

Exploring the English-Language Ideology: Critical Praxis in English Language Education

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ABSTRACT

Viewing the English language as a neutral communication tool has been criticized, for it neglects the sociopolitical implications of language learning and teaching. Growing up in a culture that strongly urges people to learn and use English, many Taiwanese students tend to blindly worship English, pursue native-like proficiency in English, and thus lose their own subjectivity in the process of learning English. As a pedagogical tool, critical language awareness (CLA) demonstrates the ideologies and power relations in everyday language by helping language learners become sensitive to and question the role that language plays in everyday usage. This paper focuses on the possibilities of CLA in an EFL college content-based course, and qualitatively describes the experiences of 12 students who participated in CLA-based activities through analysis of class observation notes and student journal writings and artifacts. The results indicate that the CLA approach opened up new possibilities for the participants through critical reflection on English-language ideology and cultural heritage. The results also reveal that the participants gained subjectivity in learning English. This study concludes that a CLA-based lesson helps students to develop a different understanding of their identities in the world and to respond critically to the world.

Keywords: critical language awareness, English-language ideology critical reflection,

探討英語語言意識型態：英語教育的實踐

劉佩勳

摘要

全球化的時代，英語已成為國際語言並被廣泛使用。然而，受到英語至上的影響，不少台灣學生往往盲目學習英語，並追求達到母語般的英語水平，因此忽略自身的需求與目的。許多研究指出將批判語言意識(CLA)融入英語學習有助於幫助學生探索語言、權力和意識形態之間的關係。近年來，儘管已有許多學者進行整合英語語言課程和 CLA 的研究與應用，但類似的研究在台灣仍然很少見。因此，藉由質性分析課堂觀察、學生學習日記與作品，本研究旨在探討將英語課程引入 CLA 時所造成的可能性。研究結果顯示以 CLA 為基礎的英語課程能提昇學生的學習自主性並能進一步引導學生省思英語學習所伴隨之意識形態。

關鍵字:批判語言意識、批判性省思、英語意識形態與英語學習

Introduction

In this era of globalization, English is an international language that is widely promoted and used. Crystal (1997) pointed out the important role of English for communication purposes in global contexts, and has addressed the urgent need for English instruction. However, viewing the English language as a neutral communication tool has been criticized, for it neglects the sociopolitical implications of language learning and teaching.

Growing up in a culture that strongly urges people to learn and use English, many Taiwanese students tend to blindly worship English, pursue “native-like” proficiency in English, and thus lose their own subjectivity in the process of learning English. The promotion of a certain language cannot be viewed as a neutral action because language learning involves ideological struggles. Language ideology is conceptual, power-laden, and can be manipulated by socially dominant forces (Woolard, 1992).

Thus, unpacking hidden language ideologies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has become crucial, particularly in the context of Taiwan, where English-language ideology plays a predominant role in English-language education. Ignoring the underlying ideologies in the process of learning English might sustain unequal relationships between Taiwan and western countries, which may cause Taiwanese students to devalue their L1 heritage and construct an L1 identity of inferiority (Liu & Tannacito, 2013). Therefore, a Taiwan-based study exploring the possibility of unpacking English-language ideology is warranted.

As a pedagogical tool, critical language awareness (CLA) helps raise students’ critical awareness of language and can be used to explore the relations between language, power, and ideology through the learning of the social, political and ideological aspects of discourse and language (Fairclough, 1992; Alim, 2010). In recent years, CLA has gained much attention in many EFL countries, in recognition of the importance of raising critical awareness in English language courses (e.g., Farias, 2005; Maftoon & Sabbaghan, 2010; Ngwenya, 2006; Rashidi & Safari, 2011). However, there have been few published works in the contexts of TESOL in Taiwan. One of the few exceptions is Huang (2013), who investigated the role of writing in classroom practices that implemented CLA and how the students responded to such an approach. Huang (2013) found that through analyzing linguistic features of texts, the students were able to see writing not just as being about grammar, vocabulary and organization, but as an expression of the authors’ ideological intentions.

While Huang (2013) emphasizes micro level language construction (i.e., linguistic features), the present study aims to design activities that draw attention to the macro level of language (i.e., words, phrases and content). The purpose of the study was to investigate the possibilities of CLA in a college content-based course and how such awareness leads to transformational action. The study provides data and the process of critical inquiry in an Asian context in particular, where little research has been done on the ideology of the English language.

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How does a critical language awareness framework help provide EFL students with opportunities to engage in a critical reflection on the English language?
2. How does CLA help engage students in some form of transformational action?

Literature Review

English-Language Ideologies and English Education

Language education and policy often affect and (re)produce language ideologies (Blommaert, 2006). Language ideologies are defined as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (Silverstein, 1979: 183). In other words, language ideologies are perceptions that one has of the status, function, ownership, etc. of a language. These ideological perceptions may not be conscious or explicit (Friedrich, 1989); therefore, unpacking them is one of the important goals of language education.

As English becomes a lingua franca, its promotion tends to take a neutral view of the language and emphasizes its importance in global communication. Crystal (1997) illustrated the importance of the role the English language plays in global understanding, using facts to emphasize the urgent need for English teaching, including the fact that 70% of 160 linguistics journals were published in English. However, Crystal’s perceptions of the English language and English language teaching have been challenged by several critical scholars (e.g., Phillipson, 1992, 2009; Holliday, 2005).

Instead of viewing English as a global communication tool, Phillipson (1992) sees it as a tool of linguistic imperialism. He takes a radical position and criticizes the traditional, naïve, and neutral view of the English language. He views the promotion of English as a way Western countries dominate developing countries. According to

Phillipson (1992: 47), “the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages.” His notion is based on the power asymmetry observed between national languages and English, which appears to construct the English language as a means of domination and structural inequality. Thus, he perceives that the linguistic choices of the dominated are imposed, rather than chosen options. In all, challenging the English-language ideology and the taken-for-granted view of the English language as a global language, Phillipson opposes those arguments which promote the spread of English because the arguments glorify English and devalue other languages.

Taking a similar approach to Phillipson (1992, 2009) in viewing English language teaching (ELT) as a construct of imperialism/colonialism, Holliday (2005) proposed localized teaching methods in ELT, and envisioned equality between the West and World TESOL. Holliday (2005) criticized the unexamined and appropriated TESOL professionalism. Presenting notions of appropriate methodology—teaching methods that pay attention to diverse international locations, and cultural continuity—preserving and rehabilitating local cultural heritage, Holliday (2005) tried to expand the ownership of English and balance the unequally distributed power relations in the field of TESOL.

English-Language Ideologies in Taiwan

In the context of Taiwan, English-language ideology plays a predominant role in English language education. The important role English plays in the world and governmental policies of language education in the favoring of English have both reinforced the prestige of English in Taiwan. To illustrate, in the early 2000s, in addition to learning local languages, more Taiwanese adults and students dedicated themselves to learning English than those who learned local languages in cram schools or with private tutors for utilitarian purposes (Tetrault, 2003). Also, in 2002, some people suggested making English the second official language in Taiwan; in 2003, the Ministry of Education (MOE) joined the debate on whether to seek native speakers of English as teachers to enhance the English proficiency of Taiwanese students in elementary and middle schools; since 2005, English has become a compulsory subject from the third grade to the first year in college. Taiwan is one of many countries that encourage students to connect to the global society through learning English. Many Taiwanese believe that people who are capable of using English will have a promising future in terms of education, social status, and economic success. This is due to the fact that Taiwanese society has an existing English worship complex: fluent English symbolizes affluence, a good education, and

high social class (Ruan, 1996). Wu (2008) also pointed out that the trend of English learning in Taiwan might be attributed to this ideology of worshipping English.

However, such an ideology might validate and sustain unequal relations between Taiwan and western countries (Chen, 2006; Liu & Tannacito, 2013). For example, using critical discourse analysis, Chang (2011) examined the phenomenon of 'English fever' in Taiwan through analyzing advertising slogans for English language cram schools. She found that the ideology of English as a global language has produced educational, economic, and linguistic inequality in Taiwan. Tsai (2005) made a similar observation when she pointed out that the spread of English is promoted under the name of globalization, which often produces and perpetuates linguistic ideology and further reinforces unequal power relations between western and local countries.

Addressing the danger of the spread of the English language, many researchers have indicated that instead of blindly learning a language, language learners should maintain subjectivity and appreciate their own cultural heritage (e.g., Canagarajah, 1999; Holliday, 2005); that is, English-language learners can neither ignore the underlying ideologies and power relations nor lose their own subjectivity in the process of learning English.

Studies on Critical Language Awareness

The concept of critical language awareness (CLA) acknowledges that the learning of the English language is influenced by power differences along racial, social, and class lines (Harklau, 2000). It considers the ways in which ideologies in discourse and language could marginalize some groups while sustaining the power of others. Fairclough (1992) argues that CLA should be a central concern in language education. As a pedagogical tool, CLA makes explicit the ideologies and power relations hidden in everyday language.

Much research has confirmed the value of CLA as a pedagogical framework that has the potential to open up opportunities for change or enhance beliefs and empowerment in language education (Case, Ndura, & Righetini, 2005; Janks, 1999; Reagan, 2006; Wagner, 2008). For example, using student journals in a postgraduate CLA course in South Africa, Janks (1999) found that the journals told powerful stories about how her students rethought their own practices and risked change to find possibilities for their own agency. Maftoon and Sabbaghan (2010) also found that raising the CLA of Iranian students could help them better recognize the ideological assumptions within the English language.

Several different teaching approaches have been used over the years in an attempt to apply CLA in different educational contexts. Many of them have proposed emphasizing the importance of the interaction between reader and text. For instance, Wallace (1992) used provocative texts to teach EFL students the skills to interpret texts which address ideological assumptions. She found that there was a developing awareness among the participants that reading texts is ideologically driven, and they were able to reflect on the texts more critically. Similarly, Ngwenya (2006) introduced CLA in IsiZulu through teaching critical reading and viewing. Case, Ndura and Righettini (2005) suggested reading critically through CLA and training students to see texts with a critical eye through the teaching of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). They provide ESL teachers and administrators with a template for examining issues of race, class and gender in reading texts.

Others have provided methods to increase EFL students' critical language awareness through journal writing tasks (Janks, 1999; Maftoon & Sabbaghan, 2010). In her study, Janks (1999) showed how students constructed multiple identities and changed their identities through journal writing. Rivers (2011) presented reflective awareness-raising strategies to Japanese college students concerning language use. It is found that through these strategies, students in the study were able to understand classroom language choices in an English-only learning environment and to realize that an English-only policy is an unrealistic target. Finally, some scholars have used a dialogic and interactive approach to teach CLA. Ivanič and Simpson (1992) designed their CLA course around issues of language varieties using a range of activities including drama/role plays, group discussion, language surveys, ranking of status of accents, gathering written forms of different languages, etc. with non-verbal texts such as graphs, films, cartoons, and illustrations.

Method

Participants

The research participants were 12 Taiwanese English learners in the English Department of a university in northern Taiwan. They were junior English majors, aged 20-22, and were enrolled in a compulsory English American culture course in which the researcher was the instructor.

This qualitative study utilized the purposive sampling method (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993) to select research participants. There were 40 students enrolled in the English American culture course. The 12 participants were selected

based on criteria created by the researcher. First, the participants had to attend all the CLA classes and submit assignments on time, which indicated their engagement in the class (n=21). Second, the students' CLA-related assignments should reflect directly on the course materials (n=12). Finally, the researcher invited the students who met the first two criteria to participate in the study (n=12). The participants' consent to participate in the study was obtained. This study aims to report the possibilities of the CLA approach being introduced in the context of Taiwan, and thus critical cases were chosen purposefully.

Instructional Design

The compulsory English American Culture course aimed to help students achieve cultural literacy through readings focusing on Western (American in particular) culture and values. The 18-week course was divided into two parts. The first twelve weeks focused on themes such as American cultures, values, languages, etc. with traditional approaches which utilized teacher-directed, lecture methods. The CLA instructional design was implemented in the last six weeks (i.e., weeks 13-18), which intended to encourage students to reflect critically on the politics of learning English, develop their intercultural understandings, and examine the relationships between culture and language. The CLA instructional design was designed around the theme of English-language ideology, which lasted six weeks, with two class-hours per week. Four topics were introduced: why we learn English, different perspectives on learning English, don't insist on English, and multilingualism. These topics were addressed because they invite students to ponder questions such as why a particular language is preferred, who makes that decision, and what it means to people who do not use the language. These questions guide the students towards understanding the sociopolitical aspects of the promotion of the English language, which leads to unpacking English-language ideology in Taiwan. Table 1 provides the overall approach and content of the 18-week course.

Table 1
The Overall Approach and Content of the Course

Week	Approach	Content/Topic
1~12	traditional	American culture and values; languages in the United States; immigration in the United States; myths of the American west; American music
13		Introduction; write a journal on why you learn English
14		Why do we learn English?

15	critical language	Different perspectives on learning English
16	awareness (CLA)	Don't insist on English
17		Multilingualism
18		Presentation of critical projects

Course materials used in the CLA classes were multimedia (e.g., film, video clip, etc.) and written texts (e.g., news articles, blogs, etc.). Course assessment included reflective journals and critical projects (e.g., posters, role plays, a letter to a government representative, etc.). The CLA lessons were conducted using strategies such as questioning and problem posing.

The framework proposed by Fairclough (2001) was adopted to design the CLA-based course. Fairclough (2001) divided the components of CLA instruction into four stages: Reflection on Experience, Systematizing Experience, Explanation, and Developing Practice. The first two stages focus on reflecting on and systematizing students' language learning experiences and paying attention to the unconscious or hidden ideologies in the discourse and language they use in their daily lives. The following two stages help students become more aware of the way the underlying social relations are reproduced and transformed in discourse and language. Through the four stages of CLA, Fairclough (2001) claimed that students would understand "how their language is socially (de)valued in comparison with that of others" (p. 200) and "contribute to the transformation of existing orders of discourse" (p. 201). Table 2 gives the description of the four stages as quoted from Fairclough (2001, p. 201).

Table 2
Four Stages/Guiding Principles of CLA (Fairclough, 2001, p. 201)

Stages	Description
Reflection on experience	Children are asked to reflect upon their own discourse and their experience of social constraints upon it, and to share their reflections with the class
Systematizing experience	The teacher shows the children how to express these reflections in a systematic form, giving them the status of knowledge
Explanation	This knowledge becomes an object of further collective reflection and analysis by the class, and social explanations are sought

Developing practice The awareness resulting from (1-3) is used to develop the child’s capacity for purposeful discourse

The four components of CLA were adapted and adjusted to include Janks’ (1999) journal writing approach in the course syllabus: Students reflect on how discourse and ideology are related to their lives through reflective journals (Reflection on Experience). They read texts or watch videos related to English-language learning in class, and they present their understandings in systematic ways through classroom discussion and reflective journals (Systemizing Experience). Students also explore the ways in which social practice favors certain discursive acts, and how ideologies are hidden in the discourses through reflective journals (Explanation). Finally, students are encouraged to find ways to change the ideologies in their own contexts through a critical project (Developing Practice).

For example, during week 14 (see Table 3), within stage 1 (Reflection) of a lesson planned around the topic of “Why do we learn English,” the students were asked to share a journal reflecting on why they learn English and what better English means to them. Within stage 2 (Systematizing experience), the students watched a YouTube video about reasons why people should learn English and tried to systematically present their understanding of the reasons why people learn English and what better English means to people through answering guided questions. The focus of stage 3 (Explanation) was to lead the students to think in-depth about the issues by asking questions such as who made the video clip, why they made it and, if everyone is learning English in the way the clip promotes, who would benefit from this kind of promotion. Finally, in stage 4 (Developing practice), the students were asked to write a journal reflecting on the class readings or discussion. Sometimes, the students were asked to identify issues or problems of concern to them and work to take action to change or transform the status quo. A detailed description of the CLA instructional design on the theme of English-language ideology in weeks 14-17 is demonstrated in Appendices A-C.

Table 3
CLA lesson plan—Week 14

Week 14	
Topic	Why do we learn English
Materials	YouTube video: “Why learn English”
	1. Reflection
	Students share journal writings on “why you learn English and

	what better English means to you” (Group and class discussion)
Classroom Procedure	<hr/> 2. Systematizing experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watch a YouTube video about reasons why we should learn English - Comprehension check <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. What are some reasons for learning English? ii. What are some advantages of speaking good English? <hr/> 3. Explanation <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Guess and discuss (group and class discussion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Who made the video clip? ii. Why did they make the clip (for what purposes)? iii. If everyone is learning English as the clip promotes, who would benefit from this kind of promotion? iv. What are some different perspectives on the role of English? <hr/> 4. Developing practice <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Students write a journal reflecting on the class activity/discussion</p> <hr/>

Data Collection and Analysis

The data analyzed for this paper consisted of five 100-minute double lessons (i.e., two 50-minute lessons given consecutively) from weeks 14 to 18. The qualitative methods used in this study include video-recorded class observations and examination of student writings and artifacts (i.e., journal entries and other materials). A total of four journal entries were collected. The first journal was written before the CLA activities about the reasons why the students were learning English. The other three journals were students’ reflections on the class materials and discussion after each CLA lesson. They were also required to work on a critical project based on what they had learned from the CLA activities.

Content analysis was utilized to analyze the data. Observation notes and student writings were analyzed using category construction (Erlandson et al., 1993) to code the data into emergent categories. That is, the data were first broken into units (based on sentences); next, the units were categorized and then organized by themes. The framework aimed to interpret the perceived realities of the research participants, which is the preferred tool for this study on language ideology.

Findings

Among the 40 students who were enrolled in the English American culture course, a total of 21 attended all CLA classes and submitted the assignments, including reflective journals and critical projects. Among those who completed the CLA assignments, there were 12 whose work reflected directly on the course materials. The present study focuses on these 12 students and documents their learning trajectories in the CLA classes.

The findings of the study show that the CLA approach opened up new possibilities for these Taiwanese EFL students through critical reflection on English-language ideology. This section first presents the findings of the focal students' changing ideologies of English language, then discusses their appreciation of their own cultural heritage, and finally, demonstrates their transformational action.

Changing Ideologies of English Language

The participants pointed out their changing ideologies after the CLA-based activities in terms of learning English. For example, through her reflective journals, Iris (pseudonym) changed her ideology of English language from a utilitarian perspective to having a greater appreciation of minority languages.

Before the CLA lessons, Iris wrote about the reasons why she was learning English:

Once you challenge yourself to learn English, you become a more open-minded individual, you are able to understand the cultural values, and you are able to express yourself in the language (Iris, reflective journal-1).

Iris was buying into the hegemony of English, viewing the English language as a skill to help her become open-minded and to better understand cultural values.

In her later reflective journal, Iris wrote about how she thought differently about language learning:

In reflection, the aspects learned in class have totally changed my perspective on learning English. I understand that although English is a common language in contemporary society, we need to protect other minor languages that are dying. (Iris, reflective journal-4)

Iris had begun to understand that learning English is not just about learning a common

language, but about jeopardizing minority languages. She realized that while the world seems obsessed with learning English, some minority languages are dying and are worth protecting. In the same journal, she wrote:

From speech given by Patricia Ryan, she stated in her talk, “One language dies every 14 days.” This is lamenting. Each language has its value . . . You must understand Chinese to grasp the true meaning of the expressions. As a bilingual, I understand the magnificence of both the English and Chinese language. Therefore, I am grieved to realize that there is a language dying in such short period of time. (Iris, reflective journal-4)

Another example of students’ changing ideology is Alice. Buying into this cosmopolitan, global citizen view of English, Alice wrote about the reasons why she was learning English before the CLA lessons:

Learning English is not only to cope with tests, it helps me to communicate with foreigners, travel to other countries, and better understand foreign movies; so it brings many benefits to me; so learning English is very important in my life (Alice, reflective-1)

For Alice, English was considered to be a tool for communication, travel, and foreign movie comprehension. But after a few weeks of taking the course, she had different attitudes toward English, saying,

It’s not right to learn English blindly because you don’t know whether you need it or not. Also, English tests can only examine one’s linguistic ability; it can’t measure one’s intelligence and value (Alice, class discussion-6; translated).

In this discussion, Alice was reflecting on a video about English as a commodification and a barrier. Her discussion shows that she is changing her ideology of English learning in such a way that she sees the importance of gaining subjectivity.

Valuing One’s Own Cultural Heritage

In addition to the changing ideologies, the students started to value their own cultural heritage more. The following shows the process of how Jenny transformed to gain awareness of her cultural heritage.

Before the CLA lessons, Jenny viewed English as an important asset to gain:

If I learn English, maybe I can get a job to support myself. . . I hope to learn English to solve many problems. . . English plays an important role in my life. It can provide a good competition. (Jenny, reflective journal-1)

However, after taking a few CLA lessons, Jenny started to reflect critically on the role of English. In a CLA activity, students were presented with a short video clip promoting the advantages of learning English, such as travel, the job market, etc. After the video, they were asked to think about questions such as “who made the video,” “why did they make it,” and “who would benefit from it.” Jenny reflected on the video promoting English, saying:

I think a private English institute produced the video to merchandise English so that they can profit from it. People from western countries might benefit [from the video] because English is their native language; if more people are learning English, they would make more money. (Jenny, class discussion-3; translated)

This discussion shows that Jenny started to see English as marketable.

Toward the end of the CLA lessons on English-language ideology, we watched another video about endangered languages and had a discussion on “what will the world become if people give up their native language to learn another language” and “Would you like this kind of change? What are some advantages and disadvantages?” In her reflective journal, Jenny wrote:

Although I’m learning English, I can’t forget my own mother language. I like Chinese because it represents a special culture. I am unwilling to learn English to give up Chinese. . . I think our government needs to change its language policy to not only value, but promote our traditional languages (like Hakka and Taiwanese). (Jenny, reflective journal-4)

This excerpt shows that Jenny started to pay attention to cultural heritage and believed that the government should promote it.

Transformational Action

Finally, these students transformed their thinking such that they began to value minority languages and/or their own cultural heritage more, and to take action to promote language equality and mother tongue inheritance by making posters, writing letters to government representatives, or making videos.

First, the CLA-based activities led the focal students to promote their own mother tongues. To illustrate, Jenny, Alice, Angel, and Vicki wrote a letter to the president of Taiwan to plead for the promotion of native languages in language education in Taiwan. In their letter, they addressed their concerns that language education in Taiwan “put[s] too much emphasis on English education, which has caused some degree of negligence of our cultural languages.” They argued that

excessive emphasis on English education could cause some degree of negligence of their own native languages. Therefore, they suggested that President Ma improve the situation by providing more native language lessons in elementary, middle and high school as well as in college, and create more job opportunities that require the use of native languages.

Furthermore, Ariel and Abby created a poster that illustrates the unequal relations of languages in the world (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Student poster: Language should have equal rights

In their presentation of the poster, they stated:

The theme of our poster is language equality. In our poster, we want to express that all languages have equal rights and we choose dinosaurs to explain this idea. We think learning languages is like the law of the jungle. Dinosaurs are very suitable for our theme. The big dinosaurs represent the most powerful languages and small dinosaurs symbolize disappearing languages. (Ariel & Abby, project presentation)

What the students are trying to illustrate is that the weak are the prey of the strong. The big English dinosaur is dominating the jungle. It is stepping on a small dead

dinosaur, Eyak (an extinct language). This poster demonstrates that students understand the unequal relations between English and other languages. These students critically reflected on the learning of English and showed how promoting English might cause language extinction.

Similarly, Iris and Claire together designed a poster to promote language equality as their final project (see Figure 2). In their poster, they showed that the number of languages is decreasing, and we might end up having only a few languages by the 27th century if no action is taken. They used some quotes to point out that every language represents a way of understanding one's cultural heritage and history, and so should be valued and maintained.



Figure 2. Student poster: *Protect what we have before it disappears*

Presenting this poster to the class, Iris said:

In reflection to the American cultures learnt in class, we have come to the

decision of promoting language equality through the use of posters for our final presentation. In our poster, we are strongly conveying the ideology of all languages is equal. Every language has its value. By the rapid speed of a language dying, every 14 days, we are losing an intrinsic and valuable asset for all mankind and a priceless way of communicating amongst each other . . . To prevent any more language deaths like the extinction of the Latin language, it is recommended that we should bring the attention of all languages are equal and to prolong the life of the endangered languages to people. If we do not commence this act, there might be only 6 or even lesser languages left in the future centuries. (Iris & Claire, project presentation)

Finally, one group made a video emphasizing the importance of mother tongue inheritance. John was the director, screenwriter, and actor of the drama. He posted their video via YouTube to promote their ideas (Figure 3; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8tK6HYTNhQ>). The video depicted the low intergenerational transmission rate of native languages in Taiwan. That is, younger speakers tend to have poorer native language competence. In the video, a grandson and his grandmother had a serious communication gap because the grandson could barely understand Hakka, a local language in Taiwan. The grandmother was very sad and got sick because all she wanted to do was pass on the native language, but instead she was given the cold shoulder by her grandson. The drama had a touching ending because the grandson realized the importance of learning Hakka to communicate with his grandmother, started to learn the language, and got closer to her as a result. The micro-film concludes at the end, “Language is not only a cultural heritage; it is the only way to draw people closer. Mother tongue inheritance is everyone’s responsibility.”



Figure 3. YouTube video made and posted by John

It is noted that there are grammatical mistakes in the excerpts as they are cited in

their original form. Nonetheless, these excerpts indicate that the CLA approach in this study paid great attention to individuality and the cultural heritage of multilingual students. More importantly, the framework helped the student participants to challenge the unequal power relations and to seek equality and empowerment in their English education.

Discussion

Drawing on the CLA approach, this experimental, classroom-based study helped the researchers and educators gain a deeper understanding of the possibilities for unpacking the hidden ideologies of the English language in EFL content-based classes. Through the teaching of CLA, Taiwanese students

- raised their awareness of language equality and cultural heritage
- gained more subjectivity regarding learning English
- were empowered as active agents of change

These results confirm those of previous studies (Janks, 1999; Maftoon & Sabbaghan, 2010) which also found that students' critical awareness of language will be enhanced through the teaching of CLA. The students were encouraged to critically reflect on the English language and were given opportunities to enact social change.

The students in this study raised their awareness of language equality and cultural heritage possibly due to their exposure to critical reading and the explicit teaching method adopted in the course. As Wallace (1992) pointed out, EFL students are often marginalized as readers, and what is missing is "a methodology for interpreting texts which addresses ideological assumptions" (p. 62). The teacher in this study guided the students to analyze texts critically through helping them recognize the purposes of the author, and taught them not to take the given text at face value, but to examine claims in depth to uncover implicit bias. It is possible that critical reading and the explicit teaching method as pedagogical practice helped change the students' views on English language learning.

Moreover, the results demonstrated that the focal students gained subjectivity of learning English through the introduction of CLA. One possible reason could be the introduction of provocative texts. In addition to critical reading, selection of provocative materials (Wallace, 1992) relevant to the students' social contexts may contribute to their changing perspectives and ideologies. After examining and discussing these selected texts and videos regarding English language learning, many students in the study no longer blindly worship English and accept the ideology of English as a prestigious language; instead, they have started to pay attention to other

minority languages as well as their own mother tongue, understanding the unequal power relations between English and other languages. They have tried to maintain their subjectivity and value their own cultural heritage in the process of learning English.

Most importantly, critical projects that provide students with opportunities to identify social problems and to change the status quo are essential for CLA classes to succeed. In this study, after the participants reflected critically on their English learning experiences, they were asked to identify issues or problems of their concern and to take action to change or transform the status quo. Some students designed posters to promote ideas such as linguistic equality and language preservation, some wrote letters to government officials about their concerns and how the situation could be changed, while others made video clips to promote their concerns.

In educational settings, particularly English language education in Taiwan, it is argued that there is a need to address social and political issues through CLA. As Tollefson (1995) contended, English language education has focused on language acquisition, teaching methods, and linguistics without placing these fields in their social, political, and economic contexts. This is especially crucial in Taiwan where the English language is highly valued and English language ideology plays a significant role in English language education. The findings in this study indicate that many participants changed their views on English language learning and made plans to change the status quo. Therefore, it is urged that English language education in Taiwan should involve critical reflection which views language learning as ideology laden and power-relations driven, and should be historically, culturally, socially, and politically contextualized.

Conclusion

The ultimate goal of the CLA approach is for students to act for change in the outside world. The most profound change in this study, I would argue, is the students' ideological change, particularly their changed ideologies regarding English and their own language. It is impossible to implement legal and policy change without a large population's fundamental understanding of language in society (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). The students' change in ideology is the first step towards the implementation of legal decisions for language equality.

This study concludes that a CLA-oriented classroom helps students develop a

different understanding of English language learning and to respond critically to assumptions and beliefs in daily life discourse and language. I hope that my study will inspire other research that explores how CLA could be applicable in EFL classrooms to raise social awareness, and eventually, social transformation in other contexts.

While this study focuses on the students who performed positively in the CLA-based classes, those who did not respond to such an approach as expected are worthy of investigation as well. Future studies should explore reasons why CLA activities are not suitable for some students, and how to design CLA-based courses that fit most Taiwanese students.

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Appendix A
CLA Lesson Plan—Week 15

Week 15	
Topic	Different perspectives on learning English
Materials	5 news and blog articles from English.com.tw (台灣英語網) Source: http://www.english.com.tw/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?post_id=23195
	Reflection Talk about why we learn English and why some people do
	Systematizing experience - Read news and blog articles about different perspectives on learning English (e.g., communication, competitiveness, myth, power, Western dominance) - Group work comprehending the articles and share understanding with the class
Classroom Procedure	Explanation - Describe feeling or reflection (group and class discussion)— - Which sentence(s) or idea(s) impressed you the most? - Group work responding to/commenting on blog article(s) - Share group discussion in class
	Developing practice Students write a journal reflecting on the class activity/discussion

Appendix B
CLA Lesson Plan—Week 16

Week 16

Topic	Don't insist on English
Materials	YouTube video: TED Talks "Don't insist on English" by Patricia Ryan Source: http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/zh-tw/patricia_ryan_ideas_in_all_languages_not_just_english.html
Classroom Procedure	<p>Reflection</p> <p>Reflect on the role of English and learning English in the era of globalization</p> <hr/> <p>Systematizing experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Watch the YouTube video: "Don't insist on English"- Comprehension check—what did the speaker think about these issues raised in the video?<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. The role of Englishii. Language diesiii. Multilingualismiv. English as an international businessv. Linguistic ability vs. intelligencevi. English as a barriervii. Language, thought, knowledge <hr/> <p>Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Personal opinions (group and class discussion)<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. Do you agree with the speaker's opinions?ii. What ideas impressed you the most in this video?- Discussion (group and class discussion)<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. What will the world become if people give up their native language to learn another language?ii. Would you like this kind of change? What are some advantages and disadvantages? <hr/> <p>Developing practice</p> <p>Students write a journal reflecting on the class activity/discussion</p>

Appendix C
CLA Lesson Plan—Week 17

Week 17

Topic	Multilingualism
Materials	<p>YouTube videos:</p> <p>1. Why it pays to be multilingual? Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8cs_cD9zeE</p> <p>2. Bilingualism and the brain Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAPyoHERyfQ&feature=related</p> <p>3. Are people who speak more than one language smarter? Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Ye-BeVyJ5M&feature=related</p>
	<p>Reflection</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Share opinions about advantages of monolingual and multilingual speakers/environments</p>
	<p>Systematizing experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watch the three videos about the advantages of multilingualism - Comprehension check—list all the advantages of multilingualism
Classroom Procedure	<p>Explanation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group and class discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. What kind of person would you like to be, multilingual or monolingual? Why? ii. What environments would you like to live, multilingual or monolingual? Why? - Identify issues/problems of concern to you (e.g., language dying, linguistic ability equals intelligence, language as a barrier, etc.)
	<p>Developing practice</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Students work on a group critical project (e.g., poster, role play, a letter to a government representative)</p>

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