

PREFACE

This Dept. of Second Language Studies Working Papers is dedicated to the memory of Ok Kyoon Yoo. Students, friends, and faculty involved in this special issue would like to thank J. D. Brown for unhesitatingly offering the SLS Working Papers as a means for paying tribute to Ok Kyoon. The paper contributions are concerned with critical language studies in honor of Ok Kyoon's commitment to social justice. Several of the contributors were either close friends or shared courses with Ok Kyoon. All are concerned with issues of power relations and equity that were central to Ok Kyoon's academic and political work.

The working papers represent a range of critical studies issues and approaches. It begins with Ok Kyoon Yoo's critical social and text analysis of *Discourses of English as an Official Language in a Monolingual Society: The case of South Korea*. In this contribution, which was Ok Kyoon's Scholarly Paper (equivalent to a thesis) for his Master's degree, he reviews recent language policy and planning literature as it pertains to the English as an official language (EOL) debate currently occurring in Korea. He then critically examines official and media text which represent opposing positions in the EOL controversy. He concludes with recommending a critical pedagogical approach that would allow citizens to engage in informed dialogue leading to language policy decision-making at the grass-roots level. This proposal harkens back to the work of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (see Okazaki, this issue) who, as a founder of critical pedagogy, initiated a country-wide locally situated adult literacy campaign designed to bring about social change. In this sense, a critical approach which involves co-construction of language policy among researchers, teachers, and citizens can have far-reaching implications for language planning world-wide.

The second contribution in this issue involves critical social and text analysis of the Japanese language situation. In *A Policy on Language Education in Japan: Beyond nationalism and linguicism*, Reiko Hatori offers a critical analysis of reports and policies provided by the Council on the National Language, Subdivision on National Language in the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Reiko additionally presents recommendations for language and

education policy changes which are based on moral imperatives regarding linguistic imperialism as opposed to the current focus on competition for economic productivity. She calls for a critical pedagogical approach in schools that: (a) raises consciousness about the oppression of linguistic/cultural minorities and the English language/cultural hegemony operating in Japan and (b) achieves internationalization, not through English, but by offering both mainstream and minority students opportunities to learn the languages/cultures present in their own communities.

The next working paper is Hye-sun Cho's interpretive qualitative study of the Korean English Teachers Group (KETG). Ok Kyoon states in his paper (this issue) "Cho (2001) witnessed the empowerment of English teachers in the Korean English Teachers Group at a grassroots level, and this possibility for empowerment is potentially likely to make English teachers' collective voices heard in public discourse if the empowerment is connected to the role of 'critically reflective teachers' as members in a larger society". Hye-sun first informs readers of the inception of the KETG movement in 1988 by labor union activists and advocates for social change. She then describes the current status of the KETG, summarized by the title of the paper "*Although we still have a long way to go, I don't think we will ever stop*": *A grassroots EFL teacher development group in South Korea*. She defines critical teacher development and then specifically details the potential and challenges of the KETG. Hye-sun concludes with recommendations for how language teachers can promote the social construction of professional consciousness.

In *Identity Construction in Literacy Practices in L2: A case study of three Korean graduate students in a TESOL program*, Younghee Her utilizes critical ethnography and autoethnography in exploring how L2 graduate students' identities and power are negotiated and reconstituted while participating in a U.S. academic community. She begins with an overview of relevant literature on identity, agency, power relations, literacy practices, emotional colonialism, knowledge reconstruction and imagination. Using these theoretical constructs, Younghee then critically examines the narratives of three Korean graduate students, focusing on themes of "imposed choice" concerning the ways in which English NS staff and students judge NNS students inadequate; emotional colonialism as it colludes with unjust evaluations; and alternative discourses that lead to empowerment and agency. In addition to informing the academic community of ways in

which they may position students, this paper provides important models for critical institutional analysis and self-empowerment.

Rena Skarin focuses on documenting a critical approach to language and literacy development in her paper *Generation 1.5 in Hawaii: Gaining Critical Tools for Reading the World*. Rena first reviews the ways in which critical theory can inform curriculum and pedagogical practices. She then provides a model of critical praxis which she developed and implemented in community college ESL courses. Since few critical theory into practice models have been published, this paper offers a much needed description of how critical language and literacy theories can be applied to L2 educational settings. Rena draws from approaches such as critical language awareness, genre theory, New Literacy Studies, critical applied linguistics, and student as ethnographer techniques to explore with students definitions of culture while helping them develop critical awareness of texts, genres, and academic Discourse communities.

In the working paper *Critical Consciousness and Critical Language Teaching* Takayuki Okazaki provides a participatory action research study of a Cultural Issues course he taught in an Intensive English Language Program. Taka provides an overview of critical second language instruction, including a pedagogy of postmethodism; deconstruction/agency approaches for resisting positioning by those from the dominant Discourse; and consciousness raising as critical content teaching. In describing his own focus on consciousness raising, Taka explores the use of problem-posing and dialogues to: (a) explore social justice issues derived from students' own experiences, (b) develop language/literacy abilities through meaningful interaction about these issues, and (c) understand culture in more complex sociopolitical ways than is usually found in second language courses.

As a whole, these working papers represent the vision Ok Kyoon Yoo held for understanding the multifaceted nature of language and power issues as well as for developing critical pedagogical models that would address those issues. The authors have provided here a range of models for utilizing critical research methods, drawing from critical studies theories, and developing critical pedagogical approaches.

To conclude, I'd like to offer personal reflections on my work with Ok Kyoon. My experience of Ok Kyoon in interpretive qualitative research courses and through advising his Scholarly Paper was that he lived his academic and political life in ways that were informed, reflective, insightful, non-confrontational, often humorous, and intellectually persuasive. He was one of those gifted individuals who, by simply providing the space for intellectual curiosity and the opportunity to challenge the status quo, grasped and then moved beyond current thinking in the field.

In my view, Ok Kyoon's intellectual accomplishments embody what academia and our work as professors should be about: supporting and learning from students as they reach beyond us professionally, politically, and personally. Ok Kyoon and other students have also helped me understand how the professional, political, and personal interact in profound ways and operate not only *out there*, but within our own classrooms and offices. My experience is that whether we take epistemological stances which are cognitivist, post-positivist, social constructivist, critical, feminist, and/or Marxist, the ways in which we *do* our work reflects the degree to which we uphold principles of social justice, equity, tolerance for alternative views, and respect for multi-varied experiences and abilities. I've learned that taking a critical perspective doesn't guarantee equitable behavior any more than being a post-positivist prevents it. I've been fortunate enough to have Ok Kyoon and others, often unconsciously, hold up mirrors that reflect what I need to learn about power relations, respect, and support in my own work with students, staff, colleagues, and others within and outside of academia. I feel that the working papers and memorial messages presented here are a tribute to Ok Kyoon, not only for his intellectual abilities, but also for showing us how students are often our best teachers in work and life.

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