critical applied linguistics:

critical

a ∧ introduction

Alastair Pennycook
University of Technology, Sydney
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Preface

It was some 10 years ago that with the announcement of a new journal, *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, to be edited by graduate students at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), I decided to try out the notion of critical applied linguistics (Pennycook, 1990). A graduate student myself at that time, I was on the one hand trying to express my own deep dissatisfaction with what I felt were severe limitations and blind spots in applied linguistics. Having taught for a number of years in Japan, Québec, and China, I had become concerned that the applied linguistics we taught was unable to deal with—indeed in a number of ways seemed to support—the many inequitable conditions I encountered: the frequent assumptions of privilege, authority, and superiority, from native speakers of English and the English language itself to particular approaches to teaching, cultural forms, or forms of social organization; and the constant denigration of other languages, other language speakers, and teachers and students from different backgrounds. On the other hand, I was trying to work out how different areas of critical work that I was just beginning to discover—critical pedagogy, critical discourse analysis, critical ethnography—might help develop an alternative way forward. The article I submitted received angry reviews, but in the end, the editor (thanks Antony) took a risk and published it.

Ten years on, Alan Davies’ recent (1999) book, *An Introduction to Applied Linguistics: From Practice to Theory*, has just arrived on my desk. Critical applied linguistics (CAL) is now in the glossary (it exists!): “A judgmental approach by some applied linguists to ‘normal’ applied linguistics on the grounds that it is not concerned with the transformation of society” (p. 145). Well, not quite how I would have put it (see the rest of this book). For Davies and others from an earlier applied linguistic gener-
ation, there is a concern that the carefully constructed and nurtured discipline of applied linguistics is in danger of fragmentation. But Davies also sees this as part of a healthy debate:

Modernist approaches (such as CDA) and postmodernist critiques (such as CAL) of applied linguistics are... seductive. They provide a useful debate on the nature of the discipline, they need to be taken into account. But they must not be allowed to take over, cuckoo-like. (p. 142)

This book is an attempt to provide more substance to this debate, to put a bit more flesh on that "more radical, if also more nebulous CAL" (Davies, 1999, p. 143) that I apparently promote. It is not an attempt to take over applied linguistics, cuckoo-like (as if!). It is an attempt to present different domains of critical applied linguistics—critical approaches to text, language, literacy, research, language learning, teaching, and translation—and to show how they fit together. After many different versions, editings, and reeditions, the book is now organized with the following chapters:

1. Introducing Critical Applied Linguistics
2. The Politics of Knowledge
3. The Politics of Language
4. The Politics of Text
5. The Politics of Pedagogy
6. The Politics of Difference

I have also included a number of charts that present overviews of different domains. These have proved quite useful as a tool for the sort of mapping exercise I've been doing here. The book tries both to give an overview of critical work in these areas and to present my own particular take on this. It is therefore something of a personal account of what I understand critical applied linguistics to be. It is also an attempt not merely to present an overview of the area but also to critique it, to subject critical applied linguistics to the same sort of critical examination as "normal" applied linguistics. I hope therefore that this book will be of interest to a wide range of readers, from "normal" applied linguists to critical applied linguists, from language educators to translators, from practicing teachers to undergraduate and postgraduate students.

In some ways, this is for me the culmination of a 10-year project to figure out what critical applied linguistics might usefully look like. I had not thought this book would be as difficult as it has proved: All I needed to do was pull together my course notes and readings from the Critical Applied Linguistics course (thanks Tim) I used to teach at the University of Mel-
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In some ways, this is for me the culmination of a 10-year project to figure out what critical applied linguistics might usefully look like. I had not thought this book would be as difficult as it has proved: All I needed to do was pull together my course notes and readings from the Critical Applied Linguistics course (thanks Tim) I used to teach at the University of Melbourne. Not so. I have come to understand in the writing how huge and complex this area is and how inadequate my own understanding was and still is. And of course, this won't be a culmination since it looks set to be part of an ongoing debate. This has not been a debate that has been easy to sustain and participate in over the last 10 years. The critical stance I (and others) have taken has caused resentment and anger. There have been nasty backlashes, attempts to discredit this sort of work, unpleasant parodies, refusals to discuss. But there has also been a great deal of support. I have been extremely privileged in the last few years to be invited to speak in many different parts of the world, from the Philippines to Brazil, from Germany to Japan, from Vietnam to the United States, from Singapore to Abu Dhabi, and in all these places, I have had wonderful conversations with a vast array of different people, trying to work out how our different projects intersect.

So, I owe a great debt of thanks to many, many people over the last 10 years, and I am not going to try to name them all. Quite a few turn up in the pages of this book. From the origins of these ideas among the "critical crowd" at Ontario Institute for Studies Education (OISE) in Toronto, through my many debates and discussions with colleagues and students in Hong Kong, Melbourne, and now Sydney, through all the discussions at conferences around the world, in coffee shops, sitting up late in bars, to the wonderful moments in class when we have arrived at a revelation of how different parts of the critical puzzle fit together (with a special thanks to the critical applied linguistics class of 1997—I still have my "exemplary umpiring" certificate on the wall). Many thanks to all these people. Let's keep the discussion going. And thanks to Naomi Silverman at Lawrence Erlbaum, who liked the sound of this book, and to Elsa Auerbach, who gave it its last critical reading before publication. And a final thanks again to my parents and to Dominique, who have done so much to support me and who will doubtless give this book yet another critical reading.
Introducing Critical Applied Linguistics

Critical Applied Linguistic Concerns
Domains of Critical Applied Linguistics
Conclusion: Why Critical Applied Linguistics?

What is critical applied linguistics? Simply put, it is a critical approach to applied linguistics. Such a response, however, leads to several further questions: What is applied linguistics? What is meant by critical? Is critical applied linguistics merely the addition of a critical approach to applied linguistics? Or is it something more? This short introductory chapter gives an outline of what I understand critical applied linguistics to be, before I expand in much greater detail in later chapters on the domains it may cover, the theoretical issues it engages with, and the types of questions it raises. Critical applied linguistics is not yet a term that has wide currency, so this introduction in a sense is a performative act: Rather than introducing an already established domain of work, this introduction both introduces and produces critical applied linguistics (CALx). It is therefore also a fairly personal account of this area. And since I believe critical work should always be self-reflexive, this introduction must necessarily be critical (hence a critical introduction).

Rather than simply trying to define what I take critical applied linguistics to be, I would prefer to raise a number of important concerns and questions that can bring us closer to an understanding of this area. These concerns have to do with:
more autonomous status. Markee (1990) termed these the strong and the weak versions of applied linguistics, respectively. As de Beaugrande (1997) and Markee (1990) argue, it is the so-called strong version—linguistics applied—that has predominated, from the classic British tradition encapsulated in Corder’s (1973) and Widdowson’s (1980) work through to the parallel North American version encapsulated in the second language acquisition studies of writers such as Krashen (1981). Reversing Markee’s (1990) labels, I would argue that this might be more usefully seen as the weak version because it renders applied linguistics little more than an application of a parent domain of knowledge (linguistics) to different contexts (mainly language teaching). The applied linguistics that critical applied linguistics deals with, by contrast, is a strong version marked by breadth of coverage, interdisciplinarity, and a degree of autonomy. From this point of view, applied linguistics is an area of work that deals with language use in professional settings, translation, speech pathology, literacy, and language education; and it is not merely the application of linguistic knowledge to such settings but is a semiautonomous and interdisciplinary (or, as I argue later, antidis- ciplinary) domain of work that draws on but is not dependent on areas such as sociology, education, anthropology, cultural studies, and psychology. Critical applied linguistics adds many new domains to this.

Critically Applied Linguistic Concerns

Applied Linguistics

To start with, to the extent that critical applied linguistics is seen as a critical approach to applied linguistics, it needs to operate with a broad view of applied linguistics. Applied linguistics, however, has been a notoriously hard domain to define. The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics gives us two definitions: “the study of second and foreign language learning and teaching” and “the study of language and linguistics in relation to practical problems, such as lexicography, translation, speech pathology, etc.” (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985, p. 15). From this point of view, then, we have two different domains, the first to do with second or foreign language teaching (but, not, significantly, first language education), the second to do with language-related problems in various areas in which language plays a major role. This first version of applied linguistics is by and large a result historically of its emergence from applying linguistic theory to contexts of second language pedagogy in the United States in the 1940s. It is also worth observing that as Kachru (1990) and others have pointed out, this focus on language teaching has also been massively oriented toward teaching English as a second language. The second version is a more recent broadening of the field, although it is certainly not accepted by applied linguists such as Widdowson (1999), who continue to argue that applied linguists mediate between linguistic theory and language teaching.

In addition, there is a further question as to whether we are dealing with the application of linguistics to applied domains—what Widdowson (1980) termed linguistics applied—or whether applied linguistics has a

Praxis

A second concern of applied linguistics in general, and one that critical applied linguistics also needs to address, is the distinction between theory and practice. There is often a problematic tendency to engage in applied linguistic research and theorizing and then to suggest pedagogical or other applications that are not grounded in particular contexts of practice (see Clarke, 1994). This is a common orientation in the linguistics-applied-to-language-teaching approach to applied linguistics. There is also, on the other hand, a tendency to dismiss applied linguistic theory as not about the real world. I want to resist both versions of applied linguistics and instead look at applied linguistics in all its contexts as a constant reciprocal relation between theory and practice, or preferably, as "that continuous reflexive integration of thought, desire and action sometimes referred to as 'praxis'" (Simon, 1992, p. 49). Discourse analysis is a practice that implies a theory, as are researching second language acquisition, translation and teaching. Thus, I prefer to avoid the theory-into-practice direction and instead see these as more complexly interwoven. This is why I argue that this book is an exercise in (critical) applied linguistics and also why it will not end with a version of the pedagogical implications of critical applied linguistics. I try to argue that critical applied linguistics is a way of thinking and doing, a "continuous reflexive integration of thought, desire and action."
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Being Critical

If the scope and coverage of applied linguistics needs careful consideration, so too does the notion of what it means to be critical or to do critical work. Apart from some general uses of the term—such as “Don’t be so critical”—one of the most common uses is in the sense of critical thinking or literary criticism. Critical thinking is used to describe a way of bringing more rigorous analysis to problem solving or textual understanding, a way of developing more critical distance as it is sometimes called. This form of “skilled critical questioning” (Brookfield, 1987, p. 92), which has recently gained some currency in applied linguistics (see Atkinson, 1997), can be broken down into a set of thinking skills, a set of rules for thinking that can be taught to students. Similarly, while the sense of critical reading in literary criticism usually adds an aesthetic dimension of textual appreciation, many versions of literary criticism have attempted to create the same sort of “critical distance” by developing “objective” methods of textual analysis. As McCormick (1994) explains:

Much work that is done in “critical thinking” . . . a site in which one might expect students to learn ways of evaluating the “uses” of texts and the implications of taking up one reading position over another—simply assumes an objectivist view of knowledge and instructs students to evaluate texts’ “credibility,” “purpose,” and “bias,” as if these were transcendent qualities. (p. 60)

It is this sense of critical that has been given some space by various applied linguists (e.g., Widdowson, 1999) who argue that critical applied linguistics should operate with this form of critical distance and objectivist evaluation rather than a more politicized version of critical applied linguistics.

Although there is of course much to be said for such an ability to analyze and critique, there are two other major themes in critical work that sit in opposition to this approach. The first may accept the possibility that critical distance and objectivity are important and achievable but argues that the most significant aspect of critical work is an engagement with political critiques of social relations. Such a position insists that critical inquiry can remain objective and is no less so because of its engagement with social critique. The second argument is one that also insists on the notion of critical as always engaging with questions of power and inequality, but it differs from the first in terms of its rejection of any possibility of critical distance or objectivity. I enlarge on these positions briefly below, and at greater length in later chapters (chap. 2), but for the moment let us call them the modernist-emancipatory position and the postmodern-problematizing position (see Table 1.1).

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theoretical base</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Micro and Macro Relations

Whichever of these two positions we take, however, it is clear that rather than basing critical applied linguistics on a notion of teachable critical thinking skills, or critical distance from social and political relations, critical applied linguistics has to have ways of relating aspects of applied linguistics to broader social, cultural, and political domains. One of the shortcomings of work in applied linguistics generally has been a tendency to operate with what I elsewhere (Pennycook, 1994a) called decontextualised contexts. It is common to view applied linguistics as concerned with language in context, but the conceptualization of context is frequently one that is limited to an overlocalized and undertheorized view of social relations. One of the key challenges for critical applied linguistics, therefore, is to find ways of mapping micro and macro relations, ways of understanding a relation between concepts of society, ideology, global capitalism, colonialism, education, gender, racism, sexuality, class, and classroom utterances, translations, conversations, genres, second language acquisition, media texts. Whether it is critical applied linguistics as a critique of mainstream applied linguistics, or as a form of critical text analysis, or as an approach to understanding the politics of translation, or as an attempt to understand implications of the global spread of English, a central issue always concerns how the classroom, text, or conversation is related to broader social cultural and political relations.

Critical Social Inquiry

It is not enough, however, merely to draw connections between micro relations of language in context and macro relations of social inquiry. Rather, such connections need to be drawn within a critical approach to
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<th>Problematizing practice</th>
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<td>Politics</td>
<td>Liberalism</td>
<td>Feminism, postcolonialism, queer theory, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical base</td>
<td>Humanism</td>
<td>Critical theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
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**Critical Social Inquiry**

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social relations. That is to say, critical applied linguistics is concerned not merely with relating language contexts to social contexts but rather does so from a point of view that views social relations as problematic. Although a great deal of work in sociolinguistics, for example, has tended to map language onto a rather static view of society (see Williams, 1992), critical sociolinguistics (→ chaps. 2 and 3) is concerned with a critique of ways in which language perpetuates inequitable social relations. From the point of view of studies of language and gender, the issue is not merely to describe how language is used differently along gendered lines but to use such an analysis as part of social critique and transformation. A central element of critical applied linguistics, therefore, is a way of exploring language in social contexts that goes beyond mere correlations between language and society and instead raises more critical questions to do with access, power, disparity, desire, difference, and resistance. It also insists on an historical understanding of how social relations came to be the way they are.

**Critical Theory**

One way of taking up such questions has been through the work known as Critical Theory, a tradition of work linked to the Frankfurt School and such thinkers as Adorno, Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, and currently Jürgen Habermas. A great deal of critical social theory, at least in the Western tradition, has drawn in various ways on this reworking of Marxist theory to include more complex understandings of, for example, ways in which the Marxist concept of ideology relates to psychoanalytic understandings of the subconscious, how aspects of popular culture are related to forms of political control, and how particular forms of positivism and rationalism have come to dominate other possible ways of thinking. At the very least, this body of work reminds us that critical applied linguistics needs at some level to engage with the long legacy of Marxism, neo-Marxism, and its many counterarguments. Critical work in this sense has to engage with questions of inequality, injustice, rights, and wrongs.

Looking more broadly at the implications of this line of thinking, we might say that critical here means taking social inequality and social transformation as central to one's work. Marc Poster (1989) suggests that "critical theory springs from an assumption that we live amid a world of pain, that much can be done to alleviate that pain, and that theory has a crucial role to play in that process" (p. 3). I am reminded here of a moment recounted by Habermas, the prolific heir to this critical tradition, when he went to visit Herbert Marcuse, his predecessor and author of such classic works as *One Dimensional Man*. Just before Marcuse's 80th birthday, the two had had a "long discussion on how we could and should explain the normative base of Critical Theory." Two years later, Habermas visits Marcuse in the intensive care unit of a hospital. The dying Marcuse returns to the previous debate: "Look, I know wherein our most basic value judgments are rooted—in compassion, in our sense for the suffering of others" (Marcuse as cited in Habermas, 1985, p. 77). This moment is worth recalling. I think, for amid all the discussions of different critical approaches and amid the insistence that this sort of critical work has to be based on particular political beliefs, it is worth reminding ourselves that it is perhaps compassion, but a compassion grounded in a sharp critique of inequality, that grounds our work. Taking up Poster's (1989) terms, critical applied linguistics is an approach to language-related questions that springs from an assumption that we live amid a world of pain and that applied linguistics may have an important role in either the production or the alleviation of some of that pain. But, it is also a view that insists not merely on the alleviation of pain but also the possibility of change.

**Problematicizing Givens**

While the sense of critical thinking I discussed earlier—a set of thinking skills—attempts almost by definition to remain isolated from political questions, from issues of power, disparity, difference, or desire, the sense of critical that I want to make central to critical applied linguistics is one that takes these as the *sine qua non* of our work. Critical applied linguistics is not about developing a set of skills that will make the doing of applied linguistics more rigorous or more objective but is about making applied linguistics more politically accountable. Nevertheless, as I suggested earlier, there are quite divergent strands within critical thought. As Dean (1994) suggests, the version of critical in Critical Theory is a form of critical modernism, a version of critical theory that tends to critique "modernist narratives in terms of the one-sided, pathological, advance of technocratic or instrumental reason they celebrate" only to offer "an alternative, higher version of rationality" in their place (Dean, 1994, p. 3). As I argue in later chapters, a great deal of the work currently being done in critical domains related to critical applied linguistics often falls into this category of emancipatory modernism, developing a critique of social and political formations but offering only a version of an alternative truth in its place. This version of critical modernism, with its emphasis on emancipation and rationality, has a number of limitations.

In place of Critical Theory, Dean (1994) goes on to propose what he calls a problematizing practice. This, he suggests, is a critical practice because "it is unwilling to accept the taken-for-granted components of our reality and the 'official' accounts of how they came to be the way they are" (p. 4). Thus, a crucial component of critical work is always turning a skeptical eye toward assumptions, ideas that have become "naturalized," notions that are no longer questioned. Dean (1994) describes such practice
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as "the restive problematization of the given" (p. 4). Drawing on work in areas such as feminism, antiracism, postcolonialism, postmodernism, or queer theory, this approach to the critical seeks not so much the stable ground of an alternative truth but rather the constant questioning of all categories. From this point of view, critical applied linguistics is not only about relating micro relations of applied linguistics to macro relations of social and political power; neither is it only concerned with relating such questions to a prior critical analysis of inequality; rather, it is also concerned with questioning what is meant by and what is maintained by many of the everyday categories of applied linguistics: language, learning, communication, difference, context, text, culture, meaning, translation, writing, literacy, assessment, and so on.

Self-reflexivity

Such a problematizing stance leads to another significant element that needs to be made part of any critical applied linguistics. If critical applied linguistics needs to retain a constant skepticism, a constant questioning of the givens of applied linguistics, this problematizing stance must also be turned on itself. As Spivak (1993) suggests, the notion of critical also needs to imply an awareness "of the limits of knowing" (p. 25). As I suggested earlier, one of the problems with emancipatory-modernism is its assuredness about its own rightness, its belief that an adequate critique of social and political inequality can lead to an alternative reality. A postmodern-problematizing stance, however, needs to maintain a greater sense of humility and difference and to raise questions about the limits of its own knowing. This self-reflexive position also suggests that critical applied linguistics is not concerned with producing itself as a new orthodoxy, with prescribing new models and procedures for doing applied linguistics. Rather, it is concerned with raising a host of new and difficult questions about knowledge, politics, and ethics.

Preferred Futures

Critical applied linguistics also needs to operate with some sort of vision of what is preferable. Critical work has often been criticized for doing little more than criticize things, for offering nothing but a bleak and pessimistic vision of social relations. Various forms of critical work, particularly in areas such as education, have sought to avoid this trap by articulating 'utopian' visions of alternative realities, by stressing the 'transformative' mission of critical work or the potential for change through awareness and emancipation. While such goals at least present a direction for reconstruction, they also echo with a rather troubling modernist grandiosity. Perhaps the notion of preferred futures offers us a slightly more restrained and plural view of where we might want to head.

Such preferred futures, however, need to be grounded in ethical arguments for why alternative possibilities may be better. For this reason, ethics has to become a key building block for critical applied linguistics, although, as with my later discussion of politics (chap. 2), this is not a normative or moralistic code of practice but a recognition that these are ethical concerns with which we need to deal. And, as with my earlier discussion of Critical Theory, this notion suggests that it is not only a language of critique that I am trying to develop here but rather an ethics of compassion and a model of hope and possibility.

Critical Applied Linguistics as Heterosis

Using Street's (1984) distinction between autonomous and ideological approaches to literacy (chap. 4), Rampton (1995b) argues that applied linguistics in Britain has started to shift from its "autonomous" view of research with connections to pedagogy, linguistics, and psychology to a more "ideological" model with connections to media studies and a more grounded understanding of social processes. Critical applied linguistics opens the door for such change even wider by drawing on yet another range of "outside" work (critical theory, feminism, postcolonialism, poststructuralism, antiracist pedagogy) that both challenges and greatly enriches the possibilities for doing applied linguistics. This means not only that critical applied linguistics implies a hybrid model of research and praxis but also that it generates something that is far more dynamic. As with the notion of synergy as the productive melding of two elements to create something larger than the sum of its parts, I am using here the notion of heterosis as the creative expansion of possibilities resulting from hybridity. Put more simply, my point here is that critical applied linguistics is far more than the addition of a critical dimension to applied linguistics; rather, it opens up a whole new array of questions and concerns, issues such as identity, sexuality, or the reproduction of Otherness that have hitherto not been considered as concerns related to applied linguistics.

The notion of heterosis helps deal with a final concern, the question of normativity. It might be objected that what I am sketching out here is a problematically normative approach: By defining what I mean by critical and critical applied linguistics, I am setting up an approach that already has a predefined political stance and mode of analysis. There is a certain tension here: an overdefined version of critical applied linguistics that demands adherence to a particular form of politics is a project that is already limited; but I also cannot envision a version of critical applied linguistics that can accept any and every political viewpoint. The way forward here is this: On
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1 I am aware of the problems discussed by Young (1995) in this use of colonial concepts such as hybridity within a postcolonial framework. Some of these concerns are discussed later. Nevertheless, I find concepts such as hybridity, syncretic appropriation, and heterosis useful for understanding the development and potential of alternative spaces.
the one hand, I am arguing that critical applied linguistics must necessarily take up certain positions and stances; its view of language cannot be an autonomous one that backs away from connecting language to broader political concerns, and furthermore, its focus on such politics must be accountable to broader political and ethical visions that put inequality, oppression, and compassion to the fore. On the other hand, I do not want to suggest a narrow and normative vision of how those politics work. The notion of heterosis, however, opens up the possibility that critical applied linguistics is indeed not about the mapping of a fixed politics onto a static body of knowledge but rather about creating something new. As Foucault (1980b) put it, "the problem is not so much one of defining a political ‘position’ (which is to choose from a pre-existing set of possibilities) but to imagine and to bring into being new schemas of politicisation" (p. 190). That is the political challenge of critical applied linguistics. These critical applied linguistic concerns are summarized in Table 1.2.

**DOMAINS OF CRITICAL APPLIED LINGUISTICS**

Critical applied linguistics, then, is more than just a critical dimension added on to applied linguistics: It involves a constant skepticism, a constant questioning of the normative assumptions of applied linguistics. It demands a restive problematization of the givens of applied linguistics and presents a way of doing applied linguistics that seeks to connect it to questions of gender, class, sexuality, race, ethnicity, culture, identity, politics, ideology, and discourse. And crucially, it becomes a dynamic opening up of new questions that emerge from this conjunction. In this second part of the chapter, I give a rough overview of domains that I see as comprising critical applied linguistics. This list is neither exhaustive nor definitive of the areas I cover in this book, but taken in conjunction with the issues raised earlier, it presents us with two principal ways of conceiving of critical applied linguistics—various underlying principals and various domains of coverage. The areas I summarize briefly in this section are critical discourse analysis and critical literacy, critical approaches to translation, language teaching, language testing, language planning and language rights, and language, literacy, and workplace settings.

**Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Literacy**

It might be tempting to consider critical applied linguistics as an amalgam of other critical domains. From this point of view, critical applied linguistics would either be made up of, or constitute the intersection of, areas such as critical linguistics, critical discourse analysis (CDA), critical language awareness, critical pedagogy, critical sociolinguistics, and critical literacy. Such a formulation is unsatisfactory for several reasons. First, the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical applied linguistic (CALs) concerns</th>
<th>Centered on the following:</th>
<th>In opposition to mainstream applied linguistics (ALs):</th>
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<tr>
<td>A strong view of applied linguistics (ALs)</td>
<td>Breadth of coverage,</td>
<td>The weak version of ALs as linguistic theory applied to language teaching</td>
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<td></td>
<td>interdisciplinarity, and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>autonomy</td>
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<td>A view of praxis</td>
<td>Thought, desire, and</td>
<td>A hierarchy of theory and its application to different contexts</td>
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<td>action integrated as praxis</td>
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<td>Being critical</td>
<td>Critical work engaged with social change</td>
<td>Critical thinking as an apolitical set of skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro and macro relations</td>
<td>Relating aspects of applied linguistics to broader social, cultural, and political domains</td>
<td>Viewing classrooms, texts, and so on as isolated and autonomous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical social inquiry</td>
<td>Questions of access, power, disparity, desire, difference, and resistance</td>
<td>Mapping language onto a static model of society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical theory</td>
<td>Questions of inequality, injustice, rights, wrongs, and compassion</td>
<td>A view of social relations as largely equitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematizing givens</td>
<td>The restive problematization of the given</td>
<td>Acceptance of the canon of received norms and ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reflexivity</td>
<td>Constant questioning of itself</td>
<td>Lack of awareness of its own assumptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preferred futures</td>
<td>Grounded ethical arguments for alternatives</td>
<td>View that applied linguistics should not aim for change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heterosis</td>
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coverage of such domains is rather different from that of critical applied linguistics; critical pedagogy, for example, is used broadly across many areas of education. Second, there are many other domains—feminism, queer theory, postcolonialism, to name but a few—that do not operate under an explicit critical label but that clearly have a great deal of importance for the area. Third, it seems more constructive to view critical applied linguistics not merely as an amalgam of different parts, a piece of bricolage, or a metacategory of critical work but rather in more dynamic and productive terms. And finally, crucially, part of developing critical applied linguistics is developing a critical stance toward other areas of work, including other critical domains. Critical applied linguistics may borrow and use work from these other areas, but it should certainly only do so critically.

Nevertheless, there are clearly major affinities and overlaps between critical applied linguistics and other named critical areas such as critical literacy and critical discourse analysis. Critical literacy has less often been considered in applied linguistics, largely because of its greater orientation toward first language literacy, which has often not fallen within the perceived scope of applied linguistics. It is possible, however, to see critical literacy in terms of the pedagogical application of critical discourse analysis and therefore a quite central concern for critical applied linguistics. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and critical literacy are sometimes also combined under the rubric of critical language awareness (CLA) since the aim of this work is to empower learners by providing them with a critical analytical framework to help them reflect on their own language experiences and practices and on the language practices of others in the institutions of which they are a part and in the wider society within which they live. (Clark & Ivanić, 1997, p. 217)

Critical approaches to literacy, according to Luke (1997a):

are characterised by a commitment to reshape literacy education in the interests of marginalised groups of learners, who on the basis of gender, cultural and socioeconomic background have been excluded from access to the discourses and texts of dominant economies and cultures. (p. 143)

Luke and Freebody (1997) explain that although critical literacy does not stand for a unitary approach, it marks out a coalition of educational interests committed to engaging with the possibilities that the technologies of writing and other modes of inscription offer for social change, cultural diversity, economic equity, and political enfranchisement. (p. 1)

Thus, as Luke (1997a) goes on to argue, although critical approaches to literacy share an orientation toward understanding literacy (or literacies) as social practices related to broader social and political concerns, there are a number of different orientations to critical literacy, including Freirean-based critical pedagogy, feminist and poststructuralist approaches, and text analytic approaches. Critical discourse analysis would generally fall into this last category, aimed as it is at providing tools for the critical analysis of texts in context.

Summarizing work in CDA, Kress (1990) explains that unlike discourse analysis or text linguistics with their descriptive goals, CDA has "the larger political aim of putting the forms of texts, the processes of production of texts, and the process of reading, together with the structures of power that have given rise to them, into crisis." CDA aims to show how "linguistic-discursive practices" are linked to "the wider socio-political structures of power and domination" (p. 85). van Dijk (1993) explains CDA as a focus on "the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance" (p. 249). And Fairclough (1995) explains that critical discourse analysis aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power. (p. 132)

Clearly, CDA will be an important tool for critical applied linguistics.

Critical Approaches to Translation

Other domains of textual analysis related to critical applied linguistics include critical approaches to translation. Such an approach would not be concerned so much with issues such as mistranslation in itself but rather the politics of translation, the ways in which translating and interpreting are related to concerns such as class, gender, difference, ideology and social context. Hatim and Mason's (1997) analysis of a parallel Spanish and English text published in the UNESCO Courier is a good example of how a form of critical discourse analysis across two texts reveals the ideological underpinnings of the translation. In this case, as they argue, the English translation of a Spanish text on ancient indigenous Mexican cultures reveals in many of its aspects a very different orientation toward other cultures, literacy, and colonialism. When Antiguos mexicanos (ancient Mexicans) becomes Indians, el hombre indígena (indigenous man) becomes pre-Columbian civilization, and sabios (wise men) becomes divineros, it is evident that a particular discourse or ideology is at play. Hatim and Mason's analysis of lexical, cohesive, and other textual features leads them to conclude that the English translation here relays "an ideology which downplays the agency—and the value—of indigenous Mexicans and dissociates ... history from destiny" (pp. 158-159).
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Luke and Freebody (1997) explain that although critical literacy does not stand for a unitary approach, it marks out a coalition of educational interests committed to engaging with the possibilities that the technologies of writing and other modes of inscription offer for social change, cultural diversity, economic equity, and political enfranchisement. (p. 1)

Thus, as Luke (1997a) goes on to argue, although critical approaches to literacy share an orientation toward understanding literacy (or literacies) as social practices related to broader social and political concerns, there are a number of different orientations to critical literacy, including Freirean-based critical pedagogy, feminist and poststructuralist approaches, and text analytic approaches. Critical discourse analysis would generally fall into this last category, aimed as it is at providing tools for the critical analysis of texts in context.

Summarizing work in CDA, Kress (1990) explains that unlike discourse analysis or text linguistics with their descriptive goals, CDA has "the larger political aim of putting the forms of texts, the processes of production of texts, and the process of reading, together with the structures of power that have given rise to them, into crisis." CDA aims to show how "linguistic-discursive practices" are linked to "the wider socio-political structures of power and domination" (p. 85). van Dijk (1993) explains CDA as a focus on "the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance" (p. 249). And Fairclough (1995) explains that critical discourse analysis aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power. (p. 132)

Clearly, CDA will be an important tool for critical applied linguistics.

Critical Approaches to Translation

Other domains of textual analysis related to critical applied linguistics include critical approaches to translation. Such an approach would not be concerned so much with issues such as mistranslation in itself but rather the politics of translation, the ways in which translating and interpreting are related to concerns such as class, gender, difference, ideology and social context. Hatim and Mason's (1997) analysis of a parallel Spanish and English text published in the UNESCO Courier is a good example of how a form of critical discourse analysis across two texts reveals the ideological underpinnings of the translation. In this case, as they argue, the English translation of a Spanish text on ancient indigenous Mexican cultures reveals in many of its aspects a very different orientation toward other cultures, literacy, and colonialism. When antiguos mexicanos (ancient Mexicans) becomes Indians, el hombre indígena (indigenous man) becomes pre-Columbian civilisation, and sabios (wise men) becomes divineros, it is evident that a particular discourse or ideology is at play. Hatim and Mason's analysis of lexical, cohesive, and other textual features leads them to conclude that the English translation here relays "an ideology which downplays the agency—and the value—of indigenous Mexicans and dissociates ... history from destiny" (pp. 158-159).
Looking more broadly at translation as a political activity, Venuti (1997) argues that the tendencies of translations to domesticate foreign cultures, the insistence on the possibility of value-free translation, the challenges to the notion of authorship posed by translation, the dominance of translation from English into other languages rather than in the other direction, and the need to unsettle local cultural hegemonies through the challenges of translation all point to the need for an approach to translation based on an *ethics of difference*. Such a stance, on the one hand, "urges that translations be written, read, and evaluated with greater respect for linguistic and cultural differences" (p. 6); on the other hand, it aims at "minimizing the standard dialect and dominant cultural forms in American English" in part as "an opposition to the global hegemony of English" (p. 10). Such a stance clearly matches closely the forms of critical applied linguistics I have been outlining; it is based on an antithegemonic stance, locates itself within a view of language politics, is based on an ethics of difference, and tries in its practice to move towards change.

Work on translation and colonial and postcolonial studies is also of interest for critical applied linguistics. Niranjana (1991), for example, argues that:

Translation as a practice shapes, and takes shape within, the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism .... In forming a certain kind of subject, in presenting particular versions of the colonized, translation brings into being overarching concepts of reality, knowledge, representation. These concepts, and what they allow us to assume, completely occlude the violence which accompanies the construction of the colonial subject. (pp. 124–125)

Postcolonial translation studies, then, are able to shed light on the processes by which translation, and the massive body of Orientalist, Aboriginalist, and other studies and translations of the Other, were so clearly complicit with the larger colonial project (Spivak, 1993). Once again, such work clearly has an important role to play in the development of critical applied linguistics.

**Language Teaching**

As I suggested earlier, language teaching has been a domain that has often been considered the principal concern of applied linguistics. Although my view of applied linguistics is a much broader one, language teaching nevertheless retains a significant role. In a recent edition of *TESOL Quarterly* that I edited, many of the different critical concerns in relation to language teaching were well represented. Awad Ibrahim (1999), for example, discusses how students from non-English-speaking African backgrounds studying in French schools in Canada "become Black" as they enter into the racialized world of North America. This process of becoming Black, as he demonstrates, is intimately tied up with the forms of English and popular culture with which these students start to identify. Class is the principal concern addressed by Angel Lin (1999) in her argument that particular ways of teaching English in Hong Kong (or elsewhere) may lead either to the reproduction or the transformation of class-based inequality. Ibrahim similarly asks what the implications are of his students identifying with marginality.

Gender runs as a theme through a number of other articles, including Rivera's (1999) and Frye's (1999) accounts of participatory research and curricula in immigrant women's education in the United States. Certainly, critical applied linguistics in the domain of language education would include many feminist approaches to language teaching (e.g., Sanguinetti, 1992/3; Schenke, 1991, 1996), or feminist research agendas (see Sunderland, 1994). Meanwhile, questions of sexuality and sexual identity are the focus of Cynthia Nelson's (1999) analysis of a period of discussion in an English as a second language (ESL) classroom about the implications of two women walking arm-in-arm down the street. Nelson shows the significance of Queer Theory for thinking about sexuality and identity in language classrooms. Other authors take different configurations of power and inequality as their focus. For Janina Brutt-Griffler and Keiko Samimy (1999), for example, it is the inequalities in the relation between the constructs of the Native and Nonnative speaker that need to be addressed, a concern that has become a major topic of discussion in recent years (e.g., Liu, 1999).

Other work that falls within the ambit of critical applied linguistics would be education or research that follows the work of Paulo Freire (and see also critical literacy). Auerbach and Wallerstein's (1987) or Graman's (1988) application of Freirean principles of problem posing to ESL classes are typical examples of this sort of work. Basing her work in a similar tradition, Walsh (1991) talks of *critical bilingualism* as

the ability to not just speak two languages, but to be conscious of the sociocultural, political, and ideological contexts in which the languages (and therefore the speakers) are positioned and function, and the multiple meanings that are fostered in each. (p. 127)

Brian Morgan's (1997, 1998) work in a community center in Toronto also shows how critical practice in ESL can emerge from community concerns. As he suggests, "A community-based, critical ESL pedagogy doesn't mean neglecting language. It means organizing language around experiences that are immediate to students" (1998, p. 19).

Other critical approaches to questions around language education include Bonny Norton's (1995, 1997) work on *critical discourse research* and on particular ways in which student identities are linked to the processes of language learning. There is an increasing amount of much needed criti-
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(case analysis of the interests and ideologies underlying the construction and interpretation of textbooks (see Dendrinos, 1992). There is critical analysis of curriculum design and needs analysis, including a proposal for doing "critical needs analysis" that "assumes that institutions are hierarchical and that those at the bottom are often entitled to more power than they have. It seeks areas where greater equality might be achieved" (Benesch, 1996, p. 736). Canagarajah’s (1993, 1999b) use of critical ethnography to explore how students and teachers in the periphery resist and appropriate English and English teaching methods sheds important light on classroom processes in reaction to dominant linguistic and pedagogical forms: "It is important to understand the extent to which classroom resistance may play a significant role in larger transformations in the social sphere" (1999b, p. 196). Diverse as these studies are, they all show an interweaving of the themes discussed in the previous section with a range of concerns to do with language teaching.

Language Testing

As a fairly closely defined and practically autonomous domain of applied linguistics and one that has generally adhered to positivist approaches to research and knowledge, language testing has long been fairly resistant to critical challenges. In a plenary address to the American Association of Applied Linguistics, however, Elana Shohamy (1997) discussed what she saw as crucial features of critical language testing (CLT). CLT starts with the assumption that "the act of language testing is not neutral. Rather, it is a product and agent of cultural, social, political, educational and ideological agendas that shape the lives of individual participants, teachers, and learners" (p. 2). She goes on to suggest several key features of CLT: Test takers are seen as "political subjects in a political context"; tests are "deeply embedded in educational and political arenas where different ideological social forms are in struggle," making it impossible to consider that a test is just a test; CLT asks whose agendas are implemented through tests; it demands that language testers ask what vision of society tests presuppose; it asks whose knowledge the test is based on and whether this knowledge is negotiable; it considers the meaning of test scores and the extent to which this is open to interpretation; and it challenges psychometric traditions of language testing (and supports "interpretive" approaches). According to Shohamy, such a view of language testing signifies an important paradigm shift and puts many new criteria for understanding validity into play: consequential, systemic, interpretive, and ethical, all of which have more to do with the effects of tests than with criteria of internal validity.

Shohamy’s (1997) proposal for critical language testing clearly matches many of the principles that define other areas of critical applied linguistics: Her argument is that language testing is always political, that we need to become increasingly aware of the effects (consequential validity) of tests, and that the way forward is to develop more "democratic" tests in which test takers and other local bodies are given greater involvement. Thus, there is a demand to see a domain of applied linguistics, from classrooms to texts and tests, as inherently bound up with larger social, cultural, and political contexts. This ties in with Peirce and Stein’s (1995) concerns about different possible interpretations of texts in tests and the question of whose reading is acknowledged: "If test makers are drawn from a particular class, a particular race, and a particular gender, then test takers who share these characteristics will be at an advantage relative to other test takers" (p. 62). Importantly, too, Shohamy critiques not only what has gone before but also the politics of knowledge that informs previous approaches. Thus, there is a critique of positivism and psychometric testing with their emphases on blind measurement rather than situated forms of knowledge. There is a demand to establish what a preferred vision of society is and a call to make one’s applied linguistic practice accountable to such a vision. And there are suggestions for different practices that might start to change how testing is done. All these are clearly aspects of CLT that bring it comfortably within the ambit of critical applied linguistics.

Language Planning and Language Rights

One domain of applied linguistics that might be assumed to fall easily into the scope of critical applied linguistics is work such as language policy and planning since it would appear from the outset to operate with a political view of language. Yet, as I suggested in the previous section, it is not enough merely to draw connections between language and the social world; a critical approach to social relations is also required. There is nothing inherently critical about language policy; indeed, part of the problem, as Tolledson (1991) observes, has been precisely the way in which language policy has been uncritically developed and implemented. According to Luke, McHoul, and Mey (1990), while maintaining a "veil of scientific objectivity," language planning has "tended to avoid directly addressing larger social and political matters within which language change, use and development, and indeed language planning itself are embedded" (p. 27).

More generally, sociolinguistics has been severely critiqued by critical social theorists for its use of a static, liberal view of society and thus its inability to deal with questions of social justice (see Williams, 1992). As Mey (1985) suggests, by avoiding questions of social inequality in class terms and instead correlating language variation with superficial measures of social stratification, traditional sociolinguistics fails to "establish a connection between people’s place in the societal hierarchy, and the linguistic and other kinds of oppression that they are subjected to at differ-
Cal analysis of the interests and ideologies underlying the construction and interpretation of textbooks (see Dendris, 1992). There is critical analysis of curriculum design and needs analysis, including a proposal for doing "critical needs analysis" that "assumes that institutions are hierarchical and that those at the bottom are often entitled to more power than they have. It seeks areas where greater equality might be achieved" (Bensch, 1996, p. 736). Canagarajah's (1993, 1999b) use of critical ethnography to explore how students and teachers in the periphery resist and appropriate English and English teaching methods sheds important light on classroom processes in reaction to dominant linguistic and pedagogical forms: "It is important to understand the extent to which classroom resistance may play a significant role in larger transformations in the social sphere" (1999b, p. 196). Diverse as these studies are, they all show an interweaving of the themes discussed in the previous section with a range of concerns to do with language teaching.

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interaction between people in medical, legal, or other workplace settings. Critical applied linguistic approaches to these contexts of communication focus far more on questions of access, power, disparity, and difference. Such approaches also attempt to move toward active engagement with and change in these contexts. Examples of this sort of work would include Wodak’s (1996) study of hospital encounters:

In doctor-patient interaction in the outpatient clinics we have investigated, discursive disorders establish certain routines and justify the actions of the powerful. Doctors exercise power over their patients, they ask the questions, they interrupt and introduce new topics, they control the conversation. (p. 170)

An important aspect of this work has been to draw connections between workplace uses of language and relations of power at the institutional and broader social levels. Recently, the rapid changes in workplace practices and the changing needs of new forms of literacy have attracted considerable attention. Gee, Hull, and Lankshear (1996), for example, look at the effects of the new work order under new capitalism on language and literacy practices in the workplace. Poynton (1993b), meanwhile, draws attention to the danger that “workplace restructuring” may “exacerbate the marginalised status of many women” not only because of the challenge of changing workplace skills and technologies but also because of the failure to acknowledge in language the character and value of women’s skills. Women’s interactive oral skills as well as their literacy skills have often failed to be acknowledged in workplaces. Poynton goes on to discuss a project designed to change these workplace naming practices.

One thing that emerges here is the way in which critical concerns are intertwined. Crawford’s (1999) study of communication between patients, nurses, and doctors in Cape Town, South Africa, health services, for example, highlights the complexities of relations between Xhosa-speaking patients, nurses operating as interpreters, and predominantly White doctors. As Crawford explains:

The power relations that operate to the detriment of patients in our health-care system are complex and are unlikely to be drastically modified by supplying a single “missing commodity” like paid interpretation, without the institution’s actual commitment to a general strategy of changing to a more culturally sensitive patient-centered model of care (pp. 41–42)

Not only are the framing issues discussed in the previous section ever present here, but also both the domains described in this section—critical approaches to discourse, translation, bilingualism, language policy, pedagogy—and the underlying social relations of race, class, gender, and other constructions of difference are all at work together. The interrelation be-
ent levels" (p. 342). Cameron (1995) has also pointed to the need to develop a view of language and society that goes beyond a view that language reflects society, suggesting that:

In critical theory language is treated as part of the explanation. Whereas sociolinguistics would say that the way I use language reflects or marks my identity as a particular kind of social subject ... the critical account suggests language is one of the things that constitute my identity as a particular kind of subject. Sociolinguistics says that how you act depends on who you are; critical theory says that who you are (and are taken to be) depends on how you act. (pp. 15-16)

Taking up Mey's (1985) call for a "critical sociolinguistics" (p. 342), therefore, critical applied linguistics would need to incorporate views of language, society, and power that are capable of dealing with questions of access, power, disparity, and difference and that see language as playing a crucial role in the construction of difference.

Two significant domains of sociolinguistics that have developed broad critical analyses are first work on language and gender (Cameron, 1995; Coates, 1998; chap. 6) and second, work on language rights. Questions about the dominance of certain languages over others have been raised most tellingly by Phillipson (1992) through his notion of (English) linguistic imperialism and his argument that English has been spread for economic and political purposes, and poses a major threat to other languages. The other side of this failure has then been taken up through arguments for language rights (e.g., Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996; Tollefson, 1991). As Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) argues, "we are still living with linguistic wrongs" that are a product of the belief in the normality of monolingualism and the dangers of multilingualism to the security of the nation state. Both, she suggests, are dangerous myths. "Unless we work fast," she argues, "excising the cancer of monolingual reductionism may come too late, when the patient, the linguistic (and cultural) diversity in the world, is already beyond saving" (p. 12). What is proposed, then, is that the "right to identify with, to maintain and to fully develop one's mother tongue(s) should be acknowledged as "a self-evident, fundamental individual linguistic human right" (p. 22). Critical applied linguistics, then, would include work in the areas of sociolinguistics and language planning and policy that takes on an overt political agenda to establish or to argue for policy along lines that focus centrally on issues of social justice.

Language, Literacy, and Workplace Settings

Another domain of work in applied linguistics that has been taken up with a critical focus has been the work on uses of language and literacy in various workplace and professional settings. Moving beyond work that attempts only to describe the patterns of communication or genres of interaction between people in medical, legal, or other workplace settings, critical applied linguistic approaches to these contexts of communication focus far more on questions of access, power, disparity, and difference. Such approaches also attempt to move toward active engagement with and change in these contexts. Examples of this sort of work would include Wodak's (1996) study of hospital encounters:

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between the concerns (discussed earlier) and the domains (discussed here) of critical applied linguistics are outlined in Fig. 1.1.

CONCLUSION: WHY CRITICAL APPLIED LINGUISTICS?

Outline

The two main strands of this opening chapter—different aspects and domains of critical applied linguistics—have helped give a broad overview of what I consider this work to cover and to entail. This list, however, is neither complete nor discrete: It is by no means exhaustive, and the categories I have established overlap with each other in a number of ways. I do not intend in the rest of the book merely to continue to summarize areas of critical applied linguistic work. Rather, the intention will be to discuss, critically, major themes than run throughout this work. A number of general concerns already emerge from the aforementioned aspects and domains: How do we understand relations between language and power? How can people resist power in and through language? How do we understand questions of difference in relation to language, education, or literacy? How does ideology operate in relation to discourse? The following chapters, therefore, deal with the politics of knowledge, the politics of language, the politics of texts, the politics of pedagogy, and the politics of difference (see Table 1.3).

Nevertheless, as I pause and reflect on the arguments, boxes, charts, structures, domains, theories, and terms that are starting to proliferate here, I also have my doubts. Is this a task with any relevance outside the academic discipline of applied linguistics? Is this a pointless exercise in positioning, defining, and explaining? So finally: Why write an introduction to critical applied linguistics? Why am I doing this? (Why indeed? I ask myself, when my eyelids droop and my head hurts, and I struggle to get my head around some of the difficult material here.) It might be suggested that my goal here is to define and claim this domain of work for myself. But while I have to acknowledge that writing this book will likely attach critical applied linguistics to my name ("Pennycook, 2001"), my goal here is not to develop a model for critical applied linguistics. Rather, my aim is to explore its complexities. The motivation comes out of 10 years of trying to relate critical work in many domains to my own fields of practice in applied linguistics. It comes out of trying to teach a course on critical applied linguistics. It comes out of the frustration of trying to figure out what is going on in different discussions or articles on critical discourse analysis, feminist pedagogy, or multiliteracies. And it also comes out of a conviction that this stuff matters, that the many discussions I have had about this work around the world suggest some significant shared struggles.

Surely, an approach to issues in language education, communication in the workplace, translation, and literacy that focuses on questions of power, difference, access, and domination ought to be central to our concerns. Two last meanings of critical that can also be given some space here are the notion of critical as important or crucial: a critical moment, a critical time in one’s life, a critical illness; and critical as used in maths and physics to suggest the point that marks the change from one state to another, as in critical angle or critical mass. To the extent that I believe that this critical version of applied linguistics that I am presenting here is crucial, important, and deals with some of the central issues in language use and to the extent that it may also signal a point at which applied linguistics may finally move into a new state of being, these senses of critical also need to be included in an understanding of critical applied linguistics.

Discussing the broader social and political issues to do with literacy and language education, James Gee (1994) offers teachers a choice: either
between the concerns (discussed earlier) and the domains (discussed here) of critical applied linguistics are outlined in Fig. 1.1.

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FIG. 1.1. Concerns and domains of critical applied linguistics.

of critical applied linguistic work. Rather, the intention will be to discuss, critically, major themes than run throughout this work. A number of general concerns already emerge from the aforementioned aspects and domains: How do we understand relations between language and power? How can people resist power in and through language? How do we understand questions of difference in relation to language, education, or literacy? How does ideology operate in relation to discourse? The following chapters, therefore, deal with the politics of knowledge, the politics of language, the politics of texts, the politics of pedagogy, and the politics of difference (see Table 1.3).

Nevertheless, as I pause and reflect on the arguments, boxes, charts, structures, domains, theories, and terms that are starting to proliferate here, I also have my doubts. Is this a task with any relevance outside the academic discipline of applied linguistics? Is this a pointless exercise in positioning, defining, and explaining? So finally: Why write an introduction to critical applied linguistics? Why am I doing this? (Why indeed? I ask myself, when my eyelids droop and my head hurts, and I struggle to get my head around some of the difficult material here.) It might be suggested that my goal here is to define and claim this domain of work for myself. But while I have to acknowledge that writing this book will likely attach critical applied linguistics to my name ("Pennycook, 2001"), my goal here is not to develop a model for critical applied linguistics. Rather, my aim is to explore its complexities. The motivation comes out of 10 years of trying to relate critical work in many domains to my own fields of practice in applied linguistics. It comes out of trying to teach a course on critical applied linguistics. It comes out of the frustration of trying to figure out what is going on in different discussions or articles on critical discourse analysis, feminist pedagogy, or multiliteracies. And it also comes out of a conviction that this stuff matters, that the many discussions I have had about this work around the world suggest some significant shared struggles.

Surely, an approach to issues in language education, communication in the workplace, translation, and literacy that focuses on questions of power, difference, access, and domination ought to be central to our concerns. Two last meanings of critical that can also be given some space here are the notion of critical as important or crucial; a critical moment, a critical time in one’s life, a critical illness; and critical as used in maths and physics to suggest the point that marks the change from one state to another, as in critical angle or critical mass. To the extent that I believe that this critical version of applied linguistics that I am presenting here is crucial, important, and deals with some of the central issues in language use and to the extent that it may also signal a point at which applied linguistics may finally move into a new state of being, these senses of critical also need to be included in an understanding of critical applied linguistics.

Discussing the broader social and political issues to do with literacy and language education, James Gee (1994) offers teachers a choice: either
to "cooperate in their own marginalization by seeing themselves as 'lan-
guage teachers' with no connection to such social and political issues" or
to accept that they are involved in a crucial domain of political work:
"Like it or not, English teachers stand at the very heart of the most crucial
educational, cultural, and political issues of our time" (p. 190). Given the
significance of the even broader domain I am interested in here—lan-
guage, literacy, communication, translation, bilingualism, and peda-
gogy—and the particular concerns to do with the global role of languages,
multilingualism, power, and possibilities for the creation of difference—it
would not seem too far-fetched to suggest that critical applied linguistics
may at least give us ways of dealing with some of the most crucial educa-
tional, cultural, and political issues of our time.

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