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FROM CRITICAL TO TRANSFORMATIVE LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY BY WAY OF EMOTIONS AND POSTHUMANISM: USING LITERATURE FOR ELF TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

This article draws from work on transformative learning and posthumanism to suggest means by which critical language pedagogy could be extended. Current English Language Teaching (ELT) teacher development with English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in focus is proposed as a site within which to consider future transformative work, possibly incorporating posthumanist themes. Sample activities based on emancipatory and transformative uses of literature in a plan for future language teacher development are outlined.

Keywords: posthumanism; transformative learning; critical language pedagogy; ELF; literature

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Critical language pedagogy (CLP) is the application of the ideas of critical pedagogy to the teaching of additional (second, foreign, etc.) languages (Crookes, 2013). Within it, specialists draw from the program articulated by Paulo Freire, originally a perspective in the field of adult education. Despite the body of work left by Freire and his many co-authors and colleagues, some areas are underspecified when considered in light of developments in the worlds of ideas[1], adult education, and the needs of additional language learners (and their teachers). Adult education under the heading "transformative learning" has produced some activity types and conceptual development; emotion has become more visible and relevant, and humanisms[2] have been put in question by the change in the world of ideas associated with posthumanism (which will be defined and discussed here). These ideas could then be brought to bear in extending CLP.

The suggestion made here is that language teachers and scholars drawing from CLP should consider the processes and concepts of consciousness and its development suggested by the adjacent tradition of transformative learning (to be defined and discussed below). Language teacher educators' ability to stimulate our students' development needs to be reflective of a view of the world that is comprehensive in its transformative potential; comprehensive of the crises we presently face, with as much deep analysis as we can build from the intellectual resources available to us. What is to be in our minds might have to be more than what Freire had in mind.

The world we live in today is not the one Freire lived in. The primary sites of oppression go beyond Freire's initial focus on class. Race and gender, though he recognized them, were not his primary focus. The ecosystem was not a major part of his narrative (Misiaszek, 2023; but see Darder, 2018, on Freire and the Global South). The climate crisis, for instance, had not manifested strongly enough for him to attend closely to it. He was a humanist, but antihumanisms (cf. Hooke, 1987), in the sense of decentering the role and impact of human and human-centered values, have become important since his early work, and may be more appropriate to the present times.

We are using the word "critical" to start from, but let it be noted that Freire originally described himself, or his readers, or the kind of teacher he was writing for, as a "radical". Freire probably later adopted the term "critical" (in English translations) on the suggestion of Giroux, as Giroux recounts in an interview with Kincheloe (Freire Project, 2017; cf. Giroux, 1979). Both as a term and as a domain, radical education is older and broader than critical pedagogy (Crookes, 2009); perhaps the time has come for CLP itself to encounter yet another more encompassing (and transformative) term.

We will attempt to state our positionality or locus of enunciation in phrasing consistent with some of the (Deleuzian) content to be discussed in the article (see below, and Beckman, 2017, p. 48), on the understanding that subjectivity is a

temporary product of flows, though socioculturally and historically located. With that caveat, we are Europeans, but also transnational academics (white, middle-class, and gendered). As intellectuals (or what Freire calls cultural workers), we are products of the turbulent but enlightening 1970s and 1980s. We do not have singular passport identities. The first author has spent most of his life in the Asia-Pacific region and works at an indigenous serving university in the Central Pacific. The second author has spent most of her adult life as a transnational academic in London and has worked in a number of UK universities developing research from a perspective of decolonising English and English language teaching.

In this article, we present lines of work that reflect what this nearby perspective in additional language teaching hopes for. We first explain "transformative learning"; we note its recent (somewhat still rare) uptake in applied linguistics; and we also focus on one or two of its extensions or transformations in particular – a planetary one, and an emotional one. That leads us to return to critical pedagogy to note its own emotional orientation, which we feel has not been sufficiently capitalized upon in additional language teaching. In light of the recent emotional turn in the social sciences and in applied linguistics, an emotional refiguration of it may be needed. Then, continuing to reach for intellectual resources to build out, or on, we turn to a major development in the world of ideas: posthumanism. We draw on Pennycook's (2018) version of this debate but then go back to a primary source and figure in this area, Braidotti (e.g., 2013), to emphasize a feminist version of posthumanism. We return to a specific area of our field, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and teacher development within it, where an initial effort has been made to use transformative learning ideas in practical ways appropriate for this field of applied linguistics; though, as we note, this is only a beginning, and we suggest developments from it. We close with a glance at the ideas surfaced by those thinking through the interface between education and posthumanism, which are consistent with (and again, point beyond) the example we have sketched. We conclude with a brief invitation or call for practical materials with which to fully build out the transformations we have suggested.

Transformative, take one

Mezirow's transformative learning

While Freire's work was not static, relevant academic fields and the physical world continued to develop after he passed away in 1995. A slightly later strand of adult education theory and practice, namely transformative learning, could develop the critical line, initially by way of the work of Mezirow, who studied how adult students in the US transformed during their formal educational processes (Mezirow, 1978). As Cogo et al. (2021, p. 196) have written, drawing on these ideas for applied linguistics:

> What is further required is "becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world" (Mezirow, 1991, p. 167…) and, on that basis, "changing these structures" to gain and act upon "a more inclusive, discriminating and integrative perspective" (ibid.). What is necessary, therefore, is that we view teacher and language education from the lens of critical transformative learning (Jones, 2020), placing emphasis on fostering a fundamental change in inequitable frames of the outside social world through a fundamental change in the inside world of the individual.

Cogo et al. (2021) and Leaver et al. (2021) have mined aspects of Mezirow's writings to consider the matter of transformation for additional language teachers. For Mezirow, following Freire but going deeper into an individual's psyche and thinking mostly of an individual process, this comes from critical reflection, an internal turning back on experience, and an intentional reassessment. For Freire, this is to be fostered through dialogue, among students and between teachers and students—less internal and less individual. For Mezirow (e.g., 1991), the transformation may be triggered by a disorienting dilemma (reflected upon by the individual, or, as Cogo et al. (2021) note, proposed to them by the teacher too). For Freirean educators, it is the role of the teacher to problem-pose, helping the student bring to awareness what they already know and then moving on, through joint analytic talk, to proposing concrete actions to address basic and simple, though challenging, aspects of real-world experiences.

Techniques and activities used in transformative learning and Transformative Language Learning and Teaching (TLLT)

Critical pedagogy puts most of its hopes for conscientization on dialogue, interactively relating to action. As additional language teachers and teacher educators, we have felt a need for greater attention to detail and support in specifying what might go into this (additional language-based) dialogical space than originally indicated by Freire or his first language literacy followers, such as Ira Shor. Mezirow refers to the student as having broad frames of reference involving habits of mind, which lead to points of view; all of these may be transformed. Transformative learning may offer a greater range of tools, techniques, and activities to support this phase of personal growth. For example, Mezirow et al. (1990) include chapters on nine approaches, activity types, or techniques: the reflective judgment model; critical incidents; group reflection through life histories; reflective withdrawal through journal writing; emancipatory use of literature; repertory grids; metaphor analysis; the action-reason-thematic technique; and conceptual mapping. Below, we will focus on one of these, the emancipatory use of literature, though it is the breadth of practical activities (beyond merely critical dialogue) that we are also drawing attention to here.

Transformations of transformative learning - planetary in particular

Transformative learning has broadened since Mezirow. Writing at the turn of the century, Dirkx (2000) subsumed Freirean work under the transformative heading. He states, "collectively, the work of Paulo Freire, Phyllis Cunningham, Laurent Daloz, and Jack Mezirow, among others, addresses the sociocultural and personal dimensions of transformative learning" (n.p.). By 2009, Yoshida et al. (2009) could refer to it as encompassing the following areas (their terms): the cognitive rational approach (Mezirow's original formulation); the depth psychology approach (drawing on Jungian emotion theory); the structural developmental approach (associated with Kegan); the social emancipatory approach (by which term the authors refer to Freire as taken up by transformative learning theory); a cultural-spiritual approach; a race-centric approach; and the planetary approach (that of O'Sullivan, e.g., 2012). Therefore, transformative learning has been considerably transformed to encompass many strands of emancipatory educational thought and continues these developments (a recent report is Kostara et al., 2022).

We briefly draw attention to one of these in particular, that of O'Sullivan (2012, *inter alia*), a transformative learning scholar who originally specialized in critical psychology, and later described himself as working in critical pedagogy. As Yoshida et al. (2009) indicate, his planetary vision of transformative learning goes beyond that of Mezirow, and takes us further on the journey the present paper is suggesting as the most useful of the range of variants Yoshida et al. have provided, once it can connect to posthumanism (see Section 4). O'Sullivan engaged with Mezirow's concept of "frames of reference", calling for "a profound change in worldview" consistent with the recognition that humanity has acquired the ability to "lay waste vast portions of the earth" (O'Sullivan, 2012, p. 164). His planetary orientation turns transformative learning towards indigeneity.

We make three points here: (1) in search of breadth and growth for critical language pedagogy we are accepting and building on the inclusion of the Freirean tradition, by Mezirow's followers, within their wider and more diverse program; (2) while benefiting from the specifications by Mezirow's colleagues of specific activities, we wish, like them, to go well beyond Freire's original primarily-cognitive orientation; (3) the last of the several transformations that Yoshida et al. (2009) list, O'Sullivan's version, is notable (for present purposes) for decentering the male, the rational, the human, and the West. As developed around the beginning of the present century, transformative learning seems too optimistic (from the viewpoint of the time of writing, 2024), but it is at least consonant with a world dimension and thus could reflect the global, physical, as well as spiritual scale of the crises (including the climatic) we are increasingly facing. It offers a global perspective within which to develop aspirations for consciousness development shared across these traditions. It can also be linked to other intellectual developments, to which we turn next.

Emotions (critical, possibly transformational)

Despite Freire's sketch of an emotional matrix for dialogue in his early *Education for Critical Consciousness* (1972)—where a significant small diagram (p. 41) includes the words love, hope, humility, faith and trust, underneath the word dialogue—possible roles for emotion in critical language pedagogy were not emphasized by the handful of applied linguists who brought Freire's ideas into our field during the 1980s and 1990s. Later, near the beginning of the emotional turn in applied linguistics, Benesch (e.g., 2016) moved the critical language pedagogy field's attention to emotions (within Critical English for Academic Purposes). But while Benesch's critical view of emotions sees them as involved in the classroom and associated with power, she does not present them as directly involved in the development of critical consciousness.

In transformative learning, Dirkx et al. (2008) refer to the development of it that emphasizes the role of emotion as a second wave of this line of work. Within this second wave, Taylor (e.g., 2001, p. 218) drew strength from neuropsychological studies of the role of emotion in cognition, as well as investigations of implicit memory—implicit memory is the putative base from which "emerges habits, attitudes and preferences inaccessible to conscious recollection … [which] are an essential part of who we are" (p. 218). This development goes beyond emotion. Taylor (2001) reconceptualizes transformative learning as "whole-person" learning, involving cognitive, affective, somatic, intuitive, and spiritual processes. A little later in this second wave, Dirkx et al. (2008), building on imagination and the unconscious, refer to learning in this line as involving imaginative engagement. This has continued: for a very recent further transformation focusing on imagination, which acknowledges Mezirow and O'Sullivan, see Ketonen-Oksi and Vigren (2024).

Once we have had the emotional turn in the social sciences and are in the process of one in applied linguistics, we are better able to see emotion as central to additional language learning. This is because we have expanded our primary theoretical understanding of what a person is, bringing emotion to the fore instead of leaving it out. On the practical side, additional language teaching is rapidly being influenced by socioemotional learning, which can provide practical and conceptual resources, already fleshed out in terms of (some) descriptions of activities and accounts of teaching practice (particularly for younger immigrant students in the US, Pentón Herrera & Alba, 2021).

There are, then, several strands of what the critical pedagogy tradition would describe as emancipatory curricular thought and practice, as well as mainstream applied linguistics thinking, that suggest a stronger engagement with emotion. The question will be *how* to bring emotion in, through activities that evoke it or respond to it, in circumstances where we are attempting to support learners' (including language teachers') transformation.

Transforming ourselves: posthumanisms

Posthumanism related to transformative perspectives

Appearing later than the second wave of transformative learning, a line of theory that overlaps with and extends O'Sullivan's (2012) version of transformative learning has been accumulating under the heading of "posthumanism". A connection can be made with O'Sullivan's conceptions if we consider this remark from feminist posthumanist Braidotti (2006, pp. 265-266):

> A sustainable ethics for a non-unitary subject proposes an enlarged sense of interconnection between self and others, including the non-human or 'earth' others, by removing the obstacle of self-centred individualism. Far from entailing the loss of values and a free fall into relativism, this rather implies a new way of combining self-interest with the well-being of an enlarged sense of community which includes one's territorial or environmental interconnections.

Posthumanism has critical (Herbrechter et al. 2022) and feminist (e.g., Braidotti, 2013) versions (for which some educational implications have been drawn, e.g., Postma, 2020), as well as a version in applied linguistics (Pennycook, 2018). Postma (2020) is helpful on the critical version—"critical posthumanism in education proposes a response to the looming ecological disaster by developing an ethical subjectivity of relatedness" and in terms of this line of work, its near neighboring subdisciplines: "critical posthumanism should best be seen as a collective that includes actor-network theory (ANT); sociomateriality; postcolonialism; new-, vital-, and feminist materialism, object-oriented ontology; speculative realism; assemblage theory; and theories of affect" (Postma, 2020, n.p.). Ecological and indigenous views, understood as critiques of the mainstream existing society, march along with this collective. In the two following subsections, we will extract selected points to illustrate this line for our transformative interests, first from Pennycook's applied linguistics version, then from Braidotti's feminist version. We will use Braidotti to draw the theme of emotion closer to our concerns.

Pennycookian critical posthumanist applied linguistics

In our field, Pennycook (e.g., 2018) has made the most effort to bring in the work accumulating under the heading "posthumanism". For Pennycook, we are already posthumanist (as Hayles, 1999, also wrote)—the problem is that we (or at least applied linguists) have not realized it yet. Posthumanism helps us see that *human* is itself a creation of power and discourses, which (as ever) marginalizes some and elevates others. If some of us (applied linguists, English teachers) find the analyses of posthumanism compelling, then quite extensive and fundamental transformations of ourselves and our associated worldviews or frames of reference will be necessary. Consequently, they must be incorporated

into our teacher development practices and our teaching and materials as well. Or minimally, if we use the idea of transformative learning aligned with Pennycook's view of posthumanist applied linguistics, this will require us to transform our initial humanist perspective as we begin to realize that something is critically wrong with it. Pennycook (2018, p. 17) writes: "A critical posthumanist applied linguistics […] seeks to unravel the ways in which language has been bound up with human exceptionalism and seeks an alternative way forward through a new understanding of language, power and possibility."

Posthumanist analyses point out that humanism has been exclusionary—it was "never a category that included everyone [but it was] specific to a particular version of humans": white European males, or the WEIRD - Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic (Pennycook, 2018, p. 3). In this sense, what it means to be human is and has been contested (Bourke, 2011). A slight reflection on the history of colonialism will recall that people of color and indigenous people were powerfully described as savages, as not human, by those who had the power to make such descriptions stick (and for material gain). In parallel, patriarchal cultures of the past did not extend the rights and privileges of full citizenship to women on the grounds of emotionality as associated with their supposed lesser cognitive, rational capabilities. So, if "human" is the dominant category of homo sapiens, women (Braidotti, e.g., 2016, would say) have never been human. Contrariwise, observers of current ecological and indigenous-inspired legal developments will note that the rights and privileges of legal personhood have now been extended to certain natural features in one or two present-day countries, just as they were in other cultures prior to contact with the colonizing Anthropocene (e.g., the Whanganui River in New Zealand, the Magpie River in Canada).

As this perspective decenters the human, so too does it decenter human language, or language as only owned by humans. To compress Pennycook's (2018) articulation of these matters: competence is not an individual ability but jointly achieved, identity is not personal, languages are not distinct nor things we acquire; and intercultural communication is not uniquely human, that is, it does not solely involve human-to-human communication.

Note that, as Pennycook (2018) observes, posthumanism does not presume the separateness of things/instances. It is aligned with Object Oriented Ontologies and Latour's (e.g., 2005) Actor-Network-Theory as both are ways of thinking about the complexities we are immersed in, being inextricably involved with material (objects) which may as well be theorized as themselves having powers (because, at least, we do not seem to be able to master them). Right now, we should be able to see the least plausibility with Large Language Models (LLMs) already disrupting learning, teaching, knowledge production, and use, to state that we are at the mercy of technology (theorized in this aspect as *technics*) rather than in charge of it.

In addition, the ubiquitous presence of technology and LLMs in people's lives can be interpreted as indicating the conceptual (and real-world) importance of the

posthumanist concept of "assemblage" – a disparate collection of heterogeneous elements that come together to form a functional whole. We are mistaken if we think of ourselves as separate and in charge of our technics, the powerful objects with which we are entangled with in networks that include Discourses, phones, languages, viruses, and so on, without which we could not be who we are, which is posthuman. If that sounds too abrupt, consider it at a little less compression. Postma (2020, n.p.) states: "humans coevolved with animals and technologies (Hayles, 2012)" and Sloterdijk (2013, p. 11, as cited in Pennycook, 2018, p. 6) states: "our ontological constitution between nature and culture [reflects] a broad middle ground of embodied practices containing languages, rituals and technical skills."

Braidotti: feminist posthumanism; nomadism

Braidotti has been one of the most prolific and influential writers on posthumanism. She takes up the charge provided to philosophers by Deleuze (whose seminars she attended), to make new forms of life through new ontologies (as part of what is called *speculative philosophy*). For Braidotti (2016, p. 22, as cited in Pennycook, 2018), critical posthumanist thought is a "caring disidentification from human supremacy". Based on "philosophies of radical immanence, vital materialism and the feminist politics of locations" this is not a universalist construction of an abstract pan-humanity faced by global crises so much as "embedded and embodied, relational and affective cartographies of the new power relations that are emerging from the current geopolitical and post-anthropocentric world order" (Braidotti, 2016, pp. 23-24). We think of the emphasis on bodies (cf. Grosz, 1994) and affect (e.g., Ahmed, 2004; heavily drawn on by Benesch, e.g., 2016) as both feminist and related to emotion. We will focus on a couple of her key concepts: vital materialism and nomadism.

Vital Materialism

Associated with the move to decenter human life in favour of other or all forms of life, one strand of posthumanist thought that Braidotti values is vital materialism. This is an attempt to overcome or dismiss the Cartesian split between mind (or spirit) and matter, in favour of some form of monism, or the idea that all existing things are part of the same essential whole. Spinoza is the starting point (for Spinoza, body and mind are two manifestations of an original unity; other theorists in this tradition include Deleuze (1970), also drawing on Spinoza, Whitehead and process philosophy (Stengers, 2011), and Latour (e.g., 2005), whose Object-Oriented Ontology continues the decentering of the human). Whitehead (see Stengers, 2011) wanted a cosmology for the age of science; one that would take physics and evolution seriously. If all supposedly inert matter is considered as somehow capable of at least taking impressions, that is, of being affected, that has particular implications, namely, we do not have

to find a dividing point that separates mind from matter. Instead, if we follow Whitehead, we can see mind and matter as together based in relationships of mutual affect and processes which balance being, becoming, and transforming (see also Hayles, 2025).

This goes along with the move, in the human space, from disembodied cognitive mind to the body as that which brings consciousness and subjectivity latterly into existence, as Nietzsche writes (especially as interpreted by Deleuze, 1962). Decentering the rational (usually male) mind can be done using empirical research from cognitive neuropsychology (as mentioned in our earlier section). As Hayles (2017) noted, the extensive amount of research on the role of unconscious thought in our actions as humans calls into question the dominant role of consciousness and the rational and cognitive in defining us.

Nomadism

Another part of Braidotti's work takes up the idea of affect (related to but not the same as emotion), as the basis of life, allowing for what she calls "nomadic" forms of existence, in which the subject position is only a temporarily manifested phenomenon (Beckman, 2017, p. 48). This may be seen in Deleuze's early work (1953) that discussed Hume and then his work on Nietzsche (Deleuze, 1962), who himself was influenced by Buddhism (Panaïoti, 2012). This important point is clarified by Deleuze's biographer, Beckman (2017, p. 48), who both paraphrases Deleuze then quotes him: "the subject does not transcend its environment; it does not pre-exist the point of view, the thought or the affect, but rather it is momentarily created through them: 'a subject will be what comes to the point of view, or rather what remains in the point of view' [Deleuze, 1993, 19]."

Braidotti (1994, 2002, 2006) extends this idea to refer to flexible, non-essentialist understandings of identity and subjectivity. In an interview (Saleri, 2012, n.p.), she refers to it as "a qualitative shift of consciousness". In the same interview, she states that what she calls the "nomadic subject is "post-identitarian". She wants us to think of being nomadic as a "process by which we map out multiple transformations and multiple ways of belonging, each depending on where our particular location is and how we grow." This is challenging but important for this non-unitary view of the self in posthumanism. Within it, Braidotti says,

> Consciousness is redefined accordingly not as the core of the humanistic subject, but at best as a way of synchronizing the multiple differences within everyone, which constitute the ethical core of nomadic subjects. (Saleri, 2012, n.p.)

These are some of the themes that an extended transformative pedagogy can encompass (that perhaps a critical pedagogy cannot) and are so important that they deserve to be cashed out, in the longer run, in practices and activities in additional language teaching (and elsewhere). But first, some further transformations will be needed. The following section points towards this.

ELF's use of transformative learning: more transformation needed

Thus far, we have brought up transformative learning, emotion, and posthumanism as concepts by which to extend the emancipatory capacity of critical language pedagogy, and we have also listed some activity types that have been deployed by educators working in the transformative tradition. We turn now to one example of the use of a transformative learning perspective within what might broadly be called a critical language perspective. CLP naturally (as it embodies critique) has to turn its skeptical and evaluative eyes towards the languages that are being taught. For teachers of English as an additional language, the radical position of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is relevant. ELF sees any language of wider communication (that is, one used by individuals who are not native speakers of it) as likely to be an emergent phenomenon created almost in the moment, agentively, by those deploying it, to get their message across along with or within whatever balances or imbalances of power may exist at that time, or circumscribe their efforts (see Cogo, 2017, *inter alia*).

In English language teaching (ELT), raising awareness of ELF has been the starting point for teachers of English to include a more critical engagement with their own field and revise the ways they refer to English and its global role in their practices. ELF awareness has been suggested (Sifakis, 2019; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018) as an approach to integrating ELF-related issues and concerns into various English language teaching contexts. In this sense, language teacher educators could be engaging in critical reflection as a way to encourage teachers (and other ELT stakeholders, including learners) to identify aspects of ELF theory and/or research that are relevant to their specific teaching situations and to develop and implement their own instructional strategies accordingly.

Drawing on transformative learning and the work of Mezirow and his followers, Sifakis and Kordia (2023b) suggest that developing critical reflection within an ELF awareness framework presents several challenges. In particular, for these authors, consistent with Mezirowian perspectives, and somewhat distinct from Freirean ones, critical reflection is mainly an internal process. It starts with critically evaluating ELF research and relating it to our own teaching practice; however, describing our practices in the past and factually reporting our points of view is not enough for a transformation. The level of reflection required in the transformative framework is critical reflection, a deeper kind of reflection that questions assumptions. Sifakis and Kordia give a preliminary indication on how to help teachers in reaching this deeper level of reflection and also how to monitor the quality of their reflections and the potential for change (Sifakis & Kordia, 2023b). They say that their work with teachers has shown their ability to challenge their prior views and teaching practices, through "their own internally constructed criteria" (Sifakis & Kordia, 2023b, p. 340).

In our view, Sifakis and Kordia bring significant insights in raising deep and critical awareness. However, their framework primarily focuses on awareness, and

we still need more work in terms of understanding the process of transformative change. The role of the teacher educator in facilitating change remains somewhat ambiguous. While their reflective process is personal and internal, supported by a mentor, clarification on the mentor's role and the practical implementation of this facilitation would be beneficial.

A transformative learning programme of critical reflection helps language teacher educators engage in organised and planned teacher education from an ELF perspective, but the programme minimises the role of emotions and overlooks the unconscious development of actions. In other words, the transformative programme has shown some results (Cogo et al. 2021; Cogo & Siqueira 2017; Sifakis & Bayyurt 2018), but where it did not work, the lingering of the native speaker ideology was blamed, or the length of the programme (a short intervention usually) was the cause of the problem. We turn now to an attempt to sketch two sample activities that could extend and develop the interface between what in this paper we have been referring to as "transformative" and "critical", in an ELF teacher education context.

Materials/lesson plans/templates needed

Despite their appearance in Freire's early work (1967/1972) and in pathbreaking ESL textbooks (Wallerstein, 1983; Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987, 2004), actual published materials or lesson plans for anything like critical language pedagogy have remained rare (Crookes, 2013; Cogo, Crookes, & Siqueira, 2023), and the same can be said for transformative learning (which in any case has hardly appeared in L2 contexts). Posthumanist ideas are of even more recent appearance, barely visible in education and only just appearing in L2 contexts (research: e.g., Zheng, 2025, but little pedagogy as yet), although some curricular ideas in this space appear in the literatures as curricular developments of specific posthumanist thinkers such as Deleuze (see e.g., Roy, 2003) or of the subarea "new materialism": Zheng (2023). In general, there is little as of yet to help L2 specialists move from theory to practice, or to guide us concerning how these ideas can be integrated with a critical and transformative view. Here we will take up one of the activity types suggested by transformative learning, and then ask what extensions or additional forms might be needed so teachers and students could transform, even as far as engaging with a posthumanist vision.

It is easiest for us to draw on our own experiences as language teacher educators. Cogo's experience suggests that the "raising ELF awareness" framework has relied on research articles and blogs about ELF and ELF-related matters that teachers would read to 1) familiarise themselves with the topic, and 2) start engaging in the various levels of reflection. But if we take seriously the positions we have been articulating earlier in this article, we have to recognize that those views are a long way out beyond where the typical additional language teacher or TESOL specialist is. Even ELF is unfamiliar, and while additional language teachers are aware of social issues, the newer discourses we are articulating here

concerning teachers' and students' identities, the role of emotion, or what we are claiming is the way the world is, namely posthumanist, are certainly not mainstream. That is, of course, partly what motivates the present article.

In what follows, we focus on the role of literature in an imagined ELF awareness workshop. There would be a part at the beginning of the workshop we have in mind where attention would be drawn to the intention of the workshop, this being the initial stage of transformative work (à la Mezirow), before the teacher workshop participants get to work on the emancipatory use of literature.

Emancipatory (transformative) use of literature

Of the nine transformative activity types we listed earlier, here we have space to take up only one of them. We follow the advice of Greene (1990), a prominent critical feminist and existentialist philosopher of education, a member of Mezirow's (1990) associates, in advocating for a classic form and source for personal development and transformation, namely literature. Its use also appears in the broad critical pedagogy tradition, as in critical literacy. Here we also follow the lead of the transformative applied linguist Oxford (2021), who used song lyrics and poems.

A classical aspect and reason for using literature is vicarious experience. It is inevitably emotional, capable of manifesting and evoking emotion. Further, the visibility of posthumanist ideas in certain literary forms has already been the focus of analysis and use by theorists in this area (Hayles, 1999; Clarke & Rossini, 2017). With transformation, emotion, and posthumanism in mind, what sort of literature should we put in front of students and, particularly, in the present case, additional language teachers, and what should be done with it? From an ELF awareness point of view, this is immediately attractive because it allows the use of literature by non-native speaking authors that has some ELF characteristics. It will also have emotional qualities, it can bring feminist authors to the fore (e.g., Adichie, 2017, see below), and it could deal with posthumanist themes (such as the two discussed below, nomadism and vital materialism). We would certainly not use traditional English literature from the old "centre" of the English-speaking world for these purposes. We could choose from different kinds of literature written by English L2 authors that cover some of the topics we explored above. To illustrate this, we consider two titles, one from a Dominican author on the general subject of a new arrival in a new country and the second by a Nigerian author about migrant returnees.

First example

The first is *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Díaz (2007), a novel that follows the life of Oscar de León, a Dominican-American "ghetto nerd" who dreams of becoming a great fantasy writer and finding love, but struggles with his identity and the fukú curse[3] that haunts his family. The novel explores several key

themes: (1) identity and the Dominican Experience in America: The characters grapple with their cultural identity and the challenges of being a Dominican in the United States; (2) colonialism and racism: The novel delves into the impact of colonialism and the pervasive racism experienced by the characters, both in the Dominican Republic and in the US; (3) Fukú and destiny: The concept of fukú, a curse believed to have been brought to the Caribbean by European colonizers, plays a central role in the narrative, symbolizing the inescapable fate and misfortune that plagues the characters; (4) Love and sexuality: The novel examines the complexities of love and sexuality, particularly through Oscar's unrequited love and his struggles with Dominican masculinity; (5) Storytelling and Escapism: The power of storytelling as a means of escape and understanding one's reality is a recurring theme, with references to science fiction and fantasy literature throughout the novel. As previously mentioned, posthumanist analyses have made positive use of science fiction.

In terms of linguistic analysis, Junot Díaz's use of language in the novel is notable for its translingualism, use of the vernacular and slang, as well as humor and irony: The narrative frequently fluctuates between English and Spanish, reflecting the bilingual reality of many Dominican-Americans. Lauret (2016, p. 53) describes it thus: "His retention of the 'foreign' word, its look, its sound, its feel in the mouth as I, an Anglo speaker, nearly choke trying to pronounce it—is surely the point of Diaz's multilingual, multicultural, omnivorous writing. Really reading translingual literature means letting the words do their own thing; translation will not do." The novel incorporates Dominican creative language use, African American Vernacular English, and "nerd" discourse, creating a rich, polyvocal text that challenges readers to engage with multiple linguistic registers and Díaz uses humor and irony to address serious themes, making the narrative both engaging and thought-provoking.

Sample activity 1

Read the following quotes from Díaz's novel and make a note or underline the lines or words that jump out to you.

> The mother, after discovering a lump and suspecting cancer, asks her daughter Lola, "Don't you feel that ...Coño, muchacha, stop looking at me and feel," whereupon her daughter duly feels and says "Lo siento". (Díaz, 2007, p. 53)

REFLECT: what did you make of the language in this quotation? How did you relate to it? What emotions came up for you when reading the passages?

(The point here is: The mother makes Lola feel, not motherly love but the lump that spells cancer, and poignant is the daughter's response ("I feel it") that is also "I'm sorry," both contained in the Spanish "lo siento.")

Second example

The second novel is *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2017). As background, note that she also wrote *We Should All Be Feminists* (2015), an essay adapted from her popular TEDx Talk (Adichie, 2017). In the latter, Adichie explores the concept of feminism in the 21st century, advocating for a more inclusive and equitable understanding of gender equality. Adichie shares personal anecdotes and experiences from her life in Nigeria and the United States to highlight the pervasive nature of sexism and the importance of challenging gender stereotypes. She recalls being called a feminist as an insult by a childhood friend and discusses how societal expectations often limit women's opportunities and reinforce outdated notions of gender roles.

Her novel could be used for a discussion of a Global Englishes perspective (cf. Galloway & Rose, 2015). It is a novel that explores themes of identity, love, and the immigrant experience. The story follows Ifemelu, a young Nigerian woman who moves to the United States to go to university. Through her experiences, the novel explores the complexities of race and the challenges of adapting to a new culture. Ifemelu starts a successful blog about her observations on race in America, which becomes a central part of her identity. Meanwhile, her first love, Obinze, faces his own struggles as an undocumented immigrant in the UK before eventually returning to Nigeria. The narrative alternates between Ifemelu's life in America and Obinze's experiences in Nigeria, highlighting their enduring connection despite the physical distance. The novel also addresses the nuances of returning to one's homeland after a long absence and the changes that come with it. It develops a deep understanding of the immigrant experience from a personal and societal perspective. Adichie's novel lends itself to a rich range of themes related to social justice, including identity and belonging, immigration and race, studying abroad and returnees, and the concept of Americanah (see also Altinmakas & Tülüce, 2024).

Sample activity 2

Student teachers can be presented with extracts from the novel that deal with language aspects. For instance, one issue is Americanah's speech, which is the way Nigerians who have been abroad speak. Many returnees adopt an American accent or a hybrid accent that combines elements of both American and Nigerian pronunciations. This can sometimes be perceived as a marker of their time abroad, but also, by the local people, as a pretentious attitude of the those who seem to display superiority (because of the time spent in the US), like the foreigner talk used by Ifemelu's classmates, who speak to her slowly and in a patronising way,

believing that English is a foreign language to her, ignoring the fact that English is the official language of Nigeria.

Here is a sample quotation that could be used to discuss the topics (Adichie, 2017, p. 161).

> Dear Non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become Black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I'm Jamaican or I'm Ghanaian. America doesn't care. [...] In describing black women you admire, always use the word "STRONG" because that is what black women are supposed to be in America. If you are a woman, please do not speak your mind as you are used to doing in your country. Because in America, strong-minded black women are SCARY.

After preliminary discussion, they would then access the book through some edited extracts, through an approach integrating group, interactive work, and individual, process-oriented work (as described by Barrette, Paesani & Vinall, 2010). In the group work, they could engage in discussions and other interactive activities that help them connect with the text on a deeper level. This approach encourages students to share their interpretations and understand different perspectives. For instance, students could be divided into reading circles, with each circle (group) using the same extract, but students taking on different roles (e.g., discussion director, summarizer, connector) to facilitate in-depth discussions and share insights. The process-oriented element allows students to focus on the steps involved in understanding and analyzing literature. Pre-reading activities build background knowledge, during-reading activities aid comprehension, and/or post-reading activities allow reflecting and analysing the text. Integrating both group and individual work helps students develop critical thinking, analytical skills, and deepen their understanding of the topic (Paran, 2008).

1. Character Analysis through a Feminist Lens: Have students analyze female characters in the text, focusing on their roles, motivations, and how they challenge or conform to gender norms. Discuss how these characters' experiences reflect broader societal issues.

2. Gender Role Debates: Organize debates on how gender roles are portrayed in the text. Students can argue whether the text reinforces or challenges traditional gender roles and discuss the implications of these portrayals.

3. Rewriting Scenes: Ask students to rewrite a scene from the perspective of a female character or to alter the scene to challenge traditional gender roles. This activity helps students think critically about the author's choices and the impact of those choices on the narrative.

4. Feminist Annotations: Encourage students to annotate the text with a focus on gender dynamics, power relations, and instances of sexism or empowerment. They can highlight passages that depict gender inequality or challenge patriarchal norms.

Posthumanist ideas as a further resource for transformative activities

If it is accepted that literature, or particular kinds of literature, can support the transforming of, for example, EFL teachers' consciousness, in critical directions, then we would suggest that similarly, certain other kinds of literature (and science fiction is regularly mentioned in the posthumanist literature) can also be used as one way to bring in posthumanist ideas to the thinking of our additional language teachers (and perhaps their students). But that said, let us first consider the wider context for innovative activities.

Innovation in education (and in additional language education) is more likely to be bringing some pre-existing but difficult practices closer to our own or to mainstream classrooms than to be developing something entirely new, never before thought of. In this article, we are not claiming to invent entirely new activity types that can somehow be run in regular classrooms and thereby say, or find, that we are doing some supposedly entirely new posthumanist education. It is more a matter of rethinking and re-presenting mostly existing (but perhaps less common) practices and content. But we can take off from posthumanist educator Herbrechter's (2018, p. 1) suggestion that ecology should become the new core subject in education, which would facilitate the uptake of posthumanist ideas. In that sense, ecology functions as a "complex of ideas… informing all aspects of education." Since key concepts such as relation, non-separation, entanglement, and the non-human are some of the more easily-accessible ideas within posthumanism, some kind of ecologically-oriented additional language education, supplemented by critique, might be a way to start. That actually suggests getting outside or looking beyond the classroom (directly—or vicariously, by way of literature), since the conventional classroom is part of the apparatus that cuts us off from our wider network of connections. That leads quickly to questioning and replacing key characteristics of school, for which pre-existing but very marginal alternatives have long existed.

Consistent with this, Blaikie et al. (2020, p. 5) take "holistic system thinking" as an overarching way of understanding posthumanist education. Then, they refer both to Western alternatives and non-Western traditions. The former are progressive and beyond, including radically democratic forms of Summerhill-type schools (which are typically located in the countryside) or "School Without Walls" in George Washington University offering a different educational experience where the city is reflected in the classroom. According to the authors (Blaikie et al., 2020, p. 5), "In Canada, Indigenous peoples' ways of knowing are linked to two tenets in education: "everything is alive, and we are all related." The authors note that this means "reviving some views of education that have remained marginal and alternative" and that these should be "at the center of a posthuman pedagogy" (Blaikie et al. 2020, p. 3). They say this "situates humans in multi-modal contexts beyond the intellect, to consider other species, place and space, and the planet as a whole, and the important role of physical learning

environments" (Blaikie et al. 2020, p. 3). These terms and aspirations should at this point in the article be recognized as goals, but in addition, the sources from which appropriate activities might be derived for some form of posthumanist additional language education are here coming into view, and are not new—though by no means often used, in the past or now.

A teacher exploring this perspective may consider whether what Nugent and Bell (2006) call a deprivatized pedagogy is appropriate. That is, as the opportunity arises (which could be at the beginning of a course), the instructor explains their overall view of language, communication, their role as a teacher, and the wider institutional and social arena - in this case, theirs is a posthumanist view. Then, if posthumanist themes are to appear in instructional material and students' response to it, there has to be some inclusion of this in basic forms of vocabulary that may be taught in a course. A standard "notional-functional" syllabus specifies various notions and their exponents in the target language (for time, space, family, transportation, hobbies, and so on, see e.g., Wilkins, 1982; Ferreira, 1981). Thus, a small number of abstract concepts, in the first and the additional or target language, will need to be introduced: perhaps relation and ecosystem, or more challenging: becoming (as opposed to being). Going rapidly beyond a focus on forms (functional though they may be), could we entertain a simple CLIL perspective, in which material to be studied in the target language would include readings that allow the actual study of content relating to posthumanist themes? Jumping-off points for critical language pedagogy (Crookes & Abednia, 2022; Crookes, 2013) have often mentioned using existing issues-oriented ESL textbooks (e.g., Day et al., 2009) as a basis for adaptation towards more critical themes, and as a basis for learning the vocabulary and structures necessary to discuss them. Although this is quite prosaic, perhaps there is room for this simple way to get these admittedly challenging concepts into play before more experiential instruction is attempted.

And then, before we compromise by only focusing on the classroom, would there be room or opportunity for some kind of embodied activity, minimally a walk through and around the school, better a walk around the neighbourhood or further into nature, and then reflection upon that, using not conventional concepts, but those initially taught (simply, perhaps didactically) and now to be deployed more realistically? To dignify this elementary activity in critical terms, we are suggesting that the material environment of the L2 learning is to be considered as a (Freirean) code. So, consistent with practices in e.g., Auerbach & Wallerstein (1987, 2004; but with more possibility for translanguaging than they may have imagined), the lesson plan must support students' attempts to respond to questions such as "what do you see here?". "Has this happened to you?" or "Does this make sense to you?" have to come in, too. The consciousness-raising that the Freirean approach we are here still consistent with is how orienting towards a critical consciousness that O'Sullivan (mentioned earlier) would have called "planetary". We are trying to conceptualize a consciousness that is consistent with

the way posthumanism implies things are these days, which is itself a critique of the ideas that have led us to our present (parlous) planetary situation.

Now, returning to the possible use of literature, consider the various young adult novels analyzed by Tarr and White (2018; including their helpful Introduction that provides an overview of posthumanism). For them, a number of classics of this genre exemplify posthumanist themes. Selecting young adult literature lowers the language demands that might be made on our teachers or students. Then, similar procedures to those outlined in the previous section are implied. We need to select extracts that relate to posthumanist themes, and invite (and support, or "scaffold") discussion and reflection on them.

In taking up literature as one possible ELF (or L2) teacher development activity type to support a transformative orientation, we are consistent with the handful of suggestions that the existing (quite limited) posthumanist education literature makes, as many of the other suggestions in the small amount of reports that have been produced up to this date refer to literature or arts-based awareness raising and experiential activities. For example, Sidebottom (2021, n.p.; see also 2019) writes:

> I invited teachers to delve into their non-human educational landscapes. We explored the various assemblages of items that made up our classroom environments and considered the stories they told—social, cultural, and material—and how these affected the ways in which students and teachers interacted with them.

She, too, used "artistic practices, such as poetry and art … to connect with our embodied (as well as cognitive responses)". She suggested that these "allowed us to better represent our entangled and complex experiences." In this, she was trying to enable pre- and in-service teachers "to explore and disrupt understandings of education-as-usual and subsequently reflect on the implications of this for their own future teaching roles."

Or, to end on a doable if not particularly innovative note, we can consider simple suggestions from Geerts (2019), who uses Haraway's (2004; and Barad's 2007) posthumanist understanding of *diffraction* to imagine *transformative diffractive pedagogies,* to refer to her taking-up of the limited options actually presented by reading through actually-occurring US-university-based undergraduate education by way of posthumanist concepts, leading to a "jointly-designed syllabus" (p. 131), a "collaborative Google documents-based midterm" (p. 132), and "classroom-based memes" (p. 134; the latter being humorous and ironic visual commentary on the philosophical themes of the class).

Conclusion

Continuing the line that what it means to be human is being challenged can be developed in a couple of ways. Our freedom of movement is decreased, and our

visibility is increased as technology also allows surveillance: Pennycook refers to what he calls (2018, p. 5; also used by Li & Lee, 2024) "instrumentation - the ways in which human bodies are reconfigured by ever-increasing forms of life". Under that condition, recent trends in world politics make the associations of the term *critical* worth considering. Following Fay (1987): a key sense of critical is simply a theory that has not only descriptive power but also transformative capacity and intent; thus, while Frankfurt School theory is the most well-known *soi-disant* critical theory, on Fay's analysis most critical theories do not have such origins like it at all (his most familiar examples being Freudian psychiatric theory and feminist theory). While conceptually we are still making use of critique, and of forms of theory such as posthumanism which can bear a critical interpretation, we are also concerned, in this article, with just how the necessary personal transformations needed to get up to speed (or escape velocity) in the present (or future) world are to occur. Freire was early convinced that dialogue and critical thinking would naturally lead to action that would be transformative. We have suggested that more emphasis needs to be placed on the transformation. Or, quite practically, that additional language students and their teachers need more scaffolding, more helpful activity types, to begin to transform. We have also been suggesting that the target towards which the transformation can move has itself moved; and thus, that more recent analyses are well-advised. In closing, with an emphasis on the practical, we encourage sympathetic readers to take up more of the activity types than we had space to consider, in light of these concerns and considerations.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT: Research data available in the text.

End notes

1. That is, the philosophical and conceptual underpinnings of our fields, also sometimes referred to as the field of "intellectual history" or "history of ideas".
2. There are many different humanisms, but all center on the idea of "man" as the embodiment of reason and agency.
3. In the novel, this phrase is used to refer to the overall negative effects of colonial contact, enslavement, and disaster, understood metaphorically as a curse on Dominicans.

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