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Review of Critical Pedagogies and Language Learning, edited by Bonny Norton and Kelleen Toohey.

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grammars and not necessarily to the topmost level with syntax-pragmatic interface character (pp. vii–ix). However, such loose use of the term makes vulnerable domain hard to test and falsify.

This said, the volume makes an excellent read on other topics. It includes several original research papers on childhood bilingualism that are beautifully written and might well become classics, in addition to some rather poorly organized papers. Readers will be pleased to find many contributions combining qualitative and quantitative data analyses, with easy-to-read graphs (certainly many more than a decade ago). I especially liked the sophisticated batteries of tests for language dominance in bilinguals (weaker vs. stronger language), where in older work readers had no choice but to take the researcher's word for it. The volume is generally well laid out and copyedited (except for typos in the references) and includes useful name and subject indexes.

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CRITICAL PEDAGOGIES AND LANGUAGE LEARNING. *Bonny Norton and Kelleen Toohey (Eds.)*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Pp. xiii + 362. \$77.00 cloth, \$28.00 paper.

Language is not simply communication; rather, it is a practice that constructs the ways language learners understand themselves and their social surroundings. This collection assembles the work of 22 scholars interested in critical perspectives on language education in different sites of practice. They investigate how social relationships and issues of power are centrally important in developing critical language education pedagogies.

In the field of education, *critical pedagogy* explores the social visions that pedagogical practices support within a political and economical framework in contemporary societies. These authors consider how practices might be modified, developed, or abandoned in efforts to support learners, learning, and social change. At the same time, they promote a variety of beliefs, convictions, and assumptions that are not unitary or methodologically uniform. There is not one single approach linking all their research; each scholar represents a pedagogy discourse, based on local situations, problems, and issues of her or his community. In doing so, however, their main goal becomes to understand the relationship between teachers and students, test makers and test takers, teacher-educators and student teachers in order to open new productive possibilities in education.

This volume combines the elements of language learning with various aspects of social consciousness, including multiculturalism, gender issues, institutional power, and race. The book attempts to evaluate, explain, and improve upon current educational

practices in various learning environments around the world. It is divided into four independent sections with a total of 17 chapters with varying foci and many overlapping themes. The first section, "Reconceptualizing Second Language Education," discusses the institutions of language learning and teaching as they relate to social issues. Topics such as multiculturalism and political correctness, "color blindness," gender, and sexuality in language learning environments are largely analyzed. Shohamy's chapter draws attention to assessment, in particular to language tests. The second section, "Challenging Identities," focuses on language learners and the various settings in which learning engages their identities in diverse and complex ways, including representation of culture, history, and power. The third section, "Researching Critical Practice," shifts to issues such as nonstandard languages, empowerment, and language learning possibilities for students of diverse histories and backgrounds. Section 4, "Educating Teachers for Change," explores the ways in which educators attempt to adapt some of the principles mentioned throughout the book to create better learning environments to promote social change.

Along with the common objective of understanding power and providing new approaches to better language pedagogy in particular locations, there are other engaging themes running through the chapters. Contributors seem committed to seeking critical classroom practices, creating and adapting materials, exploring diverse representations of knowledge, and exploring new research practices. They are interested not so much in "telling readers, researchers, students, or teachers how to speak, write, read, listen, or engage in critical practice [. . .] but articulate a stance toward intervention that aims at engaging participants in reflection and praxis" (p. 15). They have succeeded in their main objective of investigating critical approaches and language learning environments. The research does not remain focused on one particular area of language learning (e.g., teaching English to speakers of other languages or English as a second language) throughout. Rather, the authors discuss a variety of language learning settings in different countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Africa, Canada, Korea, Australia, and Hong Kong, to name a few. This allows the reader to conceptualize a broader set of circumstances. On the other hand, at times the book seems to go beyond the scope of its intended target—for instance, in Sunderland and Pavlenko's chapter "Gender and Sexuality in Foreign and Second Language Education: Critical and Feminist Approaches."

It could be argued that more relevant questions related to language instruction, such as the awareness of cultural differences, historical issues, and especially how imposing majority languages on minorities perpetuates an educational weakness versus bilingualism, are missing in this volume. That said, the concept of this book—the melding of language learning with aspects of social change—not only becomes fascinating but also offers new perspectives and recommendations for parents, educators, school administrators, and politicians willing to improve the system. Well-written and articulated, excellently documented, and with convincing examples, Norton and Toohey present this innovative research in an unprecedented manner, bringing theory and practice together to transform existing social relations in the interest of schools and communities. Reading the text would be beneficial for either graduate students or experts in applied linguistics willing to acquire knowledge in this emerging field; they will not be disappointed. This volume definitively opens the door to new possibilities in education.

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