Gender and English Language Learners: Challenges and Possibilities

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CHAPTER 1

[FINAL DRAFT]

INTRODUCTION

During the past decade, several scholars in the fields of language education, second language acquisition, and bilingualism have addressed the influence of gender on access to linguistic and interactional resources, on dynamics of classroom interaction, and on language learning outcomes (Ehrlich, 1997; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2001; Pavlenko et al., 2001; Sunderland, 2000). The field of TESOL has also exhibited a growing interest in the impact of gender on ESL and EFL learning, seen in the increasing number of plenaries, panels, discussion groups, and papers on the topic. Yet the nature of the connection between the two phenomena, gender and language learning, remains elusive, or rather it is seen differently by different scholars and educators. Some studies continue to appeal to variationist and interactional sociolinguistics methodology, treating gender as a variable, while others, grounded in critical, poststructuralist, and feminist theory, approach gender as a system of social relations and discursive practices. It is the latter approach that informs this introduction and most of the contributions to the volume. In what follows, we will discuss the feminist poststructuralist view of gender, outline its role in the context of ESL and EFL learning, and show how the contributions to this volume enrich TESOL theory and praxis, illuminating the key features of critical feminist pedagogy in TESOL.

DEFINING GENDER

Most if not all scholars who are interested in the role of gender in language education see themselves as feminist. We do not dispute this, yet we want to point out that there are multiple approaches to feminism which espouse distinct views of gender and its relationship to language (cf. Gibbon, 1999). Until recently, two approaches have been most influential in the study of language and gender (for a detailed discussion, see Ehrlich, 1997; Pavlenko & Piller, 2001). The view of the two genders, male and female, as different cultures, common for *cultural feminism*, has guided the search for gender differences in language learning and use. The emphasis on patriarchy, typical for *material feminism*, informed research on male dominance in interaction.

We argue that neither approach can be assumed unproblematically in the field of TESOL since both frameworks see 'men' and 'women' as undifferentiated and unitary groups, members of which have more in common with each other than with the members of the other group. What are the problems with such a view? To begin with, in its most radical form such an approach, relying on outdated claims in the field of psychology, conflates 'gender' with 'sex' and 'sex' with brain structure and leads to oversimplified generalizations along the lines of "females are superior in verbal skills, while males are superior in spatial skills... females are slightly more feeling oriented, while males are slightly more thinking oriented" (Oxford, 2002: 252). In reality, however, current work in neuroscience suggests that human brain functioning is a complex

process which is influenced by both nature and nurture and is not easily reducible to female/male differences. Furthermore, as pointed out by a neuroscientist Jeri Jaeger (1998: 230) even when such differences are found, "in the normal, intact brain, sex differences in functional cortical organization for language processing are not associated with significant behavioral differences in the everyday tasks of reading" or, for that matter, speaking (see also Bing & Bergvall, 1996).

Secondly, even in cases where the social nature of 'gender' is acknowledged, the binary approach obliterates the fact that in many cultures gender as a system of social relations and as a way of interpreting human anatomy is not constrained to the female/male dichotomy and humans may belong to three or four different genders (Bing & Bergvall, 1996; Hall, 2002; Lang, 1997). Consequently, an imposition of an ethnocentrically biased Western view distorts the understanding of group membership in the culture in question, making the findings about female/male differences nothing more than an epiphenomenon. Furthermore, even in cultures that view gender as a dichotomous system, the social meanings and ideologies of normative masculinity and femininity are highly diverse (Bonvillain, 1995) and cannot be superimposed.

Thirdly and most importantly, the focus on female/male dichotomy obscures oppression in terms of class, ethnicity, race, sexuality, or (dis)ability. Acknowledging this oppression forces us to recognize that in some contexts men and women within a particular group may be strongly united by the common ethnic, racial, religious or class background and have more in common with each other than with members of other groups. For instance, white upper-middle class men and women may both participate in oppressive practices targeting members of sexual, racial or ethnic minorities. Furthermore, we need to remember that is never purely 'men' or 'women' who are all-oppressed or all-powerful: it is *immigrant* women who do not always have access to educational resources, *working class* boys and girls who are silenced in the classroom, or young *black* men who do not have powerful role models in the school hierarchy (Jones, 1993).

Feminist poststructuralism, a framework outlined by Cameron (1992, 1997), Luke and Gore (1992) and Weedon (1987), and espoused by the volume editors and its contributors, emphasizes the intrinsic links between gender and other social identities. We see it as an approach to the study of language and education which strives (a) to understand the relationship between power and knowledge; (b) to theorize the role of language in production and reproduction of power, difference, and symbolic domination (in particular in educational contexts); and (c) to deconstruct master narratives which oppress certain groups – be it immigrants, women, or minority members – and devalue their linguistic practices.

In agreement with this approach, we see gender not as a dichotomy or an individual property, but as a complex system of social relations and discursive practices differentially constructed in local contexts. This poststructuralist view of gender foregrounds sociohistoric, cross-cultural, and cross-linguistic differences in gender construction. In doing so, this approach emphasizes the fact that beliefs and ideas about gender relations and normative masculinities, femininities, or representations of third or fourth gender, vary across cultures – as well as over time within a culture – based on social, political, and economic changes. Consequently, we do not assume that all women – or all men – have a lot in common with each other just because of their biological makeup or elusive 'social roles', nor do we assume that gender is always relevant to understanding of language learning outcomes. Instead, gender emerges as one of many important facets of social identity which interacts with race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, (dis)ability, age, and social status. In accordance with this view, the contributions to this volume consistently consider gender relations – as well as particular student populations – in their local social, cultural, and ideological contexts.

GENDER AND TESOL

The feminist poststructuralist view of gender outlined above does not allow for easy generalizations about 'men' or 'women' or 'boys' or 'girls', forcing us to look for new research questions and directions. Below, we contend that there are at least three ways in which we can consider 'gender' and 'gendering' in ESL and EFL contexts, without looking for gender differences in language learning processes or outcomes. These include gendered agency, gendered access, and gendered interaction.

Gendered Agency, Resistance, and Imagined Communities

First of all, we argue that there is an array of gender discourses closely linked to English, which have great potential to influence learners' investments and decisions. These discourses shape learners' desires as well as their images of themselves, their futures, and their social, educational, and economic opportunities. In some cases, perceived opportunities could strengthen the learners' agency and in others they could fuel their resistance to English.

Several recent studies indicate that many young women around the world consider English to be intrinsically linked to feminism and are motivated to learn it as a language of empowerment. We can consider this trend in the context of Japan, the EFL context highlighted in this volume. It appears that at present many more young Japanese women than men are interested in learning English, training for English-language related professions, and traveling to English-speaking countries (Kobayashi, 2002). For these women, English offers an entry into the job market as well as a possible way of liberating themselves from the confines of gender patriarchy. The latter also holds for older Japanese women in McMahill's (1997, 2001) studies of a feminist adult education English class. These women state that English is much better suited to express their personal emotions, views and the newly acquired critical consciousness.

In turn, in other contexts learners may find imagined gendered identity options unappealing and give up on learning English. From this perspective, TESOL professionals need to examine gender identity options offered to students through textbooks, classroom materials and classroom interactions, as well as to consider students' investments – or lack of thereof – in the light of gendered employment opportunities in the local and global marketplaces.

Gendered Access to Linguistic and Interactional Resources

Our second argument is that in some – albeit not all – contexts access to linguistic and educational resources and interactional opportunities in English may be gendered. Several studies suggest that in some English-speaking contexts options of immigrant and minority women may be constrained by a number of gatekeeping practices which restrict their mobility, access to ESL classes, education, and the workplace (Corson, 2001; Goldstein, 1995, 2001; Heller, 2001: Kouritzin, 2000; Norton, 2000). Some of these gatekeeping practices originate in the target language community, and some may stem from the social practices of the minority community. For instance, in the English-speaking world immigrant women may face sexual harassment, which inhibits their interactional opportunities and eventually decreases their chances to learn the language (Ehrlich, 2001). These opportunities may be further hampered by gendered and systemic inequalities such as lack of governmentally funded daycare. Recently, several programs have begun to address unique needs of such populations. Case studies by Frye (1999) and Rivera (1999) offer descriptions of two such programs where low-income immigrant Latina women can increase their English proficiency, acquire literacy skills, and improve their basic education.

On other hand, even in contexts where classes, professional training, and other linguistic resources are available, access problems may arise due to gatekeeping practices of the minority community. Kouritzin (2000) argues that even the best of solutions, such as evening and weekend classes and externally funded daycare, do not help women who are culturally required to be home with their children and to prioritize their roles as housekeepers, mothers, wives, and caretakers. Moreover, being in the workplace does not guarantee access to English either: first language may become the dominant language of the workplace (Goldstein, 1995, 2001) and English study may be seen as interfering with productivity or threatening to less-educated male partners (Norton Peirce, Harper & Burnaby, 1993).

Even in our own profession, in the field of TESOL, access to and distribution of resources may be at times both racialized and gendered. White male scholars are commonly seen in positions of power, middle-class white women are often seen either in teaching positions or building bridges between theory and practice, and racial and ethnic minority members are most often found 'on the other side', namely in the classroom. Thus, inequities in terms of race, gender, and native/non-native speaker status need to be remedied not only in the classrooms but also in 'imagining' the ESL cadre, and thus in the processes of hiring and promotion (for a discussion of experiences of a minority woman teacher of ESL, see Amin, 1999).

Gendered Interaction

Our third argument is that in some – once again, not all – contexts gender as a social and discursive practice impacts interactional dynamics. Gender inequities may structure differential interactional opportunities for male and female learners of different ages, class, or ethnic backgrounds. Consequently, in some contexts immigrant and minority girls and women may get significantly less classroom interaction time than either minority boys and men or majority men and women (Corson, 2001; Losey, 1995; see also Jule's paper in this volume). At the same time, recent studies in language education steer us away from facile generalizations about permanent female disenfranchisement, showing that in other contexts it is working class and immigrant boys and men who may be silenced by the dominant culture of learning (Heller, 2001; Willett, 1995).

ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

The aim of the present volume is to showcase diverse studies that examine gender in language learning from a sociocultural and cross-cultural perspective and offer practical suggestions for critical praxis. The 11 chapters represent language learning and teaching communities in a number of regions of the world, including Japan, Malaysia, Uganda, Canada, and the USA. The chapters also include a wide range of contexts, from K-11 and Higher Education, to Teacher Education and English for Specific Purposes.

Given the diversity of the chapters included in this volume, it was a challenge for us to determine an organizing principle for the collection. After much discussion and reflection, we decided on a four-part organization. In section 1, "Teaching for Change", we present chapters that focus on the contribution that teachers can make in seeking to address gender inequities in language learning. Section 2, "Student Voices", presents research that explores ways in which gender inequities contribute to silencing of particular students in the English language classroom. In section 3, "Innovations for All" we present a range of innovative programs that are centrally concerned with gender and educational change. Section 4, "Insights from Japan," examines three groundbreaking action-research projects that promote critical reflection about gender and

language in one particular EFL context, which is also the context from which some of the most innovative work on feminist pedagogy in EFL has come (Casanave & Yamashiro, 1996; Fujimura-Fanselow & Vaughn, 1991; MacGregor, 1998; McMahill, 1997, 2001; Smith & Yamashiro, 1998; Yamashiro, 2000).

In what follows we will discuss each section in greater depth, summarizing some of the key issues raised by respective authors. We will conclude with an examination of the common themes we have identified across the 11 chapters.

Teaching for Change

In Chapter 2, Nelson examines how one teacher, Roxanne, used lesbian/gay themes to explore cultural meanings in her grammar-based ESL class in a community college in the USA. In a lesson on modal auxiliaries, the students, hailing from 13 different countries, and ranging in age from early 20's to 70's, were asked to provide a number of possibilities to explain the scenario, "These two women are walking arm in arm". The scenario was one of a number of similarly ambiguous scenarios on a class worksheet. In the ensuing discussion, Roxanne coordinated a productive debate on lesbian/gay cultural practices by framing questions in a highly skilled manner. Instead of asking, for example, "Do you think lesbians should hold hands in public?" she asked, "How did you learn to interpret public displays of affection between two women in the United States?" This line of questioning enabled her to focus on the extent to which sexual identities are culturally situated, and to demonstrate that what counts as "normal" is not inherent but socially constructed. The discussion also provided students with great insight into the ways in which modal auxiliaries are used for acts of speculation. Blending grammar teaching with exploration of gay/lesbian issues, Nelson powerfully demonstrates that topics previously seen as 'taboo' have great potential for teaching of both linguistic and intercultural competence.

Although, in the field of TESOL, most research is focused on the experiences of English teachers, as in Nelson's study, or those of English language learners who are students, Boxer and Tyler focus their research on the relatively powerful position of English language learners who are *instructors* in US universities. These instructors, called International Teaching Assistants (ITAs), constitute about 20% of all graduate assistants on US campuses and, according to Boxer and Tyler, are highly likely to confront issues of sexual harassment at some point in their tenure as teaching assistants. Because what is considered "sexual harassment" differs from one context to another, and one culture to the next, Boxer and Tyler conducted both quantitative and qualitative research on the perceptions of twelve scenarios by a mixed group of ITAs and US undergraduates, focusing in particular on Chinese-speaking and Spanish-speaking ITAs. Their chapter represents the synthesis of previous research, focusing on cross-cultural pragmatics relevant to ITA training. Their central finding is that ITAs are aware that there are particular conventions for what is considered appropriate or inappropriate behavior with respect to students in the US, and that these are frequently different from the conventions in their home countries. However, ITAs are sometimes mystified by subtle distinctions and can over-generalize differences. In their ITA training program, Boxer and Tyler alert ITAs to relevant legal definitions, invite US undergraduates to discussion groups, and ask ITAs to keep journals of their student-teacher interactions, all with the goal of helping ITAs to achieve a successful and positive teaching experience and to prevent cross-cultural miscommunication.

In Chapter 4, Jordan explores the extent to which feminist composition pedagogy, which has tended to focus on native English speakers, can be applied to the ESL tutoring that takes

place in college-based writing centers. In particular, he seeks to raise awareness about institutional and gender-related politics in and around writing centers, and how these politics can be harnessed for the benefit of students in general and ESL students in particular. A writing center, Jordan argues, is an ideal place for the practice of feminist composition pedagogy in that it is an educational site that views students as a source of knowledge, focuses on both process and product in writing, and seeks to decenter authority, particularly with reference to gendered inequities. In following hooks' (1994) example of making theory out of practice in order to inform and transform practice, he surveyed ESL students and tutors involved in the writing center at Penn State University, USA, investigating how students perceived the writing center, writing tutors, and the process of writing. Findings from both students and tutors suggest, *inter alia*, that a writing center should be a safe place that does not look or feel like a classroom and that tutors should exercise flexibility in engaging students' native rhetorical abilities while addressing demands for standardized English expression.

Student Voices

Drawing on their research in Malaysia, Govindasamy and David describe a study that investigates gender dynamics in the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), where almost two-thirds of the student population are women. In their chapter, Govindasamy and David describe national concern over the dwindling male undergraduate population in the country. The purpose of their study is to determine whether the numerical superiority of the female population marginalizes male students, and whether the male voice needs to be given greater emphasis in academic decisions. The study was conducted in the English department, where males constitute about 10% of the student population, and, in general, do not perform academically as well as females. In their analysis of interactive patterns in the ESL classrooms at IIUM, Govindasamy and David found that the numerical superiority of female students has not minimized the role played by the male students. Subsequent analysis revealed that it is the goal orientations of the male and female students that differ, largely influenced by expectations of the society, in which men are expected to be involved in the business world and women in the teaching world. When the male students were interviewed, a large majority indicated that their motivation to pursue many of the English courses was low because they did not consider them to be of practical value. An ESP course, Language for Occupational Purposes, has been introduced to better meet the needs of male students at IIUM.

Across the Pacific Ocean, Jule analyses interaction in a grade 2 ESL classroom in Canada, in which all 20 students (11 boys and 9 girls) are of Punjabi descent. In her chapter, Jule focuses on a young girl, Amandeep, who is virtually silent over the 10-month period of data collection. Jule demonstrates that the linguistic space in the classroom is inequitably distributed, with the teacher speaking for about 89% of the time, and the students speaking approximately 11% of the time. Of the student talking time, boys speak approximately 88% of the time, while the girls talk about 12% of the time. In terms of student speech acts, boys are markedly more active than girls in responding to questions and offering uninitiated comments. Although most of the girls in the classroom exhibited silent behavior, Amandeep's was particularly noteworthy, and Jule describes three events in which Amandeep sits quietly at her desk, while the teacher attends to other students. She suggests that the teacher, who describes Amandeep as "a nice quiet girl" may be implicated in Amandeep's silence. Jule concludes that teachers should pay more attention when girls talk, wait for girls to speak, and structure language lessons to encourage more interaction from girls.

Innovations for All

In Chapter 7, Parry describes an innovative community library project in a rural region of Uganda. The project, initiated by the headmaster of Kitengesa Comprehensive Secondary School (KCSS), provides both girls and boys with greater access to literacy – particularly in the English language. The goal of the project is not only to serve the children in the school, where the project is based, but to serve the needs of the wider rural community. Parry describes why and how girls, in particular, benefit from and contribute to this library project. Because KCSS is new, poor, and locally based, it has more girls than boys as its students; parents with resources prefer to send their sons to more established schools. Further, girls are more likely than boys to remain in the local area, and will most likely become better caregivers because of their enhanced literacy skills. In addition, Parry found that girls are more effective than boys at disseminating library material - the girls are more likely than boys to read their books out loud, thereby reaching young children and illiterate adults. She concludes that the girls are learning that literacy is not necessarily associated with an alien culture, even if it is in a foreign language, and that it has the potential to improve the quality of rural life.

In another part of the world, Taylor draws on her research on an innovative anti-discrimination camp in Toronto, Canada, to explore the inextricable links between gender and race. With reference to the compelling stories of two English language learners, Hue and Khatra, she argues that our practice of theorizing ESL learning and teaching is incomplete without a perspective on what she calls "racialized gender". In Chapter 8,Taylor describes in greater detail the leadership camp in which public school students of 15 national origins collectively explored their personal experiences of social difference and discrimination. It was through the lens of racialized gender, Taylor argues, that Hue and Khatra were able to develop critical understandings of their relationship to their history, their educational experience in Canada, and the issues at stake in "coming to voice in English." Drawing on her research, Taylor offers a number of suggestions for TESOL practitioners who wish to investigate the underlying gendered dynamics of students' language learning and identity negotiation. She notes that language learners need to be given the opportunity to explore their experiences of difference; they need resources to help explore identity not as something one *is*, but as something one *does*; and they need access to themes that address body image, familial obligations and personal security in which perspectives are framed by gender relations.

In the final chapter in this section, Sarah Rillings and Rebecca Biles examine the relationship between gender and technology from their respective positions as instructor and graduate student in a technology course in an MA TESL/TEFL program in a US university. Their action research project was based on the premise that a technology course is an ideal site for student teachers to learn how gender can affect teacher-student and student-student interactions and that insights from such a course would help student teachers create safe learning environments for their ESL students. In Chapter 9, they outline the technologies used in the course, such as Syllabase, E-chatting, and Tapped In, describe the prompts Rilling used to promote discussion on gender and technology, and summarize the responses Biles made to each of these learning opportunities. Two central concerns for both Rilling and Biles were the extent to which technology could either enhance or compromise the safety of the learning community, and how issues of gender and language learning/teaching could be productively examined. They found that the course successfully helped students to increase their computer skills while simultaneously providing greater insight into gender and technology. One particularly interesting

finding was the realization that the virtual world, while being an imagined reality, is nevertheless a 'gendered' space which evokes real emotions.

Insights from Japan

Drawing on her experiences in an all-women's junior college in Japan, Simon-Maeda's chapter describes a feminist course that she developed as part of the Gender and Language Issues (GALI) program offered by the English department. In this course, which meets once a week for 15 weeks, Simon-Maeda introduces topics that examine gender inequality from a linguistic perspective. Topics include sexual harassment in the school and workplace, domestic violence, sexism in textbooks and the media, and sexuality. In addition to the lecture format, students have the opportunity to complete worksheets and engage in journal writing. Simon-Maeda argues that when learners are given the opportunity to negotiate the meaning of gender and language issues that affect their lives, they can begin to imagine different life trajectories. She draws on feminist pedagogical theories and practices to emphasize the importance of establishing dialogic relationships with students by drawing on student experience and carefully monitoring on-task activity. Significantly, she makes the point that students are not expected to uncritically or passively accept the feminist notions that she espouses, arguing that Western feminists working in non-Western contexts need to be particularly vigilant and reflexive about their pedagogy. Rather, she encourages students to develop an awareness "on their own terms" of how women have come to be positioned in a given context, and *why* they might hold certain views about a particular issue.

In Chapter 11, Scott Saft and Yumiko Ohara describe a four-day module on gender that they developed to encourage Japanese university students to consider the dynamic quality of gender and to think critically about the position of women in Japanese society. The module, taught by Saft, included an examination of the gendered use of language in English and Japanese; an assigned reading on the position of women in Japan; a discussion on the practice of *onna sashii hanashikata* (a womanly way of speaking in Japanese); and a questionnaire on the module as a whole. Saft and Ohara were encouraged by the success of the module, finding that both male and female students engaged in discussion on the topic. They found, however, that some male students remained somewhat resistant to the idea that Japanese women experienced discrimination, while the women, more responsive, recognized that both men and women need to be committed to gender equality if women are to have greater options in life. Saft and Ohara conclude that discussions about gender are most successful when students have the opportunity to respond to very specific exercises that relate to their daily lives, rather than discuss gender as an abstract topic.

The development of "an explicit critical feminist pedagogy" is the central theme of Chapter 12, in which Cohen describes in detail how she incorporates feminist pedagogy in an advanced EFL undergraduate course in a private language university in Japan. This intensive 6-hour per week, year-long course for sophomores, offers multiple opportunities for students to investigate the relationship between language and gender. Cohen begins by inviting students to examine the evaluations she has received from the previous year's course. She asks students to summarize particular excerpts from the student evaluations, and then consider why she (Cohen) has chosen the particular excerpt for analysis. In this way, Cohen anticipates the initial disorientation students may experience in the course, and prepares them for both the challenges and rewards. In the chapter, Cohen describes two teaching sequences that illustrate the ways in which she seeks to engage dialogically with text. The first sequence is based on a Japanese TV

news report delivered by a demure young woman and a confident older man; the second is a class exercise on neologisms. Cohen demonstrates convincingly that students can be encouraged to develop the oral, interpretive, and word-attack skills common to many EFL classrooms, while simultaneously gaining a greater insight into gendered dimensions of language learning and use.

COMMON THEMES IN CRITICAL FEMINIST PRAXIS IN TESOL

As suggested above, all of the contributors share a common desire to promote a more equitable relationship between members of different groups in ESL and EFL contexts. Our own hopes lie with critical praxis, both in and outside the classroom. While we recognize important differences between different critical and feminist pedagogies (and address them in Norton & Toohey, in press; Pavlenko, in press), in the present volume we emphasize their common aims with regard to the relationship between language, gender, and education: (1) to demystify normative discourses of gender by clarifying the mechanisms of symbolic domination; (2) to engage students with cross-cultural differences in the meanings of gender and sexuality; and (3) to raise the level of critical and 'multivoiced consciousness' (Kramsch & von Hoene, 2001, p. 288). Of particular interest and importance to us are recent attempts to devise critical and feminist pedagogies in ESL (Pennycook, 1999, 2001) and EFL contexts (Casanave & Yamashiro, 1996; Fujimura-Fanselow & Vaughn, 1991; MacGregor, 1998; McMahill, 1997, 2001; Smith & Yamashiro, 1998; Yamashiro, 2000), and we sincerely hope that the present volume will contribute to these explorations.

While the discussion of common themes could have proceeded in a number of ways, we have chosen to focus on the distinctive features of critical feminist praxis in TESOL as described by the volume contributors. It seems to us that the features below are most commonly shared across the studies, and are also ones that stem from the poststructuralist feminist framework outlined above.

* Instead of working with a fully predetermined and decontextualized curriculum, critical educators organize the curriculum around the needs and lived experiences of particular populations, such as young Japanese women or marginalized college students (Cohen; Maeda; Jordan). Further, critical feminist praxis in TESOL does not reduce teachers and students to just 'men' and 'women.' Rather, it engages with full individuals, who are positioned not only in terms of gender, but also in terms of age, race, class, ethnicity, national origins, immigrant status, sexuality, or (dis)ability (Nelson; Taylor).

* While making instruction relevant to students' lives, critical pedagogies also recognize 'hidden identities' (Vandrick, 1997) and illuminate gender inequalities, incorporating such topics as gay/lesbian issues (Nelson), dominant gender ideologies (Saft & Ohara), domestic violence (Maeda), sexual harassment in the workplace (Boxer & Tyler; Maeda), gender inequities in access to technology (Rilling & Biles), or sexist language used to disenfranchise women (Cohen; Maeda; Saft & Ohara).

* Both EFL and ESL classrooms represent unique spaces where different linguistic and cultural worlds come into contact. They offer unparalleled opportunities for teachers to engage with cross-cultural differences and the social construction of gender and sexuality (Boxer & Tyler; Nelson; Taylor; Parry) and thus help students develop linguistic and intercultural competence, or 'multivoiced consciousness' (Kramsch & von Hoene, 2001). This approach respectfully acknowledges students' and teachers' own diverse backgrounds, while engaging them with alternative systems of knowledge, values, beliefs, and modes of gender performance. In turn, familiarity with alternative discourses of gender and sexuality enhances students' ability

to differentiate between compliments, joking, banter, and sexual harassment, and to respond in context-appropriate ways (Maeda; Boxer & Tyler).

* Transformative classroom practices, such as teacher-led discussions, personal storytelling activities, or journal writing, incorporate students' lived experiences and then locate their experiences and beliefs within larger social contexts (Jordan; Maeda; Nelson; Rilling & Biles). Such practices engage students' imagination and allow them to develop critical consciousness (Boxer & Tyler; Saft & Ohara) and to imagine alternative ways of being in the world (Maeda; Parry). In this regard, the development of voice and the ability 'to impose reception' (Bourdieu, 1991) are central to critical feminist praxis.

* Teachers need to be proactive and well-prepared to handle controversial topics, while maintaining a positive dynamic in the classroom (Cohen; Jordan; Nelson; Rilling & Biles). Further, they need to pay particular attention to learners who may be silenced by the dominant culture (Jule; Taylor) or the local educational context (Govindasamy & David).

* Empowering in the classroom takes place through the process of sharing control and negotiating relationships between teachers and students. Teachers' positions become 'decentered', while students gain greater control of the classroom and the choice and management of discussion topics (Jordan; Maeda; Rilling & Biles). Empowering can also take place through grassroots local initiatives outside of the classroom such as community library projects (Parry) or anti-discrimination camps (Taylor).

CONCLUSION

The present volume is the first 'gender' collection in the TESOL series, and it would have been tempting to conclude this introduction by describing it as a pioneering effort. Instead, we would like to acknowledge our debt to scholars and educators who have been among the first to express concerns about gender inequities and social justice and address the relationship between English education and gender: Chris Casanave, David Corson, Katherine Davies, Cheiron McMahill, Alastair Pennycook, Jane Sunderland, Stephanie Vandrick, and Amy Yamashiro. We are extremely proud to continue this tradition and see this volume both as a tribute to earlier work and as a precursor of studies to come.

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