These tentative findings indicate that teacher trainers need to offer critical approaches towards promoting L2 socialisation rather than reproducing conventional models that emphasise accommodation and appropriateness.

Obviously further research needs to be carried out to define teacher trainers' and student teachers' understandings of linguistic, liberal and critical approaches to second-language use. Furthermore, I have not explored the teacher trainers' and the student teachers' understandings of the terms *communicative competence* and *appropriacy*. However, this paper has made an initial contribution by identifying the problem of promoting L2 interpersonal language use in the classroom. Furthermore, I believe that the research findings have implications for other areas of L2 teaching and learning where concepts of communicative competence and appropriacy may not be responding to Mexico's own second-language needs.

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Teachers as Ethnographers: Listening to Students' Voices for (Self) Development[10]

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Abstract

How can EFL teacher-researchers attain information about the lived experience of their students? Why is it important to 'listen' to what language learners have to say? How can we, as EFL teachers, use this information productively? Following the recent acceptance of and interest in the issue of 'voice' among qualitative researchers, in this paper I argue that 'voiced research' has the potential to provide access to a level of students' meaning seldom reached. The objective of this article is to set guidelines on how to approach research aimed at 'voicing' students insights on classroom practices. The implications of using such an approach to inform our teaching are outlined in this paper.

Voice in qualitative research

Voice in qualitative studies frequently captures the lived experience of people that otherwise could not be achieved and communicated through conventional means of research (Shacklock & Smyth 1997). *Voice* is a term used increasingly in qualitative research and critical theorising as a way of reminding us that social research deals with the lives of actual people. In current research, voice has taken the form of oral (hi)stories, anecdotes, (auto)biography, narrative studies and the like. However, traditional research remains faulty in that researchers investigate what *they* are interested in and what usually makes it way into final reports is the voice of the researcher providing his or her interpretation of the issues. Voiced research aims at countering this limitation. Researchers working under this methodology usually pay close attention to the voice of the researchees to investigate what is relevant to them; and researchers portray the researchees' own voices as faithfully as possible.

Some authors have commented on the need to develop a different kind of research imagination in order to obtain more grounded results (Holliday 1996, 2002; Smyth and Hattam 2001, Hart 1998, Klaus 2001). Smyth and Hatam assert: "[A] 'sociological imagination' is required. This implies research to be *more attentive to the life worlds of young people* … [and to be] *more flexible of its own agenda*" (2001:401; italics mine). In this regard, Kincheloe states:

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[10] This is a refereed article.

> *Central to this kind of research is an appreciation and a utilization of the students' perceptions of schooling … teachers must understand what is happening in the mind of their students.…*
> *Operating within this critical context, the teacher researcher studies students as if they were texts to be deciphered. The teacher researcher approaches them with an active imagination and a willingness to view students as socially constructed beings (2003: 136; citing Grady and Wells 1985; italics mine).*

Voiced research is a relatively new way of characterising the bringing to life of perspectives that would otherwise be excluded, muted, or silenced by dominant discourses. Numerous commentators have devoted time and effort to the discussion and dissemination of this particular approach to research (Stevenson and Ellseworth 1991; Herr and Anderson 1993, 1997; Lincoln 1995, Johnston and Nichols 1995, O'Loughlin 1995, Shacklock and Smyth 1997; Smyth 1998, 1999, 2000; Smyth and Hattam 2001; Hodkinson and Bloomer 2001; Krishnan and Hwee 2002). Voiced research starts from the position that interesting things can be said by groups who may actually be situated at some distance from the centres of power. Shacklock and Smyth (1997: 4) claim that "in the telling of stories of life, previously unheard, or silenced, voices open up the possibility for new, even radically different narrations of life experience". In this category we can place students, who seldom have a voice in school-related matters.

Voiced research is consistent with principles of critical theory which discuss concepts of empowerment, transformation, and emancipation from dominant forces of oppression (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, Hopkins 2002). Voiced research, as a form of critical theory, is expected to 'reveal hidden realities, to initiate discussion' (Holliday 2002:122). If the epistemology of voiced research is followed, "then interesting things can be garnered from groups who do not usually occupy the high moral, theoretical or epistemological ground" (Smyth and Hattam 2001: 406). The concept of 'voiced research' has been characterized as epistemologically committed to a democratic research agenda and so needs to be constructed in such a way that a "genuine space within which people are able to reveal what is real for them" is created (ibid: 407).

What is decided to be important enough to research can only really come from the person being researched. Research questions can only emerge out of "conversations with a purpose" (Burgess, 1988) since trust and rapport between the researcher and the researchees must be established. Similarly, Kincheloe recognizes the need for a more democratic research agenda "where the experience of the marginalized is viewed as an important way of seeing the socio-educational whole … [where] the voice of the subjugated [is used] to formulate a reconstruction of the dominant educational structure" (2003: 62). He also claims that

Our emancipation system of meaning will alert teachers to the need to cultivate and listen to the voices of students.… Teachers … will find the need to incorporate a variety of qualitative research strategies into their teaching repertoire … [so that they] can uncover those concealed social constructions that shape … the consciousness of students, teachers, administrators, and community members" (ibid: 56; italics mine).

One of the aspirations of voiced research is to provide a platform on which dominant discourses might be unmasked and shown as representing management regimes while silencing the voices of the true educational actors. The methodological challenge of educational research is to bring these voices to a centrefold position in order "to find ways to allow the smaller voices … to be heard" (Shacklock and Smyth 1997: 4). Voiced research is based on various assumptions:

1. Researchers must provide a genuine space within which researchees can *reveal what is real for them*.
2. Researchees may only 'open up' when a situation of mutual trust and rapport is established.
3. Research questions can only really emerge out of the informants' frame of reference, i.e. *what is worthwhile investigating resides within the research informant.*
4. Further research questions emerge out of the research encounter.
5. Findings are highly credible due to the time spent embedded in the lives, experiences and aspirations of those whose lives are portrayed.
6. Researchers and researchees' successive conversations result in *context-bound theorising*, which originates from a degree of sense making *in situ.*
7. The dialogic experience between researcher and researchees brings a certain degree of identity formation in both actors out of reach in current research.
8. Data is '*generated*' then and there on the spot, originated from the joint work of researcher and students through successive conversations (after Smyth 1998,1999).

This type of research is meant to inform and to be useful to people who are able to identify with the images, issues, messages, and the language depicted in the form of verbatim quotations. This is why, perhaps, a growing interest in the lives of students and their personal narratives have made their own space in research; the actual voices of those who have been previously represented have started to be heard.

Underlying principles

In order for participants to be able to reveal what is real for them, an investigation should be constructed in such a way that it allows informants to express themselves; this "requires methods that allow the researcher to capture language and behaviour" (Maykut and Morehouse 1994: 46). Two of the most suitable ways of generating data for this kind of study are therefore conversations and involvement. The use of qualitative interviewing[11] -- in the form of purposeful conversations -- instead of a more structured form of interview is advisable because "it is important to build into the normal patterns of interaction within the [researched] group, and probably getting better evidence as a result" (Drever 2003:16). It is important to talk to informants in order to generate data because in our field of expertise this is very natural. The justification for using this method of data collection is expressed by Drever: "[I]n the teaching profession, when you want to get information, canvass opinion or exchange ideas, the natural thing to do is to talk to people" (ibid: 1). Furthermore, qualitative interviewing allows the researcher to capture the students' language and behaviour, a way of articulating their worlds.

This comes from an ontological position in which people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions are meaningful properties of the social reality that research questions are designed to explore. We should start from the assumption that students and ex-students have important stories to tell about their experiences at school, about the school itself, and about the structures that foster or restrain learning. In addition, it should be kept in mind that "natural language is studied … often because it reveals something about the social situation in which talk takes place" (Brewer, 2000: 74). Such qualitative studies are described by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: 12) as "approaches that enable the researchers to learn at first hand, about the social world they are investigating by means of *involvement and participation* in that world through a focus on what individuals actors *say and do*" (italics mine).

Accordingly, I believe that in order to improve the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Mexico, we should pursue understanding from the learners' perspective, to make sense of what learning a foreign language *means* to them, *by capturing their voices*. Our role as teacher-researchers is primordial since "[the teacher] is the primary instrument of data collection and data analysis" (Merriam 2002: 5). Mason describes the qualitative researcher's role "as actively constructing knowledge about that world according to certain principles and using certain methods derived from, or which express, their epistemological position" (2002: 52). Denzin and Lincoln (2003: 64) state: "If the [research] question concerns the nature of the phenomenon, then the answer is best obtained using ethnography." I am not suggesting that we should all carry out ethnographies but rather that we should use ethnographic methods of data collection to find out *emic* interpretations of the phenomenon under investigation.

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[11] Unless otherwise stated, I will use the term 'interview' in the sense of 'conversations with a purpose'.

Data generation for this type of study is usually multi-method in focus. This approach to qualitative research "reflects and attempts to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 8). A researcher may obtain a rich, in-depth description of the phenomenon by using a "combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study" (ibid). As you may perceive, this is not a simple mission. However, there are some points in our favour, as I will now discuss.

EFL teacher-researcher: developing an 'ethnographic imagination.'

Verma and Mallick (1999:184) state that "anyone who has qualified as a teacher … is perfectly capable of being a member of an action research team and making real contributions to the teaching-leaning process." We are in a privileged situation to carry out research of the kind described here. While researchers have to spend a lot of time trying to get 'familiar' with the setting, we already spend most of our time within it. It has been recognised that teachers are in an excellent position to investigate what happens inside schools and that what a teacher does in her professional daily life is very similar to what a researcher aims to do (Nolla 1997, Woods 1998, Holliday 2002, Verma and Mallick 1999, Hopkins 2002). In particular, Nolla states:

> In teaching practice, teachers are able to use ethnographic methods since they interact with their students and become outstanding observers and interviewers; their job allows them to be part of the group, yet they maintain their teacher's role; all that is needed is some time to reflect and analyze so that the experience becomes a fruitful ethnographic work (1997: 108; my translation).

So, what do we need in order to make this transition from teacher to teacher-researcher? Verma and Mallick explain why we should aim at researching our own educational environment:

> The essentials of research are already in place [observation, application of questionnaires, interviews] and teachers are, in a general sense, already engaged in research. All that is required is a more rigorous approach to their existing activity and a system that

> ensures the results of their work are published for the benefit of their colleagues nationally" (1999: 184).

Further, Holliday expands on the advantages of researching our workplace by explaining that "we do not have to adopt a different role ... [but] just ... a more rigorous approach to collecting data"; that "we are already part of the setting, which allows liberty of movement within"; and that "our tasks and responsibilities as researchers are simply an expansion of our roles as teachers" in that "we are expected to examine and assess our student's behaviour" (2002: 26). However, Holliday warns: "Here, though, over-indulgence can be a problem. … To be able to examine the world of the participant the [researcher] must not take this world for granted, but must question his or her own assumptions and act like a stranger to the setting (ibid: 27).

Bassey highlights the advantages of being a 'reflective professional' over the 'expert professional': "[T]he *reflective professional* works with the client [students] in trying to make sense of the client's needs and shares knowledge as needed to try to *tackle the client's problems*. He or she has no need of a façade to express professionalism. It is obvious from the purposeful interaction with the client" (1992:1, italics added). As you can see, we teachers are in an advantageous position over academics since the information (knowledge) we generate is regarded as more meaningful and relevant to our teaching practice than that created by outsider researchers. In what follows, I will try to describe some guidelines for the generation of data.

Doing voiced research: some guidelines

Locating voices

It will be our task to adopt (and adapt!) our existing role as EFL teachers in order to research a familiar setting, which is the place where we work; Brewer (2000: 61) has classified this as 'pure observant participation.' Observations should account for both formal and informal events within everyday school life. At the beginning, this exploration would be very broad and guided by general questions such as *How do students behave during their first days/weeks of class?* or *How do students react to our speaking in English?*

Initially, observation notes would be descriptive, focusing on what is on the surface and what is visible such as the classroom, seating arrangement, students, activities, events and noticiable feelings. These notes should be taken and kept in notebooks during the period of observation. It is advisable to immediately type and save them on computer files to facilitate storage and later retrieval.

We should find interesting voices by taking advantage of the so-called 'communicative activities.' These provide excellent space for interacting with students and getting to know them. Find your informants, those students who seem to have something to say and always question, those who may be interesting cases.

Contacting voices

Once initial observations have thrown some light onto topics emanating from students, it is time to contact the students who seem knowledgeable and articulate: your *research informants*. The main aim of this initial interaction is to build mutual respect. Denzin and Lincoln (2003: 39-40) state that the researcher "must establish trust, rapport, and authentic communication patterns with participants." This is crucial in order to "capture the nuance and meaning of each participant's life from the participant's point of view" (ibid: 40). It may be necessary not only to make evident your concern to improve the learning environment of your students but also to mention your interest in capturing their voices.

If you implement the right type of activities and show a genuine interest in your students' lives, they may soon perceive you as a reasonable, straightforward and caring teacher (which I am sure you are!). You have to be ready to open up to them if you expect them to do the same for you. Fear nothing; this is a win-win situation. As Lincoln says, "… listening to student voices can help us find our own" (1995: 88). In the same tenor, Kincheloe believes that "not only do we learn about the educational world surrounding us, but we gain new insights into the private world within us -- the world of our constructed consciousness" (2003: 54).

In order to establish 'authentic communication patterns' with informants, you may want to adopt a 'casual conversation' style in order to carry out 'purposeful conversations.' Most conversations ideally should take place in informal settings: corridors, school square, school cafeteria, nearby cafes, and so on. Provide a genuine space within which students can talk about their issues and concerns, their dreams, aspirations and struggles. In order to accomplish this, base your initial conversations with informants on 'orienting' questions (Smyth and Hattam 2001: 409), such as the following:

Ex-students: Tell me what was going on in your life when you decided to stop studying English.

Students: Tell me what it is like to be a learner of English.

As an illustration of the type of responses obtained in my study on 'dropping out,' I will provide some of the issues brought up by informants when answering 'orienting' questions:

> D: In the teacher-student relationship there is a barrier, I believe that that barrier blocks [learning], it may be due to the number of students, the group, I don't know…
> O: So you say there is a 'wall'….
> D: Definitely, and this prevents learning to be complete, to be really good. (Dizzy; conversation)

One of the advantages of starting with 'orienting' questions is that you do not constrain your informants with pre-fabricated questions that may bias their answers. These questions also allow theorising *in situ* and the forming of 'grounded theory' (Strauss and Corbin 1998). By carefully listening to the informants' answers, you will discover the issues beginning to emerge. However, such a research interview strategy makes the task of categorizing data more demanding than with a detailed structure.

At this stage, your observation notes should come from more 'focused observation'; you should be able to disregard irrelevant things as observations gradually become more guided by the issues coming out of the conversations and/or the observations. Once you have identified these issues, you need to pursue them in following 'focused' conversations.

Capturing voices

Although the conversations become more focused, it is vital to continue using informal conversations, in order to explore the problem in depth. It may be tempting (and perhaps easier) to invite informants to your office, but you should bear in mind that changing the setting may influence their behaviour. It would be wiser to follow the initial forms of interaction.

This is the stage of the study that should provide maximum interaction between you and the researchees. The number of interviews (and interviewees) will depend largely on how much data you obtain from each and/or how deep you want to go into the issues that they bring up. At this stage, you should be in a position to ask more specific questions based on the issues mentioned by the particular informants, but you should not impose your research agenda on them. You may want to practice 'selective observation,' concentrating on the qualities of the activities mentioned by your students. For example, a student may talk bitterly about the type of relationship with their teachers, as illustrated below.

> I have had teachers who have this 'outside the classroom I don't give explanations, these are within lessons, outside, don't even speak to me' attitude. (Juana; conversation)

In this case, before you meet with the student again, you may want to observe classrooms with this sort of question in mind: *How are teacher-student relationships carried out in the classroom?*
Clarifying Voices

This last phase of the research needs to be used to clarify doubts or sound out hunches that emerged during the previous phase(s). In order to tie loose ends, you will have to ask selected informants to have another chat. This time ask specific questions on the issues from the previous conversations that need clarification. You may need to repeat this last stage until you feel you have covered all the angles of the issue under study. For instance, you may say, *You mentioned that teachers set a barrier between them and you. Can you tell me about a specific time in which this happened?* You may receive a response something similar to that of Rubi in one of my investigations:

> … and if you ask the first time and he makes faces at you, or explains unwillingly or mocks you, and he tells you 'What?! You don't know?!', then you don't trust him to ask again and then you say, 'You know what? I will never ask you again'. (Rubi; conversation)

What I have presented here is nothing but the ideas of an amateur researcher and should be taken as guidelines that you may find helpful in carrying out your own investigation. It is up to you to make the most out of them and use what you think would suit you best.

Conclusion

I now will highlight the implications of approaching research from this perspective. First of all, I am appealing to the professionalism of those of my colleagues who are commited to finding ways to improve their practice. Who could be better informed about our teaching practice than our own students? Why not ask them, then? By giving ourselves the chance to hear our students' voices, we may be establishing the grounds that could help us refine the parameters of professional judgement.

This could be our initial reaction to the inappropriateness of traditional research that permeates our field and that usually presents alien interpretations of what actually happens within *our* classrooms. Adopting this type of research approach might allow teachers to identify the unsuitability of adopted foreign teaching methodologies, leading towards a *more context-bound teaching*. I am aware that, in order to achieve this, the institutions that host our intellectual efforts should be open to changes and devoted to excellence.

If we truly want to provide our students with the most appropriate learning experience the very first thing to do is to develop a more context-bound methodology of teaching (Bax 2003, Tudor 2003, Senior 2002). This comprises several points:

1. We need to know our students' needs and fears. This could help us in anticipating methodological problems.
2. We must know our students' expectations of a language class: What do they expect to gain from it? What do they expect their role to be? Our role? We seem to take this issue for granted as if everybody behaved and learnt in the same way.
3. We need to involve learners in decision-making about existing course materials and learning activities. What sort of material and activities do they prefer?
4. We ought to incorporate student-generated activities/materials. Students will express their likes and preferred topics if we give them a fair chance.

This paper has presented an approach in researching language learning/teaching, that of voiced research. Using this kind of approach can help in building a better understanding of learners' insights on language learning, informing both teaching practice and decision-making at an institutional level. Thus, if we spend time in listening to and voicing what students' want to express, we could be in a better position to improve the learning environment in which we work.

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Teacher Educators and Pre-Service English Teachers Creating and Sharing Power Through Critical Dialogue in a Multilingual Setting[12]

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Abstract

This article reports on a qualitative project that explored how teacher educators and pre-service English language teachers applied critical pedagogy to their practices in order to create and share power. The context of the article is the multilingual and multicultural state of Oaxaca, Mexico. It draws from aspects of critical pedagogy, feminist theory and critical applied linguistics as its theoretical framework and offers insights into a critical dialogue as a way to become better language educators, learners, and researchers. The article highlights critical instances organized in four categories: native versus non-native speakers, authentic materials and textbooks, issues of bilingualism, and the participants' praxis. It is concluded that the role of language educators is essential in the construction of a more egalitarian society.

> "There is no change without dream, as there is no dream without hope" (Freire, 1994:91).

Introduction

In this article, we report on a project that focused on the exploration of how teacher educators and pre-service English language teachers applied critical pedagogy to their practices in order to create and share power. The article describes and analyzes a critical dialogue among four participants: two Oaxacan multilingual pre-service English teachers of Mixtec descent (Angélica and Heidi), a multilingual Oaxacan teacher educator (Mario) and a multilingual Russian-American applied linguist (Julia). As both the project participants and its authors, we chose to keep our real names and use first-person plural and singular as evidence of our agency. In what follows we hope to retain our four distinctive voices as we express the ideas and experiences that we co-created.

In our vision, we see teachers on all levels of the educational system engaging in critical analysis of their teaching practices and their effects on language attitudes, policies and community language use. It is our dream to see that multiculturalism and multilingualism are truly valued and appreciated not for profit or political advancement, but for the profound positive impact that they exude on people. In this article, we share our constant questioning as to the roles we should play as language educators positioned within the multicultural/multilingual context of the state of Oaxaca in Mexico. Our perspectives have been influenced and informed by critical/feminist pedagogues, critical applied linguistics as well as authors invested in social justice. This article describes our critical pedagogy and the power we created and shared during the five months we spent together in Oaxaca.

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[12] This is a refereed article.

We believe that our reflections of the encounters that we had are valid since Luke (2004) argues that "to be critical ... is a kind of distantiation that entails the capacity to watch oneself watching" (p.26). Action + reflection is also encouraged by Freire (1998). By drawing from our different perspectives and comparing our insights to those developed by critical theorists, we hope to improve our future teaching practices and work towards our vision of equality and social justice for all Oaxacans. We are aware that it is a long road, but we are already on it, had started to walk it and are building it as we move forward. We hope our lived experiences will help you walk and develop your own path as learners, teachers, and researchers.

To historically contextualize this writing piece, below is a "bird-eye" view of more than 500 years of "Mexican" history. Before the Spanish people came, the Mexican territory had been occupied by different civilizations such as the Toltecs, Mayans, Olmecs, Zapotecs, Mixtecs and others, each with their own distinct language and culture. The Aztecs, originally nomads from the North, came to the central part of Mexico (now Mexico City) and quickly became the rulers establishing a fierce empire that dominated all other groups in the region. For this reason, when the Spanish *conquistadores* invaded Mexico and fought the Aztecs, none of the subjugated groups came to their rescue. With the fall of the Aztec empire to the hands of Hernán Cortés and subsequent Spanish colonization of the region, a new language and religion were imposed on the Indigenous groups.

In 1821, Mexico won the "independence" fight, which was initiated by creoles (children of Spanish people born in Mexico who were not allowed to be part of the colonizing government) and *mestizos* (children born from the unions between Spanish and Indigenous people). Naturally, the real burden of war and ensuing social unrest lied on the shoulders of the Indigenous people. A new Mexico needed to be "unified"; hence, the "one nation, one language" policy came into place. The Spanish-speaking upper classes were not interested in learning Nahualt, Mayan or Mixtec. Instead, they insisted on granting their language, Spanish, the national status. The Indigenous people became more relegated in the society and were constantly persuaded by those in power (both the state and the Catholic Church) that if they were poor and discriminated against it was because God wanted it that way (heaven was certainly secured for them regardless!).

One hundred years later, the same Indigenous people fought in the Mexican Revolution against the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. When the autocracy was toppled, the constitution created to bring justice to all Mexican people was written in Spanish. Up to this date, more than twenty-five percent of the population in the state of Oaxaca cannot read the constitution, or for that matter any official documents or laws, all of which are written in Spanish. (López Gopar & Gunderson, in press). This constitution has been read, adjusted and manipulated by the leaders of the so-called democracy that kept the same party in power for more than seventy years and continued the oppression of the Indigenous people. Thus, for more than 500 years, Indigenous people of Mexico have been denied their rights and exploited by Spanish-speaking upper classes of creoles and *mestizos*.

Oaxaca, located in the southern part of the country, is the most linguistically and culturally diverse state of Mexico. Regrettably, many Mexicans from outside of Oaxaca as well as Oaxacan city dwellers regard this multilingualism not as the state's inherent richness but as a hindrance for Oaxacan development. A popular opinion is that it is the people from the *pueblos* (towns) with their "weird" languages, customs and ignorance that kept the same party in power and made Oaxaca the poorest state in the country with the second lowest illiteracy rate. Nonetheless, the government and the tourism industry have used the colors, flavors, and traditions created by the Indigenous people in an effort to make profit by attracting more tourists. Because of tourism, English has become part of Oaxacan linguistic repertoire sharing common grounds with Spanish and numerous language varieties of at least twelve Indigenous tongues. Interestingly, it is the learning and teaching of the English language that brought the four authors of this article together to the *Facultad de Idiomas* (Department of Languages) of the University of Oaxaca.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy has been associated with the work and ideas of several authors in Europe, North and South America. (See Kincheloe, 2005 and Wink, 2005 for a detailed description of these authors and schools). Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, has been the most influential practitioner and considered by many the father of critical pedagogy. "Freire's legacy is unprecedented for an educator: None other has influenced practice in such a wide array of contexts and cultures, or helped to enable so many of the world's disempowered turn education toward their own dreams" (Glass, 2001:15).

As language educators interested in critical pedagogy, what can we learn from Freire? Our first lesson is that critical pedagogy is not a method. It is a state of mind; a way of teaching that sees in each and every student the potential to learn, but, most importantly, the potential to teach something. Using her daughter's words in a conference in Seattle, Alma Flor Ada (1998; as cited in Wink, 2005: 108) said that "the only way to do [critical pedagogy] is to deeply, deeply believe in the learner." In other words, critical pedagogy is teachers and students working together to change their lives and transform the world into a better and more beautiful place.

Using Marxism as his starting point, Freire (1998) worked on the notions of oppressor and oppressed from the perspective of social classes. Weiler (1991), a feminist educator, rightly criticized Friere and pointed out that class distinction is not the only example of the dichotomy of the oppressor and oppressed and that we can be oppressed in certain situations and still be oppressors in others. For instance, a man can be oppressed at his job, but he may come home being a *macho*, beat his wife, quickly morphing into an oppressor. Therefore, a constant reexamination of our daily practices is needed to ensure that we are critical of ourselves and that our behavior does not have a detrimental oppressive effect on the lives of others.

Freire (1998) believed that teachers have the potential to make a difference in the fight against all types of oppression. He mentioned that if we take a passive role, we are accomplices of oppression. Do Freire's ideas translate to Mexico, or, in other words, is there oppression in Mexico? In our opinion, the answer is a definite 'yes' and examples are easy to find. One that comes quickly to mind is the unfair treatment of the Indigenous people. The other one is related to English: McDonald's, KFC, Pizza Hut, and many other fast food restaurants in Mexico charging exactly the same price for their products as they do in the United States, but only paying their Mexican employees a tenth of what they pay to their U.S. employees. And yet, we happily teach our students how to order a "Big Mac" because the textbook, usually created in the States and Great Britain, postulates that it is an important topic and useful vocabulary every English language learner should know. By simply teaching fast-food-restaurant vocabulary and never talking about what these companies do to Mexican people who work there and to local restaurants, which cannot compete with multibillion-dollar corporations, we become agents of the oppressive system perspicuously described by Freire.

Critical pedagogues such as Freire (1998), Giroux (1988), and McLaren (1989) have been criticized by feminist theorists (Ellsworth, 1989 and Yates, 1992) and applied linguists (Crookes & Lehner, 1998; Johnston, 1999; Lin, 2004). These researchers criticize the critical pedagogues for their complex writing; for making the ideas of critical pedagogy too abstract, too theoretical and inaccessible to teachers and students; for not giving examples as to how critical pedagogy works in the classroom; for following modernist rationalism; and for constructing a master narrative from a male perspective. However, Weiler (1991) argues that feminist pedagogy and critical pedagogy are quite similar, stating:

> Both feminist pedagogy as it is usually defined and Freiren pedagogy rest upon visions of social transformation; underlying both are certain common assumptions concerning oppression, consciousness, and historical change. Both pedagogies assert the existence of oppression in people's material conditions of existence and as a part of consciousness; both rest on a view of consciousness as more than a sum of dominating discourses, but as containing within it a critical capacity -- what Antonio Gramsci called "good sense"; and both thus see human beings as subjects and actors in history and hold a strong commitment to justice and a vision of a better world and of the potential for liberation (p.450).

In order to emphasize the aspect of transformation and social justice inherent in critical pedagogy, several critical authors have "reinvented" critical pedagogy as Freire suggested, naming it "a pedagogy of love" (Darder, 2002), "transformative education" (Ada & Campoy, 2003), "transformative pedagogy" (Cummins, 2000), and "revolutionary pedagogies" (Trifonas, 2000). The concept of dialogue is crucial in all these pedagogies.

Dialogue

Freire (1998) noticed that in traditional education, learners were regarded as empty vessels in which teachers could *deposit* knowledge; therefore, calling this banking education. The teacher was the active one while the student waited to be filled with facts or truths. The learner in this type of education played a passive role. Freire believed that students were treated like *objects* and that it was important for them to become *subjects* to be part of a *dialogical action* with the teacher, thus becoming the antithesis of banking education. The teacher and students would then construct knowledge together and learn from each other as they move towards their constant liberation.

Freire (1998b) states that there are certain requirements for dialogue to take place. Dialogue cannot occur if people (teachers) place themselves above others (students), believing they are the owners of truth. This is similar to what Gabriel García Márquez (2002) said in his last letter to the public: "Un hombre solo tiene derecho de mirar a otro hacia abajo, cuando ha de ayudarle a levantarse" (a man has the right to look down on another, only if it is to give him a hand to bring him up). Dialogue, Freire added, requires "an intense faith in humankind, faith in the power to make and remake, to create and recreate, faith in their vocation to be more fully human" (p. 71). Furthermore, he asserted that "without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education" (pp. 73-74).

Macedo (1997) and Freire and Macedo (1999) responded to the teachers who interpreted their role in the dialogical model as being a facilitator who is there to *converse* with students, rather than being a teacher. Freire decisively argued that he considered himself "a teacher and always a teacher" (Freire & Macedo, 1999: 46). In other words, teachers should not give up "teaching" or providing students with knowledge. However, "facts" should be presented as someone's perspective and not as the absolute truth. It is also the teacher's job to help students make connections between the learner's life and the new knowledge. By doing this, teachers will help students not only to construct new knowledge, but also to engage in their own learning, which consequently may help students gain a more powerful identity. Freire and Macedo (1999) emphasized that dialogue should be always grounded in *praxis* (action + reflection working towards the transformation of the world into a better place). Dialogue without aiming to transform is simply a sterile *conversation*.

Some educators who have adopted Freire's dialogical action suffer from the savior complex, naively hoping to deliver liberation to their students, thus instantly empowering them. This notion is highly problematic, as empowerment should not come *from* the teacher *to* the student. Indeed, this false interpretation, no matter how well intentioned it is, propagates further oppression and takes away agency from the students, again making them into passive recipients of whatever their teachers have to offer them. Cummins (1996) defines empowerment as "the collaborative creation of power, where power is created in the relationship and shared among participants" (p. 16), as opposed to coercive relations of power which refer "to the exercise of power by a dominant group (or individual or country) to the detriment of a subordinated group (or individual or country)" (p. 14). In our approach to critical pedagogy, we adopt this notion of empowerment since it builds on student's and teacher's identities and confidence to succeed, resist and transform oppressive situations.

It is important to recognize that the word "dialogue" is used and manipulated by different groups such as politicians, corporations and diplomats. Burbules (2000) cautioned us not to be naive enough to believe that in every dialogue, participants see each other as equal and worthy of being listened to. He also criticized Freire because his take on dialogue was too idealistic and unproblematized. He argued that:

> The crucial shift in perspective outlined here is from a prescriptive model of dialogue as a neutral communicative process, a procedure in which all participants are treated equally, concerned only with the search for knowledge, understanding, and perhaps agreement, to dialogue as a situated practice, one implicated by the particulars of who, when, where, and how the dialogue takes place (p. 261).

Critical Applied Linguistics and Critical Pedagogies in Language Learning

The previous section focused on critical pedagogy in education in general; in the following section we discuss how critical pedagogy relates to applied linguistics, specifically to Teaching English as a Second or as Foreign Language (TESL/EFL). Typically, language teachers consider themselves on the periphery of the educational system in general. In other words, we just teach language, but we do not "educate" people. "ESL/EFL teachers commonly see themselves as contributing to general welfare simply by helping people to communicate with other people" (Crookes & Lehner, 1998: 320). Consequently, researchers, language policy makers, textbook and curriculum designers have seen our area as unproblematic or *color de rosa*, focusing only on mastering the sounds, syntax, and lexicon of the English language. That has kept us away from mainstream teachers and their concerns with politics and pedagogies such as the critical one we have been referring to. Such is the distance between ESL/EFL and mainstream teachers, that the Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) has little to do with Bilingual Education Organizations, even though both organizations clearly have been developing second language education as one of their goals.

It is inaccurate to say that there have been no ESL/EFL teachers who have been incorporating elements of critical pedagogy into their teaching practices. In 1978, Crawford (as cited in Crookes & Lehner, 1998) attempted in his doctoral dissertation to connect Freire's ideas to second language curriculum design and proposed twenty critical pedagogy principles relevant to ESL/EFL (see Crookes & Lehner, 1998, for ten examples). Auerbach (1986) noticed that although ESL teachers were teaching students how to follow orders in low paying jobs, they were not questioning the nature of those jobs. Graman (1988) also criticized adult ESL classes and argued that the instruction, which focused exclusively on linguistic aspects and was not tied to students' lives, was irrelevant to students and did not engage them. He proposed Freire's "generative themes" as a way to develop a curriculum that was challenging, relevant and humanizing. Although these articles were published in major professional journals, regrettably, they did not have a major impact on the field of applied linguistics and TESL/TEFL.

In 1992, Phillipson published his book *Linguistic Imperialism* arguing that English had been spread for economic and political purposes and posed a major threat to other languages, thus incriminating our *color-de-rosa* profession. In the late nineties, critical pedagogy again gained momentum with a special edition of The TESOL Quarterly entitled *Critical Approaches to TESOL* edited by Pennycook (1999). He wrote in the editor's note: "The variety of papers attests to the profession growing interest in the application of critical theory in ESOL teaching and research" (p.325). In 2001, Pennycook elaborated more on his term "critical applied linguistics," stating that critical applied linguistics "is more that just a critical dimension added on to applied linguistics" (p. 10). He also said that "it involves a constant skepticism, a constant questioning of the normative assumptions of applied linguistics. It demands a restive problematization of the givens of applied linguistics that seeks to connect it to questions of gender, class, sexuality, race, ethnicity, culture, identity, politics, ideology and discourse" (ibid). Pennycook went on to say that critical applied linguistics was not completely welcomed by some applied linguists who even called it "hypocritical applied linguistics" while others demanded "objective applied linguistics."

Subsequently, many ESL/EFL teachers needed to know how critical pedagogy or critical applied linguistics could be applied to their classroom practices. For example, Ewald (1999) demanded reports on its classroom application. More recently, Norton and Toohey (2004) edited a book called *Critical Pedagogies and Language Learning*. They started by saying that "advocates of critical approaches to second language teaching are interested in relationships between language learning and social change" (p. 1). Norton and Toohey introduced the term *critical pedagogies* in order to "describe *local* situations, problems, and issues, and see responsiveness to the particularities ... [and to] resist totalizing discourses about critical teaching, subjects, and strategies for progressive action" [emphasis in original] (p. 2). Canagarah's (1999) book *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching* is another exemplary work in the way language educators and students exert their agency to resist those totalizing discourses. Finally, Morgan's work (1997, 1998, 2004) shows how ESL classes, developed around community concerns, can still teach grammar and intonation aspects critically. In this article, we attempt to describe "our critical pedagogy" with its struggles, tensions, achievements, and challenges. In order to do so, we have to situate our dialogue in space, time and methods.

Situating the Dialogue

Where?

The Department of Languages of the University of Oaxaca opened in 1974 and provides language instruction in English, French, Italian, Japanese, German, and most recently Zapotec. To respond to the increasing demand for English teachers in the state of Oaxaca, in 1992, the Department first offered the B.A. Degree Program in TESL. In Oaxaca, as in most states in Mexico, proficiency in English has become a must-have skill, often required for many jobs related to tourism and international business, for educational purposes and as one of the prerequisites for many scholarships. All over the state, there are many private English language schools and institutes offering instruction in English. Many private pre-schools and elementary schools use English classes to attract more students (English instruction begins in public institutions at the level of junior-high school).

Who?

Heidi and Angélica are students in the B.A. TESL Program, currently in their 7th semester (5th semester at the time of the dialogue). It is important to note that both Heidi and Angélica come from the same town, Tlaxiaco; both attended the same regional high school; both have Mixtec-speaking parents; both have chosen English as their career; and both have had experience teaching English in small local communities. At the same time, although both of them feel very close to the Mixtec culture, Angélica is a much more proficient speaker of Mixtec. Angélica wrote, "I am proud of myself because I can speak Mixteco and Spanish as well. When people ask me this question: 'What language do you feel as a native speaker?' and I reply 'I don't know. I think I am bilingual"[13]. Heidi, who lost most of her Mixtec, is eager to revive her language skills. When asked to describe herself, Heidi wrote:

> For me it's very difficult to say who I am. I think in Mexican culture, women are always called as the daughter of, the girlfriend of, the wife of, the mother of, so and on. I am against that because I think that every woman has to be called by her name and not as the "wife of". For me it sounds she is a part of a decoration and I don't like that. When you asked to define who I am, the first thing I said was "I am Heidi".

Julia is a multilingual TESL educator at Bridgewater State College in Boston, USA. She is originally from Russia and came to the United States ten years ago to attend graduate school. When we first started communicating via email, she wrote: " I am interested to see how individuals negotiate their identities through different languages available to them and how communities in Oaxaca respond to the dangers of linguistic imperialism and develop political strategies to maintain their language and culture." We started collaborating in June 2005.

Mario is a multilingual language educator originally from Oaxaca. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. His main interest is to collaborate with teachers in order to find ways to critically teach English and Spanish, preserve Indigenous languages, and meet the educational and linguistic needs of all Oaxacan people, especially that of Indigenous groups. This is especially difficult in Oaxaca with its complex post-colonial sociolinguistic context that is being rapidly changed by widespread language loss among the Indigenous population, long-established dominance of Spanish and an advent of English.

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13 To preserve the authenticity of our voices, we have kept the grammar, spelling, and punctuation as they were in the essays, journals and conversation exchanges between the participants.

When?

During his first academic term in the B.A. Program, Mario was asked to teach four classes: Grammar Teaching, English V, Teaching English to Children, and Teaching English through Literature. The last two courses were electives for which Mario was asked to design a syllabus. Heidi and Angélica were Mario's students in the last three classes.

The English V class was an advanced English course in which students practiced the four language skills while using authentic materials. In addition, the course allowed students to use English to discuss academic matters. Since students are required to pass the TOEFL exam with at least 500 points, this course was a preparation for this exam as well.

Teaching English to Children was an introductory and practical course. This was a very-much needed course since there are many job opportunities to teach children in private institutions. The course focused on linguistic, social and cognitive development in childhood. Classroom management techniques and strategies such as using songs, drama, children's literature, and games were also demonstrated. Finally, topics related to literacy development and the use of thematic units were discussed.

Teaching English through Literature was a reader's workshop where students were introduced to children's literature and read different authors and genres. The importance of reading to build one's vocabulary, the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Theory put forth by Cummins (2000) and his idea that concepts and skills transfer from one language to another were emphasized. The class also debated such notions as "Mexicans do not read" and many other ideas commonly held both by general public and teachers.

These courses were not designed to follow critical pedagogy as a method. Instead, during the progression of these courses Mario established a dialogue with his students and shared his constant questioning of the profession while listening to students' perspectives.

How?

The dialogue that we engaged in took different forms, but most of our sessions happened during regular classes. Mario kept a journal about "critical moments" (Pennycook, 2004) that happened in class and resulted in new insights and understandings. As part of their English class assignments, Heidi and Angélica wrote several essays, many of which were autobiographical in nature and discussed their language learning experiences, practices, and aspirations for the future.

During her two-month stay in Oaxaca, Julia kept a researcher's diary, in which she recorded her personal observations of our sessions. In addition, Julia and Mario had several private conferences with Heidi and Angélica, where they facilitated a deeper understanding of their backgrounds, current perspectives and language practices, both present and past. We also discussed topics regarding the status of Mixtec, Spanish and English in Oaxaca. As their university instructor, Mario wanted to find out more about the impact that his conscious and unconscious messages as well as the teaching of other educators from the Department had on Heidi and Angélica's perspectives on language, identity and their future task of teaching English. Finally, Mario and Julia spent several afternoons throwing ideas back and forth about the role of the TESL teacher as a critical educator in the context of Mexico. Our conversations were geared toward the analysis of Mario's experiences and practices. We also discussed the role of the researcher in post-colonial multilingual contexts and agreed that we should be always mindful of our actions and the impact that our intervention might have on the community. Mario and Julia concurred that our motivation for this project was to encourage social and educational change that would prize multiculturalism and preserve linguistic diversity.

Discussion about Critical Moments

Instead of reporting chronologically, in this article we highlight critical instances that we found relevant for us and that we believe may be relevant for English teachers in Mexico as well as in other countries. These critical moments are organized in four broad categories: the first one dealing with the issues regarding native versus non-native speakers; the second one relating to authentic materials and textbooks; the third one addressing issues of bilingualism; and the fourth one describing Heidi and Angélica's reflections and future action, their praxis.

The Native Speaker Ghost

Before starting the B.A. in TESL at the University of Oaxaca, Mario had lived in the United States for two years; he had gone to that country in the same way that many Mexicans do and with the same purpose: to make money and to learn English. Even though his command of English grammar was good, and he was getting excellent grades in grammar courses, Mario felt that there was a constant reminder of him being an outsider, a Mexican with broken English. Loosing his Mexican accent and sounding like a "native speaker" was his goal in order to be accepted by the mainstream group. After completing his B.A., Mario went to Canada to pursue graduates studies. Later on, he went back to the United States to work in bilingual schools. He had succeeded academically and professionally, but his Mexican accent had remained, and he was still regarded as "a non-native speaker."

Upon his return to Oaxaca, Mario joined the Department of Languages from which he had previously graduated. Many of his teachers and some of his classmates who also became faculty knew him, but the students did not. As a new teacher, he heard terrifying stories about the students being critical and suspicious of non-native speaking Mexican teachers like himself. The teachers' professional knowledge was constantly monitored: any spelling mistakes, mispronunciation, or unknown words would constitute sufficient proof that the teacher was no good.

Upon entering his classes, Mario felt insecure and wanted his students to know him so that he could gain credibility. As he later explained, "I did not want my students to know me personally, rather subtlety, I wanted them to know that I had lived in the States, that I had completed a diploma program, a master's degree in Canada and a teaching license program in the States, and that I had taught in both of these countries. That would certainly give me the 'right to speak' (Norton, 1997) and prove my legitimacy." Mario noted that this experience reminded him about something one of his American friends told him when Mario first arrived in Oregon to teach at a bilingual school: "I am glad John put that University of Oregon sticker on your car, so that people will know that you are educated and not just any Mexican." Although at the time Mario found that comment extremely insulting, he was doing exactly the same thing in his own classroom: "Not in words, but in actions I had told my students, 'Listen, guys, I am not just any Mexican. I am a Mexican who had lived, worked and been educated in *English speaking countries*'." This insight prompted Mario to critically ask himself what message he was sending to the students by trying to reposition himself as a "legitimate speaker" (Bourdieu, 1991).

As if in response to her teacher's inner query, Angélica commented in an interview: "[I am bilingual] in Mixteco and Spanish because I still do not consider myself bilingual in English because I just know a little bit.... Maybe if I learn more English I will take it into account." On a different occasion, she commented: "It is my dream to get a scholarship to study in the States or Canada. I want to be in the community where people speak the language that I am learning. That way I can learn faster. Now I have some knowledge, but I would like to improve it." In her study of similar attitudes among pre-service English language teachers, Pavlenko (2003) showed that the exposure to the ideas of multicompetence had a healing effect on how teachers construed themselves, eventually leading them to a more positive self-positioning as competent bilingual educators. On that account, Mario made a note in his journal: "Even though I shared this idea with my students later in the courses, my 'deed' had sent a stronger message to Angélica."

Heidi, on the other hand, had a different perspective on the issue. She wrote: "I am a native Spanish speaker learning English. So I am bilingual, but in the future I am going to be multilingual because I want to learn Mixtec. I see English as a tool that is going to give opportunities." In the Teaching English to Children class, Heidi emphatically defended non-native speakers as better language teachers. She had conducted a mini-research among Mexican students and had found that beginning students preferred non-native speakers. Again, "lived experience" had gone a longer way than classroom rhetoric.

According to Pavlenko (2003), the non-native versus native speaker dichotomy and the ghost of "the naturally competent native speaker" will be preserved as long as we continue using these terms. This dichotomy stills exists and negatively impacts the life of thousands of language teachers around the world (see the TESOL Position Statement: *Against Discrimination of Nonnative Speakers of English in the Field of TESOL,* TESOL Board of Directors, 2006). If we intend to stop this discrimination, it is time for us as educators to convey to our students a message that second language learners and teachers are not second-rate language users, but are multicompetent bilingual speakers who have varying degrees of command of their languages. Kathy Escamilla, a bilingual educator, wisely put it in a workshop in Oregon: "If you ask me to rate my English in a scale from zero to ten, I would give myself an eight because I am not Shakespeare. I would give myself a five in Spanish because "el subjuntivo" is killing me (2002). According to my mathematical knowledge, eight plus five equals thirteen."

Authentic Materials and English Textbooks: Effective or Discriminating Tools in Mexico?

In most of the TESL literature, authentic and colorful materials are recommended as effective tools to teach the language. In both the Teaching English to Children and Teaching English through Literature courses, we discussed the importance of critical analysis when selecting and using these materials.

Mario argued elsewhere (López Gopar, 2005) that many textbooks do not reflect the lives of Mexican students. In fact, they are discriminatory. After a quick analysis of a grammar lesson on the teaching of the uses of *can*, in different textbooks, he found that many of the exercises and suggested vocabulary might make students feel inadequate, inferior and lacking in skills. For instance, many textbooks included examples such as, Can you play the piano? Can you play tennis? Can you ski? Can you speak French? Can you use a computer? A student from a small community may not be able to do any of these things. They can do many, many other things, but American and British textbooks do not take into consideration their abilities.

Angélica reflected on this issue and shared her strategy of dealing with this lack of appreciation for local cultures and realities:

> Last week I needed to teach about food in my class. Most of my students have never come to the city. I checked some of materials I wanted to use, but most of the vocabulary included hamburger, pizza, hot dog, etc. There were many items that would not be

> relevant to my students. That is why I decided to develop my own materials and teach vocabulary like 'beans, tortillas, tamales, eggs, etc”. I also would like my students to feel good and proud of the things their parents feed them.

It is important to note another aspect of the practice regarding authentic materials that Mario developed in his courses and we discussed during our dialogic sessions. As part of the English V course, students wanted to practice their listening skills and expand their vocabulary. Mario decided to recommend the sitcom *Friends* since he owned a DVD with one of the seasons of this show. As an ESL teacher, this is how he defended his rationale for selecting this material: “This sitcom provided 'authentic' language. The vocabulary, expressions, grammatical structures were contextualized. The speed of the speech was "real". It was short, funny, and engaging. We moved from the use to the non-use of closed captions, and from my explanations of the meaning of selected vocabulary to my students trying to figure out the meaning within the context of the episode.”

Understandably, the jokes that required a lot of contextual knowledge of the American culture presented the biggest challenge to the students. As an after thought, Mario noted the lack of critical practice in his teaching approach: “I never stopped and discussed the sociolinguistics aspects of a sitcom like *Friends* with my students. After watching this series, what were they leaving the classroom with? How did the lives, beliefs and values of the main characters compared to those of the students and Mexican people?” Clearly, we are not arguing for any specific values or beliefs to be superior to others. What we would like to emphasize is that teachers need to be aware that languages come with ways of thinking, perceptions of beauty, success, family values, education, and so on. It is important then to stop and reflect about what impact the cultural baggage in textbooks and authentic materials may have on our students' identities and expectations.

We need to critically analyze textbooks and materials that we import from English speaking countries. In some rare cases, the authors and researchers are arrogant and ethnocentric enough to think that their ideas and creations are applicable to every context. More often though, these materials and methods are designed by well-intentioned people. However, their lack of knowledge about the specifics of the contexts where their creations will be used, puts serious limitations on the applicability of their work. It is our responsibility then to critically analyze, selectively adapt and independently create textbooks, ancillary materials and methods that will effectively meet the needs of our students and the specifics of our teaching contexts.

Speaker Evolution: From "Anonymous Bilingual Speakers" to Multilingual Advocates for Indigenous Language Preservation

As we have previously stated, Oaxaca is the most multicultural/lingual state in Mexico. Many people speak languages other than Spanish. However, many Indigenous bilingual people are constantly made fun of by some Spanish-speaking monolingual speakers, especially when they make mistakes in Spanish. Most Indigenous people come from different *pueblos* (towns) around the city and various regions of the state, contributing to a commonplace distinction usually made between people from the city and people from *pueblos*. The term "*de pueblo*" has become synonymous of exotic, weird, inexplicable behavior and low-level of education. Heidi made the following comment on her studying in a small rural settlement and eventually coming to Tlaxiaco, a larger town, to study in the local high school:

> The friends I had were from the city and they had a different perspective about Mixtec speakers, they thought that they were just illiterate people who are not going to have anything in life. I think that because of the peer pressure I did not tell them that I understand a little bit of Mixtec. Maybe that's why I stopped learning Mixtec.

In one of the interviews, Angélica offered the following comment:

> Many people think that if you don't speak Spanish, you just live in a little town and that you do not have any studies. But if you speak both [Spanish and an Indigenous language], they think that you have studied something.... I have been in conversations where I can tell that they speak Mixteco because of the intonation, but I continue in Spanish because if I ask them if they speak Mixteco, many people deny it.

During the Teaching English to Children class we discussed how we could incorporate Indigenous languages and the critical perspective in our teaching to make English an additional resource available rather than a new colonizing language that attempts to replace Spanish and Indigenous languages. We discussed the importance of valuing all types of bilingualism. (At this time, Mario did not know whether or not some of his students spoke an Indigenous language.)

In Mario's English class, students also discussed topics regarding identity (Norton, 2000), legitimate speakers versus impostors (Bourdieu, 1991) and communities of practice (Lave and Wegner, 1991). At the beginning of the course, students had to talk about a random topic chosen from the "Tell Us About" board; some of the topics were: Tell us about a good book you have read; tell us about your first date; and tell us about your dreams and hopes.

During the conversation around these topics, Mario and his students learned a lot about each other. Later, the students suggested that they should present a topic of their choice. Mario supported this student-generated idea, and the experience paid off.

Angélica's presentation was about her Mixtec culture and language. Most students who were monolingual Spanish speakers were surprised. They had known Angélica for two years by then, but they did not know about Angélica’s bilingualism. Some of their comments were: “Wow, Angélica, you are multilingual”; “You speak three languages now!”; “I wish I could do that, too!” Heidi jumped in and mentioned that she could also understand some Mixtec and that she was planning to continue learning it. Angélica's multilingualism had finally given her “cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1991). It was no longer a language she had to deny.

Angélica's road has not been easy, and she has fought her own battles growing up as a bilingual person. In Tlaxiaco, Angélica felt ignored and outside of the mainstream group: “When I was in third grade in junior high school, one of my classmates asked me, 'were you here from first grade?' I thought: 'Oh, my God, nobody knows me or even noticed me [for two years]'.” She continued, “Language is not something that people talk about. Teachers and students do not ask whether or not you speak Mixteco or Spanish. It is an unspoken topic.” Angélica never found out whether even her best friends spoke Mixteco. “Nobody asked me either,” she added in our conversation.

Angélica has also experienced her siblings' rejection of Mixtec, but has become an advocate for the Mixtec language in her own family. She has been talking with them, hoping to explicate the importance and advantages of multilingualism.

One day I went to visit my sister who lives in Mexico City. I was teaching some Mixtec words to my niece who is four years old. My sister got mad at me and told me, “Don't teach her Mixteco because she is very young. If you want to teach something to her, you better teach her English.” I told her, “That is not a problem. Even if she is young, she can learn both languages.” I don't know why she does not want my niece to learn Mixteco. She says that maybe later she may teach her Mixteco, but for now she only wants to teach her Spanish. I am very, very sad because now young parents, they do not want to teach Mixteco to their children. They only want to teach them Spanish.

Angélica observed that one of the benefits of her being in the Department of Languages was that she was able to gain knowledge and develop appreciation of linguistic diversity, which made her feel proud of her own multilingualism and affiliation with the Mixtec language and culture. Moreover, she was aware of the struggle that many Indigenous university students go through when studying in other departments where linguistics is not part of the curriculum:

Studying here you know more about linguistics and if you speak any language, it is good for you. Now I feel proud I speak Mixteco, but when I was in high school, I used to deny I spoke Mixteco because if they say you speak Mixteco, people think that you don't know anything. They discriminated you. That is why I prefer to say I spoke only Spanish. This still happens to students who are in the university level here in Oaxaca in different faculties like accounting and architecture.

Angelica's presentation was a critical moment that changed our lives, especially Heidi's. It was also a way for Heidi to see that she could have someone she could relate to and that Mixtec was appreciated, at least in this community of practice. Both Heidi's father and mother spoke Mixtec and were Mixtec/Spanish bilingual teachers. In her essays, she wrote:
My grandma just spoke Mixteco but after she came to live to Tlaxiaco and she had to learn Spanish in order to survive in the city, sometimes we played that I taught her Spanish and she taught me Mixteco, but I forgot the words almost immediately because I did not practice them. It was because my father told me that mixteco wasn't going to be useful in my future (but he was wrong).

In the following essay, she explained how her perception regarding Mixtec started to change as a result of her interactions with people in the community:
In high school, I met my best friend Martha and her mom, they made that I realize about the importance of Mixtec, Martha's mother was working in a project trying to preserve the traditions and language of Mixtec culture, even she is not a Mixtec speaker she is very interested in it. Both of them and their whole family are very proud of being from Tlaxiaco, that's why I started to be more interested in the history of Tlaxiaco and Mixtec. My father gave a book about Tlaxiaco which was wrote by a "Tlaxiaqueno" and I look after it as my treasure.... Although I was trying to learn Mixtec, it was hard for me to speak it. In my house my mother did not want to speak Mixtec to me.

Heidi's perception of the Indigenous languages has been also changed as a result of her taking courses with several critical educators in the Department of Languages. In one conference Heidi commented, "Since I took Linguistics and 'Lenguaje, Cultura y Sociedad' class, I began to realize about the importance of Mixtec as a language and not as a 'dialect' as most people called it." In an essay she provided an account of her interaction with another language educator in the Department:

> Last week I wrote an essay about the importance of Mixtec for my academic language class; when my teacher gave it back he scolded me because I wrote "mixtec" instead of "Mixtec". He told me that if I was writing about as a language I should put more emphasis on the way I write it. I think he is right, I know that the way that I write it, is not going to make that people change their perspective about Mixtec as a dialect but it is a good beginning to give Mixtec

> more power, at least in a grammatical way. Now I feel that if I write "mixtec" I am not giving it importance. This fact reminds me about people feeling in a lower position when they say that they speak Mixtec. I remember when I lived in Yucuhiti and I asked to a child that I just met, "Do you speak Mixtec?", he said "yes" but with a very soft tone of voice as trying to hide it because it was bad.

As we continued our dialogue, Heidi became more aware of the impact that other people might have had on her self-positioning and language attitudes. Moreover, she began to question the validity of this outside influence. In her own words, she wanted now to feel "the push" to come from herself, "I would like people to feel proud of being from Tlaxiaco and about speaking Mixtec without other (as American) telling them to feel proud of this."

What does Heidi and Angélica's experience have to do with English teachers? First of all, by labeling us as English, ESL, EFL teachers, we are denying ourselves the role we could play as *language educators.* These two words, "language educators," are extremely important. Most of us have experienced how difficult it is to learn a new language, especially in adulthood. We have spent years and years trying to figure out how to learn and how to teach a second/foreign language, English in this case. Knowing that learning an additional language gives us more opportunities for social advancement and positively impacts our cognitive processes, we should start appreciating the linguistic and sociocultural richness that Indigenous bilingual speakers bring with them into our second/foreign language classrooms.

We can be true "educators" in our language classrooms if we discuss with our students about the linguistic diversity that Mexico has and provide opportunities to explore cultural and linguistic richness of various Indigenous groups. Without claiming the expert position on Indigenous cultures, we could position ourselves as advocates of linguistic diversity. Such an approach will allow us an incredible array of content topics to include in our language curriculum, making our language classes epicenters of social change. If we shy away from complex and often emotionally charged topics related to the Indigenous people's rights, languages and cultures, we will effectively ignore and exclude students like Angélica and Heidi and become participants in maintaining the status quo imposed by those in power. Moreover, we will communicate the inherent value of learning English, often at the expense of other 'less important, less powerful' languages.

By keeping silent on Indigenous issues we become quiet, yet willing, collaborators of the linguistic imperialism of the multinational corporations who would do anything to bond every person into a faceless consumer of generic products and services available in the global market via the English language medium. Thus, we believe that our English language teaching is by no means neutral. It can send powerful and hegemonic messages or can become a vehicle of change. The choice is ours to make.

Angélica's and Heidi's Praxis (Reflection + Action)

As we continued our dialogue, Angélica and Heidi were changing from being "anonymous bilinguals" to becoming competent multilingual speakers proud of their heritage. They now wanted to "act" on their environment in order to transform it into a more "beautiful" place where any language would be appreciated equally and where Indigenous children would not have to deny their bilingualism as a token of illiteracy.

Heidi continued analyzing her linguistic trajectory and had several open conversations with her family. These bittersweet exchanges allowed her to get a better understanding of why she never learned Mixtec and opened new opportunities for future learning:

> I was talking to my mother on Monday about why I did not learn Mixtec. She reminded me that it was my fault too because when she tried to talk to me in Mixtec I told her "Close your mouth, you look ugly talking to me in that way, you are making a strange noise." Now, I feel guilty and ashamed of this.... Talking to my mother I could realize that her perspective about Mixtec has changed; I told her about your research and the conferences that we have had. I thought that she was not going to give any importance to it, but instead of this she encouraged me to be more interested in it, and she promised to start teaching Mixtec to me during the next vacation.

Heidi would like to go beyond her family and share her love for Mixtec culture and language with other people. Moreover, she believes that she can make a difference in her original community by openly discussing challenges and rewards that Mixtec speakers have to face on a daily basis. In her view, an open dialogue within the community could have a healing effect on its members and their self-positioning, eliminating self-censuring and encouraging ethnic pride.
I would like that people feel proud of being from Tlaxiaco and about speaking Mixtec without other people (as Americans) telling them to feel proud of this. Most of people (and I too) do not appreciate what we have until we lose it, or we are abroad. I would like to learn more about my culture and about my languages (Spanish and Mixtec), and after share with other people. I think that the challenge for me it is going to convince or to persuade other people to change their perspective about Mixtec as a dialect.

Heidi also commented about a friend who speaks Mixtec and is interested in learning English:

> I would like to teach her English but at the same time make her conscious about the importance of Mixtec. I think that she sees

> herself as just Spanish [speaker] and I would like to let her know that she is a bilingual person who is going to learn English too. The problem is that I don't know how exactly I am going to do it, maybe I could tell her to make a trade of language and plan a meeting where I teach her English and she teaches me Mixtec, in this way we can learn from each other.

In addition to the English language courses, Angélica and Heidi were also taking a course in teaching Spanish. One of their assignments was to prepare a presentation about an aspect of Oaxacan culture. They decided to present about Tlaxiaco and the Mixtec language. Julia and Mario were lucky to attend this presentation. For the presentation, Angélica and Heidi wore traditional clothing from the Mixtec region. They talked proudly about Tlaxiaco in both Mixtec and Spanish, and brought bread, fruit and examples of handicrafts from the area to share with their classmates. At the end of the presentation during the question and answer period, Adriana, one of the students in the audience, revealed that her parents spoke Mixe, another Indigenous language from Oaxaca and that she could understand and speak some of it. She thanked Heidi and Angélica for speaking out on behalf of many anonymous bilingual Indigenous people out there.

Later Angélica and Heidi told us that they also gave this presentation to a group of American university students who were studying Spanish in the Department. This presentation was conducted in Mixtec, Spanish and English. Heidi and Angélica were using their multilingualism to share their culture and language with others. This is a clear example of the praxis that Freire (1998) described in his writing. Heidi and Angélica were not only conscious about their Mixtec culture and language, but were acting as cultural advocates, educating others about the cultural practices and values of their community.

Both Angélica and Heidi planned to go back to Tlaxiaco to teach English during the summer of 2005. As they explained, they wanted Mixtec children to learn English so they can tell the world about their hometown Tlaxiaco, about their families, about their customs and traditions. They wanted Mixtec children to feel good about their culture and hoped that English could become a venue for children to break the circle of silence and self-rejection. Angélica and Heidi developed the syllabus and even taught three initial classes in Tlaxiaco, but could not finish teaching the course because both of them were granted a scholarship to study for a semester in Mexico City. Today Angélica and Heidi are back in Oaxaca, applying their critical pedagogy at BIBLOCA, a non-profit multilingual children's library in a low-socio-economic neighborhood. (To learn more about this project, see López Gopar, 2006). They teach English and work on Spanish literacy with young children as part of their *servicio social* (community service).

Finally, Angélica shared with us her willingness to participate in the development of a grammar textbook for the Mixtec language. She said,

> Now, there is an organization that is trying to design a grammar textbook for Mixteco. I would like to see how they are designing the grammar approach because I think people who want to design it need to speak Mixteco to know how the language is actually used. You cannot design a grammar if you don't know how people actually speak.

Conclusion

This article attempted to show how the dialogue among Heidi, Angélica, Julia, and Mario contributed to our empowerment and praxis. Sometimes contradictory and emotionally charged, our dialogue was not limited or confined to the four of us but was linked to every single person, text, and experience we have encountered in our lives. Our involvement in this project helped us in different yet significant ways to become better teachers, researchers and language practitioners.

Through a critical analysis of his teaching, Mario was able to get rid of the native speaker ghost that had invaded his classroom and developed teaching strategies that took into consideration sociolinguistic histories and positioning of his students. Self-reflection and critical dialogue helped Angélica and Heidi to embrace their multilingualism and develop personal and teaching strategies that emphasized their Mixtec heritage and culture. As Julia developed a better understanding of the complexities and contradictions of the Oaxacan sociolinguistic context, she engaged in a critical dialogue with a Mexican English language educator and two pre-service teachers and was able to apply her professional expertise to support their critical exploration of self-positioning, linguistic practices, and family histories. Furthermore, the project had an impact on how the four of us interpreted critical pedagogy and reminded us of the importance of self-reflection and professional dialogue. Finally, through our collaborative work on this project, we wanted to emphasize that critical research should always strive for social justice and a better world for all.

Critical pedagogy has been often misunderstood as a liberating process of teachers empowering their students, the imprisoned, the disenfranchised. Such short-sighted top-down interpretation of critical pedagogy fails to see its reductionist effect: in this view, critical pedagogy is another version of the dominant-dominated paradigm that permanently strips away any personal agency from those on the fringes of the society. Friere (1998) emphatically argued that liberation and creation of power is not achieved individually, but collectively. Thus, listening and interacting with our students' voices is an essential component of critical pedagogy and critical applied linguistics (Diaz-Greenberger & Nevin, 2003; Nieto, 1994; Rymes, 2002). The transformation of our world is not complete without our voices, without our practice. Hence, we as educators play a major role, but not as liberators; rather we can provide a welcoming environment for our students to begin their critical exploration of the world, its practices, and their self-positioning within it.

We started this paper with a quote from Freire (1994) on the symbiotic relationship between dreams and hopes. Together with Freire, we believe that our ability to dream, to imagine the joys, the pains, the struggles, and the hopes of others is essential if we are to build a more egalitarian world. A person without imagination is also a person without sympathy and empathy, and without these qualities social justice is impossible. In this article, we have shared our reflections, our aspirations, and dreams as language teachers, learners, and researchers. We would like to end this article with a hope that our readers, too, will share their ideas with other people, thus building trust and appreciation for all.

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Can I Have a Voice in the Nation's Classroom?[14]

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I recently had breakfast with my father at the VIPs restaurant in the city of Oaxaca, where I live and work as an English teacher in the public state university. My father was visiting me from suburban Chicago. It was Saturday, his last day here. We were a little pressed for time. My father had a 9:50am flight; and I had to make it to my 11:00am Literature class with the students of the TEFL Saturday program, today "The Tyger" by William Blake (1794). "Give this boy anything but pork," my father told the waitress.

She put on a noble smile.

"No pork crap," my father said.

I asked for the American plate, as had my father, and to my surprise, I paused, pondering over a side of ham or bacon or nothing. Many years ago, as a first-year graduate student home for the summer, I had announced, probably at a Sunday family breakfast at Denny's, that after having read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X,* I would give up eating pork. This would be my personal gesture of moral support for the ideals of this Black Muslim leader who had been assassinated when I was in kindergarten. My father and mother had looked at me as I were the moon-man, but they congratulated me on my decisiveness. I had only mentioned my anti-pork pledge that one time. It had lasted for a couple of years. I was surprised my father remembered.

"Nothing. Pure eggs," I told the waitress.

"Side of steak for him," my father said.

She scribbled it down. She hurried off, practically running.

"It's all like yesterday," my father said.

The waitress thumped into the aluminum swinging doors to the kitchen area.

"She must have thought you were X-man," my father said.

She didn't come back. It was someone else, a young guy, and a short while later, as we sipped the last of our coffee, the tip on the table, Barney the purple dinosaur walked past. Barney waved both arms at us, his lime-green stomach jiggling, and then he went off jitterbugging between the tables, as we got up from ours and went to the cash register.

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[14] This is a refereed article.

I tried to pay the bill but my father waved his cane. When we got to the door, Barney was there, alone, staring out the smoked glass. I stepped forward, held open one of the glass panels for my father. As he went past me, he quickly turned and passed Barney 10 U.S. "You may get the person in trouble," I told my father. We paused on the sidewalk. He caught his breath, as we waited for the light to stop the traffic, so we could get across Juárez Avenue to my car. "That's probably a waiter or busboy in that costume," I said. "Maybe even our waitress."

"I wouldn't worry." The light changed. We started across. "He's got his back to the inside. He'll tuck the money into a seam," my father said. He walked, slowly, at my side. He used his cane. He's 87 years-old. He grew up in an orphanage in inner-city Chicago during the Depression Era. He got through World War II, through a civil service career in the U.S. government, through two mortgages on a suburban home for a family of seven, through his first two years as a widower, through his first month living alone in a one-bedroom apartment in a retirement complex. "That gal or guy," he said, "is just trying to stay ahead of the game."

I beeped the alarm, opened the passenger door. I helped my father in. We were off, the windows down. "Everyone deserves a break."

I didn't respond. But that was O.K. My father and I really don't talk all that much when we're together. We just hang out. We say the minimal; we use a lot of one-liners that don't invite a reply. It's a style we share.

I thought about the X-man. Back then, his autobiography had beckoned me forth. But as a white suburban kid, I wasn't going to run to the Chicago south side and stand in front of crack houses, bullhorn in hand, verbally harassing those entering and leaving; nor, as an Irish-American Catholic, was I going to drop to one knee and offer a steaming pot of coffee to the front doors of the neighborhood mosque that had been converted from a Hardee's burger restaurant. And X's white shirt, black tie, and Dick Tracy suit -- yeah, right. But giving up pork was something feasible. For X, it was the "first pre-Islamic submission," the strengthening of one's determination to avoid "injurious things like narcotics, tobacco, or liquor" which only served to keep "black men oppressed and deprived and ignorant, and unable to get decent jobs, turning them into criminals" (Malcolm X 1964: 156, 161, 169). I liked the loose logic of this anti-pork thing. It was goofy. But it spoke to me. A couple years later, I had forgotten my resolve against pork; or maybe it had dropped down to my subconscious, where it petrified into a Jungian symbol, some kind of chalk graffiti or stick-painting on the caveman's wall that, according to Jung, likes deep within us all.

That Jungian crap is pretty good, I thought, as my father and I sauntered in through the terminal doors, me carrying his two bags. I had forgotten about Carl Jung, too. In 1955, Jung introduced the collective subconscious in which all of humankind's meaningful values and experiences throughout time are recorded (Caparrós 1990). We all have it. We age and grey and stoop, but in our Being we never get old. We're perpetually pre-Plato; we're the latest rage. I looked at my father. He was way out of breath. "I think I'll need that chair," he said.

I asked an airline official. The guy said of course, but you should have arrived much earlier because passengers with wheel chair assistance need to board first. It was a polite scolding. The airline official then took my father's ticket and luggage to the counter. He came back with the flight documents. He explained that someone had left the airline's only wheel chair abandoned in the boarding area behind the security checkpoint on the other side of terminal. They couldn't push the chair out past the electronic screening device, so my father would have to walk there and then go on foot through the screening area to the wheel chair on the other side, and please hurry the best you can, hurry. Yeah, right.

We walked most of the way, then stopped. My father looked at me. He leaned forward, both hands on the rubberized handle of his cane. He smiled -- ironically, or dreamily, or nostalgically, I couldn't tell. "He'll get his," he said.

I thought that remark was funny. A security guard waved his walkie-talkie at us, motioning us around the side of the crowd. We stopped at the chrome tube barrier off to the left of the X-Ray belt. "He's just a guy in his job," I said.

"No. That damn dinosaur."

The airline official came in behind us. He took from my hands the two bags.

"That dino. He'll get his break."

The airline official escorted my father, as the security guard swung open the chrome tube. My father turned back. "You," he said. There were a lot of people. It was hard to hear. "You, give yourself a break," he said, a half-shout, as he was led off, the airline guy at his side, the security guard at point, clearing the way. "Give yourself a break," my father repeated, a half-shout, as he disappeared into the crowd. I really didn't know what he meant. But I appreciated it. I walked out the terminal doors, feeling the blacksmith's hammer clang the anvil in a lightyear fore or aft.

We all have like moments. They're brief spaces, voids in the continent, in which we posture ourselves, through a gesture. Nick Carroway, the narrator of

The Great Gatsby (1925)*,* visions human perfection as the sum total of one's best gestures, each retaining its uniqueness, all in a line of raw iron rectangles carefully arranged on an open field, we can imagine. Of his idol, Jay Gatsby, Nick says:

> If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensititvity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. (1925: 1).

Substitute the earthquake-watch center for the blacksmith's shop that forged the seams of the iron on the grass. We can then see the singularity of intent, and the nation beneath.

It was post-World War II America that defined my father and his gang from urban Chicago. They were wage earners by day, roughnecks and loiterers by night. The war had done more than awakening them to the abyss. They had come home to the same pile of crates in the warehouse, the same orange dusk on tar roofs, the same night brick chilled at their backs, as their hands spilled dice to the moon, the dice now small bits of white wonder floating to the boots of Greeks and Italians and Poles and naught merely and merrily and only the Irish as before. That was how they got over their horror in having had seen the beast in the mud at the bottom, and now up the sun, the dice rolling in the superintendant's broom, a gift to those who would yet stay behind, and they took one step over the curb, then stopped.

The light turned green. They braced themselves, while it all sped past, cars, they knew, but yet to them so many tin dogtags rattling in the jaws of black soot. They dusted their jackets with their hands, seeing, in the words of their homeboy, the urban novelist Nelson Algren, "the new word ... proudly traffic-borne on the sides of newspaper trucks racing from newsstand to newsstand assuring us of some vast difference between us and the rest" (1961: 89). They crossed the street to marriage and night school and the new suburbs, the noon-hour, and the yellow bulldozers left to rest halfway up the black dirt roads cut into brown corn fields, those fields having had been left to dry beyond harvest time, to make way for yet another nation, their nation, where they became the ever-softening wise guys.

They went out with their whole families on Sunday mornings to short-order restaurants, all chrome and formica and plate-glass, while back in the hood emerged Malcolm X. As the popular minister of the American-based *Nation* of Islam (careful), who would increase "the membership from 400 to 40,000" before his break from the Nation in 1964 and his assassination one year later (Haley 1965: 410), X screamed that the "white man's slave trade, and his subsequent devilish actions are *responsible* for not only the presence of this black man in America, but also for the *condition* in which we find this black man here" and that "it *is a miracle* that the American black people have remained a peaceful people, while catching all the centuries of hell" (Malcolm X 1964: 247, 266; italics in original text).

This was in all the newspapers. But the X-man was a nation away from my father and his gang, those guys steadily aging over the years, but always a good time at the table with the kids, and soon *aficionados* of the sparkling Denny's as of the 80's, their credo being it's all a long haul but don't think about it, just spread around your dumb luck. We're all working stiffs.

Even a busboy or waitress in Barney costume. Outside the terminal I walked along the sidewalk and then cut across the grass parkway to the chain-link fence. I looked through the fence at the Airbus 320 on the tarmac. There were still loading luggage, not yet people. The turbines whined. I had enough time to make it to my 11:00 class -- just one more worker on the continent. I guess. Am I not a " panther … an aristocrat in the animal kingdom?" (Handler 1965: ix). Am I not "potentially dangerous," with "the physical bearing and inner self-confidence" to climb up "from the lower depths?" (ibid: ix, xii). Hardly. That's X. And me? I'm just the super at the warehouse on Madison and Halsted, now on the sidewalk during the morning rush hour, sweeping you the dice. As Luke says, "Teaching remains about, within, and for the nation" (2004: 24).

This is the *nation* within. It's the grid of cement bars far below, some kind of giant tic-tac-toe game, silvery and gleaming, on the expanse of harvested fields, their furrows barren and black. It's Gatsby's mansion occupying the blue "corner of the peninsula" and "blazing with light" to the open sea ahead while darkened to the inland behind, but for the "thin elongating glints upon the roadside wires" that led to New York City with its "haunting lonliness" and "dark lanes" (Fitzgerald 1925: 38, 53). It's the café in Madrid, during the Spanish Civil War, at the time of Franco's seige on the city, in which the unnnamed old man of Hemingway's "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" seeks refuge every night at a table on the terrace, sitting "in the shadow the leaves of the tree made against the electric light" (1933: 13). Our *nation* can shift its dimensions as well as expand and reduce itself. The old man likes "to sit late because he was deaf and now at night it was quiet and he felt the difference" (ibid). His deafness could be his *nation* in the midst of the empty café, where the younger waiter tells him, "'You should have killed yourself last week,'" purposely pours "into the glass so that the brandy slopped over," and tells the old man, "'Finished.... No more tonight. Close now'"(ibid: 14-15). If we consider, however, that the old man sits in the shadow only to cocoon himself in his deafness, consciously effecting the sound of black silence, maybe his premonition of the impending violence at the hands of Franco's troops, we could conclude that the old man's true *nation* lies not in his deafness as he believes, but rather in the physical periphery around him, within the clean and pleasant café overseen by the older waiter who says, "'I am of those who like to stay late at the cafe ... those who do not want to go to bed.'"(ibid: 16). However unconsious or conscious, physical or psychic, collective or coveted, our nation is a landscape, its wood-slat cyclone fence billowed and feeble to the larger Nation and otherwise Other.

The Other's *nation* becomes our *Nation*; our *nation,* the Other's *Nation*. This is a shifting premise in which the *N* is the bully and the *n* the victim. From his mansion "with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool, and more than forty acres of lawn and garden" (the *n* for Gatsby), Gatsby, according to the first person-narrator Nick, visions New York City twenty miles away as a haven of post-World War I greed and corruption (the *N* for Gatsby) represented by "careless people" who "smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness" (Fitzgerald 1925: 4, 120). We hence can see that the *n* and *N* are doomed to collide in, to use the words of Pennycook (2001: 6), "questions of inequality, injustice, rights, and wrongs," with the oppressed kicking from both sides of the cyclone fence.

Consequently, we could imagine that some New Yorkers beneath that "enchanted metropolitan twilight" (their *n*), especially those "poor young clerks who loitered in front of windows waiting until it was time for a solitary restaurant dinner," would consider Gatsby's estate (the *N*), where "men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars," as the lion's den of the "solid and propsperous Americans" who make "the easy money" by exploiting the working class (Fitzgerald 1925: 25, 27, 38). The longer Gatsby's parties pervade, the stronger the bonding of the beautiful and rich, and the more permanent the hardship of the urban time-clockers, not to mention the unemployed, who according to Algren remain "excluded from the privileges of our society," doomed to become the "nobodies nobody knows" (1961: 67, 105).

Gatsby would counterpoint. He'd argue that, money and jobs aside, his *n* is the nobler. His flamboyant parties are a clever ploy to reunite with his old love Daisy, to him some kind of icon temporarily tossed to the burning heap of post-World War I greed and cynicism. He had met and fallen in love with Daisy the month before he was to be shipped off as a penniless soldier to Europe. At war's end, he returned home only to learn that Daisy had married Tom Buchanan, a wealthy Chicagoan who had avoided the war and transplanted himself and Daisy to the east coast, specifically to the peninsula of Easy Egg, directly across the narrow bay from West Egg, where Gatsby, a few years later, as a self-made millionaire, would construct his opalent mansion and then begin the fun, "the lights ... brighter as the earth lurches away from the sun, and now the orchestra ... playing yellow cocktail music, and the opera of voices pitches a key higher" (Fitzgerald 1925: 26). If one of those voices were to be Daisy's, Gatsby, who had "committed himself to the following of a grail," would "recover something ... that had gone into loving Daisy" in those innocent and gauzy days before the great war (ibid: 73, 99). It would be "the last and greatest of all human dreams," the retro-transformation of America from the ego-centricity and greed that in a few years would culminate in the Great Depression to the distant past when America had been a "fresh, green breast of the new world" for the first European immigrants to come ashore (ibid: 121).

Some may think Gatsby a looney or a con man. Algren would. He'd tell Gatsby to climb down from his metaphysical bar stool and to own up to the times that have long since traded the American Dream with its infinite egalitarianism for the "American Disease" with its "nameless, useless nobodies who sleep behind the taverns" (1961: 67, 104). Algren's *N* is Gatsby's *n*; Gatsby's *N*, Algren's *n*. They each have one shoe stuck in the broken slats of the cyclone fence.

Each is in the right and the wrong. Algren's and Gatsby's issues regarding the "broader political and ethical visions that put inequality, oppression, and compassion to the fore" (Pennycook 2001: 10) ultimately are validated or negated within the confines of what Foucault calls "the ultimate destinations"of power (1981: 96). For instance, Foucault says that "rather than try to discover how the right of punishment is founded on sovereignty, how it is presented in the theory of monarchical right or in that of democratic right," he has "tried to see in what ways punishment and the power of punishment are effectively embodied in a certain number of local, regional, material institutions, which are concerned with torture or imprisonment" (ibid : 96-97).

It is at "those points" such as the prison and psychiatric ward, the end of the road, where power "installs itself and produces its real effects" (ibid: 97). Such effects may manifest themselves in *repressive forms* such as domination and exclusion; in *productive forms* such as "pleasure," "knowledge," and "discourse"; or simply in a *neutralized or face-value form* of a "network which runs through the whole social body" (ibid: 119), allowing itself to be ignored, glorified, exploited, duplicated or whatever by whomever dwelling "at the extreme points of its exercise" (ibid: 97). We can assume that the above three forms are separate yet overlapping and mutant, constituting power in the general sense. This power becomes perceived and felt only when, for the briefest of a moment, it would take a yawn and stretch itself across a certain landscape, and thereupon *it* would lie, on its back, the gin-and-tonic angel of Gatsby's American Dream, the monkey that in Algrenspeak is the burden of urban junkies, the man "in a dark suit … who wasn't black …and … wasn't white" to appear and vanish beside Malcolm X in his jail cell (1964: 186), the yellow mechanized crane to swoop up corn stalks for the future suburb, *it*, power, cracking an eye open, stretching its arms across that which is "regional and local" (Foucault 1981: 96-97).

This "localness," our own surroundings, is created in large part by that restless *it* above. As *it* shifts its form and creaks the atmosphere, we below become "not only its inert or consenting target" but also "the elements of its articulation" (ibid: 98). This means that *power* conquers us as much as we, in turn, wield *power* back to the external. To go further, we can conclude that because we conceptualize our particular space and place within the continent (dare we say "world") according to our comfort and anguish, and because *power*, that *it* which gives us our sunrise or headache, ultimately manifests itself within our own person, then what really matters to us is our immediate domain, both material and psychic, as well as the other domains less immediate but nonetheless there, whether a Denny's restaurant transposed as a Mexican VIPs, a blue peninsula, or an inner-city hood before and after dreams of Mecca. Everyone has their messiah the *nation* and their boogeyman the *Nation* -- places, hangouts, mindsets, even bodies. This last we see in Frankie Machine, morphine addict, protagonist of Algren's novel *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1949), who visions himself as two distinct corporal entities, one the healthy warrior (his *n*) who peacefully sleeps "once more on his old army cot," the other the ravaged junkie (his *N*) by the name of Private McGantic standing "in a far and sunlit entrance" to the tent, "stoop-shouldered by his terrible burden," the "thirty-five-pound monkey on his back," and complaining, 'I can't get him off.'" (15). We'll leave the monkey there, for now, but what about the yellow iron crane, the ghost in the suit, and the drunken angel? They have just rolled over, over and off, into the bounce and rattle of white dice ahead of the super's wide broom. "It is in this context," according to Luke (2004: 24), "that we teach second and third languages and dialects ... as custodians of nations." Wow.

Sweep up. Sweep off the curb, sweep out of the *barrio* to another, always everywhere a *barrio*, and now I'm walking through an opening in the chain-link fence and then across a vacant cement lot, carrying my broom. I'm in a playground that was begun very long ago but then abandoned, in its middle a lone swing set made of black wrought iron, chains of large iron loops, and wooden seats, and for some reason, I stay clear of the swing set, heading in through the door in the brick wall, and I lean the broom to the blackboard. I'm the building superintendent from Madison and Halsted, now standing at the board, beside the window. I see Nelson Algren in the first row, his cocky-ass grin, his hair that he never combs, his nerd glasses. On one side of him is Nick Carroway, 24 years old, in a pink tennis sweater, his whiteness whiter than ever, kind of a sickly pale, he probably still in shock from having found Gatsby shot dead and floating in the swimming pool; and on the other side, F. Scott Fitzgerald, his highness higher than his Princeton days, he decked out in a fedora hat and Hollywood suit, grey with white pin-stripes and a red kerchief in the breast pocket to match the red feather in his hat.

I tell them they're gonna do some English.

"We already speak English." It's Fitzgerald.

"Not my English," Algren says.

"They mean," Nick says, "that English is their own language."

"Give it a break." It's Malcolm X. He's standing against the side wall. He's tall and thin and lanky. He's wearing a black suit, the lapels of the jacket very narrow, and a white shirt and black tie. He's holding a little white cup of coffee. The cup is filled to the brim, but he holds it very casually. "You white devils," he says.

This is gonna be interesting, I think.

I pass out the photocopies of Blake's poem, "The Tyger."

"Where's your Frankie?" Malcolm X asks Algren.

"He's being squeezed by the cops and the local junk man, Piggy-O."

Malcolm X, the photocopied "Tyger" in one hand, the little coffee cup in the other, stares at Algren. Malcolm X has this super deadpan expression, the lenses of his horn-rimmed glasses silvery in the fluorescent light. He says, "Your boy just needs discipline. He's gotta help himself."

"It's in the hands of 'the bubble-gum snappers and the key-club cats alike'" (1961: 104).

"Don't pull a 'Martin Luther King' on me," Malcolm X said.

"Will they or not throw compassion from the suburb to the hood?"

"Sure, I get it. Frankie first has to cry for his civil rights from Uncle before he looks out the tenement window at the sun." X shook his head, took a sip of coffee.

"It should have been me who pulled him from the water." That's Nick. "The police, the firemen were all there, but I myself should have gotten in the pool."

"The dream was unattainable," Fitzgerald says, and then he looks at the "Tyger" poem. He adjusts his fedora hat. He leans to Algren. He says, "This English here is from another world."

"White devils," Malcolm X murmurs, and then grins.

I ask who would like to read out loud.

"Aren't you the janitor, or watchman?" asks Fitzgerald.

I pause. "Sure."

"Life guard," Nick says quickly. Everyone laughs.

"No, custodian," Algren says. "It's the current b.s. buzz word."

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

It's Malcolm X.

Everyone shuts up. They must have caught the irony of the moment. Malcolm looks around. He pops back his coffee, draining the cup in one swallow.

It's quiet. Outside the chains rattle. Nick finally says, "Should it not be "-*try"* instead of "*–tree*," at the end of the last word, to keep the rhyme?" His voice is low.

"In the eighteenth-century, how would it've been? " That's me. I'm just b.s.-ing. I look out the window. I see the swing set, black and iron and crudely made. One of its seats sways, barely. "What'da think?"

"-*try*," Nick says.

"The demon's *cry,*." Algren says.

Malcolm smiles, kind of. He flips the empty cup in his hand.
Nick continues:

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

"Oh, Daisy, baby." Fitzgerald leans back in his chair, his fedora hat dropping, half covering his eyes. "Can't ya feel the heat?"

Everyone laughs -- Malcolm, too. Nick yelps *wa-wa-woop*. Malcolm flings his coffee cup to the bucket in the front of the room. The cup thuds like rock to iron, and everyone laughs louder.

Damn kids. What's a custodian to do? First, look out the window again. Beyond the swing set, at the rear of the lot, there are two forms huddled at the fence. I squint. I can make out Piggy-O, his face pale and round as a sewer cap, wearing "an army overcoat and the mariner's rolled cap," his fingers in "a crawling descent down the grimy vest into a tobacco pouch suspended from his neck" (Algren 1949: 46-47), and beside Piggy-O, sitting as well, the guy in the impeccable black suit who had "an Asiatic cast of countenance … and … oily black hair" and who couldn't be identified "racially," besides simply being "a non-European" (Malcolm X 1964: 186-187). It would be fun to think I've suddenly been thrown into a parody of Hitchcock's movie *The Byrds (*no – *Birds)*, in which rag men and business men are going to infinitely multiply on the fence and telephone wires, waiting for the school bell and Fitzgerald and kids to come running out. But that's a stretch. What is clear, however, is that Piggie-O, along with Malcolm's spirit of Muhammed in his Sunday best, are manifestations of Foucaultian "tactics and strategies of power … through implantations, distributions, demarcations, control of territories and organizations of domains" (1981: 77). When these guys are on our side, they "make up a sort of geopolitics" (ibid), which we would call our *n*. To the contrary, when they're the bullies of our junior-high from hell, when they are the reason for us to believe, as Algren does, that "the levers of power are held by those who have lost the will to act honestly" (1961: 105), they become the messengers of our *N*. If so, we would have to "forge new levers by which to return honesty to us" (ibid).

One of these *levers* would be *critical applied linguistics*, which according to Pennycook keeps us conscious of "how the classroom, text, or conversation is related to broader social, cultural and political relations" (2001: 5). *Translate*: Keep alive Nick's dream for a lifeguard, even though his *n* bled to death beside its own warped reflection on the water; and at the same time, keep watch with Algren on the West Egg peninsula, while the yellow crane, on loan from yet another suburb, swings its shovel of a nose crashing to the side of Gatsby's mansion, lest another fat cat reactivate those footloose parties that make all the more remote "any simple remedies for the unrelenting pain and humiliation of those trapped" in Algren's *n*, the mean streets of urban America (Giles 1990: xvii). Contradictions notwithstanding, any *n* that is truly felt within the classroom should merit attention, especially if under siege by the larger *N*.

Which is the *n* and which the *N*? Some are obvious, such as that affected by Piggy-O, the *N* to the *Nth* degree, the morphine distributor in the Polish-American ghetto of 1940's Chicago, one of those materially responsible for Frankie's addiction, that is, the monkey on his back. Other *N*'s are born of Foucault's *neutralized* type of power, ultimately a liberator or an oppressor, depending "on its direct and immediate relationship with that which we can provisionally call its … target" (1981: 97). If this "target" (i.e. person; or more specifically, student) is threatened in such a way that he or she seeks a new landscape of "geopolitics," then we have unmasked yet another *N*. *Translate*: Mr. Suit.

He's still sitting there, beside Piggy-O. His back is to the fence, his hands dangling above his burgundy wingtips, one hand scraped and red across the knuckles from having had punched the wooden seat of the swing a few minutes ago as he entered the playground, and that hand now reaching down "as the pouch slipped out of his {Piggy-O's} fingers" (Algren 1949: 47). The Suit has been on the heels of Malcolm. He shadows him; he foreshadows his fate.

> Every morning when I wake up, now, I regard it has having another borrowed day. In any city, wherever I go, making speeches, holding meetings of my organization, or attending to other business, black men are watching every move I make, awaiting their chance to kill me. I have said publicly many times that I know that they have their orders. Anyone who chooses not to believe what I am saying doesn't know the Muslims in the Nation of Islam (Malcolm X: 1964: 380-381).

Mr. Suit holds Piggy's pouch in his open hand, as if contemplating its weight. It could be a fragment of gold, or better, it could be a myth, a prehistoric answer -- the betrayer's recompense from the annals of time. He then looks into the pouch, nothin' but monkey food. He tosses the pouch up to Piggy's face.

Malcolm X was first visited by Mr. Suit, as an apparition, in the Norfolk Prison Colony, where Malcolm X had been serving out a several-year sentence for burglary. At that time, he interpreted this image as the spirit of the prophet Mohammed, bearing him the message to embrace the religion of Islam in order to arise above the ghetto, the *real* prison of the black man, that had been constructed by the collective white society. Malcolm X understood that by purging "himself of all the ills that afflict the depressed Negro mass … drugs, alcohol, tobacco, not to mention criminal pursuits" (Handler 1965: xii), he would be able, through sheer will and discipline, to conquer the deeply infested social problems of the ghetto by means of eradicating their disastrous consequences on the individual person. Although social problems clearly have external manifestations such as poor housing, drug abuse, and crime, such manifestations nevertheless are superficial and entirely subordinate to the individual's internal submission to the social problems. In other words, if you clean up your act, you and everyone else, even going to the extreme of not eating pork (*the gesture, kids!)* and always wearing a clean white shirt and tie (*Daisy would like that*), then the social problems will lose their own structure and hierarchy; consequently, they will implode on themselves.

Malcolm X became the embodiment of this "puritanical" attitude (ibid). Its strength was based on the religion of Islam, albeit a new twist, the urban Black version, a.k.a. Black Muslims of the *Nation* of Islam (*careful*). As the leading minister of the Nation of Islam, soon to surpass the popularity of it leader Elijah Muhammed (*watch out*), Malcolm X, "in his television appearances and at public meetings … articulated the woes and the aspirations of the depressed Negro mass in a way it was unable to do for itself" (ibid : xii-xiii). He denounced "the white man … with a violence and anger that spoke for the ages of misery" (ibid xii-xiii); and he yelled upon "the black man in the ghettoes … to start self-correcting his own material, moral, and spiritual defects and evils," to establish "his own program to get rid of drunkenness, drug addiction, [and] prostitution … [in order] to lift up his own sense of values," and in general "to build up the black race's ability to do for itself" through initiatives such as the fomenting of black-owned banks, constructors, and other local businesses (Malcolm X: 1964: 275-276). If white society would attempt to deter or sabotage the black man's quest for self-realization and subsequent transformation of the ghettoes, then "the Negroes should use arms … to defend" their urban landscape (ibid 366), going so far as to form a militia cordon around the boundaries of each neighborhood, while they continue with their purification of themselves and their city blocks. Malcolm X, who as a last resort was "for violence if non-violence means we continue postponing a solution" (ibid: 367), believed that such a calling to arms would be unavoidable; when all else fails, it would be preferable to the only other alternative, which would be allowing the "sociological dynamite that stems from … unemployment, bad housing, and inferior education" to spontaneously combust of its own volition, exploding on all street corners (ibid 366). (*I hear ya, daddy -- and so too Frankie.*) This would do no *n* or *N* any good -- better the sawed-off shotgun than the ruins of Armageddon at Madison and Halsted. (*Hey, teach-, let the tyger speak for himself.)*

That was the X-Man, before mecca. It all started with the guy in the suit. In 1953, two years out of prison, a few months before being appointed Black Muslim minister in the *Nation* of Islam (*watch out!*), Malcolm discovered the identity of that corporal image who had beckoned to him behind bars. In a conversation with Elijah Muhammed, he learned of a Master W.D. Fard, "'a brother of the east'" who in 1931 "knocked from door to door at the apartments of the poverty-stricken Negroes" in Detroit, selling "silks and other yard goods," and announcing that he "'was The One the world has been looking for to come for the past two thousand years,'" the Muslim Mahdi (ibid: 206-208). (*Nothing personal, dude, but take a wire, wrap it tight with white gauze, insert wire in left ear, push it through, with your other hand pull wire out of right ear, now with both hands pull wire back and forth, clean out your mushrooms and fungus.)* W. D. Fard's mission was to return the "Negroes in America" to "where heaven for them was -- back home, among their own kind" in Africa (ibid: 207). (*Check the logistics; waddya do?; cross continents and an ocean "to the fake padlock on the door" and "the curtained parlors and the right way to ring … one long and two short and ask for Marie?" {*Algren 1947: 230*})* ; here, in Africa, they would forever be far away from "the white race which was bred from black Original Man six thousand years before, purposely to create a hell on earth for the next six thousand years" (*no comment from the blue lawn*) (ibid: 207).

In this same year, W.D. Fard established the University of Islam in Detroit, and over the next three years, the temples of the Nation of Islam emerged in Detroit, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., with none other than Elijah Muhammed designated by Fard as the "Supreme Minister, over all other ministers" amoung whom "sprang up a bitter jealously," the consequence being repeated attempts to assassinate E. M. (Malcolm X: 1964: 209). (*"And when thy heart began to* *beat , / what dread hand? & what dread feet?"*: *yes, sir, that's my irony now.)* E.M. received a a three-and-a half year prison sentence on apparently trumped up charges of draft dodging, and upon his release from prison, E.M. became the self-proclaimed messenger of Allah, thanks to that traveling businessman W.D. Fard who in 1934 "had disappeared, without a trace" (ibid), maybe to float in and out of prisons, a phantom recruitment officer perhaps self-willed into existence.

Fard became the legend on which to justify the Black Muslim movement on Islamic religious grounds, as well as the myth behind the man of Elijah Muhammed, the head honcho of the show, who modified Fard's quest of returning urban Blacks to the African continent to an even more unrealistic goal of creating separate statehood for urban blacks within America. This struck X not only as absurd but fradulent. If X were the panther -- a black panther, the wiseguy of the *tyger* family -- then E.M. was the coyote trickster. His doctrine of non-negotiable segregation and statehood certainly raked in the money from the fans, enough to finance his Chicago mansion (*no offence, Fitz- and Nick)* and support his illegitimate children; but because of the absolute impossibility of convincing the American people and the congress to legislatively form a 53rd state for Blacks (*you have to wonder, gentlemen,* ***where*** *this state would be, not to mention whether out-of-state 'white' tourists would be welcome*) E.M. was under no heat to deliver (*just leave your money at the door, while I ease my myself down the ladder of my indoor pool -- sorry, Nick*)

With this uneasy foreboding (*"what dread grasp / dare its deadly terrors clasp?")*, in 1964, Malcolm X made his pilgrimage to Mecca. There, as the famous Black Muslim from America declared a guest of the state by Prince Faisial of Saudia Arabia, X communed "with tens of thousands of pilgrims ... of all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans" who demonstrated "a spirit of unity and brotherhood" that his "experiences in America had led" him "to believe never could exist between the white and non-white"(ibid: 340). He now saw 'whiteness' not as a race or people but rather a misguided attitude: "[I]t isn't the American white *man* who is a racist, but it's the American political, economomic, and social *atomosphere* that automatically nourishes a racist psychology in the white man" (ibid: 371; italics in original text).

Once back in Harlem, he held press conferences, affirming his Muslim beliefs, but announcing his departure from the *Nation* of Islam (*I said, watch out!*) and his formation of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (*we get the idea, teach-)*, which would retain the self-empowerment plea for Black America but with the objective that Blacks form "an integral part of the American community" (Handler 1965: xiii-xiv). This was "a far cry from Elijah Muhammed's doctrine of separation" (ibid: xiv). X's house was set afire. He continued the Sunday afternoon meetings of his new organization at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem. He called upon "the whites of the younger generation, in the colleges and the universities," to "see the handwriting on the wall" and to join the cause by advocating anti-racism within their own white community (Malcolm X 1964: 341), while the Blacks continue "working by themselves ... in their own community" (ibid: 376), both Blacks and whites "working separately" yet together for "the salvation of America's very soul" (ibid: 377). X spoke out against E.M.'s "religious fakery" and gave public support to two former secretaries of the *Nation* who had filed paternity suits against E.M. (Haley 1965: 425). He in taxis or his own car was followed by automobiles which, at red lights, would pull up alongside him, the Black passengers brandishing rifles behind the closed windows. X sought "to convert the Negro population from non-violence to active self-defense against white supremists across America," while embracing the progressive and well-intentioned white society (ibid: 416). W.D. Fard put on a new suit. He hung from electrical cables; he warmed his hands in burning oil drums by night. (*Yeah, "when the stars threw down their spears," they were the bars from my cell, I mean my cell in the ghetto; and yeah when they "watered the heaven with their tears," it was Frankie's army canteen water, even your man Gatsby's fountain water.*)

"'*Did he who made the lamb make thee*?'" It's Nick. He has stood up from his chair, photocopy in hand.

Malcolm X, still standing at the side wall, looks back at Nick.

A lone arm rises, its hand and wrist covered by a grey fedora hat.

"I'm just one more jerk in the world who thinks he has something useful to contribute," Malcolm X says. *"Aren't we all?"*

The hat falls off, exposing the hand beneath, which is formed into the tiger's jaw.

Very soon the room will erupt in laughter, hollers, and cat calls, with X himself joining in the racket, X taking off his horn-rimmed glasses and putting on Fitz's hat. But, for now, for these several very long seconds, that *tyger salute* is a call to all language classrooms for a "sociopolitical movement" devoted to "social transformation by seeking social justice and equality among all people" (Kuboto 2004: 37); for pedagogic material with a "focus on racism and other kinds of injustice" resulting from collective ... oppression (ibid); for class activities that generate an awareness of "our locations within social, cultural, [and] economic … frameworks" and the capacity to freely affect "change" in that awareness (Pennycook 2001: 120). *Translate:* Keep Mr. Suit and Piggy-O off the swing set.

How? I raise my own arm in the *tyger salute*, for that last second before the class goes bonkers and the paper wads fly, one into my face, and I tell myself, please shut your trap. If you say *watch out!* one more time, you may become the bad guy. Don't you know that direct discourse and action may eventually corrupt the bearer? The Marxist proletariat, after all, has yet to arrive. If he were, however, to miraculously step onto a playground, he wouldn't waste his breath with Piggy-O. He'd seek out Piggy's boss, morphine wholesaler Nifty Louie, Marxie and buddie Louie drinking a cognac together, jokingly conferring that "'the monkey never dies'" but "'just hops onto somebody else's back'" (Algren 1949: 60).

This, however, is not to discredit Marxie. He fortunately is doomed to never exist, but only to assert an image of himself that will never fully materialize. For better or worse, Marxie is humankind's most flamboyant model of struggle against repression simply because (unlike, for example, Camus' philosophy of the absurd) Marxism has prescribed itself an entire cellophane package of procedures that has been unleased on peoples. Beginning with Lenin, the cellophane wrapper has been frantically torn off, as "democratic centralism" spills out from the Styrofoam plate to "insure the strictest obedience to orders" (Sprintzen 1988: 181). The rationale for this, as Camus satirically explains, is that "all freedom must be crushed in order to conquer the empire, and one day the empire will be the equivalent of freedom" (1955; in Sprintzen 1988: 181). Yeah, right, take a number and wait 100 years, and that cellophane wrapper now more like a body bag for yet another village mayor to be executed publicly in his town square by Marxie's great-grandchild the FMLN of EL Salvador in the 1980s, you know, collateral damage, not our fault you were born two generations too early. Forget the image of the wild electric hair and sunken face -- anyway, that's not Karl, but Groucho's brother, Harpo, the funny guy. Think more of a Rorschach ink pattern. It's there. It won't go away. We need to see it within us; but, really, it's spooky as all hell.

Accordingly, Pennycook (2001: 6) states that "critical applied linguistics needs at some level to engage with the long legacy of Marxism," as we can assume must any movement dealing with retaliation against dominance. In fact, Pennycook categorizes such an approach to language teaching as *emancipatory modernism* which, among other things, "provides us with both critical literary and critical discourse analysis ... relating textual meanings to broader social, economic, and political concerns" (ibid: 167), with the goal of an "inclusionary approach to difference" (166). But Pennycook is not completely sold on the idea. He'd rather see Marxie's *emancipatory modernism* complemented by another of his approaches, that of *problematizing practice*, which rather than obsessing over the domination being hurled down from the macro heavens would seek to transform the student's place at the table in the recognizable micro world. What is telling, however, is Pennycook's criticism of an all exclusive ***e****mancipatory* ***m****odernism* (or, ***E.M.***; no pun intended, X). Along with its righteousness and overly simplistic classification of power according to socio-economic class (2001), ***E. M.***'s "individual empowerment" is an illusion. It arises from our awareness of a prejudicial or unfair difference between us and the other classes (ibid); so we break our heads in order to eradicate this difference and gain entry -- or, rather, re-entry. Based on Mey (1985), Pennycook explains that the immigrant worker who in an ESL class learns to speak in the same manner as his employers is living proof that "empowering individuals within inequitable social structures not only fails to deal with those inequalities but also reproduces them" (2001: 39). This immigrant worker with the talk of the dominant class is simply a walking photocopy of the existing system of oppression. "This leaves us helpless as (critical) applied linguistics" (ibid); ***E. M.'s*** classroom is perpetually cyclical with no happy ending in sight.

The same goes for Marxism itself. According to Sprintzen (1988), Marx, visioning the classless society, "merges his outrage at the suffering of the people, their exploitation by a relatively small class of proprietors of the means of production, with an unbounded faith in the liberating possiblities of industry" (174) because in general "economics determines the superstructure of habits, beliefs, values, political and legal forms" (173). In order that "the working people ... be set free," then, they must oust the dominant class who controls industry, affect "the fullest possible development of industry's productive forces," and assume total control of the production (ibid:174-175). It is at this point that Camus sees a slippage in the Rorschach ink blot.

Camus, according to Sprintzen, criticizes Marx for allowing his "faith in the liberatory possibilities of production ... to blind him to its oppressive potential" (1988: 175). Marx "blames the division of labour for exploitation without seeing to what extent this division is furthered, and even made necessary, by the development of those forces of production" (ibid). If the factory divides society and keeps the poor in their place, what is to guarantee that the same factory would be any different when owned and operated by the Marxist proletariat in the big leather chair behind the oak desk? Doesn't the organization of labour itself force self-sacrifice on the part of the worker?

Imagine that the young waiter of Hemingway's "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," having left the café to work in a factory, would complain that he was "'sleepy now,'" that he never got "'into bed before three o'clock'" in the morning, and that you, *Prolie*, have "'no regard for those who must work'" and live their lives, and that the least you can do is pay us a decent wage (Hemingway 1933: 14-15). In response, Maxie would sit back in his chair, thump his boots onto the desk top, and then pause. He'd see, outside the glass door, his new drinkin' buddy, Nifty Louie with "his Paradise Ballroom haircut" and "Division street sun tan," his arms held out like a song 'n dance man (Algren 1949: 145-146). Marxie would wave in Louie, then turn back to the young waiter. He'd tell the waiter that everyone needed a "'light for the night'" (Hemingway 1933: 16); and so they'd keep up with the over-time hours, every single soul on the production line, 'cause no mass volume of production, then no profits, and no profits, then no material goods with which to climb up the social ladder before the ladder self-collapses, and also the same low wages, 'cause an increase in payroll, you guessed it, then no profits and no ladder, trust me, you and your mother-in-law will thank me 100 years from now. Nifty Louie would then sidle up to the desk. He'd slap five to Marxie, then look at the waiter. He'd say, "'I think you're one of the weaker sheep yourself'" (Algren 1949: 61). The waiter would slump off, out the glass door, down the wooden staircase to the assembly line below. After all, as Lenin himself states, "'discipline and organization are assimilated more easily by the proletariat, thanks to the hard school of the factory.'" (Camus 1954: 217; in Sprintzen 1988: 175). "Well, now," Marxie would then say to Louie, "Let's get outta here and 'go stand before a bar with dignity'"(Hemingway 1933: 16). He'd get up from his chair, whacking his hands on the desk, and Piggy Rorschach**,** the ink-man of kids' nightmares, falls off the page, the handplate of a Ouija board game shadowing across the tiny red-stone park in El Salvador where two guys in Red Cross vests carry yet another body of an executed mayor in a clear plastic bag, a distant scene far below, the plastic wrap gleaming like ice, the gulag revisited.

Not that the Salvadoran Right Wing's death squads were any better, of course not. But they made no pretensions about the killer behind their door. What Camus objects to is Marxism's promotion of a "mystical faith in a mythologized proletarait" who, according to basic logic, would never be able to construct "the classless society" (Sprintzen 1988: 176), but rather, just as Mey's and Pennycook's immigrant worker in an ESL class, simply would reproduce the same exploitation and repression that had created and perpetuated class divisions in the first place. So why the fairy tale? Would it not be a big step forward to just admit there's a killer behind every door?

The body is swung and tossed, an ice man in his slab of ice thumping to the truck bed; and the continent sways, so many *n's* and *N's* obscured by that wavering, warped, fun house mirror shadow, and we've got to remind ourselves to keep moving. In motion, Marxism has something to offer. Hell breaks lose only when the revolution stops and, for example, is "rationally organized ... into small cells ... under the direction of a central committee whose rule was law, whose interpretation was reality" (ibid: 180). Such an infrastructure, according to Foucault (1981), would subsist on the consumption and transmission of power networks, which in this case would be nothing more than a 'reproduction' of those same networks that existed in the old regime before the revolution. Lenin and Stalin did take Marxism to this finality in constructing the now defunct Soviet empire, one of humankind's most notable bone-head mistakes.

Camus perhaps would pose his philosophy of the absurd as a type of Marxism without finality. In his essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" (1955), we observe Sisyphus endlessly rolling his boulder up the hill. He knows there is no room to stop and stand, not at the top nor the bottom; the only alternative is to keep moving up the incline with his boulder. It is his own act of revolution, which actually frees him from the utter injustice of his situation, second by second, step by step. This is awful. But at least *Sis* doesn't have blood on his hands which would prevent him from getting a firm grasp on the boulder; at least he doesn't have to carry Nifty Louie, like a monkey, on his back as he grapples up the hill. It could be worse. Oh, sure. Thanks for small favours.

Like a *Sis-ified Marxie,* we as teachers should never arrive -- metaphorically, that is. We shouldn't talk about *Madison and Halsted*, and please give it up with the *careful!* and *watch out!*. Deep-six any mention of **D.A.I.S.Y.** (***D.****iversity*, ***A.****gency*, ***I.****dentity*, ***S.****ociety*, and ***Y.****ou).* Also, avoid pedagogic activities and materials that make obvious their intention to treat ***C.O.R.R.U.P.T.S.*** (***C****.lass* ***O.****ppression*, ***R.****evolt*, ***R.****esistance*, ***U.****s*, and so ***P.****aint* ***T.****he* ***S.****tatue* in Times Square or Gorky Park). Such social action and consciousness would be "constructed by ... the ways language learners understand themselves, their social surroundings, their histories, and their possiblilities for the future" (Norton & Toohey 2004: 1). You certainly can hope for this in your students. But get it out of your head that you are there to transform or promote this social change; such self-grandiosity often leads to distorted ideology. Do you really aspire to be a W.D. Fard or E. M. (both X's and Pennycook's)?

Any awareness to arise in the classroom, solidifying an existing *n* or birthing a new one, should be orchestrated entirely by the student. *Translate*: Nick reaching a liberating level in his mourning of the death of his friend and idol, Gatsby, by finally realizing that **DAISY CORRUPTS**. Nick knows that Daisy commits the fatal hit-and–run accident, drunk, behind the wheel of Gatsby's automobile; that at her pretense of leaving Tom Bucannan for him, Gatsby tries to cover for her, hiding the automobile, waiting for Daisy to arrive at his mansion; and that Daisy has no intention of leaving Tom. It's a ruse. Gatsby waits and waits; and finally his own assasin, the husband of the victim, knocks on his door. Gatsby is shot, falls into his pool, and drowns. Nick now sees that Daisy is not a temporal victim of post-World War I nihilism but rather its active promoter. Hence Gatsby's dream was doomed from the beginning:

> I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night. (Fitzgerald 1925: 121).

This awareness is all Nick's. During the class, the most I did was to suggest that the kids talk about Blake's "chain" and "immortal hand or eye" in relation to **themselves**; and X took over the show, probably because he did not "expect to live long enough" for other opportunities to tell his story (Malcolm X: 381). This was enough on my part.

For once you stop yourself in the classroom and take a critical stand, through your own person or an overtly critical material or activity, the gig is up. The general attitude that the "**(p)luralization of target language** and cultural codes needs to be achieved through critical scrunity of how the norm regulates and limits possibililities for **marginalized people** and how **oppositional voices** can create new possibilities" (Kubota 2001: 21; bold print mine) veers dangerously close to authoritarianism. It presupposes a judgment that current language teaching is **polarized** not only because of its attempt to remain egalitarian and a-political, which Pennycook (2001) calls *liberal ostrichism*, but also because it follows certain ideologies such as *classical humanism* whose intentions are to perserve the status quo. This is a noble criticism; but don't be fooled. It comes from a counter-ideology or something-ology, most likely related to Marxism, the ice man cometh. In fact, any ideology can become corrupted.

The first step in this corruption is a distancing or subordination between the actors. In the statement above, the brashness in identifying who is **marginalized** would require the teacher to dwell high up in Foucault's central tower of the Panopticon penal system (1981), from where the teacher would have a clear view of his or her students in their social realm, which the teacher even more brashly would characterize as a prison yard. To jump the wall of this prison, which Foucault had found as a suggested prototype in the eighteenth century writings of Jeremy Bentham (ibid), the students would need to take on **oppositional voices**. Although the discourse implies the students' self-discovery of these voices, we nonetheless sense the heavy hand of the teacher, up in the central tower, dropping a restaurant menu of voices from the open windows. Come on, haven't we had enough saviors?

If our goal as the *teach-*, *super*, *or custodian* is that "in diverse sites of language education, practices might be modified, changed, developed, or abandoned in our effort to support learners, learning, and social change" (Norton & Toohey 2004: 2), we need to constantly deny our own social and political beliefs. We need to forego even the briefest of destinations, as does Foucault when he imagines a revolution in the Panopticon prison (1981). Pondering over whether the prisoners should take "over the central tower, " Foucault decides: "Oh, yes, provided that isn't the final purpose of the operation. Do you think it would be much better to have the prisoners operating the Panoptic apparatus and sitting in the central tower, instead of the guards?" (ibid: 164-165). In this light, Pennycook (2001) sees critical language teaching not as an established perspective but rather "as a way of thinking and doing that is always questioning, always seeking new schemas of politicization" (173), even to the extreme "of dissolution, of pulling apart" as it is "cast ... adrift" (177). Similiarly, a few weeks before his death, Malcolm X said: "I can't put my finger on exactly what my philosophy is now, but I'm flexible" (Haley: 428).

X's and our revolution is one that perpetually continues and changes so as to avoid reproduction of oppression in the awareness as well as the personification of the oppressor in the Audubon Ballroom and the classroom beside the playground with the lone swing set. We don't trust finalities, not in ideologies nor in people. Even Nifty Louie's distributor, Piggy-O, who sighs "with relief to feel the pouch between his fingers again" (Algren 1949: 48) as he stands beside Fard in the playground, was probably once a nice guy, just like you or I.

Now Piggy-O and Mr. Suit take one and then two steps towards the swing set. I watch them from the window, a paper wad for the umpteenth time hitting the side of my face. I wonder what will come out of this class. I know realize that it has been punctuatated with pockets of space, allowing for a type of 'pedagogical safe house' (Canagarajah 2004), but with me keeping a wide distance, except for those few times that I got nerved during X's autobio, which I'm sorry for, but glad I pulled myself back. Maybe the kids have adopted "imagined communities and identities" with which they can "develop roles, discourses, and values that counter the dominant institutions" (ibid 134). I can't know for sure. But, anyway, am I entitled to know? Algren, his nerd glasses askew on his face, holds both arms out, signaling a stop to the paper fight.

Nick comes up to my side. He has much more colour in his face now. He glances out the window. "It's that 'foul dust' outside, teach-," Nick tells me. It 'floated in the wake of his dreams.' I see that now" (1925: 2).

Piggy-O and Fard stop at a swing. Fard kicks the wooden seat, then opens and closes his hand, looking at his knuckles. "Call the principal, or security." Nick says.

"It's just us."

"Ouch."

"Don't worry." It's Algren. He has walked up to Nick's side. He looks out the window. Behind us, X and Fitz are picking up the paper wads. "'The isolated man is a loveless man,'" Algren says (1961: 104).

Nick cocks his eyebrows.

"I mean, we're all together here on the inside, we five cats."

"Thanks, mom."

"And kittens."

I know Algren is right. It is this strange brew of solidarity with a marked sense of difference that can empower our students by helping them to position themselves in the world (Pennycook 2001, Kubota 2004). It was the same as in the new suburb of my father back in the late-1940's. Theirs was an eglatarian nation, yet refreshingly ethnic, a lone corn stalk snapping at the iron blade, as the engines idled and the men walked off for lunch, road workers, cooks, bookkeepers, teachers, night schoolers, some looking for the Swede in their

Mick, others the Sicilian in their Fin, and one guy the Ukraine in his Maine. That's a state, hollow head. Yeah, he knows that; he's from there. All hung together, yet each felt his alienation.

It was a stance of belonging by means of holding oneself apart. It was already there, in red-hot tongs, turned over on stone. They played it out. A few years later, it would be repeated by Malcolm X who, in the very first stage of his dialectic, made "the troubled white audiences ... confused, disturbed ... threatened" (Handler: 1965: xii) and even "scared hell out of " many in the Black community (Davis: 1965: 458), not to mention waitresses at VIPs. X's voice filled all the urban street corners, including Madison and Halsted that my father and company had just deserted, but he shared their same process of self-creation, an insistence on converging *unity* with *self identity through isolation***.** Malcolm X -- up to his fateful moment at the podium in the Audubon ballroom when he would be fired on simultaneously by four gunmen whom he had foreseen would be sent by the ***N****ation*, perhaps with some tangential encouragement from outside forces -- remained "committed to the cause of liberating the black man in American society rather than integrating the black man into that society" (Handler 1965: ix).

Their differences aside, the X-men and my father's generation had a common passion: their own *nation* as the antithesis of the neighboring *Nation*. We can include Fitz, Nick, Algren, Hemingway's old man and waiters, and even Frankie Machine. On one level, however ill-advised or temporal, however material or metaphorical, they all want the same as Gatsby who, after returning home from World War I, bulldozed his blue lawn and beachline out of the coastal island "that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes" (1925: 121). *Translate*: Malcolm X, in Fitz's hat, now marching out the door and across the playground and slashing his arms through the chains, as Piggy-O and Fard backstep wide-eyed and stupified; *and then*, behind X, Fitz, carrying a bucket, stepping to the corner of the swing set, swaying his body with the bucket; *and then*, Algren, Nick, and I the Super having had stepped out to the playground and now cheering, our gesture of cursing and honoring the unjust temporality of this moment, 'cause we know on Sunday afternoon of this very week X will be at the podium in the Audubon Ballroom, but nonetheless now, right now, as Algren says, X and all of us have "the city's rusted heart, that holds both the hustler and the square / takes them both and holds them there / for keeps and a single day" (1961: 77); *and then*, Fitz staggering with the bucket, holding it low between his knees, mimicking the stride of the monkey that had been forced off of Frankie's and how many others' backs; *and then*, X, with his arms held out, continuing to force Piggy and Fard back towards the fence; *and then*, Fitz feigning heavy weight and caution, as if the bucket were filled with hot mop water or acidic cleaning fluid, the old Harlem Globetrotter's trick; *and then,* Nick, Algren, and I cheering louder and holding up our arms in the *tyger salute*, our gesture of gestures to tear down the central tower of Foucault's Panoptican prison; *and finally,* Fitz wheeling the bucket, flinging at least two hundred paper wads into

Pig Man and Suit who by now are crouched on the ground with their arms across their faces, as a tiny coffee cup then rolls past them and into the fence.

Damn kids. The custodian will have to sweep up that mess.

I walk out the door with my broom. Everyone has left, and so I thought. I find a kid sitting on the swing, and something inside me drops. It's X as a boy, about 7 years-old. He wears black glasses, his reddish afro cut close. He's crying, slightly. I imagined he is utterly isolated at school, and probably teased. It's not only because of his mulatto-like features, his grandfather on his mother's side being a white man from Grenada; it's also his strange seriousness, his ever tense face.

Barney the purple dinasour approaches; the boy, still crying, jumps down from the swing. Barney -- a girl's voice -- says, "Mal, I'm not afraid of you." The boy falls into Barney's stomach, as if collapsing. "I'll take you home to your mom, Mal." I know that the year before, X's father, a Black activist, was murdered; and a few years from now, his mother will be institutionalized for a severe emotional breakdown and he will be sent to a foster home. "Come along, Mal." They walk off, slowly, the boy fallen to Barney.

I prop my broom on the side of the swingset. I follow them, pulling out of my pocket enough peso paper and coins to match 10 U.S., and when Barney turns around, I extend the money in an opened hand. "You need it more than I," she says, her huge green smile frozen for centuries in her purple sponge face. "You're a teacher."

Yeah, thanks a lot, I murmur, as they turn, walk away. I feel myself half-smile. I squeeze the money in my hand, and I look at the black iron swing set. It's one of those Jungian symbols that is painted on our collective subconscious. It began as a super old archetype, probably pre-historic, some well-meaning and humane emotion or inspiration that someone had projected out to the external world, where it took some recognizable form in art, mythology, or science. There it was perceived by others, reinternalized, and reprojected back to the outside; this process continued until the masses finally shaped it into the swing set image. Those are Jung's archetypes, humankind's select phenomena that throughout time have been commonly considered positive, constructive and wondrous. They are shared universally; they are continually projected and reassimilated through venues such as music, art, architecture, literature, and education. Tap into an archetype and you'll see the beauty of history, the illumination of the future.

I start to walk, following Barney and little X. I lag behind. I see little X step to the side, regain his footing, and then fall in beside Barney. It's heartbreaking. I fling the money in the air, hearing a few coins click off the top bar of the swing set behind me, and I think to myself, Can I have a voice in the nation's classroom? Is there a place for me? You can count on me to deny my own presence so that you can transform yours. All I can really offer is the gesture, my own and those of others close to me, all of our nations in the making, the corn fields tumbling, the ghetto streets shining, the swing set waiting. I laugh at myself about the swing set, how it sounded in that context, and then I see Barney and the boy go through the fence and then I'm at the fence.

I looked through it. I saw my father, 87 years-old, being escorted up the steps to the Airbus 320, the turbines whining, getting louder. There hadn't been any wheel chair, after all. His black cane gleaming, my father moved slowly, at his back the airline official, the security guard, and a guy in a janitor's uniform with an orange vest. It all looked so steep. They were the only ones going up.

Give yourself a break.

I didn't get it. But it didn't matter. I had the impression that one of my father's reasons for coming down here was to tell me that message, to save it for the airport, his farewell. I felt the weight of his intention, an ancient leaden coin dropping within me. I wanted somehow to share it with today's "Tyger" students, whom I'd see in about twenty minutes. "What the hammer? … / What the anvil?" They went inside the airplane with my father. Only the janitor in the orange vest remained on the platform, just for a second. He had both hands on the railings, the turbines screeching.

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