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CHAPTER 7
Local literacies and global literacy

Catherine Wallace

The future of English as a global language seems assured. Although there are other world languages, only English is used transnationally, with a majority of its users now those for whom it is a second language (Graddol, 1999). In response to this expansion, and going against the grain of mainstream values and discourses, many teachers and scholars have wished to defend and valorise the local over the global. Vernacular speech or literacy is set against standard, institutionalised and mainstream language varieties. 'Little' languages are seen like little people as needing to be defended. At the same time, there is a strong implication that the local offers the best means for the expression of 'authentic' identity and political resistance on the part of subordinated groups. In this chapter I wish to challenge some of these assumptions. I want to argue that, as teachers of English, our best response to the global future of English is not resistance to the language which provides us with a living, nor even an apologetic defence, but a rethinking of what *kind* of English best serves the needs of its users for the twenty-first century.

Literacy and literacies

Just as local or indigenous languages are privileged over English in critiques of linguistic imperialism, so local and vernacular literacies are favoured in much of the current work in literacy, particularly the research carried out under the auspices of what has come to be known as the New Literacy Studies. This has investigated not mainstream, institutionalised literacy in languages of high national and international prestige such as English, but local, vernacular literacies. These vernacular literacies may be in languages other than English as documented, for instance, in Martin-Jones and Bhatt (1998). Or they may take place in English but for local, everyday purposes. In each case literacy is seen not as something possessed as a skill but as something done or performed as a contextualised practice (Barton, 1994; Baynham, 1995). Local literacies operate in private domains, such as family life, as opposed to public ones, such as the media and education (Wallace, 1988). The interest in documenting the everyday literacy practices of children and adults is reflected in a number of recent titles, such as *City Literacies* (Gregory and Williams, 2000) and *Local Literacies* (Barton and Hamilton, 1998).

The preference for seeing literacy as context dependent and situationally contingent has led to the now widely preferred pluralisation of literacy. Gee (1990: 153) claims: 'Literacy is always plural.' Rather than a single monolithic literacy we have multiple literacies: school sanctioned literacy becomes just 'one of a multiplicity of *literacies* which take place in people's lives, in different languages, in different domains and for a variety of purposes' (Gregory and Williams, 2000: 11). The challenge to an overarching, universal literacy came originally from Brian Street

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in his influential book *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (Street, 1984). This first proposed a difference between not literacies as such but two major conceptualisations of literacy: *autonomous* and *ideological* literacy – autonomous suggesting that one is talking of a universal skill or aptitude, being able to read and write; to combat this technicist, skills-based view of literacy the ideological view has it that literacy is a social construct, taking on complex cultural and ideological meanings and diverse forms in specific settings. Hence the widely preferred plural form.

Street's original characterisation was a powerful one. It offered an important challenge to a hitherto exclusively Western understanding of literacy, as well as developing an awareness of cross-cultural differences in literacy practices, which Gregory and Williams (2000) draw on in their account of culturally distinctive literacy practices of language minority children and the implications for schooling in the mainstream. However, the continuing preference for conceptualising literacy both as plural and as broadly autonomous or ideological in orientation, presents several problems. First, the emphasis on the multiple character of literacies may trivialise and relativise their significance; there is a danger that in emphasising parity we may fail to acknowledge those power relations which are so strongly associated with certain literacies, as opposed to others, most evidently school literacy. Certainly, power is a central theme in New Literacy Studies discourse, but the implications are not clearly followed through. For instance, does school sanctioned literacy, often linked to English, offer perceived or real advantages? Is its power merely symbolic? Moreover, the emphasis on discreteness in statements such as: 'Practices each require different skills ... learned in different ways' (Gregory and Williams, 2000: 9) leads one to wonder how far this knowledge has the potential to cross boundaries, how far it might be put to productive use in a range of settings, including school. Indeed in many of the ethnographic studies, though Gregory and Williams's book is a notable exception, educational or school literacy gets scant mention.

Finally, the autonomous/ideological characterisation has led to a tendency to see autonomous literacy as necessarily and exclusively represented in educational contexts. Street and Street (1995), for instance, appear to equate schooled literacy with autonomous literacy. It is taken for granted that schooled literacy in the sense of classroom literacy instruction is constructed and practised largely as neutral technology, with reading 'taught as a set of skills which can be broken into parts and taught and tested' (Barton, 1994: 162). Certainly much of the discourse in recent documents such as the British National Literacy Strategy seems to favour a view of literacy as involving the unproblematic teaching of skills, with little contextualisation of practice, and little acknowledgement in the case of bilingual learners that they may have distinctly different literacy experiences and different language repertoires, including understandings gained from knowledge of the vernacular or home language. However, schooling does not need to be interpreted in this manner. It is not that teaching and learning decontextualises so much as it, in Bernstein's (1996) terms, *re*contextualises, reshaping everyday experiences and knowledge. Although school and home are different domains, it is not the case that school focuses necessarily on skills-based work and out of school contexts on more creative, more 'authentic' activities. There is a danger of' taking a romantic, over-celebratory attitude to contingent, everyday and out-of-school literacies; after all, in many out-of-school cultural contexts literacy will be perceived as the learning of skills or routines of the 'listen, learn, and repeat' kind, documented as one literacy practice of three Roadville parents in Heath's (1983) study of the literacy practices of three communities in the United States. At the same time school literacy practices can be misrepresented as inevitably

and inherently mechanistic. The job of educators is to acknowledge the differences, to build bridges between the domains of school and everyday life, but not necessarily by privileging the primary literacies of learners, nor by taking a narrow view of school literacy as skills-based.

Notions of primary and secondary kinds of knowledge, experience and identity are suggested by Gee's (1990) characterisation of primary and secondary Discourses, where he uses the term Discourse to mean 'ways of being in the world' – that is, more than just language, but ways of displaying membership of a particular social group. Schooling is a Secondary Discourse, as opposed to the Primary Discourse of early social settings. As children move from home to school they move from familiar domestic worlds which are part of their primary socialisation to take on other identities, ways of behaving and ways of using language. Literacy is part of this. As Gee (1990: 153) puts it: 'Literacy is mastery of, or fluent control over, a Secondary Discourse.'

Halliday (1996:353) characterises this shift less in terms of identity than of knowledge: he describes the difference between everyday life and school as being between what he calls primary and secondary knowledge: the latter is more heterogeneously constituted and specific to educational settings. Similarly, Bernstein (1996) talks of vertical and horizontal literacies. The latter are segmental and embedded in ongoing practices and directed to specific goals, and are often acquired through apprenticeship. It is these local and contingent literacies which have been investigated ethnographically in the studies described earlier. Vertical discourse and its associated literacy is scaffolded in schools and learned rather than acquired or picked up on the job. It is not that school literacies are inferior attempts at 'the real thing' (cf. Street and Street, 1995: 106) – they are qualitatively different. Schooled language, which is literate-like rather than necessarily delivered through the medium of print, is, as I argue more fully later in this chapter, a code for learning and for wider communication rather than for day-to-day use. Nor is it the case that primary knowledge, including, most importantly, knowledge of home languages and literacies, is to be discarded; rather it is rearticulated among a greater diversity of voices and experiences, which accompany the move into secondary socialisation. It takes on some of the characteristics of written language; it is 'construed out of the dialectic between the spoken and the written' (Halliday, 1996: 353). Cummins and Swain (1986) make a similar point in talking about the shift from embedded, primarily oral language towards disembedded, written or literate-like language that educational development in school represents. The question then arises as to how one supports the entry of learners who are skilled in vernacular literacies into the more elaborated, vertical discourse required for success in school or other educational settings. For language minority children, moreover, this shift or switch may involve not just a new language variety but a new language code, frequently English.

A further difficulty with the major focus in the New Literacy Studies on practice and practices in non-school settings is a relative neglect of process and processing. This is partly because of a wish to diversify literacy not merely in terms of domains but also in terms of media. An important point of difference between Gee and Halliday, for instance is that Gee does not wish to privilege print over other kinds of technologies. Therefore the linear processing unique to print is of less interest. Halliday, however, takes the view, which I follow here, that the specific features of print literacy offer particular educational advantages:

> The written world is a world of things. Its symbols are things, its texts are things and its grammar constructs a discourse of things, with which readers and writers construe experience. Or rather, with which they reconstrue experience, because all have been speakers

> and listeners first, so that the written world is their secondary socialisation. This is critical for our understanding of the educational experience ... the language of the school is written language. (Halliday, 1996: 353)

It will be seen that Halliday continues to use the terms 'readers' and 'writers' in orthodox ways, to refer to the interpreters or producers of continuous print texts. There has been a diminished interest, in much of the social and anthropological literacy literature at least, in print literacy. *Reading* is not included in the glossary to an influential new collection of papers on literacy, *Multiliteracies* (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000). And yet social subjects in a common-sense way continue to see themselves as readers and writers, and to value skill in these activities. Print is still the medium we mainly deal with, albeit in different forms – email and hypertext being the most obvious ones. And for many language minorities in Britain whose primary socialisation will be in their home, community language, the written world of secondary socialisation is in English.

Literate English and critical literacy

I want to push the case for literacy further by arguing not just for the unique role of print literacy, but also for the value of sustained engagement with written text; to claim, moreover, unpalatable though it may be in a relativist age, that some texts are more linguistically and cognitively challenging than others, and that it is particularly important that such texts should be made available in English to a wide range of students. For foreign and second language learners that means access not so much to the oral everyday English favoured by many contemporary teaching approaches but to English language literacy.

Nakata, writing from a postcolonial perspective, comments thus on the demand for English literacy on the part of Torres Strait Islanders:

> At present when Islanders call for English literacy we are told we need literacy in one of our traditional languages first. Why do we need to read and write in our first language which is after all still a robust oral tradition? Simply because it works in French Canada! This standpoint assumes that learning English at school cancels out children's previously acquired and ongoing acquisition of their first language competencies and communicative patterns. (Nakata, 2000: 112)

Nakata's point here about the vitality of local languages echoes Halliday's about a distinctive 'written world of secondary socialisation' which is not threatening to the mainly oral world of primary socialisation. It also meshes with the argument made by Joseph Bisong (1995) who proclaims the ethnolinguistic vitality of Nigeria's indigenous languages, which are not threatened, he claims, by English, because of the differing functions which local and global languages fulfil.

I would wish to extend the scope of Nakata's point to include not just English literacy but *literate English*, meaning the *kind* of English (which may also be spoken) most like formal written English such as we encounter in broadsheet newspapers, quality novels and non-fiction texts. It is important to say what I am not talking about here: I am *not* talking about standard or of native speaker English. It is irrelevant for my argument here that one can, often only with some effort, identify a speaker as Russian or Danish or Ghanaian. Indeed the still ongoing debate on what kind of English to teach in terms of say British or American – or Nigerian or Singaporean – now seems a rather arid one, because the kind of English we admire for its elegance and eloquence is frequently not produced by those whose first language it is. It is a supranational global English

which does not necessarily emanate in any direct way from the centre, as suggested in over-polarised accounts of centre versus periphery English; it will clearly demonstrate a whole range of functions but as a Secondary Discourse it is most powerful when used discursively rather than experientially. In the terms used by Habermas (1979) it is *constative speech* in that it carries with it obligations to provide grounds for what is said. Transnational English will need not to be reduced or simplified, as some accounts of its role as a lingua franca seem to suggest, but on the contrary to be elaborated to take account both of its likely expository function in formal settings, and of the reduction in shared world knowledge that is associated with transcultural exchanges.

Definition of literate English

Apart from its role in argument, 'literate English' is valuable in talk for learning in classrooms. Clegg (1992) drawing on the work of Gordon Wells, calls this *literate talk* – not just for content learning but for learning more about language itself, testing the limits, especially for L2 learners, of what they can do with their language. As Clegg (1992: 17) puts it, this involves students 'trying to get a foothold in new cognitive territory'. Literate talk – or literate English, defined to include oral and written language – is language which is not spontaneous but planned. It is more elaborated than informal speech, makes explicit its grounds and provides a useful bridge into expository written language. It is talk which is exploratory, where 'partners engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas' (cf. Mercer, 1996), as opposed to the spontaneous and fluent speech which tends to be favoured in the foreign and second language classroom. Moreover it is not just in structure that the language is more complex, which may after all be a matter of empty elaboration, of mere verbiage, as Labov (1972) pointed out in his well-known defence of the logic of non-standard English. For this reason a term used by Granville *et al.* (1998) is helpful. They talk of the need for an 'enriched English', in the process of making a case for the role of good quality English teaching as subject (rather than medium) in post-apartheid South Africa. A pedagogy for an 'enriched' English will clearly need to attend to the complex manner in which structure, content and function inter-relate in the production of effective, literate English.

It should be emphasised that there is nothing inherent in English as a *language* which makes it more suitable than any other language for this role. As Granville *et al.* point out, it is rather that English has developed extensive resources as a result of its dominance across many domains of use. It is English, with its global reach, which is likely to take on public functions as opposed to the private and solidary functions of vernacular languages and literacies. Elaborated to fulfil this role, literate English, for both centre and periphery users, faces outwards rather than inwards. As Nakata (2000: 112) says with reference to the Torres Strait Islanders: 'An English education will enable us to negotiate our position in relation to these outside influences' – but the point has wider implications.

To summarise, I want to defend the position of global literate English as what Chew (1999) calls 'an international auxiliary language'. The kind of English serving this function will not necessarily be standard in form. There will inevitably be, usually minor, regional variations phonologically, lexically and syntactically, but functionally it will be elaborated to serve global needs, the most crucial one, as argued later in this chapter, being as a tool for resistance.

Global English will inevitably be differently inflected in different contexts. Language minority children in English medium schools will draw on different resources and have different immediate needs from adult EFL learners. But the commonalities will be more significant than the differences. Literate English is part of vertical rather than horizontal discourse. While local lan-

guages and literacies tend to serve horizontal, contingent and solidary functions, global English spans a wider range of contexts, and has universal applicability and resonance.

The value of the studies done by literacy ethnographers is not in doubt; teachers need an understanding of the full range of students' identities and languages. However, our business as language educators is ultimately with the wider picture, with forms of language which have currency beyond the particular and contingent, which will prepare our students for the unpredictable futures of the era of fast capitalism; which will offer tools to resist not English itself but meanings which are frequently conveyed through English, often via powerful genres such as news and advertising and, as evidenced by its position as a major export industry for Britain, the English Language Teaching global textbook (see Gray, 2002).

Pennycook (1994) acknowledges a 'writing back' role for English, whereby English is refashioned to serve the aesthetic and political purposes, particularly in postcolonial contexts, of new generations of users. These new users participate in the dismantling of the colonial legacy of English. This is also the spirit of Pierce's (1989) proposal, writing in the context of South Africa, by which the citizens of post-apartheid South Africa opt not for the replacement of English as a lingua franca by an indigenous language, but for a new kind of English – Pierce calls it 'people's English' – inflected with different kinds of meanings. The principle that one can draw variously on the resources of a single language, reshaping the discourses which have established its hegemony, is very much linked to critical discourse analysis and critical literacy, which I turn to next.

If *literacy* and *global* are terms fraught with difficulty then so is the term *critical* in general and *critical literacy* in particular. A major figure in critical literacy studies was Paulo Freire (1972), who saw the power of literacy as a way of reflecting back to learners their own lived experience, not in a direct and immediate way but systematised and amplified through dialogue, as part of the educational process. What critical educators who follow a broadly Freirean ideology share, is a belief in the empowering potential of literacy, a potential which is articulated in different ways: for Lankshear *et al.* (1997) critical literacy is powerful to the extent that it offers a vantage point from which to survey other literacies. It achieves this through acting as a secondary Discourse in Gee's terms and thereby providing a metalanguage, a language to talk about not just literacy itself, as a form of social and cultural practice, but about features of texts and aspects of the reading and writing process. Critical reading involves gaining some distance on our own production and reception of texts; we are not just involved in an ongoing way in these as we process or interpret texts but we also take the opportunity to reflect on the social circumstances of their production, on why they come to us in the form they do, and on the variable ways their meanings may be received in different cultural contexts. Thus, in gaining a degree of distance on what we typically take for granted, we may become aware of what other discourses might replace the ones actually present; how else might this text have been written? At the same time, we are encouraged to ask what other ways there are of reading a text beyond our own currently preferred one, or that favoured by the writer.

The ability to engage in this level of critical analysis is not easily achieved. It will elude many native speakers of a language. However, the indisputable power of English as a global language necessitates a high level of critical literate English if it is to serve the 'writing back' or 'talking back' role of resistance. This is not provided by an instructional *lingua franca* model of English which restricts communication to immediate, utilitarian contexts. Edward Said, when visiting a

Persian Gulf university in 1985, observed that students following the English programme proposed to end up working for airlines or banks in which English was the lingua franca. This view...

> all but terminally consigned English to the level of a technical language stripped of expressive and aesthetic characteristics and denuded of any critical or self-conscious dimension. You learned English to use computers, respond to orders, transmit telexes, decipher manifests and so forth. That was all. (Said, 1994: 369)

Global English teaching and the ELT Profession

I have proposed that English language teaching, like globalisation itself, does not need to be seen to bring only negative consequences. This is not to deny that English language teaching agencies, in particular some international publishers, have sometimes quite explicitly taken a market view of English language teaching as a commodity. There is some justification for the view expressed by Phillipson and Skuttnab Kangas (1999) that Eastern Europe has become the new postcolonial world (Gray, 2002). Asked to comment on recent English language teaching projects in Eastern and Central Europe, Widdowson talks of there being 'rather too much of people coming in from outside 'bringing in the good news' with scant knowledge of local traditions of scholarship and education' (Widdowson, quoted in Thomas, 1999: 125). However, our resistance as language teachers need not be to the teaching of the language itself so much as to the grosser kinds of cultural and linguistic imperialism which continues to characterise some ELT discourse and practices. The reductive thrust of this, as argued above, fails to make available to learners an English which can serve the writing back or talking back function of critique. The answer, however, is not to throw in the towel but to do the job better, whether as language teachers or as teacher educators.

If we accept the need to deal with the realities of the globalisation of English in the broad ways outlined above, what more specific implications arise in terms of the kinds of second language learners we teach in different contexts and the way we might draw on, adapt or reject prevailing methodologies and materials?

One effect of a general ideological preference for specificity and localisation is the identification of subgroups of learners, the development of specific competences of the kind noted by Said, and a consequent proliferation of specialist fields in English Language Teaching: ESP, EAP and, particularly in British ELT discourse, the long-standing division between EFL and ESL. While the EFL/ESL divide makes sense in school contexts, where children of immigrant or refugee families are receiving their schooling through the medium of English rather than learning it as a subject in the curriculum, in some adult learning contexts in Britain the value of the distinction is more dubious. It is based on outdated and essentialist assumptions that there are two clearly defined groups: One being short-stay students, mainly from European countries, and the second, refugees or asylum seekers who are judged to have different educational needs, even though these same students may in an earlier era have found themselves in the EFL 'European' group. In a recent study of one London Further Education college, Cooke (2000) found that the so-called ESL learners are currently likely to be asylum seekers or refugees from many parts of the world. They are assumed, in many instances quite wrongly, to have low educational levels and consequently judged to have literacy problems. Moreover, their supposed literacy needs are addressed with competence-based instruction and assessment, a clear example of Street's

autonomous literacy pedagogy at work. The EFL 'European' group in the same college study with a standard global textbook, which is reductive in a different way, offering what we might call the three Ds view of consumerist EFL culture, *dinner parties, dieting* and *dating*, and reflecting the preoccupations of the textbook writers rather than their likely readers. Indeed, as Gray (2002) also notes, one of the ironies of the so-called global textbook is its typically narrow and parochial discourse. Consequently neither the group designated EFL nor that designated ESL is offered quality English language teaching provision, which, I am arguing here, is educationally demanding, rooted in literate language and designed to prepare students for longer term and relatively unpredictable needs as continuing learners and users of English.

In overseas contexts learners may be in EFL settings or in postcolonial periphery settings. Canagarajah (1999) documents the bizarre situation in which learners in Sri Lanka are, in the guise of following communicative approaches, frequently working with old texts long abandoned in centre contexts, and which even in their heyday were gross caricatures of the ways of life they claimed to represent. Canagarajah (1999: 87) notes: 'What we cannot tell is whether the authors and publishers of [American Kernel Lessons] and similar courses understand how little relation their subliminal messages bear to the life of students and teachers in periphery contexts'. One could add that these messages bear little or no relation to the lives of anyone anywhere. In the next section I take a closer look at how far contemporary favoured methodologies are able to offer access to global literate English of the kind argued for here.

In ESL school contexts literacy and literate talk have received more attention than in typical adult ESL and EFL contexts. Clegg (1996:3) makes a plea for other than merely narrowly defined linguistic goals in the education of ESL children. 'The main point of their learning English as an additional language is so that they can use it for their cognitive, academic and curricular development'. However, in many English language teaching contexts favoured methodologies take a more restricted view of communicative ability. These methods or approaches cluster under the broad umbrella of communicative language teaching (CLT). CLT has been under attack for some time on the grounds that – as interpreted in actual ELT materials if not applied linguistics texts – the goal tends to be talk for its own sake; simply talking is enough, and it is immaterial *what* you talk about. Pennycook (1994: 311) refers to the phenomenon as the 'empty babble of the communicative language class'.

In spite of the recent challenge by Pennycook, and others such as Cope and Kalantzis (1993) who also question the dominant progressivist ideology, versions of communicative language teaching are still not seriously challenged, in particular the premise that the goal of language teaching is to enable communication with native speakers in natural, everyday environments. This resonates with the emphasis in the New Literacy Studies described earlier: everyday, lived experience is perceived as more legitimate or authentic than what Gee (1990) has called 'contrived educational settings'. As I note in Wallace (2001: 213) educational settings are *necessarily* contrived; it is the job of teachers to contrive situations for learning. The teacher's skill is demonstrated though the manner in which the classroom can offer learning opportunities not readily available in everyday life situations. Admittedly this goal becomes obscured in some progressivist language teaching methodologies. A major one is Task Based Learning, for some time now the most popular methodological offshoot of CLT. Like CLT, it is also experientially grounded in the everyday worlds of learners and concerned with the achievement of immediate outcomes, such as solving a problem or carrying out instructions. It is, claims Kramsch (1995: 48) 'characterised by its local treatment of local problems through local solutions'.

We need, in short, to question the contribution of Communicative Language Teaching and Task Based Learning to the development of what I have called literate English, in so far as both prepare learners to deal with small-scale, day-to-day encounters between friends or intimates in familiar settings such as at parties, school or the workplace, or to engage in everyday transactions. We might expect to have moved right away from the following objective for EFL programmes offered by Van Ek, with reference to the Threshold Syllabus of the 1970s, which nonetheless continues to inform much current methodology and materials: 'the learners will be able to survive (linguistically speaking) in temporary contacts with foreign language speakers in everyday situations whether as visitors to the foreign country or with visitors to their own' (Van Ek, 1976: 24-5).

What might alternatives to CLT or TBLT look like? What are feasible ways of promoting a global critical literacy through the medium of English? What options are available to those who do not wish merely to translate the shallow preoccupations of British and American popular culture on to the world stage? Several scholars, most notably Pennycook (1994) and Canagarajah (1999), have proposed critical pedagogy as a necessary underpinning to any English Language Teaching project which wishes to address the global reach of English. However, there are different interpretations of critical pedagogy. Some emphasise humanistic learner-centredness (e.g. Kanpol, 1994). Others acknowledge the dangers of a romantic over-celebratory approach to the validation of learners' experiences: 'we must resist the somewhat misleading tendency in critical pedagogical circles to romanticise student opposition and minority discourses as being always liberatory and progressive' (Canagarajah, 1999: 97). Nonetheless Canagarajah is learner-centred to the extent that he supports the need for teachers to 'unravel the hidden cultures of their classrooms and students' (Canagarajah, 1999: 193), and believes 'that pedagogies of resistance need to be rooted in the everyday life of our students' (1999:194). I take a different view: that we should acknowledge and respect but not appropriate or incorporate the underlife, as Canagarajah calls it, of our students; that it is not our role to nurture those sites; that the concerns of teachers should be less with personal or local empowerment than with a longer-term challenge to social inequity in a wider sense (Wallace, 1999).

Practically, such a critical pedagogy involves addressing issues which may resonate locally but which have global implications; in terms more specifically of *language* teaching, it means developing literate English as a priority. This is not an imposition from the centre; it requires not the acquiescence of subordinated groups but their participation, if English is to be constantly recreated to serve emancipatory rather than oppressive goals. An attenuated, reduced English cannot serve this purpose. Literate English is also creatively more flexible than the restricted, horizontally embedded English of CLT. In other words the critical and creative use of English which Canagarajah rightly calls for is the end point rather than the starting point of critical pedagogy.

A key factor in the students' progress to critique and creativity by way of literate English is their ability and willingness to resist. Canagarajah (1999: 182) notes the necessary role for reflective resistance in view of his observation of the 'largely non-reflective' ways in which students 'display their strategies of linguistic appropriation'. This relates to a distinction first made by Giroux (1983) between *opposition* and *resistance*. Opposition can be seen as an instinctive, unreflected upon response to domination; resistance as a considered, reflected upon, rational stance, where earlier instinctive responses have been subjected to analysis.

The goal then is to lead students from opposition to resistance, from knee-jerk hostile response to reflective, considered judgement. For Canagarajah the route is pluralised English, which he sees as 'standard grammars and established discourses being infused with diverse alternate grammars and conventions from periphery languages' (1999: 175). My proposal favours not pluralism but universality. I would argue, reconfiguring the role of hybridity and pluralisation, that vernacular codes, which will be in local varieties and languages, possibly not written, not elaborated – to serve wider needs, will be multiple and shifting, while English as a global literate language will expressly serve the purpose of embracing a range of settings; it requires greater stability as a 'syncretic' language, to take a term used by Searle (1983), that binds diverse periphery and centre communities together. Once this is established, as noted above, it can be put to critical and creative use, challenging and dismantling the hegemony of English in its conventional forms and uses.

To turn instinct into reflectiveness, opposition into resistance, means forging English as a critical analytical tool which is elaborated to serve those purposes. In terms of currently favoured teaching methodologies, it means a radical rethinking of both Communicative Language Teaching and Task Based Learning, at least as both of these tend to be translated into current teaching material. It means teaching a kind of language which is not for immediate use, not to be taken out into the streets and the clubs, but which can serve longer-term needs.

The proposal I want to consider here, necessarily briefly, centres around print literacy and literate talk and comes broadly under the auspices of Critical Language Awareness (e.g. Fairclough, 1992). The purpose of Critical Language Awareness is to make language itself the object of critical scrutiny – both language as social practice and language as social process, evidenced in the reading and writing of texts. In the course of learning about these social practices and processes learners are made aware of how language might be differently shaped to meet needs beyond those which are closest and most familiar to them. Practically speaking in the classroom this involves the provision of a wide range of text genres, frameworks for analysis and opportunities for talk around text (Wallace, 1992).

The teacher may start with analysis of texts brought into the classroom by herself or the students; however, ultimately the aim is to encourage students to respond to texts within wider contexts of use. This means being aware of the placing and meaning of texts in a range of settings beyond the classroom. The text is necessarily recontextualised within the classroom and takes on cultural meaning by being brought into a pedagogic setting by students or teachers. Canagarajah (1999) describes the way commercial English language texts can be appropriated by students to their own ends. But *any* text, designed as pedagogic or coming from an everyday source, can be made use of in a range of ways within the classroom. Indeed the point of critical language study is to read texts in different ways, to subject everyday texts to other than everyday readings. An example of the kind of response I have in mind occurs in this 'think aloud' reading of an article about Singapore by a Japanese student of mine on a Critical Reading course, as she reacts to the way in which oriental people are exoticised in popular news and magazine articles: 'I don't like this article so much because I think in this kind of text generally speaking I think the British people, and other European people, seem like they are looking at Far Eastern people in some different way – as if looking at some complete strangers, like people who's mad or who act beyond their comprehension.'

We are familiar with the idea of 'text as linguistic object', in English Language Teaching, where texts are gutted for linguistic structure. Indeed much reading instruction has traditionally taken this form. We can equally see texts as *cultural* objects or artefacts in the sense that they embody the values and belief systems of the societies and communities from which they arise, as my student observed in the case of the text about Singapore. Moreover, it is clearly advantageous to examine not just texts in standard English but in a range of forms, genres and discourses. In particular it is revealing to look at texts across linguistic and cultural boundaries, for instance at the way genres are interpreted in different cultural settings. This macro awareness of texts can then be refined by more micro analysis of specific linguistic and discoursal selections of the kind promoted in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approaches (cf. Wallace, 1992).

Critical literacy and literate talk are mutually reinforcing in the sense that talk around texts offers opportunities to check out our own preferred readings against those of others. Such talk also creates the occasion for multiple interpretations of texts, each of which can be argued through, defended, modified or abandoned in discussion with others. This is when literate talk is both put to work but also is enhanced in the course of critique. It is talk which is literate in the sense that, as I noted earlier, like formal modes of writing it makes its case explicit and the grounds for claims are open to scrutiny by others. In this sense it is constative in Habermas's (1979) terms. It involves not talk as social action, doing things with words, which has prevailed in the foreign language classroom, but 'the acquisition and development of more complex conceptual structures and cognitive processes' (Wells and Chang-Wells, 1992: 55).

In the CLA classroom students are encouraged to deploy literate talk in critiquing a range of texts. One way of doing this is to offer opportunities for students to first rehearse in small group discussion their contributions to subsequent public debate, where views are shared and reconsidered in a wider forum, thus allowing space for more extended, planned discourse than is usually available to students in communicative language classrooms, where short-burst informal talk is privileged. It will be argued that foreign language learners have these abilities well developed from their first language. This is often true. However, such learners then welcome the opportunity, denied them in most language classrooms, to exercise their discursive abilities at the same time as developing literate English.

Conclusion

My defence is not of English but of a particular kind of literate English. This more widely contextualised form of English, often in written form but also used in formal spoken contexts, coexists with vernacular literacies, with each occupying distinct domains. For its users, literate English offers a form of secondary socialisation into the world of global English. We need to ensure that this world is not exclusively represented by the Murdoch press or CNN or the commodified worldview of the ELT textbook; but that learners of English as a foreign and second language can participate in its critique and recreation. Modes of resistance to English are available through English, but a critically nuanced literate English. We resist global tyranny with global means. For today's world we might reverse Van Ek's counsel of twenty-five years ago to say that the need today is to help our learners to deal with 'ongoing contacts with a world community of intellectuals, most of whom will not be native speakers of English, in the public arena beyond the national boundaries either of their own country or any other, English speaking one'.

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