

○ **S. BENESCH, *CONSIDERING EMOTIONS IN CRITICAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: THEORIES AND PRAXIS***

(NEW YORK AND LONDON, ROUTLEDGE. 2012. PP. XII, 148).

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Language learning and teaching are recognised as cognitive, social, and physical endeavours in applied linguistics in general, and second language acquisition, in particular. While the cognitive and social aspects have been discussed extensively since the sociocultural turn (Johnson, 2006), there has been limited research on the embodied nature of language learning and teaching where emotions, feelings, and affect feature prominently. Sara Benesch's recent monograph on a critical approach to emotions fills this gap by unpacking the concept of emotion theoretically and showcasing her approach to emotion in critical language teaching. The book will be of great interest to teacher trainees, teachers, teacher educators, and researchers of applied linguistics. The book of eight chapters is divided into two parts, with the first laying the theoretical groundwork and the second attending to pedagogical praxis. For teacher researchers, the second part of the book is particularly useful as it may be read as exemplars of action research.

Chapter 1 sets the scene for researching emotions from a critical perspective. Based on a brief literature review and a narrative of her personal and professional history, Benesch argues that emotions have not received due attention in both mainstream and critical English language teaching (ELT) literature. The author calls for emotions to be in a more central position in the context of critical teaching. There is also a foreshadowing of 'critical pragmatism' (Davis & Skilton-Sylvester, 2004, p. 397), or in Benesch's words 'work[ing] pragmatically while not being resigned to the status quo' (p.18), which is demonstrated throughout the second part of the book.

In Chapter 2, Benesch reviews the research literature in ELT on emotions, including cognitive approaches, sociocultural approaches, Pavelenko's multidisciplinary approach, Kramsch's notion of embodied self, and critical applied linguistics. She concludes the chapter with a discussion of how her approach to emotions departs from these various approaches in the ELT literature.

Chapter 3 focuses on the theorisation of emotions by affective-turn writers and feminist scholars, demonstrating that emotions are socially constructed feelings, fluid, embodied, and connected with the subconscious. The author also reviews three examples of critical teaching

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in which affect and emotions are taken into account with the benefits of opening up space of negotiation and greater student engagement in learning.

The section on Praxis begins with chapter 4, which explores how feminist theorist Sara Ahmed's notion of sticky objects can be applied to examining emotions in critical ELT. Using data collected from open-ended questionnaires, Benesch identifies the differences between teachers' and students' emotional responses to the two sticky objects of dictionaries and cellphones in English language classrooms. She shows that the differences may be explained by bringing the students' social environment into consideration and that students' emotions attached to the sticky objects may be productively used for language learning when teachers align with students rather than institutional demands. The author also points to the sticky objects' potential for critical literacy.

Chapter 5 reexamines pedagogical praxis in Benesch's own lessons on military recruitment on campus through the lens of the Deleuzian notion of affect. Benesch makes a reflexive interpretation of the role of various emotions and argues for both the teacher and students to move beyond the binary teacher/student identities into a pedagogical friendship to achieve deeper embodied engagement, making the class not only a place for language learning but also a site for exploring ways to deal with social issues.

Chapter 6 probes into students' embodied experiences of learning languages as a way of inspiring and urging students to engage in second language acquisition (SLA) theory building. Benesch adapts Kramsch's research, demonstrating that having students write and discuss their metaphors for SLA could be good critical practice, enabling both language teachers and students to reflect upon the embodied nature of language learning and the interconnection between language, mind, body, and society.

Chapter 7 reports findings based on interviews with English language teachers about their emotion management, reading students' embodied emotions, and explicit teaching of emotions. On the basis of the findings, Benesch discusses the general tendency of teachers' emotion work in the institutionally sanctioned direction from a critical perspective. Benesch also draws attention to often ignored 'ugly' (p.126) feelings such as anger, frustration, and anxiety in both students and teachers and proposes that acknowledging these feelings and recognising the social context in which they occur may promote a healthy emotional culture and produce possible emotional affinities.

Chapter 8 concludes the book by summing up the theoretical assumptions about emotions and offering suggestions for future work on emotions in critical ELT.

This book is thought-provoking in that it foregrounds the long-present but under-theorised domain in language learning and teaching and provides a useful framework for understanding different theoretical stances or assumptions about emotions in English language learning and

teaching. It is also timely for the sociocultural and affective-turn in second language education research and practice. If we are serious about student-centred learning and teaching, emotion should be regarded as an indispensable part of the process. Critical language teaching addresses the key role of students in the experiential learning of language where student voice, for example in the form of their embodied emotions, should be heard and attended to. Paying attention to learners' and teachers' emotion and emotion work may enhance positive learning experiences and outcomes and contribute to empowering students as agents of change in their institution and society at large. As demonstrated in the book, the attitude toward feelings and emotions being very often considered bad, lower, or ugly makes room for fruitfully discussing, understanding, confronting, accepting, or exploring emotions in pedagogical praxis.

The book offers a rich blend of emotional theories and practices, and makes a significant contribution to research on emotions in English language learning and teaching. However, there are a number of outstanding issues to be considered. For example, while drawing on critical and feminist theories to provide a theoretical framework for the notion of emotions, more effort needs to be made to explain related concepts like motivation, orientation, and feelings in ELT. In addition, while the book stresses that conceptualising emotions as 'dynamic' and 'embodied' is a 'reaction' against unitary and 'predetermined' identities (p.39), it does not offer a proper explanation about where it stands in relation to the post-structuralist view of identities. That is, identities as multi-faceted, fluid, subject to power struggles, and allowing for individual agency (Block, 2009; Norton, 2000). Emotions add an often missing piece to the picture of selves that can be felt but not properly named – selves that have potential for change, which may inspire the increasing interest in post-structuralist approaches to identities and language learning. Although it is recognised in the book that emotions are intricately related to identities, the relationship between them has been mentioned only in passing (e.g. p.118). Given that emotions and identities are both experienced and embodied, this relationship needs to be clarified within a theoretical framework. The argument for the interconnection between emotions, body, mind, and society would also be enhanced by evidence from fields such as neurolinguistics regarding how emotions are registered mentally and physically.

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