Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Rationale and Significance

> "When you ask me write personal topic like about my feeling or thinking or anything[,] I'm sometimes sad when I can't express myself very well. I wish I were a native speaker."
>
> (Mayumi, 2007)

> "I have a rude question. If Japanese try to teach English they have to study hard and usually people think they are cool in Japan because mastering English need ability. What kind of ability is needed when native speakers teach English? I feel like everyone can be English teachers without special ability or hard study."
>
> (Mayumi, 2008)

This study seeks to explore the complex relationships and interactions between the social, historical and political constructs which shape TESOL, and the lives and identities of those who teach and study within the field. A brief example of the interplay between these threads can be found in the disparate emails quoted above, one which holds up "native speaker" as an unobtainable goal and the other which expresses resentment for the privilege that this role grants. This bipolar perception should be problematic to learners and educators who value democratic classrooms, autonomy, individuality and growth as part of the education process. The first email inaccurately equates being a "native speaker," a group which many learn they can never belong to (by definition of terms), with being able to express oneself eloquently and with little effort. It is worth noting that in this email, Mayumi wishes to be a "native-speaker" rather than simply wishing to be more articulate in English; after all, these two groups, "native-English speaker" and "articulate English speaker," would overlap on a Venn diagram with ample space on both sides. The process of obtaining access to these groups would likewise be vastly dissimilar. To become articulate usually entails practice and study and has been accomplished by many. On the other hand, to become a native-speaker seems impossible at first glance, though plastic-surgery, deception or adoption of new cultural values might each contribute toward someone's ability to "pass," thereby obtaining, by some consensus, membership into the group. However different these goals actually are, the conflation of these two groups has been built into the system, hardwired into otherwise well-intentioned textbooks, policies, and facilities, unconsciously underlying the beliefs of instructors and learners alike, and producing frustration, envy and discrimination.

A practical example of an institutionalized structure which reinforces this very dissonance comes from my own personal teaching experience at the conversation school where I first met and instructed Mayumi. Like many schools of its kind, it had a tiered leveling system whereby students progressed from the lowest level, 7, defined in our guide as understanding no English, up to the highest level, 2, defined as "near-native-speaker." Implicit in this system is, of course, the suggestion that the hidden and unmentioned level 1 was "native-speaker" level and, as such, off-limits to students. This staged hierarchy, similar in design to the spectrum of belts one can be awarded in karate, implies multiple steps from non-native English speaker (NNES) to native English speaker (NES), rather than the traditionally imagined dichotomy (NNES and NES). This results in varying degrees of how close one can be, how "native-like" an NNES can be, while withholding the logical, ultimate position. With this model of language and achievement in place, Mayumi's ambivalence toward NESs should be anticipated. If it seems self-destructive to both desire and resent access to that vague group that "native-speaker" may comprise, or to be simultaneously told that "native-speaker" is both the highest rank and by definition impossible to achieve, then this is a destructive force that is embedded in many of the prevalent interests and ideologies which underpin TESOL in practice.

The history of TESOL has often been traced to colonial roots (Pennycook, 1998; Phillipson, 1992; Graddol, 2006; Holliday, 2005, to name a few), when the dissemination of English was a deliberate ploy for political and economic gain. The positioning of the NES as norm and goal for the learner, and many other pedagogical practices which are institutionalized, even subsidized at every level of academia and government, are at odds with what we now know about language, education, and human rights. And yet the critical pedagogies which might best address these discrepancies (such as those espoused by Freire or Giroux, to be expounded upon in Chapter 2) are also closely-tied, historically, to teaching literacy and language, and the idea of an emancipative, transformational education. This is all to say that TESOL, at its best, can be theorized as a constructive and empowering experience beneficial to individuals and the world at large, and at its worst, as a crime against humanity. If these are truly the stakes, you would expect TESOL professionals to be highly-paid international agents with knowledge of the cultural, political and economic implications their actions carry; trained in linguistics, the cultural backgrounds of their destinations, and education theory; sensitive to issues of identity, including nationality, ethnicity, gender, economic class and political affiliation. As for myself, I watched PowerPoint slides for a weekend in Chicago, then had my visa stamped with the title "Specialist in the Humanities" before going to teach at one of the world's best-known English conversation schools as a way of escaping "real-life" for another year or two after graduating from university.

1.1.1 "Specialist in the Humanities"

Over the past ten years, I have been employed by many other language schools in three different countries. I have regularly been granted privilege in these sorts of positions, including earning around double the income of Asian English teachers who worked within the same schools and required stauncher qualifications (and likely more interest and passion for the subject matter) to obtain the same jobs. Based on my own experience, as well as the stories of my peers and friends and colleagues, I think it is safe to say that as the sort of TESOL teacher who spent more time partying and traveling, than in looking at lesson plans or reflecting on teaching practices, I was in good company.

One ESL teacher in Thailand that I interviewed claimed: "The day after I got here, I went to the university and, I think they asked me if I had ever taught English before which, no I hadn't, and literally the second question they asked was 'When can you start?'" (Chad, 2012). Another teacher told me about her full-time university position in Thailand: "It's just for fun before I go back and get my masters. It's nice to get the year off," (Sharon, interview). My intention is not to disparage the aims or professionalism of those whom I am quoting here. Indeed, perusing entry-level positions on craigslist yields insights into the sort of employees being sought. One such entry reads:

> 200 Native English Speakers needed to English throughout Thailand NOW!
> No Prior Teaching Experience Required
>
> 'Your work is to discover your world and then with all of your heart give yourself to it." By Buddha
>
> [...] No training or prior teaching experience required for these positions.
> Gain self-awareness to define or clarify your life's mission.
> Experience personal growth and learn new skills.
> Give back to those in need
> Be of service to others
> Add valuable credentials to your resume

> Make friends across the world

A similarly lax recruitment ad from Japan reads:

> We value personality much more higher than degrees. We will give opportunities to those w/o teaching experience and University degree as long as you are outgoing and fun, responsible and professional.
>
> JOB DETAILS:
>
> -Teach conversational English through easy to use textbooks
> -You must not speak Japanese in the classrooms
> -You will be given a fixed schedule that does not change
>
> PLEASE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:
>
> 1. What is your name?
> 2. What country are you from?
> 3. How much does it cost you to come to [name of the school] one-way on the Yokohama Station?
> 4. What is your VISA status?
> 5. When are you able to start?
> 6. What is one interesting fact about you?

Unpacking these ads reveals more than a little about the sort of teacher that these schools are looking to hire. What can we say about the hypothetical TESOL teacher archetype being invoked here? These English teachers lack training and experience, do not necessarily have explicit knowledge pertaining to language or education, and are likely either young adults who have not yet settled on a career (and are not ready to), or else possibly older adults who are ready enough for a change that they are willing to drop their lives for a year or more to live in another country. There is no great demand for someone who has studied the English language, the history or politics of the country they will be teaching in, or even basic education theory and methodology. According to the second ad, if the teacher *were* presumptuous enough to speak the local language, they would not be allowed to use it within the classroom. Likewise, a prepared teacher may have their own resources replaced with "easy to use textbooks." The quote "by Buddha" as well as the promises for "personal growth" and "self-awareness" imply more reward from the experience of living in stereotyped exotic worlds or being of "service to others" than from job satisfaction or salary. Like the learners discussed above who strive to become "native-speakers" and thus, in some sense, transform their identities, these ads unmistakably target "teachers" seeking similar transformations.

1.1.2 Commoditizing Identity and Transformation

While language-teaching was once the overt goal of hegemonic forces colonizing the world by conquest, it is now within the domains of large commercial industries that perpetuate a more culturally or linguistically based imperialism (as in Said, 1978 and Phillipson, 1992). Conversation and ESL/TEFL/TESOL/ESOL schools around the world often follow the same plan (rarely the same acronym) and statistically employ the bulk of our field's practitioners. These kinds of jobs are not hard to come by nor difficult to acquire (if you are a "native-speaker") and, though not positioned within mainstream academic-TESOL, remain greatly relevant and influential to the field. Even teachers who have risen to more professional or "legitimate" levels of TESOL education, such as that taught within a university, often get their international start with commercial or conversation schools. In fact, I was personally hired to score TOEFL exams, a position which purportedly requires a master's degree to qualify for, based on three years of "teaching" at a commercial ESL school in Japan. When considering the entrenchment of billion-dollar/year exams like TOEIC or TOEFL within mainstream academia, even despite the linguistic components on other costly and often-compulsory tests such as the GRE (all three are owned by the same company, the tax-exempt ETS) or the government subsidization of English programs which rely on methodologies defined by private companies (for example, the JET programme in Japan) it becomes difficult to demarcate commercial-TESOL from academic-TESOL or, for that matter, government policy on language.

And even if we make these distinctions, as Pennycook points out, English language teaching is shaped by popular discourse and culture as much as it is shaped by applied linguistics (1998, p. 162). Therefore when analyzing and investigating TESOL, we cannot ignore the enormous number of English lessons taking place in language schools, cram schools, conversation schools or coffee shops. Rather, the ubiquitous and international commodification of chats with NESs and tests to measure how closely one compares to an NES is made possible by a perpetual reproduction and reification of objectified and homogenized identities, roles and subjectivities, marketed as symbolic signifiers which in turn shape and drive the industry. Such corporatization of domains previously untouched by the systems and jargon of commodity exchange was predicted by Marxist economist Mandel, in *Late Capitalism* (1975), and though over-commercialization and standardization pose a threat to education everywhere in the 21st-century, TESOL has uniquely proven itself an easy target for these mechanisms, and become a troubling breeding ground for policies marked by discrimination and colonial-like epistemologies. As Phillipson puts it:

> Bush's 'you are either with us or with the terrorists' is unalloyed state terrorist discourse that friends and 'enemies' are supposed to accept as gospel. By contrast, the discourses marketing and entrenching English are more discreet. However, they often serve the cause of American empire, not least when insidiously legitimating educational policies that see English as a panacea. Such discourse too often goes unchallenged, leading to the co-opting of minds. The function is 'manufacturing consent' to a world order that is inequitable, unsustainable and in conflict with international human rights law. As educationalists, we have an obligation to promote alternatives that are more just. (Phillipson, 2009, pp. 85-86).

And while the ramifications of the "McDonaldization" of English (Ritzer, 1993) are most obvious when the direct results include the purging of thousands of tribal or indigenous languages – Skutnabb-Kangas predicts, for example, that of today's almost 7000 languages, 90-95% will disappear before 2100 (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009: 38) – it is worth attempting to qualify in what manner the more "discreet" forces play out, and how this shapes our field, our students and ourselves. Only after this reflection can we, as educators, theorize and advocate for more socially-just alternatives.

1.1.3 Methodology and Identity

> We are restrained and limited by the kinds of cultural stories available to us. Academics are given the "storyline" that "I" should be suppressed in their writing, that they should accept homogenization and adopt the all-knowing, all-powerful *voice* of the academy. (Richardson, 1997, p. 2)

My original intention for this work (which has drastically changed since its inception) was a case-study based on questionnaires, interview data, and an attempt to track a student's progress throughout her interactions with TESOL in its many forms. However, like quantum mechanics, ecology, or any other research which attempts to analyze complicated or living systems, the nature of my case-study began to change the more I observed it. And though rich narrative data has long been a hallmark of general Education theory, it is woefully less employed in ESOL/TESOL research, which more typically discusses its students in terms of statistics, system diagrams, and performance ratings. This quantitative and easily-generalizable data is beneficial when it comes to drawing up a commercial business plan for publishing companies or language schools and is also employed by and within mainstream academia by means of expensive and often compulsory assessment exams. However, as my case study progressed, I realized that my observations on paper were not matching my observations as I felt I had actually witnessed them. The issues which seemed to deserve the most focus could not be accounted for by comparing test scores, categorizing types of "motivation" or even comparing goals stated at various points in her "progression." My inability to write about the issues which concerned me most is due to mainstream TESOL-research relying heavily on epistemology borrowed mostly from behavioral and cognitive psychology, which makes little space for rich, ethnographic explorations of practical experience. This epistemology is, in turn, legitimized by powerful institutions such as governments or otherwise progressive universities, and leads to the exclusion of voices that are critical, transgressive, or that simply do not use the right *language*.

Typically when a scientific discipline investigates its own history from "within," it is given a laudatory meta-narrative which interprets its past as gradual progression toward a better present. The alternative is a more critical narrative, more often written from the outside perspectives of the history, philosophy or sociology of science. According to Danziger, Psychology, as a discipline, has mostly evaded this scrutiny, and the history of Psychology "has to a large extent been left to psychologists to pursue" (Danziger, 1990, p. vii). He continues by stating that as a result, modern psychologists are "taught to characterize their own *scientific* activity in terms of a framework that is derived from nineteenth-century physical science" (Danziger, p. 1). This framework consists of basic textbook scientific method: hypotheses, observations of nature and appropriate techniques, all of which are said to yield meaningful findings. The trouble is, Danzinger argues, rather than actually observing nature, they are observing "test scores, rating scales, response distributions, serial lists, and innumerable other items that the investigator does not just find but constructs with great care" (Danziger, p. 2). Missing from the framework entirely is the recognition that whatever knowledge is gleaned from these artifacts is therefore also socially constructed. This is an example of the logical fallacy which Alfred

Korzybski called "mistaking the map for the territory" (1933), or which Bourdieu called substituting "the reality of the model" for "the model of reality" (1977, p. 29).

Danziger traces the history of Psychology well beyond the narrative's usual starting point (often positioned sometime around Freud, or else back to primitive practices such as trepanning-exorcisms, in order to illustrate how much "better" we have become) and reveals the positivistic psychological paradigm to be a relatively modern phenomenon which only arose (and quickly became institutionalized) in recent times to correspond with the late nineteenth century's rise in industry, urbanization, and commercialization – all of which made statistics and aggregates suddenly relevant (Danziger, p. 80). It is interesting, though perhaps tangential to the present topic, to explore the connections which the history of science has drawn from Descartes' dualism of matter (body and mind as the two fundamentally different forms of matter), to Newton's mechanistic universe (subsystems within subsystems that can predict everything with perfect accuracy, if only we have them plotted out correctly), to mainstream psychology's bid for legitimacy amongst the natural sciences by traditionally separating behavior from cognition, or by representing complex mental functions as astronomy-like projections of orbits through appropriately labeled boxes and arrows, spaced across the page like maps of galaxies. Roebuck also comments on Psychology's movement toward such "scientific" models, claiming that "in early psychological research, all participants, experimenters and subjects alike, were thought of as collaborators. Furthermore, the discipline focused on individual human beings. Eventually, however, the focus of psychology switched from a description of 'a human mind', that is, the mind of a particular individual, to 'the human mind', that is, a quantified collective" (2000, p. 82). This is indicated in the ideological differences between, for example, the pragmatic appeals of John Dewey and the laboratory experiments of Pavlov and Skinner. As Psychology unified into a more "rigorous" field, it certainly borrowed more from the latter thinkers, heralding the onset of classical conditioning and behaviourist theories of learning (which in turn herald the ringing of bells when our classes end, repetitive mindless drilling, and what, to me, seems like a baffling preoccupation during discussions with other teachers on appropriate disciplinary actions within the classroom).

The parallel with studies in Language Acquisition and ESOL is obvious. First, research in language and education have been hugely influenced, if not outright shaped, by behavioral, social and cognitive psychology in turn. In fact, our modern understanding of the process of learning alone is closely linked to behaviorist epistemology (Reagan and Osborn, 2002, p. 55) and is most useful when measuring or quantifying immediate results, such as how many treats must be fed to a pigeon before it presses a button, or unexplained differences between large groups, such as how but not why different schools place differently on the same test. Because of this influence, our field shares some of the potential myopia which Danziger finds in Psychology. Studies in language now commonly "deploy measurement techniques and statistical procedures that make certain assumptions about the normal distribution of particular traits in a given population" (Ushioda, 2009, p. 215). Rather than studying differences in actual individuals, Language research more often studies "averages and aggregates that group together people who share certain characteristics, such as high intrinsic motivation or low self-efficacy" (Ushioda, p. 215) – these examples being terms which are constructed by and only meaningful to the researchers. Roebuck laments that "In second language research it is often deemed necessary, for the purpose of the experiment, to assume that subjects are homogenous individuals engaged in the same activity [...] in compliance with the wishes of the researchers. Often the suggestion that this may not be the case threatens the supposed validity of the test instrument and the experiment itself" (2000, p. 84). Mechanical systems have been designed as if to explain cause-and-effect relationships between abstract constructs, such as "integrativeness," and language learning or even motivation. Test scores, questionnaire answers, leveling systems, are constructs which investigators analyze, sometimes without reflecting on the fact that they are artificial stand-ins for what they would actually be measuring. Apparent teleologies are then drawn between such measurements and the *a priori* predictions they allow researchers to make about language and learning.

This is all to say that arguably, one of traditional psychological research's greatest oversights is the individual identity, particularly as a multiple and dynamic entity which transforms over time and is *always* contextualized by, and interactive with, its environment. We have forgotten that constructs – like "native-speaker" or "non-native speaker" – are not actual biological categories, but mere models that may need to be replaced in different contexts, or as global contexts and languages naturally change. A perspective from the philosophy of science would instead recognize the historical (and social and political and etc.) situated-ness of so-called analytical systems. Drawing on critical theory and constructivist epistemologies, we are able to understand that social constructs are nonliteral, and that the constructs or metaphors or models that we choose to represent concepts such as teaching, learning, and knowing do matter (Reagan and Osborn, 2002; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Freire, who I shall discuss further in Chapter 2, was aware of this point when suggesting an appropriate model for what he saw as a deficit, traditional system of education: that of a teacher depositing knowledge into an inactive, receptive bank: the student (Freire, 2005).

1.2 Critical Pedagogy and TESOL

Because TESOL has demonstrated a potential for commercialization, discrimination, the de-skilling of its practitioners and the mis-education of its learners, Critical Pedagogy (CP) is the perfect perspective to ground and frame the following argument and discussion. Though this would seem the ideal space to explore CP exhaustively, in consideration of the genre I have saved much of this explication for Chapter 2 and will here provide a simple overview and a personal vignette.

CP can be difficult to define because it challenges attempts at standardization and problematizes assumptions. There is not a right way to "do" Critical Pedagogy. Ostensibly a combination of education theory and the ideas of critical theorists, especially Gramsci and the members of the Frankfurt School of the World-War II era, CP tends to focus on the social powers and institutions which shape our educations, either by explicit coercion, compulsion, or by the more subvert "hidden curricula" (which may be simply the side-effects of otherwise well-intentioned educators following a biased system already set in motion). Whereas educational psychology, or mainstream linguistics could be said to focus on cognitive processes, CP focuses on social processes. Its key goals lie in the concepts of social justice and "emancipative" or transformational educations. As Kanpol defines it: "Critical pedagogy is a cultural-political tool that takes seriously the notion of human differences, particularly as these differences relate to race, class and gender. In its most radical sense, critical pedagogy seeks to unoppress the oppressed and unite people in a shared language of critique, struggle, and hope to end various forms of human suffering" (1999, p. 27).

The first charge of the critical pedagogue is toward him or herself because, as bell hooks puts it, "professors who are not concerned with inner well-being are the most threatened by the demand on the part of the students for liberatory education, for pedagogical processes that will aid them in their own struggle for self-actualization," (1994, p. 17). One way to accomplish this is through an articulated critical reflection – similar to what Kanpol (1999) calls "confession" or what bell hooks (1994) calls "testimony." Before providing an example of such a critical reflection, I would like to quote a longer passage from hooks that has inspired me throughout the writing of this thesis:

> When education is the practice of freedom, students are not the only ones who are asked to share, to confess. Engaged pedagogy does not seek simply to empower students. Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process. That empowerment cannot happen if we refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks. Professors who expect students to share

> confessional narratives but who are themselves unwilling to share are exercising power in a manner that could be coercive. [...] When professors bring narratives of their experiences into classroom discussions it eliminates the possibility that we can function as all-knowing, silent interrogators. It is often productive if professors take the first risk, linking confessional narratives to academic discussions so as to show how experience can illuminate and enhance our understanding of academic material. (1994, p. 21)

Because the fourth chapter of this thesis will be a narrative of my interactions with a particular student, Mayumi, I take bell hook's advice to heart. In order to avoid the pretense of being the omniscient voice of the academic, passing judgment on an objectified case-study throughout her struggles, I have made no effort to hide or disguise my own impact on her progress, for better or worse, nor my own subjective biases and baggage as they pertain to the process of language-learning and education. The following vignette will illustrate exactly what I mean by "baggage":

When I first read Mayumi's emails quoted at the top of the chapter – how she wished she could become a NES and yet complained about how little work NES teachers needed to do – I will admit I was unfazed. I had been trained into the commercial TESOL infrastructure, had worked within the system for five years, and had not learned how to critically reflect on the field, nor my own complicity in the implications and consequences of the curriculums that I taught from. I remember telling students in Japan, when they caught me making some technical slip in grammar, that because I was a native-speaker and because grammar was therefore the study of how *I* spoke, I *could not* possibly make mistakes – grammar simply needed to catch up. I delivered this pronouncement half in jest but the sentiment fell more or less in line with my personal philosophy of language and likewise reflected how I was actually trained to respond to such comments. Though my own narrative of personal and professional transformation will not be further explicated upon until Chapter Four (owing to certain structural prescriptions mandated by the genre), suffice it to say that discovering the works of Paulo Freire began a conscientious awakening in me that led ultimately to a crisis point in which my entire history of English-teaching felt problematic. This is a crisis that I still struggle with and do not expect to emerge from with an easy solution, though writing this thesis is in some way an attempt to resolve my troubles.

I was led to this problematizing by Critical Pedagogy (CP), and while I feel lucky to have stumbled upon the insightful works of Freire, Giroux, McLaren, Illich, bell hooks, Kincheloe and others, they have not made the process of teaching (or finishing my thesis on time) any simpler due to their tendencies to always question and challenge the institutionalized values and rituals that come to seem self-evident. I must confess that until I began to be exposed to these writings, I consciously believed

TESOL to be, more or less, a scam that worked well in my favor. At no point until I finished university (with Bachelor's degrees in Creative Writing and the History of Science) had I entertained the idea of teaching (I am not sure actually *what* I was thinking…). When it did occur to me to go teach in Japan, my motivations had more to do with the promise of adventures, sightseeing, globetrotting, and meeting Japanese girls. My experiences teaching at overly commercialized schools in Japan (see Chapter 4) instilled in me ideas of helplessness against institutional powers, deskilled my capabilities as an educator, and taught me that any difference I made in a student's life or learning was probably coincidental. But on the other hand, though I felt "used" by the ESL industry, I could justify accepting my part if it presented me with opportunities to satiate my real passion: traveling to new countries, exploring new cultures and meeting new people. As long as I believed this was the arrangement, teaching was an easy but boring day-job that I could do almost by rote – the interesting parts of my life all began when the bell rang.

I believe my cynical view of ESL education, and of education in general, actually helped me make the transition to the always-critical ideas of CP (a transition that many seasoned and otherwise progressive educators still struggle to make). Because it reveals my own biases and background, thus helping to justify the sense of wonder and relief that I felt upon discovering CP, I believe it may be interesting to relate the shaping of my beliefs about education:

My relationship to both language and education has been checkered since before I can remember, owing to a developmental speech impediment that, by the age of two, had me refusing to ever talk to anyone except for my nearest-in-age sister, probably out of embarrassment or frustration at being misunderstood. I am told that somehow my sister was able to understand me when I whispered to her, and would "translate" my words to the rest of the family. Because of my inability, or unwillingness – I can not recall – to speak, I was entered into a program called "Early Intervention" at the age of five, and daily removed even from those classes in order to see a personal speech therapist. This led to remedial first and second grade classes, which I found terribly boring. When I finally decided to start speaking out loud (and I wish I could remember whatever triggered this) I was pulled from the remedial second grade class and put into "regular" second grade, and then another sudden jump straight to fourth grade where I excelled. In other words, whatever my understanding of the classroom content, it was my lack of voice which labeled me as "challenged," and my eventual demonstration of voice that labeled me as worthy to skip ahead one grade. Though being shuffled around like this had already taught me that teachers and administrators had no idea what the needs of their students were, in fifth grade, something even more unlikely occurred. My teacher, an alcoholic who had charges pressed on her for harassing the families of students on two prior occasions, selected me as her new target. After half a year of my parents receiving anonymous threats in the mail, prank phone calls, and other more intimate varieties of harassment – all which coincided with me getting mostly failing grades in class for reasons I could not fathom (and subsequent disciplinary action at home) – a police-installed wiretap revealed the perpetrator to be my teacher. The case was thrown out by the local court for reasons of tenure and I was moved to a new class while the teacher's record remained unblemished. After this, I have a clear memory of no longer trusting authority or schooling or the praise or criticism that grades incurred. School was the enemy. Until my final year of high school, I got mostly Cs and Ds, had arguments with my teachers and parents, and saw various school counselors and therapists who attempted to persuade me that I did not have my priorities straight. In 11th grade, I developed a crush on a girl who was at the top of my class, and I have maintained mostly excellent marks ever since. It seems significant to me now, for reasons to be expounded on in Chapter 2 (because that is where Literature must be reviewed), that my sudden change of grades was preceded by a desire for social acceptance from a girl, not by any great teacher's attempts to reach out to me, nor by a growing interest in the subject matter. Of course my parents and teachers who witnessed this sudden change gave credit to my current teachers and classes or whatever creative disciplinary actions were occurring at home – in much the same way that when someone learns to speak English, while enrolled in English classes, we imagine a causal relationship. My inculcated cynicism of education, schools, teachers and grades was only reinforced by my foray into the most commercialized language schools imaginable (feel free to jump now to Chapter Four).

It truly was not until reading Freire and becoming aware of Critical Pedagogy that I began to see the potential for empowerment and transformation that education could help realize, nor that I could properly articulate the destruction it could alternatively cause. To put it in another way, CP taught me firstly that there were great thinkers out there, accepted by academic communities, who saw mainstream schooling in as critical a light as I did, and secondly that educational systems did not *need* to be meaningless and arbitrary exercises whereby students, teachers and administrators were all "using" the others for their own advantage. CP has also provoked me into looking back at my own experiences teaching in Japan, the US, and Thailand, in order to consider both my own shortcomings as a teacher, and the struggles of students such as Mayumi, which I had been overlooking for years. A focus on identity and transformation is one way to illuminate these oversights while maintaining a perspective comfortably couched within Critical Pedagogy.

1.3 Research Purpose and Objectives

To go back to Mayumi's two emails quoted at the top of this chapter, what are the personal ramifications of an English-learner wishing she were a "native-speaker," i.e. a person from another culture than her own? How does the dominant discourse informing the educational and linguistic "sciences" which comprise TESOL produce this wish? And to what extent are practitioners in the field complicit in its production? In regards to the second email quoted, is her accusation that "everyone [native-speakers] can be English teachers without special ability or hard study" accurate?

An exploration of how taken-for-granted, institutionalized, "normatized" epistemologies may be manipulating us in subvert ways necessitates a meta-analysis of the frameworks which TESOL most often employs for understanding knowledge and learning, and how such frameworks were shaped in their respective historical and political contexts. If issues of discrimination, marginalization, and the insidious positioning of goals and roles for those involved in the production and consumption of TESOL is accused of being inextricably embedded in the bodies of knowledge that TESOL is structured from, then a form of investigation is required that is capable of transgressing the dominant, mainstream genre of TESOL research, while hopefully remaining pragmatic, constructive, and ultimately admissible to the field.

Fortunately social research in many areas has, in the past two or three decades, been probing in this direction. Bucholtz argues that Linguistics, "especially in the United States has been much slower than the other social sciences to shift its focus from the 'science' to the 'social' aspect of its intellectual mandate" (1999: 3) but such a shift is no longer as "radical" as it may have once been. There are many alternatives to the largely positivistic and essentializing frameworks which have dominated the social sciences throughout most of the twentieth century, including a number of perspectives which attempt to permit complexity, often by viewing language or learning as a social process (rather than viewing "social processes" as one factor of cognitive development). Examples of theoretical frameworks which acknowledge socially and contextually grounded epistemologies of language and learning include those which draw from Vygotsky and sociocultural theory (for example, Lantolf and Thorne, 2006), ecological perspectives (Leather and van Dam, 2003), language socialization (Kramsch, 2002), and postmodern, poststructural and critical perspectives (Pierce, 1995; Pavlenko and Norton, 2005). Contemporary studies in nationality (Anderson, 1983), queer theory (Hall, 2006) and gender (Bucholtz, 1999; Butler, 1999) regularly follow constructivist epistemologies which conceptualize the process of identification as one having very real consequences ranging from granting access and agency, to marginalization.

Therefore, in order to successfully and critically analyze the impact of TESOL on the identities of its learners and teachers, I borrow much from a perspective grounded in Critical Pedagogy (CP) and turn to an often overlooked source in TESOL research: the voices of actual TESOL practitioners. Lin, Wang, Akamatsu and Riazi discuss how "Literary, metaphorical writing styles and scientific, 'plain,' factual writing styles have been constructed as dichotomous, essentialized categories, with the latter privileged and legitimated as the proper medium for the representation of truth and knowledge" (2002, p. 296). This is, for example, why I am not able to speak in contractions here. But like them, I agree with Audre Lorde's famous quip that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." This has motivated me to lean on autobiographical data and my own experiences and relations within TESOL in order to better tell stories of learning and teaching English in different contexts. Because I met Mayumi as a beginning teacher, I hope this also provides critical reflection of how TESOL has impacted my own sense of identification within the field. A reliance on such auto-ethnographical data is seen as being theoretically commensurate with a complex and longitudinal, narrative study focused on identity, and will be further justified in Chapter 2. I have otherwise attempted to present my work in a more or less recognizably academic register, especially in consideration to certain structural pressures regarding format, and therefore my second and third chapters will detail relevant literature and methodology respectively, while the narrative that such literature and methodology relates to will mostly be contained by Chapters 4 and 5.

I wonder if there are many fields in the world which need to deal in more meaningful ways with multicultural contact, multilingual environments, and a truly, at least potentially, transformative education that can enable its learners to move between new worlds and identities, than TESOL. Because TESOL strives to stand at the forefront of certain social domains of competence and experience, and not in the shadows of Psychology or even more general research in Linguistics or Education, it is important for its actual practitioners to share the stories they feel meaningful, in order to construct more practical and relevant epistemologies that best suit the needs of everyday language-learners, and ideally to shape imminent institutional policy and to encourage social justice and global communication.

That said, this paper has two general purposes. First, by offering a narrative case-study of one Japanese ESOL student/teacher throughout her experiences in a wide gamut of educational settings, I hope to critically analyze how the field is able to impact (and be impacted by) its learners' identities, for better or worse. In revealing Mayumi's educational experiences, ESOL will multifariously appear as compulsory high school courses, as a university major, as a commodity in commercial conversation schools and online standardized testing, as a class which Mayumi informally taught to young learners, then alternately as TESOL the pedagogic discipline which Mayumi studied at the post-graduate level and now teaches in a university. I seek to develop richer understandings of how ESOL may interact with processes of identification, both inward and outward, self-directed and inflicted by others, transformative and oppressive. Mayumi's personal experiences will be further contextualized and backdropped by the experiences of friends, colleagues, and myself. This is not intended to provide "triangulation" per se, as a critical methodology favors a plurality of voices and realities instead of an attempt to hone in on a purported single truth – rather, this contextualization is seen as complementary to Mayumi's story, and the challenging of any certainties will take precedence over alleged accuracy. In order to be sufficiently critical, I employ methodologies and ideologies that may seem novel in some sectors of TESOL research – critical pedagogy, identity theory, critical reflection, narrative inquiry, auto-ethnography -- and from the use of these tools and perspectives, a sort of meta-question begs to be attached to this first purpose: How useful is it to critically analyze TESOL from such a perspective, using such tools? This will be discussed in Chapter 5.

My second general purpose is to push well past this critical analysis in order to simply explore how one woman, throughout the course of her life, has used her various interactions with TESOL to create personal and professional goals, drive herself toward their completion, and reap real-life benefits, improved access, agency and a legitimate position within the field, from both learning and teaching English in Japan. I hope to provide a practical and positive model of how inclusion in the world of ESOL actually works, because as has been pointed out (Cook, 2001; Pavlenko, 2004) such models are lacking.

1.4 Research Questions

1) How does one woman, Mayumi, use TESOL to reach her goals and attain actual benefits and improved access in her life, and how do these experiences interact with processes of identification?

2) How do critical pedagogy, a focus on identity, and subjective narrative inquiry further our understanding of TESOL and benefit our research?

1.5 A note on terminology

Our field is alternatively called ESL, EFL, ESOL, ELT, TESL, TEFL, TESOL and more, and has often changed its name in order to either announce a specification (as literally in ESP, "English for Specific Purposes") a demarcation (as in ESL vs. EFL, a dichotomy which is becoming less useful in a rapidly globalizing world) or a sensitivity to politics (as in ELT vs. ESOL). Alternate variations, such as TOEFL-English or Travel English indicate little more than the presence of marketing plans, and help justify additional classes, books, and the resulting price range. Further nomenclature intending to address the sensitivity to *othering* its learners (and many of its teachers) from the get-go, as the name ESOL does, include World Englishes, EIL (English as an International Language), or ELF (English as a Lingua Franca). Reagan and Osborne (2002), although mostly discussing Foreign Language Teaching (i.e. teaching Spanish or German within the US context), argue that such efforts address the concern somewhat, "but only at the level of what might be termed *articulated bias*. Regardless of what they are called, in U.S. schools languages other than English are in fact perceived, by both adults and students, as foreign. This perception is in fact only strengthened, we believe, by encouraging the use of what is seen as a politically correct label (i.e., world languages)" (52). They continue the rest of their critical and insightful book by mostly sticking to the term "Foreign Language Education." Likewise, Phillipson argues that referring to English as a *lingua franca* "generally seems to imply that the language is a neutral instrument for 'international' communication between speakers who do not share a mother tongue. Any purported neutrality needs to be weighed against the fact that the language serves key societal purposes in many domains," and suggests instead "*lingua frankensteinia*" (2009, pp. 92-93).

I agree with the sentiment and although the decade since Reagan and Osborne published their book has seen some paradigmatic change, especially at the theoretical level, I am not certain we have earned the right to call our field World Englishes in every instance. I have observed classes dubbed EIL that I found frighteningly "traditional" in nature, and differing most from the object of criticism such a name implies, in name only. Calling such classes English as an International Language, while lacking facilities, educators and resources that live up to this ideological promise, may serve to further obfuscate the already hidden curriculum.

In any case, within this paper I use the various terms mostly as synonyms. As much of my work is narrative in nature, I may alternate between terms for contextual reasons, based on whatever the school, learner or teacher being discussed preferred. When speaking of TESOL in historical or critical contexts, I am likely to stick with "TESOL," (but with smug irony). Other terms will be placed in quotation marks to indicate, as Holliday does with the term "native speaker," "that [such terms] are as stated by the discourse, and as such are disputed" (2005, p. 4). These terms will regularly include "native speaker," "teacher," and "school."

The names of the students and learners quoted have been changed unless expressly granted permission to use them, and the names of the schools and companies involved have been withheld.