英语教学的批评性研究

Critical Approaches to English Language Teaching

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世界知名 TESOL 专家论丛

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

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

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

Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

as a critical applied linguist and critical pedagogy scholar.

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

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Yilin Sun

Seattle

April 2016

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Critical Approaches to the Global Spread of English

Introduction:

Critical Approaches to English Language Teaching

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Critical domains

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Transformative pedagogies

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

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

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

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