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Book Review

A Sociopolitical Agenda for TESOL Teacher Education, by Peter I. De Costa and Ozgehan Uştuk (Eds.), Bloomsbury Academic, 2023, 208 pp., \$36.85, (ebook), ISBN 9781350262850

Hossein Davari
Saeed Nourzadeh
Damghan University

The field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) is renowned for its constant evolution, requiring language teachers to engage in continuous professional development to keep pace with the ever-shifting sociopolitical landscape. However, teacher education activities are often narrowly focused on the adoption of perceived best practices, training teachers as technicians rather than cultivating reflective, socially-aware practitioners. "*A Sociopolitical Agenda for TESOL Teacher Education*" presents a timely and necessary corrective, highlighting the critical sociopolitical dimensions that are frequently overlooked in TESOL teacher education. Spanning 10 chapters, the collection provides interdisciplinary perspectives on major issues such as native speakerism, coloniality, the achievement gap and the evolving sociopolitical landscape in TESOL. Drawing on critical theories, the contributors offer invaluable insights into understanding and implementing approaches to advocacy for social justice-oriented TESOL teacher education. In doing so, the volume challenges the uncritical acceptance of current models, calling for TESOL practitioners to embrace their roles as reflexive negotiators of political struggles and social inequities.

In the introductory chapter, titled "A Sociopolitical Agenda for TESOL Teacher Education and Why It Matters", the editors of the volume present a compelling examination of the sociopolitical landscape surrounding TESOL teacher education. By contextualizing their work within the broader shifts in education and society, they shed light on the complex challenges faced by TESOL educators in an ever-changing world. The authors, Peter I. De Costa and Özgehan Uştuk, draw heavily on the critical work of Alastair Pennycook (1990, 2001, 2004, 2022) in critical applied linguistics to frame their argument. Invoking Pennycook's earlier calls for a "critical applied linguistics for the 1990s" (1990) and his more recent assertion that "critical work has to be responsive to a changing world" (2022: 1), the authors argue that TESOL teacher education cannot be divorced from broader issues of inequity and social justice in education. They highlight key macro concerns, such as the neoliberal turn in education and the impact of crises like the COVID-

19 pandemic and refugee influxes that have begun to encroach upon TESOL classrooms. The authors contend that TESOL teacher educators need to be responsive to these changing sociopolitical realities and equip teachers to navigate the contested identity politics and ideological battles that often arise in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms. The chapter sets the stage for the volume, which aims to explore a sociopolitical agenda for TESOL teacher education grounded in the critical tradition established by scholars like Pennycook.

In chapter 2, "The Imperative of Language Teacher Leadership in an Unjust World", Dudley Reynolds presents a compelling argument for reimagining the role of language teachers as leaders in today's complex educational landscape. Reynolds critiques static conceptualizations of teacher leadership—those that reduce it to either predefined roles within systems or fixed personal traits—and instead argues for a dynamic, emergent perspective rooted in context, moral agency, and social justice. This chapter's strength lies in its synthesis of recent scholarship and its positioning of language teacher leadership as both an ethical and practical necessity in times of sociopolitical upheaval, from refugee crises to increasing nationalism. Reynolds adeptly weaves personal narrative with empirical studies, foregrounding the complexity and contingency of teacher agency. The emphasis on "sense-making" and "moral agency" as core components of teacher leadership broadens the scope of what it means to lead, urging educators to engage critically with the world beyond their classrooms.

The chapter highlights the need for language teachers to embrace a sense of professionalism and engage with the evolving world to address the intercultural dimensions of injustice. Reynolds emphasizes the crucial role of language teachers as agents of change, entrusted with imparting not only knowledge but also the power to challenge social and economic inequalities resulting from colonialism and racialized identities. What sets this chapter apart is Reynolds' call for a contextualized understanding of language teacher leadership. By viewing leadership as a dynamic role that responds to temporal events and affords teachers agency, Reynolds challenges the prevailing notions of leadership as a static quality. He advocates for a broader conceptualization of teacher leadership that encompasses collaborative decision-making, interdisciplinary learning, and the ability to positively influence students' lives beyond the classroom.

In chapter 3, "Pedagogical and Conceptual Principles of Teacher Professional Learning in TESOL: Teacher Stories from Turkey", Kenan Dikilitaş and Irem Çomoğlu explore the transformative professional development of teachers in Turkey, highlighting their key challenges and opportunities. The authors highlight the shift from traditional, top-down approaches to a more agentive and dialogic model of teacher education. The chapter emphasizes the significance of critical pedagogies, which empowers teachers to become architects of their own transformation. Drawing attention to the sociopolitical aspects of education, the authors argue that teachers should resist social injustice and discrimination while taking ownership of their professional growth. Through the lens of four compelling case studies, the chapter shows how Turkish teachers navigate their professional selves, despite limited institutional support and the prevalence of transmission-oriented knowledge delivery. Overall, this chapter provides valuable insights into the complex landscape of teacher professional learning in Turkey. It calls for a shift towards contextually-situated, transformative practices that foster critical inquiry, collaboration, and teacher agency. By emphasizing the importance of teachers' voices and experiences, the authors contribute to the broader discourse on effective teacher development globally.

In chapter 4, "Non(Native) Speakerism in English Language Teaching: Changing Perspectives, Resilient Discourses, and Missing Links", Ali Fuad Selvi offers a thought-provoking examination of the complex issues surrounding native and nonnative speakers in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). The author tackles the ideological, discursal, professional, and practical dimensions of this topic, shedding light on the tensions, controversies, and power dynamics inherent in these concepts. Selvi's work is distinguished by its critical and reflective examination, interrogating conventional language ideologies and the constraints they impose. By problematizing the notions of native speakerism and nonnative speakerism, the author urges educators and teacher trainers to reconsider their perspectives on teacher competency and legitimacy in ELT. Selvi's advocacy for a critical re-examination and reconceptualization of these concepts establishes a foundation for future scholarship and facilitates the development of transformative pedagogical approaches in ELT.

In Chapter 5, "Critical Engagement with Achievement Gap Discourses and Data: Narrowing or Not?", Jamie L. Schissel and Nancy H. Hornberger critically interrogate the concept of "achievement gap" in education. The chapter challenges the prevailing discourse surrounding achievement gaps and highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of the underlying factors that contribute to educational inequities. The authors argue that a singular focus on the achievement gap oversimplifies the complex educational experiences of marginalized learners. Instead, they advocate for a shift towards examining educational debt, encompassing historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral factors that perpetuate inequitable opportunities for all students. The chapter specifically addresses the issues related to English learners and their classification, as well as the construction and interpretation of standardized tests. Through the examination of data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and Pennsylvania state assessment policies, the authors expose the limitations of relying on aggregated data interpretations that disregard crucial contextual references. Certainly, this paper serves as a significant contribution to the ongoing dialogue surrounding educational inequalities and calls for a comprehensive reevaluation of current practices and policies.

In chapter 6, titled "Figuring Out My End Game: Supporting Novice ESOL Teachers' Emerging Identities as Humanizing Practitioners and Advocates through Peer Interaction", Megan Madigan Percy, Danielle Gervais Sodani, and Wyatt Hall explore the critical role of teacher induction in shaping the identities of novice teachers working with multilingual students. The authors argue that collaborative spaces and peer interactions are essential for novice teachers (NTs) to develop as humanizing practitioners who prioritize equity and justice in their teaching practices.

Drawing on extensive research and a seven-year collaborative project with 13 NTs, the authors highlight the significance of collective experiences and supportive collaborations in fostering NTs' agency and advocacy for marginalized students. They emphasize the importance of humanizing pedagogy, characterized by respectful relationships, dialogue, and an acknowledgment of students' sociocultural resources. In addition, the chapter critically examines existing approaches to teacher induction, emphasizing the need for a more humanizing framework that empowers NTs as agents of change.

Chapter 7, "Implementing an Intersectional Pedagogy in a TESOL Methods Course: A Narrative Approach", by Hayriye Kayi-Aydar presents a reflective interrogation of traditional TESOL methodology within the context of evolving social, political, and cultural realities. The author advances a rigorous critique of the field's persistent US-centric and White Western epistemologies, arguing for an urgent diversification of perspectives and knowledge sources to

better represent the complexities of both learners and teachers. Kayi-Aydar's use of autobiographical narrative inquiry grounds the chapter in lived experience while simultaneously demonstrating methodological reflexivity. Notably, the chapter details concrete pedagogical interventions, such as diversifying readings, interrogating labels, and implementing multimodal assignments, which operationalize intersectionality beyond abstract theory. One of the work's distinguishing strengths is its recognition of resistance from both students and institutional norms, acknowledging that meaningful pedagogical change is an ongoing and contested process. In all, the chapter makes a significant contribution by articulating actionable strategies for embedding intersectional praxis in TESOL teacher education and foregrounding the ethical imperative for social justice-oriented pedagogy.

Chapter 8, titled "Teacher Identity in Critical Autoethnographic Narrative: Making Sense of the Political in the Personal", by Bedrettin Yazan explores the complex nature of teacher identity and its significance in language teacher education. The author emphasizes the interconnections between teachers' identities, learning, and practices, arguing that teacher learning is essentially identity learning. The study deals with the case of a teacher candidate named Kateryna, focusing on her language teacher identity construction through a semester-long critical autoethnographic narrative writing process. The author combines Olsen's definition of teacher identity as a dynamic and multifaceted process with Varghese's critical perspective, highlighting the discursive construction of teacher identity within social, racial, gendered, linguistic, religious, and classed categories. The study also acknowledges the role of imagination in shaping language teacher identity, enabling teachers to envision new possibilities and reflect on their practices within a broader historical context. While existing literature has extensively examined language teacher identity as a research framework, the author notes a scarcity of studies that explore its pedagogical implications. Thus, the chapter calls for the integration of identity-focused teacher learning activities in teacher education practices, emphasizing the need for teacher educators to engage with relevant research and reconceptualize their approaches to accommodate identity-centered pedagogy.

Chapter 9, titled "Developing Decolonizing Language Teachers in Colonial Sociopolitical Contexts", by Mario E. López-Gopar, Vilma Huerta Cordova, William M. Sughrua, Juan Ignacio Martínez Martínez, and Denisse Zárate Ríos offers a rigorous exploration of English language teacher education within the complex socioeconomic and colonial legacies of Mexico. The authors critically examine how entrenched social inequalities and coloniality shape language teaching and learning, highlighting the need for a decolonial and social justice-oriented pedagogy. Through a detailed account of two student teachers' six-stage critical and reflexive journey, this chapter compellingly illustrates the integration of autobiographical writing, critical ethnography, and praxis to cultivate teachers who can challenge colonial hierarchies and language ideologies. The chapter's strength lies in linking theoretical decolonial frameworks with concrete pedagogical practices and reflective processes, fostering both teacher and community empowerment. However, while emphasizing the local specificity and reflexivity of the approach, the authors acknowledge the challenge of transcending institutional constraints and deeply ingrained colonial mindsets.

In the concluding chapter, titled "Afterword: Interrogating and Destabilizing the Canon of TESOL Teacher Education", presents a critical and cohesive synthesis of the volume's contributions, arguing for a transformative reimagining of English language teacher education. Sayer's review challenges the reader to reevaluate traditional practices and frameworks, aiming to create a more just and equitable educational environment. One of the key strengths of this work is

its emphasis on critical reflection and its potential to destabilize established categories within TESOL. Sayer argues that a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and historical contexts of education is necessary for fostering a more inclusive and democratic society. By adopting a genealogical approach, the author highlights the importance of questioning and challenging prevailing norms and power structures in TESOL. The chapter also sheds light on the shortcomings of current frameworks in TESOL teacher education, such as native speakerism and normative monolingualism. Sayer's call for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach is both timely and relevant, encouraging educators to critically examine their practices and actively contribute to the pursuit of social justice.

A point of worthy consideration is that *A Sociopolitical Agenda for TESOL Teacher Education* distinguishes itself from similar works by placing a strong and explicit emphasis on sociopolitical issues within TESOL, advocating for critical theory, advocacy, and reflexivity as central to teacher education. While Karen E. Johnson's *Second Language Teacher Education: A Sociocultural Perspective* (2009) examines how social and contextual factors influence teacher learning, and Melanie Cooke and James Simpson's *ESOL: A Critical Guide* (2008) addresses critical issues in specialized contexts such as adult migrant education, the publication under review distinguishes itself by taking a broader, interdisciplinary stance. It not only explores diverse educational settings but also urges educators to confront power relations directly, including challenges like native speakerism and the enduring impact of colonial structures. The book's commitment to equipping educators with both theoretical insights and practical tools for challenging inequality sets it apart. In comparison, the *Global South Perspectives on TESOL series* (Routledge, 2021) also foregrounds sociopolitical and critical issues, but does so by centering voices, research, and experiences from the Global South, challenging Western-dominated narratives and advocating for decolonial and locally relevant approaches. While both works share a dedication to social justice and transformative practice, *A Sociopolitical Agenda for TESOL Teacher Education* is particularly notable for its global and interdisciplinary scope and its focus on advocacy as an essential element of TESOL teacher education, whereas the Global South series emphasizes decolonization and the reimagining of TESOL from non-Western perspectives.

In conclusion, this edited volume presents a timely case for the urgent need to integrate a sociopolitical agenda into TESOL teacher education. The diverse perspectives offered by the contributors demonstrate the far-reaching implications of incorporating critical theories and social justice principles into the preparation and ongoing professional development of language teachers. By grappling with critical issues, the book challenges the status quo and calls for TESOL practitioners to embrace their roles as reflective, socially-aware agents of change. This incisive volume is a valuable and vital resource for TESOL teacher educators, researchers, and practitioners who aim to cultivate a new generation of language teachers equipped to navigate the complexities of the 21st century classroom and work towards more equitable and inclusive education. The sociopolitical agenda presented in this book has the potential to significantly reshape the field of TESOL teacher education in the years to come.

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Authors

Hossein Davari is an Associate Professor of Linguistics at Damghan University, Iran. He has published extensively in national and international journals and contributed to edited volumes by Springer and the British Council. His research interests include critical pedagogy, materials development, and English language education policy and practice.

Saeed Nourzadeh is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics at Damghan University, Iran. His research focuses on bilingual and multilingual education, language policy and planning, and critical teacher education.

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