NEGOTIATING THE "CRITICAL" IN A

CANADIAN ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This thesis represents a one-year critical ethnographic case study of an academic literacy program located within a major Canadian university. Pacific University's English for Academic Purposes program distinguished itself from "traditional" English as a Second Language programs in its innovative pedagogical approach. The program staff believed that the understanding of a language lies in the deeper understandings of the culture in which it is embedded. Because of this, the program emphasized the use of a critical dialogic approach to the analysis of how language is shaped by culture and vice-versa. My research revealed, however, that disjunctions existed between the pedagogy as it was conceptualized and the classroom practices of the instructors teaching there. Furthermore, classroom observations conducted over the course of the year suggested that student identities were being constructed and negotiated vis-à-vis those of the instructors and that the discourses of teachers essentialized culture and, in turn, student identities. I argue that the discourses we co-construct in the classroom can (re)create subordinate student identities, thereby limiting students' access not only to language-learning opportunities, but to other more powerful identities. I therefore propose that a reimagining of a critical language teacher identity and the negotiation of critical praxis can concomitantly serve to reimagine student identities in new and emancipatory ways.

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Chapter 1: SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 Prologue: Negotiating Uncertainty

Kumashiro (2004) writes about the role of uncertainty in educational practices and how the quest for certainty in our classrooms is, in many ways, intellectually counterproductive, especially in light of the fact that we can never predict the outcome and consequences of any teaching or learning act (see, for example, Duff & Uchida, 1997). To teach as if we *can* predict such things fails to recognize the complexities and dynamics of interrelations between teacher and student or student and student. I realize now that such an understanding mirrors my research process in many ways. My research focussed on an innovative English for Academic Purposes (EAP) program in Western Canada that took seriously its mandate to incorporate a "critical" perspective into its curriculum and teaching practices. Because of my past history with the program, I felt a fair bit of certainty that a case study of the program would reveal the challenges of its pedagogical implementation. I was not far from the mark because the challenges of implementing this dialogic approach became apparent early on in my one-year study.

In my mind, however, I initially predicted that these challenges would find their root in the identities of the *students* in the program. While this was not completely incorrect, I now believe it to be a small part of a much larger equation. For what started out as a study focusing on negotiating second language student identities within Pacific University's ESL classrooms slowly transformed into a study of second language *teacher* identities vis-à-vis these student identities and classroom practices. I also never predicted the degree of salience of my own identity within this larger identity mix and research process. Specifically, as a researcher of Asian heritage who "looks like" the majority of her participants, how I was racialized throughout my research process added a unique dimension to the researcher-researched dynamic which, in turn, had a significant influence on the research as a whole. It goes without saying that the absence of issues of race in the ESL research literature compounded my uncertainties.

So where did all of this uncertainty lead me? Or perhaps, where did all of this uncertainty come from in the first place? To answer this, I begin by outlining the larger questions that I started out with at the beginning of my research process, and then I will discuss how, as my research developed, my initial questions, while remaining at the base, shifted in focus from issues of student identity to that of teacher identity. At the same time, I will address why this shift needed to happen and how it forever changed my thesis.

1.2 Locating the Research

My research site, which I have named Pacific University, is a post-secondary institution located within a culturally-diverse metropolis in Canada. Its Continuing Studies department houses a non-credit, cost-recovery ESL program that offers a number of different English language education programs that range in duration and focus. The main ESL program runs full-time on a quarterly-semester system (i.e., four semesters per 12-month period; 12-weeks per semester with one week break between each semester). The participants in my study were, for the most part, involved in this full-time program, but data were also collected from the summer intensive (8-week) program. I remained on-site for one full year, from March 2003 to March 2004, as I hoped that a critical ethnographic study would better illuminate the complexities of language education than if I had conducted a shorter-term study. To further capture these nuances, the various qualitative research methods I employed throughout the year of research included document analysis, questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations.

As for the site itself, I did not really *choose* Pacific University's ESL program as my research site as much as it just seemed to be a natural progression in my history with the program. I will outline this history more in-depth in Chapter 4, but even with this background context, the main reason why I desired to do research at the program was because of my interest in their pedagogical approach which set them apart from other ESL/EAP programs in the city. As the vast majority of students in the program desire to attend post-secondary educational

institutions in English-speaking countries, the program's main focus is on English for Academic Purposes. Promotional materials (paper- and web-based) for the program are, therefore, centrally focussed on an academic literacy curriculum, with a secondary (but relatively minor) focus on English skills for business. Primarily, however, advertising is marketed towards an EAP audience. Initial student interviews revealed that the program's association with the larger Pacific University post-secondary system as well as the perceived unique approach of the program to ESL/EAP were some of the reasons why students chose to attend it.

Pacific University's ESL program distinguishes itself from other EAP programs in the city by its openly-stated dissatisfaction with "traditional" ESL/EAP pedagogies. The program's pedagogy focuses on the interconnection between language and culture (particularly Canadian culture due to the geographical location of the university). The program highlights that an emphasis on culture and the way culture is discursively constructed through language, and vice-versa, results in a better understanding of how language is used in context. Initial interviews with course administrators and instructors further revealed a desire to engage students in a critical dialogic questioning process in the developing of cultural and linguistic skills as well as academic language socialization. I was therefore interested in documenting and analyzing what a critical dialogic approach to language and culture "looked like" in the language classroom. I was further interested in issues of identity--in particular, student identity--in relation to these pedagogical practices to take into account the growing body of research in sociocultural theory and language learning that conceives of language use not only as linguistic practice, but as social practice (e.g., Duff, 2002a; Norton, 1998; Simon-Maeda, 2004a; Toohey, 2000).

Norton (2000a, 2001) addresses the multiple and conflicting identities students bring into the classroom and how language use and language education are implicated in the construction and negotiation of these identities. For my study, I was interested in investigating how students would negotiate a language learner identity within a pedagogical approach I

assumed to be largely unfamiliar to them in relation to English language education. From my past teaching history at the program, students (and teachers, I would soon discover) seemed many times unprepared for what they were experiencing in the classrooms. So my initial thoughts during the conceptualization of my research questions concentrated on the challenges of negotiating student identities within Pacific University's notion of dialogic practice: How would students interact with a dialogic approach to language and culture? What might students resist in a dialogic approach to language and culture? How might a dialogic approach to language and culture assist in better meeting the needs of these language learners? In subscribing to a critical ethnographic approach for my research, I wanted these questions to serve as the beginning of my exploratory process (Fetterman, 1998; Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996; Hammersley, 1992; Rampton, 1992; Watson-Gegeo, 1988). But as I began my data collection, it became more and more clear to me that something was awry.

The first three months of data collection at the program acted as a preliminary "introduction to the researcher" stage for the program staff and an "introduction to my research" stage for me as a novice researcher. Not only was it an opportunity to familiarize myself with the official program documentation in the form of promotional materials and past course outlines and other pedagogical documents, it was also an opportunity for me to establish a rapport and to build a foundation of trust with staff at the program in preparation for my "official" data collection to begin the following semester. It was an important time in my research, and my initial conversations with the instructors at the time were pivotal, in a sense, because I could not expect them to open up their classrooms, and, essentially, themselves as teachers, to a complete stranger.[1] Because some of the staff were relatively new to the program,

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[1] Although staff were informed from the very beginning that I was not, however, a stranger to the program.

they were interested to hear about my experiences teaching there years earlier.[2] During this time, the instructors expressed their concerns to me about the many challenges they faced in their classrooms. So after hearing more about my research and my research questions, instructors seemed supportive of it as the concerns they voiced were very much related to the questions I had proposed for my study.

I began the audiorecorded portion of my data collection by interviewing the instructors who agreed to participate in my study. I asked about their perceptions of student needs and goals and further asked them what their goals were for students. I then asked instructors to reflect on student participation in relation to classroom practices: what students tend to respond well to, what students tend to resist, and reasons for all of the above. For the most part, the data I recorded mirrored closely the conversations that the instructors and I engaged in during the three months prior. They discussed their concerns about the program, its pedagogy, and their students, but it was only when I started interviewing students and observing classrooms that I realized what had been missing from the conversations for the past three months.

The entire time up until that point, I had been focusing on two things: a critical dialogic approach to language teaching, and student identity. But I was starting to realize that this was an incomplete equation. I was wanting to study what one particular pedagogy looked like in the language classroom, but what students were saying in their interviews and what was soon made clear to me through my classroom observations was that what I was *actually* studying was what that pedagogy looked like *to a diverse group of language teachers*. For example, although notions of "critical" and "dialogic" pervaded the discourses of the program and many of its staff, I observed the interpretation of what it meant to be "critical" and "dialogic" to differ vastly across classrooms and instructors. Indeed, although those participating in the study were drawn

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[2] I am extremely cognizant of the need to analyze the implications of this statement on my research as a whole. An analysis of this, and other challenges of my research, will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

together by one particular pedagogical approach, how they engaged with it and translated it into their classroom practices was far from unified. Further, my classroom observations at Pacific University revealed discourses and practices that I believe to be decidedly *un*critical.[3] I was therefore interested in how a more unified conceptualization of critical language education such as Benesch's (2001) "Critical EAP" or Pennycook's (2001) "critical applied linguistics," which theorize the connections of language, cultural practices, and issues of power, may not only help to bring cohesion to a divided program, but address discourses of power and inequity that I observed being replicated in Pacific University classrooms.

Identity theory in language education (Norton, 2000a) was, indeed, a fruitful direction from which to begin my research, but where I had gone astray was in focusing wholly on students, without consideration of the role of teacher identity within the pedagogical practice and student identity equation. So in light of what the students were now revealing to me, Glaser and Strauss' (1967) notion of "grounded theory" helped me to rethink my initial research questions. That is, what I had neglected to ask was: What are the challenges of negotiating *teacher* identities within the program's notion of dialogic practice? How do *teachers* interact with a dialogic approach to language and culture? What might *teachers* resist in a dialogic approach to language and culture? And above all, how do teachers *interpret* a dialogic approach to language and culture? I had not acknowledged that the teachers, in fact, were the agents *behind* the pedagogy the program was attempting to implement, and it was they who played a central role in the construction and/or reproduction of classroom discourses (critical or otherwise). I needed to look, then, at how student identity was negotiated vis-à-vis teacher identity and the pedagogy these teacher identities embodied. And once I started thinking about

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[3] Uncritical in relation to the definition of "critical" I subscribe to, that is. A discussion regarding the differing definitions of "critical" within Pacific University's ESL program will be discussed in further detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

teacher identity not just as a mediator of pedagogy, but as pedagogy itself (cf. Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005), my initial observations at the program began to connect.

1.2.1 Questions to investigate

In focusing on how a critical dialogic approach to language pedagogy was being conceptualized and negotiated by students *and* teachers in the everyday practices and discourses of Pacific University's language program, I was better able to analyze why its implementation was fraught with difficulty over the course of the year. But while identifying what I perceived to be the particular challenges of a critical dialogic approach to language and culture in EAP education, I also highlight the possibilities of this approach for the academic literacy classroom. My research questions were as follows:

- *How was a "critical" curriculum conceptualized at Pacific University's academic literacy program?*

- *How did teachers negotiate this "critical" curriculum?*

- *What challenges arose in the implementation of this critical curriculum?*

- *To what extent might current research in critical language education address the challenges experienced by teachers, students, and administrators at Pacific University's academic literacy program?*

These questions may have served as an initial guideline for my thesis research, but as I continued to collect my research data, other issues of importance needed to be considered: the intersections of class, gender, and race; performativity; and the omnipresent issue of language and hegemony, to name a few. So while I present a number of research questions above, no list of questions I could have prepared beforehand would have been sufficient to address the many issues and concerns that inevitably arose in the complexities and uncertainties of research. But why these questions? Why did I feel it important to do this research in the first place?

1.2.2 Why should we care?

In Chapter 4, I will speak specifically to the reasons why I did this research and the personal and professional contexts which initiated and undoubtedly shaped it. But I would like to believe that the importance of this research goes beyond my own interest, as the issues that arose in the study speak to how language teaching can become a site of possibility not just for students, but for educators as well.

My study contributes to an enhanced understanding of English for Academic Purposes theory. Not only does a study of Pacific University's English language program serve as a unique window into bringing critical dialogic approaches to EAP, but it also provides us with concrete examples of how such an approach might be manifested in the classroom in actual practice. While the research may not tell *the* story of critical language praxis, my thesis does tell a story of one particular program's grappling with critical dialogic approaches in language education and the challenges and possibilities of its implementation.[4] And it is stories like this of the challenges language educators face in envisioning critical practices in their classrooms that I think have been largely lacking in the literature, as there are few (if any) examples of in-depth case study analyses of critical approaches to EAP.[5] Furthermore, the challenges of curricular development and implementation in an academic literacy program can share at least

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[4] I acknowledge qualitative researchers' fears of generalizing research findings and research subjects to other educational contexts especially when ethnographic case studies such as mine, here, are representative only of a particular place, time, and context (Braine, 1994; Canagarajah, 1993; Carspecken, 1996; Haig-Brown, 1992). But while a perceived inability to generalize research findings appears to limit the inherent usefulness or importance of this sort of research, Van Lier (2005, p. 198) argues, rather, that:

> insights from a case study can inform, be adapted to, and provide comparative information to a wide variety of other cases, so long as one is careful to take contextual differences into account. Furthermore, if two cases provide apparently contradictory information about a certain issue . . . this contrast can provide much food for thought and further research. (cf. Canagarajah, 1994; Duff, 1995; Mehra, 2003; see also Lincoln & Guba's [1985] notion of "fittingness")

[5] Although this is not to say that the actual research has not been or is not being done (see, for example, Comber & Simpson's [2001] edited volume); rather, I am arguing that while this work is indeed being researched, I am unaware of any examples of more extended written work which aims to present a more comprehensive (or specific) analysis of the *challenges* of implementing critical approaches to EAP or their relationship to issues of student and teacher identity.

some similarities with other contexts of educational change (Markee, 1997, p. 4; cf. Fullan, 2001).

I also hope a nuanced analysis of the relationship between identity and language teaching and learning will contribute to a more complex understanding of how both language student and language teacher identities are negotiated through pedagogy and vice versa. Particularly, my research builds on recent ESL literature which has attempted to bring to the fore the salience of race and racialized identities in the ESL classroom.[6] For although discourses of race and racism have been largely absent from ESL theory, my research has revealed that these discourses are far from absent in ESL classrooms. An analysis of English language education devoid of issues of how race and distinctions between Self and Other are discursively produced would be a glaring omission. I believe recognizing these issues are vital to the understanding of many of the challenges I observed in Pacific University's EAP classrooms. So in a broader sense, the research also asks whether we have responsibilities as language educators that go beyond mere questions of language. That is, in highlighting the complexities of teacher and student identity within a critical language education framework, I hope my research contributes to a reanalysis of students' needs and, simultaneously, teachers' practices. By reflecting on language education praxis, I highlight the need for a reconceptualization of language teacher education towards an innovative model of critical language teacher education (Hawkins & Norton, in press; Norton, 2005). Throughout these important themes, however, I hope my thesis will also highlight an interesting new perspective on the complexities of research in ESL contexts.

While issues of race in ESL have only recently begun to appear in the literature, little has been written from either an ESL or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) perspective that

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[6] See the recently-published, edited compilations of Curtis and Romney (2006), Kubota and Lin (2006), and Lin and Luke (2006) which focus on issues of race in English language education.

addresses the implications of racialized identities within the conducting of ESL research.[7] I will

discuss this more in-depth in Chapter 4, but in essence, I believe my thesis research would have

yielded very different data and, hence, very different findings had I been white. My racialized

identity as a Chinese-Canadian (and, more generally, as an Asian-Canadian) was arguably the

most salient of my identities in my relationship with many of the participants (the largest

percentage of students in the program were from Mainland China) and was, I believe, pivotal in

uncovering the discrimination faced by both the visible minority students and a particular

minority teacher in the program.[8] "Studying my own kind" (Mehra, 2001) created even more

uncertainties, many of which remain unresolved for me on a personal level in relation to my

responsibilities as a "critical" researcher. So as a final contribution, I hope that my thesis will

address what I perceive to be a void in ESL research literature that illuminates the unique

challenges of racialized positionalities in conducting ESL research as an ESL teacher and

researcher of colour.

1.3 The (Bumpy) Road Ahead

In reflecting on my research questions in this chapter and how (and why) they evolved, I

provide a backdrop against which readers can start to contextualize the comments and concerns

that arise in my thesis; but I realize that I also need to provide the theoretical foundations on

which my research questions were based. So in Chapter 2, I outline the key concepts and

discourses underlying my study—specifically, language and culture, English for Academic

Purposes, Critical EAP, and identity and investment. In Chapter 3, I introduce readers to Pacific

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[7] See Cukor-Avila and Bailey (2001) for the one example I was able to find.

[8] Although I use socially-constructed terms such as "minority," "immigrant," and "non-native English speaker" throughout the thesis, at the same time, I recognize Gutiérrez's (2005, p. 227) desire to capture better the relations of power underlying these identifications by renaming them under the broader term "non-dominant." While I appreciate the need for this renaming, I feel that for the sake of clarity throughout the thesis, it may be easier for readers to contextualize the analysis if they have a better understanding of the *specific* ways particular participants were constructed. I also hope that throughout the thesis, readers will recognize the centrality I am placing on relations of power in the ESL classroom, so in deferring to more mainstream terminologies like "minority," I hope there is an understanding that its usage is in no way a deliberate attempt to relegate issues of power to the margins.

University's academic literacy program and to those who work and study within it. I then outline the research methodology I felt would best reflect both the understanding of complexity in analysis, but concomitantly, issues of power in which these complexities are embedded. I therefore discuss why I chose to use a critical ethnographic framework for my thesis research and describe the procedures I undertook for my study over the course of the year. But how I related the theoretical and methodological discourses to my research was dependent not only on the research epistemologies that I chose to inform my study, but on my researcher positionalities which led me to choose these epistemologies to begin with. Chapter 4 thus outlines how the negotiation of these positionalities, generally, and the negotiation of my racialized identity, specifically, led me to choose a critical qualitative research epistemology for the research and writing of my thesis. Part methodology and part data analysis, the chapter reveals the discriminations experienced by a teacher of colour in the ESL program under study and highlights the complexities of conducting research in racialized spaces.

In Chapter 5, I describe Pacific University's academic literacy program's innovative vision for language education, and I outline the educational change staff initiated in hopes of realizing this pedagogy. In the same chapter though, I also present the challenges the program faced in relation to the disjunctions between the program's pedagogy and the instructors' practices. Through classroom observational data, I outline and analyze how these dialogic classrooms, at times, became transmissive, monologic ones, and how discourses of essentialization and reification can be inadvertently reproduced through "critical" analyses of culture. From these findings, I discuss the need for a language pedagogy which brings to the fore issues of power and inequity to hopefully bring about a critical reconceptualization of Pacific University's academic literacy classrooms. In this vein, in Chapter 6, I propose that a shift to Critical EAP (Benesch, 2001), specifically, or critical language education, generally, may not only bring cohesion to a divided program, but may simultaneously address and contest

the racialized discourses circulating within it. Thus, through the recounting and analysis of critical incidents taken from my research data, I identify the specific challenges the instructors need to address before they can bring a critical language pedagogy to their classrooms and their practices. I do not attempt to minimize the difficulties entailed in educational change, but believe that this change needs to happen in order for Pacific University's ESL classrooms to become fair and equitable ones. I realize that the struggle to negotiate the program pedagogy, though, is also part and parcel of the struggle to negotiate the identities of the language teachers involved. For this reason, I conclude the chapter with a reimagining of both second language teacher education and second language teacher identity in hopes of re-envisioning our language classrooms as sites of power and possibility for both students and teachers alike. I then conclude the thesis in Chapter 7 with directions for continued research and with my final reflections on my hopes for ESL's future.

In Chapter 2 then, I situate my research within my understandings of four broader areas of inquiry: language and culture, English for Academic Purposes, Critical EAP, and the notion of identity and investment. Combined, their intersections within language education formed the theoretical framework for my research presented here. As Pacific University's EAP program focuses on the intersections of language and culture, I begin my literature review by outlining the interconnections of language and culture as they have been theorized within English language education. I highlight the differing ways in which culture has been conceptualized in ESL and the varying approaches that have been used in its analysis in the language classroom. To introduce the type of ESL program Pacific University's language program would fall under, I follow with an outlining of a subfield of ESL called English for Academic Purposes which addresses English language skills purportedly needed (and desired) by language students in higher education settings. But in addressing the interconnection between language and power and how power pervades all aspects of English and ESL education, I argue that traditional

notions of EAP need to move beyond pragmatic English skills in order to provide students with opportunities to interact with English in more emancipatory ways.

I turn to Benesch's (2001) framework of "Critical EAP," which addresses power relations in academic English discourse. But while critical pedagogical approaches to language education such as the one Benesch proposes may assist us in the reimagining of English as a means for agency rather than dominance, a further framework is needed to investigate those who mediate the possibility (or impossibility) of this reimagining. So I conclude the chapter with an analysis of Norton's (2000a, 2001) theories of identity and investment which speak to the ways in which language learner identities are negotiated through the discourses of the language classroom. In the same vein, however, I believe her framework can be equally important to a more complex understanding of language teachers' identities, and using Norton's framework, I investigate not just how teacher identities are similarly negotiated, but how their identities are implicated in the *creation* of language classroom discourses themselves.

Chapter 2: SITUATING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical frameworks at the foundation of my thesis research are language and culture, English for Academic Purposes, critical pedagogy and Critical EAP (Benesch, 2001), and identity and language learning. These four main themes pervaded the research from beginning to end, but the way they intersected during my research brought to light other sub-themes such as educational change (Fullan, 1993, 1999, 2001) and curriculum innovation (Markee, 1994, 1997, 2001); identity and performativity (e.g., Butler, 1993, 2001); and race, racism, and antiracist education (e.g., Dei, 1996, 2006). In this chapter, I will present the four main theoretical perspectives and how my understandings of these theories guided my research questions at Pacific University's ESL program. As the thesis progresses, though, I will provide brief introductions to the theories behind the various sub-themes that arose throughout the unfolding and analysis of my research data. I start with a brief discussion of the intersections of language and culture which served as the underlying focus for the pedagogical approach I investigated at Pacific University's ESL program.

2.1 Language and Culture

Why is there a need to consider culture in the language classroom to begin with? On a theoretical level, Hall (2002) points out that:

> language is at the same time a repository of culture and a tool by which culture is created . . . Because culture is located not in individual mind but in activity, any study of language is by necessity a study of culture. (p. 19)

Because of this inextricable link between language and culture, ESL education has long been interested in investigating its relationship and the pedagogical applications of notions of "culture" in language teaching and learning.[9] But while many may agree that the two are

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[9] See, for example, edited volumes by Hinkel (1999) and Lange and Paige (2003) dedicated entirely to culture in second language teaching and learning.

undoubtedly interconnected, there is less consensus about what culture actually is and how it should be addressed in the curriculum. Whether culture is conceptualized as "the fifth skill"[10] or cultural canons--static, monolithic entities with the ability to be summarized in list or book form (e.g., Hirsch, 1987)--much of the debate on how culture should be "taught" appears rooted in the very notions of how it should be defined.

2.1.1 Defining culture

Courchêne (1996) illustrates one of the reasons for the difficulties of addressing the notion of culture within a Canadian ESL curriculum:

> This decision to teach culture in a systematic and integrated manner implies that somewhere a sufficiently precise definition of Canadian culture exists to allow curriculum planners to identify its components. It further assumes that one is able to describe these components in sufficient detail that they can become the content of . . . an integrated teaching program. (p. 3)

In relation to what Courchêne describes, it is interesting to note the possibility for differences in conceptualizations of culture to arise even within one language program. For example, what one person may perceive of as "components" of Canadian culture can vary greatly from another person's perceptions. Either way, whatever they determine as culture or "cultural" is what will be presented in the language classroom. Thus, due to such complexities surrounding culture, it is not surprising that ESL theorists have yet to agree upon either a singular conception of it or a pedagogy for addressing it. Differences will inevitably arise depending on the lens that one chooses in the analysis of the concept, but as I recognize that all education is steeped in relations

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[10] Relating cultural "skill" to the four skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking (see Damen, 1986).

of power[11], I use the lens of power here in my analysis of the relationship between language and culture.

Critical theorists have argued that culture cannot be analyzed without considering issues of power relations. As Kubota (1999) states:

> what is defined as culture or what constitutes culture is closely related to the question of who defines it and what kind of power relations exist between those who define it and those who are defined by it. (p. 17; cf. Apple, 1990; Kramsch, 1993, 1995; Pennycook, 2000)

Herein lies further complexity--through our "teaching" of culture, are we integrating, validating, and respecting the knowledge and experiences ("cultural capital") of our students? Or might our conceptualizations of culture create or perpetuate inequitable discourses within our classrooms? For example, although culture is still perceived by some as "big C" conceptions of culture, for the most part, the field of ESL has generally rejected such monolithic views in favour of more sociocultural theorizations of it (Hall, 2002). A transmissive model of culture based on assimilation and memorization (e.g., Hirsch, 1987) has been critiqued as it:

> espouse[s] a view of culture removed from the trappings of power, conflict, and struggle, and in doing so . . . attempts to legitimate a view of learning and literacy that not only marginalizes the voices, language, and cultures of subordinate groups but also degrades teaching and learning to the practice of implementation and mastery. (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 39)

Viewing culture as an absolute body of knowledge or reducing culture to national food and dance serves only to oversimplify the complex social and political contexts that shape what we call "culture" and make invisible the relations of power in which it exists. Thus, sociocultural theory desires to view culture as constantly evolving and being continually

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[11] I introduce theories of the relationship between language and power in Section 2.3.1.

reshaped through our social interactions. So instead of seeing culture as static and homogeneous, culture becomes negotiated and contested. In initial theorizations of culture within the field of TESOL[12], Atkinson (1999) and Courchêne (1996) conceptualize culture as a set of principles. That is, rather than reducing the concept to a number of concretes, Courchêne discusses the "characteristics of culture" to guide the way practitioners would develop and, later, present notions of culture in their classrooms. Similar to Courchêne, Atkinson's principles of culture theorize, for example, that "all humans are individuals" (p. 641). This first principle serves as a reminder that culture should not be perceived as homogeneous and needs to acknowledge diversity amongst those living within any one culture rather than make blanket assumptions and create stereotypes about a particular group or individual.

While these frameworks provide us with a starting point in the reanalysis of culture, the field of ESL has now generally moved towards an alternative conceptualization of culture as discursively constructed. The importance of understanding the/a culture of a target language thus relates to how language is believed to reflect culture and vice-versa. Because of this, Corbett (2003) emphasizes that "to understand how a community uses language it is deemed necessary to understand the community: the dynamic system of its beliefs, values and dreams, and how it negotiates and articulates them" (p. 19). But how do we go about understanding the community and its "culture"?

2.1.2 "Teaching" culture

In her influential book, *Contexts and Culture in Language Teaching*, Kramsch (1993) proposes a discovery of "third places." Through a language learners' cross-cultural dialogic exploration of both their own and the target language's culture, they learn to analyze and interpret culture within a hybridized space (cf. Byram & Feng, 2005; Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2004; Ilieva, 2000, 2001). In this way, the concept of culture is transformed into a

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[12] TESOL = Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

process of meaning-making and negotiation and brings language learners to their third places, "the culture that emerges . . . of a different kind from either C1 [first culture/learner's culture] or C2 [second culture/target culture]" (Kramsch, 1993, pp. 231-232). By focusing on the role of language in this negotiation and construction of a new culture, she forefronts how language and culture are intertwined, and how they are further embedded within discourses of power. Similar to Kramsch's view of culture, within the Canadian context, Ilieva (2000) conceptualizes culture as "a process of making sense of the world and a site of social differences and struggles over meaning and representation of people with multiple and shifting identities" (p. 52). Ilieva's theory highlights the centrality of students' identities in the shaping of their understanding of culture in the classroom (see also James' [2000] analytical framework).

In Ilieva's (2001) "culture exploration" process, she asks students to take an ethnographic approach to culture and bring their own experiences into their investigations of culture. This incorporation of the students' experiences, combined with a critical discourse analysis of their observations of difference, is critical to Ilieva's conception of cultural negotiation for she believes that:

> eliciting students' experience serves to validate that experience and allows them to explore the contradictions, personal confrontations, and conflicts that arise from cultural differences. The process directs the students to fit their individual experiences into a larger cultural perspective that includes such significant positionings as class, race, gender, or sexual orientation, for example. Through this process, the implication of power relations and struggles over meanings in cultural representations are also addressed. (p. 12)

Within this process of developing cultural understanding, Ilieva's culture exploration does not aim to impart cultural "facts" to students, but instead, serves to provide students with a process that will enable them to analyze and understand cultural ambiguities and contradictions through

their own positioned identities (cf. Silberstein, 2003). Through this form of critical discourse analysis, students become active creators, rather than passive assimilators, of cultural knowledge. And as students move towards critical approaches to the investigation of culture, "culture learning can thus be conceptualized as socialization, by the teacher as mediator, into another culture . . . . to make [students] part of the group who see themselves as mediators, able to compare, juxtapose, and analyze" (Byram & Feng, 2005, p. 925; cf. Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman, 2004).

In this brief introduction to the interrelationship between language and culture, I have discussed the difficulties researchers and practitioners have faced when attempting to address the issue of culture in the ESL classroom. It remains that much of this difficulty is due to the complexity of the notion of culture and whether it does (or should) consist of discrete, teachable "facts." Instead, I argue that culture is a dynamic notion that is ever-changing and full of inconsistencies. Moreover, it is a notion that is deeply embedded in discourses of power. As Pennycook (2000) writes, "cultures are not static frameworks but competing ways of framing the world" (p. 96). So questions such as "Whose culture is it?" should remind us that cultural discussions are intrinsically political discussions. But then again, I believe that *all* discussions of education and educational practice are political discussions, and in this vein, I continue this chapter with an introduction to the theoretical framework of English for Academic Purposes and its subsequent shift towards a more critical approach to academic literacy.

2.2 English for Academic Purposes

English for Academic Purposes, a strand of language teaching stemming from the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), has evolved greatly since its inception in the 1940s. Since its introduction, it has been subject to much debate concerning aspects of pedagogy, methodology, and ideology. In the past decade, particularly controversial debates have arisen in regards to the issue of power and politics in EAP. As with other fields of English language

study, critical theorists have begun to focus on EAP classes as sites of struggle between institutional demands, teacher positioning, academic agendas, and student needs. Swales (1997) observes how the problematization of EAP and its traditions "seems to have moved from the administrative background to the curricular center, and from there toward some questioning of the nature of the EAP enterprise itself" (p. 373).

For example, Benesch, a vocal critic of "pragmatic" approaches to EAP, critiques EAP programs which typically have "not critically analyzed academic content and teaching" (1996, p. 730). She claims that a discourse of pragmatism has led to a supposedly neutral approach to EAP. She and other critical theorists, however, question whether such an apolitical approach to any sort of English language pedagogy is actually possible due to the power that English holds globally. Zamel (1993/1998) voices similar sentiments as she feels "we need to raise questions about the nature, value, and use of academic discourse, about its assumptions about what it includes and what it doesn't, about who belongs and who doesn't" (p. 196). Thus, in the next section, I will discuss traditional notions of EAP but will follow this discussion with an outlining of the most recent move of EAP towards a curriculum and pedagogy which embodies the principles of critical pedagogy.

2.2.1 EAP and academic literacy

Historically, the basis of English for Academic Purposes has been rooted in the linguistic and rhetorical forms of English and, through time, has shifted to more pragmatic study skills such as academic reading and writing as well as study strategies such as skimming and using a dictionary.[13] Jordan (1989) addresses the centrality of skills when he states, "Study skills is seen as the key component in EAP" (p. 151). He claims that skills are of primary importance no matter what subject a student studies and that once these skills are acquired, students can then move on to more subject-specific rhetorical aspects (Jordan, 1997). The concentration on

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[13] See Jordan (1997, pp. 7-8) for a comprehensive list of academic study skills in pragmatist EAP.

specific academic skills is highlighted in many recent EAP publications such as Carkin (2005), Connor (2002), Flowerdew (2002), Flowerdew and Peacock (2001), Hyon (2001), and Starfield (2004), to name only a few.

The goals of EAP are many. Besides fostering the development of academic discourse and skills for academic success, embedded in this is the notion of learner autonomy—i.e., the nurturing of student independence so students continue to achieve academic success outside of the EAP classroom (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; Jordan, 1997; Spack, 1988). Casanave (2002) aspires to engender this learner autonomy in her students by assisting them in their integration into the academy. She seeks to establish "what could be called a mini-community of practice in which all students [are] participating in one sense or another as novice academic writers" (p. 75). One way this community can be created is by framing academic literacy education authentically within the content and/or context of what students will encounter in their mainstream post-secondary education.

English for Academic Purposes literature outlines three types of EAP instruction: sheltered EAP, adjunct EAP, and theme-based EAP. A sheltered EAP course is based on academic content that has been modified (or simplified) by a "language sensitive" content specialist (Stoller, 2001, p. 211) in hopes of ensuring more effective communication of content to language students. An adjunct EAP course sees language students taking two courses—a content course and a language course—both involving the same curriculum and content. This type of EAP instruction allows for increased authenticity as students are mainstreamed into the regular content classes while still receiving additional language instruction to assist with the learning of this content. Theme-based EAP refers to language instruction based on the choosing of selected topics by either the students or teacher. According to Flowerdew and Peacock (2001), "theme-based instruction focuses on developing overall academic skills and is not targeted at a particular discipline" (p. 181); however, even though this type of EAP instruction is

not subject-specific, it nevertheless maintains the importance of using authentic texts. This aim to maintain academic authenticity is a common thread amongst these three approaches, as EAP hopes to engage language learners in a meaningful and realistic fashion (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; Stoller, 1999), particularly in adjunct EAP courses where students actually participate in mainstream academic classrooms. But it is this quest for authenticity that has caused some controversy in the field.

In an influential (and controversial) article which generated numerous responses and critiques (e.g., Braine, 1988; Johns, 1988; Stoller, 1999), Spack (1988) discusses her concern with adjunct and other content-based courses in the teaching of academic literacy due to EAP instructors' lack of content knowledge. She asks why instructors would attempt to teach something outside of their immediate academic background and advocates for EAP practitioners to concentrate solely on teaching the English language, not the subjects. Instead, she claims, EAP emphasis should be "on general principles of inquiry and rhetoric, with emphasis on writing from sources" (p. 29). This view of academic literacy instruction assumes the transferability of these general writing skills to whatever academic task students may encounter and will thus "prepare students to write in future academic courses, whatever the subject matter or formal constraints" (Benesch, 2001, p. 37).

Critics of Spack (1988), however, argue that "'general' academic English, employing artificially-constructed topics and materials, is insufficient for students who are exposed daily to the linguistic and cultural demands of authentic university classes" (Johns, 1988, p. 706). Hence, because there is not enough generalizability in academia, one needs to be content- and context-specific in EAP instruction. Furthermore, teaching general writing skills assumes that learners fully understand the material and genres in any given discipline. This view neglects, however, the sometimes slow and complex process of familiarization and acculturation into a subject field which may also influence a language learner's (in)ability to compose in the second

language (Jordan, 1997, p. 98). Aside from Spack's critique of the particular types of EAP approaches in practice, critique of the field has also arisen in regards to EAP being overly pragmatic and insufficiently political.

2.2.2 Problematizing EAP

English for Academic Purposes' concentration on rhetorical, discourse, and academic study skills has been critiqued further for its oversimplification of the complexities of academia and academic discourse. Zamel (1993/1998), for example, argues against the way EAP is reduced to "identifying the language, conventions, and generic forms that supposedly represent the various disciplines" (p. 188). She points out that this reduction of discourse and rhetoric results in knowledge reproduction and does not result in a student's full understanding of the conventions. She argues that such an approach doesn't recognize that academic conventions are complex and subject to change, and that they are guided by contexts which can include differences in teachers' methodology and expectations as well as in students' approaches and interpretations at the time (Ibid., p. 189).

Genre analysis, for example, has similarly been critiqued for its narrow scope and over-application. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) question EAP's fixation on genre analysis and other rhetorical skills when "variation in World Englishes has given rise to calls in some quarters for greater tolerance of different rhetorical styles in international publication" (p. 23). Thus, a focus on prescriptive genres may not be reflective of recent academic trends and global shifts. Paltridge (2001) therefore calls for a reconceptualization in the way we approach genre analysis; that is, while Paltridge is not advocating for the removal of genre analysis in EAP, he instead emphasizes the need for:

> a procedure which focuses on the process of learning about, and acquiring genres, rather than one which concentrates solely on the end product, or specific variety of genre . . . .
> We cannot hope to predict the wide range of genres our students will, in time, need to be

able to participate in . . . we need to help our learners find ways of discovering how genres differ from one another as well as how the same genre may vary. (p. 59)

Like Zamel's (1993/1998) argument of the complexity and changeability of academic conventions, Paltridge highlights the similar complexities and variations in genre analysis. Calls such as these for a reanalysis of genre theory and other academic literacy methodologies concur in any case with EAP's professed goal of establishing learner autonomy.

Benesch (2001) underscores this focus on learner autonomy as she explains one of the greatest strengths of English for Academic Purposes as "its responsiveness to students' reasons for studying English. It analyzes their purposes for enrolling in a language course and offers instruction focused on those aims" (p. 51); nevertheless, within Benesch's compliment lies critique of EAP's underlying deficiencies when she continues:

yet, because needs analysis in EAP is not critical, it is usually little more than an accounting of academic requirements; and, because the instruction is not dialogic, the traditional EAP teacher is mainly a conduit for efficient inculcation of those requirements rather than an activist who could invite students to question them. (Ibid.)

Further reflecting on how EAP might facilitate students' own academic literacy agendas, Hyon (1996) advocates for a re-examination of EAP's focus to discover a new pedagogy that "encourages resistance to academic practices that limit the full social participation of ESL students" (p. 716). In contrast, pragmatist EAP does not adequately address the challenges that EAP students face in striving for academic success as it does not take into consideration issues of power within the academic system.

Hammond & Macken-Horarik (1999) argue, for example, that pragmatic skills such as the teaching of key genres "does nothing to change the power structures that privilege these [genres] and that give rise to inequality in the first place" (p. 530). Rather than being asked to renegotiate these prescriptive conventions, students are inevitably left with little choice but to

assimilate and reproduce them uncritically. Treating students as knowledge receptacles that must absorb and assimilate knowledge rather than create knowledge can be disempowering for students who are attempting to negotiate their way into their communities of practice. Thus, EAP's heavy concentration on pragmatic academic English skills has been critiqued by critical theorists like Benesch who argue that taking such a narrow approach to this, or any English language instruction for that matter, does not do justice to the central struggles around power and inequity that pervade the larger ESL field.

Benesch's (2001) call for critical inquiry and engagement in academic literacy stems from concerns that "ESP was never, nor is it now, purely a language-teaching enterprise but also a political and economic one" (p. 31). Because of this, she not only forefronts issues of power in EAP and language education, but she hopes to reconceptualize EAP praxis to better enable students to advocate for themselves equal citizenship both in their academic classroom and in their worlds.

2.3 Towards Critical Academic Literacy

Benesch's (1993b, 1999a) and Pennycook's (1994a, 1997) theoretical attention to issues of power and democracy in EAP reflect a recognition that interactions in the micro-community of the classroom are embedded in the macro-community of the world beyond the classroom. This understanding of the relationship between language and power and its implications within language education encouraged Benesch to shift EAP pedagogy from one of pragmatism to "Critical EAP." She advocates for a critical EAP pedagogy that recognizes academic institutions as complex sites in which both disciplinary knowledge and academic success are negotiated and contested and which:

> does not choose between immediate needs and the development of social awareness,
> believing that they can and should be taught simultaneously. A critical EAP teacher

responds to the demands of content courses while encouraging students to question academic life and society. (1999b, p. 579; cf. Benesch, 2001)

But before elaborating further on her vision for a socially-responsive approach to academic literacy, we need to not only understand the role of English and its negotiation inside the EAP classroom, but we need to better understand the role of English outside the classroom within the larger global context. Along this line, I begin my introduction to critical EAP with a discussion of the role of English as an international language and the implications of the power of English on how we might reconceptualize the academic literacy classroom.

2.3.1 Language and power

"English, like all other languages, is . . . a site of struggle over meaning, access, and power"

(Norton Peirce, 1989, p. 405)

That the global spread of English as an International Language (EIL) resulted either naturally or by accident is a claim contested by a number of critical theorists (see, for example, Pennycook, 1994c, 1995, 2001; Phillipson, 1992b; Tollefson, 2000). Believing the English language, itself, or its spread to be neutral would ignore how both are inextricably "bound up with aspects of global relations, such as the spread of capitalism, development aid and the dominance particularly of North American media" (Pennycook, 1994c, p. 13; cf. Lin, 2001). Instead, Phillipson (2000, p. 89) contends that the spread of English language education internationally is a deliberate effort by Western powers to both produce and sustain economic and political dominance and conceals the fact that knowledge and usage of the English language does not result in equal benefits for all people. With this in mind, we need to question whether any global citizen might, in fact, have a choice about the role of English in their lives because a belief of choice assumes "that individuals and countries are somehow free of economic, political, and ideological constraints" (Pennycook, 1995, p. 38).

The suggestion, rather, is that current social and political conditions do not necessarily allow a choice for many seeking participation in the global community to not learn English. Therefore, it becomes problematic to view the learning of English as a free-will choice for certain persons and communities (especially those in traditionally disempowered positions) when the consequences of this "choice" (as it is) have multiple and far-reaching effects. Yet at the same time, viewing the English language and its spread to either be "unequivocally harmful or beneficial is to deny the human agency that shapes how English is used in different circumstances" (Warschauer, 2000, p. 515) and denies the power and possibility that the English language can engender.

In hoping to address the complexity of English language usage in reference to larger global relations of power, more recent scholarship has attempted to reanalyze this oversimplification of the harmful/beneficial assumptions of EIL (Canagarajah, 1993, 1999b, 1999c, 2000; Lin, Wang, Akamaatsu, & Riazi, 2002; Norton & Kamal, 2003; Norton Peirce, 1989; Rubdy, 2001). These reanalyses aim to expose English as a "double-edged sword" and point out that the simultaneous (and contradictory) "costs" of English can be social and economic benefits alongside further global inequities. But assuming that language learners and their communities are wholly unaware of their precarious positioning in relation to EIL and consequently believing that English has no place in communities that have been traditionally oppressed in global relations does not take into consideration "how English is taken up, how people use English, [and] why people choose to use English" (Pennycook, 2001, p. 62). Remaining deterministic about EIL and its spread imagines "no ways by which English can be learned and then used to empower the local communities, or to further their own cultural, social, and educational interests" (Canagarajah, 1999c, pp. 41-42). Rather than failing to recognize possibilities for agency and resistance against the inequities of the spread of English, an alternate perspective to this dilemma would be to "make our students alert to the need for

negotiating the terms and contexts in which they will use English, aware of the conflicting values it represents" (Canagarajah, 2000, pp. 130-131).

Resisting English as an international language is not without its contradictions, however. Difficulty lies in dealing with the paradox of EIL. Pennycook (1998a) highlights this quandary when he asks, "How does one establish a relationship to the languages and cultures of the colonizers when they represent both colonial oppression and the possibilities for anti-colonial struggle?" (p. 213; cf. Tolman, 2006). A resolution to this rests neither in the complete rejection of English nor in the uncritical embracing of English, but rather, as Canagarajah (1999c, 2000, 2001, 2002a), Norton Peirce (1989), and Pennycook (1994c, 1998a, 2001) so fervently argue, rests in the understanding that discourses of domination or oppression are not the only discourses available to those enveloped in the English world. Existing amongst these discourses is also a discourse of resistance that is situated in the finding of one's own voice and the appropriation of English for one's own ends. And it is in this deliberate use of English as a counterdiscourse or the "writing back" of English that illustrates how "language is as much a *site* as it is a *means* for struggle" (Pennycook, 1994c, p. 267; cf. Canagarajah, 1993).

It is from the application of these macro-analyses of EIL and power to a micro-analysis of ESL education and power that many critical theorists challenge the claim that any English language education is (or has ever been) ideologically neutral or value-free (e.g., Benesch, 1999b, 2001; Canagarajah, 1999c, 2002a; Delpit, 1993/1998; Hall & Eggington, 2000; Morgan, 1998; Phillipson, 1992b, 2001; Tollefson, 1991, 1995, 2002; Wong, 2006). Instead, Auerbach (1995) argues that the broader field of ESL is pervaded by a discourse of neutrality which serves to make "invisible" issues of power and dominance:

> Pedagogical choices about curriculum development, content, materials, classroom
> processes, and language use, although appearing to be informed by apolitical

professional considerations, are, in fact, inherently ideological in nature, with significant

implications for learners' socioeconomic roles. (p. 9; cf. Thompson, 2000)

But in relation to English for Academic Purposes, specifically, Allison (1994, 1996), on the

other hand, contests the way traditional pragmatic approaches to academic literacy have been

characterized as wholly unaware of politics and social inequity.

When Jordan (1997) discusses "possible roles for teachers and students in group

discussions" in EAP (p. 12), critical analysis and engagement are clearly absent. Instead, focus

is on "facts," "authoritative information," "*perhaps* [italics added] challenging consensus," and

"reducing tension" (Ibid., p. 12). Allison would argue though that while some practitioners may

at times neglect issues of politics and power in the EAP classroom, he does not consider a

systemic lack of critical analysis the norm in a pragmatic approach to EAP nor representative of

EAP as a field. But while Benesch (1994) and Pennycook (1997) may acknowledge that an

essentialization of EAP pragmatism may not be entirely accurate, they nevertheless qualify their

initial concerns by asserting that while politics may be "mentioned" in EAP, it should, in fact,

be the central focus. Further, while not all academic literacy teachers ignore the political, EAP's

pragmatist discourse and overwhelming focus on skills makes it all the more possible for

practitioners to potentially ignore the political (Pennycook, 1997, p. 254).

Not overtly addressing the status quo and the power relations that position both learners

and teachers within larger academic practices can also be perceived as a conscious effort to

downplay the political in EAP. So rather than engendering an atmosphere where students can

develop the language needed to challenge their positioning in society and in the academy, it has

been argued that pragmatist approaches to academic literacy education work specifically to

maintain and perpetuate these social hierarchies. As Pennycook (1994a) argues:

> a curricular focus on providing students only with academic-linguistic skills for dealing
>
> with academic work in other disciplines misses a crucial opportunity to help students to

develop forms of linguistic, social and cultural criticism that would be of much greater

benefit to them for understanding and questioning how language works both within and

outside educational institutions. (p. 16; cf. Pennycook, 1997, 2001)

EAP needs to go beyond academic theories of genre analysis and essay writing to involve other

forms of knowledge that address the educational as well as societal positions students are

placed. In light of this, it is imperative that students and teachers think more broadly about the

notion of student needs in the EAP classroom and critically reflect on what it means to learn

English.

Integral, then, to our reflections on English for Academic Purposes' pedagogy,

methodology, and curriculum should be the question: What are the investments students have in

EAP and how do we consolidate these with our practices?[14] If, in Norton's (2000a, 2001) view,

students' investments in language learning are an investment in a wider range of identities and

possibilities, what can we, as educators, do to help make their language learning experiences a

success? And further, what is considered "success" for and by our students? Recognizing that

student investments are central to their learning, how, too, do we ensure that the multilayered

investments our diverse student body bring to the classroom are reflected in our pedagogy?

These questions should no doubt be at the forefront of a reconceptualization of student needs

analysis. In this regard, I turn to Benesch's (1996, 1999a, 2001) more nuanced approach to

needs analysis that places students at the centre of the EAP curriculum while simultaneously

recognizing the complex interconnection between identity and investment, power, and EAP

pedagogy.

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[14] I will speak more to Norton's (2000a, 2001) theories of identity and investment later in this chapter.

2.3.2 Reconceptualizing needs analysis in academic literacy

Needs analysis plays a significant role in the English for Academic Purposes curriculum and "should be the starting point for devising syllabuses, courses, materials and the kind of teaching and learning that takes place" (Jordan, 1997, p. 22). Numerous procedures exist through which needs analyses are completed, some of which include interviews, questionnaires, and direct observation of both staff and students.[15] Jordan admits though, that "in practice, most needs analysis choices will be determined by time, money and resources" (Ibid., p. 38; cf. Braine, 2001). In this case, the academic institution inevitably decides student need, typically not recognizing the political nature of how needs are determined. But through such a unilateral decision process, pragmatist discourses of EAP may not attend to "the possibility of a mismatch between institutional demands and learners' perceptions of what they need" (Benesch, 2001, p. 42). Thus, a major obstacle to be addressed in regards to determining learners' needs involves critically negotiating students' language goals and needs and educational institutions' wants.

Benesch recognizes how "some will look at the [needs analysis] situation and see what students must do to perform well in that situation; others will see where possibilities for change exist" (2001, p. 736). Flowerdew (1995), for example, presents a revised process for needs analysis that takes into account the learner at every stage of language learning--specifically, their needs, "necessities," "lacks," and "wants." *Necessities* refers to "what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation" (p. 24), *lacks* refers to "the gap between [students'] existing language proficiency and the target proficiency" (p. 20), and *wants* refers to "what [students] perceive as their needs" (p. 20; cf. Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). But

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[15] See Jordan (1997, Chapter 2) for a detailed description of traditional approaches to EAP needs analysis. For examples of needs analyses carried out in various ESP situations, see Basturkmen (1998), Chan (2001), Frank (2000), Jasso-Aguilar (1999), Johns (1981), Ostler (1980), and Sun (1989). For a comprehensive summary of these and other studies of EAP needs analyses, see Tait (1999), who also outlines the differing methodologies used for these needs analyses.

critics take issue with the terminology of such conceptualizations of needs analysis as "lacks" suggest student deficits in understanding academic knowledge or the culture of academia.

Supporting traditional pragmatist needs analyses and holding the belief that students may somehow be academically lacking is Jordan (1997) who states that:

> if . . . students are studying EAP in an English L1 situation, there might easily be a conflict between their customary learning style and that presumed or expected in the target situation. In this case, explanation, exemplification and practice are needed so that adjustment can be facilitated. (p. 95)

Canagarajah (2001), however, questions these conflicts in learning style when he argues against the making of assumptions about what students do and do not already know. Instead, Canagarajah makes a case that due to the prominence of English as an international language:

> so many of our students already come to classrooms with a range of center-based academic and non-academic discourses (in addition to their indigenous variants) . . . what they need is not another introduction to these discourses but, more importantly, ways of employing them creatively and critically. (p. 130)

But by making assumptions about our EAP students and their (dis)abilities, we ensure that there continues to be a gap between what is reflected in the EAP curriculum and what the students might actually need or desire.

Benesch (2001) further challenges the adequacy of using the terminology "needs analysis," itself, as the term fails to recognize that such a process involves much more than a simple perception of needs and is, instead, "fraught with ambiguity, struggle, and contradiction" (p. 44). Therefore, to use the label of "needs" serves only to downplay the political agendas students face in the quest to make EAP more reflective of their actual desires. She argues that a redefinition of the needs analysis process is paramount and introduces "critical needs analysis" as a first step in a needs analysis reconceptualization:

Critical needs analysis assumes that institutions are hierarchical and that those at the

bottom are often entitled to more power than they have. It seeks areas where greater

equality might be achieved. Critical needs analysis is a reaction to the pragmatic stance

of EAP/ESP. (Benesch, 1996, p. 736)

Because traditional notions of needs analysis tend to focus on investigating learner needs in

terms of narrowly-defined, externally-imposed goals, it is both prudent and necessary to

reconceptualize needs analysis to reflect the investments students enter our classrooms with. For

this reason, Benesch has introduced critical needs analysis to both expose and rectify the power

imbalances in traditional needs analyses. Yet she recognizes that it is not enough to

acknowledge the existence of power differentials in the needs analysis process; hence, she

introduces the concept of "rights analysis" as a means to highlight "power relations and

theorizes EAP students as potentially active participants rather than compliant subjects" (1999a,

p. 315).

Unlike pragmatist EAP needs analyses, rights analysis places ownership of learning and

learning needs back in the hands of students. Yet while Benesch (2001) advocates for rights

analysis, she is not arguing for the complete rejection of needs analysis; rather, she explains that

the two, in fact, can and should co-exist simultaneously:

Needs analysis grounds EAP in the practical realities of academic assignments, but it

overlooks other realities, such as inequities in and out of academic situations . . . offering

rights analysis as a critical alternative to needs analysis . . . attends to possibilities of

more informed democratic participation . . . . encouraging habits of social cooperation to

build healthy, participatory communities. (p. 63)

As to how rights analysis is translated into practice, it is envisioned through critical engagement

with events happening around us. That is, students are encouraged and enabled to interact with

academic content and curricula in their classrooms in a way which facilitates their own language

learning agendas that also go beyond the academy. The notion of *rights* should also reflect a notion of students' concomitant *responsibilities* to the larger local and global communities in which they live. It is through the fostering of such an academic community of practice that students' complex and diverse identities and investments are now represented in the academic literacy classroom.

Benesch's focus on engaging students in becoming critical and participatory citizens both within the communities of the EAP classroom and the larger global community outside is part and parcel of her politicized view of academic literacy instruction. And in the following section, I will speak to how larger principles of critical theory which informed the creation of Critical EAP have thus moved EAP in a new direction to address the structural and institutional contexts which embed academic English in wider discourses of power.

2.3.3 Critical EAP and possibility

Benesch promotes a merging of EAP with critical pedagogy (2001, p. xv). Critical pedagogy recognizes that issues of power pervade all aspects of education from policy and curriculum to the methodology and textbooks we use in the classroom. As a result, these power structures can serve to exclude, marginalize, and silence our students, so it is imperative to find a means by which educators can recreate their practices to make them both validating and enabling for students and their needs.

In an educational context, Canagarajah (2005b) defines critical pedagogy as:

a practice motivated by a distinct attitude toward classrooms and society. Critical students and teachers are prepared to situate learning in the relevant social context, unravel the implications of power in pedagogical activity, and commit themselves to transforming the means and ends of learning, in order to construct more egalitarian, equitable, and ethical educational and social environments. (p. 932)

Alongside with this, Pennycook (1990) identifies the two principles that encompass critical work—namely "a notion of critique that also carries with it a sense of possibility for transformation, and an exploration of the nature of and relationship between culture, knowledge and power" (p. 307). This transformation is embarked on through a process of collaborative dialogue not only between students and teachers, but also between students themselves. In a critical pedagogical framework, all knowledge is subject to question and critique. A critical approach to academic literacy therefore hopes to turn attention away from the dispersion of skills and facts and advocates, instead, for the de/reconstruction and "pluralization of knowledge" (Pennycook, 1997, p. 263).

Critical EAP, specifically, encourages students to play an active role in shaping the EAP curriculum. Rather than allowing the academy and the EAP curriculum to prescribe what students need to know and should know for academic study particularly, a critical approach aims to uncover what students desire to know and should know for success both in and outside the classroom:

> Critical EAP goes beyond pragmatic instrumentalism and a limited notion of student
> success as fulfilling content class requirements . . . . Critical EAP helps students
> articulate and formalize their resistance, to participate more democratically as members
> of an academic community and in the larger society. (Benesch, 2001, p. 61; see also
> Mayher, 1992)

Examples of a critical EAP framework in practice have been outlined in recent publications. Swales (1997), for example, recounts going beyond genre analysis to incorporate "discussions of anglophonicity and its insidious spread . . . the causes and effects of being members of small and large academic discourse communities; and . . . the histories of different rhetorical traditions" (p. 381). Therefore, not only does he introduce the pragmatic aspects of EAP in

terms of discourse structures, he uses them to address the political aspects of English and the power imbalances that are embedded in both the learning and use of these structures.

Similar to Swales, Cope and Kalantzis (1993) call for a more critical approach to genre analysis that leads to "mastery of a tool which encourages development and change (even disruption) rather than simply reproduction" (p. 245). Also tying together the pragmatic and the political is Clarence-Fincham (2001) who designed a program in a South African university that would "facilitate the development of academic reading skills while . . . encouraging a critical understanding of the university environment" (p. 249). In this program, she opened up for critique various aspects of university life that included school policies perceived by students to be sexist and the way some university lectures and classroom materials positioned EAP students as deficient or lacking in knowledge and experience.

Starfield (2004) introduced the use of concordancing in the analysis of how authority is negotiated through the strategic use of particular words and discourses in academic texts. In turn, her students turned to the critical use of corpus in their own academic writing to similarly negotiate more authoritative academic identities for themselves. Other examples of a critical approach to academic literacy are outlined in Cummins (2000), Hunter and Morgan (2001), and Morgan (2002), all of whom discuss the development of critical media literacy skills to analyze the way in which knowledge and reality is constructed and manipulated in media such as the internet and print. Although their research and my research presented here highlights the reasoning behind the evolution of more pragmatic approaches to EAP to those more critical, no pedagogy is, nor should be, above critical analysis. But perhaps due to its relatively recent appearance in EAP literature, little critique has been made specifically about critical EAP, itself. However, as with other critical language approaches more generally, criticism of critical EAP stems from the larger discourse from which it was developed—namely, critical pedagogy.

There are a number of critiques which continue to arise in the analysis of critical

pedagogical approaches. Specifically, some have taken issue with its translation into practice, its

ideological roots, and its professed ability to empower students in its praxis. The first of these

critiques, that critical pedagogy remains overly theoretical and has not been well-enough

grounded in the complexities of the ESL classroom nor classroom practice, has been stressed by

Johnston (1999), who articulates critical pedagogy's "failure to make explicit connections

between its abstract philosophical position and what does or should go on in actual classroom

teaching" (p. 559; cf. Dlamini, 2002). Although I have outlined here several examples of critical

EAP in practice, more research needs to be done to more clearly illustrate what forms a critical

EAP curriculum might take, especially in the context of language education. Also needed is

further research into both the possibilities and the limitations of a critical ESL pedagogy and the

implications of these on our teaching practices. And it is in the recognition of this gap in ESL

research that I undertook and present here my own qualitative case study research.

Further criticism of critical pedagogy has also arisen from concerns that this pedagogy

is, or may become, as hegemonic and colonizing as those that it attempts to displace (Johnston,

1999). Feminist scholars, for example, highlight how critical pedagogy has traditionally lacked

sufficient examination of the intersections of gender and race in inequitable power relations

(Ellsworth, 1992; Gore, 1992). Hence, the worry that critical pedagogy has the ability to

become, as Foucault (1980) has termed, a new "regime of truth" (Gore, 1993, p. 56; cf. Simon-

Maeda, 2004b) has been raised by many who are apprehensive about any pedagogy purporting

to be more equitable than another—especially when such a claim is made within a discourse that

emphasizes the inevitable interconnection between education and power. That is, if we come to

the belief that all education is (at its most extreme) indoctrination on some level, how are we to

determine whether a critical approach is "better" or "worse" than another or, in this case, more

equitable than another? As Kumashiro (2004) writes, "critical pedagogy needs to move away

from saying that students need this/my critical perspective since such an approach merely replaces one (socially hegemonic) framework for seeing the world with another (academically hegemonic) one" (p. 39; cf. Fox, 2002). Similar sentiments have been voiced by Allison (1994, 1996), who applies this critique specifically to critical EAP.

In his work, Allison (1994, 1996) has expressed his unease with critical EAP's "ideologist" discourses. Though in making this claim, he suggests that other pedagogical discourses (such as a pragmatist EAP discourse in this case) are, in contrast, free of trappings of ideology and politics. But I argue here (as I have outlined in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1) that *all* education and pedagogy is shaped by particular values and beliefs (Tejeda et al., 2003). The motivations behind a pragmatist discourse in academic literacy are no exception and must therefore be seen as political in the same way that critical EAP has been viewed. Ironically, the critique of the discourses of pragmatist EAP as ideological (in that they ignore larger issues of power both in and out of the academic literacy classroom) is precisely the same line of argumentation. As Benesch (1993b) asserts, "Being unaware of the political implications of one's choices, or claiming that those choices are neutral, does not mean that one's pedagogy is free of ideology" (p. 707; cf. Benesch, 1999b). Critical pedagogy and critical EAP thus aim to question these underlying ideologies and disrupt, rather than contribute to and reproduce further, oppressive discourses. But while critical pedagogy speaks to the need to empower students in the co-construction of alternative discourses, the final critique of critical pedagogy questions such aims.

The notion of "empowerment" and critical pedagogy's claim to empower students in the classroom has been taken to task.[16] At the centre of this argument is the highly contested notion of the term "empowerment," as critics argue that power can neither be given, taken, nor divided

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[16] See Cummins (1996) for an elaboration on the notion of "empowerment."

like pieces of a pie, nor can relations of power be somehow erased from interactions in the classroom. Instead, Johnston (1999) clarifies the importance of an understanding of these relations to recognize that "power is not shared like a commodity so much as negotiated as a process" (p. 560; cf. Ellsworth, 1992; Gore, 1993). Benesch (2001), aware of structural limitations to any pedagogical approach and cognizant of the controversy surrounding "empowerment" acknowledges that:

> Critical EAP does not claim to empower nor does it renounce critical teaching as naïve and unrealistic about the obstacles it faces. Rather, it meets the numerous limit-situations academic settings present, not knowing what the final outcome will be. It makes limit-acts possible and then studies what happens as they are enacted, attending to the exercise of power within classroom settings rather than anticipating particular results.[17] (p. 60)

Indeed, Benesch far from regards critical pedagogy or critical EAP as a panacea; rather, she recognizes that all approaches are entangled in power and complexity, but nevertheless remains hopeful that out of these complexities can arise possibility for change. She hopes a critical reanalysis of pragmatist EAP discourses and a shift to critical EAP may enable further opportunities for the negotiation of more equitable relations and possibilities in the academic literacy classroom.

To clarify then, EAP's concentration on pragmatic skills such as reading and writing is not what critics such as Benesch and Pennycook take issue with per se. Many actually wholeheartedly agree that there is a need and importance to cover rhetoric and discourse in the EAP classroom; however, their critique lies in the assumption that mere knowledge of academic conventions, alone, is adequate for survival in academia. For, as discussed in an earlier section, there are a number of factors underlying what is academically required and needed. From

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[17] The terms "limit-situations" and "limit-acts" refer, literally, to the personal, structural, and other limits of a specific situation and the limitation of acts that are possible or allowed in any given situation.

differences in professors' preferences to students' expectations to course content, academic

discourses are hardly unitary (Casanave, 2002; Hamp-Lyons & Zhang, 2001; Morita, 2004).

Because of this, teaching formal characteristics of genre or any other decontextualized skills in

advance will not necessarily help in addressing all the complexities and variables (e.g.,

audience, purpose, persuasion) encountered by students. Further, knowledge of academic

rhetoric such as genre conventions does not necessarily translate into entrance into nor success

in the discourses of any given field as membership inclusion (or exclusion) has just as much to

do with the power of who is *allowed* in and who is not as it does with the power of competency.

A concentration on practical English skills can therefore overshadow or completely

neglect the social and political realities of the English language in the EAP classroom and

beyond. But instead of establishing a happy medium between the pragmatist and the critical,

EAP has traditionally fallen short of going beyond liberal dichotomies to truly enable students'

critical engagement with the curriculum and its materials. While recognizing the place of

practical skills in the academic literacy classroom, Benesch (2001) explains that:

> critical pedagogy does not leave out the content requirements made on students in their
>
> courses or in the workplace. Rather, it treats those demands critically . . . . Critical EAP
>
> allows ESL teachers and students to examine externally imposed demands and negotiate
>
> their responses to them. (pp. 52-53)

So because advocates of EAP's pragmatic approach (e.g., Allison, 1994, 1996) have responded

to critics' claims that EAP pragmatism inadequately prepares students for life both in and

outside of the academy, it is important to re-emphasize that within a critical EAP framework,

pragmatism, indeed, does have a place.

Specifically, Flowerdew (2002) discusses how much EAP research still revolves around

academic discourses such as genre analysis, corpus-based studies, and contrastive rhetoric. But

while continuing to discuss these traditional approaches to EAP, Flowerdew also calls attention

to the issues of linguistic hegemony and empowerment (p. 7). He recognizes the irony of simultaneously encouraging the study of traditional English discourses while also highlighting the repercussions this hegemony may have on minority languages and peoples. Nevertheless, he defends EAP's pragmatism with the realization that:

> while it is important to make people aware of the potential for hegemony in the use of English and the issues of power and access which accompany this potential, and while it is important to encourage cultural and linguistic plurality, to deny people access to the linguistic, social, and educational capital that English represents is irresponsible. (Ibid.)

Delpit (1993/1998) articulates this paradox of English for hegemony as well as agency by stating a need for students "to have access to many voices" (p. 214) in order to access the tools needed to construct a counterdiscourse (cf. Tejeda et al., 2003). New discourses such as this, in turn, open up possibilities for students to critically examine and challenge EAP's accommodationist nature. As Zamel (1993/1998) argues:

> rather than serving the academy, accommodating it, and being appropriated by it, we ought to work with others to engage in an enterprise that is far more dynamic, complex, collaborative and intellectually engaging, an enterprise whereby we and our students contribute to, complicate, and transform the academy. (p. 196; cf. Benesch, 2001; Ivanič, 1998)

But while critical EAP classrooms may play a role in this process of complication, implicated in this process of change are the agents within those classrooms who mediate and negotiate such reimaginings. So although critical EAP provides a starting point from which possibility may take root, it is in the actions of those who adopt this framework and discourse of agency in the classroom that are key. Thus, I believe an understanding of theories of identity and investment in language education (Norton, 2000a) to be central to the changing of EAP classrooms from spaces of cultural reproduction to spaces of challenge and re-creation.

2.4 Identity and Investment

Notions of identity and investment in the field of English as a Second Language have given theorists a rich and complex lens through which we can begin the reconceptualization of English language learners (Norton, 2000a, 2001; Norton & Toohey, 2001). Rather than examining learners independent of their social worlds, an emerging body of research seeks to do justice to the often multiple and conflicting identities they bring to the classroom. Norton's theories of language learner identity and investment focus on how student identities shape and are shaped by the discourses of the language classroom. Further, she embeds these processes of identity negotiation in inequitable social relations recognizing that the discourses in which we participate are inevitably steeped in power (Norton, 2000a, p. 5; cf. Toohey, 2000).

Although Norton introduces identity and investment in the theorization of language learners, specifically, I propose that these theories can be equally fruitful in the analysis of language teacher identity (e.g., Duff & Uchida, 1997). That is, in viewing teacher identities as similarly discursively negotiated in language classrooms, I attempt to draw attention to how discourse practices also produce particular language teacher identities within English language education. To set the theoretical groundwork for a more nuanced analysis of both ESL students and teachers within my study, I conclude this chapter with an introduction to the notions of identity, investment, and imagined communities.

2.4.1 Identity in language education

Much ethnographic research in applied linguistics investigates a notion of language "socialization" rather than language "acquisition"; that is, a sociocultural perspective of language education "implies that language is learned through social interaction. It also implies that language is a primary vehicle of socialization" (Watson-Gegeo, 1988, p. 582; see also, for example, Canagarajah, 1993, 1999c; Day, 2002; Duff, 1995, 2002a; Goldstein, 1997b; Ivanič, 1998; Norton, 2000a). Besides understanding that language and discourse mediate this

socialization, however, it is important to recognize that additionally, these and "all discourse practices set up particular kinds of social relations between participants" (Toohey, 2000, p. 99; cf. Wenger, 1998, p. 151).

In her book *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Change*, Norton (2000a) presents the narratives of five immigrant women in Ontario, Canada, as they seek to negotiate old and new identities within their interconnected worlds of home, school, and work. Norton highlights how these identities were (re)created through discursive practices with others and vis-à-vis the relations of power underlying these practices. In this way, the identities of the five language learners were never static, but rather were always shifting and marked by a continual process of negotiation (cf. Yon, 2000; Toohey, 2000). How the learners used English both in and, particularly, out of their ESL classrooms reflected their investments in learning English and their desires to become participatory members of specific communities. She thus argues that we need to uncover not only *how* students imagine themselves, but also what students seek to imagine *for* themselves. And in order to better meet the diverse needs of ESL students, we need to understand in which communities students strive to establish membership in order to address how English language education can assist in establishing access to these communities.

2.4.2 Investments and imagined communities

According to Norton (2000a), language learners hold multiple investments in the English language. Central to the negotiation of these investments is the struggle to negotiate the conflicting social and political contexts in which they currently live:

> The notion of investment . . . presupposes that when language learners speak, they are
>
> not only exchanging information with target language speakers, but they are constantly
>
> organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social

world. Thus an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space. (pp. 10-11)

What language learners desire and how they relate to these social worlds is represented by their sense of imagined communities. The term "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1991) refers to the communities students' feel invested in becoming an integral part of both in and outside classroom (Norton, 2001), and each learner has their own vision of membership within these communities.[18] For this reason, students' investments influence and are influenced by participation in the language classroom, specifically, and in the target language community, in general (Norton, 2001; cf. Canagarajah, 2004; Ibrahim, 1999; Kanno, 2003a, 2003b).

Put another way, student participation reflects their imagining of the potential possibilities for social and educational change:

> Learners and teachers are capable of imagining the world as different from prevailing realities. Moreover, we can invest our time and energy to strive for the realization of alternative visions of the future. Our identities then must be understood not only in terms of our investment in the "real" world but also in terms of our investment in *possible* worlds. (Kanno & Norton, 2003, p. 248).

If students view English as a key to these imagined communities and "possible worlds," their participation at Pacific University's ESL program (or any other language program) might relate to a corresponding belief that English language education symbolizes the doorway to these future possibilities. But in the same way that language education may open these doors, it has equal potential to close them.

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[18] Imagined communities (Anderson, 1991) are deemed such as: 1. they are "conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (p. 7)--i.e., it is a community; and 2. its members "will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p. 6)--i.e., it is imagined.

In Norton's (2000a, 2001) study, for example, the learning of English for Katarina represented the possibility of regaining the professional status she had felt she lost when she left Poland. She had previously been a teacher and thus regarded herself as being a member of a highly-educated community. One of her investments in language education, therefore, was to study English, in part, to upgrade her Canadian qualifications. When Katarina's teacher implied that she had insufficient language skills to take a computer course which Katarina perceived as another step towards her imagined community, she quit the ESL class never to return. Katarina's actions, Norton states, was an act of resistance towards the way she was positioned by her teacher (i.e., as an uneducated immigrant rather than as a fellow teacher and highly-educated professional).

In failing to recognize Katarina's identity and investment as the latter and suggesting that she is incapable of handling the challenges of the computer upgrading course, her teacher effectively closes the door on the professional community to which Katarina desires membership. In this way, Kanno (2003a) emphasizes the significance of the role institutions play and the power it can wield in the manipulation of students' identities and investments when she states, "schools' visions of imagined communities, implicit or explicit, exert a powerful influence on their current policies and practice and ultimately affect the students' identities" (p. 298; cf. Simon, 1992). Thus, when there is a conflict between the imagined communities of students' and those imagined for them by their teachers or the institutions in which they participate, the latter communities can be limiting rather than enabling. And when there is a disjunction between language methodology, pedagogy, or curriculum and a student's investments, a student's learning trajectory can be adversely affected. That is to say, student investments in imagined communities impact classroom participation in complex ways and therefore require further investigation and analysis as Norton (2000a) cautions:

unless learners believe that their investments in the target language are an integral and important part of the language curriculum, they may resist the teacher's pedagogy, or possibly even remove themselves from the class entirely. (p. 142)

In Canagarajah's (2001) study of English language learners in Sri Lanka, he recognized conflicts between students' identities and investments when he pointed out their need to "learn English while also maintaining membership with their vernacular community and culture" (p. 109). Hence, his students' desires to resist their new English-speaking identities resulted in the creation of "safe houses" (Canagarajah, 1999c, 2004), or subversive tactics which included verbal and written asides shared between students that extended beyond the walls of the classroom. Similar to Canagarajah's belief that students' acts of resistance were a means through which they could maintain their desired identities, Norton (2001) echoes that:

[students'] extreme acts of non-participation were acts of alignment on their part to preserve the integrity of their imagined communities. Non-participation was not an opportunity for learning from a position of peripherality, but an act of resistance from a position of marginality. (p. 165)

Resistance to a language program's curriculum and pedagogy is one way in which students are thus able to express concerns over the neglect of their identity and investments within ESL classroom practices.

Toohey (2000) similarly investigates other forms resistance can take when the children in her research attempted to negotiate their identities within the everyday discourses of their classrooms. In her study, she analyzed how children from minority language backgrounds "came to inhabit (temporarily and in contradictory ways) particular identities" and how these identities either enabled or restricted their access to language learning opportunities within classroom practices (p. 16, see also Day's [2002] research). She investigated how both desirable and undesirable identities were presented to ESL learners and how these were either taken up or

resisted. In this manner, discourses within the ESL classrooms turned them into sites of possibility for some, and sites of impossibility for others.

2.4.3 Other(ing) identities: Identity and pedagogy

Discourses within the language classroom, however, are not the only discourses which serve to limit students' possibilities for imagining alternative futures; rather, possibilities for imagining are also constrained by the larger sociopolitical discourses existing within the broader community outside of the classroom:

> While agency and choice are critical in positioning, it is important to underscore that instances of reflective position are often contested by others and many individuals find themselves in a perpetual tension between self-chosen identities and others' attempts to position them differently. (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 20)[19]

Resistance against an identity inscribed on us by hegemonic discourses therefore becomes all the more challenging as the power of these discourses does not allow the possibility of disassociation. For example, Goldstein's (2003) research investigates immigrant students at Northside, a Canadian high school in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Her 4-year critical ethnography investigates the language practices of the staff and students at the high school and, in particular, examines how the immigrant students from Hong Kong used both English and Cantonese to negotiate their Othered identities while there.[20]

What Goldstein (2003) found was the contested nature of the struggle for students to construct new identities for themselves amidst the larger, more socially-prevalent discourses of racism and linguicism. The "English-Only" debate, essentialist constructions of the "model minority," and constructions of a linguistic and racialized "Other" created and perpetuated

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[19] See also, Espiritu (1992), Ivanič (1998), Kanno (2003b), Kanno and Norton (2003), Lewis (2001), and May (1999).

[20] See Harklau's (1999, 2000, 2001) work which documents similar research conducted with Generation 1.5 students in a U.S. context.

within wider school discourses challenged the development and maintenance of an equitable multilingual and multicultural school community. This is not to say, however, that a reimagination of one's identity or resistance against hegemonic discourses is an impossibility, for it is precisely this possibility upon which critical theorists like Benesch, Canagarajah, Goldstein, Harklau, Norton, Pennycook, and Toohey base their work. Rather, as Ivanič (1998) elucidates:

> identity is not socially *determined* but socially *constructed*. This means that the possibilities for the self are not fixed, but open to contestation and change . . . . "the self is implicated moment by moment" not only *in power* but also *in power struggle*. (pp. 12-13)

In Goldstein's (2003) study, for example, Evelyn, a Chinese-Canadian student at Northside, challenged the linguicism and anti-immigrant discourses existing within the school through the medium of art. In another example, Goldstein outlines how some students' usage of their first languages of Cantonese and Mandarin in a Mathematics class not only improved their understanding of content, but, to some degree, also improved their relationships with other classmates across cultural lines. Thus, even through the discourses of racial and linguistic discrimination, a number of students succeeded in their struggles to resist being positioned as the "Other." Of importance to note here though is that the challenging of discourses within the school, generally, and the individual classrooms, specifically, was, to a large degree, mediated by particular teachers at the school concerned with issues of equity and social justice; however, their actions were in response to the frequently *in*equitable discourses produced and maintained concomitantly by other teachers (and students) at Northside. Teachers' identities as agents of change or perpetuators of Northside's racialized script, therefore, cannot be overlooked and instead need to be analyzed in reference to the reconceptualization of pedagogical practices within language education.

While recognizing that language learner identity is shaped by and through the discourses of the ESL classroom, it behooves us to simultaneously recognize that "the value ascribed to speech cannot be understood apart from the person who speaks, and the person who speaks cannot be understood apart from larger networks of social relationships" (Norton, 2000a, p. 8). It is thus important to consider our power as teachers within language education and how our identities as ESL teachers are implicated in the creation and negotiation of language learners' identities. Further, we must ask ourselves how the discourses we allow and do not allow in our classrooms shape our students' identities both in the micro-community of the classroom and macro-community of the world. These concerns remain central to my thesis investigation at hand.

In this chapter, I summarized briefly the theoretical foundations of language and culture, English for Academic Purposes, Critical EAP (Benesch, 2001), and identity and investment (Norton, 2000a). I began by speaking to the relationship of language and power and how this interconnection plays out in the field of ESL education. From language, culture, and EAP pedagogy to classroom interactions, power pervades all aspects of language education. Thus, when I discuss how student identity is negotiated in the ESL classroom, I contextualize this negotiation within the inequitable social relations that discourses of power perpetuate. Most central to my thesis research in this regard, however, is not just how ESL classroom discourses shape language learner identity, but, more significantly, how ESL teacher identities are implicated in the creation and perpetuation of these very discourses of power which construct identity in the classroom.

In the following chapter, Chapter 3, I introduce my research site and participants. I provide readers with a window into the program under study and those who worked and studied within it. Although the chapter only provides a general description of my research participants, more detailed information regarding specific participants and their backgrounds, etc. will be

highlighted throughout my thesis as my data reporting and related analyses unfold. Also in the chapter, I describe the research methodology I subscribed to for my thesis--critical ethnography--and I explain why I believe this methodology to have been most appropriate for the type of research I hoped to conduct. I outline the data collection and analysis procedures I followed over the course of the year of study, and I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the challenges of writing a critical ethnography.

Chapter 3: SITUATING THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Ethnography has been theorized as both a process and product and is centrally concerned with voice, representation, and the interrelationship between micro- and macro-contexts (Duff, 2002b; Gergen & Gergen, 2000; Palys, 1997). The "process" of ethnography is a method of inquiry that entails an extended observation of a group while the "product" is the detailed story or interpretation that results from this inquiry (Agar, 1996; Britzman, 1995; Creswell, 1998; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Van Maanen, 1996; Wolcott, 1995). But although ethnography today is arguably less entrenched in theories of colonialism and imperialism as it has been in the past, theorists argue for the application of a critical lens to ethnography in order to affect social and political change.

While critical theorists remind us of how our teaching practices have the potential to marginalize, exclude, and silence students in our language classrooms[21], there has been growing recognition of the need to interrogate how the research methodologies we employ may similarly serve to dominate and disempower others. As Lather (1986a) points out, it is crucial that we recognize that "research which is openly valued based is neither more nor less ideological than is mainstream positivist research" (p. 64); thus, research methodologies that bring issues of power to the forefront are necessary if we hold the belief that all research is political (Gergen & Gergen, 2000; Lin & Luk, 2002; Lincoln & Denzin, 2000; Norton, 1997a; Thomas, 1993). Who and what is to be researched, when, where, and why are all questions interconnected with issues of power and who wields it.

It was in my desire to critically analyze the discourses and practices at Pacific University's academic literacy program and how they engendered or limited students' access to language learning possibilities that I subscribed to a critical ethnographic approach for my thesis study. And in this chapter, I will outline the basic principles underlying this research

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[21] See Norton and Toohey's (2004) edited volume, for example.

epistemology and how the research procedures I followed, from data collection to analysis to eventual write up, were reflective of the critical orientation I believe this study required. But before I describe the process through which I conducted my research, I begin with an introduction to my research site and participants.

3.1 Introduction to Pacific University's Academic Literacy Program

The site of my thesis research was Pacific University's English as a Second Language Program. The program is a non-credit, cost-recovery language program located within the Continuing Studies department of the larger Pacific University system. During the first semester of research at the program, the program was marketed to students generally falling under an English-language level of "intermediate to very high advanced" (Pacific University ESL program: Overview, p. 3). But due to increasing pressure by higher administration at Pacific University for larger student enrolment numbers[22], by the second semester, a revision in marketing materials had expanded the scope of the program's potential student body from "low" to "very high advanced" (Pacific University ESL program, immersion programs, p. 2). As the program was originally developed for more advanced learners of English, the new acceptance of students at significantly lower English language abilities would no doubt have implications for instructors' classroom practices. But the participants in my research, for the most part, represented the program's original target audience, and so it is within the program's original instructional context that the focus of my analysis remains.

The program runs on a quarterly-semester system with a regular 12-week long program and an intensive 8-week program that runs only during the summer months. Classes are in session from Monday to Friday, five hours per day, and each subject is broken into 50- or 100-

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[22] I feel it important to qualify here that my relationship to the program and its staff found me privy to observations and comments that I believe would not have been shared with me if I had not had a longer-standing history at Pacific University. Therefore, some observations I may make in regards to other "non-classroom" issues (i.e., the larger structures affecting the every day practices at the language program) are based on a culmination of the information made privy to me by the administrative staff and the instructors alike and are, therefore, guided by their own positionalities within the larger sociopolitical atmosphere surrounding the program.

minute blocks. After an initial language assessment (a mix of TOEFL[23] and other in-house-developed assessment materials), students are divided into classes (somewhat like a homeroom or cohort) of approximately 12 students of fairly equivalent language ability. According to its marketing website, the program aimed to "provide [students] with the opportunity to study English in a university environment, introducing you to the education system in Canada while giving you first-hand exposure to Canadian university life" (Website, Retrieved June 7, 2003); therefore, the program modeled its classroom setting around what one would experience within a "typical" Canadian university, especially in light of the fact that the vast majority of the students identified higher education as at least one of their reasons for their attendance at the program (some simultaneously identified career goals and a very small proportion identified immigration desires). In this vein, the program pedagogy aimed "to address not only language points per se, but also the culture in which the university program you want to go is situated." (Erika, Administrator, Interview 09/10/03).

The program is a content-based EAP program, and depending on which class and level students are in, "core" courses in their program would include (but are not limited to) *Canadian Studies, Literature, T.V. News/News Media, Oral Skills, Listening Practice, Popular Culture,* and *Composition/Critical Reading and Writing.* Elective courses would include *Film Analysis, Business Culture, University Preparation,* and *IELTS[24]/TOEFL Prep*[aration]. At the end of each semester, qualifying students (i.e., those with sufficient attendance and who complete all required assignments in each course) receive certificates indicating that they have fulfilled all the requirements for successful completion of a particular language level within the program (there are three levels, with Level 3/"C-level" being the highest English language level within

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[23] TOEFL = Test of English as a Foreign Language. It is the most widely-used standardized English testing system in the world, used by institutions globally to test English language skills.

[24] IELTS = International English Language Testing System (another widely-used standardized English language testing system)

the program structure). Students achieving a Level 3 certificate (which was a rarity) may sometimes be granted conditional acceptance into the university's mainstream degree-granting program. But within the program's marketing brochures, it is explicitly stated that acceptance into the university is conditional on meeting the larger requirements of university entrance which are based, in part, on achieving minimum scores on standardized language tests such as IELTS or TOEFL.

Administrators and instructors in the program ranged in age from mid-twenties to early sixties. In any one semester, there are approximately 15 instructors actively teaching. Over the period of one academic year, I recruited the participation of three administrative staff (including the program director, associate director, and the program assistant) and 14 instructors (four to six per semester). I had originally hoped that I would have the opportunity to follow a focal group of instructors throughout the entire year of research, but with the inevitabilities of staff joining and departing as well as leaves of absence (as instructors on contract are required to take one semester off per calendar year), this was not possible. In the end, I hope that the participation of multiple instructors provided me with a diversity of perspectives on instructors' pedagogical perceptions, goals, and the resulting discourses.

The program director, Erika[25], and associate director, Ariel, both had PhD degrees (in English and History respectively), while 7 out of 14 of the instructors in my study received graduate degrees in various academic specializations including English Literature, History, Linguistics, and Philosophy. Ten of the 14 also had some level of ESL certification such as a TESL or CELTA certificate[26], and past ESL teaching experience ranged from less than 1 year to upwards of 20 years. Of the 14 instructors participating in the study, seven of them had been

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[25] All names (including the name of the university under study) have been changed to pseudonyms. In almost all cases, pseudonyms used within my study were of participants' own choosing unless they were duplicated by others or were the actual names of other participants within the study.

[26] TESL = Teaching English as a Second Language; CELTA = Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults

teaching at Pacific University for less than 1 year[27], four of them for less than 2 years, and three of them for 3 years or longer (three, four, and six years respectively). Further, 3 out of 14 were Asian (one Chinese male, one Chinese female, and one Japanese female) while the other 11 instructors (one male and ten female) and all administrators were white.

While the ages of the students varied, the greatest proportion of the students were current or recently-graduated university students who fell within the 20- to 25-year-old age range. Of the total 87 student participants, 81 of them had been studying English for between five to ten years (a few of them, up to 15 years), while six of them had less than two years of "formal" ESL education. Student participants came from a number of different countries, but reflective of the overall student population in the program, the vast majority of the students participating in my study (over 50%) originated from Mainland China.[28] The student population within the program was made up of high school graduates (many looking to pursue higher education within North America), university graduates (some looking to pursue further academic studies), and business professionals (looking to establish linguistic skills for application to their varying careers). At the conclusion of my one year of research, all staff participants received small gifts; likewise, all student participants received either small gifts or honoraria, but these were given at the end of each semester with values determined according to the length of their participation.

The number of participants throughout my study and the research procedures conducted varied from semester to semester. The information contained in Table 1 is a summary of my entire year of research at Pacific University's academic literacy program. And in the next section, I will explain in more detail the information contained in the table to set a context for the understanding of the research I conducted and why I conducted it in the outlined manner.

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[27] There had been an influx of new instructors hired, in fact, during my second semester of research at Pacific University.

[28] The exact breakdown is as follows with the number of student participants over the course of the year from that country indicated in the parentheses: Brazil (1), China (51), France (1), Ivory Coast (1), Japan (11), Korea (13), Mexico (3), Spain (1), Taiwan (3), Turkey (1), Vietnam (1).

Table 1: Summary of Research Participants and Procedures

SEMESTER DATES	PARTICIPANTS	PROCEDURES
First Semester: March 12, 2003 to June 6, 2003	*Staff:* 3 administrators and 7 instructors	*Document analysis:* program manuals and other pedagogical documents; marketing materials (web- and print-based) *Staff:* introduction to my research, initial meetings, and informal interviews
Second Semester: June 30, 2003 to September 19, 2003	*Staff:* 3 administrators and 7 instructors *Students:* 9 full-time (8-week) students and 27 full-time (12-week) students *8 focal students (4 male; 4 female)	*Staff:* -written questionnaires -audiorecorded interviews *Students:* -written questionnaires -audiorecorded focus groups
Third Semester: September 29, 2003 to December 19, 2003	*Staff:* 1 administrator and 11 instructors *Students:* 32 full-time (12-week) students *7 focal students (4 male; 3 female)	*21 Focal Students:* -audiorecorded interviews *Second and Third Semesters only:* -staff meeting observations -audiorecorded classroom observations
Fourth Semester: January 5, 2004 to March 26, 2004	*Staff:* 1 administrator and 8 instructors *Students:* 27 full-time (12-week) students *6 focal students (2 male; 4 female)	

3.2 Critical Ethnography

Critical ethnographic research is historically situated (Canagarajah, 1999c; Norton, 2000a; Norton Peirce, 1995) and looks not only at how conditions of the past have affected what is currently occurring, but also how an understanding of history enhances our understanding of the present social and political situation (Jordan & Yeomans, 1995; Simon & Dippo, 1986). It examines inequitable distributions of power and privilege between people and groups and the effects that such inequities have on society and culture (Carspecken, 1996; Denzin, 1997;

Hammersley, 1992; Lincoln & Denzin, 2000).[29] Because all research is political and situated (Auerbach, 1994; Barton, 2001; Britzman, 1995; Lin & Luk, 2002; Palys, 1997; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999; Thomas, 1993), a critical research orientation promotes critical questioning around issues of race, gender, class, ethnicity, etc.; the formation of knowledge; and the power relations between researcher and researched (Dei, Mazzuca, McIsaac, & Zine, 1997; Goldstein, 1997b; Pennycook, 1994b, 2001). Critical ethnographic research looks to change the underlying structures that this dominance (and resulting oppression) stems from (Agar, 1996; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) by focussing on social and political inequity and, more importantly, on agency and social and political change on a structural and institutional level (Anderson, 1989; Goldstein, 2003; Haig-Brown, 1992; Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996; Hammersley, 1998; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Lather, 1986a, 1986b; May, 1997; Van Galen & Eaker, 1995). With this framework for research methodology, I conceptualized, conducted, and analyzed my data over the course of the year accordingly.

3.3 Data Collection

Ethnographic researchers aim to understand greater contextual factors through complementary means of data analysis such as document analysis, field notes, questionnaires, interviews, journals, oral histories, artifacts, documents, videotapes, audiotapes, and any other interactions (e.g., formal/informal conversations, social interactions), to name but a few sources of rich data. Data collection for my thesis research included the following which I will outline in detail: document analysis, questionnaires, staff meeting observations, student focus groups, interviews, classroom observations, and research journal. But although I conducted my research over the course of one year (which constituted, in theory, four semesters), the majority of my data collection occurred during the second and third semesters for a number of reasons.

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[29] For some examples of research investigating the effects of power inequities on schooling in particular, see Barton (2001), Goldstein (1997a), Haig-Brown (1992), Levinson (1992), Norton (2000a), Norton Peirce (1995), Pennycook (1995), and Toohey (1995).

Because I desired a multi-layered understanding of the instructors and students at Pacific University's EAP program, I conducted research at my site for one year--generally considered to be the minimum length of time for ethnographic research (Agar, 1996; Scollon, 1995).[30] I hoped to show my commitment to my research and to my research participants by ensuring that I was on-site every day (except on rare occasions) for a minimum of three hours at a time. This was generally the case in the second and third semesters of my research. But because I began my research at Pacific University in March, 2003, it is important to note that that particular semester was already more than half-way through completion (i.e., it actually began in mid-January, but for clarity's sake, I still refer to it, however, as my first semester of research). As I mentioned in Chapter 1, I also treated the first semester of research at the program as a "get-to-know-the-research/er" stage for myself and the staff. Because of these two reasons, I limited my data collection that semester to document analysis and initial staff interviews only. I did not observe staff meetings as I wanted the staff to get to know me better before entering what I considered to be sacred teacher spaces, and I did not conduct classroom observations due to the complexities of attempting to obtain consent so late into a semester and out of further fear of disrupting (or more so, interrupting) already-established classroom dynamics.[31] All data collection procedures were conducted during the second and third semesters, but the fourth semester saw disruption due to major administrative changes at the program which caused me to feel less comfortable freely continuing to conduct my research.[32] The differing contexts of my

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[30] The understanding of a one-year minimum was in response to the disturbing trend towards "blitzkrieg ethnography" (Watson-Gegeo, 1988) and "data raids" (Athanases & Heath, 1995) that characterize the growing use of ethnographic methods/techniques (i.e., studies which are "ethnographically oriented") as opposed to ethnography, per se (cf. Davis, 1995; Hornberger, 1994).

[31] Although this is not to claim that my presence *outside* of the classroom during the first semester of research was not similarly disruptive; only that I did not believe it to be appropriate to start classroom observations after already being absent for the first few weeks of the semester (which I consider formative to observe in order to establish a better research context).

[32] I reflect on these administrative changes in further detail in Chapter 4.

research in the first and fourth semesters are important to reveal here in my continued desire to be as transparent as possible with my case study research here.

3.3.1 Document analysis

I analyzed documents regarding all aspects of the program throughout the entire year of research. Documents that I was able to obtain for analysis included professional documents regarding the program's philosophy and pedagogy; staff paper and e-mail memoranda and meeting minutes; course outlines and written activities; as well as marketing materials in the form of print brochures and their website.[33] I was interested in the way the program was marketed and described in written documentation and looked at whether these descriptions were either commensurate or incommensurate to the discourses found in other (non-public) documentation and in the classroom practices themselves. I was similarly interested in uncovering whether staff and students felt that this documentation accurately reflected what was happening in their classrooms as it would be interesting to analyze reasons for disjunction, if any. In particular, student and instructor manuals were developed over the second and third semesters which were to be the first extended written works outlining the program and its pedagogy. Upon its completion, the documents were included in my data analysis and I discuss them in Chapter 5.

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[33] Please note that the website has since been revamped and continues to be updated. But at the beginning of my study, I predicted that an updating might occur before the thesis was completed, so I made multiple printouts from the website during my year at the program to keep as reference. This also applies to other promotional items from the program. All have since been revised (some of them many times over as my research was, after all, conducted almost three years ago), but once again, I ensured that I kept multiple copies of all of the materials that were in circulation during my one year of research at Pacific University's ESL program for reference purposes. So readers are aware, during the course of the year, the website remained the same, but the print brochure was redesigned halfway through the study. The redesign saw the marketing brochure grow from 4 pages to 17 pages, with all of the content of the former being integrated into the latter either verbatim or only slightly modified. Whenever I cite a marketing brochure within the thesis, I distinguish them by their title, with "Pacific University ESL program: Overview" referring to the brochure used in the first two semesters of my research, and "Pacific University ESL program: immersion programs" referring to that used throughout the last two semesters.

3.3.2 Questionnaires

At the beginning of every semester for staff participants and the beginning of the second to fourth semesters for student participants, I asked all participants to complete a 2-page (front and back) short-answer questionnaire which I collected and compiled.[34] Questionnaires provided me with a general introduction to my research participants and also assisted me in the formulation of questions for the interviews later in the data collection process. Staff questionnaires (see Appendix A) began by asking for biographical information addressing age, ethnicity[35], first language, language teaching experiences and qualifications, among other general questions. The second part of the questionnaire focussed specifically on perceptions of the program pedagogy and its goals, on students' language needs/goals/investments, and on how to best meet the needs of these students. Student questionnaires (see Appendix C) began by asking for biographical information addressing age, ethnicity, first language, and language learning experiences, among other general questions. The second part of the questionnaires focussed specifically on students' perceived language needs and goals, students' opinions on "good" language programs, and their reasons for enrolment in this particular language program.

3.3.3 Staff meeting observations

In order to better understand how instructors came to understandings of the program and its philosophies, it would also be important to include in my analysis observations of staff meetings and professional development workshops. These observations would give me important insights not only into how Pacific University's ESL program's pedagogical beliefs and goals were shaped by the administrators and the "official" discourse, but how the pedagogy

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[34] Questionnaires and all ethics forms for my research were written in English only due to the sheer number of first languages within the program at any given time and the impossibility to predict far enough in advance which languages forms would need to be translated into from semester to semester. I am aware, however, that there are ethical implications to this lack of translated materials for second language learners.

[35] I am further aware of the contentious nature of the term "ethnicity." But as the term is used, for the most part, unproblematically in the mainstream, I believed its usage to be necessary in order to gather the background information I was seeking from my participants.

and its goals were presented to instructors. I seek to examine how professional development (PD) was perceived by the instructors and the administration and whether the discourse and interactions within these PD workshops may have been implicated, in part, in the disjunction between the pedagogy and instructors' practices.

Staff meetings were held bi-weekly to keep all staff up to date on daily happenings within the program. During the time of my research, professional development workshops were held alongside these meetings (usually during the latter half of the staff meetings). But during my year at the program, I noticed that, generally, professional development would remain a very small portion of these meetings, and, at times, would be omitted completely depending on how many administrative issues needed to be dealt with in any given week.[36] Because the instructors' attendance at staff meetings was mandatory, so was their attendance at PD workshops. Sometimes, homework was assigned to instructors corresponding to exercises facilitated during the workshops. With the consent of all of the staff, I was permitted to attend the meetings, but because not all of them were participating in my research, I did not audiotape meetings and workshops and, instead, sat in on them and took field notes as I was listening. Staff meeting observations were only conducted during the second and third semesters (for the reasons recounted in Chapter 3, Section 3.3), but in any case, by the fourth semester of research, staff meetings were becoming more administrative (and eventually, completely administrative) in nature, and I believed my attendance there to have been inappropriate.

3.3.4 Student focus groups

Within the first two weeks of each semester during semesters two through four, I would hold student focus groups, each consisting of approximately eight students at a time and lasting between 45 minutes to one hour in length. As there was no videorecording component to my

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[36] It is important to note that professional development workshops ended completely almost immediately after Ariel's departure in the third semester of research. Attempts at re-introducing them by the new associate director never succeeded.

data collection, I believed it to be logistically easier to keep focus group numbers low for easier transcription. Focus groups were organized according to homeroom classes (which were divided by language level). Maintaining the same group dynamics in focus groups as in their daily classroom interactions would hopefully assist in providing maximum comfort for participants in a group interview setting.

While audiotaping the focus groups, I would keep a stopwatch beside me at all times. I would take rough notes (pseudo-transcriptions of sorts) while listening, and beside each utterance, I would mark down the time it was said. This later aided my transcription and analysis as I was able to track more quickly the utterances I desired to refer to for specific analysis. I used this focus group opportunity to ask students questions formulated from the questionnaire responses I had previously collected, and it was an opportunity to ask students to answer in more depth their expectations for the program and their initial impressions of the program (see Appendix D for sample student focus group questions). Focus groups also helped me to identify the students whom I would be interested in selecting for more in-depth analysis for my study each semester.

3.3.5 Interviews

Semi-structured one-on-one interviews with staff (over the entire year) and students (from the second to the fourth semesters) at the program were audiotaped and lasted approximately one hour. During the interviews, I took field notes and did rough on-the-spot transcriptions. This would assist me in identifying more quickly the parts of interviews I desired to transcribe in detail for the analysis. I generally conducted interviews a few weeks into the semester as interviews would be guided not only by the participant's questionnaire responses, but by their experiences in the classroom that semester (therefore, interviews at the beginning of the semester might be deliberately brief as there would be little to reflect upon). Staff and

student scheduling issues, however, sometimes resulted in me having to conduct interviews later into the semester or near the conclusion of a semester.

Staff were interviewed in two parts. The first interview was regarding what they perceived to be the goals of the program and their students' needs and whether or not they believed these goals to be in accordance to these needs. I also asked questions regarding how they would relate these to issues of students' identities and their opinions on professional development initiatives in relation to their teaching and the program as a whole. The second interview was regarding professional development initiatives such as the instructor's manual (see Appendix B for sample staff interview questions). For some instructors, both interviews were conducted concurrently if their schedules (and mine) allowed.

I selected focal students to conduct one-on-one interviews with each semester. Although I realize the danger of "choosing" my 21 focal students throughout the year, I did my best to achieve a "representative sample" of the student population according to sex, age, educational background, English language level, self-identified language learning investments, and home country. I aimed to have 8 focal students each semester, but in the third semester, I was unable to obtain an interview with one of them (i.e., the student missed our scheduled interview appointment and I was subsequently unable to arrange an alternate date with him for unknown reasons). In the fourth semester, I had begun to conclude my data collection due to my growing discomfort conducting research at the program after major administrative changes occurred (which I will outline in more detail in Chapter 4); for this reason, I only selected 6 students to interview.

Student interviews were conducted mid-way to three-quarters of the way through the semester and questions were guided, similarly to the staff interviews, by their questionnaires and classroom observations. As with staff interviews, student interviews were audiotaped and I made rough on-the-spot transcriptions as the interview progressed. The purpose of student

interview was to determine why the student chose to attend Pacific University's language program and what they perceived the goals of the program to be. I also asked them how these perceived goals related to their own needs and personal goals (see Appendix E for sample student interview questions). I framed questions within the context of my own classroom observations of key incidents regarding instructors' practices and student participation. I was particularly interested in finding out whether or not students considered their instructors' beliefs and the approaches they used in their classrooms to be commensurate with the student's own perceived ESL needs and goals and whether their observations of classroom practices were commensurate with their understanding of the larger program pedagogy.

I do not deny that my positionalities undoubtedly played out in my research by finding me posing particular questions (and, in turn, not asking other ones) to my participants. In recognition of this, however, I sought to gather support from actual classroom practices at Pacific University's ESL program, and so the project also consisted of classroom observations.

3.3.6 Classroom observations

The decisions as to which classes I was to observe during the second and third semesters rested exclusively on issues of consent. That is, I only observed classes taught by participating instructors, and I further narrowed down which classes of theirs I could observe by only observing those in which I had obtained consent from at least 50% of the students.[37] As a result, I notice that my classroom observations were limited each semester to the intermediate and advanced levels as consent from lower-level students was spotty if not non-existent.[38] I

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[37] This percentage was my own criteria and was discussed with program staff when it became evident in the first week of observations that I would not obtain 100% student consent from any classes. I am cognizant, however, that some ethics would consider non-consent of even one person within a class as enough to disallow classroom observations. In any case, the logistics of audiotaping any less than 50% of the students (and, more importantly, avoiding all other surrounding students) in such tiny classroom spaces would make classroom observations in those classes extremely difficult.

[38] The reasons for this could be anything from lack of understanding of my admittedly wordy (but arguably necessarily wordy) consent forms and "introduction to my research" presentations that I did each semester to

observed 11 classes[39] in the second semester (taught by Andrée, Eileen, Julie, Monique, and Rose) and seven in the third (taught by Andrée, Julie, and Rose). My observation schedule varied every other week as the program structured its class schedule into "odd weeks" and "even weeks," in part to take into account the free afternoon every Friday (which was when staff meetings were held) and in attempts to divide up program hours between courses as evenly as possible.[40] Each class was nevertheless observed once per week (i.e., either eight or twelve weeks) unless not possible due to test administration, field trips, or teaching observations/evaluations by administration. Each classroom observation I conducted during the year of research lasted the entire class which would either be 50 minutes or 100 minutes (i.e., if the class spanned two teaching periods).

Although I had originally intended to audio- and video-record classroom practices, a number of instructors voiced concerns about how videotaping (due to its intrusiveness, both physically and psychologically) might seriously affect the dynamics and "safety" of the classroom. Hence, during these classroom observations, I would only audiotape interactions between the instructor and the participating students (which also reflected microphone placement within the classroom) and took field notes on the activities that I observed regarding

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student shyness or lack of confidence in participation due to the amount of verbal participation my research entailed to straightforward ambivalence. Whatever the case, I was actually somewhat relieved by the lack of participation, especially, from the lowest-level students. This was due to my own fears that student consent may remain unethical had they not fully understood what they were consenting to. This is yet another challenge of doing research in language education, especially if consent forms are not in students' first languages.

[39] Although three of these overlapped in scheduling (i.e., Specialization courses—*Business Culture, TOEFL Prep[aration]*, and *University Prep[aration]*). In the case of these courses, I alternated observations each week, so in fact, I was only able to observe each of these classes once every three weeks.

[40] Schedules and the number of hours allotted to any given course depended on the language level of the students. For example, the schedule of those in the lower-levels would see a larger number of hours dedicated to courses such as *Listening Skills, Oral Skills*, and *Reading Skills*; while those for the highest-level students would place greater emphasis on content courses such as *Popular Culture, Canadian Studies*, and *News Media*. In terms of implications for my research, having odd and even weeks meant that I found myself conducting observations of some classes for 2 hours in an odd week, but only 1 hour in an even week, for example.

issues of pedagogy, classroom activity, and student participation. These classroom observations served as a further frame for later one-on-one interviews.

3.3.7 Research journal

My final source of data was taken from my own research journals. My research journal served two purposes (although I did not know it at the time). Initially, when my supervisor suggested to me to keep a research journal, I was skeptical. I felt I had been taking fairly good field notes, and so long as it fell within research ethics and participant consent, I had the luxury of audiotaping everything that I could have possibly audiotaped. But her reasoning for the idea was in recognition of the fact that there are many other kinds of observations (e.g., my own personal reactions to events, the overall "feel" of the site on any given day, conversations with people outside of classroom observations and interviews, etc.) that occur alongside the audiorecorded research that we need to take note of because they indirectly (or directly) influence what we are observing.

It did not take long, however, for the journal to quickly evolve into a personal diary, of sorts. That is, I regarded a research journal as an "official" place in which I could record observations about my questions and data being collected. But soon after starting the research journal, I found myself writing diary-like entries about my (at times strong) feelings about and reactions to events that had happened at the office with students and staff on any particular day. I wrote about the affective contexts of my research from my own positionalities while simultaneously using the journal to record the affective reactions that I observed and interpreted in others around me.

There were many times during the conducting of my study that my research lenses may have been clouded by my "non-researcher" emotion (if one can make that distinction); but I believe keeping the research journal helped me get from a place of judgement to a place of analysis. Ellis and Bochner (2000) point out that "it's amazing what [researchers] can recall, and

for how long, if the event was emotionally evocative" (p. 751), but in recognizing this, they caution that:

> the advantage of writing close to the time of the event is that it doesn't take much effort to access lived emotions—they're often there whether you want them to be or not. The disadvantage is that being so involved in the scene emotionally means that it's difficult to get outside of it to analyze from a cultural perspective . . . . That's why it's good to write about an event while your feelings are still intense, and then go back to it when you're emotionally distant. (Ibid., p. 752)

Indeed, I've reread my journals a number of times, and each time, I am surprised at how much I believe they reveal about my positionality as a researcher while conducting this research. Strong expressions of hopefulness, sadness, happiness, and anger pervade the pages but act as profound evidence of how research is interested. And it is in the possibility of a critical analysis of my own words that I found the research journal/diary particularly important not just during my research process, but more importantly, during the analysis and the final write-up of my findings.

3.4 Data Analysis

Looking at complex micro- and macro-contexts inherently requires a flexible process of inquiry that leaves open the opportunity for theories to arise from the data rather than the other way around. The ethnographic research process is an exploratory one that starts with general research questions that serve to guide the initial data (Fetterman, 1998; Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996; Hammersley, 1992; Rampton, 1992; Watson-Gegeo, 1988). Questions are revisited throughout the data collection process and eventually allow for the researcher to come to a theory that will then guide the remainder of the study—that is, a "grounded theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). More layers to our research are thus uncovered by maintaining an inductive framework as questions are revisited, negotiated, and renegotiated throughout the data collection

process. Thus, in my own research, data analysis was ongoing and recursive throughout the entire year. I would collect data then go back to participants with my tentative analyses not just during interviews, but in the case of the staff, in daily conversations. I went through a similar process during the writing up of my thesis as I would constantly reread my research journal and transcripts or relisten to audiorecordings many times over in my attempts to gain further insights into developing ideas.

I dedicated separate computer and paper files and binders for each semester of research at the program. I would divide my files (whether they were electronic or paper) into sections such as "marketing information," "class lists," "consent forms," "focus groups and interviews," "classroom observations," and "staff meetings and memos." Audiorecorded data (i.e., focus groups, interviews, and classroom observations) were filed according to classes and, then further, by the instructor. I did not transcribe focus group and classroom observations in their totality; but rather, referred to my rough transcriptions and field notes to isolate the parts that I would ultimately use for my analyses. One third of my one-on-one interviews were professionally transcribed while I roughly transcribed the remaining two thirds. Again, as with focus groups and classroom observations, I identified through my research journal and my field notes those interview sections I would later transcribed fully for the analyses. Throughout the process, I would make a note of themes and patterns which emerged in my data and triangulated the data collected through each research procedure to build a more complex frame for analysis.

I observed whether or not any inconsistencies arose between previous interview data collected and what I was observing within the classroom as well as the similarities and differences in instructor and student responses. I was further interested in seeing how professional development did or did not affect the instructors' classroom practices. I also sought to analyze whether or not professional development initiatives by administration brought the cohesion that it was hoped to and to theorize reasons for change or lack thereof. Throughout this

process, I would analyze reasons for disjunctures in initial findings and would bring those back to some of the staff (instructors and administrators) with which I had established close relations.

3.5 Writing (About) Uncertainty

During the course of data analysis, my initial research and findings uncovered narratives of discrimination and marginalization—an analysis of which will constitute the greater part of my thesis in the following chapters. For this reason, I wanted to remain more faithful to the individual human experiences I was describing (Gergen & Gergen, 2000; Kanno, 2003b; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000), and therefore, I looked to a style of research reporting that would engage with the affective power of the events as I did not desire to write my thesis as if coming from a stance of disinterest or detachment. For if we claim to have a more progressive understanding of research and if we claim to be aware of our own situatedness and its possible influence on our research, this progression in research ideology needs to be represented not only in our methods, but in our reporting.

Canagarajah (1996) advocates for "energetic experimentation with alternate forms of research reporting that would better reflect our emerging realizations on the nature of research and knowledge production" (p. 321; cf. Gergen & Gergen, 2000; Lu & Horner, 1998; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999; see Denzin, 1997; Goldstein, 1997a, 2003, 2004; Richardson, 1995, for examples of these alternative ways of reporting). Thus, because of my struggles throughout my research to negotiate my multiple identities and positionalities at Pacific University and because I realized early on that my research, in a way, also guided my own partialities, I wanted and felt I needed to "challenge the traditional depiction of the researcher as scientific, rational and objective and construct the researcher as operating in a much more subjective or intersubjective mode--as constructed, at least in part, in and by the text (and the research process) itself" (Starfield & Ravelli, 2006, p. 223).

The writing process and the resulting product is a process of negotiating identity and an act of identity itself (Ivanič, 1998). I am cognizant, however, of the critique that my research and the reporting of my research might appear to essentialize the identities of staff and students at Pacific University's language program. But I recognize that identities are situated, contested, and constantly in flux (Norton, 2000a, p. 11), thus my findings from this study can only be viewed as a snapshot of a particular program and its participants at a particular moment in their history. So while I present data excerpts from interviews and observations I conducted, I qualify that these excerpts need to remain in the sociopolitical contexts in which they were collected and should not be used to essentialize people nor their actions (cf. Loutzenheiser, 2004).

While observing the trials and tribulations experienced by the students and instructors in my research, a case study methodology reminds me that as each day of research passes, contexts have shifted, and because of this, the research is a construction of multiple and partial stories— the stories as interpreted by the students, the teachers, but most of all, the researcher (Mehra, 2003, p. 381). And it is in this realization that Pennycook (2005) cautions, "writing is not a process of transparent representation whereby we report on the things we observed, but rather is a constitutive act through which the observations are created: the realities of our research are a product of writing" (p. 303; cf. Alvermann, 2002; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Siegel & Fernandez, 2002). This "crisis of representation" speaks to the concern that rather than projecting reality, language is often used to produce reality and our research subjects (Alvermann, 2002; Denzin, 1997; Gergen & Gergen, 2000; Pennycook, 2005; Pillow, 2003). So in attempting to make transparent my understandings of the way my research may be creating my research participants and in further hopes of not appearing to be speaking *for* those in my study, I write and create a "reflexive I" to locate myself, "the writer as subject within the research process" (Starfield & Ravelli, 2006, p. 231).

Pillow (2003) warns us, however, that:

prominent in much qualitative research is the idea that the researcher, through

reflexivity, can transcend her own subjectivity and own cultural context in a way that

releases her/him from the weight of (mis)representations. Self-reflexivity can perform a

modernist seduction—promising release from your tension, voyeurism, ethnocentrism—

a release from your discomfort with representation through a transcendent clarity. (p.

186; cf. Alvermann, 2002; Pennycook, 2005)

She argues instead for more critical reflexivity or "uncomfortable reflexivity—a reflexivity that

seeks to know while at the same time situates this knowing as tenuous" (p. 188) for

"confessional texts," as they have been characterized, attempt to pass as reflexive writing but

merely serve to undermine the goals of critical research (Rhodes, 2000). In my thesis, I hope to

express this tenuous knowing through Kumashiro's (2004) notion of "uncertainty" in

educational practices to present the not-so-straightforward challenges that the instructors and

students at Pacific University faced during my year of research.

Because I recognize once again that my interpretations are always partial, I attempt,

whenever possible, to provide data excerpts for claims made in the thesis to explicate how and

for what reason I came to my understandings of my observations and findings. Nevertheless, I

am aware of the danger of data that claims to "support" research argumentation in light of

Leung, Harris, and Rampton's (2004) concern over the manipulation of data deemed "inelegant"

(i.e., data that essentially contradicts or otherwise fails to support our research findings):

This practice of selection is so commonplace that it would be invidious to cite any

individual examples. Yet, we know that there must be a great deal more surrounding

data which are not reported. In other words, "irrelevant" data are not shown. A key

question here is: What constitutes "relevant" or "irrelevant" data? A further question is:

Is it possible that the so-called irrelevant data may also be "inconvenient" in that it

complicates, complexifies, or even undermines the arguments or points of view being

advanced by the researcher concerned? (p. 224) [41]

But although I realize that even this prospect, of providing data excerpts for "support," is, itself,

a tenuous notion, I hope that it still provides readers of this research the possibility to reflect for

themselves on whether or not my analysis holds validity to them. Further, I make every attempt

to qualify my analysis and findings so as not to assume my interpretation to be the "truth," but

rather, as an interpretation situated in my own identities and investments as an ESL researcher

and educator. For as Loutzenheiser (2004) points out, in the conducting of research,

"knowability" is not the goal, but rather, it is the *partiality* of knowing to which we should aim.

In this chapter, I introduced both the participants in my study, and I described the

research methodology I subscribed to in conducting the research. In doing so, I hope to provide

a contextual framework for the findings and analysis that I will present in the core chapters of

my thesis to follow. But I believe a further explanation of research "methodology" is required

for a more nuanced understanding of my research findings. For while I hope my research may

help to inform future ESL practice, ultimately, how it serves to inform others and to what degree

it might can only be determined by those with an understanding of the additional social and

political contexts in which my research was entrenched. So at this time, I believe it is necessary

to now locate *myself* within my theoretical and research frameworks. Therefore, in Chapter 4, I

want to give readers an idea not just of where I was coming from before I began the research,

but also how these positionalities played out over the course of the year of study.

As I adhere to a critical research epistemology for my thesis study, I recognize the

centrality of foregrounding my own researcher partialities as part of the research process. I need

to be upfront about who I am as an ESL teacher and researcher, among my many identities, and

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[41] In this vein, see also Pillow (2003) who similarly refers to "messy" research which disrupts "comfortable, transcendent" qualitative research (p. 193) or Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) who speak about researchers who are "economical" about their research and findings (p. 20).

how these identities played a pivotal role in both why and how I did this research. In essence, Chapter 4 highlights the many limitations or uncertainties of my research. But more so, the chapter focuses on my uncertainty as a researcher during my year at Pacific University. For at times, I floundered because of relative research inexperience; but at other times, I floundered because of the overwhelming emotions that conducting this research evoked in me. Both may be perceived as limitations of my thesis study and of its resulting analysis. But at the same time, both benefited my research in an immeasurable way. And it is in the critical reflection of the challenges of one's research that we should look to in providing us not only with a more complex understanding of the questions we are asking, but, indeed, of the questions that we *should* be asking.

Chapter 4: RESEARCHER AS SUBJECT

In this chapter, I would like to reflect on the role of *my* identity and investments in conducting this research. I talk about what my beliefs are about language education and how my own experiences as an ESL teacher, myself, have no doubt had an effect on my research questions, research epistemology, and the reporting style I have chosen to use. Florio-Ruane and McVee (2002) have pointed out that "the work of understanding and describing others' lives is inevitably mediated by our own autobiographies" (p. 84). Because of this, it was important to integrate within my research reporting principles of autoethnographic research (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) where my own lived experiences are at times used as a framework for introspection into the lived experiences of my research participants.

I desire to preserve research transparency and therefore openly acknowledge that I am unable to write from anywhere but through my own lenses and positionalities; hence, I do my best in this chapter and throughout the rest of the thesis to reveal the underlying partialities that are often hidden in research. So I lay out on the table my past history at Pacific University's ESL program and how this history, at least initially, motivated my desire to do research there. I talk about how this same history led to the unravelling of my attempts at remaining at arm's length with the internal and external conflicts faced by the program and its staff and students; but I argue that it was (perhaps to a large degree) due to this affective involvement with my participants and their subsequent racialization of my identity as an Asian-Canadian that my research uncovered discourses of race and racism which may have otherwise remained buried. I also recount why, for the same reason, it was difficult for me to initially write this thesis not only because few narratives have been written addressing issues of race and research in ESL, but also because I was torn as to how I could speak *about* rather than *for* my participants. Therefore, while the uncertainties of research may be difficult to negotiate in any case, I argue

that conducting research in racialized spaces creates unique challenges and uncertainties that warrant further analysis.

4.1 Locating the Researcher

The notion of reflexivity is central to doing critical research, generally, and critical ethnography, specifically, as it shows the situatedness of the researcher and researched and the agendas and partialities in our research. Reflexivity addresses our positionalities within our research which have been influenced by the educational, familial, social, and political experiences and positionings of all those involved and, furthermore, "requires explicit recognition of the fact that the social researcher and the research act itself are part and parcel of the social world under investigation" (Jordan & Yeomans, 1995, p. 394; cf. Pennycook, 1994b). Revealing one's location within research is in stark contrast to the supposedly "neutral" or "objective" ethnographies of the past where researchers assumed the ability to detach themselves completely from the research process. Recognizing the partialities that are inseparable from the research leads to an accountability to the research process, and it is this transparency that attracts many who are interested in the complex social dimension of research to ethnography (see Agar, 1996; Anderson, 1989; Athanases & Heath, 1995; Duff, 2002b; Fetterman, 1998; Gergen & Gergen, 2000; Lather, 1986a, 1986b; Norton Peirce, 1995; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999; Rampton, 1992; Richardson, 1995; Simon & Dippo, 1986).[42] Reflexivity, however, is not about judging which partiality is more valid than another for "all knowledge production is situated in a particular social, cultural, and political context" (Pennycook, 1994b, p. 693).

Van Lier (2005) wrote about the vital importance of taking into account the contexts in which our research is situated in the investigation not only of what transpired but also why

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[42] See, in particular, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) who devote much of their book to this central aspect of ethnographic research.

particular events transpired as they did. Whether it is the political contexts of institutional demands, the personal context of previous involvement (and resulting investment) in the program, or the social contexts of inevitable relationships which are forged or broken while working so closely with a particular group of teachers, all of these contexts have, in part, moulded my research to what it has become here. Because of this, discussing any research complexities as "limitations" would be to relegate these factors and events as problematic or perhaps extraneous to the research findings that I discuss in my thesis. Instead, I reveal these challenges as part and parcel of conducting research and critically reflect on these challenges as essential to the conducting of *critical* research. As I recognize that all of these contexts and challenges contributed to the shaping of my research and my researcher partialities, I reveal them here.

4.1.1 Why did I care?

In the name of transparency, it was important at the very start of my thesis to state outright my past history with Pacific University's language program when locating the research. So when I began my PhD program at UBC, I not only came in with a research idea (which, eventually shifted as I outlined earlier), but more importantly, I came in with a research site: Pacific University's EAP program.

I had been employed at Pacific University's academic literacy program for close to four years, so before I even began my thesis research and forging relationships with the staff and students in the program, it goes without saying that I had already forged a relationship with the program and philosophy itself. My understanding of the program and its philosophy was already deeply ingrained prior to my even conceptualizing the details of my research, so I cannot claim that my past experience with the pedagogy did not see me entering the research site without preconceived notions of how the program might have been interpreted theoretically and practically. So while I do want to point out that my research is an analysis of how *other*

educators understood the program, I recognize that my own interpretations of the program pedagogy would inevitably make its way into the research in the form of questions I might ask and interpretations I would make during data analysis.

Overall, my four years at Pacific University were rewarding ones. I was fresh out of a Linguistics undergraduate degree and had less than two years teaching experience but no experience at a post-secondary level EAP program. I was ready and willing to become a "better" ESL educator and I was fascinated by an ESL pedagogy unlike any other that was discussed in my Applied Linguistics classes. Out of just over a dozen co-workers, only three (one of them being the program director at the time) had backgrounds in Linguistics (all of them at the graduate level). The rest had graduate degrees in various other fields such as English Literature and Political Science. As I was a relatively inexperienced teacher, the first two semesters found me organizing field trips for the program that were related to the theme-based (e.g., First Nations, Education, Women, Health Care, Environment) curricular content. But because of my undergraduate major, my second and third year at the program found me specifically developing and teaching core "ESL" classes like grammar and pronunciation. So while the program did base its core curriculum on Canadian Studies, at the time of my employment, there was an artificial divide between what was considered the program's language classes and its content classes.

In my fourth year at the program, there was renewed interest by the administration to develop and maintain professional development (PD) workshops in order to consolidate what were believed to be disjunctions between the program pedagogy and instructors' classroom practices. So during my past experience with the program, challenges of praxis were already evident. For the PD workshops, instructors would read and discuss theoretical writings on critical theory by Freire (1973), language and culture by Kramsch (1993), post-modern identity

by Rosaldo (1993), and feminist ethnography by Okely (1996).[43] What kind of ESL program was this? And where were the *Jazz Chants*?[44] I was fascinated by the theoretical frameworks we were working with, and even with the difficulties the program was experiencing in terms of pedagogical cohesion, I still believed that this innovative pedagogy, at its core, had much to offer the field of ESL. So when I returned to graduate school, I knew I wanted to investigate why the implementation of such a promising program was fraught with difficulty. And with Norton's (2000a, 2001) theories of student identity and investment, I had a good place to start (although soon afterwards, I realized that an analysis of student identity was only the start).

Being an enthusiastic albeit naïve researcher, I imagined a return to Pacific University's EAP program would be "just like old times" for although the majority of the staff had since changed, a small handful of them, including the two head administrators, Erika and Ariel, remained. What would happen during that one year of research, however, was a lesson to me that sometimes the affective demands of conducting research are the most difficult demands of all.[45]

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[43] Due to my pack rat nature, I guess, I recently rediscovered my notes and handouts from these previous PD workshops. Among the materials other than those I just listed, I found summaries of books and articles typed out by Ariel, the head teacher and PD workshop co-developer at the time, which highlighted the theories of Clifford Geertz, Stuart Hall, Pierre Bourdieu, and Michel Foucault.

[44] I say this in half-jest for I had come across a number of ESL teachers in my first two years of teaching whom I believed were (unhealthily) obsessed with using them in their classrooms. Briefly, Jazz Chants are a language learning technique and phenomenon (I use this word consciously) developed by Carolyn Graham (1978) that links the learning of the rhythm and grammar of spoken English to the beat of jazz in the form of poems or chants. An example of this for the learning of the future tense would be "What are you going to do at two? What are you going to do? Where are you going to be at three? Where are you going to be?" (p. 17), etc. While I see the value of this sort of exercise to improve upon grammar, vocabulary, or speaking skills like intonation, I am reminded of my earlier ESL practicum days when some of my adult ESL students expressed their strong dislike for them on the one hand, and their frustrations with their teacher's frequency of using them on the other. For some students, I believe embarrassment to "perform" them aloud may have been part of the reason; for others whose investments in English language courses were related largely to their hope of one day having their professional credentials recognized (some of them being medical specialists who came to Canada as refugees), I believe some found them to be patronizing.

[45] Creswell (1998) and Wolcott (1995) both highlight the physical, mental, and emotional challenges of conducting ethnographic research and how these challenges demand a major commitment from any researcher and researched involved in it.

4.1.2 Taking things personally

Perhaps I was setting myself up for a rude awakening when I walked back through the doors of Pacific University's EAP program thinking that a year of research would be more about academic engagement than anything. Little did I know that it would, instead, be my *affective* engagement with the research and participants that would play a large role in the shaping of the thesis. There were three specific events that I identify that instigated much of this engagement within the thesis, and all three wreaked havoc on both the political and social climate of the program, leaving few, if any (including myself and my research), unaffected.

Although the program was associated with Pacific University as a whole, their EAP program was non-credit and remained cost-recovery-based. Like many major ESL schools, Pacific University's language program relied heavily on recruiting agents located in various countries as a means of advertising. These recruiting agents, in turn, receive payment according to the number of students recruited. Not all students come to this program via a recruiter, but during the second semester of my study, a cohort recruited from China (consisting of approximately 40 students—almost half of an entire semester's students) registered for two full semester's of study at Pacific University's ESL program. Unfortunately, it was soon discovered that the cohort had been sold the program under false pretenses as they were told by marketing agents in China not only that the program was a "TOEFL school[46]," but that enrollment in the program would guarantee them acceptance into Pacific University itself (i.e., the mainstream degree-granting programs). Both claims were, of course, incorrect; however, the reality of the matter was not uncovered by the staff and students until one student decided to ask an administrator for clarification about these acceptance conditions. Needless to say, a near-mutiny

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[46] That is, a language school specifically devoted to teaching English skills for the TOEFL test. Arguably, a "TOEFL school" would be one which would focus particularly on test-taking skills and decontextualized language skills in response to the way in which the test is constructed.

soon ensued resulting in extreme dissatisfaction with and resentment towards the program and its staff by the cohort students.

Less than a quarter of the students in the cohort agreed to participate in my study (let alone the program itself after discovering that they were "swindled," as an instructor put it), and because they were generally grouped in classes within their cohort (classes which I never observed due to insufficient research consent numbers), my data did not reflect much of the in-class tensions that stemmed from this unfortunate event. Yet I think it is an important event to examine here because I argue that these tensions were still reflected in the data that I *did* collect. After all, it was not hard to see that frustrations of both students and instructors ran high, especially when the ruse was first uncovered, and some of the instructors who participated in my study were also teaching classes within this cohort group. So quite possibly, the tensions that they faced from disgruntled students because of this series of unfortunate events may have affected their teaching (albeit on a subconscious, or even conscious, level) in classes that I *did* observe. And, in fact, a number of instructors participating in my study stated this much during their interviews with me. But the uncovering of the program's "mis-selling" was sandwiched between two other events that put the instructors and me on a political and emotional roller-coaster—namely, the departures of Ariel, the associate director of the program and the person responsible for the program's PD workshops, shortly before the China cohort's situation came to light, as well as Erika, the director and original developer of the program and its pedagogy, afterwards (close to the end of my data collection). With these three events occurring over a relatively short time span and all occurring during my year at the program, I question the effects that these very political happenings may have had on the overall study. I am left to now question whether the data I collected would have been different had the political and social climate of the program remained more stable.

Another repercussion of these events on my research was that because of their central role within the program and in relation to the pedagogy, Ariel's and Erika's departures would surely have pedagogical implications. Indeed, after Ariel's departure, professional development dissolved quickly and other professional development initiatives were delayed. Although the desire for the continuation of PD was voiced by administration, by the end of my year of research, I believe strained relations between the administration and the instructors made it difficult for PD initiatives to be sustained in any way.[47] The dissolution of PD, compounded with the other controversies during that year, created a very unstable work and, more significantly for me, research environment. It was no surprise then, considering my relationship with the program both historically and with the current research at hand, that I became caught up in the sociopolitics of the events myself. I concluded my research that semester, and it took me over one year to finally have the courage to go back to my data. I pause here to say that I realize this all sounds so soap-opera-ish (the headlines: "ESL researcher *traumatized* by research"), but I believe it to be completely relevant and important to the point I am trying to make about the affective burdens of research and their effects on the researcher and their research.

It took me a year to finally get to a point where I could look at my research again without becoming almost paralyzed with emotion; but I now realize that this pause was not an unnecessary one because by the time my research had concluded, I was so affected by my research and the research process that an earlier version of the thesis would no doubt have been more judgemental than analytical (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). And the irony of this is that the very

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[47] I recognize the irony of conducting a case study investigating, in part, ESL teacher education at a particular program only to observe the program's PD initiatives slowly, but eventually, falling to the wayside during the course of my research due to unanticipated and relatively sudden administrative changes, among other things. At the same time, however, uncertainties such as lack of physical space, funding, resources, etc. or changes in staffing and policies are precisely the kinds of challenges educators from all fields have to deal with in their everyday work lives. And these all, in a myriad of ways, no doubt affect both teaching and learning possibilities (not to mention research possibilities!) and contributed to the playing out of events I highlight in my research and their ultimate analysis.

reason why I spent the first three months of my research getting to know the teaching staff in the program was precisely because of their fear of having their teaching judged (as opposed to me looking at their practices analytically and contextually).

Thankfully, many instructors did agree to participate in the research study, but I believe that this was because many of them had begun to view me as a coworker and, more importantly, as a colleague and friend. But trying to juggle these multiple identities--researcher, colleague, and friend--and the partialities they entail also carry implications for the research process. As Canagarajah (1999c) points out, "researchers are always acting and generating action during their long stay in the community. The mere presence of a non-member is enough to activate certain social dynamics that may alter the everyday life of the community" (p. 50; cf. Alvermann, 2002; Hammersley, 1992; Jordan & Yeomans, 1995; Pennycook, 1994b; see also Hammersley & Atkinson's [1995] notion of research "naturalism"). That is, my multiple identities and my negotiation of them at Pacific University have likely contributed in some way to the events and the discourses I was observing. But by becoming too entrenched and active in the lives of those being researched, Creswell (1998) and Hornberger (1994) worry about the possibility of the researcher learning the partialities of that community or vice versa or otherwise affecting the way the researched acts in their environment—both situations possibly resulting in a less representative interpretation of those being researched. But such are the effects of researchers on research as is the importance of recognizing and reflecting on these within our research reporting as I attempt to do here. On the other hand, in being positioned differently by different people, details that might otherwise remain undiscovered can come to light—that is, in viewing me as more than "just" a researcher, I believe participants revealed things to me that they may not have shared had they perceived me and my identities differently. Nonetheless, with every new positioning comes the need to critically reflect on my additional responsibilities to my participants as a researcher, colleague, and friend, and so I recount in the

next section my struggles to negotiate my at times conflicting research identities at Pacific University.

Although I entered Pacific University's academic literacy program in 2003 as a relative stranger (though a small number of my past colleagues were still working there at the time), I exited the program in 2004 as a colleague and friend. Then again, establishing some level of relationship (positive or negative) with one's participants would be inevitable as I tried to establish myself as a full-time fixture in the program, not only to show my level of commitment to the research, but to the participants and their lived experiences while in the program. Showing commitment in this way, however, inevitably resulted in the blurring of the (perhaps mythical) lines between my multiple identities of researcher, professional colleague, and friend; but, I question whether an attempt to maintain researcher distance (and to claim the possibility of even doing so) would have been more dishonest to me, my participants, and my research. Nevertheless, this identity blurring was the reality of my research process while there, and I now outline these shifts and the possible implications of them here.

4.1.3 From researcher to pedagogue to culinary counsellor and back again

In relation to the notion of multiple identities, ethnographies allow for complex and sometimes contradictory identities within a single person (i.e., the researcher, the researched, or both). This stems from the recognition that a single person may inhabit many different contexts and, in effect, many different identities. These multiple identities, in turn, are revealed in the way we research and the way we are researched (Gergen & Gergen, 2000; Goldstein, 2003; Norton, 2000a). For example, Lincoln and Denzin (2000, p. 1060) discuss how researchers' identities can shift during the research project--from doing fieldwork to our interactions with the data and subjects. And it is an awareness of these identities (and their shifting) that an ethnographic methodology takes better into account the intricacies of conducting research.

The complexity of my simultaneous identity positionings within the program first became apparent when I realized that I was soon being seen as a potential ESL resource person by both students and staff. Teetering between a researcher and resource person was a fairly easy, and perhaps advantageous, blurring to have to negotiate when interacting with my student participants. At the same time, though, I could not help but wonder whether this same identity blurring in my interactions with staff in the program may have conversely been a negative positioning in relation to the data I was hoping to collect. That is, as my research at Pacific University's EAP program progressed, staff became more aware of my academic background in ESL and thus believed me to have a more comprehensive knowledge of ESL "expertise." Because of this, little by little, instructors began to openly canvass me for advice in regards to all aspects of language learning.

I was often asked to suggest readings and activities and was constantly engaged in conversations regarding ESL methodologies and ideologies. My interest in critical approaches to ESL quickly became apparent to instructors because of my new shift to ESL pedagogue. Further, because my ideological leanings corresponded closely (at least in theory, from my understanding) to the philosophy of the program I was researching, my opinions gained further credence in the eyes of some of the staff. In turn, due to relative unfamiliarity with critical approaches to language instruction, many staff approached me for opinions on various issues pertaining to language learning within the Pacific University curriculum specifically. By the end of the year-long study, I was under the impression that many of the staff had a fairly good idea of the theoretical framework of my thesis research and of the overall ideology that informed my research. I am therefore left to wonder how my identity shifting from a researcher to a resource person may have inadvertently influenced the identities and behaviours of some of the staff (cf. Canagarajah, 1999c).

In a particularly worrying example, just over a year after completing my thesis research, I bumped into an instructor from Pacific University's EAP program at an ESL conference. She reminded me of a staff meeting at the program (02/06/04)[48] that I had attended during which there was a debate of the program's long-standing "English-Only" policy. In summary, as a researcher at the meeting, I desired to remain the "neutral observer," so I sat in on the discussion in silence; however, one staff member, perceiving me as the Applied Linguistics "expert" (relative to the other staff with little to no background in ESL theory), proceeded to ask me for my opinion. Suddenly put on the spot in front of the rest of the staff, I felt no other option but to voice my opinion as requested which was, in this case, disagreement with the policy. Saying that I had no opinion would have been patronizing to the instructors in the program, so whether this counts for anything or not, I voiced my opinion with much hesitancy and made it a point to qualify my opinion by saying that much research exists for both sides of the issue.

When I was asked for references, I brought to the next meeting (a week later) articles addressing the "English-Only" debate, some for and some against.[49] But the fact still remains that at the staff meeting, I was the only dissenting voice against the program's "English-Only" policy. This is not to say, of course, that no other staff shared my opinion, but that I was the only one to express dissent. After reminding me of this staff meeting exchange, this instructor then told me that because of that discussion, I had "converted" her (i.e., once in agreement with the English-Only policy, after hearing my opinion, she now was in disagreement). What disturbed me was that I had a similar conversation with another instructor in the program only a few months prior who told me that that particular discussion had also changed her thinking about the issue.

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[48] Throughout the thesis, all focus group, interview, and staff meeting dates are formatted as "month/day/year." To prevent possible confusion, I will further indicate beside the date whether the person was an administrator, instructor, or student.

[49] Unfortunately, however, I do not have a record of which ones I gave them, although I strongly believe that one of the articles I chose was Auerbach (1993) as well as Polio's (1994) subsequent cautioning response to Auerbach.

Of course it would likewise be just as patronizing for me to say that these two instructors "saw the light" only because of my "expert" guidance. I am sure they were more than capable of deciding for themselves whether or not they felt the need to re-evaluate their previous stance on the issue and of ultimately judging whether or not the alternative viewpoints presented held any credence to them. But now I am left to ask what my influence may have been on the program and the instructors in the program because ultimately, how can I deny any responsibility if my research subjects are telling me that I literally "converted" them? But herein lay the problem with my positioning as both a researcher and ESL pedagogue: the additional legitimacy granted to me by the staff not only as an ESL expert, generally, but as a Pacific University ESL expert, specifically, increased my already disproportionate power and influence as an academic researcher on the program and those within it.

Qualitative research recognizes that the researcher has an irrevocable effect on both the research subjects and research site, but critical qualitative research requires us to be critically reflexive about these effects in relation to the larger issues of power inequity in research. It is therefore important for me to point out further that researcher and pedagogue were not my only identities of power within Pacific University, as it was a seemingly more innocent identity that held the most power for me within my thesis research. That is, to further add to the complexities of my own identity negotiation, besides the blurring of my researcher/pedagogical colleague identities was the blurring of my researcher/friend identities.

My initial concern in this regard was that the establishing of relationships with the staff at Pacific University's ESL program may have simultaneously had adverse effects on my relationships with the student participants. For as my relationships with the instructors in the program became closer, this, not surprisingly, changed the dynamics of our interactions. Our communications no doubt became friendlier, and it was a shift that I am sure was noticed by students in my study. For this reason, I needed to continually emphasize to my student

participants the ethics of confidentiality throughout my research process as I was cognizant that within the scope of the study, students would be voicing opinions about the program and, inevitably, their teachers. But how could I ever convince students of my vow of confidentiality to them when they see the way in which I interact daily with the instructors they have, in confidence, spoke so candidly about? Similarly, even staff, themselves, in reference to their own responses to my research questions, at times found it difficult to speak of their own experiences within the program and its pedagogy without referencing people who are not only their colleagues, but their friends. So the first concern in attempting to negotiate the blurry line between researcher and friend with my participants was trying to be mindful of my participants' concerns of confidentiality, especially when they were definitely aware of my relationships within the program. But I was further concerned when I consciously decided to take actions that I knew full-well would inevitably position me differently within my research at Pacific University.

Due in particular to the dismissal of Ariel and Erika, relations between some of the instructors as well as other staff in the program became strained. One afternoon, a conversation with an instructor revealed to her my great love of all things edible. She lamented to me that social get-togethers over food outside of the tension-filled office was precisely what the staff needed in order to lift morale and to hopefully rediscover collegial relationships which had become increasingly difficult due to office politics. So I do realize that I was also implicated in the blurring of my identities at Pacific University, especially in light of the fact that I am openly admitting that I, myself, was co-initiator of these social functions. But when I did organize them (I organized a number of lunches and dinners during my research year at the program), I was thinking only as a friend. As foolish as this might sound, I felt that food field trips would provide staff with an escape from stresses that although I could never remove, I could at least temporarily release. If I had thought about this as a researcher and about how organizing social

outings may have affected my research, I may not have pursued it nor would they have been organized.[50] In the end, I make no apologies for doing something that may be considered by others as crossing the researcher line but that I considered a needed break from the chaos not just for my friends/participants, but for myself as well. I would argue that organizing dinners "skewed" my data no more or less than my unintentional staff meeting "conversions." In fact, indirectly, I think the dinners, to a certain degree, contributed a deeper complexity to my research overall.

Interviews I conducted with the staff as I became closer to them as a friend, not just as a researcher and colleague, were markedly more detailed and introspective. Interviews became more like discussions and made me privy to insights that I may not have had access to had I been perceived solely as a distant or disinterested researcher. And from these more candid interviews, other issues and themes (many of them extremely personal and heart-rending for those speaking about them) were brought to light that I may not have thought about had they not been revealed to me. In turn, these new revelations gave me greater insight into my research questions and deepened my analysis greatly. Clearly, my juggling of "hats" (as one instructor described my negotiation of multiple identities as a researcher[51]) and the responsibilities that each encompassed was an integral part of my research process, and there are ethical concerns here in terms of the possibility for a researcher to abuse such negotiations. But I would like to think that this was not a responsibility I took lightly, and it was something that I thought about many times over the course of the year, and even now as I write this thesis.

Although it is probably clear to readers by now that I became (and remain) good friends with many of my participants (both staff and students), this does not preclude my desire to also

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[50] These lunches and dinners were actually very well-attended by the staff at Pacific University's ESL program, with each get-together seeing between 10 to 12 staff and instructors in attendance. That is approximately 50% or slightly higher of the total number of people working at the program at any given time.

[51] For examples of other researchers negotiating multiple researcher identities in second language research, see Goldstein (2003) and Norton (2000a).

be a "good" researcher and do "good" research. Because the program was not perfect, as nothing ever is. Likewise, while my research participants are now my friends, this does not mean that any of them should expect to read this thesis in comfort. While there were many interactions I observed that gave me cause for great hope in ESL education, conversely, there were many that also gave me cause for great concern. But I recognize that our actions are influenced by and within the discourses in which we live and work and by the temporal and historical contexts in which they are embedded. So while I present some of the observations that did cause me concern, I do so to better understand a complex situation. Thus, I hope I am remaining responsible and respectful to my participants while concomitantly remaining responsible and respectful to my research.

Hodges (1998, as cited in Day, 2002, p. 53) tells us that "we are not born with complex identities but rather . . . we become 'multiplied' through ongoing sociality." And it was because of my multiple positionalities at Pacific University's academic literacy program that I believe my ethnographic research was better able to look at the etic (i.e., looking at data from an external social sciences perspective) and emic (i.e., from the perspective of the researched), providing a more comprehensive (and hopefully more representative) view of my participants and their lives (Davis, 1995; Duff, 1995, 2002b; Gergen & Gergen, 2000; Hammersley, 1992; Hornberger, 1994; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Norton Peirce, 1995; Palys, 1997; Watson-Gegeo, 1988). But Agar (1996) and Duff (2002b) have called attention to the now blurring line between the once-divided etic and emic in relation to the global community and how we are starting to see characteristics and patterns of the "Other" in our own lives. As Agar (Ibid.) explains, "people don't clump into mutually exclusive worlds. Ethnographers and others swim in the same interconnected global soup. They know things about each other even before they meet and start to talk" (p. 21). In the next section, I will highlight how the etic met emic in my thesis study when I reflect on the complexities I faced in "studying my own kind."

Although I was juggling identities of researcher, pedagogue, colleague, and friend throughout the duration of my research year at Pacific University, depending on the context of a particular situation, certain identities would become more (or less) salient (Kanno, 2003b). For example, when at a social get-together with the instructors, I argue that my most salient identity was as a friend, but if dinner talk shifted to work talk, so too, would my identity shift to that of colleague. My identity would similarly shift during other aspects of my data collection while at Pacific University's English language program, however. Specifically, I found the way I was racialized by my research participants within my study to be particularly salient over the course of the year. And interestingly, sometimes, this racialized identity even shifted from moment to moment within one single interaction. The negotiation of this identity found me pushed (as it were) from insider to outsider to in-between and highlighted for me the significance of race and racial(ized) identities in the conducting of ESL research.[52]

4.2 Researching Race from Inside, Outside, and In-Between

I cannot claim that I never expected issues of race and racialization (and my own racialized identity, in particular) to come up in my research. Mehra (2001), in reflecting on what she decided to research for her doctoral studies, made the observation that "who I am determines, to a large extent, what I want to study" (p. 72; cf. Mehra, 2002). That is, a matter of importance to Mehra in relation to her personal beliefs and value systems guided what she felt was a matter of importance to research. In her case, her identity as both an Asian Indian and as an international student in the field of education influenced greatly her desire to conduct research in immigrant education, focusing, in particular, on children within Asian Indian immigrant families. In a similar way, how I am and how I have been racialized as a Chinese-Canadian and as an ESL teacher and researcher of colour likewise influences my desire to

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[52] See Merchant and Willis (2001) for examples of other narratives of researchers of colour who address the challenges that they, too, faced while conducting research with participants of similarly-racialized backgrounds.

investigate how issues of race play out in second language classrooms. But while the influence of these experiences on my research questions was no surprise to me, I did not expect the salience these experiences would hold within the actual research process. The way in which I was racialized by those who participated in my research and its implications on my research are what I need to outline here as it was this identity negotiation, arguably more than any other, that affected my study most significantly at Pacific University's ESL program.

4.2.1 Studying my own kind

"You look Chinese," declared a student from Mainland China while I was preparing for another hour of classroom observation (11/21/03). When I confirmed that indeed, I was Chinese, the student continued, "Do you think Taiwan is an independent country?"[53] Understanding that any response I would give would garner some sort of reaction either way, I told him that I felt strongly about the notion of self-naming (alluding to my belief that people in Taiwan should have a right to call themselves either Taiwanese or Chinese depending on their own perceptions of their imagined [and actual] communities—not exactly a surprising response considering the topic of my thesis!). Predictably (but not my intention, of course), some students from Taiwan loudly expressed their approval while some from Mainland China quickly (and vocally) relegated my response as "Canadian." I was subsequently told by the same student immediately after this incident, "You were born here so your Chinese (language skills) must be bad." This statement was made, however, without any knowledge of my actual linguistic ability.

I interpreted this student's initial question to me as stemming from his attempts at presenting discourses of Chinese solidarity on the issue of Taiwan independence. Discovering my background was Chinese perhaps lead him to assume that I would, in fact, toe the line and

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[53] This question was in reference to a conversation several students from Mainland China and Taiwan were having before class in relation to the issue of Taiwan independence. I had overheard their conversation while setting up my audiorecording equipment in the room, but up to then, did not acknowledge (nor intend to acknowledge) awareness of their conversation due to my preoccupation with my research preparation task at hand.

proclaim my agreement with him (and other students from China) on the issue. And with my positioning within the program as a university researcher (and possibly my positioning as a geographically-differently-located Chinese within the global Chinese diaspora), the power and legitimacy my response would possibly hold could have been a significant setback for anyone with a dissenting voice within the classroom. Unfortunately for this student, his attempt at legitimation went awry and instead played into the hands of the opposition. Upon discovering that his attempt at garnering further solidarity backfired, it was interesting to see how I was, in a sense, publicly punished.

At the beginning of the interaction, I had been positioned as a fellow Chinese, but less than a minute later, it was interesting to see how quickly my membership was revoked due to my apparent lack of congruency with a Chinese voice. Further highlighting my inability to speak the mother tongue was an additional blow to my legitimacy in any claim for Chinese membership. I found it strange (but somewhat invigorating from a theoretical sense) to see how in one short moment, I went from insider to outsider. As Hodges (1998) argues "a community of practice is organized in such a way as to make participation contingent on identifying, or dis-identifying, within ideological constructs" (p. 289). Also, because "identities are brought into being through their performance" (Silberstein, 2003, p. 321) and because I failed to therefore properly perform a Chinese identity, my performance was deemed one of "Canadian."

On another occasion, I was similarly asked by a different student from Mainland China whether I was Chinese, but before having a chance to answer, the student quickly followed with a puzzled, "Because you look Chinese... but you don't *act* Chinese." The first question I asked myself was, "Hang on a minute... How do I 'act'?!?" But then I started to wonder to myself, "How did this particular student *expect* me to act?" Because of this line of questioning, I believe then that when the student first saw my face at the program, he not only had an expectation of who I was, but also how I was going to act in relation to this perception. To his surprise (judging

from his tone of bewilderment) though, the way I performed Chinese-ness was not commensurate to his own understandings of this racialized identity. In being categorized as either Chinese *or* Canadian, and not a hybrid mix of both (cf. Hall, 1992), what might be the implications in regards to the way in which these students positioned me both in and out of this ESL classroom? How was my identity being constructed and/or reconstructed? In any case though, I do not believe that the student's construction of me as less authentically (or even completely illegitimate) Chinese shifted my standing within that classroom incident or within the larger discourses of power. As a "university researcher" and as a "Canadian" (at least now in these students' eyes), I maintained two very privileged identities. But moments such as these bring back memories of similar experiences of mine as an ESL teacher in the past, and it reminds me of the complexities of being a person of colour in the field of ESL. They are experiences that make me question the implications of this tension for other visible minority teachers and students in ESL when their identities are similarly racialized in their classrooms.

4.2.2 Race, racialization, and ESL

Although teacher and student identities in many fields of education may be affected by issues of race and racism, I argue that racialized identity constructions in ESL/EFL are more deeply entrenched due to a normative equating of the English language with whiteness. This generally unspoken assumption, however, needs to be critiqued (Amin, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999, 2001, 2003; Curtis & Romney, 2006; Kubota, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2004a; Liu, 1999; Thomas, 1999).[54] That is, idealized notions of an "authentic" English speaker have repercussions for who is considered a "legitimate" speaker of the language, and the affects of this discourse has implications for the racialization of both second language

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[54] I am hopeful that two 2006 special journal issues on "Race and TESOL" (*TESOL Quarterly* [Kubota & Lin, 2006]) and "Postcolonial Approaches to TESOL" (*Critical Inquiry in Language Studies* [Lin & Luke, 2006]) mark the beginning of a greater focus on these highly important, yet thus far under-researched, issues in the field of ESL/EFL.

students and teachers and their claiming of legitimate space and place as English language speakers.

Nuzhat Amin (1997, 2000, 2001) conducted a study of ESL students taught by visible minority ESL teachers in Toronto, Ontario—probably the most ethnically diverse city in Canada. In her research, she found that students held the following assumptions about English speakers: "only White people can be native speakers of English," "only native speakers know 'real,' 'proper,' 'Canadian' English," and "only White people are 'real' Canadians" (1997, p. 580).[55] Colonial constructions of nativeness (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999) and the native speaker are hardly isolated to the students in Amin's particular study and have been theorized extensively in ESL literature (see, for example, Amin & Kubota, 2004; Braine, 1999; Kubota, 2001, 2002a, 2004a; Maum, 2002; Norton, 1997b, 1998, 2000b).

When students embrace beliefs about whites, Canadians, and native/nonnative speakers of English reflecting those above, the statement they are consequently making is that only whites should teach/are able to teach ESL. They therefore perceive any non-whites teaching ESL as inferior as all visible minorities are automatically labelled as nonnative speakers/illegitimate speakers of English (Leung et al., 1997; Lin et al, 2002). This racialization of the NEST/NNEST[56] construct leads some students to further believe "only a White accent qualifies one to be a native speaker" (Amin, 1999, p. 97) without necessarily understanding on a conscious level what these sorts of discourses imply.[57] That is, the underlying message in such

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[55] In reference to race and the Canadian nation-state, Bannerji (2000) argues that Canada is:
  a construction, a set of representations, embodying certain types of political and cultural communities . . . constructed in agreement with certain ideas regarding skin color, history, language (English/French), and other cultural signifiers--all of which may be subsumed under the ideological category "white." (p. 64; cf. Fleming, 2003)

[56] NEST/NNEST = native English-speaking teacher/non-native English-speaking teacher

[57] See Kelch and Santana-Williamson (2002) for a revealing study of ESL students' perceptions of accentedness. Their findings uncovered students' general inability to distinguish between whether an English speaker's accent was native or nonnative even though participants in their study spoke to the advantages of having "native" English-speaking teachers over "non-natives." As such, Amin and Kubota (2004) cogently argue "that accents, like race, are

declarations is that a "white accent" has more to do with facial features than with linguistic features. As a result, in an ironic twist, Nayar (1994) interestingly highlights how non-visible minority NNESTs (or NNESs, generally) have greater opportunities to claim "native speaker" status; conversely, visible minorities are not given the space to claim the same status "regardless of their linguistic abilities" due to the very same process of identity racialization and the association of race with nativeness/non-nativeness (p. 3, cf. Inbar-Lourie, 2005; Liu, 1999).[58]

Mark was the only male visible minority instructor at Pacific University's ESL program at the time of my study. He had immigrated from Hong Kong 30 years earlier, at the age of 11, and was multilingual (English, Cantonese [his first language], Japanese, and Mandarin). Because of his English fluency, he told me students were often surprised to find out that English was not his first language. He was nevertheless cognizant that as an ESL teacher, "my face can, *can* be a disadvantage being Asian-looking because [students] already--boom--in the first 30 seconds, um, stereotype me as an Asian and *therefore* non-native" (Interview 04/26/04). He was aware of the way in which discourses equating the English language and whiteness thus served to position him as an inauthentic speaker. But perhaps because he, himself, "[could] understand that kind of thinking," he was able to reflect on the issue with some humour when he recounted to me a past job-hunting experience while he was living in Japan years earlier:

> In Japan, I applied for an English-teaching job . . . and then they ended up hiring a girl from France who spoke *really* good English--with a *really* good French accent. But, she was blonde. And that's... that sells. [*whispers jokingly into the tape recorder*] That *sells*. (Mark, Instructor, Interview 04/26/04)

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socially constructed, are a linguistic manifestation of nativism, and constitute a new and effective form of racism" (p. 113; cf. Rubin, 1992). Language and power also intersect in analyses of the construct of "accentedness" (cf. Bonfiglio, 2002; Lippi-Green, 1997) when referring to notions of "Standard English" (see, for example, Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001).

[58] See Harris and Rampton's (2003) recently edited volume that provides an excellent socio-historical analysis of the intersections of language, ethnicity, and race.

Mark realizes that he is therefore positioned as an illegitimate second language instructor not just within the micro-discourses of a particular language program, but in the macro-discourses of the larger field of ESL (Pavlenko, 2003).

During my second semester of research at Pacific University's ESL program, discourses of English and whiteness also played out in an incident I witnessed (07/22/03) involving Lisa, one of only two visible minority instructors at the time[59], and one of her students in relation to how she was perceived by him as an illegitimate ESL teacher. She later recounted the incident during our interview:

> Last term, I had a student who was older than me, Asian, Korean man . . . first day in class, his body language was already resisting, not the program, but me being a fellow Asian and younger and female. Um, so that kind of resistance I've gotten from Asian *males* especially that are *older* than me. (Lisa, Instructor, Interview, 12/21/03)

She described how she had asked the student to leave the classroom due to his disruptive behaviour during one of her classes. When class ended, however, the student confronted her outside the classroom:

> He came up to me and starting yelling at me and said that it was *extremely* disrespectful to him, and that I should *never*, he said, "You must *never* do that ever again in the classroom."

Andrée, one of Lisa's colleagues, was teaching in the class next door. She saw and heard what was happening and immediately intervened. As if re-enacting the original discourse exchange, it was Andrée who now chastised the student for his show of disrespect. I believe that because of

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[59] Mark was hired in my fourth and final semester of research at Pacific University's ESL program.

the way in which identity categorizations of race and age can intersect[60] (i.e., Andrée was older

than Lisa and is white), Andrée's performance of a teacher identity was not challenged. In fact,

at the next staff meeting, she revealed that in a later meeting with the student, he apologized to

her (Andrée) for his actions as he perceived upsetting a teacher *he actually respected* as

disrespectful. From this exchange, we see how social categories allow some to appropriate

certain identities (in this case, a legitimate ESL teacher) while disallowing others to do the same

(cf. Espiritu, 1992; Ivanič, 1998; Kanno, 2003b; Kanno & Norton, 2003; Lewis, 2001; May,

1999; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Lisa and Andrée were both female and were relatively

inexperienced teachers; but as teaching inexperience is not necessarily an observable trait, I am

left to ponder not only the centrality of age, but of the role that racialization may have played in

this incident.[61] The powerful sway of the construction of who constitutes a legitimate English

speaker, however, was made shockingly evident to me soon afterwards.

Andrée, still visibly upset by what had just occurred, went on to teach her next class,

Listening Practice. Instead of keeping to the original lesson she had previously planned,

however, she decided to turn what she observed into a "teachable moment" (cf. Baynham's

[2005] notion of "contingent practice"). Unable to contain her distress, Andrée tearfully told her

students what transpired then began to speak with her class about how non-white teachers are

just as Canadian, legitimate, and respected as white instructors. In an attempt to further continue

the discourse in relation to the content of the class, she put students into small groups and asked

them to go out into the city and learn about Canadians and what it was like living in Canada. To

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[60] I similarly believe that the intersections of race with other socially-constructed categories such as gender played a role in why Mark, for example, was able to more easily negotiate his legitimacy in the language classroom than Lisa.

[61] On the note of racialization, it might also be fruitful to analyze the implications of Andrée's intervention in this incident as a white female. I am not minimizing nor critiquing her actions as rather, I believe public displays of solidarity from white colleagues to be integral in the addressing of issues of discrimination; rather, I think it's important to consider how her intervention may have also served to simultaneously take agency away from Lisa as she needs to constantly be "rescued" by her white colleagues. Of further consideration is the paradox of the perpetuation of racialized dominance between a white teacher and a minority student in the addressing of inequity.

make it appear more pedagogically "legitimate," she proposed that the goal was to listen to different ways of speaking, and practicing listening skills and strategies.

As soon as students broke off into their groups to devise their questions, I was disappointed to discover that Andrée's attempt at having students rethink their notions of "Canadian" resulted in the following exchange:

Jane: I think we will have to avoid to ask Asian people.

Miki: But maybe I think, um, especially if we ask just the Caucasian people, it's not good. We have to ask many people… different kind of people.

Jane: Yeah, but I think it's listening class. We have to…

Miki: We have to do the "proper" English?!?

Jane: Yeah.

Miki: It sounds stupid.

Jane: No. I don't think so.

Miki: Why? We have to choose all kind of people and then we have to get all kind of English. That's the aim. If we choose the "proper" English…

Jane: If you want to listen to the Asian's language, just in the classroom, you can do it.

Miki: But, but, but, in, in [name of city in which Pacific University is located], people, people speak… I know a lot of Asians who speak English perfectly… We should not avoid Asian. It's so… strange.

Jane: Okay, okay. Just do it.

(Andrée, *Listening Practice*, 07/22/03)

Although Miki, a student from Japan, argued that the avoidance of Asians was "strange" because she knew "a lot of Asians who speak English perfectly," Jane, a student from Taiwan, stated bluntly, "If you want to listen to the Asian's language, just in the classroom you can do it." I found it telling that the discourse of white equalling legitimate English speaker and

Canadian remained compelling to some students, even after there was an attempt to dispel it publicly by Lisa's white colleague. But the irony of these student-constructed discourses is that in positioning people of colour as illegitimate English speakers, students do not seem to realize the role they, in fact, play in the continued invalidation of *themselves* as legitimate speakers of English.

To a certain degree, discourses conflating racialized identity and language ability remain powerful in its oppression of those relegated as nonnative English speakers in part *because* students in the field (and others who are similarly positioned) continue to perpetuate this inequitable assumption. Consequently, by continuing to subscribe to this racialized construction of the native/nonnative speaker, students position themselves in the global discourse as inauthentic speakers of English (cf. Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999a).[62] Thus, when students internalize these discourses, they perpetuate their own racialized identity and that of Lisa and other visible minorities in the ESL field.

The way in which the activity was mediated by Andrée did play a role in why some students had difficulties critically analyzing the issue, but we need to keep in mind that Andrée not only went into the lesson unprepared pedagogically (i.e., it was an unexpected lesson shift), but, more importantly, affectively shaken. We also need to recognize, though, how powerful these discourses are as they work from within those they oppress (i.e., when these discourses are internalized and thus reproduced by students like Jane), within the classroom (i.e., when teachers and their practices perpetuate the dichotomy), and within the larger TESOL field (i.e., when these racialized theories are continually reproduced in the literature thereby limiting

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[62] Steven Talmy's (2004) research similarly uncovered how ESL students in Hawaii resisted their own marginalized identities by positioning and stigmatizing their fellow ESL classmates, all the while without recognition that their identities as second language learners were, in fact, inherently interrelated. Hence, in stigmatizing other ESL students, they were reproducing their own marginalization.

possibilities for people of colour to negotiate other, more emancipatory, identities). In contrast to my interview with Mark, Lisa did not speak to the issue with humour.

During our interview, Lisa, a teacher at the program for one year, recounted numerous incidents which forced her to face the powerful discourses which served to position her as an illegitimate ESL teacher and Canadian amongst her students and even amongst her colleagues. What was of interest to me to query was the silence that I had observed surrounding these incidents and the way in which they remained relatively unaddressed. But while conducting an interview with Lisa (12/21/03), I was struck by how my identity as an Asian female ESL teacher and researcher seemed to be implicated in her reflective process in relation to her experiences. In particular, her attempts to draw out my experiences and to link them to her own represented her desire to make sense of her own trials and tribulations as a visible minority in ESL. My research led me to question how racialized research identities can unearth incidents, feelings, etc. that may otherwise remain buried. Throughout the investigation, I found myself asking: What are the unique challenges and implications of our own racialized identities as researchers of colour studying "their own kind"? What are the implications of studying "within" for the research? And what appear to be the implications of studying and teaching "within" for the researched (Lisa)? I entitled the following section "'Revealing' Silence" to encapsulate how my research both revealed the way Lisa was racialized and the accompanying silences, as well as how the data was revealing of the discourses involved in the creation and perpetuation of her racialized identity.

4.2.3 "Revealing" silence[63]

Lisa was an instructor in her mid-twenties who was born in Japan, but whose family immigrated to Canada within a year of her birth. She grew up bilingual, speaking both English

[63] A version of the remainder of this chapter (starting from this section) has been published. Lee, E., & Simon-Maeda, A. (2006). Racialized research identities in ESL/EFL research. *TESOL Quarterly, 40*(3), 573-594.

and Japanese, and received her Master's degree in TESOL at an American university before returning to Canada to teach. At the time of my research, she was one of only two visible minorities in a staff of 24. The other Asian instructor worked at the university's second campus and was thus very rarely seen by anyone except during occasional staff meetings. Within this section and those following, I describe Lisa's struggles as she attempted to negotiate her racial identity with students, staff, and administrators in the program.

During her interview and in everyday conversations, Lisa recounted to me a number of anecdotes that illustrated how she was racialized and marginalized, from being mistaken for a student by colleagues to being challenged by students in her classroom. After detailing each account, however, she would ask me whether I had experienced similar situations in my own ESL teaching career. In order not only to analyze the discourses underlying Lisa's anecdotes but, simultaneously, the discourses underlying our research interactions, I turned to Pierre Bourdieu's theories of legitimacy. Bourdieu's (1977; 1982/1991) theory of *legitimate speakers* and *legitimate listeners* addresses the demarcation between those considered "worthy" or "unworthy" to speak or listen; yet underscoring legitimacy is the centrality of who it is that has the power to position someone as worthy or (il)legitimate. In relation to how Lisa was positioned by students and colleagues, the perceptions of race and the resulting racialization of her identity relegated Lisa to illegitimacy as an ESL teacher, native speaker, and Canadian. In relation to our research relationship, however, what was especially interesting to me was how Lisa perceived me as a legitimate ally and colleague with whom she could share and discuss her experiences.

Throughout our interview and between each anecdote, Lisa would intermingle phrases such as, "if you understand what I'm saying" or "I don't know if you've had that [feeling] before." Upon further reflection, I questioned whether Lisa would have made such rhetorical asides if she were being interviewed by a white researcher. In viewing me as a fellow Asian,

Canadian, native speaker of English, and ESL professional, she positioned me as both a legitimate speaker and listener to her experiences as a visible minority in the field of ESL. She believed I mirrored her hybrid identity (cf. Ang, 2001; Hall, 1992) and might understand what it felt like to be simultaneously perceived as being "too Asian" on the one hand, but being "too white" on the other. Thus, when I concurred that I had, indeed, also experienced incidents of racialization, my claims of understanding her experiences (at least to a certain degree) appeared to be interpreted as legitimate rather than as patronizing (a possible interpretation had similar claims of understanding how she was racialized been made by a white ESL researcher).

Lisa's turning to me as a researcher of colour for validation of her struggles was representative of her desire and need for personal and professional support--support she was unable to find amongst her colleagues. But same-race researchers would critically question how she positioned me as legitimate and her "own kind" (in this case, a female minority teacher who would understand how she was racialized in the field of ESL). In her research, Mehra (2001) would refer to Lisa's "if you understand what I'm saying" utterances as "the 'you know how it is!' pattern" which, if taken for granted by the "own kind" researcher, could lead to "hasty judgments or interpretations" rather than to the seeking of understanding more critically the lives of one's research participants (pp. 75-76). That is, being perceived as her kind implies that one's multiple identities (such as the categorizations of race, class, gender, etc.) can be fragmented and decontextualized and denies the ways in which they intersect at any given moment. As an example, because the large majority of the students in the program were from Mainland China, negotiating one's racialized identity may arguably be easier for a Chinese-Canadian (myself) than for a Japanese-Canadian (Lisa) ESL teacher.

From a research perspective, because insider/outsider identities and positionalities are both relational and situational (Enos, 2001; Gallagher, 2000; Kim, 2001; Twine, 2000), one should be hesitant to assume any universal experience or a full understanding of another's

experiences (cf. Ladson-Billings, 2000). Instead, we need to understand how these multiple identities are taken up by ourselves and by others in differing contexts as the privilege or oppression of one person can never be equated so simply and linearly with another (Simon, 1987).[64] For this reason, although a shift from a positionality of research outsider to one of insider (in light of a perceived similarity in racialized positionings) might assist in revealing particular silences (Lisa's, in this case), same-race research purports that this shift can simultaneously become another form of colonizing research practice if the researcher fails to question her relatively-privileged positioning within the larger research/social/political context (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 267).

Nonetheless, Lisa's candour pervaded the interview, and, as a result, I was left unsure as to what to do with such confessions of isolation and confusion. Mere words of comfort would seem superficial in light of how I interpreted incidents such as the ones she recounted as illustrative of broader inequities within the program. Rather, in examining the data, it appeared that what she was seeking was not just words of comfort, but a space in which she could speak about her experiences as part of the larger social and political structures of her workplace. For example, when asked to explain a request that she had made to me at the beginning of my data collection--that I would attend staff meetings as part of my data collection--Lisa seemed to allude to larger structures that had an impact on her day-to-day work:

Ena: I remember when I first started [my data collection], you asked me if I was going to go to the staff meeting . . . Because you told me it makes you feel better [if I attend].

Lisa: Yeah, I don't know why. But I don't know if you've had that experience as well. It seems like I have to shut up. Do you know what I mean? Because I've gotten

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all these questions like, "Oh, where are you *really* from?" Or, do you know what
I mean? Because people have made me feel like I'm a visible minority in the
program within the instructors. And so then I think I feel like I'm being pushed
down a little. And then I feel like, "Oh, wow. I can't speak." And I don't know if
that's normal . . . . Have you had that experience before? . . . Have *you* felt like
you can't speak?

(Lisa, Instructor, Interview 12/21/03)

I shared with Lisa my experiences of racialization while teaching in the field in the past,
but I did so with much trepidation on the assumption that to share such personal information
would be to affect the "objective" validity of the data via a "contamination" of it (cf. Ellis &
Bochner, 2000). It is a dilemma and a myth that Kanno (1997) addresses in relation to how
some qualitative researchers "still shy away from active involvement with participants for fear
of jeopardizing the research itself" (p. 4); but she remains critical of this as "detachment is a
stance just as personal involvement is, and both affect what respondents say . . . They adjust the
extent of disclosure accordingly" (Ibid., p. 6). In the case of the interactions between myself and
Lisa, I argue that these disclosure "adjustments" are significantly determined by the participant
relative to how they view the researcher and their raced, gendered, classed, etc. identities (as
well as the intersections of these social constructions). Her indication that my presence at staff
meetings would reduce her feelings of otherness and illegitimacy made me question whether I
had another role in the program that was, in fact, more significant than that of a researcher. At
that moment, I began to question whether my racialized identity was not only implicated in my
own research process, but might have been having an impact on her participation within the
ESL program as a whole. Her reasons for forefronting my racial identity in her reflective
process became additionally clearer to me when I asked her to discuss another incident I had
observed during my research.

4.2.4 Hidden/hiding emotion in ESL research

Halfway through my data collection, administrators at the language program decided to design a new marketing brochure in the form of a multi-page glossy program booklet (Pacific University ESL program: immersion programs). The new booklet would feature pictures of past students on the front and back covers and throughout the inside pages. For this brochure, all instructors were asked to submit biographies and have pictures taken for inclusion in a special section of the program booklet entitled "Our Instructors." There was an understanding, though, that due to space constraints, only a few would be chosen for inclusion in the final publication. As with the other instructors, Lisa submitted a biography and had a photo taken for the brochure. When the program brochure arrived from the printer, however, I was puzzled to see Lisa's face pasted on the back cover in between the many faces of past students. What made this error all the more obvious was the fact that within the pages of the program booklet was the instructors' section which highlighted the pictures and short biographies of some of the white instructors.

When I brought up the marketing brochure during our interview, Lisa said she felt "pretty shitty" when she first saw the brochure. She told me that because she estimated that approximately ten thousand copies of the brochure had already been printed, she felt there was nothing she could do about the situation and did not raise the issue with the program administrators.[65] In discussing the incident further, it became apparent that the most disappointing aspect of the experience for her was the fact that she felt none of her colleagues realized there was anything wrong with the new brochure in the first place:

Ena: Has anyone else pointed it [your misplaced photo] out to you?

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[65] That particular program brochure was redesigned a year afterwards, however. As to whether this was in response (in whole or in part) to the previous error of Lisa's photograph placement, I do not know; but it should be noted that all erroneous brochures were fully distributed during Pacific University's marketing efforts prior to the brochure's design overhaul and subsequent re-publication.

Lisa: My mom. My dad.

Ena: No one else?

Lisa: No. No instructors. No one. *You*. That's about it. I don't think other instructors--

see, that's my point. I don't think other instructors *care*. I see, that comes from

their not understanding being a visible minority in an ESL atmosphere.

(Lisa, Instructor, Interview 12/21/03)

I was saddened when Lisa expressed to me that she believed I was the only one who both

realized and cared about how she was continually positioned in the program. By the end of our

interview, she voiced skepticism that the way she was racialized would ever change for her and

for other visible minorities in the field as a whole. Again, I was left to question whether these

issues and her resulting feelings would have been revealed in the research had I not been a

young Asian woman. At the same time, I realize that my line of questioning was a significant

influence on the responses she gave, but it does not fully explain the complexities of how she

interacted with me during my thesis study and how she had positioned me as, perhaps, the only

ally she had in the program in regards to the continuing struggles she faced.

The above excerpt highlights what I believe to be a difficult challenge when studying

one's own kind—namely, the negotiation of a perceived lack of space for engagement in our

research around issues of race which, in effect, may serve to downplay the affective impact and

consequences of such racializations and minimize the significance of racist occurrences in our

field. My positioning as a researcher of colour and studying from within meant revealing these

silences and bearing witness to Lisa's numerous accounts of how she was marginalized vis-à-vis

other instructors in the program by her own colleagues, administrators, and students alike. Her

initial resistance to revealing her experiences to me, combined with my own initial resistance to

revealing similar experiences of racialization as an ESL teacher, however, is what is most

indicative of the underlying issue at hand.

Kubota (2002a) has argued how "the discriminations and injuries faced by [Asian and Asian American] students remain hidden because they try to either walk away from them without confrontation or blend into the mainstream by negating difference in order to survive" (p. 88; cf. Kumashiro, 2000).[66] She argues that hegemonic discourses of "Asianness" presume such silences to be a characteristic of Asian shyness and, in turn, serve to obscure issues of race and racism from critical analysis. Thus, as exhibited through both Lisa and my own case of racialization, a resistance to recognizing racism in ESL/EFL research not only by those who racialize, but by those who *are* racialized and, more importantly, resistance to recognizing the emotional effects of these actions in our research serves only to perpetuate the continued reproduction of such incidents.

4.2.5 Researcher responsibility in racialized spaces

In recent years, there have been increasing calls not just for critical approaches to language education, but for the application of critical methodologies to its research (Norton, 1997a; Pennycook, 1994b, 2001). Yet few scholars in the area of language education research have specifically examined how a racialized identity shapes (and is shaped within) research interactions, and how race, like any other positioning, greatly affects our research methodologies and conclusions. But by recognizing the centrality of race and racism in the conducting of our research, we resist research *racelessness* (Carter, 2003) and work to facilitate multivocality in order to reveal (and change) the silences of epistemological racism (Kubota, 2002a; Ladson-Billings, 2000). Hence, readers will notice my conscious decision to privilege, in particular, the data gathered through my private interviews with my participants when addressing issues of race and racism that arose during my research.

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[66] In this vein, in Chapter 6, I will outline and analyze other data collected over the course of the year that revealed how visible minority students were also marginalized through the racialized discourses of Pacific University's ESL program.

While I also present data from classroom observations, I felt strongly about presenting

the discourses at Pacific University through the eyes of the students and visible minority

instructors like Lisa. Their voices, in turn, would present their perceptions of how they felt their

identities were being constructed through the racialized scripts of the program. For a focus on

the *intent* of one's actions takes away from the significance of the (perhaps unintended) *effects*

of these actions and discourses on those at the receiving end. Relegating these voices and their

narratives to anecdotal evidence and perceiving them as somehow less legitimately empirical

than other forms of data would serve to perpetuate this research racelessness, and for this

reason, I attempt to turn the lenses on the voices I believe were silenced over the course of my

year of research while at Pacific University.

Carter (2003) states that researchers "have an obligation to the experiences that we

expose" (p. 33); as a researcher of colour, specifically, however, I posit that an internalization of

researcher obligation can potentially become further complexified if one believes that the degree

of exposure was/is related to some notion of shared racialized or other experiences, essentialized

or not (cf. Tyson, 2003). Perhaps this is why almost three years after the research was

completed, I realize that I am *still* left wondering what my responsibilities were and still are to

Lisa. She continues to teach ESL but continues to question whether it would be easier to change

to another field of work. "Objective" research would claim that I have no responsibility to Lisa

past ensuring that her participation in my study was entirely ethical; however, *critical* research

can only be labelled as such if it exhibits *catalytic validity* which "represents the degree to

which the research process reorients, focuses, and energizes participants toward knowing reality

in order to transform it" (Lather, 1986b, p. 272; see also Lather, 1986a).[67] Conversely, Kanno

(1997) highlights the danger of reinforcing the relations of power between researcher and

participant if the inquiry implies "that the participant needs fixing in some way" (p. 8) and

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[67] For a similar notion, see Goldstein's (2003) notion of critical reflexivity (cf. Denzin, 1997; Pennycook, 2001).

hence becomes "confused with a mission to 'save' the participants" (p. 4). Instead, she emphasizes personal growth through a critical reflection on the research process--a learning experience not only for the participants, but for the researcher as well (cf. Jordan & Yeomans, 1995).

In her study, Kanno (1997) became friends with her participants and played the role of a supporter and, at times, a therapist when they shared difficult experiences; but I question whether these actions served to change any of the underlying inequities in the system in which their identity and experiences were entrenched. Hence, I remain concerned that providing Lisa with an opportunity to voice her experiences (perhaps cathartically or perhaps furthering her feelings of desolation) and revealing her silence within a thesis that few will likely read is a shirking of responsibilities on my part as a researcher of colour attempting to do critical work. If catalytic validity is central to critical research (Chaudhry, 2001; Zurita, 2001), but one's catalytic validity fails to directly address and challenge the continued reproduction of inequitable discourses, how do we make sense of this as we conduct critical ESL research? It is a question I am still struggling with in the tenuous terrain of studying my own kind.

In this chapter, I highlighted how my multiple identities and positionalities were implicated in the research process from creation and collection to analysis and reporting. I drew attention to the challenges that I faced conducting the research, while at the same time recognizing their central importance to the research itself. Indeed, the process of negotiating one's multilayered identities and positionalities in research is a challenging process and, at times, a confusing and affectively difficult one; however, I realize that it is through a critical reflection of this process and its uncertainties that I have learned the most not only about my research, but about my research self. In negotiating my identities, I also addressed the centrality of issues of race in ESL research and highlighted why I believe these issues need to be further

researched in the field of ESL if language education is to be more equitable for both teachers and students of colour.

In Chapter 5, I present Pacific University's ESL program's innovative pedagogy through data collected during my document analysis stage and initial interviews with administrators and instructors in the program. I subsequently outline how my findings at the program revealed a disjunction between the program's imagining of an alternative academic literacy praxis and the classroom practices I observed. I related this divergence to a lack of coherence in both the program's pedagogy and teacher identity, but more importantly, I analyze the implications on instructors' practices. This moved me to theorize what changes needed to happen in order to bring cohesion to a divided program and to address how our teaching practices might better assist students in the negotiation of their identities within their local and global worlds. In this vein, I conclude the chapter by highlighting the possibilities of Critical EAP (Benesch, 2001) or critical language education, generally, for Pacific University's ESL program. For a critical language pedagogy indeed holds much possibility for students to learn English for agency, but what still remains to be analyzed is how the instructors in the program might bring such critical language education to fruition.

Chapter 5: UNITED WE STAND(?), DIVIDED WE FALL

In this chapter, I will outline Pacific University's ESL program's desire to set itself apart from "traditional" ESL programs, and I summarize the program pedagogy as described in marketing brochures and by the staff in the program. I discuss efforts by administration for ongoing professional development, but while presenting the possibilities of this innovative approach for academic literacy, I identify some of the challenges I observed in the negotiation of this pedagogy into practice and how these challenges resulted in the recreation of inequitable student identities. Hence, this chapter will highlight the diverse ways administrators and instructors attempted to translate an innovative pedagogy into practice and what this may have meant for the negotiation of possible identities within the program.

5.1 Negotiating Educational Change

I think that many students are tired of a traditional approach and are eager to try something new. I also think that other students are unaware of what distinguishes the program and are instead drawn to the prestige of a university.[68] (Rose, Instructor, Questionnaire)

I open the first section of this chapter with this quote from Rose, an instructor in the program for one and a half years, as I think it is quite emblematic of my overall thesis. That is, I argue that students and instructors were acutely aware that the program was "new" and different from other "traditional" programs; but the challenges facing those in the program lay in a lack of *deeper* awareness of *how* the program differed and therefore how to articulate and negotiate this

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[68] There is little doubt that Pacific University's English language program benefited from its affiliation with what I (and many) would consider to be a well-respected educational institution in Canada. In initial questionnaires and interviews with students, while a few did identify the program's unique pedagogical approach as a motivation for their attendance, Rose's suspicions are confirmed as students did, indeed, place more credence on the university's overall international reputation as a consideration in their ultimate decision to enrol in this particular ESL program. In an aside, however, I was somewhat surprised to discover during my interviews with focal students that almost all of them chose this particular Canadian city for their English studies even before choosing this particular program as their language school of choice. Therefore, the primary reason for their attendance at Pacific University's ESL program had more to do with a temperate climate than anything else!

difference within classroom practices. For I argue that the program itself had its own identity, but just as the negotiation of student and teacher identities is steeped in struggle and relations of power, so too was the negotiation of the identity of Pacific University's academic literacy program.

5.1.1 Disrupting "traditional" ESL

Pacific University's ESL program is based on the belief that "formal" knowledge of a language (e.g., textbook grammar and pronunciation) does not provide language learners with all the skills needed to communicate effectively. Although meaning does exist in a language's words and grammar, it also exists in its social and cultural contexts. With this in mind, the belief is that a broader cultural understanding behind language provides students with the additional "tools" needed for communication (cf. Corbett, 2003; Kramsch, 1993). Further, the program philosophy did not conceptualize "culture" as represented by concrete facts and instead conceptualized culture as the underlying belief systems that influence how a language is constructed and used.

Erika, the program's director, developed the program at Pacific University over a decade prior. As I perceived the program's pedagogy to be unlike other ESL programs I was familiar with, I asked Erika about its developmental roots, and specifically, its theoretical roots. While she expressed that for the most part, the program pedagogy was developed "not so much from reading any theories, reading that I've done, as from attitudes that I've had about teaching since I was, you know, 19 years old," she did identify "theories about social construction of knowledge" as "one of the contributing theories" (Erika, Administrator, Interview 09/10/03) and emphasized the need "to recognize that 'language' is a social construction and to teach it accordingly" (Erika, Questionnaire). She believed meaning was embedded in the culture of a language, and because of this, a "traditional" ESL approach focussing primarily on decontextualized language skills was not enough to help students learn to "decipher" meaning.

So not only did she want to highlight the connections between language and culture, but she wanted to further highlight the need for the development of specific analytical skills to better understand this language and culture connection.

The "underlying principles" of Pacific University's language program were as follows:

- Knowledge of a language, especially formal, ESL or EFL knowledge, does not provide the ability to communicate effectively.

- Meaning exists in the syntax of a language, as well as in the words and grammar.

- Meaning also exists in the [social] situation and in the cultural context.

- Language and culture cannot be separated. Speakers must have cultural understanding in order to use a language effectively.

- Colloquial language and cultural context cannot be taught.

(Instructor's manual 04-1, p. 7)

Thus, the focus of the program was on the development of communication skills through the analysis of "Canadian culture".[69] The process of analyzing language through the lens of Canadian culture was believed to help students "develop language skills with the analytical/critical skills needed for understanding the meanings behind the words" (Pacific University ESL program: immersion programs, p. 4) or, in other words, to "learn to read between the lines" (Ibid., p. 1). In this vein, Ariel, the program's associate director, emphasized the use of dialogic practices to help students to "find/solve problems of meaning or interpretation" themselves. For example, for the *Critical Reading and Writing* class, Ariel desired to see in the classroom an:

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[69] I put "Canadian culture" in parentheses to recognize how problematic this notion can be, especially in light of my analysis of the notion of culture in Chapter 2, Section 2.1. However, this is the discourse used within the program by staff and students. Within the course of my analysis of the program here, I do discuss the implications of the contentiousness of culture and how it was constructed within classroom discourse practices. But because this analysis appears a bit later in the chapter, I do not want readers to feel nervous about the unproblematic way I will be referring to it until that time.

analysis of the language as it's been used and why is it being used this way so that the people can read critically . . . . [students are] being critical of what's happening in what they're reading and how what the writer in what they're reading is using the language to shape it. (Ariel, Administrator, Interview 03/11/03)

Viewing language learning as based on the development of skills was also believed to lead to student autonomy as a focus on skills would then enable students to continue their language learning independently outside the classroom:

Although they pass the TOEFL exam or something, they can go to university but, like the first year or second year it must be so *hard* them. Maybe they will fall down or something because they don't know the society, they don't know the culture. (MuYun, Student, Focus Group 11/10/03)

I feel that the idea is you can learn a culture and you can be inside a culture. But the idea, I think, here and my goal is how to be active inside a culture not passive. I think the idea, like, not to make different, but to be someone and not to be like everyone.

(Victoria, Student, Focus Group 07/10/03)

Students told me that they were looking to "study real English" (Adam, Student, Questionnaire), and in this regard, the program's marketing brochures highlighted that "our participants are not satisfied with functioning in 'EFL' classrooms. They want more than vocabulary lists and English grammar rules" (Pacific University ESL program: Overview, p. 2) as "serious English language learners are able and eager to achieve more than is expected from them in most 'English for Academic Purposes' programs" (Pacific University ESL program: immersion programs, p. 13).

The program addressed "real English" in their curriculum by emphasizing their usage of "authentic materials" within their classrooms:

> We cannot use ESL materials because they remove the cultural context and therefore the meaning. Because our objective is to help participants to learn to comprehend, interpret, and communicate meaning, we work with a wide variety of course materials that focus on current affairs, social background, popular culture, and the arts—daily newspapers, magazines, and videotapes. (Pacific University ESL program: immersion programs, p. 7)[70]

In this way, the program materials were not tailored to a specific discipline, but instead, aimed to integrate Canadian culture into every aspect of the curriculum by focussing on local and global issues through a Canadian lens:

> Pacific University students learn to live the language, to think critically, to express themselves and their ideas, and to communicate confidently. Ideas are exchanged about not only Canadian and North American issues, but also issues that pertain to the global community. (Pacific University ESL program: immersion programs, p. 3)

> Classroom activities would include small-group and whole-class discussions and

analyses around the cultural issues presented through these authentic materials. Instructors were to guide these discussions via a dialogic approach by getting students to "think critically" about them in relation to understanding the deeper cultural meanings behind the language. After all, a focus on language and culture, per se, was not what distinguished Pacific University's ESL program from others. Looking at the connections between language and culture is hardly a new approach to English language education; rather, the distinguishing feature of their pedagogy lay

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[70] I do recall, however, the discovery of a photocopied page from a "traditional" ESL grammar textbook left in the photocopy machine causing quite a stir at the staff meeting one particular week. Ariel and Erika were very clear that this discovery remain an isolated one never to be replicated again as they believed it went against the program's pedagogy and philosophical beliefs. Other than that one "incident" though, I never saw any other "traditional" ESL materials enter the classrooms I was observing, although I did see them laying on instructors' desks from time to time, presumably as reference. I will speak to this incident further as part of my analysis in Chapter 6, Section 6.4.1 in relation to the further reimagining of our teaching practices and language teacher identities.

in its process-driven critical thinking approach to the understanding of culture. As Lucy, an

instructor in the program for the past two years, explained:

> Other programs ignore culture, take a shallow view of it (i.e., Canadian culture = hockey
>
> and maple syrup) or present it as a product, all cleaned up with all the ugly bits and
>
> contradictions and uncomfortable aspects removed. They present culture as (they think!)
>
> their market wants to see it: easy to understand; devoid of challenges. Our program
>
> accepts these challenges as a necessary part of learning to understand the culture and
>
> thus learn how to use the language effectively. (Lucy, Instructor, Questionnaire)

Silberstein (2003) referred to this kind of messiness of analysis as "the concept of contradiction"

(p. 328) and sees this as part and parcel of a critical understanding of language and culture in

ESL. In her classroom, Lucy aimed to analyze "behaviour as a text or social systems as texts as

well as just a piece of writing or a speech, something somebody says. And we try to look at the

values and assumptions that underlie what we say and what we do and how that affects our

language" (Lucy, Instructor, Interview 12/03/03). I believe this quote encompassed both the

innovation of the program, but simultaneously, the pedagogical challenges the program faced.

Although the vast majority of the instructors in the program had previous ESL/EFL

teaching experience, all of those participating in my research acknowledged that the program's

dialogic approach to language and culture was unlike any other they had ever known or been

involved with. Throughout my study, I interpreted mixed feelings of hopefulness, insecurity,

and confusion surrounding a pedagogy that was, for the most part, new not only for the

program's students, but likewise, for its instructors. Ariel and Erika were cognizant of the need

for ongoing professional development in the negotiation of the program from theory to practice

due to its unique approach to language and culture. Desires for PD were further motivated by

their dissatisfaction with practices they had previously observed in the program's classrooms.[71]

During my year at the program, I perceived two professional development initiatives that were rooted in the desire for greater program cohesion. One was ongoing PD workshops that were conducted by Ariel as part of the mandatory staff meetings every other week, and the other was the development of more in-depth written documentation about the program and its pedagogy. I will discuss both in the next section.

5.1.2 The struggle to reimagine our teaching selves

Pacific University's ESL program was originally developed by Erika, the program's director, but due to her growing responsibilities on the administrative end of the program, almost all of the professional development in the program was facilitated by Ariel, the associate director.[72] I understood that when a new instructor was hired at the program, Ariel would give them a sort of "instructor manual" which outlined information pertaining to the program's curriculum and administration. The manual was over 70 pages long, give or take (apparently, information was added and subtracted every once in a while in efforts to keep it current), but I

[71] Ariel (and Erika, at times) would conduct classroom observations from time to time as part of their instructor evaluation process. Instructors would have their teaching observed over a class period and would subsequently receive written feedback on their teaching. This evaluation would be kept in each instructors' teaching portfolio at the program and would be referred to during contract renewal periods. I understood this process to be highly contentious for the instructors at the program as many voiced their dissatisfaction about the accuracy of these observations and whether they were truly reflective of their teaching abilities. Some of the factors of concern appeared to be related to the infrequency of these observations, the affects of an administrator's sudden presence in the classroom on the students, and the potential nervousness of the instructors during these evaluations among other things.

[72] And I believe these to have been, perhaps, the first two issues that needed to be addressed by the program: that teacher education at the program was originating solely from a top-down approach and that the initial developer of the program was no longer involved in teacher education at the program. This is not to say that Ariel was not capable of facilitating teacher education initiatives, only that with Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) notion of "dialogization" and "heteroglossia," utterances and ideas can become irrevocably translated with every person who appropriates the discourse. Therefore, the program pedagogy, per se, was, at its core, a hybridization of both Ariel's and Erika's experiences and positionalities. One could therefore argue that without a collaborative effort between the two of them to begin with, any attempt at a unified program in *both* their eyes may be rendered unsuccessful. At the same time, however, during the second and fourth semesters of my research, I observed two attempts by Erika to model the program pedagogy: the first time in one of the Pacific University ESL classrooms, and the second time during one of the staff meetings. Both attempts at pedagogical modeling fell short, from my perspective, in exhibiting clearly to instructors the possibilities of the program's pedagogy. I feel it important to note, though, that the socio-political contexts surrounding both attempts, such as the way Erika was already positioned in the program by both instructors and students, as well as the contexts surrounding her "volunteering" to demonstrate the pedagogy in practice in the first place, may have, in part, contributed to this failure.

perceived the greatest focus of the manual to be on course curricula. That is, courses within the program were outlined in detail with explanations of the language skills to be developed in each course.

For example, in *Canadian Studies*, "students will analyze Canadian institutions and different aspects of Canadian history, geography, economy, and society to develop a background for understanding issues and topics studied in other courses." Course requirements included "at least one informal report to the class based on interviews with English-speaking Canadians; participation in a group report or project on Canada; providing a topic for class discussion and leading that discussion." Course objectives were, "to develop an understanding of the institutional, historical and economic context of Canadian social issues and current events; to increase the ability to decipher contextual clues; to develop the ability to discuss issues and topics of interest to both students and Canadians using informal language; to develop strategies and techniques for continuing to learn outside the classroom." Topics (e.g., education, government, and legal system) and possible initial guiding questions and examples were given, but it was emphasized that:

> all topics should be explored in terms of internal tensions and contradictions, and connections to other topics and issues; how these differ from the students' understandings and experiences, and what that implied in terms of underlying assumptions and attitudes. As well, alternative perspectives from within Canada could be explored (i.e., First Nations perspectives and contributions.)

These outlines were completed in detail for every course offered within the program and sample outlines from past instructors were included as models (which I assumed represented how administration desired to see the courses taught). Within the multi-page document, however, only three pages appeared to outline the program's pedagogical approach (one page being part of the "Performance Guidelines," with the other two covered under the section entitled,

"Program Goals and Approach," which was placed after information on "Schedules" and "Field Trips").

While the broader program goal was for students to "become effective English language communicators in Canada," this goal was further broken down into "improved communication skills; increased ability to decipher Canadian cultural context; increased ability to decipher jokes, jargon, and slang; demonstrated ability to continue to assume responsibility for one's own learning." Ariel then further translated these goals into "instructional perspectives" and a "pedagogical approach":

> The Pedagogical Approach is communication- and process-based, which means that classroom activities focus on:

>> -interactive, participant-centred learning based in the sensitivity to cross-cultural concerns and issues

>> -developing processes of understanding (not acquisition of knowledge)-including understanding of the interaction of language and culture

>> -use of materials from the society in which students and instructors are immersed that are both intellectually and culturally stimulating and challenging.

Quotes taken from the marketing brochure and the program goals were further referenced under each point to show their relation to the program's pedagogy. With all instructors receiving this information as an introduction to the program and its pedagogical framework, professional development workshops aimed to work from these initial foundations.

The PD workshops I observed during the first and part of the second semester focussed heavily on teaching strategies or guidelines for either the program in general or for courses in particular. For example, at one PD workshop, Ariel introduced a strategy for cultural analysis she entitled "digging ditches" to "find the chasms between cultures, not shared universal meanings." In the handout given during the workshop, Ariel explained the three main ideas

behind "how to dig a ditch" and provided specific strategies instructors could use for "ditch-digging" in their classrooms:

    1) Challenge assumptions we share with students . . . Get people to look for the assumptions that provide coherence to every set of arguments (the two or more sides in the material, as well as their own) . . . .

    2) Look for the gaps in <u>our</u> logic, especially in the "commonplace" or "quotidian" . . . . Ask "What if?" questions, changing the parameters of their interpretation, or of the material slightly . . . .

    3) Bring in material that demonstrates a discontinuity between our conceptual/cultural schemas and those of our students (the use of <u>different</u> logics or sets of assumptions about meaning) . . . . Finding these cultural chasms, these differences in conceptual schemas, and bringing them out in the open and acknowledging them is what Dialogic Teaching is all about. It is *not* just asking questions, getting students to question, and sharing differences of opinion.

In applying this kind of approach to developing cultural understanding in classrooms, Ariel emphasized that instructors were not to aim for a notion of student "closure" when facilitating these dialogic discussions because a sense of closure implied to her the idea of culture as concrete facts; instead, she wanted students to continue to grapple with and negotiate the larger ideas being addressed in class long after leaving the classroom. She wanted students to learn to question the assumptions and values and to look for the cultural "contradictions" as Lucy's previous quote explained. When contrasted with my past experiences with professional development in the program only three years earlier, I was surprised to see how the workshops no longer focussed on the program pedagogy's theoretical roots as I once remembered. Instead, PD seemed to dwell on overall language teaching strategies and fairly vague "concepts." The deeper engagement with the theory underlying the approach was noticeably absent, replaced,

instead, by tips on how to "teach" humour (i.e., strategies for analyzing humour) and "practical considerations" when "teaching composition classes." This time around, summaries and excerpts of pertinent work for instructors to consult for further reference included books on writing form (Coe, 1990; Watson, 1998) and lexical approaches (Lewis, 1998).[73]

Although these PD materials and workshops were part of an effort to address perceived differences between the program's pedagogy and instructors' practices, my interviews with instructors revealed their concerns that these administrative efforts might be part of the *cause* of this disjunction. The struggles to negotiate the program's pedagogy for instructors at Pacific University's ESL program were elucidated by Katrina during her interview:

> The theory of it all, I'm still figuring out . . . I've been here now for two years, and it takes a long time to wrap, for *me*, it's taken *me* a long time to wrap *my* head around it, and I think for a lot of instructors . . . I know that there are myself and other instructors who still struggle with what is it that we're doing . . . . a lot of the words that have been floating around here like "contextual clues," "active listening," um, all these different strategies and *things* that we're supposed to be doing in the classroom. I never understood what they were or how they were related . . . it's been kind of these vague terms that have been floating around and being used by all of us but nobody has been given clear definitions of what this stuff is. There's a lot of, "This is what we *don't* want," "This is what we *want*," but what we *would* like to have happen, how that vision of how it is, is not clear, made clear. But we don't want the "traditional" stuff. But then all that theoretical things of what is idealized and what we're trying to aim for, we're not given, yeah, it remains kind of nebulous. (Katrina, Instructor, Interview 07/25/03)

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[73] I never brought up this observation (i.e., my contrasting of my own past PD experiences to the PD workshops I was observing at the time of my research) to Ariel, however, and realize that this would have been a fruitful line of questioning considering that I argue that PD workshops (but more so a lack thereof) also contributed, I believe, to the disjunction between program pedagogy and classroom practices. In the end, however, I never had a chance to ask her as less than a month after that PD workshop on lexical approaches, Ariel was no longer at the program.

I thought it was interesting that Katrina spoke of the lack of a clear conceptualization of many of the terminologies "floating around" the program but nevertheless pointed out that even though concepts remained "vague" and "nebulous," they were still "being used *by all of us.*" In a sense, then, the lack of cohesion could have effectively been perpetuated by the instructors themselves as they attempted to engage with (and, no doubt, translate on their own) terminology (and pedagogical approaches) that was not understood clearly to begin with. This might have further made the program and its pedagogy nebulous for the students as well. The focus on clarifying the methods behind the program rather than on "the theory of it all" or how the methods related to Pacific University's larger pedagogical vision was also observed by Katrina.

Kirk's (1986) position that not "all theoretical knowledge results in good practice, nor that good practice necessarily presupposes awareness of relevant theory" (p. 164) is important to consider in this regard. While I agree with the former, as research has shown how teachers modify theory depending on their pedagogical desires and positionalities (Siegel & Fernandez, 2002; Zeichner, 1999), I still believe in the importance of theory, especially in the case of Pacific University's ESL program. For perhaps one can argue that in most cases, there is not any *need* to name the theories which inform the practices we bring to our classrooms (although I am of the belief that it would only bring more understanding--not less--to the rhyme and reason behind them). But if the program and its staff desired to address the incongruity between the program pedagogy and instructors' diverse practices, I argue that theoretical "naming" (or at least some clear identification of philosophy or ideology, not necessarily based on "a" theory, per se) becomes more imperative.

Pennycook (1999, p. 323) argues that "any pedagogical choice implies some kind of theory . . . Neither pedagogical practice nor personal experience can be assumed to be unmediated by theoretical standpoints." That is, the absence of theory or the naming of theory does not preclude the existence of any, and the fact that my own experience within the program

years earlier revealed the existence of at least some semblance of the program's theoretical

framework supports this. This therefore led me to question the possible effects of its absence on

the larger program disjunctions I was observing.

During my second semester of research at Pacific University, a second professional

development initiative unintentionally emerged out of the perception by administration that

students, themselves, were questioning the program's pedagogy and cohesion. The idea to

develop a student manual for the program was borne from the belief that students would

perceive the program as more legitimate if cohesion could be represented via an "official" (or at

least official *looking*) written document. Katrina and Nicola, instructors in the program for 3

years and 1 year, respectively, were specifically chosen and contracted by Erika to write the

manual due to Erika's belief that their practices best exemplified the program's pedagogy.

The manual would consist of two sections: the first being an outline of the program and

its pedagogy, and the second being an outline of administrative policies at the program and

other generic information such as safety and logistical issues.[74] While Erika fully admitted that

its main purpose was to increase the program's face validity, I perceived the initiative to be

more significant than that as it developed into something more during the process of its

development. That is, in recognizing that a similarly cohesive document clearly outlining the

program pedagogy failed to exist for instructors in the program, Katrina and Nicola asked Erika

if they could develop an equivalent manual for instructors which would provide incoming and

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[74] In a humorous aside, I was particularly fascinated by what I perceived to be a slightly overdone treatment of the section of the student manual entitled "Personal Safety Tips." While I am all for equipping students with such important information in order to hopefully contribute to their safer stays while in Canada, I concur with one of the staff at the program who commented that taking such a heavy-handed approach (i.e., six pages outlining 75[!!] separate tips), "Makes [name of Canadian city in which the program is geographically located] seem like Jersey!" But on a more serious note, I might also relate this to how ESL student identities can also be constructed by the discourses of good intentions (e.g., discourses only meant to keep our students safe). Remember that all of the students attending the program are, for the most part, over (or well-over) 20-years-old. The large majority of them also came from metropolitan cities with populations reaching half the size of Canada in its population entirety. While issues of liability or beliefs about student naïveté may have been at the root of the decision to warrant this amount of attention to safety, the sheer length of this section might have been perceived to be quite a patronizing treatment of students' "street smarts" (or rather, a lack thereof).

current instructors with a reference which might aid in establishing greater pedagogical focus. Erika agreed.[75]

By the manual's completion, I was left unsure about whether the new instructors' manual provided any more clarification of the program and its pedagogy than Ariel's past PD documents. Specifically, the instructor's manual was 38 pages long, but only two pages were spent on the program goals and pedagogy (with less than half of it differing from what had already been written and distributed by Ariel in semesters past). Similar to Ariel's previously-developed documents outlined earlier, more than three times the number of pages (slightly over 7 pages) were dedicated to course outlines in detail and the language skills and objectives for each individual course offered within the program while the final 20 pages were dedicated to administrative details ("Policies and Procedures").

I was somewhat surprised that this new opportunity to further clarify the program goals and philosophies was not utilized, in my opinion, to its fullest extent, especially in light of Katrina's PD concerns expressed earlier. Rather than seeking to clarify "the theory of it all," the instructor's manual, through the use of **boldface** type, clarified the program and its pedagogy as follows:

> A **communication-based, process-based program**, and . . . a **language and culture program** . . . **Language is only a small part of communication** . . . But culture

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[75] I believe it crucial to point out that during my final semester of research at the program, Rose was contracted by administration (although I am not sure whether the contract originated from Erika or from the new associate director replacing Ariel) to produce a curriculum development document outlining the philosophical and pedagogical frameworks underlying the program. Again, being written by one particular person coming from particular positionalities (i.e., Rose had an M.A. in English, but perhaps more important to note, I interpreted Rose's practices to embody principles of critical pedagogy), I was not surprised to see the final document outlining the program's "philosophical underpinnings" as structuralist/post-structuralist, cultural studies/post-colonial studies, and critical linguistics/critical applied linguistics, and its "pedagogical influences" as critical pedagogies and critical dialogic pedagogies and philosophies. I am therefore also left to question whether the contracting of Rose for the development of this theoretical project was, like the choosing of Katrina and Nicola for the manual, a premeditated one. The document was completed two semesters after I concluded my study and I am unaware of whether or not it was used in any systemic way at the program after its completion.

certainly, and to some extent "social/cultural stuff" **cannot be taught**. It's like the

following diagram:

Data→Filter/code to give meaning→information→knowledge

We can **teach "data", or content**, but we can't teach the filter. So, what we have to

"teach" is the **process of understanding** that filter. (instructor's manual 04-1, p. 7)

Most puzzling though was that there was little further explanation of what this meant. Instead, I

accidentally discovered that the student manual (also written by Katrina and Nicola), in fact,

contained a much clearer and expanded explanation of the above, and broke down "the process

of understanding" as how "to read, interpret, and understand meaning in a text." The process

was broken down into: detailed reading of the text, active listening, asking questions (the

description of which was particularly emphasized with boldface type), examining values and

assumptions, learning to observe/read and understand contextual clues, examining social

structure (inclusion and exclusion), finding tensions and coherence (with a description, again,

emphasized in boldface), and stating and defending your opinion (pp. 11-13). All of these were

further explained in anywhere from two to eight lines per point. In fact, the student manual

specifically addressed and detailed the program pedagogy over a span of more than eight pages

(instead of two in the instructor's manual)—a somewhat strange discrepancy between a student

manual and one that could have potentially been used for professional development purposes. In

my estimation and from interviews with instructors, I doubted whether the PD workshops or the

subsequent reference manuals provided the clarification of praxis that I think instructors both

needed and wanted.[76]

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[76] According to Pennycook (1999, p. 323), "Praxis may be understood as the mutually constitutive roles of theory grounded in practice and practice grounded in theory" and "does not dichotomize theory and practice but rather sees them as always dependent on each other."

Upon their completion, both the student and the instructor manuals were printed and distributed at the beginning of 2004: the student manual in the program introductory packages and the instructor manual at the first staff meeting of the year/semester. While it was hoped that the instructor's manual "could be a catalyst for forcing people to actually really engage the pedagogy" (Rose, Instructor, Interview 09/10/03), others worried that it might limit possibilities of classroom practice by concretizing the pedagogy into cookie-cutter recipes, thereby perhaps taking away any incentive to develop or maintain innovative practices. Neither ended up being the case, however, as by the time the instructor and student manuals were completed, Ariel was no longer with the program and PD workshops no longer existed in any organized matter after her departure.[77] In addition, I did not observe either of the documents referred back to in any way (systemic or otherwise) for the remainder of the semester and my time conducting research at Pacific University's ESL program.

So where did this leave Pacific University's academic literacy program, and what did the incongruence between the program pedagogy and instructors' practices look like within the language classrooms I observed? In the next section (and in Chapter 6), I present some of my classroom data recorded over the course of the year, and I will analyze the implications of these diverse practices within the program. My interpretations of the effects of these practices on classroom discourses and the students involved in them told me that it was not enough to be asking ourselves as teachers *why* our students were learning English and what this might mean for praxis; rather, the more important question to reflect upon, I have now come to believe, is *how* our students are learning English and what this might mean for praxis. Because as my data will soon highlight, the discourses we mediate through our teaching practices structure the kinds

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[77] After Ariel's departure, there were subsequent (failed) efforts to reconceptualize and reintroduce professional development, but these never came to pass due, I believe, to the social and political tensions within the program by that time which also resulted in the departure of Erika halfway through the final semester of my research at the program.

of identities students are able (and consequently *un*able) to negotiate within our ESL

classrooms. And as Toohey (2000, p. 81) has pointed out, "where one can be and what one can

do are importantly constitutive of what one can learn."

5.2 Incommensurate Discourses

Although a number of instructors participated in my research and welcomed me into

their classrooms for observations, for the most part, due to a lack of sufficient student consent, I

was only able to observe the classroom practices of five instructors during my study.[78] Although

I am thankful to all the instructors at Pacific University who so generously agreed to participate

in my research, I am particularly thankful to Andrée, Eileen, Julie, Monique, and Rose. These

five instructors opened their classrooms and, more importantly, their practices, to the researcher

gaze and remained supportive of my endeavours throughout my research. They allowed me to

enter and exit their classrooms as I pleased knowing full-well that I was audiorecording their

every word and taking observational notes along the way.

In particular, over half of all my classroom data taken that year were of the classes of

Julie and Rose due to the number of core subject courses that they taught in the program and

their tendency to be assigned classes containing the higher-level students (who made up the

majority of my student participants). The reason I forefront this information prior to my analysis

is because readers should know that much of the pedagogical analysis within this thesis will be

rooted in the classroom practices of only a few of the many instructors who participated in my

study; though, the voices of their teaching colleagues and their reflections on the program's and

their pedagogy will hopefully assist in further illuminating the issues I investigate.

Because of this disproportionate amount of data from a small number of instructors,

readers will see in the following analyses many of the same instructors' names in data excerpts.

At the same time, however, I do not want readers to see this as indicative of a form of finger-

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[78] Please refer to Section 3.3.6 for an explanation of why this was the case.

pointing; rather, in very generously making themselves available throughout my research, I was simply able to gather more (and richer) data from particular instructors. Of course, this symbolizes another ethical quandary for me as a researcher in claiming to not finger-point, but simultaneously selecting particular excerpts for analysis and not others. But as I try to make clear throughout my analysis, their discourses must be seen within the context of the larger social and political contexts, and are used as examples of discourse practices within the program—that is, the presenting of excerpts from particular instructors' classrooms does not mean that I did not observe similar discourses in other instructors' classrooms or within other interactions at the program (e.g., during staff meetings, in casual conversations, etc.).

In conducting critical ethnographic research, I orient my analysis towards a notion of social change in the addressing of how discourses of power shape our educational practices. So while I believed the instructors in my analysis to be exceptional teachers in many respects, the excerpts I will be pulling out from my data will, for the most part, highlight classroom discourses that can offer us a starting point for reflection on our classroom practices. As pointed out in Chapter 4, it is important to recognize that teaching practices do not occur in a vacuum and are inevitably affected by the social, political, and historical contexts in which they were produced; however, not going back and analyzing practices that may not have gone as we expected would be irresponsible as it is precisely this inaction that may lead to "repetition" (Kumashiro, 2002). Besides, many of the instructors at Pacific University's academic literacy program spoke of their practices with some level of insecurity and tenuousness and all spoke of their desire to be "better" teachers. So as Mayher (1990) points out, bringing a reflective practitioner stance will hopefully enable us all to improve upon our practices as it "will continue to allow us to act on the basis of the best we know at any given moment, while using our double vision to ensure that we continue to learn from the situation" (p. 285; cf. Hawkins & Norton, in

press). And it is in the spirit of collaborative reflection on our practices and in hopes of more critical pedagogical language practices that I present my findings and analysis here.

5.2.1 Pedagogy/ies in practice

"What are we teaching?" and "How does this fit into the larger program structure?" were questions that Ariel constantly asked instructors to think about throughout the semester. The concern over content cohesion was one talked about not just by instructors, but by students alike. Students such as Victor and Nora both wondered whether their instructors ever spoke to each other about what they were covering in their respective classes, and throughout my data collection, I observed instructors, a number of times, express surprise that students were unfamiliar with certain topics or particular ideas that they assumed were being discussed by their colleagues in their other classes. Katrina spoke of the particular difficulty of the lack of cohesion in content on students in the program due to the program's tendency to cover "intense topics" such as gay rights and First Nations issues:

> [The program's] not very cohesive yet and my heart actually goes out to the students because . . . . they are *slammed* six times a day with intense topics with no cohesion and I don't think--it's not fair. It is absolutely not fair to do that to them. I couldn't handle that as a human person. I could not handle going from a class to class, six hours, five days a week and being slammed with all these major topics without having anything to pull it all together and have a purpose and meaning behind it. (Katrina, Instructor, Interview 12/05/03)

Indeed, I observed the gamut of Canadian issues covered in class to differ by the instructor and by the day, but a staff meeting discussion about the possibility of switching the program back to a theme-based one (as it had been in years previous with each week seeing a particular Canadian issue covered) was decided against. A reversion back to a theme-based curriculum was seen as inconsequential to the goals of the program, as the focal point of the

program's pedagogy was supposed to have been on the process of analysis rather than on the content of that analysis. Because of this, it would not have mattered whether or not there was cohesion in content, and rather, it was cohesion in the process that Erika wanted instructors to bring to the fore. If this was the case, then Ariel's questions for reflection needed to be changed from "What are we teaching?" and "How does this fit into the larger program structure?" to "How are we teaching?" and "How does my practice fit into the larger program structure?" And it was precisely these questions that I found some instructors asking themselves.

I observed instructors' own uncertainties about what pedagogical practice should look like in a Pacific University language classroom guiding a further questioning of how curricular content could be facilitated in practice. In one example, because the program's pedagogical approach emphasized "interactive, participant-centred learning," some instructors struggled with how they could mediate classroom discourses while negotiating their positionality within the classroom as the teaching authority:

> I think that theoretically it's nice to think that this, the program is participant-based but a lot of times I feel like I'm the teacher at the front of the classroom. So I don't think that that always, and depending on the class that you're teaching, but that doesn't always translate into practice. (Monique, Instructor, Interview 09/03/03)

In effect, I perceived Monique, an instructor in the program for two years, to be recognizing Auerbach's (2000) belief that "all classrooms are 'teacher-centered' to the extent that it's the teacher's conception of education that shapes how the learning community develops" (pp. 144-145; cf. Markee, 1994). In realizing how she was positioned vis-à-vis her students within the classroom, Monique was aware of the role of power relations within her own practices and was therefore cognizant that the issue needed to be addressed. This was made further complex as some students also desired (and expected) their classrooms to be more traditionally teacher-centred.

Although Monique and other instructors hoped to exhibit to their students "that the teacher was there as a guide and that [student] participation was really important" (Monique, Instructor, Interview 11/25/03), at times, instructors had difficulties reconciling this with the program's desire for students to critically think about issues and students' reluctance, at times, to engage openly with the process:

> I believe that this approach requires trust. And in order to get them to sort of feel like that they can kind of open up and explore multiple perspectives, um, I have to do this balancing act between saying "It's okay. It's safe," and challenging them on their perspective. And because there isn't a lot of lateral challenges, you know what I mean? Because there's not a lot of students coming up and challenging each other, it does, I guess it, yeah, it feels like there's more of an oppositional relationship. (Nicola, Instructor, Interview 03/25/04)

The desire to challenge students to critically analyze issues was perceived as increasingly difficult when the students, in particular, came from the same country. Although Nicola believed there were students who did have differing viewpoints to share, she believed it to be difficult for them to express these opinions aloud, choosing instead to leave the image of a collective voice undisturbed. As hard as she tried to guide the discussion towards the uncovering of divergent viewpoints on any given issue, in the end, she felt that classroom silence meant she too often had to represent these viewpoints herself, thereby making her feel like "a mouthpiece for North American attitudes" (Ibid.).

Whether any "teacher at the front of the classroom" will be able to escape being perceived as a cultural "mouthpiece" is questionable however, especially in light of the program's focus on language and culture (and Canadian culture, specifically). And while a dialogic approach would rather see teachers at the sidelines strategically posing questions and comments to facilitate further student exploration, there will be times when instructors will have

to give discussions the extra push that it might need to continue along. So perhaps what needs to be problematized or analyzed is not that Nicola became the mouthpiece; instead, what she needs to think about is how she negotiated that identity within the classroom vis-à-vis the larger dialogic process. As long as her mouthpiece identity did not completely transform the classroom into a teacher-centred one, I can still see a place for this occasional (i.e., only when needed, and not on a consistent basis) pedagogical divergence within the program's desired "interactive, participant-centred learning." Markee (1994, p. 16), for example, points out that the discourse practices we mediate in the classroom can "restructure classroom relationships on a moment-by-moment basis" with every utterance that is produced. Because of this, he argues that temporary reversions to teacher-talk when students pose questions may actually be more expedient than teacher-led recastings as the former allows for a quicker return to student-led talk. But during my study, I observed instances when some instructors had difficulties relinquishing their roles as experts within the classroom discourse.

In a mid-level *T.V. News* class taught by Julie, who had been teaching in the program for six years, pairs of students were asked to present a news clip and subsequently lead the class analysis. The news story one pair of students chose reported a recent home accident where a child had been burned by placing their hands on the protective glass of a gas fireplace. I observed Julie continually interjecting during the discussion and reverting classroom dynamics back to herself as the facilitator/teacher although the class was intended to give students the opportunity to practice mediating classroom discussions. During one particular conversational lull, Julie attempted to encourage further interaction by posing another question. But although her line of questioning may have been intended to encourage students to keep talking, the way it played out may have shut down not only Moon, a female student from China, but, perhaps other students who might have then thought twice about their participation:

Julie:	Um, other questions, because, why do you think, why do you think that it's more common *now*? Why is it, was it 16 last year? 16 children got their hands burnt. The year before that, it was only 7. The year before, it was less. The year before, it was less. What is it so many more now?
Tony:	The weather.
Moon:	I think one of the reason that here more and more mothers is not, uh, professional house workers. More and more mothers have a full-time have at least a part-time work. So she has to...
	(another student interrupts)
Julie:	You know, I, I would be *very* surprised if the mother or father were not right there with that child. I would be *very* surprised. You cannot have a little baby crawling around and a parent not right there. I could be sitting right there and "Oh, there's my child." I'm watching my child as she crawls. The next thing I know, I could see that happening *very* easily and I don't think it's any reflection on the parents. Maybe they just didn't, I could honestly see a parent thinking, oh, if it was a real fire, then I have to worry because my child could put their hand in the fire. Very dangerous. But oh, my child is *safe* in front of the fire because it has the glass there and not even know that the glass was *so* hot. So I think, um, I think it's a possibility that I think you're wrong. I think you're wrong. I don't think it's anything to do with the, the mother's, uh, professionalism.
Moon:	So what do you think?
Julie:	Pardon me?
Moon:	So what do *you* think?
Julie:	I want to know if either of you guys can figure it out.

Johnson: It's colder. It's really cold, right?

Julie: So how come 3 years ago when it was really cold we didn't have this?

            (a student suggests something about children becoming more curious)

Julie: I think it's much more basic than that.

            (more student guesses)

Julie: I think she knows [making eye contact with Saki]. I think you know.

Saki: (inaudible) So houses, houses which has this kind of fireplace or, uh, have

            increased.

Julie: Yeah.

            (multiple students stammering, "What? What? What?")

Tony: Like the fireplace more, uh, popular now.

            (another student repeats)

Julie: Yeah, oh yeah! To get this kind of fireplace in your house, it's seen as

            cleaner, right? Uh, it's very fashionable to have a gas fireplace.

                                            (Julie, *T.V. News* 12/02/03)

I want to point out that the news story said nothing about the cause of the increase in the number

of injuries; rather, the story at its base reported that the accident had occurred and spoke of the

baby's injury. I understand that particular information gaps could and might be filled by the

listener of the story; but at the same time, the program pedagogy emphasized a process of

analysis rather than a discovery of the unknown (or at least unconfirmed) "truth."

Simon (1992) has argued that in dialogic pedagogy, both student and teacher:

must listen for the silence in the other, helping each other to knowledge that is

inaccessible. This knowledge is not *in* the teacher; it cannot be given. It is only to be

acquired in the conversation between the teacher and students as coinvestigators of each

other's resistances. (p. 97)

But instead of allowing Moon to run with a particular interpretation and at least allowing her to continue with that idea to speak to the reasons why she might think this, Julie, instead, interrupted her mid-sentence to essentially tell Moon she was wrong. As Morgan (1998) effectively argued:

> my experience has been that telling someone "You're wrong" or "You must do this instead" can create mistrust and barriers to further learning . . . Problem-posing involves circulating probing questions and ideas in a thought-provoking manner that engages rather than threatens people and opens up possibilities for critical reflection. (p. 16)

Being "wrong" implied that there was a "right," and because it was not made explicit what that "right" was from the story, the way the discourse was constructed implied that what was right was Julie's interpretation, which, of course, she had a perfectly logical answer for. But I did not see how Moon could not have similarly made a case for her interpretation had she been given a chance.

Instead of seeing a fostering of the skills students required for independent study and critical inquiry, there therefore remained a dependence on the instructor for both resources and "truths." As Hammond and Macken-Horarik (1999) explain:

> access to both cultural and linguistic resources, and the means to critique them, is crucial for critical engagement with textual and cultural practices . . . [but] without this double focus, ESL students either remain stranded in commonsense ways of interpreting texts or become overly dependent on teachers' guidance and assistance in the study of specific texts, even within programs that aim to incorporate a critical perspective. (p. 531)

Julie's tendency for monologic practices saw much of the discussion and responses reverting back to the approval (or disapproval) of the instructor. And the discourse practices produced and maintained within the class saw both the instructor and the students, themselves, constructing and reinforcing this dynamic (e.g., Moon deferring to Julie with "So what do you think?" after

hearing that her answer was wrong). But in reproducing this type of discourse practice in the classroom, possibilities for student opposition and the construction of alternate ways of knowing were limited, if not quashed completely, if they did not align with the instructor's voice. But I question what the implications of this transmissive practice are for students when their ownership of the learning process (which Julie attempted to engender through the idea of student-led discussions) and their attempts at meaning-making were being repeatedly invalidated.

I don't believe Julie was aware of the monologic practices she was bringing into the classroom but, on some level, she was aware of her positionality within its discourses:

Julie: The material that I choose to bring in, um, is going to be material that I find interesting or that I find controversial, right? And while I, I do encourage them to disagree and to get, you know, find arguments, just by my choice of material, it shows my values. Yeah.

Ena: How do you feel about that?

Julie: Um, in some ways guilty. And in other ways, I think it's just human nature. There's bias. Everybody has bias. You know, every single news story has bias. Every single article you read has bias. So, you know, when they, just as when they listen to the news, they've got to listen critically and decide for themselves. I'm *hoping* that I'm also teaching them that when they listen to *me*, they've got to question that as well. (Julie, Instructor, Interview 07/16/03)

Although Julie was cognizant that her opinions would quickly become apparent to her students, she still hoped that students would see questioning her as similarly part of the process of inquiry. Thus, she seemed less cognizant that the way in which she mediated discussions did not necessarily allow students an opportunity to do so without the risk of possible vocal opposition from Julie in return.

In the case of Julie's classroom excerpt above, students were essentially left with no choice but to accept the opinion of the instructor and to likewise, perhaps, replicate it in high-stakes situations such as assessment. Fox (2002) highlights this problematic notion in her own reflections on teaching:

> In the problem-posing approach to teaching, which relies on critical thinking as the primary tool for finding solutions, the instructor too often has already solved the problem . . . I have told them that I do not expect them to agree with me; I simply want them to think critically. But in reflecting on the comments I put on their papers and the ways that I lead class discussions, I become uneasy, because my comments, which are intended to encourage critical thinking, often point to my unintentional use of it to guide my students to the "right" answer, the "right" perspective—which is always my answer, my perspective. (pp. 200-201)

This is not to say that within the process of inquiry, we should fear the expression of our own opinions, for whether we state them outright or whether we assume the possibility of neutrality, our answers will inevitably be revealed to our students if not overtly, then covertly. Instead, Kumashiro (2002) believes that of paramount importance is "learning to teach intentionally while learning to recognize the hidden ways we often teach unintentionally" (p. 84). In this vein, we need to make a distinction between our answer and the "right" answer, as they do not have to be one and the same.

In a transmission approach to education, getting to the answer is the goal; but in a dialogic approach, questioning whether our answer or any other answer is "right" is more so the point of the project. This way, student identities are ones of knowledge creators rather than knowledge receivers, and teacher identities are ones of knowledge facilitators as opposed to knowledge transmitters. As opposed to guiding students to our own truths, how might we go about acknowledging and validating the knowledge and experiences of our students? For as

Norton and Toohey (2001) believe, an understanding of "good language learning requires attention to social practices in the context in which individuals learn L2" (p. 318).

On a previous day, Rose's *Canadian Studies* class with the same group of students saw them discussing the Canadian social welfare system. The class discussion was around the notion of a "guaranteed minimum income," and Rose posed the question to students, "How would you decide how much to make a guaranteed minimum income?":

Saki: Minimum living cost.

Rose: What kind of, how would you decide where the person should live? Like, what kind of apartment? Is that minimum, is minimum living cost a small apartment? How would you decide?

Saki: Umm... Small, um, food expenses and late, later, apartment. Small apartment.

Rose: Sharing with 10 people in one room? So we have to really *think* about those calculations. What kind of housing is available for how much money? That certainly is different in [name of the city] than it is in other parts of [name of province the city is located in] too. So where a person lives would have a real influence on that.

Tony: How about the government just build a big building and then leave the homeless just put them in there and then offer them meal and offer them a room?

Rose: Okay, what would people say against that idea? What would the arguments be against that idea?

Tony: So, like, you only have one choice, right? Because, like, you don't work and then you get a, like, get a basic living. Living. Yeah.

Rose: Okay. That's, so you're presenting this idea. You have a place. A big building. If you don't have a job, you go there, the government gives you food. Okay, why,

why might people object to that idea, do you think? If you were going to have to argue against that idea, what could you say?

Tony: Discrimination.

Rose: Discrimination? Let someone else take that argument further. Why could you think that was maybe not a good idea? To have a big building for people who are unemployed to get their basic needs met? . . . . You don't have a job for a year, or something, you live in this big building. Okay, does that solve all the problems? Should we get started right now? Build a big high-rise?

Tony: Too expensive to build it.

Rose: Too expensive to build? What other objections would people have? I mean you mentioned discrimination. Can someone else pick up on that?

Saki: They will be satisfied with their living, so the government have to give them pay money to them.

Rose: People will be satisfied just to live there and eat.

Saki: Yeah, or, against human rights.

Rose: Okay, how is it against human rights? How would you say that it's against human rights?

Saki: Everybody has freedom can live where they want.

Rose: So people should be able to live where they want to live? Not in Tony's big homeless hostel?

(Rose, *Canadian Studies*, 11/21/03)

In this excerpt, Rose, like Julie in the previous excerpt, appears to be leading students to a particular response. Although Tony proposes a "big building" for the homeless, she immediately problematizes his idea rather than analyzing it for its possibilities. When Tony later raises the question of whether his idea might be discriminatory (which appeared to be the direction Rose

was hoping the discussion would take), Rose clearly picks up on this notion and continues with the issue of discrimination.

From Benesch's (1999b) view, "critical thinking is neither an unguided free-for-all nor a didactic lecture but a balance between extended student contributions and gentle challenges by the teacher" (p. 578); however, Rose's continual "gentle challenges" to Tony and to the class appears, like Julie's discursive practices, to similarly lead students to particular understandings of the issue (i.e., that certain aspects of Tony's idea might be discriminatory). Although unlike Julie, Rose facilitates the discussion so that students are the ones who generate and expand upon the issue of discrimination, her reiteration of the notion of discrimination appears to coax the students towards what was still, in the end, *her* answer. A failure to displace the teacher as expert within a dialogic classroom replicates a "banking" model (Freire, 2000) of schooling where dialogue is "reduced to the act of one person's 'depositing' ideas in another" and becomes "a simple exchange of ideas to be 'consumed' by the discussants" (Ibid., p. 89). Instead, Fox (2002) argues that educators must "begin to construe critical thinking as a process that we engage in *with* [italics added] our students" (p. 209).

Specifically, it was through a process approach that Pacific University's program pedagogy had hoped to mediate with students more complex understandings both of how language is used and the culture in which it is embedded. A dialogic process to culture was the means through which students would analyze with instructors any contradictions (or "ditches," as I outlined in Chapter 5, Section 5.1.2) that they observed in Canadian culture--a process which would force students and their instructors to confront and question their commonsense understandings of their values and assumptions. From the program's point of view, then, culture was not made up of concrete facts; rather, cultural understanding was an exploratory and introspective process. But interviews with students revealed a different view of culture within the program:

Culture is not that important. It depends on your goals and it depends on whether you're interested in culture. Cultural knowledge is supporting language learning, but it is not the total experience. (Kelly, Student, Focus Group 10/29/03)

I think if we want to stay here learning or live here, learning culture is very useful . . . . But if we go back, we don't need to learn more about this. (Maggie, Student, Focus Group 02/09/04)

Indeed, if a student did not plan on staying in Canada nor had any interest in learning specifics about Canada, I can see how these sorts of hesitancies about what they were learning would make sense. But looking at these statements further, we realize that when students were speaking about culture in the above quotes, and in interviews I recorded with a number of students (and even some instructors) in the program, what became clear was that culture in the program, at least from their perspectives, *was* made up of concrete facts that students, in a sense, had to learn or were learning about. This disjunction can be related back to what the program was originally about, at least as described in the instructor's manual: "culture . . . cannot be taught . . . . So, what we have to "teach" is the process of understanding that filter" (p. 7). But in students saying that they did not want to learn about culture or that it was not important, the program seemed to present culture as content as opposed to process, and I was interested in investigating where and why this shift occurred.

The program's participant-centered approach was intertwined with the program's other pedagogical approach of "developing processes of understanding (not acquisition of knowledge)." In perceiving culture and cultural understanding as an analytical skill rather than as discrete facts, the program aimed to bring this process-oriented approach to the "teaching" of culture. Although an ethnographic approach to culture has gained favour in ESL, negotiating this process of understanding becomes an admittedly tricky one in practice as "the concept of cultural difference often presupposes the existence of essential, stable, and objective traits that

can be found in one's own and the target culture, creating a fixed polarized difference between them" (Kubota, 2004b, p. 21). It also goes without saying that, "it is much easier to transmit stable products of knowledge, sanctioned by authority, than variable processes of learning" (Kramsch, Cain, & Murphy-Lejeune, 1996, p. 100). So with the program's focus on the intersections of language and culture, it is important to investigate how teachers negotiated cultural understanding in their practices. What my observations uncovered, though, were differing strategies and approaches being used within the program, many of which would explain why Maggie and Kelly continued to view culture as static facts, or possibly, more dangerously, as static traits.

5.2.2 Essentializing culture

In *Popular Culture* classes, many instructors liked to bring in sitcoms and other television clips into class as a way to deconstruct the cultural information and messages they contain. Julie was no different, and in one particular class with the advanced group, I observed an interesting incident between her and one of her students. Rebecca, originally from the Ivory Coast, was one of the highest-level students in the entire program at the time. During this particular class, Julie had brought in a clip of a comedy entitled, "An American in Canada," which told the tale of an American who was being sent to Canada to work. Gags on the show tended to be based primarily on the contrast between Americans and Canadians, and it was particularly because of this that Julie felt it would raise an interesting discussion on cultural issues.

Julie set up the clip as follows:

What I have here for us is a show called, "An American in Canada." And it is *full* of stereotypes, okay? So I want us to watch the clip. I want us to find as many stereotypes as we can, and I want us to try to make some more conclusions about Canada by watching this clip. Now this is a, it's a, it's a Canadian show, so when they made it, they

thought, they thought that it would appeal to a Canadian audience. So you have to ask

yourself, what about this appeals to a Canadian audience? And what does that say about

Canada?

(Julie, *Popular Culture*, 12/02/03)

So at its base, the point of the lesson was for students to identify and list all of the American and

Canadian stereotypes they perceived were contained in the clip. Julie would therefore ask

students questions such as, "Would you say that ambition is an American stereotype?" or "Is

over-confidence an American stereotype?" to which many students would chime in in

agreement. Part way through the lesson, Julie continued, "All Americans are, Americans are

more, what? Violent? Sure. You know, it's a stereotype. I'm not, I'm not saying that all

Americans are violent. They're not. Of course not. But it is a stereotype that Americans are

violent, right?" Julie would elicit other stereotypes from students and would list them on the

board, but when she arrived at Rebecca, the following response ensued:

Julie:　　　　Rebecca? No idea? You have a hard time, you don't like doing the

　　　　　　stereotype thing, do you? No.

Rebecca:　　No. It never works for me. I don't know.

I found this interaction rather intriguing as it seemed to suggest that this was not the first time

that Rebecca had experienced difficulties with this kind of exercise and that it was not the first

time that Julie was aware of this. It further implied that identifying stereotypes may have been a

strategy for cultural analysis that Julie employed in her teaching in other classes.

I believe that Julie was attempting to point out that these are the ways people stereotype

in Canadian culture, and therefore, students needed to understand how the process of cultural

stereotyping worked. But although I can see how the identification and ensuing discussion of

stereotypes may have been perceived by Julie as an effective way to engage with culture and

cultural difference, in teaching stereotypes, Byram and Feng (2005) worry that this approach

"will inevitably lead to superficial learning and may enhance stereotypes and ethnocentrism" if there is no other "variety of representations of the cultural product or concept under discussion" (pp. 917-918). While Julie made qualifications that statements such as "All Americans are violent" were stereotypes and did not reflect reality, she did not engage students in further questioning to perhaps debunk these assumptions. This may have, then, inadvertently reified these stereotypes in the eyes of the students. My fears were later confirmed in the case of Rebecca, who eventually came to believe that the process of cultural understanding in Canada was, in fact, in the developing of stereotyping skills.

When asked about the particular classroom incident I recounted above, Rebecca expressed her frustration with having to constantly find the stereotypes:

Rebecca: It was *very, very* difficult for me to try and guess what was the social level of this guy because he's wearing this, he's wearing that . . . . I *never* think about, okay, because you are wearing that, you're, like, we don't divide, you know, we don't have this kind of thing of putting in the box or you are from *this* country, you're from *this* group . . . . Why do we have to learn how to do that? So maybe it's because it's a very important thing in this society. Otherwise I mean if it's not important, why do we have to? And she says that everything is base on stereotype. So we have to learn more about this . . . . Some people judge people because they have this or they don't, and maybe I'm one of the person that don't do that. That's why it's difficult for me. I had to come into that. But now I'm doing it. I'm trying to do that for the class.

Ena: Okay. Do you think it's helpful? It's useful to be thinking about these types of things?

Rebecca: Uh, I don't think so. That's the thing I couldn't get. Why do we have to, I

don't think so. I wonder why do we have to learn this, actually. I mean,

from my value, for my education, I don't think it's useful. Why do you

have to judge people with just a physical appearance? Because what we

see on the show is just physical. I don't know. I don't know why we have

to do that.

(Rebecca, Student, Interview 12/03/03)

I was admittedly horrified when Rebecca told me that she came to believe that the ability to

stereotype was an important part of the program and essentially of becoming an effective

communicator within Canadian society. Because if it was not "a very important thing in this

(read: Canadian) society . . . why do we have to [stereotype]?" For this reason, she had begun to

make a concerted effort to try to "come into that" both in class, but perhaps, also, outside of

class as well. And if Rebecca was one of the most advanced students in the program at the time,

if *she* misinterpreted the point of the exercise and analysis, I question how many others may

have also and wonder about the repercussions of this on the reproduction of these kinds of

cultural essentializations.

Julie's approach towards dispelling stereotypes and assumptions, in essence, backfired

and reproduced the very discourses she was trying to challenge. For although she reinforced to

her class that indeed, stereotypes were based on assumptions and should not, therefore, be

applied in an essentialized manner, her approach failed to engage students in a process of

understanding the sociopolitical implications of those stereotypes and how these "facts" are

constructed through discursive politics and ideology to begin with. Instead, her attempt to dispel

them by her use of qualifying statements further implies that there are "true facts versus false

information" and reinforces "the concept that stereotyping is caused by a lack of knowledge

about the target culture or cultural difference [which] renders a stereotype as false consciousness that can be fixed by knowing accurate information" (Kubota, 2004b, p. 26).

Julie's strategy for cultural inquiry appeared to be one of using "contextual clues" to identify what kind of cultural information students could gather and, therefore, what kinds of assumptions one could subsequently make from what they were observing. This strategy appears related to one outlined by Ariel in an e-mail to staff about how to define "contextual clues":

> They may be "who, what, when, where", but how do you know?? This is not a good definition of contextual clues. Go back to the Active Listening definition (what kind of work does the person do, what is their educational background, how old are they, what assumptions do they have, and so on); or to the definition that is part of the *Listening Practice* course description, where context includes "body language, intonation, word choice, clothing, furnishings or other material objects in surroundings". The contextual clues are the specific, concrete bits of information that you "read", that tell you "who, what, where, when", not the other way around.
>
> (Ariel, Administrator, personal communication, July 18, 2003)

The strategy therefore seemed to ask students to analyze what they were observing and to develop conclusions derived from these observations. This sort of pedagogical approach, however, appeared to *encourage* this essentialization and was not in alignment with the other PD materials outlined earlier emphasizing cultural "chasms" and contradictions. And in taking an essentialist approach to the analysis of culture, discourses quickly revealed themselves to be much more problematic when the subject of cultural analysis turned to the cultures of the students, themselves.

Norton (2000a) highlights how student identities are constantly being constructed by and within classroom discourses and practices, and she theorizes identity as a process of negotiation

as opposed to a static category (cf. Morita, 2004). In drawing attention to the ways in which language education is steeped in discourses of power, she similarly embeds these processes of identity negotiation in "frequently inequitable, social structures which are reproduced in day-to-day social interaction" (Norton, 2000a, p. 5). I was thus interested in investigating how classroom discourses within the program were implicated in the creation, negotiation, and contestation of student identities and how the power of these discourses impacted student identities within the microcosm of the classroom and the larger macrocosm of society (Ivanič, 1998; Toohey, 2000). In my observations, I discovered that in many classrooms, the possibilities of student identity were oftentimes constructed within a discourse of Self and Other vis-à-vis the identities of the instructors in the program. "Critical" explorations of culture were thus being based on problematic cross-cultural essentializations of identity and difference which constructed a homogenous, traditional, and static identity of Other (Kubota, 1999, 2001, 2004a, 2004b; cf. Duff, 2002a; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Leki, 2006).

Discursive constructions of Other came out in many ways at Pacific University's ESL program due to an uncritical reflection on the notion of culture and cultural difference at the program. For although the program emphasized culture as a process of negotiation, there did not appear to be any recognition that it was, at the same time, a process of construction—that is, many argue that in analyzing culture or understanding culture, we are simultaneously *creating* (and recreating) culture and images of it through our discursive practices (Kramsch, 1993, 1995; Kubota, 1999; Ilieva, 2001). And when I first began my classroom observations, it became apparent early on that it was as much about what was questioned in the classroom as it was about what was not questioned that contributed to the shaping of how culture was perceived at the program.

Because there did not seem to be any clear conceptualization of what a critical dialogic approach to language and culture might have meant in practice, many of the instructors in the

program viewed this kind of analysis to be rooted in a process of comparing and contrasting. Especially when a pedagogical emphasis was placed on a notion of contradiction or incongruence of understanding the underlying meaning of the text, the idea of multiple meanings would seem part and parcel of the process of analysis. The slippery slope, however, was that I observed "multiple" meanings to, for the most part, be numbered at two. And this was the case for the analyses of much of the program content. Name the pros and cons. Argue for or against. Should we or shouldn't we. But taking such approaches can thereby suggest dichotomies of right and wrong, good and bad, or Self and Other (Pennycook, 1994a, 1997).

The binary of Self and Other was no more evident than in the frequency I observed instructors asking students to think about questions such as, "How does this compare to your country?"; "Do guys think like that in your country?"; "What about in China?"; "What about in Japan?"; "What about in Canada?" But in posing these kinds of questions, Dei (2006) argues that:

> difference is conceptualized in authentic, essentialized, exoticized, culturalist terms and is positioned as independent of other social experiences, such as race, class, gender, disability, and sexuality; thus it is presented and understood as a form of signification that is removed from political, social, and historical or contemporary struggles and constraints. (p. 37; cf. Taylor, 2006, p. 123)

Therefore, to what extent were instructors' "critical" dialogic practices perpetuating *un*critical analyses of culture? Because these discourses were so prevalent throughout the program and replicated in many different classes by many different instructors, the process of essentialization generally tended to go unproblematized. Hence, what were the implications of these essentializing practices within the classroom?

First, I observed students at the program being continually constructed as "experts" of their respective racialized "cultures." For example, in Julie's (08/12/03) *T.V. News* class, two

students were leading a discussion regarding the Mad Cow scare. One of the student presenters

who happened to be from Japan posed the question to the class, "Do you think your country

should import Canadian beef?" After some responses from her fellow students, she continued,

"What about Japan?" Julie promptly turned to look at Tamara (the only other Japanese student

in the class other than the student presenter) and said, "The representative from Japan? Because

you know Japan is not importing Canadian beef, right?"

There are a number of issues requiring analysis within these utterances, with the first

being, once again, the oversimplifying of the larger issue of beef importation into a yes/no

dichotomy. Reducing arguments to this format are arguably not "critical" ones and gloss over

the complexities in argumentation.[79] We should similarly be concerned when students,

themselves, are perpetuating the essentialist discourses and asking their fellow students about

what happens in "their country" as that and the notion of the "cultural/country representative,"

as constructed by Julie, contributes to the (re)construction of Self and Other, us and them.

Instead, as Holliday, Hyde, and Kullman (2004) argue, we need to cease the process of

essentialization and "take what people say about their own culture as a personal observation

which should not be generalized to other people who come from the same background" (p. 48).

The same should be argued when challenging essentialized constructions of cultural attributes.

Although Kaplan's (1966) "cultural" distinctions between rhetorical styles have been

contested by critical theorists such as Kubota (1997, 2004b), Kubota and Lehner (2004), and

Pennycook (1998a), his discourses of ESL/EFL learner writing styles still pervade language

learning discourses within the larger applied linguistics field. I was therefore not completely

surprised to come across Kaplan's "reductionist, deterministic, prescriptive, and essentialist

orientation" (Kubota & Lehner, 2004, p. 10) to rhetoric within the walls of Pacific University's

EAP program.

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[79] I will speak more to the varying definitions and conceptualizations of "critical" in Chapter 6.

In one particular *Oral Skills* class (09/08/03), Eileen, an instructor in the program for one and a half years, put students together into pairs and asked them to peer edit each other's final speeches to be presented in the following classes. During that class, I observed the following private discussion between two of her students, one from France, the other from Mainland China, in regards to the "proper" way to formulate an argument:

Jean Phillipe: You don't give your opinion in your introduction.

Johnson: My opinion's here.

Jean Phillipe: Yes, but I, [lowering his voice] it's not how she likes when you leave your opinion in the first part.

Johnson: [laughs] Okay. Alright.

Jean Phillipe: [flipping through his notes] Evidence…

Johnson: You have to use your opinion.

Jean Phillipe: You have to know, you have to, you have to exactly what you want to talk about and why, what, what you think about it.

Johnson: Oh.

Jean Phillipe: And after you give reasons and…

Johnson: Yeah.

Jean Phillipe: …explanations…

Eileen [addressing the entire class] Also, if you're *confused* about something your partner is saying, make sure you tell them because maybe your wording could be better.

Johnson: Okay, Eileen? Excuse me? I've some, maybe I've some problems with my formulation about my weekend, 'cause it talks about the issue and finally tell my opinion… and not the…

Eileen: No. That's the Asian way of, of, um, yeah. No, your opinion has to be, it

must be in the first, the first couple of sentences.

(Eileen, *Oral Skills*, 09/08/03)

I believe this dialogue was symbolic of the contrastive rhetoric debate itself. On the one hand,

Eileen relegated Johnson's writing as "the Asian way" which, in this case, was congruent to the

wrong way. On the other hand, Jean Phillipe seemed fairly firm in his belief that as Zamel

(1993/1998) argued, differentiations in rhetorical styles was more related to the instructor's own

personal preference than anything else. I also found it interesting how Jean Phillipe

communicated this idea (i.e., in private discussion by lowering his voice to avoid detection) to

Johnson as it mirrored, in a way, Canagarajah's (2004) observations of how his students in Sri

Lanka created "safe houses" in the negotiation of dominant discourses.

Although one could argue that Jean Phillipe was perhaps unaware of the theories of

contrastive rhetoric, from this excerpt, it seems that what he *was* aware of was that the

prescribed rhetoric was more about arbitrariness than about the "truth" of the rhetorical form. To

me, it appeared that he consciously understood the significance of his remark to Johnson and,

for that reason, felt the need to modify the volume of his utterance accordingly. But it is also

important to take note of Eileen's apparent hesitation in her final utterance of the excerpt.

Perhaps after her naming of it as "the Asian way," she realized the essentialist nature of the

statement. Either way, it was telling that her very first response to Johnson in connection with

his "difference" in argumentation was based on the discursive construction of cultural thought

patterns.

In a second example, another *Oral Skills* class of Eileen's (07/21/03), a student

expressed extreme discomfort with giving fellow classmates peer feedback on their

presentations. Some classmates went to great lengths to ensure Donald, a student from Spain,

that they would not take any comments he made personally and that they regarded the process

as assisting with the improvement of their speaking skills. Eileen explained to Donald that she considered giving peer feedback to be an important aspect of class participation within a Canadian educational context. He nevertheless continued to vehemently refuse to contribute to the "critique," and Eileen appeared quite surprised with how adamant he was about not participating. She seemed interested in finding out more about this and consequently attempted to engage a by-now-agitated Donald in a conversation about his reaction after class:

Eileen: You know what, what's interesting about, to me about that is that Spanish attitudes about...

Donald: (interrupting abruptly) It's not Spanish. It's my personality.

Eileen: Oh, it's not, it's your personal attitude. Okay.

(Eileen, *Oral Skills*, 07/21/03)

Unlike many other students at the program, however, Donald didn't hesitate to openly challenge the cross-cultural essentializations that were being discursively created within the classroom.

Cross-cultural approaches to and analysis of multiculturalism such as those observed in the program can recreate discourses of essentialized cultural truths. As Harklau (1999) explains:

when instructors dichotomize culture, they may implicity suggest that they view American cultural perspectives and students' cultural perspectives as mutually exclusive. Furthermore, because of teachers' dominant role in the classroom, that implicit view is not likely to be challenged. Rather, it is likely to be reproduced in the writing of students, who come to believe that teachers expect them to emphasize the foreign, the different. (p. 117, cf. Harklau, 2000; Kubota, 2003)

Asking students questions about their countries' "takes" on any particular issue was part of this emphasis on the foreign, and more times than not, students complied with overgeneralized answers to instructors' requests for cultural information. Thinking "critically" about culture, therefore, meant thinking about how students' cultures differed from Canadian culture. At the

same time, however, while my observations did uncover covert "safe-house" (Canagarajah, 2004) interactions (such as Jean Phillipe's with Johnson), overt resistance from students in class served as a reminder that some were aware of the circulation of these discourses or at least were aware that there was something to be problematized about them.

In one of Monique's *Critical Reading and Writing* classes (08/21/03), for example, students were assigned to write a critical essay for their final project but were asked to present to their colleagues their topics and strategy for how they were going to argue them. By presenting their work in progress to the class, it was hoped that a gathering of peer feedback from their fellow classmates in regards to the viability of their topic, clarity of their thesis statements, and quality of their arguments would help to focus and improve their paper. Judy, a student from Japan, revealed that the recent loss of her pet prior to her arrival in Canada had led to her choice of essay topic. The suggestions given to Judy on how she could bring more focus to her topic, however, prompted Jean Phillipe to challenge the underlying shift in direction of her topic:

Judy:　　　I'm going to write about, uh, how do people cope with pet loss. And my statement, uh, is it could be possible to forget it. But I think it's still general.

.　.　.

Monique:　　So, Judy, you feel like your thesis statement is too general. Does anybody else have any suggestions about how she could make it more specific, or?

.　.　.　.

MuYun:　　I think, uh, the pet loss for Canadian is there are, like, two kind of people. One is treat their cat like a, like a person. A human. And maybe it have some ill or too old, so they don't want their, like, die or, like, hurt or something, and then they put it in sleep. Some people just like, uh, like a

chore, like a body and you keep it and you help it. But one day, maybe you can't keep it, you just put it to sleep.

Monique: So you're saying that some Canadians have two different attitudes about pets.

MuYun: Yeah. Uh huh.

Monique: So...

MuYun: You can compare these two or found, uh, which way should we really choose or, like, treat your pet.

Monique: Okay. So maybe we can pick up on what MuYun is suggesting a little bit, and, and Judy, you might want to talk about the cultural difference.

Judy: Oh, but, I, I think there is, um, there is not much cultural differences and that people are...

Monique: ...between...

Judy: ...between Japanese or any other countries. The feelings are the same, so...

Monique: Do you think that's an issue worth exploring? If the feelings are the same, if people treat their pets the same throughout different cultures, or do you think that's, that's too self-evident?

              . . . .

Jean Phillipe: I think she, um, I do not agree if she do like you said.

Monique: Why not?

Jean Phillipe: Because it's not the topic. It's not this topic. It's not about country, just about the feeling. I think maybe it's about...

Monique: How can you...

Jean Phillipe: ...what, what...

Monique: Okay...

Jean Phillipe: ...kind of relationship or what kind of thing dogs can bring you in your

life. And after, you can have a conclusion about if you loss, it's can be...

Monique: Do you think it's the same in every culture?

(Monique, *Critical Reading and Writing*, 08/21/03)

When the suggestion was made to turn the lens of analysis on cultural differences regarding pet loss, Judy appeared clearly confused by this essentialization of her argument. The way in which Judy's topic was appropriated and subsequently retranslated was an interesting one as I perceived the intent of her topic, in part, was to speak to the universality of grief surrounding pet loss. In asking whether it would be possible for people to forget the loss of their pet, the topic seemed to imply not only that the process was an emotionally difficult one, but also that the process applied to anyone who had ever experienced pet loss (i.e., not just pet owners in Japan or those in Canada, etc.). How MuYun thus chose to take the topic up was surprising to me as she not only imposed a cultural component to the discussion, but she did so from the perspective of a Canadian (MuYun is from Mainland China). Monique furthers MuYun's discourse by encouraging the analysis of pet loss framed within discourses of how coping mechanisms differ from culture to culture. But this proposed shift in discourse prompted Jean Phillipe to openly challenge the need to dichotomize feelings of pet loss by culture or geography.

Norton (2000a) argues that a dichotomous classroom discourse such as the one described here "exoticizes multiculturalism, rather than critically engages it," and instead, in order to promote a critical pedagogical approach, "incorporating student experiences into the classroom should be a more complicated process than commodifying multicultural histories in the form of student presentations" (p. 144) (as some instructors in the program appeared to be encouraging in their courses/classes). Rather, a critical analysis of culture, knowledge, and power should deconstruct discourses of homogeneity and "explore how cultural differences as a form of

knowledge are produced and perpetuated, and how teachers can work towards social

transformation" (p. 145; cf. Kubota, 2004a, 2004b).

What are the implications of our practices when culture is essentialized in the

classroom? The goal of Pacific University's ESL program was to bring a dialogic process of

inquiry to a more complexified understanding of culture and how culture shapes language.

Essentialist views of culture, in contrast, serve to limit more critical understandings of culture in

students as culture becomes reduced to a set of facts that can be assimilated and learned. In

negotiating language in this way, the one strategy offered to students in their own creation of

understandings of culture lead them to further perpetuate one-dimensional views of culture,

lacking both depth of understanding and critical analysis. This was observed by Rose, an

instructor, who found students reproducing these cultural essentializations in their written work.

Instead, she believed that the critical analytic skills towards cultural understanding that the

program had hoped to engender in students continued to elude the majority of them.

According to Rose, "very, very few" students by the end of semester at the program "got

it" ("slim to none" were her exact words); rather, she witnessed semester after semester how

students were not able to "look at comparisons in culture and make sense of it without reverting

to these kinds of stereotypes." She had recounted to me how she was marking some of the mid-

term essays where she asked students to state and argue their opinion on a social issue. She told

me that there were two students from China at the time who wrote essays contrasting aspects of

China and Canada. One of them implied "that North American people are bad parents and not

strict enough with their kids and the other essay was basically saying North American people

should live with their parents and grandparents like they do in China." Her main issues with the

essays were that the arguments were based on generalizations and both failed to provide any

kind of argumentative analysis of why they believed what they had stated:

It was clear from these essays that the students hadn't really learned how to deal with the cultural difference in any way that was, you know, critical or in any sort of rational way. I mean they were basically in both cases saying, you know, the Chinese way is better and that Canada should do this the Chinese way but not even necessarily building an argument for that but just assuming that and stating that. And so for me, that was quite discouraging as well. What are we actually doing in terms of discussing cultural difference and getting somewhere with these discussions? So that was quite eye opening for me . . . . I wasn't disappointed in the students. I was disappointed in the program, right? . . . To me, they showed a sense of the failure of the program in dealing with these issues. It seemed to me that this kind of issue is what the program is all about and that if this is what the students are producing at the end, you know, essentially working with really broad stereotypes. (Rose, Instructor, Interview 03/22/04)

Rose argued that the issue was not that students shouldn't have made the arguments, but rather that they made the arguments without asking substantial questions about why they held these beliefs and without any critical analysis of them. But I question what the other implications are of our practices if they continue to perpetuate the use of broad stereotypes and generalizations which both oversimplify and reify culture.

When students perpetuate essentialist discourses of cultural difference themselves, it illustrates how "discursive formations make it difficult for individuals to think outside of them; hence they are also exercises in power and control" (Kumaravadivelu, 1999, p. 460). Rather, as Guilherme (2002) argues:

> critical cultural awareness entails a philosophical, pedagogical, and political attitude towards culture. It may be defined as a reflective, exploratory, dialogical and active stance towards cultural knowledge and life that allows for dissonance, contradiction, and conflict as well as for consensus, concurrence, and transformation. (p. 219)

So when instructors' lack of cohesion and clear vision of how to sensitively, respectfully, and critically examine the relationship between language and culture results in discourses such as these, we need to investigate them further not only in terms of how they may have affected students' access to learning opportunities, but, perhaps more importantly, how they may have affected their access to particular identities and investments (e.g., Kanno, 2003a).

When a lack of cohesion in pedagogical understanding leads to a lack of cohesion in instructors' practices, students, who are shuffled between the many different pedagogies and practices throughout any singular day, are left trying to grapple with how Pacific University's ESL program might assist them in meeting their language learning goals. And in this vein, in the next section, I discuss the instructors' concerns with students' obsessions with the TOEFL exam and how they attributed students' overall lack of understanding about the program to their subsequent resistance to the program and its pedagogy. I argue though that this "resistance" needs to be reanalyzed not just in relation to the instructors' practices, but to the need for an understanding of the larger discourses of English language education globally. For without a clearer understanding of how English positions our students in the world and how the discourses of our classroom such as those recounted above may contribute to these inequitable positionings, instead of English language education opening doors to students' imagined communities, our unreflective practices may, instead, unintentionally ensure that those doors remained closed.[80]

5.3 Theorizing Resistance: Looking Beyond "Those Annoying Little Books"

Early on in my interviews with students in the program, students expressed to me a fear of incongruence between their goals as they envisioned them and their perceptions of what they believed instructors had envisioned as their needs--a disjunction in imagined communities as

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[80] Or, if one prefers, we can refer to "gates" if we are to speak of the gatekeeping effects of the English language that I outlined earlier in Chapter 2.

Norton (2000a, 2001) might argue. Students did not seem to believe that their language learning goals had been considered by their instructors as they felt that classroom practices did not attend to what they imagined for themselves in the future. As Yu-ri (Student, Interview 08/12/03) explained, "sometimes goals from teachers and goals from students, it's against or doesn't meet together." So if the actual language teaching and the desired language learning did not coincide, Yu-ri asked, "Why should I do?" When students' investments and imagined communities are not taken into consideration in our classroom practices, what are the possible implications for non-participation and/or resistance (Norton, 2001)? But in asking ourselves as language teachers how we might then go about addressing the diverse investments students have in language learning, Norton (2000a) points out that rather, we need to understand that "the identities and lived experiences of language learners are already part of the language learning/language teaching experience, whether or not this is formally recognized in the second language curriculum. What the language teacher needs to understand is *how* the identities of learners are engaged in the formal language classroom" (p. 140).

"The whole TOEFL issue" was a concern expressed by a number of instructors over the course of the year in relation to "balancing the students' wants with the program goals" (Eileen, Instructor, Interview 12/17/03). As the majority of the students participating in my study desired to attend a post-secondary institution within an English-speaking country, the immediate goal of scoring well on the test was, for the most part, the first and foremost goal on the minds of many of them. As a gatekeeper for entrance into the imagined communities of a North American university or international business, a good TOEFL score was, at times, in competition with students' desires to simultaneously negotiate English language skills for "daily life" (Toring, Student, Interview 03/22/04). For many of the students, "real" English for daily life would have to wait, however, as time was limited, and, in the words of Adam (Student, Focus Group 07/10/03), "English-speaking countries control the world now. Most of the parts. So we have to

master [English]. Because we want to prove ourselves. We want to learn much more, to earn much more. That's the problem."

Indeed, Mike, another student at the program, underscored how focused some students were on getting to point A (i.e., passing the TOEFL test) and therefore pointed out how some students may have felt their needs being invalidated by classroom practices that did not seem to seriously consider students' larger investments in ESL:

I think learning English just one target is to pass some examination and get a high score. I think maybe most of students here also think so because they want to pass the TOEFL test. So sometimes when class is over and we will talk something about this class, somebody said, "It's no use because they don't teach us how to chose the right number." And if you want to enter university, you must pass some language examination. Nobody will ask you "why" or "what." Just choose. (Mike, Student, Interview 08/13/03)

But in placing emphasis on the immediacy of passing the TOEFL and in subsequently assuming that English language pedagogies that do not "teach to the test" are therefore not meeting their language needs presents a narrow view of the language learning endeavour. This constructed dichotomy between English for the test and English for overall communication nonetheless appeared to be a fairly compelling language dichotomy that was subscribed to by a number of students at Pacific University's academic literacy program. Victor (Student, Interview 12/16/03), for example, expressed his disappointing dilemma as follows: "On one hand I *want* to improve my English, but on the other hand, I *really* want to pass my TOEFL."

Instructors in the program felt that they were constantly having to justify the worth of the program's pedagogical approach to students throughout the semester: "I just never feel that many of the students sort of cross that threshold in terms of believing that what we do has value or is really helping them with English (Rose, Instructor, Interview 03/22/04). And many referred to this notion of "buying into" the program as a pre-requisite to a student's successful language

learning experience while there. But because it would take time "for students to understand our program's particular approach--especially when they are dealing with a new educational philosophy, generally" (Lucy, Instructor, Questionnaire), instructors believed it was a "hard sell" (Nicola, Instructor, Questionnaire). Ruth, an instructor in the program for four months, recounted in frustration the difficulties she had with the determinations of one particular student in this regard:

> He was TOEFL-obsessed and it was very clear that he wasn't going to pass it . . . He was memorizing lists of vocabulary and putting all of his faith in that . . . he couldn't see, he just wouldn't believe that what I was asking him to do would *help* him pass the TOEFL. You know, he totally believed that memorizing those vocabulary lists from those annoying little books was going to help him. (Ruth, Instructor, Interview 03/25/04)

For the most part, throughout the study, there seemed to be an overall demand for prescriptive grammar amongst students--something typical of a pragmatist EAP curriculum. But because students did not believe in the program philosophy or perceived it to be useful or grounded, they were not able to access the skills that the program was trying to promote. The students wanted to analyze the language in terms of grammar, but as pointed out earlier, the program approach instead aimed to analyze language in terms of the context and how it was used. Because there was a significant disagreement about what "good" language education should look like, many students were constantly at odds with the program and, in the end, felt they learned nothing because of this.

We can relate this divergence between students' and instructors' views on language education to the notion of the "good" language learner (Harklau, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2001). Those deemed to be good learners are students who are able to negotiate access to people (e.g., teachers) and learning opportunities (e.g., classroom discourses/exercises). In the case of this particular EAP program, because of the uniqueness of the program, students were not

necessarily able to decipher what exactly a "good" language learner would be in this educational situation or necessarily how to access people and opportunities. Because these students were left mystified as to how to access the resources their instructors and this innovative pedagogy were offering to them, their responses were to reject them altogether as "too hard," "boring," or "useless" (among other descriptors they used in their written evaluations). I believe the issue is not about why the students were not "good" language learners; rather, the point of analysis is about what was considered "good" teaching and learning to the students and, simultaneously, what was considered "good" teaching and learning to the instructors (cf. Simon & Willinsky, 1980).

It appears that many students had a narrow vision of the kind of teaching practices that would help to improve their English language ability, and they did not seem to count a dialogic approach to language and culture as one of them. By holding onto this belief about language learning, however, students were not able to access the opportunities for language learning that may have been available. Benesch (1996) therefore asks:

> How does one deal with cases in which students are so assimilated into academic culture that they identify study skills as their needs? Should one accept and be guided by this congruence between students' conceptualization of needs and institutional requirements or instead be wary of it, suspecting the hegemonic influence of academic traditions? (p. 724)

I argue that this question is pertinent to the point at hand with the TOEFL. When ESL students put such focus on a singular test, there are two things I (and Benesch) see happening: students are not only subverting their own desires for language learning with those imposed by external powers, but they also continue to perpetuate the cycle of inequity and gatekeeping that such standardized tests represent. This is not to ask for a complete rejection of language testing systems, but rather, I raise the point to remember that it is important for language teachers to

critically reflect on these matters and what this might mean for our role in the larger discourses of language education.

Near the end of my third semester of study at Pacific University, I remember having a conversation with Katrina where she was happily recounting to me a really successful lesson she had that day. And in what was probably more of a rhetorical aside, she asked something along the lines of why all classes could not be as good as that one and she brought up the issue of students' possible lack of respect for the program and for the teachers who worked within it. I questioned her about her association of "bad classes" with possible lack of respect and within that questioning, I asked whether she felt all her students in fact *wanted* or intended to come to Canada or to this program and whether all the students actually *wanted* to learn English in the first place. She seemed stymied by this proposal. You mean the students were not here to learn?!?

As Lin (2001) has observed, "many students in the world hold an ambivalent, want-hate relationship with English and the classroom becomes a site for students' struggles and oppositional practices" (p. 271). Erika, the program director, expressed her understanding of students' ambivalence towards English in her questionnaire when responding to the question, "What do you think are the reasons why students study English?" In a response almost mirrored by Andrée (Instructor, Interview 09/12/03), Erika wrote: "I'd like to say 'for love of the language,' but I think the main reason is the reason most students go to university—'to get a better job'" (Erika, Administrator, Questionnaire). And it is in recognition of the role that English plays globally that may give us greater insight into our students and "the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it" (Norton & Toohey, 2001, p. 312; cf. Norton, 2000a, p. 10; Norton & Toohey, 2002). This ambivalence needs to be understood within the larger

global discourses which also come into play in a student's "choice" to learn English, generally

(Pennycook, 1995):

> I learn English because America has power in the world, so that's why I learn English.
>
> But if American is not very important in the world, I don't want to learn English. (Gina,
>
> Student, Focus Group 10/30/03)
>
> I'm not that *want* to learn English. *If* the global thinking is maybe French is more
>
> important or more common, I would learn that language. So it's not my interest to learn
>
> English, to be honest. (Victor, Student, Interview 12/16/03)

Lisa, an instructor, similarly questions this notion of choice when she recognizes the

integral role of English in the international business world and her students desires, in part, to

"be in" this world:

> [English] it's *the* international language and students in any country are *pushed* to study
>
> the language whether they *want* to or not. Because in the business world, especially
>
> international business, English is the language of communication, and if you don't know
>
> it, there's no way for you to be in the business world . . . . Because English is so, it's
>
> become so big and it's become such a *big* part of the whole world that I think they feel
>
> that they *have* to do it and they have no choice. (Lisa, Instructor, Interview 12/21/03)

In questioning the possibility of choice in English language education, Lisa identifies a possible

conflict that many of our students, perhaps, face on a basic level. If, indeed, her students enter

her classroom feeling that they are required to (more than they *desire* to, as Gina and Victor

express) learn English, what are the subsequent implications for the ways in which her students

interact not only with the English language, but with English language education? And more

importantly, what are the implications for Lisa's praxis in relation to the identities and

investments her students bring into the classroom?

So when we say that "there's more than a TOEFL test at the end. A TOEFL test is not any indication of language proficiency, I guess. Or it's not complete" (Nicola, Instructor, Interview 07/25/03), I think we are missing a larger piece of the ESL puzzle because students are the first to admit that "many people learn English just for the certificate to get a good job, not for communication" (Maggie, Student, Focus Group 02/09/04) and that "maybe the English is very useful. We can also say it's not English very useful; it's the *marks* very useful" (Errison, Student, Focus Group 02/09/04). While that may sound cynical, students really believe that to be the case, and, for many critical theorists (e.g., Phillipson, 1992b, 2001), they would also concur. In a follow-up interview, Nicola (Instructor, Interview 03/25/04) says that she has "had students e-mail me when they're taking their English requirement, even though they're a business student, at [name of local university], and say, '*Now* I understand why we do Lit[erature]'." But I believe she answers her own question as to why students would continue to ask for "more stuff for TOEFL" and why they might not "appreciate the long-term benefits in the moment."

I argue that the realities of "the moment" do not provide students with the *luxury* to dwell on the potential long-term benefits of English to them. Once they get to point B (in Nicola's student's case, getting into the local university), only then are many able to look back on the program for what it was. To wonder why students do not "appreciate" the program doesn't take into account the complexities of how students negotiate their multiple investments in language education. For sometimes, it is not necessarily better for us as teachers to focus on the "bigger picture," because focusing on what lies *beyond* for our students can sometimes lead us to miss (as in this case) the immediacy of what students are struggling with *now* as they try to negotiate their "politics of location" (Canagarajah, 1999c; hooks, 1989) simultaneously between the local and the global contexts in which they live.

Ruth (Instructor, Interview 03/25/04), an instructor in the program for four months, wanted students to see that English was "not means to an end, it should be the end in itself"; but for many of the students, the only reason why they were in the program and learning English in the first place is precisely because they perceived it to be the *only* means to their imagined end. But in acknowledging the gate-keeping role that TOEFL plays in students' negotiation of their imagined communities in an academic literacy context, as Benesch questions, does this mean that we teach to the test and play into a system that we may realize is not meeting the needs of our students? Or is there another way? And, more importantly, how do we convince students that there *is* another way? Because I think if we are able to show students that other possibilities exist, there is no reason why they, on their own accord, would not "buy in."

Canagarajah's (1993, 1999c) critical ethnography examines the complex and sometimes contradictory social and political contexts of English language education in Sri Lanka. He outlines the contested nature of English as an international language and the power relations embedded in the spread of the language both currently and historically. Through the analysis of past frameworks of the role of English globally, he turns to a theory of "politics of location" (cf. hooks, 1989), coupled with the research methodology of critical ethnography, to more accurately represent the conflicts in language and identity that his students go through in learning English. Using the theoretical lenses of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992b) and post-colonial theory, Canagarajah analyzes how his students felt simultaneously oppressed and empowered by the English language. They understood that although English language education continued to position them in the periphery, it also concomitantly offered them the means to resist such domination. Students in Canagarajah's research thus struggled to simultaneously embrace and challenge their English language education in the process of negotiating their identities within their local and global worlds.

As with students in Canagarajah's research, those within Pacific University's ESL program similarly recognized the hegemonic power of English, and some simultaneously recognized its potential as a means for agency and resistance. Few students (even those in the most advanced levels), for example, felt the ability to claim English as "their" language no matter what level of fluency they had achieved (or would ever achieve) (Higgins, 2003; Pavlenko, 2003). Furthermore, the majority expressed the impossibility of "choice" in whether or not to learn English:

> As long as the United States remain the boss, we have to learn English . . . and make benefits to ourselves. (Johnny, Student, Focus Group 07/10/03)

> The United States, they speak English. And they are the strongest country in the world. So, we must learn. We *have* to learn . . . If we don't learn their language, then we have no way to *pass* them. (Mike, Student, Focus Group 07/16/03)

At least for some language learners like Johnny and Mike, however, a reimagining of "choice" in learning English represented a counterdiscursive strategy. Instead of envisioning their identities in globally subordinate roles, the acquisition of English represented the means through which these students hoped to contest and reimagine these identities. So while students in my study expressed a lack of choice in learning English, many simultaneously expressed the right and responsibility to learn English for the advancement of themselves or of their country as a whole.

One cannot neglect the voices of dissent which speak to the appropriation of English for counter-hegemonic purposes as Canagarajah (1993, 1999c) and Pennycook (1994c) theorize. And I have been fascinated by how such practices of power have been passionately spoken about by students in my research:

> If you want to be a model, you have to learn what the model is doing. In order to learn what the model is doing, you have to learn to talk with the model. To talk with the model

you need to learn the language of *this* model. So after you know *what* this model is

doing, *why* is it a model then you can--now I know *what* they're doing, I will do my *own*

model. I'll create my own model so everybody's going now to follow me. So before

doing that, you'll have to learn what is the model. (Rebecca, Student, Focus Group

10/29/03)

In examining some of the comments of the students and the instructors in this section, however,

the image of how one goes about learning the model was not necessarily shared between both

groups. And it was this divergence in opinion which, I believe, is at the heart of the issue. That

is, I believe that English for counterdiscursive practices, first and foremost, needs to get back to

acknowledging *simultaneously* language skills needed both for the current hurdle and the future

hurdles. As Simon and Willinsky (1980) point out, "as one's linguistic competence develops,

this requires the use of language as both a vehicle and an expression of one's own purposes" (p.

119).

Most students in my research seemed well aware that the journey past "Point A" would

be a difficult one, but for now, their immediate contexts required a certain degree of tunnel-

vision. Benesch's (1996, 1999a, 2001) notion of critical needs analysis addresses how the voices

of the students can play a role in the classroom curriculum while balancing their desires with

those required of them from the institutions they desire to be a part of. Further, critical rights

analysis simultaneously acts to connect their voices and their agency to their communities both

in and outside of the classroom in the recognition of the need for them to negotiate more

powerful roles and identities locally and globally.

Of course, in highlighting critical needs and rights analyses, I am not saying that it

means we need to teach to the test or that students do "whatever they want" in the classroom (as

Monique and Rose believed student's perceptions of a student-centered classroom to mean);

expending all our energies justifying to students why this pedagogy represents "good" language

learning is not necessarily efficient either. Rather, we need to respect where our students are coming from and, *together* with students, bring to the fore (not pessimistically, but constructively) the local *and* global challenges they may face while navigating their imagined communities and the possibilities these worlds hold. For as Morgan (1998) points out, "an empowering educator would need to view students as equals and resist prescribing what empowerment is or should be for students" (p. 17). In doing so, teachers do not invalidate or minimize the hegemonic discourses along the way, and students, with teachers as a guide, can collaboratively negotiate the English that will be needed for the journey. But I believe this process necessitates two things: 1. cohesion in our practices; and 2. a commitment to social justice, for it is also important to recognize that students' resistance to the program should similarly include an analysis of the actual classroom practices students were participants in. Gaining access to discourse and learning practices at the program was not just a matter of students either desiring or not desiring to do so; but rather, access was also dependent on whether or not they were *allowed* to do so within the classroom discourses.

5.4 "What 'It' is and How to Get There"

In this chapter, I outlined the innovative pedagogy those at Pacific University's ESL program aimed to bring to academic literacy learning and described the initiatives made by administration in the program to bring the pedagogy to life. My research found, however, that a clear understanding of the program pedagogy remained out of reach for many of the instructors there, and the difficulties in translating pedagogy into practice within their classrooms resulted in an overall lack of pedagogical cohesion. Classrooms which had been imagined as dialogic, in practice, became, at times, monologic, and discourses which had been imagined to be culturally-sensitive and respectful, in practice, became, at times, not just *in*sensitive and *dis*respectful, but essentializing and culturally reifying.

The lack of coherence in the program was also, in part, at the root of student resistance to the program as students did not believe that their investments in English were being addressed within the program. But I bring the notions of cohesion and student resistance together to conclude the chapter with a discussion of the underlying issue at hand: that is, the lack of recognition or overall awareness around issues of power and practice in language education. For this reason, concentrating solely on issues of pedagogical cohesion in the program would be an oversimplification of the challenges that the program faced and why they were facing them. Because of this, I conclude this chapter with a vision of how the program might make the language learning experiences of their students both enabling and successful. For while simultaneously recognizing that the road to educational change is anything but smooth, Benesch remains unwavering in her belief that "EAP classes can be agencies for social change, both in and outside the academy" (1996, p. 736).

I spoke to the challenges the instructors at Pacific University's ESL program faced in bringing the program's innovative pedagogy to their classroom practices, and I spoke to how a number of factors may have contributed to the disjunction between pedagogy and practice that I observed over the course of the year. Rose attributed the failure of students "getting" the program to the lack of unity in approaches of the many instructors in the program and spoke to students' confusions about the program in relation to instructors' own confusions in negotiating the pedagogy themselves:

> I'm sure there are some students who quote unquote "get it" but this whole issue of what "it" is and how to get there is an *entire* discussion in and of itself, isn't it? And how that's been dealt with in other classes I mean, you know, because you know we've had situations with professional development and stuff where it seems like people are almost being encouraged to work with stereotypes, for example. So it could be, I mean, these are, I have strong feelings about this but it could be in other courses these kinds of issues

are being dealt with in a different way as well. And yeah to *get* somewhere with that, I

believe one would have to have quite a united philosophy and approach otherwise it's

far, far too confusing. I mean this is complicated enough to deal with. It's complicated

enough to deal with but if you're hitting people with god knows how many approaches, I

think it's just beyond confusing for them. (Rose, Instructor, Interview, 03/22/04)

Rose identified a number of challenges that the program faced in terms of pedagogy in this

quote. It was telling how at the base of her comment was the idea that the program pedagogy

was unclear not only for the students, but, more importantly, for the program staff and their

inability to understand what the program "was" in the first place. She further mentioned the

difficulties with PD in the program and how that merely compounded the already complex

difficulties in translating the pedagogy into classroom practice. Thus, it would be imperative for

the program to address at the very start the challenges that were rooted in the initial

misunderstandings of the program pedagogy.

The issue of "what 'it' is and how to get there" is indeed a major challenge as at the

beginning of this chapter, I spoke to staff and students' understanding that the program was

"different" but to a lack of clear awareness as to *how* it was so. Because of this, even some

instructors were skeptical that any sense of program unity was even possible. When speaking

about the development of the program manual, for example, Julie (Instructor, Interview

07/16/03) was less than confident about its ability to bring both the pedagogy and the people

together as she believed it would "be subject to interpretation" and that instructors were "going

to be able to twist words to fit with what you support doing in the classroom" (cf. Siegel &

Fernandez, 2002; Zeichner, 1999). Because of these complexities, it would be irresponsible for

me to say that there was one panacea that would address the multiple challenges the program

faces. But rather, I propose a shift in the discourse from a focus on pedagogical coherence to a

coherence in teaching and teacher identities to think about how we might reconceptualize how

we view ourselves and our practices. To clarify though, a reimagining of a language teacher identity does not mean that we all need to teach the same (which Julie already expressed was next to, if not, impossible) and it does not necessarily mean we need to think the same, per se. But what it does mean is that we would need to have an educational "vision" (Simon, 1992) of what we believe is "good" language learning and "good" language teaching (Norton, 2001a; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Toohey, 2000) from a broader perspective.

If we think about our classroom practices as either enabling or constraining access to language learning opportunities, then we need to revisit the questions Ariel was asking instructors to reflect on throughout the year. In asking, "What are we teaching?" and "How does this fit into the larger program structure?", the answers focus on our language teaching practices in terms of the program and content. Instead, we need to shift our reflection to our language teaching practices in terms of the language learner. That is, I realize that my interest in the innovation of the program was not necessarily in *what* they were intending to teach, but in *how* it could be taught and the implications of this practice on the reimagining of more empowered language student identities. But that kind of reconceptualization, at its base, is an ideological shift as it underlies a focus on larger social and political relations of power within ESL education. In openly addressing our practices as ideological and when we then speak of what it means to be a "good" language teacher, it is not just about what pragmatic skills the students require or even what analytical skills and processes they need to be autonomous learners; rather, we need to extend the conversation to ask what are our other responsibilities to students in terms of larger relations of power and what other language skills students might need in order to truly engender autonomous learning and agency. How do we, as second language teachers, therefore, need to "reimagine our teaching selves"?

It is not that the instructors at Pacific University's ESL program were not reflective about their practices; in fact, I observed many of them reflecting constantly on whether what

they were doing in the program was "right" and whether it coincided with the larger vision of the program. Many were indeed questioning their practices, but in concentrating on whether or not their practices were "right," the questioning was merely around issues of program cohesion and their practices in relation to whether they were translating it "correctly"; rather, the kind of questioning I think needed to happen was whether their practices were "right" in terms of whether or not student learning was either engendered or prevented by their practices. But that line of questioning is no longer about negotiating our teacher identities vis-à-vis the program's identity, but negotiating our teacher identities vis-à-vis the students' identities.

For example, the program's pedagogy focused on the use of a dialogic approach to the analysis of language and culture. So PD workshops focused on the methods and strategies instructors could use in their classrooms and with particular content. Teacher education thus focused on the question of "how" without focusing on the question of "why" (Norton, 2005). As Kramsch (1993) cogently argues:

> a dialogic pedagogy is unlike traditional pedagogy. Not only can it not be pre-programmed, but it is likely to question the traditional social and political tenets of foreign language education. Furthermore, it sets new goals for language teachers—poetic, psychological, political goals that are not measurable on proficiency tests and do not constitute any easy-to-follow method. For all these reasons, such a pedagogy should better be described, not as a blueprint for how to *teach* foreign languages, but as another way of *being* a language teacher. (pp. 30-31)

Kramsch turns the focus to how we embody particular teaching identities through our classroom practices. The question is no longer knowledge for what, but, as Wong (2006) importantly highlights, a dialogic pedagogy becomes "knowledge for whom" (pp. 36-37). Through dialogic teaching, teachers "become aware of the things we take for granted, and how we reproduce these values in our day-to-day teaching" (Morgan, 1998, p. 17).

A reanalysis of our practices in the way Kramsch, Morgan, and Wong speak of turns the focus of our inquiry to issues of power in education. Specifically, this desire "to bring about pedagogical, institutional, and social change on behalf of and with their students" reflects a critical pedagogical approach to language education (Benesch, 2001, p. 138). A critical approach to ESL analyzes the role of English globally and how inequitable social and political relations position students in particular ways. Critical pedagogy views our classrooms as micro-communities, reflective of the macro-communities outside the classroom, and because of this, it aims to address the ways in which students need to negotiate more equitable identities for themselves and sees the language classroom as a site of agency and change, rather than a site of replication. Critical pedagogy, therefore, "should be seen as a social and educational process rather than just as a pedagogical method" (Crookes & Lehner, 1998, p. 327, cf. Kirk, 1986).

In critical ESL education, teaching and learning practices are not the only issues needing to be reconceptualized in the classroom. Alongside, what needs to be re-examined are the identities of those inhabiting it. Students are no longer seen as blank slates, dependent on their teachers' expertise and knowledge to learn the language. Further, students' histories and experiences are not viewed as subordinate or irrelevant to the language learning task at hand and are, instead, viewed as integral to the process. When teachers are the expert, when teachers' discourses are the discourses of "truth," and when teachers are central to the every aspect of the language learning endeavour, student identities are simultaneously being shaped in particular ways. A shift to a critical pedagogical approach to language learning or, in the case of Pacific University's EAP program, a shift to Benesch's (1999b, 2001) "Critical EAP," therefore, is but the first step towards the recreation of our classrooms as it gives us the opportunity to reflect on the future of our practices.

No educational change, though, is without challenge in and of itself (Fullan, 1993, 1999, 2001; Markee, 1994, 1997, 2001), and in the next chapter, I outline some of the challenges I see

facing the program in a reimagining of their pedagogy within a critical language education framework. Based on my classroom observations over the course of my year of research, I therefore highlight four primary challenges that need to be addressed in order for the program to bring their model of critical EAP to fruition. At the base of these issues, however, is a deeper analysis of our own teacher and teaching identities, and so I propose the application of Norton's (2005) and Hawkins and Norton's (in press) recent work on critical language teacher education in the recreation of our classrooms as sites of possibility in ESL teaching and learning.

Chapter 6: "CRITICAL" PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGES

Fullan's (1993, 1999, 2001) work has theorized many of the difficulties of implementing educational change which can include administrative support (or lack thereof) as well as the difficulties and resistance of teachers and students towards change. Similar issues have been raised by Markee (1994, 1997, 2001) in relation, specifically, to language education and language teaching innovations. Markee (1994) argues that innovation cannot succeed without a certain level of conflict as the process of innovation within his conceptualization entails the "invariably messy" analysis of our teaching values. This messiness of negotiation is, in fact, "an important precursor of potential change" (p. 23). Generally, what they and others who write about teacher education (see Hawkins, 2004; Hawkins & Irujo, 2004; Hawkins & Norton, in press; Johnson, 2000; Motha, 2006c; Norton, 2005; Reagan & Osborn, 2002; Toohey & Waterstone, 2004, among others) seem to agree on is that change cannot occur without a reflection on our practices.

In the previous chapter, through an analysis of critical incidents taken from classroom observations, I underscored how our discourse and classroom practices "establish social relations that determine access to classroom resources and ultimately to learning" (Toohey, 2000, p. 3). I concluded Chapter 5 with a call for more critically-reflective language teaching practices at Pacific University's EAP program and proposed that a shift to a critical pedagogical approach to language education might assist in addressing the challenges the program faced. Yet there were further classroom observations that made me realize that this educational change was not without its own challenges, and in this chapter, I analyze the four specific challenges those in the program first need to address in order for a critical language pedagogy to come to fruition. I identified these four challenges as:

1. Language not being perceived as social (or political) practice

2. Associating being "critical" with one's language ability and culture

3. The differing conceptions of "critical"

4. The negotiation of a critical language teaching praxis

I argue that at the core of all four of these challenges, however, is the centrality of the negotiation of language teacher identity, generally, and of a critical language teacher identity, specifically. And because underlying the negotiation of a critical language teacher identity is a realization that "it is often *how* we teach rather than *what* we teach that creates difficulties in the classroom" (Morgan, 1998, p. 15), I conclude Chapter 6 with a discussion of recent models of critical language teacher education (Hawkins & Norton, in press; Norton, 2005) as a means through which we might begin the process of critical reflection.

6.1 Being Pragmatic

The first challenge I identified facing the development of a critical pedagogical approach to language instruction in the program was the tendency of some instructors to view language as an instrumental tool rather than perceiving its usage as social practice. Viewing language in this way saw instructors treating English language education as one of pragmatics rather than politics and focussing on students' language needs accordingly. In Chapter 2, I discussed the role of English globally and the way the language has been used in the continued colonization of certain populations. Further, one of the main premises of the thesis here is the way in which the language is used within our own language classrooms to position students often in inequitable ways. But in interviews with instructors and from observations of classroom practices, what became evident was that for many in the program, the role of the ESL teacher was clearly focused on the linguistic task at hand.

6.1.1 The role of the "language" teacher

In one of Andrée's *Composition* classes, I observed her facilitating a vocabulary-building exercise. She asked a student volunteer to go up to the whiteboard and write the following four words: "beautiful," "ugly," "friendly," and "unfriendly." She then proceeded to

divide the class into four small groups and assigned one word to each group. Students were given thesauruses and dictionaries and were asked to find synonyms or other adjectives that meant the same as the word they were given. Students were to make a list which they were to then write on the board for their fellow students to see. The following is an excerpt of the synonym lists:

Table 2: Synonym Exercise (Andrée, *Composition*, 11/24/03)

WORD	SYNONYM LIST
unfriendly	cruel, rude, ruthless, terrible, inhospitable, unkind, unsociable, unwelcomed, ungentlemanly, hostile, horrid, disgusting, mean, aggressive, snobby, antagonistic, cocky
friendly	tender, peaceful, helpful, polite, gentle, kind, nice, scrupulous, harmonious, welcoming, warm, sympathetic, amiable, amicable, sociable, passionate
ugly	disgusting, nasty, unattractive, unpleasant, beastly, awful, unpretty, unlovely, gross, objectionable, monstrous, squalid, heinous, revolting, repulsive, terrible, horrible, pig
beautiful	pretty, hot, balanced, even, out of this world, graceful, classic, chaste, attractive, pleasurable, enjoyable, agreeable, wonderful, fabulous, cool, nice, sexy, incredible, fantastic, awesome, trendy, fashionable

After students wrote their lists on the board, Andrée brought the discussion back to the entire class as a group and they, together, went through each list to see if any other students could add any words. Discussions also ensued about some of the words contained in each list. For example, for the word "friendly," a student asked if "elegant" would be an acceptable synonym. Andrée replied:

I wouldn't put "elegant" as a synonym for "friendly." Uh, well someone who *is* elegant, well. It depends. If it's elegant in fashion, in the clothes you wear, you wouldn't necessarily be friendly. But, if it's a person who's elegant in character, then that person *would* be friendly. (Andrée, *Composition*, 11/24/03)

This excerpt illustrates the difficulties in engaging with critical discourses in the language classroom as Andrée's attempts to ensure that students "save face" when presenting ideas. That is, how do we engage with students in critical analyses of their responses in a way that does not invalidate them (like in the examples I presented in the previous chapter). For explaining that elegance in character means a person "would be friendly" requires further analysis with the students to uncover how these associations are produced by particular discourses that view "elegance" in this way (i.e., I, myself, do not necessarily consider someone who "acted elegant" friendly any more than I would necessarily consider a fashionably elegant person to be friendly). A discussion of vocabulary can be an effective entrance point into analyses with students about how language is shaped by and through the social and political discourses in which we live— discourses that are further pervaded by unequal power relations. Vocabulary lessons cannot be seen as an apolitical exercise and should entail a critical reanalysis of how language is used on a daily basis.

In a later excerpt from the same class, for example, the word "pig" or "piggish" was proposed as a substitute for the word "ugly." In explaining "pig" as being associated with the notion of messiness, Andrée clarified the word as follows:

Well, a mess can be ugly, right? If someone is messy, that person can be ugly. If the person looks messy . . . . So someone who's usually messy, can be ugly. Like for example, a homeless person. A panhandler. You might think that they're really ugly 'cause they're messy. So that would be an example.

Pacific University's ESL program aimed to make students aware of how culture impacts the language, and this exercise could have done just that. Rather than viewing vocabulary lessons as pragmatic and vocabulary as static and apolitical, it could have been an entrance into deeper critical engagement by discussing the cultural implications of the words and their synonyms and what sorts of social and political constructions they entail (cf. Morgan, 1998). But in associating a homeless person with messiness and, by further association, with ugliness, particular viewpoints were being put forward through classroom discourses. While I didn't believe this to have been Andrée's intentions, it reminds us of how what we teach unintentionally can, at times, be more significant than that we teach intentionally (Kumashiro, 2002).

Without any critical engagement with the words and how they are discursively constructed and used in everyday discourses, learning vocabulary acted mainly as a pre-activity before the primary (also pragmatic) classroom exercise (which was a discussion about constructing conclusions). The need to quickly move onto the next activity perhaps further represents how difficult it is to engage with critical discourses in the face of time constraints and similar classroom pressures (Simon, 1992). The challenge of time constraints and the everyday demands of curricula completion was further reflected when Zenyth, a student from Korea, asked Andrée the meaning of the word "fag."

Andrée had been circulating around the class actively assisting groups with their numerous questions when she was called over to Zenyth's group. Prior to this exchange, however, I observed Zenyth speaking with her group members about the word and expressing hesitancy as to whether she should ask the teacher for an explanation. I had interpreted the hesitancy to have come from a recognition that the question was off-task; but as Baynham (2005, p. 780) highlights, the student-teacher dynamics of responding contingently creates a "messier" classroom environment (albeit a more "dynamic" and "agentive" one). This, in part, made more extensive critical engagement even more challenging:

Zenyth:	Yesterday, uh, Sunday, we went a field trip.
Andrée:	Field trip.
Zenyth:	But they spoke "fag," "fag" a lot.
Andrée:	The word "fag" is a slang word for homosexual.
Zenyth:	Homosexual?
Andrée:	Homosexual. Yeah. Don't ever use it, please.
Zenyth:	Ah! But this one in England is a cigarette, right?
Andrée:	Yeah. Yeah, and sometimes it's a cigarette here too. A lot of the time, it's a cigarette here too. So, "Can I have a fag? Do you have a fag?"
Zenyth:	Yes. Yes.
Andrée:	It's, it's asking for a cigarette. But most of the time, it's homosexual.
Zenyth:	'kay.
Andrée:	So it depends on context.
Zenyth:	'kay. Ah.
Andrée:	Okay?
Zenyth:	Thanks.
Andrée:	Okay. (Andrée turns and leaves)
Zenyth:	(reiterating and explaining to students in her group) Homosexual. Gay or lesbian. Same-sex. Bisexual. Homosexual.

The vocabulary word in question, "fag," similarly represents how language is entrenched in power. But Zenyth's exclamation of understanding, "Ah! But this one in England is a cigarette, right?" in this conversation appeared to me to have glossed right over Andrée's caution not to use the term. Andrée's message of "Don't ever use it, please" indicates that the word is inappropriate in some way, but there was a lack of engagement in a deeper dialogic analysis of how the term is both used and constructed. As a result, the students focussed on the word

"homosexual," not seeming to acknowledge hearing that the term was problematic, and thereby

perhaps not fully understanding the underlying social and political ramifications of its usage.

Pennycook (2004) highlights the difficulties of having to negotiate the pressures of

limited class time with the desire to engage with unexpected "critical incidents" such as the one

recounted above when he states, "it seems to me that trying to be a critical educator is more

often about seeking and seizing small moments to open the door on a more critical perspective"

(p. 341). This need for a more critical perspective, however, is based on a view of language as a

form of political and social practice (e.g., Duff, 2002a; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Norton, 1998;

Toohey, 2000). For this reason, I believe the challenge of engaging with critical discourses at

Pacific University's ESL program was due, in part, to my perception that some instructors did

not necessarily view language in this way.

During my interviews with instructors, many spoke of their role in relation to students'

goals of getting into university or performing well in future international careers. For example,

in my interview with Lisa, I asked her what her goal was as a language teacher in the program:

> It's the same thing as the goal of this program . . . Because a lot of them have these goals
>
> in becoming successful business men, business women in the international business
>
> world, it's *our* job as ESL instructors to make a path for them towards that goal that they
>
> have because if they didn't have this language of English, there's no way that they could
>
> become a *good* business man or woman in the international world, I think. (Lisa,
>
> Instructor, Interview 12/21/03)

Although the majority of the students enrolled in the program in order to address their more

immediate needs of English university preparation, many of them did foresee the usage of

English as related to their future careers in the local and global business world. Holding the

belief that English was the key to business, Lisa therefore stated the importance of teaching

students to "communicate effectively in a North American context," "increase their confidence,"

and "make them independent." She believed that this goal was reflective of the goal of the program as a whole and seemed to believe the learning of English would open doors for students to succeed in their future career plans. In her view, English played an instrumental role in students' future successes and mirrored some of the students' own views of English and the use of English.

In Chapter 5, Section 5.3, I wrote about students' obsessions with the TOEFL exam which, in a very central way, relates to this notion of English as a required tool (and gate-keeping mechanism) for future identities and investments. A belief that students held about English, for example, was that it would assist in future economic success (in the form of career and salary, etc.). But we need to question whether apolitical, pragmatic approaches to language learning are enough for this success. That is, the way in which power operates through language, requires a reanalysis of English in a language-learning context, for Baker (2001) and Cummins (2000) remind us that the economic benefits of English proficiency are not simply rooted in linguistic ability nor in the perceived lack thereof. That is, in a telling example, May (2001) draws attention to the structural disadvantages faced by fluently English-speaking minorities in the United States, pointing out that social and economic benefits continue to elude many African Americans and Hispanics, native-born or otherwise (cf. Pendakur & Pendakur, 2004).

As cynical as it may sound, I believe the point of these reminders pertain similarly to the students we deal with every day in our classrooms. Such research suggests that simplistically viewing English language skills as the gateway to establishing more equal opportunities for certain English speakers remains problematic.[81] So again, if English represents in the eyes of

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[81] Stuckey (1991) similarly critiques Heath's (1983) influential ethnographic study *Ways With Words* for the lack of attention towards social and political factors which, Stuckey believes, played a larger role in the disenfranchisement of Trackton's black working-class community than how they practiced literacy. That is, Heath concluded in her research that a change in literacy practices would result in an improvement of Trackton's social and political

students and their teachers a key to future opportunities, it behooves us to think about the *type* of English skills students may require for full and active participation in the communities they desire to be a part of. The teaching of English for agency as opposed to English for mere function would arguably translate into very different language learning classrooms.

6.1.2 The role of the "critical" teacher

In another classroom, I observed an activity that one could arguably consider a type of vocabulary lesson as well. In this example, Rose's *Canadian Studies* class had just begun and she informed students that the discussion that morning was to be about a reading regarding First Nations treaties and Native land claims that students were given the previous class. But instead of going straight to the reading, Rose opened the class as follows:

Rose: So before I ask you, uh, to open this up with some general questions, I'd

           like you to tell me, what are all the different names for Native people? So

           "Native" is one way.

Tony: First Nations.

Rose: First Nations.

Tony: Aboriginals

           . . .

Rose: Aboriginal. Anything else? Native, First Nations, Aboriginal.

Tony: Indian

---

positions; but Stuckey argues that literacy and definitions of literacy, themselves, are yet another political means of categorizing people ensuring that those deemed "illiterate" or unfamiliar with particular literacy practices (as Heath argued about Trackton) remain in the underclass (cf. McKay, 1993). Stuckey therefore questions, "Why . . . do studies of language always result in solutions that are linguistic rather than social or economic?" (Ibid., p. 41). This is not to say that linguistic issues are not of importance here or in Heath's study, only that they should not be the only (or necessarily the primary) lens through which the oppressive conditions are analyzed; rather, as Stuckey argues, our analysis must more so rest in the critique of the social relations that create the literacy "problem" and the greater humanity that is needed in order to address inequity (Ibid., p. 124).

Rose: Indian. Anything else? So there are a few reactions from people when you
            said the word "Indian." What have you heard about the word, the word
            "Indian"?

Tony: India.

Rose: India. Some of you have heard about the word "Indian," I'm sure. No?
            Nothing? All these words are equally useful? All these words are equally
            useful? We can use them all?
            (another student states that they can't use "Indian")

Rose: We *can't* use "Indian." Okay, why not?

Johnson: Just another country's name like that.

Rose: Okay, so some people are saying you can't use it because it has a negative
            meaning. Where did that name come from in the first place? What's the
            origin of the name?

Johnson: Asia

Rose: Asia? How did this name come to be used to talk about Native people in
            North America?

Johnson: (inaudible)

Tony: Because the mistake.

Rose: Because of a mistake?

Tony: Columbus. He want to reached the India island, Indian island, but he
            reached America.

Rose: But he reached America?

Tony: But then he saw First Nation.

Rose: He *thought* it was India, right. So the *mistake* of explorer means we end
            up, of Columbus, I guess it was who made this original mistake, calling

the native people in the new land that he reached, Indians, because he

thought he had reached India. Now, of course, this is not the name that

native people had for themselves, this is the name that European people

gave to native people. But not only was it not the name native people

used for themselves, but, it was a name based on a mistake.

(Rose, *Canadian Studies*, 12/09/03)

Although this would not be considered a "typical" vocabulary lesson, it can be analyzed in a

similar way to what Andrée desired to do in her class recounted above. That is, both instructors

were giving students the opportunity to learn alternative terms to the words. However, this is

where the lessons diverge as Rose's intention was not a pragmatic one, and instead, her desire

lay in the discussion of the politics behind each terminology. Thus, while Andrée, for example,

told her students, "Don't ever use it, please," Rose's intent was to specifically engage her

students in a discussion about *why* particular terminologies should not be used. And while

Andrée qualified that students should generally be careful with their usage of synonyms because

of their difference in contextual meaning, Rose went further to discuss specifically the issue of

naming and how "it has a real political power in Canada, this idea of what name your group

should call itself," thereby asking students not only to think about the differing terms, but to

analyze them in reference to how they have been created and perpetuated through the

discourse.[82]

The way in which discourses of power position people and communities was also at the

base of some instructors' perceptions of their role in the program. In recognizing the

interconnections of power between students' micro- (the classroom) and macro- (the world)

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[82] See Norton Peirce (1990) for an example of how theories and issues are named and renamed through discourse to promote particular views and for particular ends.

communities, some Pacific University instructors such as Monique regarded the engagement in

larger social and political critique as integral to their role as language educators:

> Maybe this is a fatalistic way of looking at things, but I feel like, well, if people are
>
> going to have to learn English, and if the world is becoming more and more whatever,
>
> "globalized," if you want to use that word, it would be nice for these students to be
>
> armed with the critical skills to examine what's going on around them rather than just
>
> say, "Oh, that's cool. I want to, you know, whatever, Britney Spears' album or Coca-
>
> Cola" . . . . I don't feel like I am just preparing them to become business people in a
>
> global market, you know. I feel like I am teaching them to be able to question why
>
> they're here to begin with and what's going on with that and what's happening with their
>
> own culture in relation to North American culture which is a lot of this, "great
>
> democratizing force." So yeah, I don't know how much of that gets across but I do try to
>
> do that you know. (Monique, Instructor, Interview 09/03/03)

In contrast to Lisa, Monique interpreted the overt critiquing of larger structures of power and

power relations on both a local and global level as an overall goal of the program and its

pedagogy (Canagarajah, 1999b, 1999c; Pennycook, 1989, 1998a). Her reflection on her

pedagogy echoes Canagarajah's (1993, 1999c) belief that discourses of resistance do not simply

appear in the classroom; rather, as in Monique's classrooms, their existence in our practices is a

decidedly conscious effort made by educators desiring to collaboratively design with students

alternative possibilities for the reimagining of their English worlds.

In facilitating with students alternative ways of interacting with and using English, the

possibilities of English for counterdiscourse may continue to enable students in negotiating for

themselves their relationships in their micro- and macro-societies. As Ruth (Instructor,

Interview 11/26/03) explained, as instructors, it is not enough for students to learn English

without thinking responsibly and critically about the reasons *why* they were learning it (cf.

Phillipson, 1992b). Hawkins and Norton (in press) further point out that:

> because language , culture, and identity are integrally related, language teachers are in a
> key position to address educational inequality, both because of the particular learners
> they serve, many of whom are marginalized members of the wider community, and
> because of the subject matter they teach—language—which can itself serve to both
> empower and marginalize.

Critical language education does not see a divide between the "language" teacher and the

"critical" teacher as both are instrumental to the articulation and the formulation of resistance.

Instead, Benesch (2001, p. 61) advocates for a pedagogy which recognizes the importance of a

focus on both, in tandem, as oppose to one at the sake of the other. But it is this very point that

led me, in part, to the second challenge that I identified for the program and the possibilities for

Critical EAP within their classrooms.

6.2 "Critical" Pre-Requisites

Although the program pedagogy desired for students to "think critically" about language

and culture, a number of instructors expressed skepticism in their interviews that such an

approach was possible for some ESL students. The two factors causing their doubtfulness were

that many believed that the notion of criticality was in staunch opposition to the cultures and

educational systems from which their students originated. Further, others questioned the

possibilities of engaging meaningfully in critical inquiry when English language abilities for

some students remained low. For some instructors then, the desire to bring cultural critique to

their classrooms was not without challenge, but the assumptions underlying their concerns

needed to be investigated further in light of the work of Kubota (1999, 2001, 2003) and others

(e.g., Morita, 2004) who have argued extensively about the discursive constructions of Asian

ESL students as passive learners incapable of critical thinking. At the same time, getting

students to think critically does not necessarily entail the ignoring of the pragmatic nor a complex investigation of "big" issues, for an engagement in the critical, as Pennycook (2004) discovered, can sometimes be found in less obvious spaces.

6.2.1 Un-critical assumptions about learning

The belief that students from particular cultures (read: Asian) are either unable to or at least have extreme difficulties with critical thinking has been expressed by some who believe that, "not only is critical thinking a culturally based concept, but many cultures endorse modes of thought and education that almost diametrically oppose it" (Atkinson, 1997, p. 72). The concern about Asian students (who made up the vast majority of the students in the program) and their inability to not only think "critically," but to even voice their own opinions ("uncritically," even) pervaded many discussions I participated in with the staff in the program. Many felt that students' apparent reticence to challenge those in authority made it difficult for the development and maintenance of any critical analysis. Others conversely expressed that their opinions about the issue had changed over time. Mark, an instructor in the program for three months, commented that this was the case for him:

> With last term over with, I have observed on several occasions that the students are fully capable of thinking critically. The shortcoming for some of them is how they express themselves effectively . . . . I think that they *are* capable of critically thinking. What they might not know is that they *are* thinking critically. Partly because of the system that they grew up in. They did not know that they're doing it or at least capable of doing it. (Mark, Instructor, Interview 04/26/04)

This idea that students were unfamiliar with critical thinking seemed to be implied by the marketing brochures in statements I discussed in Chapter 5 such as "Pacific University students learn to live the language, to think critically, to express themselves and their ideas, and to communicate confidently." The program seemed to further reproduce this discourse when

presenting, for example, testimonials of past students in the marketing brochure who are quoted as saying: "I think the most important thing I learned in Pacific University's ESL program is critical thinking! I learned how to really watch news, read stories and even ads, and I learned to ask questions! That's so important!" (Pacific University ESL program: immersion programs, p. 13). Some instructors such as Andrée, however, questioned this:

> Well, I think there is an assumption here that other cultures are not taught or allowed to critique anything. They have to accept everything as it is. I am not sure that assumption is correct but we're supposed to show them how to question things and not assume that what they see is the truth. But I think a lot of them, well, like, some of them know that already. (Andrée, Instructor, Interview 09/12/03)

The belief that students were unable to be critical, or, in Mark's case, that students were being critical but were not aware of their criticality on a conscious level can be both essentializing and patronizing to our students.

Ellsworth (1992, p. 103) cautions against this centering of educators as those who are solely responsible for or solely able to raise the critical consciousness of their students as this assumes the dependence on criticality and resistance to exist only within the pedagogy of critical educators. This was reinforced to me by students like Rebecca (Interview 12/03/03), from the Ivory Coast, who questioned the usefulness of this focus as she had previously come from a university setting and expressed that she had "done that." Victor (Interview 12/16/03), a student from Mainland China, similarly expressed that a student's criticality "depends on the personality" and that some would understand and practice this notion of critical thinking "*before* they went here. They, they *will* have. They will have anything, they will questioning, uh, everything." Students' assertions that critical thinking was not new to them in my research reflected the findings of Morgan (1998), who, from his own teaching experience, understood

that "for some students, the ability to read politics 'between the lines' is a 'traditional' or familiar literacy skill" (p. 14; cf. Davidson, 1998).

In her research in a Korean context, Shin (2006) found it problematic when teachers would attribute students' difficulties in a critical classroom to (perceived) cultural differences.[83] She argues that these types of discourses further serve to essentialize the Other and because of this, we should regard these statements with great caution:

> We should be wary of such accounts and the circulation of such knowledges in TESOL. Although such images are merely Western *representation* of East Asian culture, due to TEs' [teachers of English's] privileged positions in TESOL, they are often *constitutive* of reality, and more problematically, they are often endorsed by SOLs [speakers of other languages] themselves. (Shin, 2006, pp. 158-159; cf. Kubota, 1999, 2001, 2003)

Within my study, indeed, many students did talk about some difficulty engaging with a critical analytical process in the classroom. While they expressed that developing critical thinking skills in the program was good, it was "hard" for Asian students who were not familiar with the approach and were "used to Eastern Asian style of learning and teaching," as Nora (Student, Interview 08/26/03), a student from Japan, explained.

Shin's (Shin & Crookes, 2005a) action research in a Korean EFL high school classroom, on the other hand, found that students were receptive and active participants in a critically dialogic classroom "when prompted by an appropriate curriculum context and a safe climate for discussion and writing that invites thinking" (p. 131; cf. 2005b). And while she identified institutional restraints and lower English proficiencies as the main challenges in a critical dialogic classroom, she emphasized that "the challenges, however, are not inherent in the

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[83] Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) similarly argue against the stereotyping of cultural learning styles as static and categorical traits and argue, rather, that learning practices should instead be critically analyzed as "in constant tension with the emergent goals and practices participants construct, which stretch and change over time and with other constraints" (p. 21).

culture" (Ibid.). Furthermore, Shin's research simultaneously reveals other challenges to this pedagogy--challenges which resonated with the concerns of a number of instructors at Pacific University's ESL program.

6.2.2 Un-critical assumptions about language

Shin's (Shin & Crookes, 2005a) research identified that the lack of English proficiency of her students played a role in their difficulties engaging in critical classroom practice. Over the course of my research at Pacific University's EAP program, instructors expressed to me similar concerns about their students and questioned whether a critical approach to language learning was, in fact, effective or even desirable for students with lower-level English language abilities.[84] A number of them recounted how difficult it was, at times, to begin or maintain a critical dialogic classroom when many of the students were perceived to be lacking, at times, the core vocabulary needed for discussion. Some instructors therefore felt that the pedagogy should be applied only in classes with advanced-level students. We can relate this perception of the link between language ability and criticality back to the incident I recounted in the previous chapter, where a photocopied page out of a "traditional" ESL textbook was discovered left in the photocopying machine by the administrators. Although teachers were told not to use them, I think the incident may have been, in part, a reflection of how some teachers believed that at least some of the students still needed these kinds of materials. It simultaneously speaks, though, to the meshing of pragmatism and critical language teaching that Benesch (2001) speaks of. And although I do not necessarily think ESL textbooks are the best ways of handling pragmatic skills

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[84] As I did not have the opportunity to observe any of the lowest-level classes (the lowest-level class involved in my study would have been considered of low-intermediate language skill), I cannot necessarily comment directly on how a critical pedagogical approach might or might not have worked for students at those language levels. At the same time, however, some instructors were making similar comments about students even in the mid-levels (i.e., the level of classes that I, at times, observed), so my arguments here will speak more generally to the critique that critical practice in ESL classrooms cannot or do not succeed for any students other than the most advanced English learners.

like grammar and pronunciation, like Benesch, I still believe there is a place for grammar lessons within a critical classroom.

At Pacific University's ESL program, while Ruth recognized that indeed, lower-level language abilities do pose more challenges for critical classroom practices, the lack of language skills should not lead us to assume that a critical approach is any less possible for particular groups of students:

> I think last semester, I was kind of under the impression or thinking, myself, that it was a kind of program that only really worked well with, you know, people who'd already attained a high level of English and then, well, maybe not. I think I've changed my mind a *little* about that because I've had such good results with the A-level [lowest-level] curriculum class that I taught last term *and* this term . . . I think that it's not necessarily a question of where they're at when they come here. I do believe that this pedagogy *does* work with the lower levels as long as we have a *little* bit of flexibility. (Ruth, Instructor, Interview 03/25/04)

Ariel (Administrator, Interview 03/11/03) expressed similar optimism about the use of critical dialogic teaching with the program's lowest-level students and saw the possibilities for the development of English language skills simultaneously with critical analysis skills. But as to how both the pragmatic and the critical could be melded together in practice was just as much an issue for instructors like Julie.

I recall Julie speaking with me one day about her feelings that the program was unsuitable for low-level students as they lacked the language basics upon which to build. Without the language, she argued, any critical analysis in English would be difficult for students. She used the analogy of learning how to snowboard to illustrate her point and spoke about how she learned snowboarding in steps before she was finally able to make it down the mountain without falling over. She believed that language learning required a gradual

acquisition of these steps upon which the next skill could be developed and so on. And in the case of language learning, eventually, one could then get to a point of competency which would only then allow the learner to be able to engage in critical discourse. My argument is with the notion that one could not be critical or at least articulate criticality without a certain amount of language skill. While this may pose difficulties, no doubt with literacy learners, even those students in Shin's study (Shin & Crookes, 2005a) were still able to engage, to a certain extent, in critical classroom practices. And I would argue that students at Pacific University's EAP program were of higher language levels than those in Shin's research.

For me, the snowboarding analogy separates language and thought as independent of one another and does not necessarily see that they are and can be intricately related or that students might be fully capable of being able to think about language and think critically at the same time. Even in the case of learning to snowboard, there is a complex interplay of thinking about many aspects simultaneously which all then coordinate and translate into the final ability to snowboard. That is, I do not believe we can think of each aspect of snowboarding (i.e., balance, stability, strength, direction, etc.) as independent of the final goal of snowboarding, per se. I think we need to consider the possibility that language skills and critical skills can be developed simultaneously rather than assuming ones dependence on the other.

Morgan's (1997, 1998, 2004) work in community-based language programs in Toronto, Canada, for example, illustrates convincingly not only that language pragmatics and critical analysis can, in fact, be intertwined in practice, but that this can be eminently possible with learners who may not be considered advanced learners of English. For Morgan, grammar and pronunciation lessons were as much about pragmatic skills as they were about reflecting "the complex social and political contexts influencing my students" (2004, p. 162). Negotiating English grammar and pronunciation in his classrooms was interrelated to the negotiation of students' identities and investments in English language learning. In this way, language was

recognized not only as social, but as political practice, and critical engagement was proven

possible in classrooms with diverse language levels. In fact, for some instructors at Pacific

University's ESL program, enabling students to engage in critical discourse, at times, was the

least of the problems facing students, and ironically, it was arguably the more essential language

skills that appeared to elude them.

Cummins' (1980) distinction between the acquisition of "BICS" (basic interpersonal

communicative skills) and "CALP" (cognitive/academic language proficiency) has generally

assumed that learners acquire the former before the latter due to its lesser cognitive demand.

Rose, however, discovered that language acquisition was not so straightforward and recounted

to me an event she and her students had recently experienced. The story highlighted for her how

dynamic language learning was and how English language skills like BICS and CALP could not

be compartmentalized so simply in the ways Julie previously described (cf. Nero, 2005).

Because of this, Rose was lead to believe that there needed to be greater focus on addressing

both language skills and critical skills in a more holistic way. Highlighting a humorous case of

this gap between BICS and CALP, Rose told me the story of how she attempted to take her

upper-intermediate-level students out for breakfast one morning but soon discovered the type of

English language skills that were actually most challenging to her students.

Rose had decided to take her class to a local restaurant for breakfast, but when it came

time to order their breakfast, she discovered that they had difficulty ordering and understanding

the breakfast options posed to them by their server (e.g., whether they wanted brown or white

toast, how they wanted their eggs prepared, etc.). She observed that rather than asking the server

what she meant by these options, the students' coping strategy was to continue to respond to her

in the affirmative whether or not they understood what they were actually ordering. On top of

this, after the orders were taken, while waiting for their meals to arrive, Rose began making

jokes about the Atkins Diet in reference to the "heavy, meaty breakfasts" they were expecting.[85]

To Rose's further surprise, the only response she received were blank stares from all 11 of her

students at the table:

> I thought, "How could you have been in North America for even 3 months and not have
>
> heard of the Atkins Diet?" Like, never mind that it's in the newspaper and in the news
>
> media all the time, but it's on TV, like, Subway's Atkins wrap. It's just like, Atkins is
>
> everywhere. And I mean for me, it was just, like, symbolic of what, like, what the heck
>
> are we teaching them if this kind of stuff hasn't come to their attention? Obviously,
>
> we're failing as a program because to me, that's the kind of stuff, that's like, by the end
>
> of three months, that's the kind of thing that the students should have become aware of .
>
> . . . That was a functional skills moment. I'm not usually a part of that with the students.
>
> I don't usually witness that, you know, having difficulty ordering breakfast. So here we
>
> have students and they have debates about gay marriage, for example, but they can't
>
> order breakfast. (Rose, Instructor, Interview 03/22/04)

For Rose, the program's focus on critical dialogic practices around social issues seemed

absurd in light of this discovery, for the same students who had been discussing gay marriage

or, perhaps, First Nations land claims only a day earlier, were now at a loss for words about

eggs and toast. In contrast to Julie's concern about the possibilities of critical engagement,

Rose's story speaks to the need to analyze how, like in Morgan's (1997, 1998, 2004)

classrooms, instructors at Pacific University's ESL program might be able to balance the

pragmatic with the critical. The need for this critical analysis was made all the more imperative

in an interview I conducted with one of the students from Rose's class in the story above.

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[85] The "Atkins Diet" refers to a nutritional approach developed by Dr. Robert Atkins in the early 1970s which experienced a resurgence in popularity in the early 2000s due to the revision and re-release of the original handbook. The popular but controversial approach emphasizes a diet concentrating on high-fat, high-protein, and low-carbohydrate consumption.

By coincidence, three days prior to the above interview with Rose, I had an interview with Maggie, and during that interview, she spoke to similar concerns about the program pedagogy's exclusive focus on social issues. She had become disconcerted with what she felt was a gap in the skills that she was learning in the program and those she felt she needed in her daily life. Like the breakfast story above, she told me that a similar thing had happened to her and a classmate of hers at Subway[86], but because of their inability to understand the questions they were being asked, they ended up leaving the restaurant empty-handed:

> We think it's a shame that we have been here for three months but we still don't know
> how to order . . . . 'Cause maybe our teacher think our classes have a higher level, so we
> always, always focus on some social issues. We talk about it many, many times, but
> actually we don't learn many things from the daily life. Some simple things of the life
> here. (Maggie, Student, Interview 03/19/04)

In my view, both of these incidents raise concerns about a program's pedagogy which aims to focus on helping students "to perform confidently in college and university courses . . . to succeed in their chosen careers . . . [and] to live comfortably in this community" (Pacific University ESL program: Overview, p. 3).

Katrina (Instructor, Interview 12/05/03) raised similar questions about why class discussions always had to be "about the big topics" without similar consideration of "the small stuff" that she perceived students were equally interested in talking about. These concerns were reminiscent of Pennycook's (2004) reflections on critical praxis when he found himself asking "Am I being critical (enough)?" (p. 341). His reflections on being a critical language teacher was a poignant reminder of how often critical educators get lost in the bigger issues, thereby missing the smaller opportunities to engage. Rather, Pennycook reminds us that in some of the best critical language classrooms and practices:

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[86] "Subway" is a multinational restaurant chain with a menu focussing on a variety of submarine sandwiches.

society hasn't been transformed. Ideological obfuscation hasn't been removed. But in many ways, this is what critical language education is all about. It's the quiet seeking out of potential moments, the results of which we don't always know. It's about the everyday. (Ibid., p. 342)

We need to broaden the notion of what it means to be "critical" or what is considered worthy of being critical about, and just as importantly, we need to further examine how we might make these discussions more relevant to our students' lives. Does being critical have to always be about big issues like politics or social issues such as gay marriage? Can it be about the Atkins diet and the discourses of power around issues of dieting and body image or nutrition and class issues (similar to Benesch's [1998, 2001] discussions of anorexia in her EAP classroom)? When asking these questions, however, and from many of the interviews and classroom observations I conducted over the year, I found myself continually asking, "What do teachers mean when teachers talk about 'being critical'?" and "What are they 'being critical' about?"

6.3 What *is* "Critical," Anyway?

Although Katrina (Instructor, Interview 07/25/03) specified "contextual clues" and "active listening" as two of the unclear catch-phrases circulating within Pacific University's ESL program's discourses, there was another term that needed to be analyzed in terms of what it meant to both instructors and students in the program. The definition of the word "critical" remains contentious due to the various ways in which it has been defined and redefined in usage. This term circulated quite freely within the program, but I argue, as Katrina does, the challenges of its application remained due to the lack of a clear (and more importantly, coherent) definition of what it meant in the context of classroom practices. For although "critical thinking," "being critical," "thinking critically," and "critical skills" were phrases commonly used, the classroom observations and interviews I conducted revealed that "critical" classroom practices were sometimes anything but.

6.3.1 Being critical about "critical"

It was interesting to me over the course of the year to observe how the discourse of staff meetings was very much pervaded by this notion of "critical thinking" or "being critical." In turn, these discourses were reflected in more than half of my interviews with instructors in the program, especially when asked about their interpretations of the program's goals and the goals they envisioned for their own classroom practices. But because "the word *critical* has no single meaning" (Siegel & Fernandez, 2002, p. 68; cf. McPherron & Schneider, 2005; Pennycook, 2001, 2004), defining what we mean by "critical" research, "critical" thinking, or "critical" pedagogy can be complex and problematic. Likewise, due to the varying definitions and descriptions of critical praxis in the literature, critical approaches to language education are less than straightforward.

At Pacific University's ESL program, notions of "critical" were anything but uniform. For some instructors, "being critical" was about critical thinking--"one of rational question procedures, as a way of trying to create objective distance, of identifying bias or lack of logic." For others, it was about teaching practices concerned with "making things socially relevant" (Pennycook, 2004, p. 329). In the case of the former conceptualization, this was represented by the way in which students were repeatedly engaged in cultural analyses which were based on a compare and contrast model of questioning. Not only were responses to this kind of questioning essentializing, but they served to further reproduce and legitimate these discourses by remaining unproblematized. During my interview with Rebecca, the critical engagement she experienced repeatedly in the classroom consisted of the same "critical" questions:

It's always the same thing, you know. You watch the news, then you answer the same question. . . . and it's *always* the same questions . . . . "What can you say about the tape?" and the other question is, uh, "What can you say about the people?", "What are

the issues?", "'You have comment? Question?" That's it. (Rebecca, Student, Interview

12/03/03)

Benesch (1993a, 1999b) makes the distinction between "critical" skills and "cognitive" skills,

and both she and Pennycook (2001, 2004) argue that this conceptualization of critical,

understood as "critical thinking," reduces critical to a supposedly rational form of analysis that

is both literal and formulaic. Pennycook (1999) strongly emphasizes this distinction as:

> critical thinking is generally an apolitical approach to developing a sort of questioning
>
> attitude in students; critical approaches to TESOL have to do with a political
>
> understanding of the location of pedagogy and the development of a way of teaching
>
> aimed at transformation. (p. 341)

At its base, then, Critical EAP and critical language education entails the recognition and

challenge of the interconnections of relations of power in language learning. Unlike the way it

was primarily used at Pacific University's EAP program, it is not merely about "asking

questions," but rather, is about asking specific kinds of questions in order to both challenge

existing singular conceptions of knowledge and to bring about new and multiple knowledges. In

the collaborative creation of knowledge amongst students and teachers, the new discourse

therefore requires new teaching practices; in this vein, classroom discourses and relations need

to shift from monologic to dialogic (Benesch, 1999b; Gieve, 1998). In critical language practice,

teachers are not central to the creation of the discourse, and rather, their role is to constantly

mediate it in order to sustain critical dialogue. For this reason, Pennycook similarly has

concerns about *un*sustained "critical thinking" in classrooms which essentialize and

oversimplify the critical process.

For example, many of the "critical" analyses of cultural issues that I observed in the

program had a tendency to dichotomize issues into essentialist parts. Questions such as "Should

marijuana be decriminalized? Yes or No?" or the use of any other dichotomies for the "critical"

analysis of an issue serves only to reinforce the notion that there is a "right" and a "wrong" answer thus removing the complexity and criticality of analysis. Although in another sense, the teacher has moved forward to make the discourse, at times, more socially relevant to their students, discourses formulated through binaries rather than dialogically can lead:

> not only to rather shallow discussions and essays on the particular topics, but also . . . to an uncritical liberalism whereby, in the worst cases, topics are framed between simple and, I would argue pernicious, dichotomies (Should prostitution be legalised? Is homosexuality normal? Is capital punishment justified? And so on). Framed as many issues-based courses are between a series of liberal dichotomies, they tend once again to reproduce an uncritical approach to knowledge. (Pennycook, 1997, p. 261; cf. 1994a, 2001)

Instead, Rose (Instructor, Interview 07/09/03) expressed how this sort of critical questioning allowed students to be *un*-critical about issues as teachers ended up "fixing" thing, consequently giving students the opportunity to assimilate these dichotomies unconsciously without ever having to go through the questioning process themselves (Fox, 2002). These "critical" approaches (i.e., the cognitive approach and monologic approach) further neglected larger issues of power and hegemony.

In contrast, Lucy (Instructor, Interview 12/03/03) and Monique, for example, brought the element of critical analysis to their practices by openly challenging their students to analyze both their own, and that of their instructors', assumptions about an issue. They both spoke of making their students "uncomfortable" in this process as they believed that this was required for a deeper analysis and understanding of the information. According to Monique, she hoped for students to:

> be able to think critically about the kind of cultural information they're getting specifically from North America or Western culture and to be able to understand and

dissect it . . . . It's critical skills to be able to understand what they are being bombarded

with basically in the world. It's being able to ask the right questions. Being able to be

given any situation and to be able to look at what's going on, how is this working, what

am I being given, and how am I being expected to react. It's hard to talk about it in a

really abstract way. Say you're watching a television commercial. I want the students to

be able to say, "Okay, this is what this commercial is trying to do to me" . . . . How is

this working? Why is this working? What does that say about our culture? What is it

saying about our values and how is our value system created? (Monique, Instructor,

Interview 09/03/03)

From critical thinking and critical pedagogy to monologic and dialogic, the inconsistency with

how the program pedagogy was practiced in the classrooms at Pacific University finds me

questioning whether a clearer and more cohesive (and social-justice based) conceptualization of

"critical" may make a focus on critical practice more transparent and further, make instructors

more accountable for their critical (and, in turn, their *un*critical) practices.

I am not claiming, however, that critical practice only results from an overt labelling of

one's practices as "critical," as I recognize that educators' practices may often be critical

without their conscious awareness of the fact that they are so (Canagarajah, 2005b; Shin &

Crookes, 2005a; Morgan, 1998; Wink, 1999) or without educators feeling the need to label them

so even when they *are* aware of their criticality. Rather, I put forward the possibility that

concepts and issues may be more difficult to engage with when they remain unnamed or at least

not clearly defined (Davidson, 1998), especially in the case of "critical" practice where a lack of

a clear definition of the word "critical," at its base, has been of concern for many critical

theorists. For when there is lack of clarity in what it means to be a critical language teacher, our

practices may inadvertently translate into pedagogies quite the opposite of what we intended.

6.3.2 Positionalities and practices

When discussing the program's pedagogy with me, Jimmy, a Pacific University instructor for one month, expressed a hope that within the program, issues of culture and cultural analyses were represented "even-handedly . . . In other words, without placing judgment or 'superiority'" (Jimmy, Instructor, Questionnaire). I asked him to speak more about this during our interview and uncovered his previously unvoiced concern that the program's critical cultural analysis may have unconsciously been reproducing hegemonic discourses within the classrooms. Although I never revealed to him that my observations did reveal how the pedagogy was being differently manifested within different instructors' classrooms, this possibility seemed a very important concern for him and his own practices:

I would *hate* to have the students think that we're trying to force Canadian values down their throats and you know, telling them that, you know, "Your views might be right in China, but they're not here" kind of thing. I kind of think for the most part. I hope it's done that way. Or that it's made very clear that, you know, the teachers *want* to present it that way even though they might have inherent biases. (Jimmy, Instructor, Interview 03/24/04)

Throughout my year of research in the program, I observed a number of instructors expressing worry about their positionality in the program. But my classroom observations uncovered that awareness at the conscious level does not always translate to the subconscious ways in which we teach (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Kumashiro, 2000, 2002, 2004; Mayher, 1992; Toohey, 2000).

During our interview, Andrée made the observation that:

within this program, . . . I've noticed that . . . most of the instructors, if not all, are left-of-centre, *definitely* left-of-centre, which definitely influences what goes on in the classroom. Perhaps hopefully a less biased approach, although some remarks from

students have shown that perhaps we're a little too biased on the left side, on the left-

wing . . . . we're not supposed to give our opinions in the classroom, but I think that, I

don't know about other instructors, but for me that's almost impossible. (Andrée,

Instructor, Interview 09/12/03)

She stated that she believed instructors were "not supposed to give [their] opinions in the

classroom," and she sounded disappointed when she felt the need to admit to me that in her own

praxis, "that's almost impossible." But as Norton Peirce (1990) cogently argues:

I was trained to believe that my role as a teacher is to help students express the ideas that

they bring to the language classroom and not to determine the way my students should

think. In practice, however, the contention that teaching can be "neutral" is problematic .

. . The issue for me is not whether our role is a political one or not, but how we theorize

this political role. (p. 109; cf. Hawkins & Norton, in press; Kelly and Brandes, 2001)

Rather, teachers need to seek to reveal the ways in which we teach consciously and

unconsciously (Kumashiro, 2002), knowing that our classroom practices are guided by our

positionalities. For my observations suggested that our students are more than aware that their

teachers speak from these lenses, and I observed some students' classroom strategies to include

a deliberate attempt to mine (e.g., by asking them straight out for their opinion and why, or

voicing their own opinions with great uncertainty and with rising intonation as if waiting for

their instructor to approve or disapprove accordingly) their instructors for their opinions in order

to respond "appropriately."

I recounted in Chapter 5 how I observed students such as Judy and Rebecca being

pushed into culturally essentialized discourses in their respective classrooms, and I spoke to

Harklau's (1999, 2000) concern that these discourses become further perpetuated when students

feel they have to subscribe to them out of classroom strategy (i.e., to gain favour or marks, etc.).

Because of this, the concern that arises from Jimmy's and Andrée's quotes above is an

imperative one for those desiring to bring critical pedagogical praxis to their classrooms. I also

discussed my concerns over some instructors' discourse practices which, at times, promoted

particular "truths" (many of them left-of-centre, as Andrée points out). But this emphasis on

dissent and on a critique of the dominant discourse may have similarly prevented the safety of

disagreement or honesty of critique. As Fox (2002) cautions, "privileging resistance . . . is

antithetical to our goal of transforming relations of power and authority" (p. 200) even if the

world views being privileged are "alternative" or liberatory ones. In this regard, I did observe

the favouring of student responses that "adopted" the political left-leanings of instructors; this

implied to me that thinking "critically" at Pacific University's ESL program meant learning how

to think left-wing, as Andrée feared in a previous quotation. When looking back on an incident

in his own practice where one of his students openly expressed a particular political view during

a presentation which differed from the one he previously stated in classroom discussions,

Morgan (1998) reminds us, "this was a moment to reflect on how my teaching practices might

have silenced his point of view" (p. 34; cf. Kumashiro, 2002, p. 84).

Although Canagarajah (2005a) implores teachers and socially-conscious intellectuals to

"continue to critically examine their own biases in relation to the experiences of students" (p.

101), Katrina expressed this as one of the main challenges facing the program as a whole:

[Instructors] do not fully know and understand one another or accept each other's

perspectives and points of view and also issues of bias and faith and belief systems. And

it's kind of this unstated hidden thing that roams around the staff room but nobody really

says it. And you have people who are supporting and advocating different rights and

others who are not on the same page with that, but we, as a group, have never delved

into our own biases and attitudes towards ourselves . . . we haven't been able to do that

amongst ourselves so how can we even begin to do that with the students? (Katrina,

Instructor, Interview 12/05/03)

In this excerpt, Katrina made the powerful point about the relationship between the ability to reflect on our own positionalities with the process of facilitating the same reflection in students. When instructors were unreflective of their own positionalities and power within their classrooms to create or maintain particular discourses, the inequities of classroom practice were revealed as they were throughout this thesis. More specifically, however, I relate Katrina's point back to Lisa's narrative I recounted in Chapter 4 as I believe it to be extremely pertinent to the discussion at hand.

In her narrative, Lisa expressed to me how she experienced incidents of racialization in the program and sought my support in regards to these issues due to my own positionality as a visible minority in the field of TESOL. I bring it up again here as Katrina's point about instructors' differing positionalities in the program is crucial to understanding the process of racialization that Lisa experienced there. That is, the way in which Lisa was positioned as the Other in the program was not much different in principle to how the students in the program were also discursively positioned. For in both cases, essentialized and reified distinctions between Self and Other were maintained through the creation and maintenance of particular discourses at Pacific University's ESL program. The way in which we mediate our classroom discourses makes certain identities available and, concomitantly, unavailable to both visible minority teachers and students as essentialist conceptualizations of culture and cultural difference related here are "often co-opted by hegemonic discourses of colonialism and imperialism" (Kubota, 2004b, p. 34; cf. Said's [1978] influential work on Orientalism).

Over the course of the year at the program, student interviews and classroom observations revealed how some program discourses became racialized in the eyes of the students and served to create and reproduce locally- and globally-subjugated (or Othered) student identities both within and outside the classroom. As Holliday, Hyde, and Kullman (2004) argue, "Otherization . . . does not allow for the agency of other people to be a factor in

their identity construction. It does not permit the *negotiation* of identity between people, but imposes crude, often reductive identities on others" (p. 159). And these issues are integral to my analysis at hand because of their pedagogical implications and their implications on the need for us to reconceptualize our own teacher identities in the ESL classroom. For I had observed few students at Pacific University left untouched and/or unaffected by these racialized discourses, and it was a reminder to me that "language learners are not only learning a linguistic system; they are learning a diverse set of sociocultural practices, often best understood in the context of wider relations of power" (Norton & Toohey, 2002, p. 115).

6.3.3 Reproducing the Other

I set the background for the analysis to follow with an interview excerpt from one of the instructors in the program. When I asked Janet, an instructor in the program for three months, "What do you see are the program goals of Pacific University's ESL program?", she replied:

> I really see it as a thing of getting students to think critically. Well, thinking critically in a western way . . . I wouldn't say per se that Chinese people don't think critically. I think it's just taking a western stance on things and, in its own way, kind of involving students in western culture and letting them understand, yeah basically understand western concepts and ideas about things . . . . how things are seen and perceived in their own culture compared to how things would be perceived in Canadian culture or western culture and just getting them to compare and contrast. I think that's important for the intercultural experience just to kind of step away from the emotions and feelings sometimes, just to analyze . . . away from the values, per se, and just looking at them for their face value. (Janet, Instructor, Interview 03/22/04)

Although Janet recognizes in the first two lines of the excerpt that knowledge is situated in particular contexts, the excerpt remains based on a Self/Other dichotomy. For example, although Janet does acknowledge that Chinese people do, indeed, "think critically," and clarifying, rather,

that the program's goal was to get students to take "a western stance on things," Janet racializes and dichotomizes the concept of criticality by suggesting not only that there are distinctly separate Chinese and western "ways" of thinking critically, but that the two stances are in contrast to one another.

Further, instead of students engaging in a critical analysis in the process of cultural meaning-making, Janet's use of the words "taking," "involving," and "letting" denotes a student's passivity rather than agency in the process of understanding. But "in assuming that critical thinking is a point of arrival" (in the case of Janet's excerpt, "taking a western stance"), Fox (2002) warns that "we manifest and reproduce whitely ways of being in the world" (p. 203) as knowledge is assimilated rather than collaboratively and critically analyzed. This is also reproduced if we attempt to separate "emotions and feelings" and "values" from culture as culture has little meaning in and of itself; rather, meaning is given to culture through discourses which are guided by these emotions, feelings, and values. This understanding of culture was at the very core of Pacific University's ESL program. From a critical pedagogical perspective, assuming one could analyze culture at its face value ignores how unequal relations of power pervade it and prevents a more critical analysis of how cultures are positioned hierarchically in relation to others.

As I have addressed in a number of places in my analysis, the disjunction between how instructors were teaching and how they believed they were teaching at times lead to practices that instructors may not have intended. Kumashiro (2000) reminds us, "teaching is not a representational act, an unproblematic transmission of knowledge about the world to the student, but is a performative act, constituting reality as it names it, while paradoxically acknowledging that the teacher cannot control how the student reads what the teacher is trying to en-act" (p. 46; cf. 2002, 2004). That is, although instructors may believe their practices to be devoid of values and positionalities, we need to be critical of whether such an apolitical

approach is even possible when critical theorists have argued how all education is steeped in power and positionality. It further becomes all the more vital to critically reflect on our practices and the ways in which identities are negotiated through the discourse practices we mediate in our classrooms.

In the case of Pacific University's ESL program, their innovative pedagogical approach focused primarily on the critical analyses of cultural issues affecting students on both local and global levels. Instructors' classroom practices would therefore commonly include a facilitation of collaborative classroom deconstructions of current social and political issues. Throughout my research, I occasionally had opportunities to observe how a number of instructors in the program engaged students in these discussions. But it was during a focus group interview with a group of student participants that particular concerns were raised by a student from Mainland China in regards to classroom discourse practices. In place of discourses of critical engagement within the classroom, I was troubled to hear their recounting of these "critical" cultural analyses:

> Maybe we don't understand the culture in North America. So sometimes we make some conflict with the instructors. They use the North American way to treat the things happen in China. But they're very different from our opinion . . . they show the picture about the student thing in 1989 . . . and tell [students], "Everything the Chinese government says is not true." (Sara, Student, Focus Group 02/05/04)

From Sara's perspective, critical engagement appeared to be based on the voicing of one particular perspective (i.e., the North American "way") as opposed to on the seeking of alternate understandings or a sense of collaborative engagement with the issue. Instead of a pedagogical focus on inquiry as an intellectual process, the classroom instead seemed to be one of a process of "enlightenment" towards a particular ideology or "truth." From what they were telling me, students' recounting of particular classroom interactions seemed to indicated that for some instructors in the program, "critical thinking" appeared to be about "empowering" students by

raising their awareness as to how they have been deceived by their government. As Fox (2002) cautions:

> My point is not that we should rid our classrooms of truths or ideologies. In fact, we
> cannot do so, because our agenda is to teach *something*. However, we *can* ask for what
> purpose we posit critical thinking in our classrooms. If we do it in the service of *our*
> truth, we must recognize that there is nothing inherently liberatory about any ideological
> stance, no matter what the supposed emancipatory goals. (p. 208; cf. Ellsworth, 1992;
> Gore, 1992, 1993)

Being "critical," Benesch (1999b) cogently argues, is not simply about a process of asking questions; rather, it is in the *types* of questions that we ask and, more importantly, for what reasons we ask them which makes our teaching critical. It is imperative, therefore, that language teachers be aware of the way in which our discourses mediate and ultimately determine the direction any given line of questioning can take, as in effect, these discourses establish the (im)possibility for any given voice to exist in the classroom. As highlighted through another incident, for example, although program instructors desired to encourage their students to actively challenge the values and assumptions underlying various issues, some classroom practices, as described by another student from Mainland China, in contrast, appeared structured in a way which discouraged (read: prevented) this very possibility:

> Last semester, a lot of semesters, some teacher give us, like, cartoons and he said,
> "China has no human right." And the last semester, some instructors read a part about
> the Tiananmen Square and say some students can't tell the truth because the government
> will be kill them. And when we talk with the instructor about these things, they show,
> they find *another* articles or essays written by the western people to give us. I think it's a
> kind of prejudice. (Toring, Student, Focus Group 02/05/04)

I found it ironic how this excerpt demonstrated how teaching practices in the program were, in a sense, self-defeating. That is to say that this anecdote represents an instructor's attempt at promoting student agency by creating opportunities for students to critically engage with particularly controversial social and/or political issues (Willett & Miller, 2004). The irony was that when students, indeed, seized the opportunity to present alternative voices on the subject, instead of encouraging this counterdiscursive strategy, instructors' appeared to strengthen in their resolve to reassert their own perspectives and to further (de)legitimate and silence particular views of the world.

I believe the students' concerns over classroom practices reflected their recognition of how the parameters of a supposedly "critical" discourse were inequitably (unintentionally, I presume) predetermined by their instructors' practices. By effectively marginalizing and silencing students through discursive identity constructions of the Other (Kubota, 1999, 2001, 2004a, 2004b), classrooms become, as Lin (2001) observes, "a key site for the reproduction of social identities and unequal relations of power" (p. 271). Therefore, what kinds of student and teacher identities were being re/produced at Pacific University? And in a third incident recounted by Sara in a later interview, I was further left to question what kinds of identities were available to *any* Asian students at Pacific University within these discourses of Other:

Sara: I remember that the instructor gave us some pictures that shows about China, my home country, and it's about some AIDS village. The people living in that village always got AIDS and they showed some pictures. They never, they wear nothing. And bone by skin.

Ena: Skin and bones. Okay.

Sara: And it's awful. I feel embarrassed when I saw this picture. Maybe it's true but I think it's kind of some bias here and when they show some dirty and miserable things, they show our home country but they never

show such kind of pictures in Canada or any other western country. I

think that it's unfair. And they also show other awful pictures in other

Asian countries such as Filipino or something or whatever. They never

show some such kind of picture in a western country. So I can't express

the feeling but I feel uncomfortable. (Sara, Student, Interview 03/25/04)

In both Toring's and Sara's classes (they were not classmates and were in different class

levels), their instructors' strategies for encouraging critical thinking, not unlike many of the

other instructors in the program, involved the critique of global issues. But what these particular

anecdotes revealed was that when the subjects of social and political critique appeared to be the

Other, the critical, many times, became uncritical. Though the instructor in the above anecdote

may have intended to foster critical engagement through the addressing of a global issue such as

AIDS, Sara perceived the instructor's approach as Eurocentric and discriminatory. Hence, it is

imperative to reflect on how the classroom meaning-making processes we facilitate may result

in essentialized rather than critical discourses and serve to position our students accordingly.

But herein lies the complexities of a pedagogy attempting to analyze the connections between

language and culture. When culture and its analysis is based on a notion of cultural difference,

and when difference is not deconstructed to reveal how these understandings have been shaped

by and through discourses of power, cultural difference can be "used to differentiate, exclude, or

privilege certain groups of people. Therefore, issues of culture can be investigated with the

understanding that they are often implicity and yet profoundly connected to the idea of race"

(Kubota & Lin, 2006, p. 476).

At this time, it is important for me to point out that I, personally, did not witness any of

the above incidents that the students were referring to; however, at the *same* time, I frequently

observed students being marginalized in other ways during my classroom observations (some of

which I already outlined previously), and I believe that combined, the incidents are all part and

parcel of the same issue at hand. Furthermore, whether or not discrimination was the *intent* of the instructor's practice should not be the main focus of analysis as assuming oversensitivity on Sara's or Toring's part is how incidents of racism and marginalization continue to be minimized and made invisible (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.4). Rather, I choose to focus my analysis on the *effect* of these instructors' practices on Sara, Toring, and, perhaps, a number of other students at Pacific University who may have continued to remain silent/silenced and who may not have had the courage to reveal these classroom happenings to myself or to others.

Even though these incidents may seem like minor blips in the overall academic semester, from my interviews not only with Sara and Toring, but with other student participants throughout my study, the effects of incidents of cultural essentialization and othering on the way in which students interacted with the instructors and the ESL program, in general, survived long past the initial incidents. Classroom discourses which marginalized the students in the program both covertly and overtly (as in Toring's previous example of an instructor's response to student challenging) prevented students from voicing dissent or critique. Consequently, it is important to take note of Norton's (2000a) cautioning that when students resist, remain silent, and fail to otherwise participate in our classrooms, or "if learners do not make progress in learning, teachers cannot assume that learners do not wish to learn the second language or that they are unmotivated or inflexible; perhaps the learners are struggling because they cannot speak under conditions of marginalization" (p. 16).

It is important to clarify that both students generally felt a sense of safety and well-being at the program; but this should not minimize the significance of the classroom situations during which they (and likely other students from Mainland China who bore witness to the marginalizing discourses) *did* feel a sense of discomfort and discrimination. For although in other classroom observations I and, undoubtedly, the students believed it to be "safe" for students to critically engage in discussions around social categories of class and gender, what

students seemed to express to me was a feeling that counterdiscursive practices were less safe when classroom discussions centered on issues of constructions of race and racialization (Dlamini, 2002). This, in turn, created within Pacific University ESL classrooms cultures of silence around discourses of the Other which some students felt unable to challenge. Because of this, language educators need to reflect on how teaching practices may silence students' voices and points of view (cf. Morgan, 1998).

I recall one day during my study speaking with one of the instructors in the program about the notion of inclusivity. She expressed how she would consistently assist students in planning weekend leisure activities, and within her classroom practices, she said she also made a point to ensure to the best of her abilities that classroom discussions were inclusive so all students would have a chance to participate equally. But while these forms of inclusiveness are, indeed, important to consider, at their core, they miss the key point of inclusion as I see it. That is, I do not necessarily see inclusion in the classroom as ensuring that students have someplace to go and activities to do during the weekend nor is it about encouraging class participation in a student who is silent or otherwise ensuring that all students have a chance to speak; rather, for me, a critical analysis of inclusion requires us to go beyond the surface of this reticence and passivity to ask the questions: *Why* is this particular student not participating? What is it in the *structures* of the activity, social relations, my practices, or this school that prevent this student from participating (Cheng, 2000; Littlewood, 2000)? If language learning is mediated by the social relationships and practices within our classroom, what identities and investments are made accessible (or likewise, inaccessible) vis-à-vis our power and positionalities in our classrooms (Day, 2002; Norton & Toohey, 2001)? And it is in this vein that I turn to a reanalysis of language teacher identity and argue how a shift to a critical language teacher identity might assist in the re-envisioning of Pacific University's pedagogies and practices.

6.4 Negotiating Critical Language Teacher Identities

In the past decade, language teacher education has emerged as an important field of inquiry in ESL/EFL research (Hawkins & Irujo, 2004). While much has been written in regards to skills, techniques, and strategies in language teaching, there has been recent recognition for the need for language teacher education to take into consideration the growing sociocultural theory and research that has emerged in the field (Hawkins, 2004; Johnson, 2000; Reagan & Osborn, 2002):

> What is lacking in teacher education, both in TESOL and within other disciplines, is a specific and deliberate focus on the role that teachers play in shaping the power relations, access to resources, and positionality of their linguistic minority students. It is not enough that teachers be familiar with second language acquisition theory and be able to name and identify a variety of ESL methods. (Motha, 2006a, p. 94; cf. Norton, 2005)

But although there has been a shift towards critical approaches to language education, little has been written to bridge critical theory with language *teacher* education in this regard (Crookes & Lehner, 1998; Lin, 2004; Pennycook, 2004; Ramanathan, 2002). An upcoming publication by Hawkins and Norton (in press), however, will hopefully mark the beginning of greater theorization of what a model of critical language teacher education might look like.

In their paper, Hawkins and Norton (in press) highlight "critical awareness, critical self-reflection, and critical pedagogical relations" as "central heuristics in critical language teacher education, noting, however, that there are no neat boundaries between these conceptual frames." In this thesis, I have discussed the issues of critical awareness and critical pedagogical relations in reference to the staff and pedagogy at Pacific University's academic literacy program; but it is in recognition of the importance of the final heuristic, critical self-reflection, that I focus the final section of this chapter on how the program staff might begin the negotiation of a critical language praxis in their own language classrooms.

6.4.1 Demystifying critical praxis

While Pacific University's ESL program was understood to entail critical dialogic practices in its analysis of language and culture, some instructors in the program voiced more concern over the seeking of "practical" guidance for a program philosophy and pedagogy with which they were largely unfamiliar or, as Katrina stated, possibly did not understand. This is not surprising, however, as perhaps the most commonly-voiced concern facing teachers' desires to implement a critical framework in language education is the perceived lack of guidance at both a theoretical and practical level as to how it might be conceptualized (Johnston, 1999; Kelly & Brandes, 2001). This concern was echoed by a number of instructors at the program speaking to me over the course of the year. Although there were initiatives for professional development (outlined in Chapter 5), some felt that there remained a lack of a clear-cut explanation as to what the program and its philosophy was about. While it was proposed that the key terms of "critical thinking" or "dialogic thinking" could be seen as a unifying concept for the program, a lack of direction was still perceived at the level of practice.

Because of a lack of teaching models for critical language education, Julie specified what she felt instructors in the program needed in order to bring the pedagogy to students in a cohesive and consistent way:

It has to be *practical* professional development, not theoretical, or not *only* theoretical. Um, for example, when I did [a teaching certification course], um, it was all very hands-on. *Very, very* hands on . . . . a lot of stuff is very commonsense stuff that you're just not aware of it. And I think a lot of the professional development stuff is just, it's just becoming aware and having that "Aha! *Now* I understand!" Um, I think, yeah, I think, professional development is something that needs to continue throughout your *entire, entire* teaching. It can't be like, "Okay, you know, now I got the piece of paper, this means I'm a great teacher." Because I'm not. I'm not. You know, okay, I'm *much* better

now then I was then, but boy, you know, I still need to work on this and this and this.

You know, and it's constant. And refresher. And sometimes, it's like, okay, I learned

that two years ago and then I forgot about it and now I got to remember to do that again.

(Julie, Instructor, Interview 09/10/03)

When Julie talks about good teacher education as "hands-on" or the idea that you can learn

something two years ago, forget about it, then remember to do it again, she speaks to her

perceived need for the addressing of concrete methods rather than of a theoretical underpinning

of those methods. This desire to learn strategies and activities which one can automatically

translate into classrooms was a desire similarly voiced by pre- and in-service language teachers

in Hawkins and Irujo's (2004) work. This long-existing conflict between theory and practice in

education sees theory relegated as "out of touch" and/or disconnected from the realities of the

classroom (Morgan, 1998; Pennycook, 2001). For this reason, in teacher education, practical

knowledge has generally been seen by instructors like Julie as more valuable and useful; but this

perspective fails to recognize the interconnections between theory and practice and how there is

a need for the two to mutually inform one another.

Norton's (2005) newly developed model of critical language teacher education asks

teachers to focus not just on content and not just on methods. According to Norton:

the model suggest that when student teachers enter language education programs, the

two central questions they ask are as follows: "What do I teach?" and "How do I teach

it?" . . . Teaching is not just about "content" and that teaching is not just about

"methods." We have to ask the question, "*Why* do we teach *what* we teach?" and "*Why*

do we teach the *way* we teach?" (p. 16)

In Julie's case, indeed, her inquiry mirrors the first two questions of "what do I teach?" and

"how do I teach it?" But the relegating of theory as redundant or theory as an adjunct (rather

than as integral) to the hands-on "how" practices leaves Julie subject to not fully understanding

the "why's" of those practices. I argue that conversely, a lack of understanding of the "why's"
can, in turn, leave her subject to not fully understanding the "how," as Norton argues (cf.
Guilherme, 2002, p. 5). Instead, Kumaravadivelu (2006) has argued that when teacher education
focuses on methods alone, we create a discourse of transmission where the teacher-in-training is
dependent on the teacher-educator "expert" for teaching knowledge. This approach to teacher
education, however, fails "to develop in [student teachers] classroom discourse analytical skills
necessary for them to analyze and understand their own teaching acts in order to ultimately
derive their own theory of practice" (p. 215). Rather than seeing teacher education as consisting
of methods and strategies, he argues for the notion of a "postmethod condition" in language
teacher education which is based on a deeper understanding of a teaching context's particularity,
practicality, and possibility (Ibid.; cf. 1994).

But even if some semblance of guidance or clarity existed for instructors in the program,
Nicola questioned whether a pedagogy so "openly ideological" (Lather, 1986a) would still
present challenges due to its perception as an ideology more so than a methodology. Further, a
"McDonald's" approach to English language education (Monique, Instructor, Interview
09/03/03), with an emphasis on rote textbooks and methods, as well as "cut and dry, black and
white kind of facts" devoid of context characterized many of the instructors' past experiences.
For both of these reasons, Nicola believed that the pedagogical "confusion" may have stemmed,
instead, from instructors' underlying philosophies of education and educational approaches and
the complete inability for some to imagine alternate ways of seeing language education:

> I think that unless we went to very specific progressive schools growing up . . . We grew
> up in a system not that dissimilar to what the students grew up in. And so when we were
> trying to look for, um, tangible examples of what an instructor does in a program like
> this, they're not always there. There are these really abstract concepts which are great,
> but when I'm looking for "what is a teacher," my sort of practical examples are drawn

from ways in which *I* was taught. Um, and you kind of have to resist that here . . . . If you're *happy* with traditional ways of teaching, this program will *never* make sense to you. You're *always* going to be struggling against what's going on. If you think that the way that you grew up and the way that you were taught was perfect, then this is going to be hard. (Nicola, Instructor, Interview 07/25/03)

Like Crookes (1997) and Crookes and Lehner (1998), Nicola speaks to the dialectal relationship between a teacher's practice and their own educational experiences as learners and to how these two factors intrinsically inform one another in our understandings of pedagogy (cf. Duff & Uchida, 1997, p. 468; Johnson, 1994; Pennycook, 2004). The assumption is that teachers learn by doing because it is about "commonsense," as Julie previously pointed out. But without rigorous study and reflection on teacher education, we are bound to reproduce inequities which we have internalized and later perform because they are within the realm of our commonsense and are therefore rendered "natural" and invisible (Gutierrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995; Kumashiro, 2002, 2004; Mayher, 1992). We not only need to reflect on what we are teaching, but of equal importance as Norton (2005) emphasizes, we need to reflect on how our students are learning from that teaching. Both Ariel and Erika similarly reflected on this fact and did try to address it openly. In fact, the lack of program cohesiveness was addressed by Ariel the first semester I was at the program.

In a 3-page memo distributed to the staff during my first semester of research, Ariel recounted a group of students from the previous semester who organized and collaboratively wrote a "manifesto" (as a few staff referred to it) which expressed their dissatisfaction with the program at the time. Ariel brought the example up at the meeting to open up for collective analysis "what went wrong" in relation to the program pedagogy:

The short version is that there were two [sic] many models of/approaches to education and teaching. Whenever this happens (and it has been more pronounced at times in the

past), there are problems. The solution is to be sure that all instructors are "teaching" from a similar approach, and making sure that students understand <u>why</u> .... The problem for us is that we are not always aware of how our behaviours relate to what we are saying, or think we are saying. We may consciously believe one model or approach and actually use a different model or approach because it's the one we learned growing up.

As Duff & Uchida (1997) similarly discovered in their research, many times, instructors' classroom practices did not necessarily correspond to the practices that they believed they were bringing to their classrooms. So while all of the instructors in the program indeed had some type of understanding of the program, Ariel's point was that if the program was to succeed, they all needed to have the *same* understandings. But when the program and its pedagogy remained mystified as it was, instructors in the program were effectively left to their own teaching devices, and, more importantly, they were left to refer back to their own past teaching and learning histories. What was interesting about the hiring practices at the program, however, was that I understood the instructors to have been hired specifically *because of* their diversity in areas of expertise and experience.

The program administrators didn't necessarily believe that only those with ESL backgrounds were able to be "good" language educators. They therefore hired both new and experienced teachers, ESL and non-ESL teachers, and those with theoretical and those without theoretical backgrounds (i.e., in terms of academic histories). Erika, in particular, believed that the diversity of expertise would contribute to the program's innovative vision of academic literacy; but it was this diversity that also contributed to the lack of coherence in teaching practices. I believe that the resources needed to bring the program's innovative academic literacy approach to fruition were already within the walls of the program over the year of my research; but instead, the opportunity and the communication needed to harness that potential

was never fully realized for as Rose put it, they "simply did not 'speak the same language'." As

Simon (1992) states:

> The articulation at issue here is the question of the possible terms of reference on which
>
> different groups of cultural workers might see their efforts as mutually supporting. Such
>
> terms require both a practical framework within which one can envision how one's work
>
> might complement the practice of others as well as a political vision, informed by a
>
> social imaginary and ethnical sensibility. (p. 39)

What is needed for a pedagogy of possibility, therefore, is not necessarily a unity of experiences

or practices as much as it needs to be about a unity in educational vision, not only of what the

"critical" looks like, but what it *should* look like.

In the case of Pacific University's ESL program, without a clearly conceptualized vision,

and concomitantly, without a clearly conceptualized professional development framework, I

interpreted there to be a perpetuation of the traditional (and arguably, inequitable) pedagogical

structures that instructors "grew up in." When all knowledge is "interested" (Pennycook, 1989),

our teaching practices are inevitably interwoven in the partialities that we bring into the

classroom. As Zeichner (1999) has confirmed, studies:

> [have] clearly shown us how difficult it is to change the tacit beliefs, understandings, and
>
> worldviews that students bring to teacher education programs. In some cases, we have
>
> learned that prospective teachers often transform the messages given in teacher
>
> education programs to fit their preconceptions, sometimes in ways that conflict with the
>
> intentions and hopes of teacher educators. (p. 11, cf. Mayher, 1992; Siegel & Fernandez,
>
> 2002)

Therefore, when one does not have a precedent of a particular pedagogy (in this case, a critical

pedagogy), nor a critical language teacher education framework in place to facilitate the process

of understanding new ways of interacting with students, teachers may not be able to access the identities that are vital to critical pedagogical practice.

Going back to the photocopy incident where the traditional ESL materials were discovered by program administration, I wonder whether we can analyze this in terms of the accessibility of a new language teacher identity. That is, Crookes and Lehner (1998, p. 119) acknowledged that little documentation of the processes involved in implementing a critical teacher education model in an ESL/EFL context exist to date until now (see Hawkins & Norton, in press). And Nicola's previous interview excerpt speaks to the plethora of research which has studied how teachers reproduce the discourses they were socialized into during their own school years or from their teacher education years. Many of the instructors in the program had previous experience teaching ESL, and every one of those same instructors told me that the previous schools in which they last taught were significantly different in terms of pedagogical approach from Pacific University (or at least from what they understood as the pedagogy of Pacific University's ESL program). Some, in fact, referred to their previous schools of employment as "traditional" ESL schools, and some told me that their previous teaching at these schools entailed the page-by-page following of ESL textbooks that were selected by their school administration. Because some teachers were already at a loss as to what a critical dialogic pedagogy might look like in practice, and because others had already come to a belief that the innovative pedagogy was not ideal for lower-level ESL learners, what was *more* surprising to me over the course of my year at the program was the fact that the ESL textbook "fiasco" happened only once in a span of twelve months.

A critical language teacher education model would provide teachers with a clearer opportunity to critically reflect on the notion of language education, generally, and on their practices, specifically. Indeed, it was the initiation of these sorts of critical dialogues that many instructors were hoping for, but did not have an opportunity to experience. In this vein, I argue

that because there was no established critical language teaching "community of practice" (Wenger, 1998), they could not imagine for themselves a critical language teacher identity. Program "old-timers" (in this case, Erika and Ariel) did not necessarily apprentice (or at least strongly apprentice) "newcomers" into becoming part of an imagined community of critical language teachers in a critical program. As Duff and Uchida (1997) discovered in their own study:

> Without past teaching experience . . . preservice teachers lack an established set of practical responses to problems (a repertoire) in learner-centered teaching and may assume the completely opposite role identity instead, the authority figure, based on their own learning experiences . . . . Without well-developed images of themselves as teachers, teachers may be hard-pressed to negotiate their role in class. (p. 474)[87]

It is, perhaps, not that difficult to imagine how easy it may have been to fall back on ready-made materials especially when the industry ensures that there is an abundance of this kind of material in existence. And with time constraints and assuming that many hours and dollars went into the development of these "tried and true" books, the photocopy "offender" at the program probably asked themselves, why *not* use these resources rather than having to reinvent the wheel?

I clarify that I am not saying that what transpired during my year of research at Pacific University's ESL program was solely on the shoulders of both Erika and Ariel. While access to an imagining of a critical language teacher identity was needed, the creation of that identity was not Erika's and Ariel's to create unilaterally. In fact, they did try, but I strongly believe that it was *because* it was not communally imagined (for whatever the reasons) that such an identity remained out of reach for many. The reason I say this is because much of the inequity that I observed, I believe, was rooted in discourses that went beyond second language teacher identities—that is, the discourses that we bring to our teaching can also be or, at least can also

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[87] See also Johnson's (1994) study.

be influenced by, the discourses that we live by and within on a daily basis. And specifically for

the discourses of race and racialization that I observed at Pacific University's ESL program, I

argue that the discourses were reflective of the discourses of race and racism pervading the

larger field of ESL.

I realize that this argument will not go over well for many in the field, but it is not an

argument that has not already been much more eloquently argued by Ryuko Kubota, Angel Lin,

Suhanthie Motha , Shelley Wong, and many, many others. In presenting my research here and in

basing my arguments on the data I collected over the course of one year at Pacific University's

ESL program, my desire is *not* to finger-point at individuals nor to minimize the hard work and

dedication of a group of teachers. My desire, rather, is to illustrate how these discourses are

representative of larger systemic discourses of racism which I believe never disappeared from

ESL's missionary roots and continues to cast a "colonial shadow" (Vandrick, 2002), and how

the open and ardent challenging of them is related to critical language education and teacher

education and the negotiation of a critical language teacher identity. For it is through our

actions, and more so our *in*actions, towards injustice and inequity that we become complicit in

the maintenance of various oppressions.

6.4.2 Reflecting on critical practices

In asking us to reflect on "*why* do we teach *what* we teach?" and "*why* do we teach the

way we teach?", Norton (2005, p. 16) reminds us that it would be naïve to assume that any one

identity would intrinsically be more liberating than another. Rather, in order to never lose sight

of how our roles as educators can either reproduce or challenge inequity in our classrooms, we

need to forever be critical about how our practices, even as "critical" language teachers, can

serve to shape the identities of our students. As mentioned in the previous section, like any other

pedagogy, critical language pedagogy is not above critique, and in fact, Monique expressed her

concerns over how "critical" language education may not necessarily be as critical as we once thought:

> I come into the classroom with my own biases. And if I pretend that I don't have those, and I'm just trying to teach them language without the critical skills or the cultural context, then I might be assuming that they're seeing the world the way that I see it, or that they *should* be seeing the world the way that I see it, or the way that I see the world is the only way to see it, rather than getting in there and having some confusion and having some questioning and for me to be able to look at it from an outsider's point of view, too, as a teacher and not be so entrenched, even though I know that's really hard to do. (Monique, Instructor, Interview 09/03/03)

Monique's trepidation in this above quote speaks to how language teacher education literature has generally remained uncritical and, until recently, "little or no attention has been paid to making teachers critically aware of how they contribute to maintaining the discursive practices and culture of their discipline even as they are being socialized by the culture themselves" (Ramanathan, 2002, pp. 3-4). Rather, in conducting this research, I was centrally interested in investigating ways in which teachers *could* become critically aware of the practices they mediate in their classrooms, and so I proposed Hawkins and Norton's (in press) and Norton's (2005) models of critical language teacher education which are centrally focussed on the notion of critical self-reflexive practices.

Like Monique, Rose expressed similar concern in regards to her positionality within classroom practices as she perceived some instructors' notions of critical praxis to be rooted in promoting particular views of seeing and being in the world:

> I try to be conscious of not bringing in a liberal bias because *clearly* that would be the danger in the assumption that we're, like, "liberal programmy land" and we want to convince everyone who comes here that homosexuality is okay, or something like that. I

mean, that may sound silly but I kind of get the impression that that may be some people's, some instructors', beliefs of what they're supposed to be doing. Now, I'm trying to not be coming at it from that place and to be respectful of, you know, seeing it as an intellectual exercise. That [students] can take themselves out of their shoes, put themselves in someone else's shoes, but they can *go back* to the original place . . . . But, yeah, I really struggle with that, with not feeling colonial about it. (Rose, Instructor, Interview, 12/04/03)

She indicated that she at times believed that it felt "like this conversion project." In both the practices of Monique and Rose, avoiding the pitfalls of viewing critical language education as critiquing particular social or political views, "converting" students to a particular line of thought, or promoting a particular line of thought as superior to another never appeared far from their minds. A number of instructors took seriously the questions Norton (2005) posed, and many expressed confusion, self-doubt and a whole range of mixed emotions stemming from their commitment not only to what they were doing, but to what they were *really* doing. But what was of most significance to highlight was that in many of the interviews, a number of them also had some sense of understanding that teacher education was a process and not an end point.

In Chapter 5, I have analyzed the challenges faced by the staff and students at Pacific University's ESL program over the course of my year of research. Difficulties in negotiating an innovative pedagogy contributed to the creation of discourses that I do not believe were intended by the instructors there. Nevertheless, it was important to speak to these discourses and the adverse effects it had on the language teaching and language learning opportunities at the program. I argued that the discourses were implicated in the reproduction of power inequities at the program—inequities that I argue reverberate beyond the program and the events during which they actually occurred. I have proposed that a pedagogy which forefronts issues of power and inequity in language learning is helpful for those at Pacific University who desired to re-

envision once oppressive discourses into more emancipatory ones. Because of this, I propose that Benesch's (2001) Critical EAP, specifically, and critical applied linguistics (Pennycook, 2001) might play a role in the addressing of the challenges the program was facing.

In acknowledging that the development of and a shift to a critical approach would, in itself, be a demanding but worthwhile endeavour, here, in Chapter 6, I presented the initial challenges staff and students at Pacific University would face in the process of educational change. Not perceiving language as social and political practice, associating criticality to language and culture, and defining the notion of critical were the three challenges needing to be addressed at the outset as all spoke to a basic understanding of what critical language education and Critical EAP represent. However, I believe the fourth challenge, negotiating critical language praxis, encompasses the first three and is not only the last, but the most significant challenge of them all. For the challenges I outline in this thesis were not merely a matter of pedagogy, because to say that would be to assume that the pedagogy could be applied uniformly by anyone who might choose to subscribe to it. But the heart of the matter lay in those who translated it into practice--those who embodied it in the classrooms and brought certain aspects of it (and, concomitantly, not others) to the students. The centrality of the instructors' identities and the implications on how they negotiated the program pedagogy was paramount to the analysis, but in order to continue to move our practices forward, there is a need for a reanalysis of language teacher identity and how they can be reimagined for more equitable future practices.

A number of the staff, as we have seen from their voices thus far, were aware that there were pedagogical issues that needed to be addressed, but they all expressed uncertainty as to how change could or needed to happen. But in this way, I argue that Norton's (2000a) theory of identity as well as recent models of critical language teacher education (Hawkins & Norton, in press; Norton, 2005) may provide some guidance for the program and its instructors. Furthermore, these reconceptualizations of teacher education may assist instructors in the

reimagining of their identities as critical language teachers. And in this reanalysis of classroom practices lies the possible creation of more powerful identities for their students. Thus, in negotiating the "critical," I believe Pacific University's ESL program requires an engagement in collective inquiry which both challenges the conceptualizations of the program classrooms and discourses as they are, and reimagines what they can become (Hawkins & Norton, in press; Norton, 2005; Simon, 1992). And in the end, as ESL practitioners, we need to realize that societal and educational reform must begin from within in order to initiate lasting change. By continually reflecting on our praxis to engender and maintain a classroom of inclusion and respect, we hope to ensure educational equity for our students.

In the final chapter of the thesis, Chapter 7, I summarize my research in its entirety and bring to light areas that I believe are important for the pursuit of future research. And to conclude my thesis, I make a closing comment on my research process and the directions for ESL's future.

Chapter 7: THE (*STILL* BUMPY) ROAD AHEAD

In my thesis, I outlined a case study that I conducted from March 2003 to March 2004 at Pacific University's ESL program. My interest in the program stemmed from my belief that the innovative pedagogy they proposed for EAP instruction--i.e., a critical dialogic approach to the analysis of language and culture—held much promise for the field of academic literacy. "Traditional" EAP has been critiqued for its overly pragmatic and generally apolitical, asocial, and ahistorical view of language, and the program pedagogy at Pacific University aimed to address the gaps these kinds of programs failed to address. During my year of study in the program, however, I observed significant ruptures between the program pedagogy and instructors' practices. I connected some of these challenges to the lack of pedagogical clarity as the program was not only new to its students, but likewise to its instructors. While professional development initiatives were not sufficient to bring the cohesion the program needed, my classroom observations of how this disjunction played out in classroom discourses highlighted the vital necessity for a reanalysis of instructors' practices in the classroom.

Over the course of the year, I watched as the dialogic became monologic and the critical become uncritical. I argued that the essentialist and, at times, discriminatory discourses which circulated in the classrooms served to prevent some students' access to language learning opportunities as their identities were being constructed and subjugated vis-à-vis the more powerful identities their instructors asserted. Students became positioned in ways that silenced them in the classroom and in wider societal discourses. Because I identified teacher identities as central to the understanding of how students' identities were discursively constructed, I believe that a reanalysis of both pedagogies and identities is central to educational change. I proposed that a shift to Critical EAP (Benesch, 2001) accompanied by a new model of critical language teacher education (Hawkins & Norton, in press; Norton, 2005) would be necessary in order to address the inequities I observed being reproduced in the program. Nevertheless, educational

change is not without its own difficulties, and so I presented the challenges the program might face in their pursuit of reimagined teacher identities. Access to alternative teacher identities for those who work within Pacific University's ESL program will hopefully, in turn, translate into access to alternative and more powerful identities for their students.

7.1 Mapping Change: Identity *as* Pedagogy

The hope of improving the educational experience of all students is of central importance to educational change (Fullan, 1993, 1999). Change can be in the form of pedagogical or methodological innovations; however, this change can be burdened by conflict at the personal, institutional, and structural levels (Fullan, 2001; Markee, 1994). Markee theorizes that all innovation stems from pedagogical and methodological tensions and their attempted resolution, but both he and Fullan (2001) concur that in order for educational change to be successful, it, in fact, *requires* this conflict (p. 108) due, to a large degree, on the relationship between teaching beliefs and behaviours (cf. Markee, 1997). As Kumashiro (2000) similarly theorizes, anti-oppressive education and other work addressing issues of power will involve crisis because it serves to illustrate to people that "*the very ways in which we think and do things can be oppressive*" (p. 44), but he continues that "teaching and learning really take place only through entering and working through crisis, since it is this process that *moves* [someone] to a different intellectual/emotional/political space" (Ibid.; cf. Kumashiro, 2002).

Reflecting on how our practices may oppress is both difficult and uncomfortable as "personal beliefs tend to be deeply ingrained" (Duff & Uchida, 1997, p. 476), but Motha (2006b) reminds us not to be deterred from engaging in social justice work for fear of the uncomfortable:

I am not discounting the importance of safe discussion, because it is important if space is to be created for a struggle against systematic oppression and an examination of how racist ideologies serve to reinforce privilege. However, this concern for safety must be

balanced against social justice and must not be allowed to redirect our focus from

subjugated groups, who have historically been left out of the picture, back to dominant

groups. (pp. 168-169)

For when we do not openly and actively challenge the hegemonic discourses and practices in

which language education is entrenched, we run the risk of reproducing the very discourses of

inequity ourselves. At the foundation of a critical language practice and critical language teacher

education (Hawkins, 2004; Ramanathan, 2002; Reagan & Osborn, 2002) is the recognition that

all knowledge is "interested" (Pennycook, 1989) and that our practices are inevitably

interwoven in the partialities we bring to our classrooms (Auerbach, 1995). Further, central to

critical praxis is the process of critical self-reflection and the questioning of our identities and

practices within the larger relations of power in which they are embedded.

Along these lines, I was intrigued when I asked program instructors during their

interviews whether they encountered acts of non-participation or resistance (overt or covert) in

their classrooms, and they all answered in the affirmative. What was particularly interesting

about their responses, however, was how many spoke of student resistance in relation only to

the program pedagogy—that is, few instructors implicated themselves and their practices as a

possible catalyst of student resistance (cf. Harklau, 2000, pp. 60-61). From the incidents

recounted by Sara and Toring in the previous chapter, though, we see how language educators

can not only be mediators of pedagogy, but their identities can be a form of pedagogy in

themselves. As Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson (2005) suggest, classroom

interactions such as these:

confirm the importance of a teacher's identity in the knowledge received or rejected in

classrooms. The interpersonal relations generated between teachers and students are not

simply a *context* for language learning. At times, they are *texts* themselves, indivisible

from the meanings produced through schooling. (p. 34)

Failing to view ourselves and our identities in the classroom as part of the larger

equation in the relationship between language, discourse, and practice denies our agency and

accountability in larger social relations of power at the micro-level of the classroom and macro-

level of the field (Ramanathan, 2002). When language teacher education remains a superficial

questioning of content and methods as opposed to a broader critique of power in our sites of

learning, we enable the English language classroom to remain a site of disempowerment

(Hawkins & Norton, in press; Norton, 2005). Instead, a shift to a model of critical language

teacher education and more critically-reflexive practices can play a central role in the changing

of our sites of practice into sites of possibility for both teachers and students alike. But further

research is similarly needed to see how a model of critical language teacher education might

particularly address some of the specific oppressions my thesis research unravelled.

7.2 Identity and Antiracist Pedagogy in Language Education: Future Research

Norton and Toohey (2001) discussed the intersections of race, class, gender, and age in

their respective research studies and attended to how these discursive constructions were

important to a more complex understanding of how certain students were differently positioned

in their research sites:

> We wonder what data we would have collected had Eva and Julie not been blonde and
>
> white-skinned, slim, able-bodied, well dressed, and attractive to Western eyes. In this
>
> regard, although Eva's coworkers were ultimately happy to work with her, they
>
> remained reluctant to work with other immigrants. And in the classroom, a South Asian
>
> girl was not as successful as Julie in resisting subordination. (p. 318)

Their inquiry into how a learner's multiple identities intersect in the language classroom is

pertinent to my proposal for future research here as my thesis, in particular, addressed the

centrality of race and racializations on how the students in my research were positioned at

Pacific University's ESL program. As Jacob (Student, Focus Group 02/09/04) contended, if

students' language learning experiences were to be successful, "the teacher and us [must be] all the same. The teacher want to teach us *his* local language, English. And then he or she must know a little bit *our* culture. And *then* he or she can make a good job." To address Jacob's concern and the concerns that I brought up throughout the thesis in relation to how students were essentialized and marginalized requires not just a reconceptualization of our practices to critical ones, but ones that specifically turn the lens onto issues of race in TESOL.

The critical incidents presented in my thesis which address issues of race have led me to believe that the next step we need to make as ESL educators is a move towards not just critical language teacher education, but antiracist language teacher education. Antiracist teacher education would forefront issues of race and racialization and how classroom discourses can "position our students as second-order speakers, as linguistic interlopers and consumers" rather than "encouraging them to take up their legitimate roles as innovators in diverse global communities of linguistic practice" (Taylor, 2006, pp. 123-124, cf. Norton, 1997b). It would also address issues of essentialization and marginalization that my research revealed. Future research necessary to investigate is how recent collaborative models of language teacher education may assist in the further reconceptualization of language teacher education to take into account antiracist theory. For as I discussed in Chapter 6, if we are to bring about systemic change, teacher education must be collaborative (Guilherme, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 1994; Morgan, 1998). Collaborative language teacher education models practiced by Hawkins and Irujo (2004) and Toohey and Waterstone (2004) have shown us how a sense of ownership and accountability in the process of creating more socially-conscious pedagogies can empower language teachers to be agents of change.

7.3 Epilogue: Moving Beyond Certainty

You show up prepared but you also show up prepared for the conversation to go any which way that it's going to go . . . Like, you have a framework that you bring into the

classroom and then it's not my class. Like, it's everybody that's participating in it . . . .

yeah, I do feel, like, a bit uncertain as to where things are going sometimes or a little

insecure, but I think in a kind of natural healthy way. Like, that's what keeps the

classroom alive. (Monique, Instructor, Interview 09/03/03)

I began my thesis with Kumashiro's (2000, 2004) notion of "uncertainty" and how I have come

to better terms with appreciating why the embracing of "discourses of tentativeness" (Mayher,

1992) is central to critical practices. As Monique explains, the insecurity and spontaneity that

uncertainty may bring can be unsettling for teachers, but as a result, it enables teachers to

critically negotiate ESL "formulas" and "truths" of ESL practice. It allows, instead, for teachers

to recreate their identities and classroom practices and provide for a wider range of identities for

their students (Norton, 2000a).

　　　　After a tumultuous year of data collection and an arguably more difficult process of

analysis and writing, I have grown immensely as an ESL teacher and researcher and, like

Monique, have critically negotiated my diverse identities within both classrooms and

institutions. In turn, I learned much about being inside, outside, and, most importantly, in-

between. It was in the constant negotiation of these spaces and the partialities of occupying

these spaces that my research (and my multiple identities immersed in it) really took shape.

These negotiations could never have been scripted ahead of time as I could not predict the

events nor interactions that would occur over the course of the year. So if I had gone into the

research process believing that there would be aspects of my research that I could be absolutely

certain about, I doubt the process would have been nearly as productive or as enlightening as it

ended up being on both a personal and professional level. There were many issues and

challenges that were revealed to me throughout this thesis research that have affected, to the

deepest core, my beliefs about ESL theory and practice. And in the end, my thesis research has

taught me this: it is in the uncertainties that we learn the most, and I look forward to continued

negotiation of what it means to be a "critical" ESL teacher and researcher.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire – Staff

A. Biographical Information

1. Name: _____ 2. E-mail Address: _____

3. Gender: M / F   4. Age: _____ 5. Country of birth: _____

6. If not born in Canada, for how long have you been in Canada? _____

7. Mother tongue: _____ 8. Other languages spoken: _____

9. What is the highest educational level you have achieved? _____

B. Teaching Experience

10. How long have you been teaching ESL? _____

11. What ESL teaching qualifications do you have? _____

12. Have you taught high intermediate level or advanced level students before? Please give

brief details. _____

_____

13. Have you taught in other academic ESL programs prior to Pacific University? Please briefly

describe these other programs. _____

_____

14. In your opinion, what are the most important factors influencing students' academic

success? _____

_____

C. Reasons Why Students Study English

15. What do you think are the reasons why students study English? _____

_____

_____

16. In what ways do you think studying English will help students:

    a. personally? _____

_____

    b. academically? _____

_____

    c. professionally? _____

_____

17. In your opinion, how long does someone need to study English in order to be able to

communicate effectively? Explain. _____

_____

_____

_____

D. Pacific University's English for Academic Purposes Program – General Questions

18. How long have you been teaching at the program? _____

19. What do you think are the goals of the program? _____

_____

_____

_____

20. What do you think differentiates Pacific University's ESL/EAP program from other

ESL/EAP programs? _____

_____

_____

_____

21. Why do you think students choose to attend this particular ESL program? _____

_____

_____

_____

22. Pacific University's EAP program focuses on teaching language through culture. In your

opinion, do you think it is important to incorporate culture in language teaching? Explain.

_____

_____

_____

23. Do you think students value this aspect of the curriculum? Explain. _____

_____

_____

_____

24. How is culture represented in the Pacific University EAP program? _____

_____

_____

_____

25. In your opinion, what aspects of culture are important to learn about? Explain. _____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix B: Interview Questions - Staff

PART I:

A. English for Academic Purposes (EAP):

-What do you understand is central to a "good" EAP course?

B. Pacific University's English for Academic Purposes Program:

-What are the program goals?

-What are your goals as a teacher in this program?

-If applicable, how do you consolidate program goals and your goals?

-Does Pacific University's EAP program differ from other academic ESL programs you have

taught in in the past?

-What do you perceive are your students' needs in this program?

-What are the different types of students you have? What are their investments?

-Why do you think EAP students need to learn about culture?

-On the notion of "culture":

-What does the program see as "culture"?

-What do you see as "culture"? Explain.

-What do you think your students see as "culture"?

-How do you address Canadian culture in the classroom?

-How do you interpret the program: theoretically, pedagogically, methodologically?

C. Student Participation:

-In your experience at this program, how much do students participate in class?

-Who tends to participate the most / the least? Why do you think there are different

levels of participation?

-In this program, have you encountered any student resistance or non-participation? If

so, what do you think are the causes of resistance in students?

-Generally, what do students find appealing? What do they resist?

-What, if any, do you see are limitations to the program, theoretically, pedagogically, and

methodologically?

D. English as a Global Language / Globalization and ESL:

Can you comment on your feelings about the current role of English in the world?

-What do you think is our role as ESL teachers?

-Do you see the influence and/or prevalence of the English language as particularly

positive or negative?

-What do you think students think about English? English language education?

PART II:

E. Textbook Development:

-What do you understand to be the goal of the textbook? What are your opinions on this?

-What effect, if any, do you think the textbook will have pedagogically/methodologically? On

the instructors? On the program overall?

-What do you see are possible limitations to this textbook or its use?

Appendix C: Questionnaire - Students

A. Biographical Information

1. Name: _____ 2. E-mail Address: _____

3. Gender: M / F   4. Age: _____ 5. Country of birth: _____

6. Mother tongue: _____ 7. Other languages spoken: _____

8. How long have you been in Canada for? _____

9. Are you a landed immigrant/Canadian citizen or international student? (please circle one)

10. If you are an international student, do you hope to one day become a Canadian citizen?

_____

11. Does anyone in your family speak English? If so, who, and how well? _____

_____

_____

12. Occupation / Desired occupation: _____

13. What is the highest educational level you have achieved? _____

14. Are you currently registered in a college or university? _____

a. If 'yes', where are you studying and what program of study are you pursuing?

_____

b. If 'no', where would you like to study and what program of study are you considering

pursuing? _____

_____

B. English Language Learning Experiences

15. How long have you been studying English? _____

16. Do you speak English outside of school? Yes / No (please circle one – if 'no', skip to question 17)

a. How much? Regularly / Sometimes / Hardly ever (please circle one)

b. Outside of the English classroom, in what situations do you speak English?

_____

_____

_____

_____

17. In what ways do you think studying English will help you:

    a. personally? _____

_____

_____

_____

    b. academically? _____

_____

_____

_____

    c. professionally? _____

_____

_____

_____

C. Pacific University's English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Program

18. Why did you choose to attend this EAP program? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

19. This program emphasizes the importance of learning about culture when learning a

language.

a. In your opinion, do you think this goal is important? Explain. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

b. In your opinion, what aspect(s) of culture would you most like to learn about? Explain why.

_____

_____

_____

_____

c. In your opinion, what aspect(s) of culture do you think are important to learn about? Explain

why. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D: Interview Questions – Student Focus Groups

A. English for Academic Purposes (EAP):

-What are the most important factors influencing students' academic success?

-What do you understand is important to a "good" EAP course?

-What are your goals? What are your investments in learning English?

B. Pacific University's English for Academic Purposes Program:

-What do you think are the goals of Pacific University's EAP program?

    -How is this English program the same as/different from other ESL programs you have

    attended?

-For those of you who have seen Pacific University's EAP program's website and/or brochure,

is the program what you expected? Why or why not?

-For those of you who have read/skimmed the program's "student manual," did it help you to

better understand the program philosophy? Did you find it helpful? Why/why not?

C. Notions of "culture"

-Do EAP students need to learn about culture? Why or why not?

    -What does the program see as "culture"?

    -What do *you* see as "culture"? Explain.

D. English as a Global Language / Globalization and ESL

Can you comment on what you see as the current role and place of English in the world?

    -What is the role of ESL in this globalising world?

    -Do you see the influence and/or prevalence of English as particularly positive or

    negative?

    -What do you think about English? How do you feel about English/learning English?

Appendix E: Interview Questions - Students

Student Name: _____

Date of interview: _____

A. Background:

-Why are you learning English?

    -What do you want/hope to use it for?

    -Do you think learning English is important? Why or why not?

    -How do you think English will help you (personally, academically, professionally)?

-Why did you come to Canada/[name of Canadian city]/Pacific University's English for

Academic Purposes program to learn English?

B. Pacific University's English for Academic Purposes program:

-How did you find out about Pacific University's EAP program?

-What did you expect to learn at this program?

-Is what you read on the program's website/marketing brochures what you see happening in the

class? Is the program what you expected from reading the website/brochure?

-What are you learning in class?

-What aspects of the program do you like? What aspects of the program do you not like?

-This program emphasizes language and "culture/Canadian culture." Do you feel this is

important for you to learn about? Why / Why not?

-This program also tries to emphasize "critical thinking." What do you know about this? How

do you feel about this aspect of the program?

-Does anything about the program surprise you?

-If any, what suggestions do you have to improve the program?