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A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF CULTURE TEACHING IN ELT: TOWARDS POSTMODERN PERSPECTIVES[1]

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ABSTRACT

The recent interest in the social and cultural politics of English language teaching (ELT), along with the rise of post-modernist thinking, has brought the very concept of culture under close scrutiny. Building on the premise that ELT tenets, practices, and materials are never neutral but are always involved in cultural politics, the present paper aims to present a brief overview of the important lines of development in the history of culture teaching in ELT within a broader socio-political context. With a purpose to trace the changes in the theoretical discourse that have occurred since the post-World War II years, this paper focuses on the perception of culture and culture teaching.

Key Words: *English language teaching, the concept of culture, culture teaching, postmodern perspectives.*

ÖZET

Son yıllarda İngilizcenin öncelsiz bir biçimde küresel ölçekte yayılmasının İngiliz Dili Eğitimi (İDE) alanındaki kültürel ve sosyo-politik açılımlarını eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla irdeleyen görüşlerin öne çıkması, postmodern düşüncenin de etkisiyle kültür kavramının sorunsallaştırılmasına yol açmıştır. İngilizce öğretimine içkin temel inanç, pratik ve malzemelerin asla tarafsız olamayacağı görüşünden yola çıkarak, bu çalışma İDE alanında kültür olgusunun kavramsallaştırılması ve öğretimindeki değişimleri II. Dünya Savaşı sonrası yıllardan günümüze kadar uzanan tarihsel gelişim çizgisi içinde irdelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *İngiliz dili eğitimi, kültür kavramı, kültür öğretimi, postmodern yaklaşımlar.*

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1. Introduction

For two decades or so, globalization has come to be a keyword in texts on English language education. So has the global spread of English. In 1991, on the 25th anniversary of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) organization, in an attempt to identify the major themes and perspectives of ESOL teaching and research, Brown (1991, p.250) underlined three basic challenges, all created by the global spread of English, with specific reference to the social and cultural politics of English language education: (1) English is increasingly not learned as a tool for interaction with just native speakers of the language, (2) English is not always learned as a tool for understanding and teaching U.S. or British cultural values, and (3) non-native speakers of English are increasingly playing a more major role in the global teaching and spread of English. Ten years later, in 2001, among the research priorities of the TESOL International Research Foundation was still the global spread of English, with an emphasis on almost the same challenges for TESOL educators internationally (Nunan, 2001, pp.605-606).

Accordingly, much of the work in mainstream ELT theory and research has been widely criticized for paying little attention to the politics of language and education (Pennycook 1994, Phillipson 1992). In this climate of concern over the social and cultural politics of ELT, the last two decades have witnessed a serious discussion on the issues of culture, native-nonnative dichotomy, and the ownership of English (Braine 1999; Holliday 2005, 2006, 2009; Medgyes 1992; Norton 1997; Pennycook 1994, Phillipson 1992; Widdowson 1994) as well as a burgeoning interest in the cultural and political implications of the spread of English across the globe (Canagarajah 1999; Pennycook 1994, 1998, 2001; Phillipson 1992).

Among the important theoretical constructs informing ELT which have recently come under blistering scrutiny is the concept of culture. In his comprehensive survey of the culture concept in TESOL, Atkinson (1999, p.625) makes a case that culture is an under-examined concept in TESOL despite its centrality to the field. Similarly, Byram and Risager (1999, p.83) note that there is a need for a common professional discussion in contemporary times of the concept of culture. Since then, in line with the larger philosophical changes that have taken place in recent history, the concept of culture has been undergoing change. It is timely, therefore, to re-view the literature on the teaching of culture in English language education within a wider context of sociopolitical issues.

With a view to enhance our understanding of the current changes in the perception of culture and culture teaching, the purpose of this paper is to present a brief historical sketch of culture teaching in ELT with a particular focus on how it relates to broader socio-political factors. It is also important to note that the present paper is neither a complete history of culture teaching nor

pretends to take a comprehensive look at how the current state of culture teaching has come into being -there are any number of views of culture and culture teaching that might not follow. Premised on the idea that English language teaching beliefs, practices, and materials are never neutral, and indeed represent certain understandings of language, communication and education that are inevitably linked to the particular world views and ideologies that have arisen at the same time (Pennycook, 1994, pp.178-179), this paper is rather an attempt to present a bird's-eye view of the history of culture teaching within the wider context of sociopolitical changes. The time span chosen for the limited purposes of the present paper ranges from the post-war decades to the present which, according to Robertson (2003, in Kumaravadivelu, 2008, pp.32-35), fall into the third wave of globalization. The history of culture teaching has been periodized according to the continuity of the approaches to culture and culture teaching, more or less. Each section contains a general overview of the important lines of thought in the history of culture teaching in ELT, situating them within the larger socio-political landscape of the time (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Culture Teaching in ELT within a Socio-Political Context

	Socio-political Landscape	**Disciplines Informing Culture Teaching**	**Basics of Culture Teaching**
Post-war Years	- the start of the Cold War era - foundation of international organizations - foundation of the European Steel and Coal Community - post-World War II decolonization movements - 'development' programs in 'developing' countries -civil rights movements	<u>Linguistic Anthropology:</u> Brooks, Hall, Lado, Sapir & Whorf	- a shift from Culture with a capital C to culture with a small c - language and culture as inseparable - target culture as content
1960s		<u>Pragmatics</u> Austin & Searle	-culture with a small c - communicative competence
1970s	-large-scale immigration into Europe and the USA - energy crisis and economic instability - shift from Keynesian interventionism to n neoliberalism -Thatcherism & Reagenism -advances in computing technologies	postmodernism – poststructuralism - <u>Sociolinguistics:</u> Hymes, Labov, Brumfit, Wilkins, Canale & Swain	- target culture as content and context - 'authentic', 'real-life' materials -interest in source culture
1980s		<u>Intercultural Communication</u> Hofstede	-culture with a small c -a shift towards context and poetic dimensions of culture teaching -intercultural communicative competence -cross-cultural comparisons -cultural pluralism in materials
1990s	-the end of the Cold War era - foundation of the EU -advent of internet-based technologies	Cultural Studies Discourse Studies Media Studies Feminism Queer Theory Critical Theory	

2. A Brief Note on the Pre-war Period

Until the 1940s, it was the Grammar Translation Method that dominated the field of language education (Richards & Rodgers, 1989, p.4), and the primary purpose was access to the great literary works- often referred to as Culture with a capital C. Despite the efforts in many countries to promote language teaching for a greater international understanding after World War I (Stern, 1983, p.99), it was only after World War II that explicit links between culture and language teaching were drawn.

3. The Post-war Decades to the 1970s

The aftermath of World War II was characterized by two opposing, albeit complementary, processes- international cooperation and international rivalry. Despite their alliance during the war, the disagreement between the USA and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics about the configuration of the post-war world resulted in a bipolar economic and ideological competition. For four long decades, while they sought to divide the world into two ideological camps-capitalist and communist (Kuamaravadivelu, 2008, p.34; Steger, 2003, p.35), they were both imbued with "a sense of globalism deeply influenced by their own desire to seize the moment and secure political and economic advantages" (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, 34-35).

Economically, while World War II destroyed much of Europe, "in 1945, the USA was in a position to restructure the post-war world to reflect its own interests" (Teeple, 2000, p.11). "Founding the United Nations (UN) was a first step towards the establishment of the principles of a 'new world order' and the agencies to embody them" (p.11). In 1949, a military alliance, NATO, was forged in order to ensure US military dominance over Europe (p. 12). For Europe's economic revival and growth, the Marshall Plan was also introduced in Europe (Hobsbawn, 1996, p.280), and, in order to contain socialism and ensure the future of capitalism in Europe, the USA financed capitalist reconstruction on strictly American terms (Teeple, 2000, p.11). At the same time, "European Community began in 1950 with French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman's modest plan to create a supranational institution charged with regulating French and German coal and steel production" (Steger, 2003, p.65).

In economic terms, it was basically Keynesianism that served as the model during the post-war years (Steger, 2003, p.40; Teeple, 2000, p.12). That is, from 1945 to the early 1970s, while individual nations were free to control the permeability of their borders in economic terms, the establishment of international economic institutions founded the framework for making the rules of a global economy (Teeple, 2000, p.12). Until the early 1970s, existing mechanisms of state control over international capital flows made possible full

employment and the expansion of the welfare state-which has sometimes been called the 'golden age of controlled capitalism' (Steger, 2003, p.38).

During this period, furthermore, "[f]or American capital, and capital in general, the socialist and nationalist movements of liberation in the colonial empires and spheres of influence had to be fought or co-opted and the colonial systems dismantled and opened to international trade" (Teeple, 2000, p.12). During the Cold War era, thus, "the question of how to help other nations to 'develop' came to the fore" (Pennycook, 1994, p.42). Accordingly, a new paradigm of 'development' and 'modernization', which divided the world into 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' nations, grew up, and massive decolonization during the post-war years was coincided with the implementation of the development programs under the leadership of the USA (pp.44-45). Modernization meant a linear path of upward progress, moving from the 'undeveloped' to the 'developed', and that development could only be achieved by following the Western model of capitalism (pp.42-43). In order to help 'modernize developing countries' and rebuild war-torn European nations, the USA assumed leadership in establishing three new international economic organizations: International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (later known as the World Bank), and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (later transformed into World Trade Organization) (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p.35). During the Cold War, the IMF and the World Bank's function of providing loans for 'developing' countries was primarily connected to the West's political objective of containing communism (Steger, 2003, p.52).

Part of the expansion of capitalist system into the 'undeveloped' countries was also the promotion of 'modern' values, beliefs, and behaviors through mass media and education (Pennycook, 1994, pp.41-54). In addition to the USA's involvement in 'developing' countries through a vast array of institutions-political, economic, academic, and cultural (p.153), in the early 1960s, the emphasis of the British Council's work also shifted from cultural exchanges in 'developed' European countries to educational aid in 'developing' countries, especially in former colonies (pp.148-149). Overall, although the political independence signified the end of colonialism, political independence did not signal any particular change in economic dependency. Having convincingly argued the role of the neocolonial structures of world relationships after World War II in the escalation of English into its current status, Pennycook (1994, 1995, 1999) urges us to see the very use and teaching of English in the context of these processes of 'modernization'.

It was within this political climate that an anthropological view of culture, that is, culture with a small c, started to be influential in the writings on language education (e.g. Brooks, Hall, Lado). During the fifties and sixties, when

international trade, commerce, diplomacy, labor flow expanded to unprecedented heights, anthropological aspects of culture moved to the fore so as to address cultural practices that were seen to be impeding effective communication (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p.212). These scholars, as Kramsch notes (1993, p.224), "searched for a common universal ground of basic physical and emotional needs to make the foreign culture less threatening and more accessible to the language learner". It should also be mentioned that it was the heyday of audiolingualism in the USA and Britain from the 1950s until the communicative revolution in the mid-1970s (Holliday, 2005, p.45). The rise of audiolingualism can too be considered as the product of the same need of the American workforce all around the world to communicate effectively. Accordingly, it became increasingly important for the labor force to be mobile and flexible, and to be able to communicate and have a minimum knowledge about the world (Risager, 2007, p.33).

The older view of culture as intellectual refinement was not totally rejected, but culture as the way of life of a society was given preference; and, in turn, culture as a strong component of language curriculum was recognized (Stern, 1983, pp.250-251). Drawing from the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis as the central anthropological linguistic concept, Hall (1959, 186; in Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p.213) declared that "culture is communication and communication is culture". The idea of the inseparability of language and culture was adopted (Stern, 1983, p.251). Brooks (1964, p.85) argued that:

> Language is the most typical, the most representative, and the most central element in any culture. Language and culture are not separable; it is better to see the special characteristics of a language as cultural entities and to recognize that language enters into the learning and use of nearly all other cultural elements.

Accordingly, Brooks (1964, p.89) characterized knowledge of culture as knowledge of topics and questions that mark the differences in comparable patterns of culture. The models offered for the analysis of culture, in general, focused on different aspects of the target culture in a categorical manner as well as cultural differences, which were considered to differentiate cultures (Hughes, 1986, pp.162-169). Having accepted language as the most central element in any culture, these studies dealt with particular languages (e.g. English) and their particular cultures (e.g. British or American). Accordingly, the language teacher, who was invariably the native speaker of English and, thus, the source of cultural information, was seen to be responsible with presenting information about the target culture.

As far as the USA was concerned, it was a period of increased immigration into the USA and its national 'melting pot' ideology gained

widespread support until into the 1960s (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, pp.65-94; Risager, 2007, p.33). Cultural differences were treated as cultural deficiency; and monoculturalism, alongside monolingualism, shaped the teaching of culture in the second-language classroom (Kumaradivelu, 2008, pp.84- 92). Yet, at the same time, the recognition of socio-cultural inequalities and conflicts, especially the racial ones, started to manifest itself through a large number of social and ethnic movements in the USA (Risager, 2007, p.33).

On the whole, these developments in English language education took place at a time when, in line with the expansion of capitalism, there occurred both an acute need to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds and places and large-scale development/modernization initiatives. The increased attention given to foreign language teaching in the USA from the mid-1950s, coupled with the insights taken from behaviorist psychology, resulted in the emergence of the Audiolingualism and the concomitant need for an increased knowledge of other countries was met by cultural tidbits which were mostly based on comparable patterns of national cultures. The teaching of English language, both at 'home', the USA, and elsewhere, in turn meant the teaching of Anglo-American culture.

4. From the 1970s to the 1990s

The 1970s represent a shift from the Keynesian interventionism to neo-liberal economic policies. Due to the abandonment of the gold-based fixed rate system in 1971, the ensuing decade was characterized by global economic instability in the form of high inflation, low economic growth, high unemployment, public sector deficits, and two unprecedented energy crises (Steger, 2003, p.39). By the 1980s, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and US President Ronald Reagan led the neoliberal revolution against Keynesianism, consciously linking the notion of globalization to the liberation of economies around the world" (p.40). Although the former Soviet Union and the East European countries were comparable to the West in terms of growth rates until somewhere around the early 1970s, after that point, they fell rapidly behind (Giddens, 1999, 14). Accordingly, starting in the 1970s, the economic agenda of the IMF and the World Bank synchronized neoliberal interests to integrate and deregulate markets around the world (Steger, 2003, p.52).

These changes in economy policies were also complemented with revolutionary changes in computing technologies. The miniaturization of electronic circuits vastly reduced the size of computers, exponentially increased their speed and capacity, enormously decreased costs, and in turn multiplied the number of potential users and applications of personal computers in a very short period (Teeple, 2000, p.13). This new technology can be regarded as one of the hallmarks of globalization since it has both changed the instruments of

production and facilitated the transmission of information all around the world. “By the early 1980s the circuits of capital had become predominantly global and little national integrity of the accumulation process remained” (p.13). As a result of this technological turn, the world has undergone such radical changes as the development of mass communications and rapidly increasing flow of information. Social theorists, such as Daniel Bell, claimed that some of these changes were indicative of a transition to a new ‘post-industrial society’ (Cahoone, 1996, pp.8-9).

The early 1970s, just like the 1960s, were also characterized by a growing recognition of socio-cultural inequalities in the USA, which entered a period of turmoil, a crisis in consciousness emerging in the civil rights movements within the country (Pennycook, 1994, p.45). Similarly, in Western Europe, many social movements arose in the 1960s and 1970s, and there was increasing immigration of labor (Risager, 2007, p.46). In fact, there was a significant delegitimation of authority and political explosion of students in many parts of the world (Cahoone, 1996, pp.8-9). Despite the fact that this period marked the beginning of larger philosophical changes which led to a considerable re-evaluation of the intellectual paradigms that informed much academic work, we had to wait until the early 1990s to see their effects in English language education.

The interest in communication, along with spoken rather than written language, and the anthropological understanding of culture which appeared in the 1960s in the USA started to spread in general (Risager, 2007, p.40). In the 1970s, in the USA, with a highly pragmatic orientation, a whole range of practical methods such as culture capsules, culture assimilators and culture clusters were developed for teaching about cultural differences in connection with teaching about intercultural communication for outsourced business employees and workers (pp.41-42). The developments in Western Europe of the 1970s increased the need for language learning and knowledge of other countries, too. With the increased emphasis on the functional and communicative potential of language as a result of the American work in sociolinguistics (e.g. Hymes and Labov) and the studies by British applied linguists (e.g. Brumfit, Candlin, Widdowson, and Wilkins) (Richards and Rodgers, 1989, pp.64-65; Stern, 1983, pp.258-259), culture’s role in language curriculum grew and the communicative approach eventually replaced the audiolingual method. That is, the precursor of the keen interest in culture during the 1970s and 1980s is the communicative approach that developed in the same decades (Risager, 2007, p.10). Yet, this development did not represent a departure from an understanding of culture with a small c focusing on the transmission of information about target culture but maintained it through the

introduction of a variety of 'authentic', 'real-life' materials such as magazines, advertisements, and newspapers into the language classroom.

In the 1980s, the anthropological concept of culture came to be a common reference and the content orientation was still the predominant attitude (Risager, 2007, pp.100-101). The visual aspect of culture teaching was also strengthened in the same decade due to the development of video technology, which made it possible to record films, etc. from television and use them directly in teaching (p.73). Yet, at the same time, there started to emerge a body of literature that was highly critical of the cultural content of globally designed Anglo-American ELT materials due to their Anglo-centrism or Eurocentrism, stereotypical representations of Anglo-American culture, lack of address to local cultures or their under/mis-representation, and few opportunities for cross-cultural activity (Clarke & Clarke 1990; Dunnet, Dubin & Lezberg 1986; Prodromou 1988).

Another area of concentration during the 1980s was intercultural communication. In 1980, G. Hofstede introduced an empirical dimension to intercultural communication studies popularized by Hall in the 1960s (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, pp.215-216). Using statistically oriented quantitative methods to analyze cultural values contained in survey responses from more than 116,000 IBM employees in forty countries, he identified four dimensions of corporate culture: inequality acceptance, uncertainty avoidance, social role, and individualism versus collectivism (p.215). With the shift towards the idea of the intercultural task of language learning, content oriented culture pedagogy also began to become interested in the students' knowledge of their own country, their perception of themselves, and their national identity (Risager, 2007, p.101).

Overall, cultural understanding and cross-cultural comparisons were accepted to be a necessary component of language curriculum (Stern, 1983, p.262). The focal point of culture teaching was the so-called native speaker of the English language. The overall objective of culture teaching was then to help learners develop the ability to use the target language in culturally appropriate ways for the specific purpose of communicating with native speakers of the target language (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p.114).

5. The 1990s

Two major developments unfolded during the 1990s added further weight to globalization processes: the dissolution of the USSR and the advent of internet-based technologies. Furthermore, the European Union was established upon the foundations of the European Communities. The new neoliberal economic order received further legitimation with the 1989-91 collapse of

communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and many of the formerly communist countries in Eastern Europe submitted their formal accession applications to the EU (Steger, 2003, pp.40, 65-66). The Internet also assumed a pivotal function in facilitating globalization through the creation of the World Wide Web that connects billions of individuals, private associations, and governments; and further accelerated the liberalization of financial transactions (pp.17, 42). This new era of globalization was dubbed by the US President George H. W. Bush as "a 'new world order' whose leaders no longer respected the idea that cross-border wrongful acts were a matter concerning only those states affected" (p.61). The end of the Cold War was even called to be 'the end of history', that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government (Fukuyama 1992).

In the 1990s, as Risager (2007, p.137) notes, "the idea of intercultural learning became widely recognized". What gave impetus to the growing concern with intercultural communication was obviously the rapid increase in intercultural communication itself. Studies with a sociolinguistic orientation also lent weight to the ideas against the one-way transmission of the norms of target culture (see Chick 1996, Saville-Troike 1996). Eventually, communicative competence was replaced by intercultural communicative competence (Byram & Buttjes 1991, Hinkel 1999). Throughout the 1990s, a certain weakening in the content dimension of culture teaching and growth in its context and poetic dimensions were also observed (Risager, 2007, p.138).

Although the prevailing view of the relationship between language and culture was still that they were inextricably linked, in the course of the 1990s, this conviction split into a structuralist and a (new) poststructuralist variant (Risager, 2007, p.138). In the USA, a poststructuralist shift of paradigm took place with a number of publications by Claire Kramsch, who adopts a linguistic, discourse-analytical approach and is highly critical of culture pedagogy up to that point (Risager, 2007, p.106). Kramsch (1993, p.8) severely criticizes the prevailing view of culture as "mere information conveyed by the language". Kramsch (pp.12-13) further suggests that the main goal of foreign language study can no longer be the pursuit of communicative happiness, and that it should take its impetus from a concrete occurrence of cross-cultural miscommunication in a language class and take cultural context as its core rather than dealing with the teaching of each of the traditional four skills and then with the teaching of culture. Kramsch, as Risager (2007, p.108) observes, links language and culture according to the formula: one language-many cultures that vary according to such different parameters as socio-economic status and gender. Kramsch's work, being "the first monograph within culture pedagogy that unites a linguistic main perspective with a non-essentialist

treatment of the cultural dimension" (Risager, 2007, p.100), can thus be considered as a hallmark of a poststructuralist/postmodernist turn in culture teaching in ELT.

6. Conclusion: A Postmodernist Turn

The earlier conception of culture as the way of life of a group of people, as traditionally defined in anthropological terms, seems to have penetrated into ELT for at least three long decades, and still exists to a greater or lesser degree. Implicated in this usage are the national-regional categories such as Anglo-American culture and British culture. These standard views of culture, which have been prevailing in ELT, according to Atkinson (1999, p.626), refers to "a notion of culture(s) that sees them in their most typical form as geographically (and quite often nationally) distinct entities, as relatively unchanging and homogeneous, and as all-encompassing systems of rules or norms that substantially determine personal behavior". Considering people's behavior as defined and constrained by the culture in which they live, this essentialist way of thinking might however easily lend itself to a wider set of chauvinism which includes racism and sexism since it allows to think that 'German culture believes that ...', and that 'she belongs to German culture, therefore she ...' (Holliday, 2005, pp.17-18). Holliday (2005, 2006) further argues that native-speakerism which is characterized by the belief that native-speaker teachers represent a Western culture from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology is a pervasive ideology in ELT and its impact can be seen in many aspects of the field. As far as ELT is concerned, notes Holliday (2005, p.6), it is the native/non-native dichotomy where the fullest expression of an us-them divide is found.

In much the same vein, referring to the common representations of Asia in 260 American textbooks that were revealed in a study by the Asian Society in 1979, Pennycook (1999, p.11) maintains that there has been "a major tendency to operate with static models of cultural difference, static definitions of culture that dichotomise a West/East, Them/Us polarity of difference". Pennycook (1998, p.22) further suggests that the colonial construction of Self and Other, of the 'TE' and 'SOL' of TESOL still remain in many domains of English language education.

It is apparently the larger philosophical changes that have given impetus to the critical endeavor to expose and problematize the socio-political issues that are bound up with ELT. Poststructuralism, as is previously implied, was indeed born into the highly complex socio-political context of the 1960s (Cahoone, 1996, pp.3-5). Yet, poststructuralist, or postmodernist perspectives started to be influential in ELT in the 1990s when there started to emerge a new body of literature addressing to the challenges posed by the phenomenal

spread of English across the globe. Inspired by such post-modernist concepts as identity, power, and discourse, poststructuralists are concerned with 'what culture does' rather than 'what culture is' (Morgan, 2007, p.1042). "Poststructuralists...worry that a preoccupation with cultural issues can become a form of "power erasure"..., disguising systemic inequalities connected to race, class, sexual orientation, or gender relations in society" (p.1042). A critical view of culture, then, seeks to unveil "the fissures, inequalities, disagreements, and cross-cutting influences that exist in and around all cultural scenes, in order to banish once and for all the idea that cultures are monolithic entities, or in some cases anything important at all" (Atkinson, 1999, p.627).

With an upgrading of interdisciplinary discourse that takes the humanities and/or the social sciences as a point of departure (Risager, 2007, p.158), the current landscape can be best characterized as involving a proliferation of ideas of how to broaden the implications of culture and critique its use in ELT. In opposition to an essentialist view of culture, Holliday, Hyde, and Kullman (2004, pp.4-5), proposes a non-essentialist view which sees cultures as a complex social force that can flow, change, intermingle, and cut across and through one another, regardless of national frontiers. As far as foreign language education is concerned, these views have been fleshed out with, for instance, the small culture paradigm (Holliday 1999), the notion of cultural realism (Kumaravadivelu 2008), and the transnational paradigm (Risager 2008). If teaching practices are always involved in cultural politics, then, those poststructuralist perspectives, with a broad socio-political orientation "that places a notion of politics at the center of teaching around culture and identity formation" (Morgan, 2007, p.1044), might serve well to respond to the current challenges in ELT, and, in the longer run, enlarge the scope of human possibilities through education.

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