Athabasca University Master of Arts - Integrated Studies

'TO ENGLISH' IN QUEBEC
TOWARD CRITICAL APPROACHES TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

By

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'*TO ENGLISH'* IN QUEBEC

Abstract

'To english' in Quebec

Toward critical approaches to English language teaching

This paper is about resistance — resistance to the overwhelming hegemonic role of the English language. Critical approaches to English language teaching (ELT) engage with the politics of both teaching the language of the dominant and resisting domination by the same language. Critical approaches to ELT are often transdisciplinary, or anti-disciplinary, and seek new ways of understanding language, culture, and identity in relation to power and politics. Critical approaches move past dichotomous binaries, e.g. dominant/subordinate, native/non-native, global/local, and insist on the in-between spaces that those dichotomies create. Not only do critical approaches take seriously pressing concerns of linguistic attrition and hegemony, they also engage with a number of social and cultural issues that are often excluded from mainstream language education. My central research question is therefore: To what extent do Quebec ELT researchers and institutions embrace critical approaches to ESL instruction? My analysis shows, supported by a review of literature, that the majority of research in Quebec on ELT has not embraced critical approaches and has stagnated in the mainstream and normative approaches of applied linguistics. I propose that Quebec shift its focus on ELT toward critical approaches.

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'To english' in Quebec
Toward critical approaches to English language teaching

The difficulty, simply put, is getting the balance right.

Alastair Pennycook (2001, p. 120).

I am assuming in this discussion that learners of English as a second or foreign language experience unequal power status.

Canagarajah (2005, p. 946)

In the quote above, Pennycook supposes that the balance in linguistics leans toward discourse that reproduces the dominant ideologies and power structures of the English language. In light of that, I would ask if English language teaching (ELT[1]) in Quebec reinforces the dominant ideologies, power structures and inequalities referred to by Pennycook and others? Does linguistics research in Quebec question or problematize the role of ELT in relation to power, identity, and culture? And what would this critical approach add to the language context in Quebec? Or in other words, how would being critical of our ELT approaches make it any better for teachers to do their jobs, or for students to learn, or for the Quebec people to relate differently to the English language? Research points to an ELT teaching corps in Quebec that is dissatisfied with its profession (French and Collins 2011), to student-teachers that are facing numerous challenges including hostility towards English language and culture (Winer 2007), and to difficulties achieving proficiency with current ESL practices and resources (the focus of all of Concordia's research, see table 3). If the ELT research over the last 40 years has been mainly in

(uncritical) applied linguistics[2], it is time that we take a different approach and be critical of the taken-for-granted assumptions about ELT. My central research question is therefore: To what extent do Quebec ELT researchers and institutions embrace critical approaches to ESL instruction? To answer this question, I have performed an analysis of the principal studies and discourse related to ELT in Quebec.

To begin, I would like to situate the reader with my own background assumptions. Referring to Canagarajah's quote above, it is my assumption that despite the majority status of French in Québec, francophone Québécois must engage on unequal ground with the dominant political, economic, and cultural powers that function primarily in English within the North American and global context. I also feel that the ELT discourse in Quebec maintains dichotomous binary perspectives concerning ELT. This dichotomy can be described as follows: those in favour of continually improving the instrumental effectiveness of ESL instruction vs. those in favour of prioritizing French language instruction by reducing the amount of time and resources accorded to ESL instruction in schools. The former perspective tends to argue that more effective ESL instruction will guarantee access to the global economy as well as providing cognitive developmental benefits to students. The latter perspective tends to perceive ESL instruction as a threat to the mastery of French first language and is wary of the influence of anglophone culture on Quebec culture as a minority in North America. The resulting discourse neglects critical concerns for cultural and social issues, for example cultural identity, gender issues, and social inclusion, because criticizing one pole of the binary is (mis)understood as inherently supporting the opposite pole. It is my fundamental assumption therefore that if the ELT research in Quebec reflected more critical approaches, the public discourse concerning English might evolve. Therefore, following Pennycook and other critical scholars, I argue that

our ELT classrooms must be attentive to the ways that language is not just reflective of society, identity, or culture. To the contrary, I suppose that language is performative and thus integrally responsible for constructing society, culture, and identity with potential to both transform and reproduce power relationships.

These assumptions connect ELT to a number of other disciplines and interdisciplines, including post-colonial studies, culture studies, political economics, political ecology, queer theory, and fine arts, for example. By engaging with the interconnectedness of language and power, language teaching becomes a site of resistance to linguistic hegemony. For example, Quebec rappers resist dominant perspectives on language through code-switching (Sarkar 2009). As well, the appropriation of language via neologisms plays a similar role of resistance in some learning contects (Canagarajah 2005). Along this line, I suggest later in this paper the neologism *to english* in order to further the performative understanding of language.

I propose that the fields relating to ELT in Quebec, such as applied linguistics and second language acquisition, need to look toward critical and, thus inevitably, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary approaches in order to transform their relation to the English language. Pennycook's (2001) work on critical applied linguistics (CALx) is one potential model from which ELT researchers and teachers can find inspiration for their work. Pennycook grounds his theory in a number of disciplines because he recognizes the multiple relationships with language. While I adhere to a notion of transdisciplinarity — transcending the normative and exclusionary practices of disciplinary thinking to embrace possibilities for both/and logic[4] — Pennycook (2001, p. 173) sees this as anti-disciplinarity. His notion of anti-disciplinarity is based on his perception that CALx needs to resist the normativity of mainstream applied linguistics (ALx) and respond to the shifting grounds of language and education. Whether we should adhere to

trans, inter, or anti-disciplinarity is too large a question for the current work. On that note, as several reviewers of this paper have pointed out, I am "immersed in the subject" (P. Kellogg, personal communication, April 22, 2015) of ELT and critical theory and this can come across as an overly specialized approach. I have attempted to make my argument as clear as possible using terminology and concepts that transcend disciplines. However, I must also engage with the concepts of the disciplines of applied linguistics and second language acquisition. When need be, I have added endnotes to help clarify matters. Furthermore, I have included three tables appended to this essay elaborating on the literature related to ELT in Québec.

In the next section I will briefly highlight the main aspects of Pennycook's approach in order to frame my analysis of the ELT literature I reviewed. Following that, I will move on to the analysis of the main perspectives concerning ELT from Quebec. Subsequently, I introduce a neologism — *to english* — in order to reframe ELT in a way that engages with the performativity of language and resistance, and to create space for new and complex ways to understand language.

Applied Linguistics with an Attitude[5]

The main tenet[6] of critical applied linguistics (CALx) involves the constant questioning of the assumptions that constitute our understanding of language. Language, according to Pennycook, is intricately wrapped up in micro and macro socio-cultural relations — relations that are always already political. In order to understand language in such a way, we must acknowledge that language (and teaching and identity) are not just reflections of society as applied linguistics assumes. Rather, language performs society and culture. Also, it is important to note that the end goal of CALx praxis[7] is social transformation — challenging dominant discourses that produce inequalities and injustice, something that applied linguistics avoids. If

approached from a CALx perspective, ELT can resist dominant structures. English language learners (ELLs) invested in such a critical approach can be validated in their first language while challenging the socio-cultural and political concerns that are intricately related to language and to English in particular.

One of the main advantages that comes to non-English speaking societies by embracing critical approaches to ELT is an understanding of how English can be used as a form of resistance against the domination of the English centre (Pennycook 1994, 2001). Critical approaches in ELT[8] are, in addition, attentive to the marginalization and subordination of a number of social groups, including women, the poor, and minorities. A number of ELT scholars have drawn on post-colonial studies to inform their perspectives (Pennycook 1994, 1999, 2001, 2004; Phillipson 1992; Kachru 1996; Canagarajah 2005; Kumaravadivelu 1999). Pennycook explains that among these critical approaches there is a fundamental epistemological difference between those who adhere to the emancipatory goals of modernism and those who adhere to the problematizing practices of poststructuralist and postmodernist approaches. The former seeks to analyze relations between language and the socio-political, and the latter sees language as always already political—analyzing society through language studies. Apart from these critical ELT approaches, Pennycook perceives two other epistemological approaches to language. One approach, including Chomsky's, embraces realism and the innate aspects of language to a point that disconnects the political from language and finds critical approaches as confusing the scientific with the political. Another approach, what Pennycook (2001, p. 29) calls "liberal ostrichism," acknowledges the complex relationship of language and power but denies engaging with the politics of language in its research and practice. This approach, which Pennycook claims is that of mainstream ALx, sees language as reflective of society and that being critical

should also mean being nonpolitical. Pennycook finds issue with this approach in that, "From a critical applied linguistic perspective, this denial of its own politics, this refusal to take into account broader social and political concerns, makes this an ostrich-like (head in the sand) approach to applied linguistics" (2001, p. 165). In my view, much of the research related to ELT in Quebec has been of this character.

In contrast to the practice of ALx, Pennycook highlights the need for, in the words of Dean (1994), "the restive problematization of the given" concerning our understanding of language and its relation to power. Furthermore, CALx's self-reflexivity resists producing itself as a new orthodoxy and further creating exclusive and dichotomous binaries (Pennycook 2001, p. 7). Pennycook (2004, p. 3) suggests that we need to transcend the disciplinary constraints imposed on us by linguistics and applied linguistics in order to "disinvent" language and then reconstruct new ways of understanding language. By engaging with a number of contexts that intersect with language such as cultural studies, philosophy, literary theory, postcolonial studies, sociology, history, queer theory, and more, Pennycook's framework challenges the normativity that has produced "profoundly exclusionary practices" (ibid., p. 3, 6). Even more, those working in CALx should keep in mind a preferred vision of the future as CALx involves an ethical aspect of compassion and hope (ibid.)[9] – we are aiming for social transformation here, not just reproducing the status quo.

This brings us to what is, in my view, the most crucial aspect of Pennycook's theoretical framework — how language must be understood as performative. Performativity according to Pennycook (2004) and Butler (1999) should not just be understood as 'nonverbal communication' or 'acting.' Rather, 'performative' means to understand the body "as

interlinked with other social and semiotic practices" (2004, p. 17). Or in other words, language (broadly understood) reflexively performs society. As well, Pennycook (ibid.) warns that,

> [W]e need to be cautious not to suggest that language is merely a site of identity performance. Thus, while it is useful to view language and identity as interrelated acts, we should also try to avoid a view that suggests that they are acts that we can easily choose.

This means also that individuals are not completely free agents. Social structures play a significant role on the performativity of the individual. Pennycook (ibid.) paraphrases Butler (1999), "Fashioning language and identity implies a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance." The repetition of language acts makes us believe that identity (and gender) is a static and essential thing. However, according to Pennycook and Butler, this appearance is deceiving. Language does not reflect who you are. Rather, language is integral in constructing identity.

To exemplify this, we can look at Bonny Norton's research connecting ELT and identity construction. She has argued to reframe the way we understand student motivation, a significant distinction from mainstream understandings of motivation held by many in ALx. Norton (2010, p. 3) writes,

> Departing from current conceptions of motivation in the field of language learning, the concept of *investment* [emphasis added] signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to speak, read, or write it.

Drawing on Bourdieu (1991), Norton goes on to explain that the *investments* language learners make result in the increase in their cultural capital. In turn, learners' identities and their

opportunities for the future are reevaluated (Norton, 2010, p.3). Also, Pennycook adds to this understanding of learner identity:

> Looking at identity [and culture] as something we perform through language rather than as something reflected in language helps get away from the essentialized identities of much applied linguistic work (Pennycook 2001, p.162).

Notions such as investment, cultural capital, performed identity, imagined communities and imagined identities are all potential pathways for language teachers to engage with learners in transformative ways.

Finally, Pennycook argues for an approach to language study and education that he calls "applied linguistics with an attitude" (2001, p.177). This cheeky and anti-disciplinary way of labelling his approach captures Pennycook's emphasis of the "restive problematization of the given." The attitude in mention makes for a view of language as always already political (2001, p. 108) that requires linguists and teachers to be constantly self-reflexive (2001, p. 30). Pennycook is even critical of many approaches labelled as critical but that do not apply "problematizing practices" (2001, p. 30), i.e. much of the work from critical discourse analysis, critical literacy, and critical pedagogy. His point is that even 'critical' approaches can be limited by determinism and an inflexible belief in the emancipatory goals of modernism. Rightly so, Pennycook elicits critique of his own work.[10] In the next section I will apply the framework of CALx to an analysis of the literature produced on ELT in Quebec.

ELT Research from Quebec

From my literature review[11] I conclude that the emphasis in ELT research has been mainly on the instrumental aspects of second language acquisition (SLA), and, thus largely dissociated from "an adequate understanding of how languages are complexly related to social

difference and cultural factors" (Pennycook 2001). A minimal discussion of the politics of language in Quebec is frequently present in these mainstream ALx studies, but the studies do not engage with the "profound questions of social difference, inequality and conflict" (ibid.). While the majority of the research fits into Pennycook's category of liberal-ostrichism, there are a handful that embrace more critical approaches. However, even the latter studies are not up to the standard that Pennycook sets for "applied linguistics with an attitude," situated instead within an emancipatory-modernist framework. I will begin with the research that has focused on the instrumental aspects of language proficiency. For a detailed analysis of the main literature I reviewed, see tables 2 and 3 in the appendices.

Liberal-ostrichism[12]

In my view, the research I include in this category reproduces the ideologies of the dominant group (i.e. the English centre) by leaving unquestioned the assumptions that constitute second language learning and teaching. Lightbown and Spada (2013), for example, are unreflective of their own assumptions concerning SLA yet go to great lengths to report the history of the various frameworks that form the field of SLA, from behaviourism to innatism[13]. To many, addressing what appear to be functional problems with functional solutions makes intuitive sense.[14] But however much instrumental value these studies might have toward SLA and English language proficiency, it will only serve to reproduce the status quo without a problematization of the assumptions and aims of said research.

To begin, in the literature that I qualify as reproductive of dominant discourse it is commonplace to acknowledge the political context in Quebec concerning language. However, the vast majority of research either skirts the issues when it comes to posing research questions (e.g. Lightbown and Spada (1994, 2013)) or advises that teachers attempt to change students'

attitudes towards the politics of English (e.g. Winer 2007). An example of how the politics of language are acknowledged but not engaged with can be seen in the frequent discussion in ELT literature as to whether Quebec is an ESL or an EFL context. The oft repeated ESL/EFL debate[15] (Winer (2007), Fallon and Rublik (2011), et al.) is evidence of how ALx scholars neglect the extent to which Quebec language learners are invested in English regardless of the so-called 'lack of contact'. 'Lack of contact' is also a misconceived notion, limiting 'contact' to face-to-face interaction in physical social spaces. This view neglects the emerging ways in which learners can virtually 'contact' with English thru social media and the Internet. Furthermore, irrespective of access to 'conversation' with Anglophones (which by the way reproduces the dependence on native speakers) contact can be seen in the omnipresent discourse of both the perceived need for English and the perceived need to protect against English hegemony. For these reasons, as noted above, I believe Quebec English teachers (L1 and L2) should work under the label ELT.

A second critique is that Quebec ALx research has overemphasized a few methodological aspects of teaching in what appears to be a pseudo-movement to promote a particular model of ELT. I am referring specifically to the research on Intensive English programs aimed at highlighting the advantages of SLA resulting from more intensive blocks of English class time (i.e. Lightbown 1988, 2012; Lightbown and Spada 1994; Collins and White 2011; Collins et. al 1999). In fairness, they admit that there is no universal best practice for SLA and even acknowledge the fallacy of the "earlier is better,"[16] thus questioning the recent policy changes to advance ELT to as early as first grade. However, with all of the resources that were devoted to the several studies on Intensive English programs, not one problematizes social or cultural concerns such as the unabashed prescription of up to 7 hours of English TV for homework.

Furthermore, there is no question as to the effect of social exclusion[17] that results in the selective nature of the Intensive English or the Enriched English Language Arts classes.

A third concern is that the literature has shown no consideration of the ways that gender and language are related in more complex ways than mainstream 'difference' or 'deficit' theories. It is surprising to me given the proportion of women producing scholarly research on ELT in Quebec that there is little consideration of gender issues, equality in classrooms, or equality in the ELT profession at large. Pennycook (2001, p. 151) addresses the relation of gender and sexuality to language:

> Forms of discrimination against women in and through language are widely attested: Women are stereotyped as talkative while at the same time they are frequently silenced or ignored… women's use of language frequently bears signs of lower social status; women's ways of talking are not accorded respect… Clearly, language is an important site of the reproduction of gendered equality, but to understand how gender and sexuality may relate to a range of issues in applied linguistics, we need to consider carefully what models of language, power, and identity we are using.

Not even Winer (2007) addressed gender issues seriously in her commentary when one of her students was clearly treated in a sexist manner by one of the student's non-ESL colleagues (i.e. "*la petite anglaise*" anecdote, p. 502).[18]

A fourth point of contention is the frequent focus on the 'problems' or 'challenges' that English teachers face in Quebec. It is too facile to blame the external societal factors for teaching inefficacy as Winer seems to argue. By contrast, SLA focuses too heavily on the internal affective or cognitive factors of learners that impede linguistic and cultural acquisition.

Winer (2007) notes 'problems' with hiring proficient speakers outside of Montreal, the effect of lack of proficiency on medium of instruction, and the advantaged status in school/community for francophone ESL teachers because they fit in better (p. 496). She also identifies the use of little English by teachers in ESL classes as "problematic" but clearly means that it is viewed negatively and that ESL teachers should use as much English as possible with few exceptions (p. 499). While I agree with Winer to some extent, this situation shows how the "problematics" of ESL teacher training revolve around the technical aspects of ESL instruction.

A fifth critique involves the notion of student motivation. All of the studies refer to problems motivating students. Lightbown and Spada (2013) do well to note that motivation is not a guarantee of effective SLA. However, Norton (2010), a Canadian voice from outside Quebec, uses the term 'investment' to better capture the way students engage with L2 learning. The potential for language teachers to draw on the invested reactions from students is enormous. Whereas Winer suggests student teachers 'diffuse' hostility, I would engage with the hostility. Resistance is crucial to language performativity. Recognizing the investment students have in a language despite their relative proficiency and engaging with the potential to resist English domination through the English language are untapped avenues in English language teaching in Quebec.

Finally, Pennycook (2001, p. 143) admits that it would certainly be easier, and perhaps more productive, for ALx and teachers to focus their energy on instrumental aspects of learning. He writes,

> Thus, it could be argued that it's all very well to consider classes as social contexts, but we still need to get on with the real work of looking at cognitive processes, at *how students learn language* [emphasis added]. Such a

> dichotomization between the social and the psychosocial, however, obscures the ways in which social, cultural, and political relations are tied up with questions of identity, subjectivity, and difference (ibid.).

This is the argument that many would have in Quebec — that the problems facing ESL teachers require them to focus more and more on the psychosocial processes of learning a second language. The slightly presumptuously titled *How Languages Are Learned* (Lightbown and Spada 2013) speaks to the essentialist epistemology of mainstream SLA. To be fair, this well appreciated text is an accessible read and covers a large span of issues in SLA. However, while the authors do claim that there is no magic recipe to SLA, it is clear that they are mainly only concerned with language proficiency and neglect to ask 'what are students learning' as well as 'how,' 'why,' and 'for whom' are francophone students taught English.

Discourses of Resistance

There are only a handful of studies that have been produced in Quebec (of which I am aware) that have taken a critical approach to issues concerning ELT. Fallon and Rublik (2011, 2012) question the discourse over the introduction of ESL in French schools as early as first grade. Sarkar and Winer (2006) present an analysis of the performativity of code-switching in Quebec hip-hop that indirectly implicates English language learning[19]. Steinbach and Kazarloga (2014) take a world Englishes[20] approach to analyzing the identities of future ESL teachers. Tan (2005) also questions the relationship between identity and language in the Quebec context. However, her work remains mostly descriptive.[21]

While all of the studies that I refer to in this section can be criticized on some level, they can be seen as discourses of resistance and ought to be followed up in further research that more deeply questions the relationships between power, language, identity, culture, teaching, and ELT.

By resistance, I don't mean that they are not in favour of teaching the English language in Quebec. Rather, I mean that they resist the mainstream and dominant perceptions of language and question the relationship between language and power. I believe, and this is surely a result of my desire to see the transformative potential of language learning, that these studies have potential to transform the stagnating dichotomous discourses over ELT in the province. Sarkar and Winer (2006), for example, engage the socio-cultural aspects of language that are not limited to classroom learning environments. A similar concern is evident in Fallon and Rublik's (2011) underscoring of the differences between circumstantial and mandated second language learning. While it is at times unclear in both of the aforementioned studies to what extent they are critical of the mainstream understandings of language, they both question the relationship between language policy, language use, and cultural issues. Steinbach and Kazarloga (2014, p. 321) also find that the discourse of language policy influences student motivation to learn. As I underlined above in the section on Pennycook's approach, critical approaches have moved away from a notion of motivation which tends to put the onus on the student to 'get motivated' to learn. Instead, Steinbach and Kazarloga (2014), as well as Fallon and Rublik (2011) and Winer (2007), could look at the ways that learners and teachers are invested in language. And while Steinbach and Kazarloga (2014) point to the policy discourses that affect student motivation, they don't consider how those discourses are mainly informed by research from mainstream applied linguistics. Instead of pointing to lack of opportunities to practice English and the negative way that ELT is perceived in the province, ELT professionals ought to be questioning the way that ELT research has produced these perceptions and discourses. Furthermore, in their insistence on the perceived reality of resistance to English language learning due to protectionist discourses, Steinbach and Kazarloga (2014) reproduce those very same discourses. Shouldn't critical

research be concerned with finding ways of engaging with the resistance instead of aiming to 'change negative attitudes toward English language and culture'? This 'changing' sounds a little too much like 'assimilating' or 'indoctrinating'.

Where these studies adhere more closely to critical approaches can be seen in the questioning of givens, such as with Fallon and Rublik's (2011, 2012) analysis of the 'earlier is better fallacy.' Another example is how Steinbach and Kazarloga (2014) problematize the status of native speakers and non-native speakers as ESL teaching candidates. They write,

> Perhaps a real movement to deemphasize NS [native speaker] norms can start in contexts like Quebec, where many teachers are not prepared to sacrifice their identities in order to teach English because of their strong national identity in a political and linguistic context where their native language has more political and social status than English (ibid., p. 331).

This may be an interesting starting point for how teachers that identify as francophone Québécois engage with the politics of language in the classroom and address concerns of identity, status, and equality.

In all, the few studies that I found from Quebec embracing a critical approach exhibited only slight deviations from the mainstream discourse of ELT in Quebec and the mainstream research of applied linguistics. More work needs to be done in order to engage with the issues. We need to be more attentive to gender concerns regarding identity and inequality. We need to engage with the politics of language in teacher training and ELT classrooms. We need to consider how ELT reproduces social stratification and reinforces dominant ideologies. We need to reframe the way teachers, students, and society understand language and language teaching. In short, we can do much better.

Discussion on Performativity – '*To english'*

What we need at this point are new ways of engaging with English that provide teachers and students the space needed to openly resist the dominant discourses that reproduce power structures and inequality. One such way would be to encourage the appropriation of language (Pennycook 2001). In that light, I envision a neologism that would better engage with the performativity of English. In line with Pennycook's theory of performativity I propose we reframe the object noun 'English' as a verb '*to english.'* In my view *to english* means that "language is a doing" (ibid.) Furthermore, *to english* should involve a questioning of the assumptions of a language, a 'restive problematization' of its givens. We no longer need labels such as native or non-native speakers—regardless of your origins, the performativity implicated in the verb *to english* transcends normative understandings of language. This a-normativity makes it potentially a transdisciplinary (or anti-disciplinary) endeavour. Drawing on lessons from the postcolonial performativity of resistance to the dramaturgy of sociology, from the attitude of CALx to the pragmatism of ALx, reframing the noun 'English' as a verb *to english* engages creative possibilities for social transformation. *Englishers* — those who *english* — are invested in the language in countless numbers of ways. *To english* means more than simply being aware of the relationship between power and language. *To english* means questioning the assumptions we hold about language and resisting that which results in inequalities and exclusion.

Conclusions

Research that has been produced in Quebec can be (loosely) categorized into two main groups, discourses of the dominant, and discourses of resistance. By assigning a label to a particular study or researcher, I don't mean to dismiss or praise their work unquestioningly. In

fact, I respect greatly all of the work that I have reviewed for this paper. My critical approach is not intended to discredit any of the work reviewed here, but is rather aimed at finding transformative paths to ameliorating the language context in Quebec. As I have mentioned before, this particular context is attended to in some way by nearly all of the studies I reviewed. However, very few of the studies produce research that engages with the particular socio-cultural-political-economic issues in such a way that resists the dominant and stagnating dichotomous understanding of language in the province. None of the scholars comment on a student's resistance to ELT as one particular site to engage with the student's investment in English. Those studies that have engaged with the sociocultural aspects of language establish precedents that are perhaps a sign that the theoretical framework guiding language studies in the province is changing. I believe that critical approaches (plural because there is no single correct approach) can transform the discourse of language and power, ameliorate linguistic relationships in the province, and empower the Quebecois people. In the classrooms in primary and secondary schools, in the university TESL programs[22], in the research produced by ELT scholars, in the media, in the online community, and in the physical public spaces, language can be a site of resistance — a performativity that persists in-between dichotomous binaries.

Looking toward the future, the next steps for ELT in Quebec should be to focus on teacher education. In the existing university TESL curriculum there are currently three courses that lend themselves particularly well to critical approaches: language awareness, classroom management, and history of English. Promising potential for CALx applications can also be seen in that both UQAC (Université du Québec à Chicoutimi) and McGill, for example, have integrated or interdisciplinary approaches in their education departments. In my view, reframing future teachers' understanding of language will produce more invested teachers and students. As

well, an important arena to support in-service teachers will be to integrate more critical approaches in the annual SPEAQ (Société pour le perfectionnement de l'enseignement de l'anglais, langue seconde, au Québec) conferences. And of course, as I have argued in this paper, the research in the province on ELT needs to take a critical and more transdisciplinary turn.

In conclusion, I will finish with a statement of hope from Canadian scholars invested in ELT. Hawkins and Norton (2009, p. 36) write,

> This then, is the promise a critical approach holds: to contribute to the shaping of a social world in which all people, regardless of language, ethnicity, colour or class, have equal voices, access, and possibilities.

We — teachers, students, parents, administrators, policy makers, stakeholders—need to be moving toward ELT approaches that avoid the normativity of disciplinarity and remain critical of our taken-for-granted assumptions about language, culture, society, education, and power relationships. So, the question I ask to all those invested in ELT is: How do you *english*?

Endnotes

[1] While it may be confusing to some in Quebec, I have chosen to replace the label ESL (English Second Language) with ELT throughout the paper, except where another author refers specifically to ESL. I have opted to use the label ELT for a number of reasons. First, the issue of first language or second language or foreign language has very little significance, in my view. While the instrumental challenges of second language acquisition (SLA) are quite different from L1 (First Language) learning, all of the previously mentioned forms of language learning involve ideological and epistemological assumptions that can be reproductive of hegemonic relationships (Benesch 1993). Second, I would like to show solidarity with the large body of critical scholarship that uses the label ELT. Third, there is a particular relationship in Quebec between first and second language learning resulting from unusual policies on language of schooling. As well, many francophones are learning in English L1 contexts, and issues of access and rights of L1 instruction complicate matters. Thus, ELT encompasses more of the discourse involving English in Quebec.

[2]It is important for me to reiterate my respect for the scholars that I criticize here. I do not aim to attack the people, but to criticize their approaches. I am amazed by the quantity of fine research produced by the scholars at the various Quebec institutions. These scholars are proficient and seem to care sincerely about helping francophone Quebecois to acquire English as a second language.

[4] For more on transdisciplinarity, see Nicolescu (2010).

[5] For a brief overview of Pennycook's work on CALx and its implications see Friedrich, et al. (2013, pp. 121-124).

[6] Pennycook would have issue with using a word such as 'tenet' that implies an attempt to normalize an approach.

[7] Praxis in Pennycook's view is, "[T]he mutually constitutive roles of theory grounded in practice and practice grounded in theory. It is a way of thinking about critical work that does not

dichotomize theory and practice but rather sees them as always dependent on each other" (1999, p. 342).

[8] For those who are unfamiliar with the various frameworks for understanding the global role of English, I have reproduced a summative table from Pennycook (2001). It can be found in the appendices under Table 1.

[9]It is important to note that Pennycook (2001, p. 22-23) highlights other meanings of 'critical' that need to be considered, such as 'crucial' and 'turning point,' when defining CALx. He writes, "Like it or not, English teachers stand at the very heart of the most crucial educational, cultural, and political issues of our time." He furthermore addresses one of the crucial difficulties with critical theory that some educators or members of society face – the fear of theory (ibid., p. 26). Pennycook suggests that there is a need to analyze not just the lack of knowledge but the resistance that some may have towards abstract and purely academic forms of knowledge.

[10]An interesting critique of Pennycook's notion of CALx comes from Friedrich et al.(2013). Among the many astute criticisms from Friedrich, et al., the limited accessibility of CALx to only those who have the specialized, academic knowledge required to read his work and to make any sense of it. The authors claim that this type of exclusive knowledge is actually something that Pennycook argues vehemently against, but in fairness is virtually unavoidable given the complexity of his understanding of language and power relations. It is very hard to put into simple terms the vast knowledge base behind CALx. As well, the authors note that, "It is hard to avoid the conclusion that 'problematizing' is a far cry from 'problem solving'" (ibid. p. 131).

[11]I also need to make clear the limitations of my analysis. By no means is my research extensive, not including doctorate theses for example, but I believe it is representative of what is commonly held as the authoritative voices on ELT.

[12] See tables 2 and 3 for more detailed analysis and a complete list of the studies reviewed.

[13] Innatism is a notion in SLA generally attributed to Chomsky (2014) that posits that children are born with the innate ability for language. This is typically juxtaposed with perspectives that emphasize environmental factors as having more impact on language learning.

[14] Ironically, Lightbown and Spada (2013) even highlight this same point, but only do so in such a superficial way that no serious social, cultural, or political concerns are raised. For example, Lightbown and Spada look to demystify the notion of motivation as a key factor for success, and look at one of the same studies that Pennycook refers to, i.e. Heath (1983). The notion that people from different backgrounds 'take' differently from different texts doesn't warrant much further inquiry for Lightbown and Spada other than a simple acknowledgment of difference in the classroom. Pennycook however, looks to engage with that difference in such a way that questions how teaching practices might marginalize some students and reinforce the status of others. Particularly if the teacher is of the same background of the dominant group.

[15] What I label as the ESL/EFL debate refers to the argument that some make that English is a foreign language (EFL) in Quebec because second language contexts (ESL) typically have more 'contact' with or presence of the target language. 'Contact' is understood in this debate as physical face to face interactions in English. As I argue, this limited understanding of 'contact' neglects the ways that Quebecois interact in English through the internet, TV, or other media or through the nearly omnipresent discourses that implicate English Canada or other North American/global countries.

[16] Pennycook and other have pointed out the fallacy that many ELT policy makers, researchers, teachers, and laymen have assumed that the best time in a person's life to learn a language is in early childhood. Furthermore, it is assumed that the earlier a child learns a language, the better the child will acquire the language. Pennycook calls this a fallacy because there is no actual research to defend such a perspective and that the consequences of such an assumption are that policies detract seriously from the learning of indigenous and first languages. These first languages take subordinate status to learning English (in particular, though other western languages have a similar position). Arguments for more balance between languages learned, less

haste in introducing second languages so early, and less pressure to acquire second languages at the expense of first languages are more positive paths.

[17] Berthelot (2008) offers a poignant critique of the exclusivity of streaming in public schools.

[18] "la petite anglaise" translates literally to 'the little English girl' and could be used as a term of endearment. However, this is typical to use the diminutive 'petite' to disempower women by belittling the individual's significance. Construed in this manner, the expression would be offensive and sexist, not to mention portraying a hostile opinion towards English teachers or English language and culture.

[19] I include their study in this discussion of ELT because I believe that critical approaches to ELT can also focus on non-school related studies. By observing the social phenomenon of language use in particular contexts, we can better understand as teachers how language is performed in those contexts.

[20] The world Englishes approach to ELT is generally attributed to Kachru (1996) and aims to liberate English speakers and learners from the dominance of standard English hierarchy. Claiming that geographic locations 'own' their proper variety of English is a decentering gesture that has many positive consequences for English learners around the globe. However, world Englishes approaches neglect to engage with the politics of language as much as CALx.

[21]If I have omitted work from this short list, it is not for lack of searching for critical approaches to ELT in Quebec. And if I have mis-categorized work, perhaps it is due to a question of degree of criticality, for it is possible to be aware of the complex socio-political language context in Quebec but remain largely uncritical of the relationship of ELT to that socio-political context.

[22] Though I didn't have space in this paper to address the issue of teacher education, I performed an analysis of two university TESL programs concerning the types of courses that they offered their students and the whether there were any critical approaches apparent in the course descriptions. Briefly, the results showed, as I suspected, that the majority of the classes focused

on instrumental knowledge training and practical teaching methodology in line with the research from ALx.

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Appendices

Table 1:

Frameworks for Understanding the Global Role of English (Reproduced from Pennycook (2001,Table 3.2))		
Framework for Understanding the Global Role of English	**Implications for English and language teaching**	**Politics, problems, and pitfalls**
Colonial celebratory	English an inherently useful language; teach English as mission to the world	Arrogant appraisal of English and disdain for other languages; colonial politics
Laissez-faire liberalism	English a functional tool for pragmatic purposes; teach English to whoever wants it	Inadequate analysis of the global politics of English and of complementarity
Linguistic imperialism	Homogenization, destruction of other cultures and languages; teach English sparingly	Too powerful a model of structural power; strong on structure, weak on potential effects
Language ecology and language rights	English a threat to complex local ecologies; support other languages through language rights	Possible conservative form of conservation; identity too closely pinned to mother tongues
Linguistic hybridity	Languages and cultures change and adapt; world Englishes; teach multiple varieties	Blindness to threats posed by global forces; model of change as natural; weak theorization of hybridity
Postcolonial performativity	English as part of postcolonial problematic; cultural politics of resistance and appropriation	Complexity of relations between local and global contexts; potential romanticization of appropriation

Table 2:

UQAC and Other Affiliations			
Authors	Theoretical Framework	Area of study	Analysis
Steinbach and Kazarloga (2014) [Univ. de Sherbrooke]	World Englishes,(critical) Applied Linguistics	TESL education, Native speaker vs Non Native speaker identities	This research engages with some very crucial concerns in the field of ESL teacher education involving identity and Quebec's relationship with the English speaking inner circle. The study shows potential in its approach to ELT from a world Englishes perspective and questions the mainstream conceptions of native and non native English speaking teachers. While the findings may point to some interesting new ways of theorizing hybrid identities, the authors still reproduce some discourse that is reinforcing of uncritical applied linguistics practices, such as the notion that the job of an ESL teacher is to change attitudes of students and parents toward English language and culture.
Fallon, G., and N. Rublik. (2012), (2011) [UQAC affiliated]	Critical Discourse Analysis, (critical) Applied Linguistics	Early primary level ESL instruction	These two studies take a critical look at the policy that introduced ESL in Quebec primary schools as early as 1st grade. The political context is duly engaged in the studies, and a number of cultural and economic issues are addressed as well. Perhaps the only drawback is that the study fails to reframe some of the repetitive discourse, i.e. ESL vs EFL, and doesn't question some assumptions that underlie mainstream ALx in Quebec or pedagogical approaches. However, this is an exemplary work that needs to be followed up with further research of the kind.
French [UQAC] and Collins [Concordia] (2011)	applied linguistics	ESL Teacher perceptions of ESL profession across Canada	Survey funded by CASLT and Heritage Canada reached 512 teachers across Canada with 63.6% coming from QC. QC's teachers were found to be mainly ESL specialists, taught the fewest number of hours per week but many more students, and were mainly ESL students themselves in school. The study points to lack of student motivation as being the central issue affecting teaching conditions, with English often viewed negatively by students. Almost half of teachers in QC reported recently wanting to quit ESL teaching, unlike results from the rest of Canada. The study also reports the ESL teachers' perception of less support from the ministry, parents, community, and other non-ESL colleagues. Teachers find commercial ESL material promoting anglophone culture to be good or excellent, but that library materials were unavailable. Doesn't highlight the makeup of the ESL classrooms (i.e. immigrants, francophones, etc…). Criticizes the drip feed approaches, suggesting it is responsible for lack of motivation for students. Doesn't consider any level of engagement on the politics of language or critical thinking. The study points to general dissatisfaction of QC ESL teachers with their profession, though they remain positive about the rewards of the ESL profession and are concerned about their students' success.

Table 3:

McGill and Concordia University Affiliated			
Authors	Theoretical Framework	Area of study	Analysis
Sarkar, M., & Winer, L. (2006) [McGill]	applied linguistics (some critical aspects)	performativity of multilingual codeswithcing in Quebec rap	While not directly related to ELT, this study on performativity follows in Pennycook's call for critical approaches to language studies and marks an important analysis of non-classroom engagement with the politics of language that has potential for application within the classroom. The authors do make use of some traditional linguistics notions that may be reproductive of dominant discourses, their ultimate goal seems to be working towards critical analysis of the power structures in relation to language in QC. They suggest as well that code-switching develops new forms of cultural and linguistic hybridity, in line with the performative understanding of language promoted by Pennycook (2001, p. 177). The study echoes other work from Sarkar that hails the possibilities of global and local cultural hybridity through language performativity. While the proposed future research on unequal power relations is as yet not realized, the counter-discourses that have been highlighted in the present study are valuable to transforming the linguistic context in QC. I find it a little ironic that Winer signs her name to the study, but that it doesn't resemble theoretically her other study that I reviewed (2007) that promoted avoiding engaging in the politics of language in the classroom.
Tan, May. (2005) [McGill]	applied linguistics (some critical aspects)	history of ESL curriculum in Quebec	Reflective of the way language is a vehicle for culture and not just a reflection of culture. Excellent analysis of the complex linguistic and ELL context in QC. Notes that the focus in ELT discourse has been around best practices from linguistics and applied linguistics. Acknowledges the complex legacy of colonial past in QC and challenges involving language and globalization. Notes that the discourse focuses mainly on the when, how, and how much of teaching ESL, intentionally leaving out the what and for whom questions.

Winer, L. (2007) [McGill]	Applied Linguistics (critical, but mainly reproductive)	ESL instruction in English schools in Quebec and the implications for TESL education	Notes the linguistics demographics of Quebec, education policy background, a brief history of the QC education system and QC nationalism (p. 491). Addresses the significance of Bill 101 in that QC allows English medium schools but doesn't permit ESL instruction in these schools (p. 492). My rationale for using the label ELT as opposed to ESL or EFL is exemplified in Winer's discussion of the presence of ESL/Language Arts (ESLA) classes with native/fluent ability students but without certificate of eligibility to study in English schools (p. 493). Addresses superficially issues with the status of non-native ESL/EFL teachers: notes 'problems' with hiring proficient speakers outside of MTL, the effect of lack of proficiency on medium of instruction, the advantaged status in school/community for francophone ESL teachers because they fit in better (p. 496). Identifies the use of little English by teachers in ESL classes as "problematic" but clearly means that is viewed negatively and that ESL teachers should use as much English as possible with few exceptions (p.499). Emphasizes motivation and not investment, lacks in-depth cultural critique, and encourages teachers to avoid engaging with political concerns in class and change students attitudes towards negative association of English with politics (p. 501-502).
Sarkar, M. (2009) [McGill]	Ethno-linguistics (critical approach)	Transformative power of code - switching in QC hip-hop	Proposes crossing ethnolinguistic lines to bring together youth through hip-hop (p.140). The ethnolinguistic study is relevant to the focus of this study because it is not only part of a collection of critical approaches on global linguistics and identity issues, edited by Pennycook, but it addresses a particular aspect of Quebec linguistic and cultural hybridity that is performative. Sarkar, along with Winer, works with the TESL department at McGill. She speaks of how a resistance to English dominance is part of the Quebec ethos (p.141) combined with a need to create new local/global hybrid culture to meet the growing needs of diverse communities in urban Quebec. A unique mix of language in Quebec rap "is used to challenge existing power relations and denounce local social problems" (p. 143). Addresses the transformative power of challenging standard French. "In Quebec, the French-English language divide has tended to hijack academic discourse about identity. Language, rather than French-Canadian ethnic identity, or Catholic religious identity, as formerly, is now seen as *the* [original emphasis] "elément identitaire" (identity element" (p.153). "If it goes on as it has begun, Quebec Hip Hop has the potential to be a positive, cohesive, outward-looking social force for this generation —a generation that is experimenting actively with much-needed alternative ways of doing "being Quebecois".

Boberg, C. (2012) [McGill]	World Englishes	English as a minority language in Quebec	Examines the unique variety of Quebec English that has been influenced by the confluence of French and English cultures in QC. While not related directly to TESL, this study informs the ELT discourse as it concerns the way that English is used in QC. While principally descriptive linguistics, this work is a reference point for reframing the native vs non-native dichotomy and concerns over the use of standard English. By establishing a variety of English unique to QC, the socio-political relationship to language is foregrounded.
Lightbown, (1988), (2000), (2012) [Concordia]	Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition	SLA research, Research and theory in language policy	I could have added another half dozen studies and essays written by Patsy Lightbown and Nina Spada. They are extremely prolific. As I mention in the text, they do not completely ignore the politics of language, but their focus is clearly about the technical and instrumental aspects of SLA; aspects that at times are problematized and complexified, but never engaging with a vast possibility of sites that their research could have addressed. Lightbown's (1988) work is one of the better examples among the (uncritical) ALx studies that acknowledges the relationship between educational policy and research. As well, Spada and Lightbown (2002) expand their concern of SLA to the far north of Quebec in an attempt to engage with other cultures within the Quebec context.
Lightbown [Concordia] and Spada [McGill](1994)	Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition	Intensive English (IE) programs for primary school ELT	The study describes the political linguistic context in Quebec without engaging with any of the politics. Their favouring of IE programs can be seen as a clever way to skirt the system, a way to get as close to immersion programs without being called immersion. Also uncritical of the use of TV to promote anglophone culture. This study represents a 'movement' in a sense, headed by Concordia and McGill, promoting IE programs. Focus on performance evaluation of the students, and not performativity. Focus on contact with the language and not engagement with language issues.
Lightbown [Concordia] and Spada [McGill](2013)	Second Language Acquisition	How Languages Are Learned	While Lightbown and Spada consider that we must account for the variety of contexts for language learning by a variety of characteristics in language learners, they still focus on SLA as outcomes and progress with very little attention to how language relates to identity, politics, culture. Doesn't consider how SLA discourse reproduces dominant ideologies that reinforce inequalities. The only mention of 'critical' in the work that is respected by a number of reviewers (eg., Narcy-Combes (2014), Sunderman (2007) refers to the controversial 'critical period hypothesis' which is contrary to CALx approaches. Neglects resistance as a site that learners engage with language. While they do not necessarily reproduce all of the fallacies that Pennycook admonishes about traditional ELT, they by no means engage with more complex ways that language is political and performative.

Collins, and White (2011) [Concordia]	Second Language Acquisition, Applied Linguistics	Intensive English programs in 6th grade ESL classes	Longitudinal study interested in the effect of a variety of models of concentrated ESL learning experiences on language proficiency over time. Critical of drip feed approaches. Propose application of their findings to other learning situations. The context they provide on the schools or classroom makeup lacks any mention of socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, or other possible socio-cultural concerns. Don't question the TV watching homework as problematic and note it simply as 'increased aural exposure' (p. 123).
ALERT [Concordia] Trofimovich, Horst, Cardoso, Collins, McDonough, and White	Second Language Acquisition	**A**cquiring **l**anguage **e**fficiently: **r**esearch and **t**eaching	With dozens of studies produced by the ALERT team members, they all focus on the instrumental aspects of SLA. Very little attention is brought to the political context in Quebec or the politics of language. While the team is extremely proficient and has provided a significant amount of valuable SLA research, this type of work exemplifies how Quebec needs to devote more resources and attention to critical approaches.