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Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis

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My primary purpose in this article is to conceptualize a framework for conducting critical classroom discourse analysis (CCDA). I begin with a critique of the scope and method of current models of classroom interaction analysis and classroom discourse analysis, arguing that they offer only a limited and limiting perspective on classroom discourse. I then contend that the concepts of discourse enunciated in Foucauldian poststructuralism and Saidian postcolonialism can be employed to develop a critical framework for understanding what actually transpires in the L2 classroom. Drawing insights from these two discourse traditions, I attempt to construct a conceptual framework for CCDA and present basic principles and procedures that might make CCDA possible. I conclude the article with suggestions for further exploration that CCDA might open up.

A few years ago, I was teaching in the MATESOL program of a university in the southeastern part of the United States. In addition to courses in TESOL, the program at that time was offering classes for advanced international students aimed at improving their reading and writing skills. It was part of my administrative responsibility, as director of the program, to periodically review the teaching effectiveness of the instructors teaching those classes. One day, at about the midpoint in a semester, I observed a class taught by Debbie (a pseudonym). The class consisted of 20 students mostly from the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Debbie had put together a course pack of readings under the theme "American Heroes." It consisted of selected texts about outstanding U.S. politicians, scientists, artists, and the like. The readings, I thought, were well chosen and well organized. On the day of my observation, Debbie chose to use a text called "Mission to the Moon." She started with prereading questions that elicited no more than monosyllabic responses from her students. She explained the heroic contribution made by the Apollo 11 astronauts to advance the frontiers of knowledge. She then asked several comprehension questions, to which her students, again reluctantly, answered in monosyllables. She continued in the same vein and ended the class after giving a writing assignment. As prearranged,

she left the classroom to enable me to talk to the students to get their perspective of classroom events.

As I was observing that class, it was fairly apparent to me that (a) this was a teacher-fronted class, (b) the students had not read the text, and (c) they were not able to participate in class discussions in spite of their advanced level of proficiency in English. Given what I thought was a dismal lack of preparation and participation on the part of the students, I was wondering what Debbie could have done differently to make the class more productive. It was therefore with sympathy and support for her that I started talking to the students. I had barely finished introducing myself when several of them vociferously started complaining about Debbie. It was as if their silence in class was just a matter of the proverbial calm before the storm. They said that she was not at all helping them improve their reading and writing skills. "She is all the time talking about American culture and American heroes and nothing else," they complained bitterly. It soon became clear to me that the tension arose not because of the content of the text but partly because of Debbie's method of teaching and partly because of the students' perception of her ethnocentricity. They felt that their identities were not being recognized and that their voices were not being respected. Their unwillingness to prepare for the class and to participate in class discussions appeared to me to be a form of passive resistance.

It is reasonable to assume that this episode or a variation of it may be playing out in many ESL classrooms. It emphasizes how "classrooms are decontextualised from the learners' point of view when the learners' feelings, their beliefs about what is important, their reasoning and their experience are not part of the assumed context of the teacher's communication" (Young, 1992, p. 59). It reminds us as TESOL professionals that classroom is the crucible where the prime elements of education—ideas and ideologies, policies and plans, materials and methods, teachers and the taught—all mix together to produce exclusive and at times explosive environments that might help or hinder the creation and utilization of learning opportunities. What actually happens there largely determines the degree to which desired learning outcomes are realized. The task of systematically observing, analyzing, and understanding classroom aims and events therefore becomes central to any serious educational enterprise.

The importance of such a task has long been recognized in general education as well as in L2 education. In this article, limiting my focus to L2 education, I examine two widely used approaches to classroom observation, generally characterized as the *interaction approach* and the *discourse approach,* and then argue that there is an imperative need to develop a third: a *critical approach.* I also touch upon appropriate analytical tools that might be fruitfully employed in critical classroom

discourse analysis (CCDA) and suggest new directions for further exploration that the approach might open up. To achieve my goals, I derive insights from the concepts of discourse associated with two major schools of thought in cultural studies: Foucauldian poststructuralism and Saidian postcolonialism. For reasons of brevity and clarity, I formulate my discussion under the rubric of classroom interaction analysis, classroom discourse analysis, critical perspectives on discourse, and CCDA.

CLASSROOM INTERACTION ANALYSIS

Classroom interaction analysis involves the use of an observation scheme consisting of a finite set of preselected and predetermined categories for describing certain verbal behaviors of teachers and students as they interact in the classroom. Although seldom explicitly articulated, the theoretical foundation governing classroom interaction analysis can be traced to behavioristic psychology, which emphasizes the objective analysis of observable behavior. Accordingly, the categories included in an observation scheme reflect the designer's assumptions about what observable teacher behavior is necessary in order to build a classroom behavior profile of the teacher. These principles are clearly reflected in the oldest and the best known scheme in the field of general education: the Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories, proposed by Flanders in 1970. The Flanders model spawned a series of category schemes in L2 education. According to one count (Chaudron, 1988, p. 18), nearly 25 observation schemes with wide variations in categories, procedures, and descriptions appeared during the late 1970s and early 1980s. These schemes by and large followed the Flanders model of observing, describing, and assigning numerical values to teacher talk and student talk using preselected and predetermined categories and coding procedures.

The use of interaction schemes undoubtedly resulted in a much better understanding of classroom aims and events, particularly in terms of teacher talk and student talk. Nevertheless, interaction schemes all share four crucial limitations: (a) They focus exclusively on the product of verbal behaviors of teachers and learners and give little or no consideration to classroom processes or to learning outcomes; (b) they depend on quantitative measurements, thereby losing the essence of communicative intent that cannot be reduced to numerical codification; (c) they are unidirectional, that is, the information flow is generally from the observer to the teacher, the observer being a supervisor in the case of practicing teachers or a teacher educator in the case of teacher trainees; and (d) they are unidimensional, that is, the basis of observation is largely confined to one single perspective, that of the observer, thus

emphasizing the observer's perception of observable teacher behavior. (For detailed critiques, see Allwright, 1988; Chaudron, 1988; Long, 1980; van Lier, 1988.)

An important development in classroom interaction analysis occurred when Allen, Fröhlich, and Spada (1984) proposed what they called the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation scheme. The primary objectives of the scheme are to capture differences in the communicative orientation of classroom instruction (i.e., form-focused vs. meaning-focused) and to examine their effects on learning outcomes. Designed in two parts, the scheme contains 73 categories representing binary distinctions (e.g., student-centered vs. teacher-centered participation, reaction to form vs. message, and genuine vs. pseudo requests). It is different from most other interaction schemes in two significant ways: It is directly linked to communicative methods of language teaching, and it is designed for real-time coding as well as for analysis of recordings of classes.

A decade after the COLT observation scheme was proposed, a user-friendly manual of coding conventions was published (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995). The final chapter of the manual contains a compilation of 11 studies in which different researchers used COLT in different classroom settings. These studies show that a significant achievement of COLT, compared with its predecessors, has been its capacity to help its users differentiate between more and less communicatively oriented instruction, thus enabling them to better connect instructional input with potential learning outcomes. However, COLT shares some of the limitations that characterized other interaction schemes, a point reiterated by the authors of the studies included in the manual. For instance, Allen (in Allen, Fröhlich, & Spada, 1984) finds it necessary to recommend that "the quantitative procedures based on COLT be supplemented by a more detailed qualitative analysis, with a view to obtaining additional information about the way meaning is co-constructed in the classroom" (p. 143). Spada and Fröhlich (1995) also say that "if one is interested in undertaking a detailed discourse analysis of the conversational interactions between teachers and students, another method of coding and analyzing classroom data would be more appropriate" (p. 10). Thus, COLT remains basically Flandersian in the sense that the basis of observation is largely confined to observable, codifiable, and countable behavior of learners and teachers.

As the above discussion shows, the interaction approach to classroom observation can produce only a fragmented picture of classroom reality. The inherent drawbacks of such an approach inevitably led to the emergence of alternative analytical schemes that can be grouped under the rubric of classroom discourse analysis.

CLASSROOM DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

One of the earliest L2 classroom observation studies that embraced a discourse analytical approach is Allwright's (1980) study on patterns of participation. Mehan's (1979) ethnomethodological work in general education convinced Allwright (1988) that "whatever happened in the classroom was indeed a co-production, and therefore that it no longer made sense to look at classroom interaction as if it was only the teacher's behaviour that mattered" (p. 171). He was thus motivated by the desire to make sense of classroom discourse in general rather than to narrowly study teacher effectiveness. Accordingly, he posited a three-way analysis in his observational scheme: (a) a turn-taking analysis, which relates to several aspects of turn-getting and turn-giving practices; (b) a topic analysis, which relates to the use of language as instances of linguistic samples mostly meant for student imitation and of communicative expressions about the target language itself; and (c) a task analysis, which relates to the managerial as well as the cognitive aspects of classroom tasks.

The significance of Allwright's (1980) observational scheme lies in the fact that it departed from the earlier Flandersian tradition in three important ways: (a) It made no a priori distinction between teachers' and learners' roles but instead allowed patterns of participation to emerge from the data (cf. Fanselow, 1977), (b) it consisted of high-inference categories that are subject to interpretational variations, and (c) it treated classroom participants as individuals rather than as a collective mass by attempting to describe and account for their individual behavior. And, although it involved some numerical measurements, the framework was essentially ethnographic, entailing qualitative interpretations of data.

Allwright's (1980) emphasis on ethnography finds a strong echo in the work of van Lier (1988), who very effectively uses ethnographic means to understand classroom aims and events. Highlighting the need to contextualize the actions and contributions of participants in the classroom, van Lier "takes the educational environment (with the classroom at its centre) as the crucial data resource and thus strongly emphasizes the social context in which language development takes place" (p. 24). Accordingly, in studying turn taking, for instance, he looks not only at the distribution of turns but also at the available options for turn taking and the extent to which different participants took these up. He also offers a useful classification of activity types and how they might influence patterns of participation.

The interpretive nature of classroom discourse analysis advocated by Allwright (1980) and van Lier (1988) also entails an analysis of multiple

perspectives—the teacher's, the learner's, and the observer's (researcher's)—on classroom discourse. In studies that ethnographically analyzed transcripts of video recordings of classroom performance along with pre- and postobservation interviews with participants (Kumaravadivelu, 1991, 1993, in press), I have attempted to show the usefulness of classroom discourse analysis that takes multiple perspectives into serious consideration. In the 1991 study, I argue that, to be relevant, any classroom discourse analysis must be based on an analysis of the potential mismatch between intention and interpretation—between the teacher's intention and the learner's interpretation, on the one hand, and between the teacher's and learner's intention and the observer's interpretation, on the other. Accordingly, I have identified 10 potential sources of mismatch between intention and interpretation. In the 1993 study, I demonstrate how classroom discourse analysis can facilitate an understanding of the degree to which classroom participants are able or unable to create and utilize learning opportunities in class. Finally, in my forthcoming study, I provide guidelines for helping practicing teachers explore their own classrooms so that they can self-observe, self-analyze, and self-evaluate learning and teaching acts and thus, ultimately, develop the capacity to theorize from practice and practice what they theorize.

The Context of Discourse and the Discourse of Context

A common thread that runs through the discourse analytical studies discussed above is the way they treated the concepts of *discourse* and *context*—both borrowed from the field of mainstream discourse analysis. Standard textbooks on discourse and discourse analysis, particularly those meant for language teachers (e.g., Cook, 1989; McCarthy, 1991; McCarthy & Carter, 1994), use the term *discourse* to refer to connected texts as opposed to isolated sentences. Discourse analysis thus becomes a study of larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts. To the extent it relates to language as communication, it relates to the relationship between language structure and the immediate social context in which it is used. Thus, to use a distinction made by Widdowson (1979), discourse analysts are mainly concerned with *textual cohesion,* which operates in the surface-level lexis and grammar, and *discourse coherence,* which operates between underlying speech acts.

The emphasis on social context has helped classroom discourse analysts look at the classroom event as a social event and the classroom as a minisociety with its own rules and regulations, routines, and rituals. Their focus is the experience of teachers and learners within this minisociety. Such experience, as Breen (1985) writes, "is two-dimensional: individual-subjective experience and collective-intersubjective experi-

ence. The subjective experience of teacher and learners in a classroom is woven with personal purposes, attitudes, and preferred ways of doing things. The intersubjective experience derives from and maintains teacher- and learner-shared definitions, conventions, and procedure which enable a working together in a crowd" (p. 140). Classroom discourse that embodies such a two-dimensional experience "is a central part of this social context, in other words the verbal interaction shapes the context and is shaped by it" (van Lier, 1988, p. 47). Such a view of social context allowed classroom discourse analysts to study the routines of turn taking, turn sequencing, activity types, and elicitation techniques. Thus, the interpretation of any category involving "repeats," "elicits," "responses," and so on was seen to rely on "the contingent relationships between the current and the preceding or upcoming discourse" (Chaudron, 1988, p. 39).

PERSPECTIVES ON DISCOURSE

The concept of discourse and the practice of discourse analysis as delineated by classroom discourse analysts marked a notable departure from the behavioristic approach associated with the earlier interaction approach. Thus, within the confines of their stated research agenda, classroom discourse analysts were able to achieve what they set out to achieve, that is, the explication of contingent relationships reflected in the textual cohesion and discourse coherence created by discourse participants during the course of their classroom interaction. But, as I show below, their discourse perspective is far more limited and limiting than other discourse perspectives, particularly those associated with contemporary cultural studies: Foucauldian poststructuralism and Saidian postcolonialism. I therefore take a detour to peep into these discourse traditions before returning to my critique of classroom discourse analysis. For the sake of continuity and coherence, I discuss the two critical traditions first and then highlight their educational applications.

Discourse and Poststructuralism

For Foucault (1972), the French thinker, discourse is not merely the suprasentential aspect of language; rather, language itself is one aspect of discourse. In accordance with that view, he offers a three-dimensional definition of discourse, "treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements" (p. 80). The first definition relates to all actual utterances or

texts. The second relates to specific formations or fields, as in *the discourse of racism* or *the discourse of feminism.* The third relates to sociopolitical structures that create the conditions governing particular utterances or texts. Discourse thus designates the entire conceptual territory on which knowledge is produced and reproduced. It includes not only what is actually thought and articulated but also determines what can be said or heard and what silenced, what is acceptable and what tabooed. Discourse in this sense is a whole field or domain within which language is used in particular ways. This field or domain is produced in and through social practices, institutions, and actions.

In characterizing language as one, and only one, of the multitude of organisms that constitute discourse, Foucault (e.g., 1970) significantly extends the notion of *linguistic text.* A text means what it means not because of any inherent objective linguistic features but because it is generated by discursive formations, each with its particular ideologies and particular ways of controlling power. No text is innocent, and every text reflects a fragment of the world. In other words, texts are political because all discursive formations are political. Analyzing text or discourse therefore means analyzing discursive formations that are essentially political in character and ideological in content.

Foucault (1970, 1972) further argues that every individual and every utterance is embedded in and controlled by *discursive fields* of power/knowledge. Power manifests not in a top-down flow from the upper to the lower strata of social hierarchy but extends itself in capillary fashion, becoming a part of daily action, speech, and life. Power/knowledge is expressed in terms of *regimes of truth,* which are sets of rules, statements, and understandings that define what is true or real at any given time. Thus, as Mills (1997) succinctly points out, "power, knowledge and truth—this configuration is essentially what constitutes discourse" (p. 17). This configuration is made up of what Foucault (1970, 1972) calls *discursive practices,* which are used in certain typical patterns to form *discursive formations.* Discursive formations make it difficult for individuals to think outside of them; hence they are also exercises in power and control. A discursive change, whether social, political, or cultural, can therefore be effected only when an entire community, not just an individual, changes its ways of thinking and knowing, speaking and doing.

Although Foucault does entertain the possibility of systemic social or discursive change through subversion and resistance in his later works (e.g., *The History of Sexuality: The Use of Pleasure,* 1984), much of his analysis tends to focus mainly on the workings of power. A somewhat different focus on the relationship between dominance and resistance comes from another French sociologist, de Certeau (1984), who draws attention to the subversions embedded in the practices of everyday life.

For him, the powerful institutions of society are able to demand particular behaviors, thoughts, and responses from individuals. He discusses the coercive power of these institutions as a *calculus of force-relationships* or a *strategy*. Individuals, he argues, do not always comply with the dictates of dominant institutions. Instead, for a variety of reasons, ranging from incompetence to unwillingness to outright resistance, they reject the demands placed on them institutionally and operate according to their own desires, in a way that presents itself to them as personally empowering. This oppositional response he calls a *tactic* (pp. xviii–xx). A tactic

> is an art of the weak. . . . clever tricks of the "weak" within the order established by the "strong," an art of putting one over on the adversary on his own turf. . . . The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. (pp. 31–40)

The weak know intuitively how to manipulate the strong, so much so that under certain adverse circumstances the tactics of the weak can take the form of systematic and sustained subversion. Tactics, de Certeau explains, can be as common as stealing stationery from one's workplace, refusing to cooperate with authority, or spreading disinformation. They "characterize the subtle, stubborn, resistant activity of groups which, since they lack their own space, have to get along in a network of already established forces and representations" (p. 18).

Because subtle, stubborn forms of subversion are part and parcel of the practice of everyday life, de Certeau (1984) emphasizes the importance of investigating them along with subtle forms of dominance. And one site of such investigation is the linguistic text. Like Foucault's (1972) discourse, de Certeau's text extends beyond language. "Today, the text is society itself. It takes urbanistic, industrial, commercial, or televised forms" that produce a system "that distinguishes and privileges authors, educators, revolutionaries, in a word, 'producers' in contrast with those who do not produce" (pp. 166–167). But, unlike Foucault, who conceived discourse largely as power/knowledge, de Certeau, as Threadgold (1997) points out, "made clear the need to think about both the way disciplinary knowledges work to conceal the positions and interests of those who enunciate them and the way conceiving knowledge as discourse excludes an account of the power of enunciation to subvert or change it" (p. 71).

A similar view about discourse as power/knowledge has been expressed by yet another French theorist, Bourdieu (1990). He argues that individuals strive to respond to dominance and resistance by seeking to maximize their *capital*. Capital, for him, is a form of power. Contrary to

common belief, capital is not only economic but is also social and cultural. A fourth kind of capital, symbolic capital, constrains the realization of the other three. These four fields of capital interact and interweave in myriad ways involving both communities and individuals. For instance, as Luke (1996) explains, economic capital in the form of material goods and resources can be transformed into cultural capital in the form of academic knowledge or cultural thought, and into social capital in the form of access to organizational facilities or political parties (pp. 326–330).

The three fields of capital—economic, social, and cultural—are recognized as capital if and only if they are granted legitimacy, that is, symbolic capital, by the society at large. In other words, realization of one's economic, cultural, and social capital is contingent upon societal, institutional authorization and approval. As Bourdieu (1990) puts it, "The kinds of capital, like trumps in a game of cards, are powers that define the chances of profit in a given field." That is to say, the position of a particular individual in the society is "defined by the position (s)he occupies in the different fields, that is, in the distribution of the powers that are active in each of them" (p. 230). Society itself is structured by the differential distribution of capital. Such structuring is done by the state as well as by established social structures, including educational institutions that regulate the availability, value, and use of capital and its conversion across fields. These forces are constantly engaged in capital formation and distribution, thereby helping produce and reproduce hierarchies of knowledge that legitimize inequalities between social groups. Bourdieu, Passeron, and Martin (1994) call such legitimization *la violence symbolique* (symbolic violence).

Symbolic violence, according to Bourdieu (1991), manifests itself in discourse, particularly in academic discourse. He asserts that "there is a whole dimension of authorized language, its rhetoric, syntax, vocabulary, and even pronunciation which exists purely to underline the authority" of those who perpetuate symbolic violence (p. 76). He relates particular texts and events to larger macrosocial structures by specifically connecting the relations among various discourse formations with the relations among the social positions of their authors.

As the above discussion reveals, Foucauldian poststructuralist discourse and its variations display an acute preoccupation with notions of power/knowledge and of dominance and resistance. In spite of such a preoccupation, strangely enough, neither Foucault nor de Certeau and Bourdieu actually paid any attention to the European colonial expansion or to its effect on the power/knowledge systems of the modern European state (Bhatnagar, 1986; Spivak, 1988). Their theories are considered Eurocentric in their focus and of limited use in understanding colonial discourse. However, their construction of the discourse of

power/knowledge and of dominance/resistance is so influential that it provided a point of departure for postcolonial discourse analysis.

Discourse and Postcolonialism

Cultural theorist Said's (1978) *Orientalism* was the first account to offer a comprehensive theoretical framework for postcolonial discourse analysis. In reading a number of literary, historical, sociological, and anthropological texts produced by the colonial West, Said found that the colonized people were dehumanized, stereotyped, and treated not as communities of individuals but as an indistinguishable mass about whom one could amass knowledge. The number of stereotypical observations made repeatedly about colonized countries and cultures is so great that these statements cannot be attributed simply to the individual authors' beliefs but can only be products of widespread belief systems structured by discursive frameworks and legitimized by the power relations found in colonialism.

Said (1978) used the term *Orientalism* to refer to the discursive field constituted by Western representations of the Other. Orientalism is a systematically constructed discourse by which the West "was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively" (p. 3). It forms an interrelated web of ideas, images, and texts from the scholarly to the popular that are produced by artists, writers, missionaries, travelers, politicians, militarists, and administrators and that shape and structure Western understanding and management of colonized cultures and peoples. Said showed that the discourse of Orientalism is built on a binary opposition between the West and the East, us and them, that produces an essentialized and static Other. He thus moved away from a narrow understanding of colonial authority to show how it functioned by producing a discourse or a structure of thinking about the Other. He explained that ideas, images, or texts that are accorded the authority of academics, institutions, and government create not only interested knowledge but also the very reality they seek to describe. Said's analysis of Orientalism is founded on Foucault's (1972) notion that knowledge and power are inseparably tied together, that is, that knowledge is constructed according to a discursive field that creates a representation of the object of knowledge, its constitution, and its limits.

Although Said's (1978) seminal thoughts on Orientalism inform much of contemporary literary and cultural studies, he has been criticized for adopting a Foucauldian model that not only focuses on the working of power but tends to grant almost total hegemony to dominant systems of representation. As many scholars (e.g., Ahmed, 1992;

Breckenridge & van der Veer, 1993; Loomba, 1998) have pointed out, Said's view of the colonizer and the colonized as locked in a rigid dichotomy of domination and subordination does not account for the diversity of historical contexts, for the heterogeneity of colonized subjectivity, or for the agency of colonized peoples. It is generally true that colonized people gradually internalize the violently disseminated idea of the superiority of the colonizing culture and therefore seek to imitate the norms of the colonizer. But is this colonial mimicry merely a pure act of subordination?

Raising and responding to that question, and taking a psychoanalytic approach to colonialism, Bhabha (1984, 1985) suggests that colonial mimicry, instead of always being an expression of subjugation (which it frequently is), may at times actually operate as a mode of subversion. Bhabha points out a fundamental contradiction inscribed in colonial ideology: On the one hand, it seeks to assert the unbridgeable gap between the superior West and the inferior East while, on the other hand, continuously attempting to bridge the gap (through religious conversion or secular education) by remaking the Other in the image of the Self. Bhabha also sees this contradiction, Mills (1997) observes, "as a form of complex desire on the part of the colonizer, rather than simply as an act of oppression and appropriation. The colonizer here is just as much at the mercy of these forms of representation as the colonized, and is simply caught in the play of desire and fantasy which the colonial context produces" (p. 125).

The play of desire and fantasy, according to Bhabha (1985), renders colonial discourse "hybrid" or "ambivalent." Hybridity "is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination" (p. 154). Colonial authority is never able to produce a perfect copy of the original but can produce only something that is transmuted. Consequently, the notion of hybridity opens up spaces for the colonized to subvert the master-discourse, thereby unsettling the traditional representation of colonial power as unlimited and nonnegotiable. Hybridity makes it possible for colonized peoples to challenge the colonizers in their own language. Thus, English education in Africa and Asia became a double-edged sword because the colonized did not simply accept the superiority of English institutions but also used English education to undermine that superiority, foster nationalism, and demand equality and freedom (Loomba, 1998, pp. 89–90).

Bhabha's (1984, 1985) representations of resistance contrast with the views of another postcolonial critic, Spivak, who is wary of too easy a recovery of the voice or agency of colonized people. In an extremely influential essay titled "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1985a), Spivak argues that *epistemic violence* of colonialism was so pervasive and so

devastating that it rewrote all intellectual, cultural, and legal systems, making it impossible to discover the authentic subaltern consciousness. She correctly points out that even the voices of resistance that Bhabha and others refer to are the voices mostly of the Western-educated, indigenous elite and not of those on the margins of colonial circuitry: men and women among the illiterate peasantry, the tribals, the lowest strata of the urban population, and the like.

Articulating the relationship between poststructuralism, postcolonialism, and feminism and pointing to the wide acceptance of such totalizing, monolithic constructs such as *Third World* or *Third-World woman,* Spivak (1988) suggests that the colonial construction of knowledge has become the only reality that now constitutes both the colonizer and the colonized and the only currency that is usable both in the West and in the East. From this view, even nationalism is a derivative discourse that, despite its reversal of colonial terms, remains trapped within those very terms and hence has only succeeded in replacing colonialism with neocolonialism. Claiming that the same colonial construction of knowledge informs feminism, Spivak (1985b) challenges "the colour-blindness" of Euro-American feminist theories and movements, asserting that "it is particularly unfortunate" that Western feminism "reproduces the axioms of imperialism" (p. 243) by romanticizing the emergence of the articulate Western female subject and her individuality without marking how the expansion of imperialism makes such a feminist project possible. In highlighting the problematic aspect of Western feminism, Spivak echoes the arguments of yet another postcolonial critic, Mohanty (1984), who demonstrates the ways in which Western feminist scholarship constitutes women of the Third World as a homogeneous group, which it then uses as a category of analysis on the basis of certain sociological and anthropological universals without considering larger social, political, and economic power structures that operate between the West and the non-West.

Although Spivak (1985a) sympathizes with attempts to recover the subaltern voice, she sees difficulties and contradictions in constructing a speaking position for the subaltern. By accentuating the limitations of subaltern representation, however, she does not call upon postcolonial intellectuals to abstain from representation altogether. Rather, she urges them to vigilantly unlearn their privilege and ethically mark their own theoretical positions in order to avoid imperialistic gestures that seek to represent those who cannot represent themselves or to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. Her focus on the possibility of alternative voices being recoverable within discourses has been instrumental in forcing many postcolonial critics to rethink their own relation to colonial texts (Mills, 1997, p. 120).

Educational Applications of Poststructuralism

The Foucauldian concept of discourse has enormously influenced thought and action in several academic circles, three of which bear direct relevance to applied linguistics and TESOL: critical linguistics, critical pedagogy, and feminist pedagogy.

Adhering to the Foucauldian tenet that no discourse is innocent, critical linguists (also called *critical discourse analysts*) argue that "all representation is mediated, moulded by the value-systems that are ingrained in the medium (language in this case) used for representation; it challenges common sense by pointing out that something could have been represented in some other way, with a very different significance" (Fowler, 1996, p. 4). Saying that the ideology and power that constitute dominant discourses are hidden from ordinary people, critical linguists seek to make these discourses visible by engaging in a type of critical discourse analysis that "is more issue-oriented than theory-oriented" (van Dijk, 1997, p. 22). In that sense, they seek to actualize Foucault's thoughts through a close linguistic analysis of texts within a particular sociopolitical context. By doing so, they hope to shed light on the way power relations work within the society. They thus move from the local to the global, displaying "how discourse cumulatively contributes to the reproduction of macro structures" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 42).

As can be expected, critical linguists pointedly emphasize the role of critical language awareness in developing sociopolitical consciousness. Fairclough (1995), in particular, believes that critical language awareness "can lead to reflexive analysis of practices of domination implicit in the transmission and learning of academic discourse, and the engagement of learners in the struggle to contest and change such practices" (p. 222). He further points out that language learners can learn to contest practices of domination only if the relationship between language and power is made explicit to them—a position shared by critical pedagogists as well.

Combining Foucault's sociological theories and Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's educational philosophy, critical pedagogists work under the assumption that academic institutions are not simply instructional sites; they are, in fact, "cultural arenas where heterogeneous ideological, discursive, and social forms collide in an unremitting struggle for dominance" (McLaren, 1995, p. 30). Classroom reality is socially constructed, politically motivated, and historically determined. Therefore, critical pedagogy has to empower classroom participants "to critically appropriate forms of knowledge outside of their immediate experience, to envisage versions of a world which is 'not yet' in order to alter the grounds on which life is lived" (Simon, 1988, p. 2). Such a pedagogy would take seriously the sociopolitical, historical conditions that create

the cultural forms and interested knowledge that give meaning to the lives of teachers and learners. "In one sense, this points to the need to develop theories, forms of knowledge, and social practices that *work with* the experiences that people bring to the pedagogical setting" (Giroux, 1988, p. 134).

Asserting along Foucauldian lines that discourse empowers and disempowers, privileges and marginalizes, critical pedagogists call for an "empowering education" that relates "personal growth to public life by developing strong skills, academic knowledge, habits of inquiry, and critical curiosity about society, power, inequality, and change" (Shor, 1992, p. 15) and helps students explore the subject matter in its sociopolitical, historical contexts with critical themes integrated into student language and experience. They consider contemporary language education "as somewhat bizarre in that it legitimates and limits language issues as technical and developmental" and believe that language education must be "viewed as a form of learning that not only instructs students into ways of 'naming' the world but also introduces them to particular social relations" (Giroux & Simon, 1988, p. 131). Similar thoughts are beginning to inform the debate about power and inequality in ESL education as well (see Tollefson, 1995).

Arguing that reading the world is not confined to reading race and class but involves reading gender as well, feminist pedagogists such as Lather (1991), Luke (1992), and Ellsworth (1992) attempt to "deconstruct the master narratives of patriarchy and thereby move gender onto the critical agenda even if, in many discourses, it remains institutionally contained at the margins" (Luke, 1992, p. 45). They agree with critical pedagogists that the classroom is one of the powerful ideological sites within which counterhegemonic discourses and practices can be organized. They contend, however, that discourse analysis should be concerned with the deconstruction of the political, social, psychological, and historical formations of gendered discourse because all discourse production is gendered. An appropriately gendered classroom must go beyond employing surface-level pedagogic strategies, such as giving female students equal opportunity to speak in the classroom or giving females equal representation in imagery and language in curricular text. Considering these strategies as a mere add-on tactic of incorporation, they seek critical classroom discourse that legitimizes female voices as well.

Educational Applications of Postcolonialism

Postcolonial theorists offer a refreshingly challenging perspective on education in general and on English language education in particular.

They tell us that education was "a massive canon in the artillery of empire," effecting, in Gramsci's (1971) phrase, "a domination by consent" (p. 28). They also tell us that language

> is a fundamental site of struggle for post-colonial discourse because the colonial process itself begins in language. The control over language by the imperial centre—whether achieved by displacing native languages, by installing itself as a "standard" against other variants which are constituted as "impurities," or by planting the language of empire in a new place—remains the most potent instrument of cultural control. (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1995, p. 283)

Perhaps no language is as much implicated in colonialism as English is. Several postcolonial commentators have pointed out that the same ideological climate informed both the growth of English and the growth of Empire. In her pioneering study *Masks of Conquest*, Viswanathan (1989) argues that in colonial India, the English literary text functioned as a mask that camouflaged the conquering activities of the colonizing authority. She wonders at the historical "irony that English literature appeared as a subject in the curriculum of the colonies long before it was institutionalized in the home country" (p. 3) of England. Noting that "the superiority of English rested on a racialized and gendered equation between language and nation" (p. 20), Krishnaswamy's (1998) *Effeminism: The Economy of Colonial Desire* shows how colonialists relied "heavily upon a vocabulary of effeminacy to describe and codify Eastern languages and literatures while defining European languages and literatures, especially English, as hard, energetic, rational, and masculine" (p. 20).

Connecting this line of thinking specifically to English language teaching (ELT), Pennycook (1998), in *English and the Discourses of Colonialism*, offers an in-depth analysis of what he calls "the continuity of cultural constructs of colonialism" (p. 19) and demonstrates how ELT is deeply interwoven with the discourses of colonialism. ELT, he argues,

> is a product of colonialism not just because it is colonialism that produced the initial conditions for the global spread of English but because it was colonialism that produced many of the ways of thinking and behaving that are still part of Western cultures. European/Western culture not only produced colonialism but was also produced by it; ELT not only rode on the back of colonialism to the distant corners of the Empire but was also in turn produced by that voyage. (p. 19)

Based on his analysis, Pennycook calls for concerted efforts to decolonize English language education by finding alternative representations and alternative possibilities in English classes.

CLASSROOM DISCOURSE ANALYSIS REVISITED

If, simplifying the poststructural and postcolonial perspectives presented above, discourse can be seen as a three-dimensional construct consisting of a (socio)linguistic dimension, a sociocultural dimension, and a sociopolitical dimension, then classroom discourse analysts may be considered to be involved with the first, interested in the second, and indifferent to the third. By treating discourse as no more than a form of contextualized language use at the suprasentential level, classroom discourse analysts have treated it mostly as a (socio)linguistic phenomenon and have studied the grammatical and lexical elements of textual cohesion and discourse coherence that make contextualized language use possible. Although such a (socio)linguistic focus, as noted earlier, marks an advancement over the behavioristic approach associated with the classroom interaction approach, it nevertheless offers only a limited view of discourse. If one is serious about understanding what discourse is all about, it would be inadequate, as van Dijk (1997) has suggested,

> to merely analyze its internal structures, the actions being accomplished, or the cognitive operations involved in language use. We need to account for the fact that discourse as social action is being engaged in within a framework of understanding, communication and interaction which is in turn part of broader sociocultural structures and processes. (p. 21)

Sociocultural aspects of classroom discourse are an area in which extensive research has been conducted. But its focus has been mostly confined to two strands of inquiry. The first focuses on cultural aspects of speech act performance. Typically, such studies (see Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993) seek to identify the basic linguistic structure of, say, politeness formulas in English as contrasted with politeness formulas in the learners' L1 or their interlanguage. The objectives of such studies are, of course, to predict areas of cultural adjustments for the L2 learner and to suggest strategies of pedagogic intervention for the L2 teacher. These studies have no doubt helped language professionals understand how pragmatic aspects of learners' interlanguage performance relate to the way certain speech acts are realized across languages and cultures. The second strand of inquiry focuses on ethnic variation in classroom interaction. Typically, such studies (e.g., Sato, 1981; Schinke-Llano, 1983) investigate the relationship between ethnicity and the distribution of turns, talk, and topic initiation in the L2 classroom. These studies have been found to be of limited value because of their preoccupation with ethnicity to the exclusion of other variables that may have contributed to interactional variations, variables such as the nature of the tasks given to learners, the teachers' pedagogic orientations, their personal attributes,

their teaching techniques, and their classroom management, not to mention all the affective factors that shape the interactive behavior of learners themselves (Kumaravadivelu, 1990; Malcolm, 1987).

Furthermore, a true and meaningful understanding of the sociocultural aspects of classroom discourse can be achieved not by realizing the surface-level features of communicative performance or conversational style but only by recognizing the complex and competing world of discourses that exist in the classroom. Recent studies on the role of culture in L2 learning and teaching (e.g., Kramsch, 1993) emphasize the need to go beyond an amorphous collection of facts and figures about cultures and cultural artifacts in order to understand how culturally shared meanings are co-constructed in the classroom. As Kramsch points out, the L2 classroom is a site of struggle where learners create their own personal meanings at the boundaries between the native speaker's meanings and their own everyday life: "From the clash between the familiar meanings of the native culture and the unexpected meanings of the target culture, meanings that were taken for granted are suddenly questioned, challenged, problematized" (p. 238). Understanding the learner's struggle to create meaning involves an understanding of how sociocultural meanings are linked in complicated ways to social identities—issues that have been neglected until recently (see the special-topic issue of *TESOL Quarterly* on language and identity, Vol. 31, No. 3, Autumn 1997).

Even a cursory glance at the professional literature in TESOL shows that classroom discourse analysts have shied away from any serious engagement with the ideological forces acting upon classroom discourse, even as they frequently emphasize the significant role these forces play in shaping and reshaping that discourse. Thus, for instance, in a widely acclaimed book, van Lier (1988) rightly argues that classroom research must "expose complex relationships between individual participants, the classroom, and the societal forces that influence it" (p. 82) but goes on to focus entirely on classroom-based issues such as initiative, topic and participation structure, and repair. More recently, van Lier (1996, 1997) has called for an ecological approach to classroom observation that embraces "not only the context of classroom learning but, more fundamentally, the very definitions of language, of development, and of mind" (1997, p. 783). Yet another example is McCarthy and Carter (1994), who, in a book that offers discourse perspectives for language teaching, tell their readers that a discourse-based view of language "involves considering the higher-order operations of language at the interface of cultural and ideological meanings and returning to the lower-order forms of language which are often crucial to the patterning of such meanings" (p. 38). Yet they refrain from telling their readers how to explore and exploit the higher order operations of language for

instructional and analytical purposes; instead, they merely recommend a list of books on critical linguistics for interested readers to pursue (p. 171).

The neglect of the broader sociocultural and sociopolitical dimensions of classroom discourse analysis has been made possible by its scope and method. Its scope has been confined mostly to treating the classroom as a self-contained minisociety insulated and isolated from the outside world rather than as an integral part of the larger society where the reproduction of many forms of domination and resistance based on such factors as class, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, language, and sexual orientation is almost a daily occurrence. Likewise, the preferred method of classroom discourse analysts—microethnography—has enabled them to study crucial classroom issues such as input and interaction, form and function, topics and tasks, questions and corrections, and the way they all relate to each other. Perhaps a combination of micro- and macroethnographic analyses, on the other hand, would have compelled them to cross the borders of the classroom to study broader social, cultural, political, and historical structures that have a bearing on classroom issues in order to see, as anthropologist Bateson (1979) would say, "the patterns that connect" (p. 16).

It is perhaps worth reiterating that classroom discourse analysts, as microethnographers focusing on micro issues of the classroom, did indeed advance the understanding of classroom aims and activities. My critique, then, is not about the gap between what was sought to be achieved and what was actually achieved but between what was actually achieved and what could have been achieved if only other perspectives of discourse (such as poststructural and postcolonial) had been taken into account. It is instructive in this context to note that although most classroom discourse analysts in TESOL have adopted an exclusively microethnographic approach, other educational ethnographers, such as Cazden (1988), Erickson (1991), and Hymes (1996), have persistently questioned the wisdom of separating the particular from the general, the part from the whole.

CRITICAL CLASSROOM DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The poststructural and postcolonial discourse perspectives outlined above offer immense possibilities for formulating the nature, scope, and method of CCDA. Although neither of the two perspectives is unproblematic and although each by itself may not be fully sensitive to classroom L2 learning and teaching, collectively they have developed a rich body of knowledge and skills that help conceptualize and conduct CCDA in meaningful ways.

Conceptualizing CCDA

The critique of classroom discourse analysis presented in the previous section also contains some of the fundamental characteristics of CCDA. To recapitulate, CCDA is based on the following premises and principles:

- Classroom discourse, like all other discourses, is socially constructed, politically motivated, and historically determined; that is, social, political, and historical conditions develop and distribute the cultural capital that shapes and reshapes the lives of teachers and learners.
- The racialized, stratified, and gendered experiences that discourse participants bring to the classroom setting are motivated and molded not just by the learning and teaching episodes they encounter in the classroom but also by the broader linguistic, social, economic, political, and historical milieu in which they all grow up.
- The L2 classroom is not a secluded, self-contained minisociety; it is rather a constituent of the larger society in which many forms of domination and inequality are produced and reproduced for the benefit of vested interests; therefore, an analysis of classroom discourse must necessarily include an analysis of the discursive practices and discursive formations that support the structure of dominant discourses.
- The L2 classroom also manifests, at surface and deep levels, many forms of resistance, articulated or unarticulated; therefore, an analysis of classroom discourse must necessarily include an analysis of various forms of resistance and how they affect the business of learning and teaching.
- Language teachers can ill afford to ignore the sociocultural reality that influences identity formation in and outside the classroom, nor can they afford to separate learners' linguistic needs and wants from their sociocultural needs and wants.
- The negotiation of discourse's meaning and its analysis should not be confined to the acquisitional aspects of input and interaction, to the instructional imperatives of form- and function-focused language learning activities, or to the conversational routines of turn-taking and turn-giving sequences; instead, they should also take into account discourse participants' complex and competing expectations and beliefs, identities and voices, and fears and anxieties.
- Classroom discourse lends itself to multiple perspectives depending on the discourse participants' preconceived notions of what constitutes learning, teaching, and learning outcomes; therefore, any

CCDA needs to identify and understand possible mismatches between intentions and interpretations of classroom aims and events.

- The objective of language education should be not merely to facilitate effective language use on the part of language learners but also to promote critical engagement among discourse participants; therefore, CCDA should be concerned with an assessment of the extent to which critical engagement is facilitated in the classroom.
- Teachers need to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to observe, analyze, and evaluate their own classroom discourse so that they can, without depending too much upon external agencies, theorize what they practice and practice what they theorize, thus contributing to the dismantling of the debilitating dichotomy between theorists and teachers, between producers and consumers of pedagogic knowledge.

These overlapping premises and principles, I believe, can form the bases for conceptualizing CCDA.

The premises and principles also indicate that the primary function of CCDA is fundamentally different from that of the interaction and discourse approaches discussed earlier. If the function of interaction analysis is seen as normative and that of discourse analysis as informative, then the function of CCDA can be seen as transformative. Classroom interaction analysis, with its normative function, seeks to play a directive role, in effect telling practicing teachers what kind of classroom climate would be considered optimal to achieve their instructional purposes and what they need to do in order to create such a climate in their classroom. Besides, the findings of classroom interaction analysis are supposed to give teachers an idea of the extent to which their own classroom performance approximates to a predetermined model. Classroom discourse analysis, with its informative function, seeks to play a descriptive role, giving practicing teachers a profile of instructional strategies and interactional patterns and possible relationships between the two. It attempts to describe the processes internal to classroom aims and events in order to inform teachers of the possibilities and limitations facing them as teachers, information they can use to further their self-development. CCDA, with its transformative function, seeks to play a reflective role, enabling practicing teachers to reflect on and cope with sociocultural and sociopolitical structures that directly or indirectly shape the character and content of classroom discourse. It also seeks to equip them with the knowledge and skill necessary to conduct their own CCDA, thus directing them away from knowledge transmission and towards knowledge generation, away from pedagogic dependence and towards pedagogic independence.

Glimpses of CCDA

Recent classroom-based studies reported by Chick (1996) and by Canagarajah (1997), for instance, give us glimpses of the possibilities and potential of CCDA. Chick's work is a classic example of what classroom discourse can reveal when viewed through the prism of larger sociopolitical context. He conducted a microethnographic analysis of his classroom data to find out why teachers as well as students in mathematics classes carried out through the medium of ESL in KwaZulu schools were reluctant to give up choral responses and were resistant to interaction associated with the communicative approach to language teaching. After microethnographically analyzing the data, he came to the interim conclusion that the behavior of KwaZulu teachers and students was the result of their cultural disposition, that is, the interactional style they exhibited is native to the Zulu-speaking community. This interim conclusion was the same as the one he arrived at in a study conducted in 1985, in which he analyzed interethnic encounters between a White South African, English-speaking professor and Zulu graduate students.

Later, however, Chick (1996) decided to reexamine the same set of classroom data because of his growing awareness of the limitations of microethnographic research that fails to show how the pervasive values, ideologies, and structures of the wider society condition and constrain microlevel behavior in the classroom. When he revisited the same data and analyzed them in terms of macrolevel issues of racist ideology and power structures of apartheid South Africa, he found that KwaZulu teachers and students actually colluded with each other to deliberately construct the kind of interactional pattern that he observed. He realized that the classroom discourse actually represented "styles consistent with norms of interaction which teachers and students constituted as a means of avoiding the oppressive and demeaning constraints of apartheid educational systems" (p. 37). In other words, the interactional styles followed by KwaZulu teachers and students were not an example of their linguistic affiliation or cultural identity but an expression of their oppositional tendencies.

Expression of oppositional tendencies is what Canagarajah (1997) found in a Texas classroom (see also his 1993 study about a Sri Lankan classroom) where he was teaching academic English to a group of predominantly African American students just entering college. In a critical analysis of interactive data from student conferences done through electronic media, he demonstrates how his students negotiated the discursive and ideological challenges of the academic culture and critically interrogated their classroom discourses. In deconstructing, for instance, a dialogue in which his students are discussing a passage on

recent revisions in history textbooks used in U.S. schools, Canagarajah shows how they "dramatically appropriate the text to read their own themes and perspectives, thus eventually subverting the writer's message" (p. 181). Consider this partial extract:

David: Yea you know it is weird how the people who write most of the history books we read in school are white. Why is that? And why does it seem that the white man in those history books are portrayed as being the better of the races?

Sonny: Exactly. Ray. Have you heard the song by BDP (I think) that talks about the black people of the Bible?

Dexter: i feel the reason for the distortion is because whites want to portray themselves as doing the right thing to their children since they are the majority.

Andrew: as in the book "1984" whoever controls the present controls the past. Since the white man is in power he can belittle the role of the Indian and black cowboys.

. . .

Amos: it's kind of funny the only Blacks mentioned in the history books are those that have been assassinated by the white man (malcom x, and martin luther king jr.)

Sonny: I think minorities would write their history if they could. How many companies want to publish "History of the Negro(igga)"??? (p. 182)

Canagarajah's analysis reveals that the students here exhibit a heightened consciousness of their ethnic identity by exploring many issues not raised by the passage, thus giving additional depth to the subject. He points out that starting from

> the what and how of distortions in history they go on to explore the why, and eventually probe the political-economy of textbook production that functions against minorities and sustains the hegemony of the majority groups. The written word is thus creatively given new ramifications in reference to the larger social contexts and discourses of the students. (p. 184)

Chick's (1996) and Canagarajah's (1997) studies treat the classroom as a site of struggle between competing discourses, a cultural arena where ideological, discursive, and social forces collide in an ever-unfolding drama of dominance and resistance. They both cross the boundaries of the classroom in order to make true sense of classroom behavior. They both interpret classroom behavior not just in terms of (socio)linguistic features of input and interaction but in terms of sociocultural and sociopolitical forces that shape that behavior. Finally, they both show that their sound interpretation of classroom discourse is made possible only

through a mode of investigation that is sensitive to participants' articulated and unarticulated responses to the symbolic violence perpetrated on them.

Conducting CCDA: Critical Ethnography

Investigative and interpretive methods for analyzing classroom discourse have always been problematic. Practitioners of classroom interaction analysis have mostly used quantitative techniques that conceal more than they reveal of the intricacies of classroom interaction. Practitioners of classroom discourse analysis have mostly opted for qualitative techniques (with an occasional sprinkling of quantification), characterizing their research as microethnography based. Conducting CCDA, however, requires a research tool that can penetrate hidden meanings and underlying connections. Critical ethnography offers one such possibility.

Critical ethnographers are actively engaged in dealing with powerful systems of discourse. They seek to deconstruct dominant discourses as well as counterdiscourses by posing questions at the boundaries of ideology, power, knowledge, class, race, and gender. As McLaren (1995) states, the task facing critical ethnographers "is not to render knowledge as something ultimately to be discovered, but rather as social texts that are relationally produced in a multiplicity of mutually informing contexts" (p. 281). In that sense, critical ethnography is what real ethnographic research should be: "not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (Geertz, 1973, p. 5).

Given the primacy of the search for meaning in mutually informing contexts, critical ethnography renders the dichotomy between micro- and macroethnography problematic. The dichotomy, after all, is an artifact of the academy, an analytical construct that has no psychosocial reality—unless one is willing to argue that the classroom, and the participants within it, exist inside a clinical bubble protected and protectable from external contamination. It is perhaps profitable to pay attention to the fundamental changes taking place in the fields of sociology and anthropology, in which "a sense of critical reflexivity, the complexity of voice, and subject position have transformed the terms in which ethnographic research is now undertaken and written about" (Marcus, 1998, p. 3). For example, Lash and Urry (1987, cited in Marcus, 1998) have argued for a collapsing of the macro-micro distinction itself. Echoing their view, Marcus has proposed what he calls "a multi-locale ethnography." He rationalizes that "any cultural identity or activity is constructed by multiple agents in varying contexts, or places, and that ethnography must be strategically conceived to represent this sort of multiplicity" (p. 51).

Critical ethnography, then, involves the gathering of spoken and written, audio and video data from multiple sources, including interactional episodes, participant observation, and interviews and discussions with participants at different levels and at different times. It also involves thick description as well as thick explanation. To do thick description, popularized by anthropologist Geertz (1973), the critical ethnographer returns to the same piece of data again and again and adds layers and layers of description as seen through participant observation. To do thick explanation, the critical ethnographer takes into account "relevant, theoretically salient micro- and macrocontextual influences, whether horizontal or vertical, that stand in a systematic relationship . . . to the behavior or event(s) one is attempting to explain" (Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo, 1995, p. 62). Such an investigative practice recognizes the complexity of the relationship between macrocontextual factors and the researchers' own socially determined position within the reality that they are attempting to describe, interpret, and explain.

The seemingly subjective method of critical ethnography is susceptible to adverse comments about the validity and verifiability of its findings. However, it is worth pointing out that following the positivist, empiricist scientific tradition, in which one begins with clearly identified research questions, states null or working hypotheses, and then looks for an answer from the collected data, which is then statistically verified for its validity, reliability, and generalizability, is by no means the only way of conducting critical inquiry. In the critical ethnographic tradition, research questions may evolve and change during the course of inquiry. Besides, the concept of *validity,* as Hymes (1996) points out, "is commonly dependent upon accurate knowledge of the meanings of behaviors and institutions to those who participate in them" (p. 8). Along similar lines, feminist pedagogist Lather (1991) proposes the notion of *catalytic validity.* According to her, catalytic validity points to the degree to which research moves those it studies to understand the world and the way it is shaped in order for them to transform it.

Suggestions for Further Exploration

The scope and method of CCDA presented above open up new directions for further exploration. Some possible investigative questions that might lead to useful and usable insights are the following:

- If classroom discourse consists of (socio)linguistic, sociocultural, and sociopolitical dimensions, how do we as TESOL professionals profitably explore the patterns that connect all three?

- If classroom discourse is socially constructed, politically motivated, and historically determined, how can we study and understand its impact on everyday learning and teaching?
- If an analysis of classroom discourse has to include an analysis of the discursive practices and discursive formations that sustain the symbolic violence perpetrated on participants, what investigative methods might be necessary to do such an analysis?
- If discourse participants bring to the classroom their racialized, stratified, and gendered experiences, how can we identify the way(s) in which these experiences motivate the style and substance of classroom discourse?
- If the objective of language education should be not merely to facilitate effective language use but also to promote critical engagement among discourse participants, then how can we analyze and assess the extent to which critical engagement is facilitated in the classroom?
- If the learners' voices have to be recognized and respected, how might their personal purposes, attitudes, and preferred ways of doing things be reconciled with classroom rules and regulations and with instructional aims and objectives?
- If students bring to the classroom their own forms of cultural capital, which may be different from the capital hierarchy of the external world or even of the school they attend, how can we make sure that their cultural capital is recognized, rewarded, and enriched?
- If learners and teachers are using subtle forms of subversion in the practice of everyday classroom discourse, how can we investigate the source and substance of such tactics?
- If the learners' linguistic needs and wants cannot be separated from their sociocultural needs and wants, how can we analyze and interpret the impact of one on the other?
- If negotiation of discourse meaning is not confined to the acquisitional aspects of input and interaction but includes the expectations and beliefs, identities and voices, and fears and anxieties of the participants, how might such a comprehensive analysis help or hinder the proper conduct of classroom business?
- If classroom discourse lends itself to multiple perspectives depending on the discourse participants' preconceived notions of learning, teaching, and learning outcomes, how can we identify and understand possible mismatches between intentions and interpretations of classroom aims and events?

- If prospective and practicing teachers have to be equipped with the knowledge and skill to conduct their own CCDA and achieve a reasonable degree of pedagogic freedom, how can pre- and in-service teacher education programs be recast?
- If one of the goals of CCDA is to provide a descriptive, interpretive, and explanatory account of classroom performance, how can we ensure a principled way of conducting CCDA that results in a reasonable degree of generalizability and replicability?
- If the principles and procedures of CCDA are to be adhered to in learning, teaching, and teacher education, then what actually are the costs and consequences of doing so?

Clearly, investigations of these and related questions will provide the additional insights necessary to develop a full-fledged CCDA.

IN CLOSING

A reading of poststructural and postcolonial thoughts on discourse motivates a critical look at the discourses and counterdiscourses that shape and reshape practices in ESOL classrooms. Foucault's power, de Certeau's tactics, Bourdieu's capital, Said's Orientalism, Bhabha's hybridity, and Spivak's subalternity—all present variations of the same theme, namely, that discourses manifest power relations. The theme is simple yet barely self-evident. Only a persistent promotion of critical sensibilities, in ourselves and in others, can help us as TESOL professionals unmask the hidden relationship between individual interaction in the classroom and the wider sociocultural and sociopolitical structures that impinge upon that interaction.

The transformative thrust of CCDA, with its potential to create and sustain critical sensibilities, has serious implications not only for the ways TESOL professionals observe, analyze, and interpret classroom aims and events but for curricular objectives and instructional strategies as well. It has been pointed out that ESL learning and teaching cannot take place in a sociopolitical vacuum (Auerbach, 1995; Pennycook, 1994) and that focusing on sociopolitical themes does not come at the expense of the acquisition and retention of language skills that we hope to impart in our learners (Morgan, 1998). While endorsing those views, I would rather emphasize the importance of instructional strategies in promoting critical reflexivity in the classroom. In the context of the ESL classroom, as in any other educational context, what makes a text critical has less to do with the way its content is constructed by the author (though it surely matters) than the way it is deconstructed by the teacher and the learner.

A case in point is the hero episode narrated at the beginning of this article. Recall how Debbie's ESL students complained about her preoccupation with U.S. culture and U.S. heroes. She paid little or no respect to the students' voice, and they responded with their own subversive tactics. I believed then as I do now that the tension that prevailed in her class had more to do with her instructional strategy than with the textual content. I subtly drew Debbie's attention to this in my feedback to her. I pointed out that the theme she selected for the course was well suited for an instructional strategy that not only respected her students' sociocultural sensibilities and their sociopolitical awareness but tapped their experiential knowledge as well. I suggested that, for instance, she could start a discussion about the concept of hero and hero worship in different cultures represented in the class, ask her students to say who their heroes were and why they considered their heroes to be their heroes, and compare their cultural concepts of hero and hero worship with the U.S. perspective represented in the prescribed texts. In other words, I suggested ways for Debbie to pay attention to the cultural capital students bring with them.

By recognizing and respecting various forms of cultural capital that participants bring with them, by seriously engaging them for learning and teaching purposes, and by analyzing the resultant classroom discourse by means of critical ethnography, teachers can open themselves to alternative meanings and alternative possibilities. In that sense, CCDA does not represent a seamless and sequential progression of events and thoughts from classroom interaction analysis to classroom discourse analysis to CCDA; rather, it represents a fundamental shift in the way the field conceives and conducts the business of L2 learning and teaching.

As Foucauldian educationists Popkewitz and Brennan (1998) tell us, the term *critical* "refers to a broad band of disciplined questioning of the ways in which power works through the discursive practices and performances of schooling" (p. 4). I hope that the conceptual framework for CCDA proposed here provides a foundation for the disciplined questioning of what we as ESOL teachers do in the classroom and why we do it. With its multifacted focus and its critical ethnographic tool for analysis, CCDA has the potential to offer rich representations of our classroom practices. And as we strive to realize that potential, we are well advised to keep in mind a sobering thought from anthropologist Marcus (1998): "You can't really say it all; all analyses, no matter how totalistic their rhetorics, are partial" (p. 37).

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