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“CURSES IN TESOL”: POSTCOLONIAL DESIRES FOR COLONIAL ENGLISH

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Overview

- **Historical origins of the inscription of the desires on the subjectivities and cultural imaginaries of the colonised**
 - Historical processes of imperialism, colonialism and Cold War structures
 - Cultural and psychological aftermaths of the processes
- **De-imperialisation and de-colonisation at the level of *subjectivity, desire* and *cultural imaginary***
 - Interrupting the working of the effects of these processes at the level of subjectivity and cultural imaginary – raising critical consciousness
 - Reconstituting desires in learning languages in multilingual contexts without subscribing to historical or contemporary hierarchies of languages

Imperialism, colonialism and the formation of desire for colonial English

About a year ago, a Radio Hong Kong early morning infotainment programme began to air a 10-minute section on English idioms. At the beginning, the male host who in the authors' opinion speaks good English demonstrated the reading of the idioms. However, a few days later, a native speaker model was provided and the male host reiterated that this was the standard model and urged the public to follow the native speaker model. It is interesting to note that one native speaker model presented actually carried noticeable regional accents, but the host still presented it as the “norm” that all other co-hosts and the public should follow.

(Luk & Lin 2006, p. 9)

Terminology

Imperialism & colonialism

The two are related but not the same:

As Catherine Hall (2006) puts it:

- “**Imperialism**... is the process of empire building. It is a project that originates in the metropolis and leads to domination over the peoples and lands of the periphery. ... **colonialism** is ‘what happens in the colonies as a consequence of imperial domination’. ... ‘the imperial country is the “metropole” from which power flows, and the colony is the place which it penetrates and controls’. One might add that the penetration often has been extremely uneven and that resistance on the part of the colonised has been central to that unevenness. ...

Terminology

- ...**imperialism** can function without formal colonies, but the possession of colonies is essential to what is termed **colonialism**. Colonies, themselves, differ enormously even within a particular empire such as the British Empire. The process of colonisation involves the takeover of a particular territory, appropriation of its resources and, in the case of the British Empire, the migration of people from the metropole outward to administer or to inhabit the colony as settlers. Regardless, colonisation involves various forms of dispossession of those who lived on the lands prior to their being colonised. ...

Terminology

- **Subjectivity**
 - (in simple terms) one's sense of self, self-understanding, ways of seeing self and others, worldviews (see delineation in Barker, 2008)
- **Cultural imaginaries**
 - cultural ethos, shared cultural schemata, and fantasies (see theoretical delineation of this term in Strauss, 2006)

Colonial language: cultural capital and the object of desire in colonised space

- **The colonial language**

- shaping the colonized into the colonizer
- extinguishing local languages, knowledge and epistemologies and further a **devaluing of self**
- ***Double-consciousness (Dubois, 1903)***: viewing oneself through the eyes of the dominant

- **The symbolic violence of colonization persists in**

- postcolonial contexts (Bunyi, 2005),
- non-colonial settings (Tiazi, 2005; Reagan & Shreffler, 2005) and
- empires themselves (Motha, 2006, 2014)

Colonial language: cultural capital and the object of desire in colonised space

- **The colonial psychic and cultural belief remains at the **unconscious level****
 - Mauvaise foi ('bad faith') (Sartre, 1956): the postcolonial being in itself rather than being for itself; emulation of the Other
 - Forming desires without being conscious of the social constructedness of 'natural' reasons for the desires (e.g. native English accent is more 'beautiful')

Desire for English and Western cosmopolitanism

- **The Cold War sociopolitical structure inscribed on people's subjectivity and cultural imaginary (Chen, 2010)**
- **Cultural imaginary of many Asian countries about 'the West'**
 - looking to 'the West' as an ideal
 - having unconscious desire to emulate the West in seeking 'modernity' or development

Chen Ying-Zhen:

For a long time, in Taiwan, anyone who criticized the U.S. would be labeled a ‘communist spy,’ which would destroy one’s life and family. Unlike other progressive intellectuals in the Third World, those in Taiwan lost the knowledge, ideas, and ability to criticize the hegemony of U.S. neo-colonialism. Under the Cold War structure in East Asia, the anti-communist security regime deeply penetrated the social body and educational institutions. In the minds of young intellectuals, the image of America as a powerful, civilized, developed, and wealthy country was solidly established. Until today, ‘the best will study in the U.S.’ has become the highest value for young students in Taiwan. (Chen Ying-zhen, 1998, quoted in Chen 2010, p. 115)

Desire for English and Western cosmopolitanism

English language policy considerations and decisions in many Asian societies (e.g. South Korea):

A desire and a rhetoric for **development, modernity, cosmopolitanism** and **linguistic capital for successful participation in the new global socioeconomic order**, re-voicing and reproducing the ideological discourse of the global dominance of English (Park & Abelman, 2004; Park 2009, 2013)

Desire for English and Western cosmopolitanism

- English-as-an-official-language debates and the ‘ideology of self-deprecation’ in South Korea (Park, 2009, 2013)
 - Koreans are failures in learning English, so making English an official language will enable them to master English

The psychological power of the dominance of English:

- ‘Subaltern subjectivity’ (Ascroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1998)
 - students in disadvantaged socio-economic conditions find english difficult, boring but important and readily believe they can’t have good English

Rise of ELT industries: Commodification of colonial English

Appleby (2013) White male English teachers as 'charisma men' in Japan

Kubota (2011): Linguistic instrumentalism and social stratification in Japan

Song (2011): English as an official language in South Korea

Rubdy (2005): Official ideologies and language policy in education in post-colonial Singapore

Appleby (2013): white male English teachers as 'Charisma Men' in Japan

- Interview data with White Australian men working as TESOL teachers in Japan
- The white men's professional and personal experiences with Japanese women (female students).
- The licentious figure of 'Charisma Man' (from a comic strip series): a stereotypical white Western man, an 'average guy' in his native land who becomes something of a superhero when transported to Japan.



CHARISMA MAN

The Man... The Legend

Welcome to Charisma Man!

Charisma Man first appeared in the February 1998 issue of the 'The Alien' magazine, and immediately catapulted into legendary-status among readers in Japan's expat/Gaijin world. The creator of the strip, Larry Rodney, teamed up with a graphic designer friend, Glen Schroeder, both from Canada, to produce the first year of outstanding strips. The strips continued through 2002 with Neil Garscadden doing the writing and Wayne Wilson providing the art work. At the end of 2002, a book containing all the original strips was published and quick sales further documented its appeal. 'Charisma Man' has now become common vernacular among ex-pats in Japan and other countries. This website provides all the info you need to keep up to date with all the latest Charisma Man developments.

Charisma Man Episodes!

Charisma Man Original Strip #1

Charisma Man Original Strip #2

BACK ON HIS HOME PLANET OF CANADA, OUR HERO WAS JUST ANOTHER AVERAGE GUY...



BUT WHEN HE LANDED ON PLANET JAPAN...



...HE BECAME

CHARISMA MAN



WATASHI WA ... CHARISMA MAN ... DESU!



BUT CAN OUR HERO DEFEND HIMSELF AGAINST HIS ARCH-ENEMY... WESTERN WOMAN!?



CAN CHARISMA MAN SAVE HIMSELF IN TIME? Find Out Next Month!

Appleby (2013): white male English teachers as 'Charisma Men' in Japan

- Emerged and overlapped teacher and student identities in the *eikaiwa* (English language school?) industry as a commercial-educational space
 - Male and female
 - Customer and product
 - Agent and object
 - Prey and victim
- The white male teachers: struggle to fulfil professional desires while simultaneously fashioning a morally adequate, yet successfully heterosexual and masculine self

(The following slides are shown by courtesy of Roslyn Appleby)

Apple Store Mac iPod iPhone iPad iTunes Support

iTunes プレビュー iTunes 10の新機能 iTunesとは? iTunesで何をしよう? iTunesを使いこなす

もし彼氏が外国人だったら英会話 開発: CyberAgent, Inc. [この開発者による他の App を見る](#)

Appを購入、ダウンロードするには iTunes を開いてください。



詳細
もし彼氏が外国人だったら...
『もし彼氏が外国人だったら英会話』では、毎日の彼氏との電話が、恋愛ドラマのような筋書き
[もし彼氏が外国人だったら英会話 のサポート](#) [...さらに見る](#)

バージョン 2.1.0 の新機能
今回バージョンではiOS4.2.1で正常にお使いいただけないエラーが発見されました。大変申し訳ございませんが、該当のご利用者様は最新のiOSにアップデートいただいた上でお使いいただけますようお願いいたします。

iPhone スクリーンショット




¥250
カテゴリ: 教育
更新: 2011/08/08
現在のバージョン: 2.1.0
2.1.0
サイズ: 8.2 MB
言語: 日本語, 英語
販売業者: cyberagent inc
© cyberagent, Inc
AllRight Reserved
以下の理由により 12+ のレーティングがついています。
まれ/軽度 アルコール、タバコ、ドラッグの使用または言及
まれ/軽度 性的内容またはヌード

条件: iPhone、iPod touch および iPad 互換 iOS 4.0 以降が必要

カスタマー評価
現在のバージョン:
*** 7 件の評価
全てのバージョン:
*** 68 件の評価

トップアドオン
1. Callコインチャ... ¥85

CyberAgent, Inc.による

The white male English teacher

- Commodified by the ELT institutes
[(ex)colonizer/former imperialistic]
- Objectified by Japanese female students as objects of desire
[(ex)colonized/‘post-colonized’]

Media enticements – for teachers and students

(this slide is shown by courtesy of Roslyn Appleby)



<http://www.aacircle.com.au/forums/f23/>



<http://careers.gaba.co.jp/overseas/images/lesson.jpg>

Kubota (2011): linguistic instrumentalism and social stratification in Japan

- Interviews with worker and business leaders about role of English and English tests
- English is not just for pragmatic work-oriented purpose but also for leisure, socializing or escape for some learners (with particular social background)
- Neoliberal linguistic instrumentalism implicated in social stratification (e.g. gender, race, job status) shaped features of Japanese adults more than their language skills

Song (2011): English as an official language in South Korea

- ‘English as an official language’ discourses in South Korea while
- The majority of people and industries can function well in the Korean language
- Legitimization of internal domination of the socio-economic elite classes
 - English as gatekeeping cultural capital in key areas of social mobility

Rubdy (2005): Official ideologies and language policy in education in post-colonial Singapore

- Speak Mandarin Campaign and Speak Good English Movement
- Consequences
 - Social stratification and divisiveness: spawning and sustaining meritocratic system, reproducing social inequality
 - Language shift: the power and status of the two languages grow at the expense of minority languages including Singlish, reducing linguistic diversity

Theoretical lenses: Discourses, institutions and the constitution of subjectivity and desire

Foucault: discourse, subjectivity, and knowledge

Production of self or subjectivity: result of power relations, discourses and institutions

The effect of colonialism lingers on at the level of subjectivity

Construction of 'self & other', 'the West and the Rest'

- Binary construction of Self and Other
- Binary construction of **'the West and the Rest'**
- Cultural theorists Stuart Hall (1989, 1992) and Paul Gilroy (2002) point out that 'the West' is not a fact of geography, but a historical construct discursively produced and reproduced in colonialist discourses
- It **functions to classify** societies and people into different essentialist, hierarchical categories.
- It produces knowledge about the superior (White) West, and the inferior (non-White) Rest

Construction of 'self & other', 'the West and the Rest'

- It discursively constructs both the binary categories of cultural *Self* and *Other*, as well as
- **binary** sets of **knowledge** about them
- and these categories are further essentialized (i.e., do not allow for internal diversity, or entanglement)
- and hierarchicalized (put on a **linear** scale of progress, evolution, development, etc.)
- e.g., 'the civilized, advanced, superior West' vs. 'the uncivilized, primitive, inferior Rest'

Postcolonial theories on colonialist construction of *self* and *other*

- Edward Said's *Orientalism*, a key text in postcolonial theory, shows how the colonialist discourse on the Orient—Orientalism—has constructed a **knowledge** of the East and **power-knowledge relations** privileging the West.
- 'The Orient was a European invention', and 'the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) *as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience*' (Said, 1985, pp. 1-2; emphasis added).

The *Other* is inside the *Self*

- Drawing on Saussure's linguistic theory (1974) on how signs gain their meanings not through representation of external facts, **but through the setting up of internal contrasts**,
- postcolonial theorists argue that the colonialist has to construct an inferior cultural and racial *Other* in order to know who he/she is (*Self*):

A Quote from Frantz Fanon's book, 'Black Skin, White Masks'

- [The English] have to know who they **are not** in order to know who they are.... It is a fantastic moment in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* when he talks of how the gaze of the Other fixes him in an identity. He knows what it is to be Black when the White child pulls the hand of her mother and says, "Look momma, a Black man." And he says, "I was fixed in that gaze." That is the gaze of Otherness. And there is no identity that is without the dialogic relationship to the Other. The Other is not outside, but also **inside** the Self, the identity. (Hall, 1989, p. 23; emphasis added)



The first step towards lightening

The White Man's Burden

is through teaching the virtues of cleanliness.

Pears' Soap

is a potent factor in brightening the dark corners of the earth as civilization advances, while amongst the cultured of all nations it holds the highest place—it is the ideal toilet soap.

All rights reserved.

Popular circulation of colonialist discourses & images in the 'metropolis': construction of cultural self & other



- In October 1899, this advertisement appeared in *McClure's Magazine* to persuade readers that purchasing Pears' Soap would lighten the White Man's Burden by "teaching the virtues of cleanliness."
- The advertisement shows Admiral George Dewey washing his hands, ships in the background, and the scene of a missionary handing soap to a native.

Source: <http://www.wou.edu/las/socsci/kimjensen/imperweb.html>

- Context: The White Man's Burden became a discourse that American imperialists used to justify territorial expansion
- Audience: *McClure's Magazine* readers
- Implications: Colonialist discourses/images were circulating in popular media and ordinary everyday life → the everyday ordinariness of colonialist discourse (naturalization of colonialism)
- Source: <http://www.wou.edu/las/socsci/kimjensen/imperweb.html>

Constitution of subjectivity and desire: both the (ex)coloniser and the (ex)colonised

Fanon: constitution of subjectivity and desire of both the colonized and the colonizer (Chen, 2010)

A Foucauldian insight:

Both the (ex)colonizer and (ex)colonized are vehicles of the colonial logic or discourse

Need for intervention that takes place at the level of subjectivity and the psychic structure of desire

Central Question

How can we help ourselves and our students to de-imperialize and de-colonize subjectivities and cultural imaginaries?

Critical syncretism: decolonizing and de-imperializing subjectivity and desire

The projects of deconstructing, denaturalizing and reconstituting subjectivities and desires

- **Decolonization: 'post-colonised'** societies
- **De-imperialization: former imperialistic** countries

- both **individual** and **institutional levels**

Critical syncretism (Chen, 2010): reconstituting patterns of identification

How to achieve a de-colonized subjectivity?

A strategy of *critical syncretism*

- To overcome this impasse, Chen (2010) proposes a cultural strategy of critical syncretism:

‘The direction of identification put forward by a critical syncretism is outward; the intent is to become others, to actively interiorize elements of others into the subjectivity of the self so as to move beyond the boundaries and divisive positions historically constructed by colonial power relations in the form of patriarchy, capitalism, racism, chauvinism, heterosexism, or nationalistic xenophobia. ...

Strategy of critical syncretism: multiplying patterns of identification

- ... Becoming others is to become female, aboriginal, homosexual, transsexual, working class, and poor; ...
- Critical syncretism is a cultural strategy of identification for subaltern subject groups. Here “others” refers not just to racial, ethnic, and national categories but also includes class, sex and gender, and geographical positions.’ (Chen, 2010, p. 99)

Hierarchical binarism

Dominant Structure or Regime	Subject Position: Superior Self	Subject Position: Inferior Other
Colonialism	Civiliser/Coloniser vs.	Primitive/Colonised
Patriarchy	Male vs.	Female
Heterosexualism	Heterosexual vs.	Homosexual, bisexual, transgender, etc.
Native-speakerism	Native speaker vs.	Non-native speaker

Strategy of critical syncretism: multiplying patterns of identification

- Chen proposes that the ex-colonized should stop looking *only* to the powerful as models (or as negative models) but also to look across a wide range of possible models elsewhere.
- Traditionally the ‘weak’ or the ‘marginal’ as defined by various structures of domination (e.g., patriarchy, colonialism, heterosexualism) is seldom looked up to as possible models for identification, but Chen here is inviting the ex-colonized to try out the subject positions of women, of homosexuals, of transsexuals, of linguistic and ethnic minorities, of the ‘learning disabled,’ of the poor and so on.

Strategy of critical syncretism: multiplying patterns of identification

- From these diverse perspectives and identity positions the ex-colonized can discover new ways of seeing things and multiply their frames of reference.
- In this way, the ex-colonized might be able to step out of the straightjacket of binary identity categories defined by the (former or neo-) colonizer.

Strategy of critical syncretism: multiplying patterns of identification

- By being able to see things from the identity positions of other people who are also struggling, it becomes possible to make connections and networks that can link different efforts to an overarching political struggle.
- For instance, the male working class activist can join efforts with the feminist activist, the homosexual activist, and the migrant worker activist. They can also share their different perspectives, epistemologies, strategies, and knowledge frameworks.

Conscientização and Psychological Identification with the 'Weak'

Conscientização (Freire, 1970)

- Becoming of how we are shaped by the many **inconsistencies** and **ambiguities** in our **institutional** and **social conditions** and how we are **socialized into desires** through **everyday encounters and practices (e.g. ELT)**
- Helping raising **critical consciousness** and making us more **agentive** in shaping our own desires.

Critical pedagogy: emphasis on raising critical consciousness

- Critical pedagogical work has emphasized the goal of achieving critical consciousness in liberating students from ideological myths or false consciousness
- e.g., the colonial belief that former colonial masters are superior to oneself, or the myth that the colonizer's language/speech is more scientific, modern, rational, or beautiful.
- It focuses on designing critical curricula and pedagogy for raising students' critical consciousness of their own sociopolitical situation.

Critical Discourse Analysis: focus on ‘the thinking *self*’

- While critical discourse analysis is both necessary and valuable in raising our critical consciousness,
- it seems that critical discourse analysis alone is not sufficient in achieving the goal of :
- **re-constituting the emotional structure of sentiment** and cultural imaginaries of colonized and imperialized subjectivities.
- European Enlightenment modernity has emphasized critical and rational thinking (Marshall, 1994; Felski, 1995).
- Anglo-European theories of the subject or the self since Descartes have also privileged the *thinking* subject/self.

Importance of emotional conditions

- This critical consciousness is seen as key to subsequent liberating work leading to self-empowerment (Freire, 1973).
- While recognizing the importance of critical reflection and critical awareness, Chen (2010) also stresses the importance of bringing to the forefront **the emotional conditions** of the imperialist, colonial, and cold war subject.

The emotional conditions (structure of sentiment) of the imperialist, colonial subject

- How can the imperialist, colonial, or cold war structures of sentiment and cultural imaginaries be reconstituted?
- Chen's key insight is to highlight the importance of understanding the emotional conditions (or structures of sentiment) of the imperialist, cold-war, or colonial subject.
- The imperialist, colonial, or cold-war 'subject' here means a person who has been *subjected to* the ideological shaping forces and sociopolitical mechanisms of imperialism, colonialism, or cold war.
- The person's subjectivities, structures of sentiment, and cultural imaginaries have been constituted by these forces and sociopolitical mechanisms.

The need to also understand ‘structure of sentiment’ (‘情緒性的感情結構’ or ‘感情結構’)

- Analysis of the emotional conditions of the subject/self, however, will contribute to further enhancing critical pedagogical work.
- Chen (2010), via Fanon’s (1952) sociopolitical psychoanalysis of the emotional structure of the colonized subject, can offer us some insights on how to further enhance critical curriculum design work.
- This work aims to achieve the twin goals of both raising critical consciousness, and **reconstituting the structure of sentiment and cultural imaginaries.**
- It aims at re-shaping and reconstituting the deep-rooted desires, attitudes, imaginaries, and emotions of ex/neo-colonials and ex/neo-imperialists.

Identifying with ‘the weak’

- To achieve these goals, it seems that critical discourse analysis will need to go hand in hand with creative curriculum design that also seeks to provide the opportunity for students *to emotionally take up the subject positions of ‘the weak’ as defined by current structures of domination.*
- Here, Chen’s (2010) strategy of critical syncretism is useful
- It is a strategy of multiplying our patterns of cultural identification.

Combining Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Pedagogy

Critical Discourse Analysis

- Raising critical consciousness

Critical Pedagogical Design (adopting Critical Syncretism)

- Multiplying patterns of cultural identification and emotional horizons
- Psychodramas and scenarios in which students (and also teachers) can try out different identities, in psychologically realistic role-play and performative acts, or ethnographic drama projects (Goldstein 2003; Nelson 2011)

Critical Pedagogical Design

- Trying out (different combinations of) the subject positions of the ‘weak’:
 - The homosexual, the female, the colored person, the poor, the working class, the migrant worker, the trans-sexual, the linguistic minority, the physically challenged, the un-educated, the outsider, the foreigner, the communist, and so on.
- Creating psychological experience to re-shape our cultural imaginary and structure of sentiment towards more understanding and empathy of the formerly cultural ‘other’ or ‘inferior’.

Critical Pedagogical Design

- Facilitating the bringing to the forefront of *our deep-rooted desires, fears, cultural stereotypes, and emotions*, which are the effects of colonialism, cold war, imperialism, and other dominant social structures.
- An example from new media:
- Second Life avatars can be used to enable students to take up new identities with realistic, psychologically significant effects, although much more research is needed in this area

(As, depending on the use and situation, hierarchical, binary identities can also be reinforced in such new media; so, caution is also needed)

Inter-referencing: multiplying our frames of reference

- Innovative critical pedagogical design can also seek to provide students with a chance to learn about and appreciate (but *not* to essentialize, fixate, or exoticize) the cultures of other societies and the cultural knowledge and worldviews of other groups of people situated elsewhere.
- Critical cultural studies projects that draw on a repertoire of strategies and resources including new media communication facilities can be designed to facilitate such new cultural experiences through interacting with people located in different places and cultures.

- For instance, a story co-construction project can be designed to link up English language teachers-in-training in one locality (e.g., Hong Kong) and those in another culture and place (e.g., Myanmar) to co-construct/co-author, or co-redesign traditional Chinese folk stories and Myanmar folk tales.
- Students/teachers from both localities can engage in creative and critical discussion of different folk legend traditions and how this can enrich our cultural imaginary repertoire (e.g., apart from learning well-known Western fairy tales, which traditionally form an important part of our English reading curriculum).

- This will help multiply our frames of reference and de-centre fixation with or attachment to Anglo-European knowledge and cultural imaginaries that often hold the central position in thinking and practice in our field (e.g., TESOL, Applied Linguistics).

Work done in raising critical consciousness

Individual level

Vandrick (2002, 2009), Mackie (2003)

Questioning the desires driving ESL teachers' teaching that are historically shaped by colonialism (e.g. about race, class, etc.)

Policy and institutional level

MacNamara (2011) and Kim (2012)

Flexibility and sensitivity to different accents and ways of using English in English tests in international civil aviation communication

Concluding remarks

A NET wrote in a job application letter, 'I have taken a lot of courses in TESOL':

A '*curse*' constituting the hierarchical structure of subjectivity and desire in TESOL

We need to break away from the hierarchy inscribed in our **subjectivities** by the **discourses and institutions** of historical and **neo-colonialism**, **imperialism** or various structures of **domination and subordination**.

Email me for the articles...

- Lin, A. M. Y., & Motha, S. (in press). 'Curses in TESOL': Postcolonial desires for colonial English. In Ruth Arber, Michiko Weinmann, & Jillian Blackmore (Eds.), *Rethinking languages education: Directions, challenges and innovations*. New York: Routledge.
- See also an earlier article by the same authors:
- Motha, S., & Lin, A. M. Y. (2014). "Non-coercive rearrangements": Theorizing desire in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 48(2), 331-359.
- My email address: angellin@hku.hk