
Popular Culture and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL)

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Abstract

A review of current research on popular culture and TESOL shows that the recurrent themes revolve around pedagogical affordances of popular cultural resources in TESOL, evaluation of popular culture's pedagogical potential, and construction of learner identities via ESL/EFL popular culture. However, there is a dearth of discussion on development of critical literacies when popular culture is used in English classrooms and existing studies focus mainly on popular cultural resources that are based on Anglo-American and European cultures. Moreover, issues relating to how to use popular culture in school teaching contexts that are constrained by the need to meet official curriculum requirements and preparation for high-stake tests remain under-investigated. It is proposed that more classroom-based and narrative-based research should be done to look into the experiences and desires of EFL/ESL students from various sexual, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds as they learn English via popular culture. In addition, critical literacies and common meaning-making conventions of popular culture can be introduced to TESOL programs so that learners can become critical, active analysts, and producers in the popular cultural world that they are immersed in.

Keywords

Popular culture • Digital literacies • Learner identity • TESOL • Language education • Agency

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Introduction

Although using popular culture in EFL/ESL classrooms is not a new pedagogical endeavor, research on popular culture and TESOL did not gain significant momentum until the late twentieth century. This chapter looks into major issues revolving around the use of popular cultural resources in TESOL. Early developments in this area have been concerned with establishing pedagogical evidence regarding the positive role of popular culture in increasing ESL/EL learners' interest in learning English and facilitating their language attainment. For instance, studies have focused on how the use of popular culture enhances learners' vocabulary and listening comprehension through the use of excerpts of advertisements and TV/radio programs. Further development in this research area has to do with quantitative studies to establish the relationship between use of pop culture and improvement in English-language proficiency. Another strand of research has involved learners' out-of-school consumption and production practices of popular culture, especially with new media and emerging digital technologies, and the subsequent pedagogical implications for formal English instruction. With increasing interest in learners' identities, much research attention has been directed to learners' out-of-school literacy practices vis-à-vis the (co-)construction, negotiation, and contestation of racial, sexual, and social class identities. However, it has also been pointed out that the feasibility of engaging popular culture in TESOL is still much debated in view of institutional constraints and potential tensions between popular culture and school and exam cultures. These will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Early Developments

With the rise of studies in communicative competence and content-based instruction in the 1970s and 1980s, popular cultural resources were introduced to the ESL/EFL classroom to contextualize L2 learning with authentic content

material. The following quote from Sandsberry (1979) captures well this rising trend:

More recently, however, several concurrent trends have resulted in a new view toward using non-specialized materials for teaching language, trends such as the emphasis upon teaching language in context; the shift of interest from small to increasingly larger units of discourse; the goal of communicative competence taking precedence over that of linguistic competence; and bilingual education, in which students learn the second language through content courses. One consequence of these trends, the move away from strictly controlled language, means that not only can language activities focused upon everything from model villages to recipes now be considered appropriate for elementary as well as very advanced classes, but also that such activities need not be considered second-rate, slated for the last ten minutes on Fridays. (pp. 501–502)

Early studies thus focused on how to use popular cultural resources to facilitate L2 comprehension, enjoyment, and learning, capitalizing on learners' interests while offering grammatically correct and yet authentic materials to consolidate English communicative competence. Research studies in this tradition mainly elucidated the ways in which language teachers used popular cultural resources fruitfully in language classrooms. Specifically, (pop) songs proved to be the pop culture genre that guaranteed most pedagogical potentials. Richards (1969), for example, argued that songs could help to teach children new sounds, rhythm and stress, polite forms, and vocabulary due to its pleasurable nature. However, nonstandard grammatical structures in songs were thought to hinder language learning, and teachers were asked to adapt songs in classroom presentations. In addition, pop songs were seen as "affective, simple and repetitive" (Murphey 1989), and teachers were asked to design various song-based activities (e.g., role-play, grammar/listening comprehension drilling, teaching vocabulary/translation) for classroom use that would align with learners' preference. On the other hand, pop songs were considered to have the "song-stuck-in-my head" (SSIMH) effect, or in Barber's (1980) term "Din in the head" (Murphey 1990), and so they were thought to be able to assist teachers in instilling some information into learners' minds (Murphey 1992). In the context of Mexican secondary schools, Domoney and Harris (1993) reported that Spanish-speaking students lacked interest in learning English because it was seldom used outside the classroom, and teachers explored how to capitalize on students' interest in rap music to bridge the gap between out-of-school English exposure and formal learning. Song-based fill-in the gaps were also found to facilitate language attainment rather than just for atmosphere and mood enhancement among Japanese EFL university students (Kamel 1997).

TV dramas proved to be useful aids in teaching English listening, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Handscombe (1975), for example, documented how to appropriate the TV series *The Sunrunners* in the Grade 3 ESL classroom in Ontario, Canada, for exposing pupils to multiple dialects of English as well as consolidating their grammatical knowledge and vocabulary of English. Videotaped news broadcasts were also found to be useful materials to enhance students' listening comprehension in the classroom. In order to address the uneven development of the four language

skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing), Brinton and Gaskill (1978) maintained that compared with artificial language examples, news broadcasts could bring real language materials to classrooms and enhance students' English listening comprehension, vocabulary, and understanding of the target language culture. TV comedy was also found to present useful resources for teaching English as a foreign language (McLean 1976).

Earlier research viewed popular culture as exciting and practical and to provide a proxy environment similar to the actual English-speaking world. It was assumed that the more students were exposed to authentic language use, the more competent they would be able to cope with English in real life situations. For example, Hafernik and Surguine (1979) advocated for the use radio commercials to teach listening in ESL classes due to the high recording quality, the entertaining nature, and the provision of everyday English in a contextualized manner. They proposed designing instructional activities such as (1) true/false, (2) multiple choice, (3) short answer, (4) matching, (5) cloze dictation, (6) adapted role-play, (7) values clarification, (8) discussion, and (9) contact assignments based on English radio commercials. In Hong Kong, Cheung (2001) pointed out that popular culture, such as television, movies, music, gossip magazines, comics, fashion, computer games, and the Internet, exerted significant impact on young people's feelings, attitudes, and knowledge about society. Therefore, teachers were advised to tap into students' "encountered knowledge" (Cheung 2001) to design meaningful and communicative tasks in classrooms to enhance their motivation to learn English.

In related research, comic strips were found to have an effect on ESL learners' reading comprehension (Liu 2004). With a factorial design involving factors of English proficiency (i.e., high-level or low-level ESL learners), text difficulty (i.e., difficult or easy English texts), and visual support (i.e., with or without comic strips), Liu (2004) argued that the reading comprehension of low-level ESL learners could be significantly enhanced when difficult texts were supported with relevant comic strips, because key information was abstracted and represented in comprehensible visuals. However, the high-level ESL learners in Liu (2004) did not benefit from comic strips because comic strips distracted their attention from complex language structures and did not provide more information than they could understand from the texts. It was therefore recommended that teaching material developers should choose the visual supports that reflected the texts' linguistic complexities so as to increase the quality of readers' language input and output.

Another way of using popular culture in TESOL was to make use of both its language forms and content. For example, Sandsberry (1979) used magazine advertisements in ESL classrooms to teach logical thinking and English language alternately by asking students to interrogate the logics of the advertisement. Despite the diversity of opinions toward using popular culture in classrooms, there was general consensus that careful planning and adaptation was the key the successful integration of popular cultural resources in English-language education.

Major Contributions

Pedagogical Affordances of Digitally Mediated Popular Cultural Resources

With the transnational popularity of new information and communication technologies, popular culture is no longer seen as supplementary material for language teaching but is increasingly seen as an important external force that can foster change in EFL pedagogies. For example, Stapleton and Radia (2010) argue that L2 writing pedagogies need to go beyond the debate among different perspectives, i.e., “product,” “process,” and “genre,” and propose that emerging software and online resources can supersede such a theoretical debate. Specifically, they evaluate the effectiveness of existing resources and recommend that teachers draw upon corpus-based and thesaurus tools to give feedback to learners’ writing.

Concerning the results of the new National English Program for Basic Education in Mexico featuring early start EFL instruction and a sociocultural approach, Sayer and Ban (2014) investigate Mexican primary school students’ engagement with English outside the classrooms by interviewing 61 fifth and sixth grade students, their teachers, and parents in central Mexico. It is found that students use English outside schools more than commonly thought, mainly through computer-/technology-mediated popular culture. They also find that students regard school English lessons positively because such English lessons enable them to engage in out-of-school English popular culture consumption. Due to the centrality of popular culture, it is proposed that teachers should tap into students’ lived popular cultural experience, and some teacher control should be given up to make way for learners’ voices in the lessons.

Compared with earlier studies, learners in recent studies are seen as playing a more active role in the use of popular cultural resources for language teaching and learning. For example, Murphy (2014) recommends YouTube videos and Ted Talks as materials from which EFL/ESL teachers select intelligible, comprehensible, and meaningful nonnative English speech samples for teaching pronunciation. As an integral part of this process, learners are required to engage in detailed analysis and imitation of the nonnative English speech samples so that they can counteract effects of native speakerism in appreciating the linguistic, paralinguistic, and rhetorical strengths of clear and intelligible nonnative English speeches.

The area of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) has made significant contributions to TESOL and emerging technology-mediated popular culture. For example, Thorne and Reinhardt (2008) propose bridging activities to engage the internet generation’s vernacular digital practices for enhancing relevance of formal language education in advanced foreign-language learners’ day-to-day language use. Specifically, learners are guided to compare the linguistic and multimodal features as well as the social purposes of new literacy genres such as instant messaging, blogs and wikis, remixing, and multiplayer online gaming with the traditional literacy practices such as face-to-face spoken conversation and print media genres. Through comparison and reflection on their own new literacy practices, students can become

more aware of their agentive role as critical genre analysts of both conventional and digital text forms. In another study, Wang et al. (2012) maintain that *Second Life* supports constructivist learning as it enables a more active student role and supports students' knowledge construction via the recreation of public entities and infrastructures that can include opportunities for intercultural exchange. Based on the principles of task-based learning, authentic activities, and collaborative learning, a three-step activity model is proposed for designing foreign-language learning activities with *Second Life*, which include Setting the Stage, Acclimating, and Testing the Waters. "Setting the Stage" refers to giving technological support to novice users and encouraging ESL students to develop a *Second Life* user manual in their native language; "Acclimating" pertains to establishing a safe zone in *Second Life* where EFL/ESL learners will be gathered to discuss assigned topics via text messages in order to achieve higher English proficiency; finally learners will interact with native English speakers in *Second Life*, i.e., "Testing the Water."

Evaluation of Popular Culture' Pedagogical Potential

While some studies on popular cultural resources counteract the dismissal of popular culture as purely recreational and underscore learners' language gains after active analysis and participation in pop culture, another emerging theme is the assessment of language gains by analyzing the pedagogical potential of a specific popular culture genre and exploring the ways in which popular cultural resources can be effectively used with quantitative research. For example, Rodgers and Webb (2011) examine the word types, vocabulary reoccurrence, and the vocabulary size necessary to reach 95% coverage of different English TV series in order to ascertain the value of watching TV series for learning English vocabulary. Specifically, using the computer software RANGE (Nation and Heatley 2002), Rodgers and Webb (2011) compare the frequency of vocabulary in 142 episodes of six TV dramas, *24*, *Alias*, *Crossing Jordan*, *CSI*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and *House*, which are treated as related TV programs, with 146 episodes of six other randomly chosen TV dramas. Fewer word types and families and higher vocabulary reoccurrence are found in related TV programs than the unrelated, randomly chosen TV programs, and a vocabulary size of the most frequent 3,000 word families is considered sufficient for understanding 95% of the words in the TV programs. Therefore, for less proficient English-language learners, it is better to receive narrow, repeated L2 aural input by watching different episodes of a single TV program or a single episode multiple times. However, more advanced English-language learners benefit from receiving more broad L2 aural input. Furthermore, teachers can design comprehension questions and pre-teach some low-frequency words from the TV programs as classroom-based activities to aid students' comprehension.

Lai et al. (2015) identify the close ties between out-of-school English learning with information and communication technologies (e.g., the Internet, movies, TV dramas, songs) and English proficiency with a group of junior secondary EFL learners in a large city in southern Mainland China with both quantitative and

qualitative data. In particular, she finds that English movies and English songs are what this group of students opt for in out-of-school English learning, and parents and teachers are the most important socialization agents for this group of students. The study suggests that in learning contexts where in-class instruction focuses heavily on language forms rather than on language meaning, diversity of out-of-school English learning activities should be enhanced to facilitate the learning of English-language meaning. Lai (2015) also posits that teachers play a significant role in undergraduate students' digital self-directed foreign language learning (including English) with semi-structured interviews and online questionnaires. In particular, teachers' affective support can improve students' sense of the perceived usefulness of technologies. Additionally, teachers' capacity support and behavior support are found to be important in facilitating learning conditions and improving students' computer self-efficacy. However, quantitative evaluation of popular culture's pedagogical potential tends to overlook the effects of learner identities on learning and seems to regard learners as homogeneous, rendering research findings in this tradition dubious at a time of "superdiversity" (Blommaert 2013), when learners' attitudes and understanding of a popular culture text can vary considerably even within the same classroom. In the next section we will turn toward a review of studies on the issue of learner identities.

Construction of Learner Identities via ESL/EFL Popular Culture

An important research focus in popular culture and TESOL examines the construction of English-language learners' identities, whether in traditional, print-based media, or in new media environments powered by emerging technologies. Specifically, this line of work is less concerned with pop culture as an English-language teaching/learning resource and rather examines the possible ways in which English-language learners construct their relationship with English and the imagined communities of English speakers via popular culture, including how power relations in English learning/teaching are implicated in popular culture.

Pioneering work in this tradition is found in Lam (2000, 2004), who explores how immigrant youths in the United States utilize popular culture to acquire more symbolic resources, such as English-language competency and friendship. Lam (2000) contends that computer-mediated communication (CMC) engenders vernacular L2 development and enables users to construct more positive and powerful identities for themselves compared with the negativity experienced in schools. Albeit constrained by dominant ideologies, ESL learners manage to transcend their social marginalization due to low academic English proficiency via connection with a global English-speaking (including EFL) community. The enhanced social capital and emotional support they create are central to sustaining a positive learner identity. This view is also echoed in other recent studies (e.g., Lee 2013, 2014) on EFL youths' use of social media, and it is predicted that "newer social media will only give rise to even greater diversity of both technology users and linguistic practices" (Lee 2014, p. 180).

Hip-hop music genres are also found to have the potential to empower working-class secondary EFL students, evidence for which is documented in Lin and Man (2011)'s study. An extracurricular English hip-hop learning activity, called "The ELT Rap Project," was piloted in a low performing school in Hong Kong. The authors investigate the possibility of transforming working-class students' inferior learner identities with rap and dance workshops offered by local artists and an English tutor with dual foci, one on rap and the other on English phonetic skills. With pre-and post-questionnaires and focus group interviews, it is found that the students have demonstrated more positive learner identities and more linguistic capital, such as knowledge of letter-sound relationships, which help to increase their investment in English.

Popular culture can also help English learners to critically reflect on their identity formation. Mackie (2003) provides a critical account of the influence of popular culture on formation of one's subjectivity after examining how she acquired implicit knowledge about race from popular American films and her experience of being othered when teaching English in China. Mackie and Norton (2006) examine the affordances and complexities when teachers include films as resources for teaching literacy in the L1 context. In related research, popular culture texts are found to be conducive to language learning as language learners use these texts to "construct their identities as learners, users, and consumers of the English language" (Chik and Breidbach, 2011).

Recent studies have also examined how learners are positioned and position themselves in second languages when they are involved in consumption and production of popular culture texts. In engaging with popular culture in English teaching and learning, social inclusion or exclusion is a significant dimension. Due to the diversity of students, more attention over selection of pop culture materials is advocated to avoid marginalization of learners. Indeed, as pointed out in Duff's (2002) study on pop culture and ESL students, teachers should know about the relevance of the popular culture resources in students' everyday life, especially when they come from different sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds; moreover, teachers should unpack the forms and functions of hybrid pop culture texts for immigrant students, because "relevance and access cannot be taken for granted. People often do not share the necessary sociocultural and psycholinguistic repertoires, practices, and abilities, and need assistance from others to understand them. For newcomers to a discourse community, references to dominant local pop culture are often both intriguing and confusing, especially in highly intertextual or hybrid oral texts" (p. 486).

In the same vein, Black (2009) discusses the pedagogical value of Internet-mediated communication for TESOL in the twenty-first century with examples of English-language learners' engagement in online fandom. Specifically, Black (2009) identifies three major benefits of engaging in leisure-time, pop culture-based, technology-mediated activities in L2 English: improving English-language and composition skills (i.e., print literacy), developing "the twenty-first century skills" of information literacy which refers to the ability "to seek out and critically evaluate information across a range of media" (p. 693), and finally developing positive identities as "powerful learners, language users, and as active producers of their

own social, cultural, and ideological materials” (p. 696), i.e., boosting learners’ academic self-concept.

Similarly, Norton and Vanderheyden (2004), in studying the ESL preadolescent Archie comic readers who newly immigrated to Canada, observe that engaging in ESL popular culture consumption such as reading L2 English comic books can benefit English-language learners’ sense of belonging to the new community as well as their language development. Specifically, they find that reading Archie comics can help the newly arrived students learn the sociocultural practices of Canadian society. In addition, the practice of lending the Archie comic books to native English-speaking classmates’ can empower the ESL learners in terms of fostering interpersonal relationships.

Work in Progress: Digital Language Learning via Popular Culture

As discussed in the previous section, the potential benefits for integrating popular culture in school-based EFL/ESL teaching have been well documented. Recently, researchers have attempted, in an emerging body of work, to explore students’ informal, autonomous learning afforded by digital popular cultural resources. A literature review on computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and second-language acquisition (SLA) done by Mroz (2014) identifies two main types of virtual language learning environments (VLEs) which can provide opportunities for meaningful use of L2 English, i.e., online commercial video games and non-gaming three-dimensional multiuser virtual environment (3-D MUVE) such as *Second Life*. In particular, virtuality is conceptualized as providing a “holistic and complex” immersive environment and affording agency to language learners (Mroz 2014, p. 334).

In terms of the relation between gaming and L2 English learning, Sylvén and Sundqvist (2012, 2016) find that L2 English proficiency is related to the frequency of gaming and types of games played for a group of well-resourced Swedish fifth graders. In the naturalistic setting of home life, frequency of gaming (i.e., ≥ 5 h/week) and the variety of games are found to be correlated positively with the acquisition of L2 English vocabulary. A study on Japanese university EFL learners’ collaborative interaction in and attitudes toward *Second Life* conducted by Peterson (2012) reveals that learners can obtain peer correction and peer scaffolding for unknown lexis. Additionally, the students hold positive attitudes toward learning on *Second Life* due to the appealing personalized avatars and the low-stress environment as compared with a regular English class.

Despite the generally positive research findings regarding using digital popular culture for self-directed English learning, and due in part to significant learner diversity, a number of factors have impeded the effectiveness of learners’ self-regulated language learning with technology. For example, Lai and Gu (2011) indicate that lack of digital literacy, unawareness of useful technologies for language learning, or little metacognitive knowledge about how to use them effectively can significantly undermine learning foreign language via digital popular culture resources and platforms. These issues are further explored in the section below.

Problems and Difficulties

While popular culture is celebrated as stimulating accessible resources for language and content learning, there are several problems and difficulties regarding using popular culture in TESOL. The research literature compels language education researchers and practitioners to reconsider the ways in which popular culture is positioned in formal English instruction and how it can be optimally integrated into both formal and informal, self-regulated English learning. In particular, the question of how to capitalize on popular culture in language education is complicated by the differences between two social institutions: schools which favor academic achievement and traditional values and the mass media which features diverse values and pursuit of pleasure and desires. In particular, teachers' ability to recognize students' local funds of knowledge about popular cultural tends to be circumscribed by the institutional constraints which are "characterised by a nationally governed curriculum, an emphasis on testing, and externally specified teaching frameworks" (Burn et al. 2010, p. 13). Lo (2013) echoes this view in a study about the conflicts between students' production of L2 English comic strips and the formal literacy requirements expected in primary school English. While teachers are encouraging students to learn English in online entertainment and participatory culture settings, Lo (2013) reveals that teachers are also caught in the dilemma of meeting formal English teaching requirements. Therefore, special emphasis should be placed on the ways in which educators can address and finesse these institutional tensions and how to formulate possible pedagogical designs which allow students and teachers to do what they are institutionally expected to do while meeting their own personal interests in popular culture.

Much new media research on popular culture and L2 learning suggests that learners can benefit from popular culture-/technology-based classroom activities because students can potentially develop powerful identities and gain recognition for their prior experience and knowledge (e.g., Black 2009). However, there is reason to be concerned about the issue of accessibility as disenfranchised learners without ready access to suitable devices and/or mass media texts may be excluded. For example, what if some students have not watched the most widely discussed TV drama? In order to address this concern, one way forward will lie in adding the emic perspective in initiatives of using popular culture in English classrooms by using ethnography to incorporate students' pop culture practices. In addition, more learner training in terms of digital literacy and awareness of useful technologies for language learning should be offered to English learners in need (Lai and Gu 2011).

Numerous research has critiqued the dominance of written language (e.g., the New London Group 1996; Gee 2004; Lankshear and Knobel 2007) and acknowledged the potential of digital popular culture (e.g., social media and virtual environments) as an affordance for young people with sociocultural and linguistic differences to construct alternative and positive identities (e.g., Lam 2000; Lee

2014). This said, symbolic violence regarding gender, race, and class is of course present in cyberspaces, and how such power relations are enmeshed in students' L2 English learning have not yet been adequately and critically investigated. In addition, the global and local symbolic capital of particular languages and cultures can be a serious issue: many popular culture resources, whether Web 2.0 technology or more traditional media such as films and TV dramas, are often Anglo-American and European. A potential corrective action is to utilize popular cultural resources in the learners' mother tongue or to incorporate those based on non-Western contexts in order to decenter dominant cultures while also fostering multilingualism and desires to learn other languages and cultures (Janks 2004).

Another potential problem lies in the register and language level of popular culture materials. While most students need to acquire the powerful forms (i.e., academic register) of dominant foreign languages (e.g., English, French) for upward socioeconomic mobility, the style of language in popular culture tends to be vernacular. The vernaculars which students are acquiring through engagement with the popular culture world are not always appropriate for, or readily transferred to, use in academic settings (Madge et al. 2009; Thorne et al. 2009). In addition, a mismatch between the proficiency level of beginning foreign-language learners and the complexity level of authentic popular culture materials is reported by Lai and Gu (2011). If teachers are not making conscious efforts to provide language support and bridge the gap between L2 English everyday vernaculars and L2 English academic language, students may not be able to benefit from popular culture-inspired language instruction. English-language teachers should therefore caution against the assumption that exposure to L2 English popular culture is always beneficial for students' linguistic attainment and teach with more register awareness when popular cultural resources are used.

Future Directions

Learning language via popular culture in the digital age is not "a lazy throwing open of the school doors to the latest fad, but rather committing to a principled understanding of the complexity of contemporary cultural experience" (Willis 2003, p. 411). Given the developments and problems in the field, future research should be conducted toward more understanding of diverse popular culture's influence on L2 English learning and teaching, both in terms of students' language attainment and their identity development. Specifically, more naturalistic or (design) experimental research can be done to examine the efficacy of using popular culture in TESOL and to investigate when and form whom popular culture can be useful and in which dimensions of the language ability. Additionally, more classroom-based or narrative-based research can be done to reveal the affect and desires of learners from various sexual, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds when they learn English via popular culture so that language teachers can design language curricula accordingly. Another

future direction would be further studies and innovative pedagogical practices that involve multilingual popular culture texts from a wider range of cultural contexts, which can promote multiculturalism.

Furthermore, popular culture is a powerful source of fun, excitement, fantasies, and desires as well as social controversies. Students immersed in popular culture often do not have a chance and/or the analytical tools to critically reflect on how their own subjectivities and identities, ways of seeing things, and relating to others are implicitly and ideologically shaped or influenced by the popular cultural texts that they consume pleurably every day. Therefore, critical literacies can be introduced to English-language learning programs so that students can identify ideologies and biases implicitly embedded in popular culture and contest negative subject positions which are discursively constructed by some popular culture texts.

Finally, as Lin (2012) points out, “[I]anguage (e.g., L1, L2, L3) should not be seen and planned as discrete separate entities but rather as continua (Hornberger 2003; Canagarajah 2005) and. . .part of multimodal communication (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 2001).” Teachers and researchers are encouraged to explore ways to equip students with the techniques and meaning-making conventions of popular culture and to teach them different ways to creatively produce content for the purpose of promoting social justice and heteroglossia (cf. Lin and Luk 2005). In this way, students are not merely passive consumers of popular culture but are also critical, active analysts and producers of the cultural world.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Ecologies of Digital Literacies: Implications for Education](#)
- ▶ [Elementary Language Education in Digital Multimodal and Multiliteracy Contexts](#)
- ▶ [Identity in Mediated Contexts of Transnationalism and Mobility](#)
- ▶ [Language and Identity on Facebook](#)
- ▶ [Language, Ideology, and Critical Digital Literacy](#)
- ▶ [Multilingualism and Multimodality in Language Use and Literacies in Digital Environments](#)
- ▶ [Multimodal Discourses Across the Curriculum](#)

Related Articles in the Encyclopedia of Language and Education

- Brian Street: [New Literacies, New Times: Developments in Literacy Studies](#). In Volume: [Literacies and Language Education](#)
- Kevin Leader and Cynthia Lewis: [Literacy and Internet Technologies](#). In Volume: [Literacies and Language Education](#)

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