

A Marginalized Third Space: English Language Learners' Cultural Capital¹

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Abstract

In certain English learning contexts where textbook-driven and standardized curriculum is a predominant approach, content materials and genres situated in native-English-speaking cultures are nevertheless foreign and daunting to English language learners (ELLs). However, the link between ELLs' learning outcomes and English instruction that capitalizes on their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) is disconnected. To address this issue evident in the aforementioned phenomenon, this synthesis paper presents a critical review of how ELLs' cultural capital interplays between the dominant (mainstream schooling) and the dominated (cultural capital inherited by ELLs) across diverse sociocultural contexts and discourses in the classroom and beyond. Using Bourdieu's (1986) cultural capital as a critical lens, ten salient studies surrounding this issue are critically examined across various learning settings: Pop culture, mainstream schooling and instruction, post-secondary education, bilingual program, out-of-school literacy practices and online community—highlighted by the findings and pedagogical implications for English teaching and learning. A call for an inclusive and empathetic approach that can empower ELLs and legitimize their cultural capital is needed.

Resumen

En ciertos contextos de aprendizaje del inglés donde predomina el plan de estudios estandarizado y basado en libros de texto, los materiales de contenido y los géneros situados en culturas nativas de habla inglesa son, no obstante, ajenos y abrumadores para los estudiantes de inglés (ELL). Sin embargo, no existe un vínculo entre los resultados del aprendizaje de los estudiantes ELL y la instrucción en inglés que aprovecha su capital cultural (Bourdieu, 1986). Para abordar este tema evidente en el fenómeno mencionado anteriormente, este síntesis presenta una revisión crítica de cómo el capital cultural de los estudiantes ELL interactúa entre lo dominante (educación general) y lo dominado (el capital cultural heredado por los estudiantes ELL) en diversos contextos socioculturales y discursos en el aula, y más allá. Utilizando el capital cultural de Bourdieu como lente fundamental, se examinan críticamente diez estudios destacados sobre este tema en varios entornos de aprendizaje: cultura pop, educación e instrucción general, educación postsecundaria, programa bilingüe, prácticas de alfabetización extraescolar y comunidad en línea, destacado por los hallazgos y las implicaciones pedagógicas para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés. Se necesita un llamado a un enfoque inclusivo y empático que pueda empoderar a los estudiantes ELL y legitimar su capital cultural.

Background

English globalization has blurred the landscape of English learning and teaching. English learning can transcend the traditional class walls by entering the out-of-school sphere, such as pop culture, online games and social networking communities. English is also not taught solely by means of print textbooks, but via multimodal materials available outside the classroom, such as magazines, newspapers, movies, songs, and websites. The plurality and diversity of English learning and teaching, as illustrated above, is supposed to build a vibrant ecology of global English and to democratize English learning by valuing learners' sociocultural backgrounds, prior experiences, learning interests, skills and needs. Despite the rosy picture, the scenario where teachers simply follow the ready-made textbook recipes and students passively practice the drill-and-kill exercises is not uncommon, particularly in test-driven contexts. As English language textbooks are generally written by native English speakers (NESs), the selection parameters of topics, texts and genres, such as American holidays and geography, are inevitably swayed by textbook writers' monolingual/cultural imperialism (Montaño & Quintanar-Sarellana, 2012). Incorporating multilingualism/culturalism with different varieties of English use is not inherently embraced by NES textbook writers as this approach would only "weaken the native-speaker standard of teaching and learning" (Xiong & Yuan, 2018, p. 113). Culturally-dense, value-laden content materials familiar to NESs may become stumbling blocks for English language learners (ELLs). Neither do ELLs share those monolingual/monocultural reference points, nor are their cultural repertoires from home and life experiences validated or drawn upon in those textbooks. This poses challenges to their language development and academic success.

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The situation is even worse for ELLs as newcomers (e.g., immigrants), who have to deal with both the language barrier and target culture hurdle. These marginalized newcomers lag behind their monolingual counterparts in academic achievements as the dominant instruction and mainstream curricula fail to accommodate the former's home cultures and out-of-school activities (Burke, 2013). Consequently, ELLs are silenced or even opt to drop out because the double barriers disable them from actively participating in class or receiving needed support and resources for academic success that are privy to their privileged counterparts (Janis, 2013). They might also be stigmatized by local mainstream students and even teachers as underachievers or outsiders (Kanno & Cromley, 2013). But what is the missing link here?

To unravel this complex phenomenon, it is pivotal to critically examine the existing tension and imbalanced power relation between mainstream English instruction and marginalized ELLs' struggle to gain access to the predominant space engineered by the former. A case to make is that what accounts for "failure" in ELLs' learning performance may not necessarily be their lack of motivation or efforts, but the oversight of legitimizing students' background knowledge and "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1986) they bring into the class. As Bourdieu (1986) defined the term "capital," it is equated with relative social power, realized in different forms of socially and culturally constructed fields, such as family, school, business, and community. He further argued that a person (agent) can bring his/her own capital to enter different fields as long as the capital is validated by the other members, or the conflict to marginalize the outside (dominated) capital may arise. Each English class is a dynamic milieu, socialized and co-constructed by ELLs and mainstream students and the teacher. Even so, ELLs' cultural capital (CP, henceforth) may not be legitimized by all the mainstream community members, or different from the CP only valued by the majority (Lin, 1999; McCollum, 1999). As such, ELLs' CP is marginalized which forestalls their access to the mainstream resources. Without the legitimate access, ELLs also lose their voice and power, resulting in their shutdown in English learning (Duff, 2003).

Hence, this critical review aims to investigate how the notion of CP is conceptualized in various sociocultural contexts and to unearth the inherent power structure between the majority and minority. Specifically, this review intends to capture a holistic picture of how the nuanced and complex dynamics of CP play out across in- and out-of-school settings in which ELLs engage, such as pop culture, mainstream classroom, post-secondary education, bilingual program, out-of-school literacy practices and online community.

Cultural Capital as a Theoretical Lens

Our world, according to Bourdieu (1986), is socially constructed and registered in different kinds of fields, such as family, school, business and community. By that, capital is an "accumulated labor" or embodied form of social power, validated by the agent(s) within the particular social field to "[enable] them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor" (p. 241). In other words, agents can gain access to the resources or power exclusive to the social field as long as they possess the legitimate capital. Bourdieu further argued that capital presents itself in three major forms and each form of capital can be transformed to one and another, depending on the field and functions. As he illustrated:

economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations ("connections"), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility. (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243, original emphasis)

CP also manifests itself in 1) *embodied capital*: background knowledge, skills, attitudes and linguistic practices; 2) *objectified capital*: books, texts, materials and media; and 3) *institutional capital*: academic success in awards, credentials and qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986, see also the categorization of symbolic capital in Carrington & Luke, 1997). Hence, CP is fluid and can be symbolized as a form of power, credential or resource that an individual seeks in order to enter different social fields. Hence, the notion of CP can be conceptualized in the inequality of power relationships existing in mainstream schooling that favors the dominant culture.

Through the CP lens, the dynamic day-to-day classroom activities in the educational field can be further problematized and teased out, thus yielding a better understanding of these complex social practices. For instance, minority children from different sociocultural and socioeconomic backgrounds may be victimized by the unequal allocation of mainstream resources in predominately White classes. Their "failure" in academic achievement may very well attribute to their inborn inability and inertia, conceived by the teacher,

peers and principles in the institution, who have owned the dominant CP opposite to that brought by those minority children (Bianco, 1996). Consequently, minority children, the dominated group, are left out without knowing how to access the *legitimate* resources and capital shared only by the dominant group.

This critical examination helps us not only see through imbalanced CP prevalent in the educational field, but also challenges the status quo regarding how this inequality impacts the marginalized students on their academic achievement (e.g., literacy development) across various school settings and beyond. Building on Bourdieu's (1983) framework, Carrington and Luke (1997) stressed that the life opportunities and the development of literacy competences of students are profoundly shaped and affected by how literacy is taught and conceptualized in institutions. They argued for field-specific literacy practices that accommodate local diversity. CP, embodied and objectified in local communities and families, should also be recognized and accommodated in school-based literacy practices. This approach unlocks the potential that local CP can bring to foster ELLs' literacy competences and grant them opportunities to succeed in academic accomplishment and future employment.

Unfortunately, the commonsensically causal relationship that links "mainstream literacy" with "economic/social advantage" still permeates in traditionally institutionalized literacy practices. It ignores the marginal resources indigenous to the minority student population and deepens the misconception among the dominant public whereby academic success is equal to social success. This misconception may mislead the policy making and education reform that determines the allocation of resources and monetary investments, accessed and acquired mainly by the mainstream students, teachers and institutions. The consequences of the current literacy practices, as Carrington and Luke (1997) illustrated, will severely impact the life paths of those minority students if the eschewed literacy practices go unnoticed. Hence, they urged that educators and teachers should consider the consequences of ELLs' life trajectories before making any drastic curriculum decisions based solely on the literacy misconceptions inherent in the dominant classroom practices.

Similarly, Aragon and Kose (2007) reported on how CP is operationalized to uncover the extant reproductions of inequalities in school, centering on the pressing issue of high postsecondary dropouts and low graduation rates of students labeled by color, by low socioeconomic status, as at-risk and as disadvantaged. Although a body of research has emphasized the impact of ignorance of CP brought by students with linguistically/culturally diverse backgrounds, they argue for a new conceptual model that both recognizes the marginalized CP and provides pathway for minority students to access those resources. This may increase their opportunities and success in academic achievements and career pursuits. CP, in this sense, is more multifaceted than situating the notion solely in minority students' identities and positions. Equally important is to extend this concept to various social and educational settings in which those students may enter. Therefore, it is imperative that institutions and standardized curricula validate ELLs' cultural assets and take further actions to equip students with the dominant CP (i.e., knowledge, skills, social networking) needed to transition into mainstream classrooms (Aragon & Kose, p. 116).

Guiding Questions

The rationale behind this critical review is that the unresolved tension addressed above will not only jeopardize ELLs' language development, but also perpetuate the inequality of power relation dominated by mainstream institutionalization and instruction. Overlooking the CP possessed by ELLs may exacerbate the tension and mislead what we presume ELLs should and can achieve. As such, it is crucial to challenge the status quo, empower ELLs and legitimize their CP. A critical examination of the existing disconnect between dominant English instruction and the CP inherited by ELLs can offer wider research and pedagogical implications for curriculum design, teaching methodology, institutional policy-making and education reform in TESOL.

CP as a conceptual framework is adopted to examine ten empirical peer-reviewed studies published between 1999 and 2015, thus highlighting the trends and implications of research spanning nearly two decades. They are related to the impact of how ELLs' CP plays out between the dominant (mainstream) and subordinate (minority) groups across different sociocultural contexts and diverse discourses, namely, pop culture (Duff, 2003), mainstream schooling and instruction (Lin, 1999; Yoon, 2015), post-secondary education (Janis, 2013; Kanno & Cromley, 2013), bilingual program (McCollum, 1999), out-of-school literacy practices (Mitsikopoulou, 2007; Sundqvist, 2011) and virtual community (Burke, 2013; Potts, 2005).

Four probing questions are raised to guide the directions of critiques:

1. How can CP be operationalized in the context of English language learning?
2. Does English instruction in mainstream classrooms legitimize the CP that ELLs bring into the class?
3. To what extent have these studies unpacked this black box for those marginalized ELLs and empowered their language learning?
4. Have the methodologies employed by the researchers adequately tapped into the conceptual framework of CP?

Critical Review of Empirical Studies

In this section, the overall strengths and weaknesses of research designs across the selected studies are evaluated and discussed. Guided by the four questions, the review employs the “goodness-of-fit” approach to examining their underpinning epistemological assumptions vis-à-vis CP, while discussing research designs, practical implications and limitations. Table 1 sums up the major theoretical perspectives, methods and findings of each empirical study:

Study	Context	Theoretical Perspectives	Research Design / Instruments	Findings and Implications
Burke (2013)	Online literacy practices and identities of two middle-grade ELL newcomers to Canada	New Literacies; Multiliteracies; cultural capital framework (habitus)	Qualitative case study: learner literacy logs documenting out-of-school digital engagement and multimodal texts, interviews	Identities augmented through practicing multimodal literacies shaped and were shaped by their engagement in social networking and online gaming groups; in-school learning should be more aligned with out-of-school activities
Duff (2003)	Pop culture vis-à-vis ELL newcomers in a Canadian high school	Intertextuality (discursive hybridity) of pop culture in education	Ethnographic cross-case study, class observations, interviews	Pop culture could be pedagogically engaging but less accessible for ELLs, who need scaffolds to enter the intertextual and hybrid space (e.g., semiotic forms, text functions) so that new knowledge can be co-constructed, sociocultural identities negotiated, and participation patterns enacted
Janis (2013)	Older immigrant ELLs in U.S. community colleges	Cultural capital framework; mediating-institutions theory	Qualitative case study: interviews with stakeholders (adult ELLs, faculty, administrators)	The community college played an integral role to support older adult ELLs with varying life experiences and background by validating their rich cultural capital and helping them chart academic/career goals
Kanno & Cromley (2013)	ELLs' access and success in tertiary education	Cultural capital framework	Survey study drawn from National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) for 12 years; linear regression for predictors and outcomes	Large gaps were found between monolingual students and disadvantaged ELLs; factors linked to ELLs' lagging behind in academic access/success were not only due to linguistic capital, but also other forms of capital such as socioeconomic status
Lin (1999)	ELLs in four middle grade classes with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds in Hong Kong	Cultural capital framework; creative, discursive agency	Ethnographic cross-case study, questionnaires, interviews, lesson plans	Cultural capital of students from disadvantaged class was not compatible with that of dominant English instruction
McCollum (1999)	Middle grade ELLs in a two-way bilingual program (English-Spanish)	Cultural capital framework; sociolinguistic theory	Ethnographic case study, field notes of observations, interviews	Mexican-background ELLs favored English over their L1 due to mainstream instruction, assessment policies and peer culture that marginalized and devalued their home cultural/L1 capital
Mitsikopoulou (2007)	Greek ELLs' out-of-school literacy practices	Critical discourse analysis; literacy as a social practice	Ethnographic cross-case study, in-depth semi-structured interviews	Out-of-school literacy practices in English learning and ICT skills were shaped by the impact of globalization
Potts (2005)	Adult immigrant ELLs' online activities and participation (WebCT) in a	Vygotsky's sociocultural theory; community and learning	Mixed methods: survey, semi-structured interviews, descriptive statistical analysis, online posting excerpts	ELLs' language development and knowledge construction were fostered through sharing of their linguistic/sociocultural capital validated by NES members in the online community

	Canadian graduate program			
Sundqvist (2011)	Out-of-school English learning in Sweden	Extramural English; interaction hypothesis (SLA)	Student diaries, speech data from 5 speaking tests, vocabulary tests	A positive correlation was found between out-of-school learning of 80 ninth graders (e.g., films, magazines, news, video games, music, internet surfing) and their oral proficiency and vocabulary size in English
Yoon (2015)	Literacy practices, agency and identities of two middle grade ELLs in the U.S. mainstream classroom	Cultural capital framework; agency theory	Qualitative case study: interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts from student project work	ELLs' literacy development and identities were hindered by mainstream classroom discourse; individual differences should be noted, and ELLs' home cultures and L1s activated in their language practices to empower agency

Table 1: Summary of Selected Literature on Cultural Capital Regarding ELLs

We will now turn our discussion focus to the four guiding questions:

1. How can CP be operationalized in the context of English language learning?

If we use the epistemological lens of *critical theory* to understand the notion of CP, we can see a clearer picture of the underpinning arguments anchoring CP. That is, they all critically examine the dominant socioeconomic, political and educational mechanisms while challenging the imbalanced power relation between the mainstream and the marginalized. Equally crucial is to open a free and unforced space for each participant (agent) in different social settings to have an equal chance to enter the space (Bredo, 2006). In other words, diverse voices and perspectives, especially from the minority groups, should not be ignored. It is also argued that solely buying into one monolingual/mono-cultural perspective cannot contribute to the public benefits and accommodate multilingual/multicultural needs, but only advantages the private interests. From this critical standpoint, those empirical studies also situated CP in different English learning contexts, centering on the extant tension between ELLs' agency vis-à-vis the mainstream NES hegemony.

Several common issues were raised across the reviewed studies. First, inequality of power relations was reproduced by the dominant school policy and a wider social ideology, which consequently impacted the life possibilities of students from lower socioeconomic classes and their access to the mainstream resources privileged by the dominant group (Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Lin, 1999; McCollum, 1999). Second, ELLs did not share the dominant cultural capital, which had been rooted in the everyday lives of the local mainstream students. It also biased what accounted for the *academic failure* of the dominated group (Duff, 2003; Yoon, 2015). Third, globalized phenomena transformed and dictated the personal and familial investments in CP for the sake of job employment or international orientation (Janis, 2013; Mitsikopoulou, 2007). Fourth, virtual community, with appropriate pedagogical design, could empower ELLs' agency and identities and transition them into the co-constructed online multimodal resources (Burke, 2013; Potts, 2005). Fifth, ELLs' life experiences and out-of-school literacy practices should be celebrated and connected to socioculturally inclusive and responsive curriculum design and instruction (Burke, 2013; Sundqvist, 2011; Yoon, 2015).

2. Does English instruction in mainstream classrooms legitimize the CP that ELLs bring into the class?

Surprisingly, the “elephant in the room”—the linguistic/cultural CP brought by ELLs which is not legitimized and valued by both the mainstream instruction and the privileged NES group—still exists in the current English learning landscape based on research spanning nearly two decades (Duff, 2003; Janis, 2013; Kanno & Cromley, 2013; Lin, 1999; McCollum, 1999; Yoon, 2015). A case in point is that English learning takes place not only in class, but also at play, at work and in the virtual space that transcends the physical class. ELLs' everyday practices, life experiences, co-constructed knowledge and skills, coupled with their first language (L1) use and home culture valued in families and communities, richly embody different forms of capital (Burke, 2013; Potts, 2005; Sundqvist, 2011). However, the current monolingual/monocultural approach to English instruction fails to recognize and accommodate these rich and dynamic repertoires brought by ELLs. As evident in the reviewed studies, ELLs were labeled as “outsiders” or perceived as “underachievers” by the dominant groups because the former's multifaceted CP was devalued by and incompatible with that of the latter (Yoon, 2015). They were also positioned in an awkward *hate-it-but-need-it* situation where they were not confident, interested and comfortable with ways English was taught but were forced to accept the fact that English was the *language of power* (Norton, 2017). The eschewed chain of symbolic violence (i.e., English = academic success = good job = power), structured by the

mainstream schooling and educational policies, further pushed them to the bottom of the social hegemonic hierarchy (Kanno & Cromley, 2013). Given the imbalanced power structure, they ended up abandoning their own CP since it did not serve them well in mainstream classrooms (McCollum, 1999), much less in securing academic/career pursuits (Janis, 2013).

3. To what extent have these research studies unpacked this black box for those marginalized ELLs and empowered their language learning?

Despite the inequality of power relations evident in the aforementioned studies, there are still silver linings showing how ELLs could be active agents in the third spaces to break through the boundaries. For example, Potts' (2005) study revealed that ELLs could draw upon their cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and expertise in subject matters to confidently express their opinions and to actively contribute to the online community. They could build on their peers' comments and learned from their writing styles and ways of organizing thoughts. This learning strategy could also facilitate their participation in the community as well as their gaining membership verified by the other mainstream members. The results of Lin's (1999) study also echoed that both ELL teachers and learners could work as *active and controlling members* by capitalizing on their linguistic/cultural capital. Also indicated in multiple studies (Burke, 2013; Mitsikopoulou, 2007; Potts, 2005; Sundqvist, 2011; Yoon, 2015), ELLs' out-of-school literacy practices through social networking, online gaming, and multimodal engagement, not only enhanced their language development and knowledge co-construction, but further augmented their sense of belonging and identities. The empowerment of agency opens a new avenue for ELLs to deal with the dilemmas structured by the mainstream schooling.

4. Have the methodologies employed by the researchers adequately tapped into the conceptual framework of CP?

As outlined in Table 1, most of the reviewed studies were conducted through the approach of ethnographic/qualitative case studies (except Potts' 2005 mixed methods design and Kanno & Cromley's 2013 large-scale survey study). Since the notion of CP is to problematize the inequality of power relations between the dominated and the dominant, the inherently ideological phenomena were usually nuanced and complex across different educational settings. Using experimental design might yield the results of causality, but probably would not be able to answer why and how the phenomena would take place within socially co-constructed and culturally diverse contexts in those studies. As such, a majority of researchers in the reviewed studies exerted the potential of ethnographic/qualitative case study in order to capture a holistic picture of "what is going on" while providing an in-depth examination of different real-life cases.

Most researchers also employed the *triangulation* approach in their studies to ensure research validity in both ethnography and mixed methods (Borman et al., 2006; Smith, 2006). As Yin (2006) suggested using triangulation in case study research to verify results by "establishing converging lines of evidence" (p. 115), they could make their findings more rigorous by cross-checking field notes in observation with interview data, for example. Another merit of using ethnographic design is that data analysis could be an ongoing process while researchers are collecting data (Yin, 2006). They could refine their cases, revise research questions and form new theorization or conceptualization based on the interactional patterns generated from the data analysis. In sum, triangulation and ongoing data analysis strengthened the trustworthiness of these ethnographic case studies.

Implications

The notion of the "third space" goes beyond formal learning that only occurs in a class setting but also zigzags through learners' informal, out-of-school learning dimensions (Gutiérrez, 2008). Given the digital technology era, the third space can be extended to learners' day-to-day practices in the virtual environment besides their formal/informal learning generally taking place in physical contexts (Schuck, Kearney, & Burden, 2017). Furthermore, it can be conceptualized through the critical lens as a hybrid or even a "radical" space that challenges the imbalanced power relation and allows the marginalised group to freely capitalize on their individual CP across physical and virtual spaces without being suppressed by their privileged counterpart (Bhabha, 2000). In the context of English education, ELLs' cultural capital is usually a hidden *third space*, devalued and ignored by the mainstream schooling and dominant English instruction. As the reviewed studies ascertained, the mainstream resources are privileging those local dominant groups but are inaccessible to those ELLs. Using the lens of Bourdieu's (1986) cultural capital enables us to see a clearer picture of how ELLs' CP is marginalized to a peripheral position and otherness, as evidenced in various

educational and out-of-school settings such as community college, bilingual education program, online community via social networking and gaming. Only when we problematize the phenomena arising from the imbalanced power structures between the dominant and dominated, can we tease out the inherent factors of the stereotypical *academic failure* of those ELLs. The high-stakes dilemmas, evident in these reviewed studies, will not only dampen students' aspirations for English learning, but jeopardize their life opportunities as well. The symbolic violence, dictated by the mainstream social and educational systems, will also exacerbate the tension.

One of the pedagogical implications drawn from these studies is that the awareness of the CP brought into class by ELLs from different cultural, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds should be raised in mainstream schooling (Burke, 2013). Teachers and administrators should also help scaffold ELLs to access the mainstream resources necessary for excelling in academic achievement and future job employment (Janis, 2013; Kanno & Cromley, 2013). Rather than using a deficit model to define and constrain ELLs' potential in academic attainment, a culturally responsive and inclusive model is needed to take into account ELLs' everyday practices and real-life experiences enacted at home, in- and out-of-school school, and in online discourses—supported by multimodal, multilingual and digital literacies (Norton, 2017). This paves the way for future curriculum design and English language education (Xiong, 2018).

It is also acknowledged that the claims made in this paper cannot be generalized based solely on the ten reviewed studies, though their findings are transferrable to other similar instructional and out-of-school settings. Doing a “case survey” across studies centering on this issue would better “answer new questions” or “confirm new interpretations” (Borman et al., 2006, p. 123). By so doing, stakeholders in both research and educational fields can be more aware of this vital but often overlooked third space in their research and teaching practices.

Concluding Remarks

Taken together, the embodied CP (ELLs' linguistic/cultural repertoires and prior experiences) is not recognized or validated by the dominant. This blocks the dominated from accessing the objectified CP for social power and academic attainment, thus jeopardizing their institutional CP and leading to repeating a grade or to dropping out. The academic failure of those marginalized students, unfortunately, may be taken for granted by those NES stakeholders who have privileged their CP for so long that they are unaware of this inherent inequality of power structure in mainstream schooling. Without taking into consideration the CP inherited by those minority students, the existing tension and disconnect between dominant English instruction and disadvantaged CP can only deepen the misconceptions and stereotypes about those linguistically and culturally at-risk students. The common case scenario—where ELLs fail to draw upon their prior experiences, background knowledge and linguistic skills to gain the membership into the third space possessed by local mainstream teachers and students but use silence as the coping mechanism to hide their non-participation—will only repeat itself. A call for an integrated pluralistic and humanistic approach to English language education that can incorporate multicultural/lingual perspectives into curriculum design and legitimize vulnerable ELLs as capable and empowered agents is needed.

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