Review for Final Exam

Edward Kamau Brathwaite (1930- )

“Nation Language” (lecture at Harvard in 1984)

nation language
native language
metropolitan language
cultural imperialism

‘cultural disaster’ area

iambic pentameter
calypso
oral tradition

“But basically, the pentameter remained, and it carries with it a certain kind of experience, which is not the experience of a hurricane. The hurricane does not roar in pentameters. And that’s the problem: how do you get a rhythm which approximates the natural experience, the environmental experience?” (313).

“I think, however, that language does really have a role to play here, certainly in the Caribbean. But it is an English which is not the standard, imported, educated English, but that of the submerged, surrealist experience and sensibility, which has always been there and which is now increasingly coming to the surface and influencing the perception of contemporary Caribbean people. It is what I call, as I say, nation language. I use the term in contrast to dialect” (313).

Braj B. Kachru (1932- )

from The Alchemy of English (1986)

colonialism
imperialism
vehicular load (Quirk)

comprador class
elite language
code-mixing
attitudinal neutrality

“There are some who consider it a “grotesque perversion of the truth” that English “was imposed on a subject people by a set of foreign rulers for the sake of carrying on their alien government” (Chaudhuri, 1976: 89). The word “imposed” is tricky here, for what was attitudinally prestigious and pragmatically desirable and rewarding did not need imposition: Power seems to have a way of creating its linguistic base” (321).

“The alchemy of English (present and future), then does not only provide social status, it also gives access to attitudinally and materially desirable domains of power and knowledge. It provides a powerful linguistic tool for manipulation and control. In addition, this alchemy of English has left a deep mark on the languages and literature of the non-Western world” (325).

Chinua Achebe (1930- )

“The African Writer and the English Language” (1975)

African literature
national literature
world language (“which history has forced down our throat” [430])

“A national literature is one that takes the whole nation for its province and has a realized or potential audience throughout its territory. In other words a literature that is written in the national language” (428).

“What are the factors which have conspired to place English in the position of national language in many parts of Africa? Quite simply the reason is that these nations were created in the first place by the intervention of the British which, I hasten to add, is not saying that the peoples comprising these nations were invented by the British” (429).

“Of course there are areas of Africa where colonialism divided up a single ethnic group among two or even three powers. But on the whole it did bring together many peoples that had hitherto gone their several ways. And it gave them a language with which to talk to one another. If it failed to give them a song, it at least gave them a tongue, for sighing” (429).

“The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use” (432).

Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1938- )
apartheid
alienation
orature
carrier of culture

three aspects of language as communication:
the language of real life (Marx); production (hand)
speech (voice)
written sign (writing implement)

three aspects of language as culture:
“culture is a product of history which it in turn reflects” (438)
“an image-forming agent in the mind of the child” (438)
culture transmits images through a specific language

“Language was not a mere string of words. It had a suggestive power well beyond the immediate and lexical meaning. Our appreciation of the suggestive magical power of language was reinforced by the games we played with words through riddles, proverbs, transpositions of syllables, or through nonsensical but musically arranged words” (435).

“In Kenya, English became more than a language: it was the language, and all the others had to bow before it in deference” (435).

“English was the official vehicle and the magic formula to colonial elitedom” (436).

“Production is co-operation, is communication, is language, is expression of a relation between human beings and it is specifically human” (437).

“Culture is almost indistinguishable from the language that makes possible its genesis, growth, banking, articulation, and indeed its transmission from one generation to the next” (438).

“It is the final triumph of a system of domination when the dominated start singing its virtues” (441).
James Berlin (1942-1994)
“Composition Studies and Cultural Studies”

composition studies
cultural studies

expressionism
social constructionist rhetoric
social epistemic rhetoric

site of struggle

power elite
privilege

Maenette K. P. Benham and Ronald H. Heck
from Culture and Educational Policy in Hawai’i: The Silencing of Native Voices

ceded lands
homestead lands

colonialism
imperialism

cultural boundaries
peer-group dynamics

Hawaiian language immersion

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)
legitimate language
linguistic competence (Noam Chomsky)
fictio juris (legal fiction)
official language

symbolic domination
symbolic violence

labor market
linguistic market
market in symbolic goods
linguistic capital

habitus
disposition/attitude

sociologically pertinent oppositions vs. linguistically pertinent oppositions

“Saussure’s langue, a code both legislative and communicative which exists and subsists independently of its users (‘speaking subjects’) and its uses (parole), has in fact all the properties commonly attributed to official language” (468).

“In order for one mode of expression among others (a particular language in the case of bilingualism, a particular use of language in the case of a society divided into classes) to impose itself as the only legitimate one, the linguistic market has to be unified and the different dialects (of class, region or ethnic group) have to be measured practically against the legitimate language or usage” (469).
“There is every reason to think that the factors which are most influential in the formation of the habitus are transmitted without passing through language and consciousness, but through suggestions inscribed in the most apparently insignificant aspects of the things, situations and practices of everyday life” (471).

“The social uses of language owe their specifically social value to the fact that they tend to be organized in systems of differences (between prosodic and articulatory or lexical and syntactic variants) which reproduce, in the symbolic order of differential deviations, the system of social differences” (473).

Brian Cox ( )
“Teaching Standard English” (1991)
Received Pronunciation
spoken Standard English
written Standard English

accent/pronunciation
dialect/vocabulary and grammar

Middle English
Caxton

“Standard English itself is usually analysed by linguists as a dialect of English which clearly has social prestige” (480).

“Standard English is also a social dialect: its use is a marker of social group membership, and the relationship between standard and non-standard dialects and social class in Britain is particularly strong” (481).

“To be effective in their teaching of Standard English, schools should teach it in ways which do not denigrate the non-standard dialects spoken by many pupils. . . .The profound implications for pupils' relationships with their families and communities should be recognized” (483).

“Teachers should differentiate clearly between different kinds of correction, and avoid indiscriminate correction. It can only be confusing to a pupil if features of dialect are 'corrected' at the same time and in the same way as, for example, spelling errors” (484).

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937)
“Normative Grammar” (1929-1935)
normative grammar
grammatical conformism

hegemony
resistance
subaltern
organic intellectual
traditional intellectual

“[A 'normative' grammar] is made up of the reciprocal monitoring, reciprocal teaching and reciprocal 'censorship' expressed in such questions as 'What did you mean to say?'; 'What do you mean?'; 'Make yourself clearer'; etc., and in mimicry and teasing” (280).

“Written normative grammar, then, always presupposes a 'choice', a cultural tendency, and is thus always an act of national-cultural politics” (281).

“In reality, one is 'always' studying grammar (by imitating the model one admires, etc.)” (284).
**Da Pidgin Coup**

Pidgin/Hawai'i Creole English

“language is the carrier of culture”

identity

pidgin

lexifier

creole

African American English/Ebonics

covert prestige

“The Issue: Board of Education Chairman Mitsugi Nakashima recently implicated Pidgin in the poor performance by Hawai`i students on standardized writing tests. ‘I see writing as an encoding process and coding what one thinks, and if your thinking is not in standard English, it’s hard for you to write in Standard English,’ he said. This statement was the catalyst for the group of language and writing experts listed above to prepare this position paper on the recurring issue of Pidgin and education” (Da Pidgin Coup).

“We also show why writing is a ‘foreign language for everyone’, and why there is no good reason to assert that Pidgin speakers are held back in their writing development by their Pidgin language” (Da Pidgin Coup).

“‘Hawaii is the land of broken English,’ claims one of the anonymous authors of these materials in 1921. ‘Tell [children] that the Pidgin English which they speak is not good English; that it is not spoken by good Americans... ’ ‘Show the children,’ the author continues, that ‘Pidgin English implies a sense of inferiority’” (Da Pidgin Coup).

It is important to understand that Pidgin in Hawai`i has ‘covert prestige’ meaning that many wear it as a badge of honor which gives a sense of identity and sets locals apart from people from the mainland and elsewhere. There is evidence which indicates that in situations of conflict (such as Pidgin being denigrated at school) language use (particularly that of school age adolescents) will move away from that of the dominant group” (Da Pidgin Coup).

“Speech does not lead naturally into writing. Every learner, no matter their variety of spoken English, makes errors in writing because writing is different from speech” (Da Pidgin Coup).

**Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975)**

“Unitary Language” (1934-1935)

unitary language

monologic utterance

centripetal forces

centrifugal forces

dialogism

heteroglossia

lyric poetry

novel

“A unitary language is not something given (dan) but is always in essence posited (zadan)—and at every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia” (270).
“Thus a unitary language gives expression to forces working toward concrete verbal and ideological unification and centralization, which develop in vital connection with the processes of sociopolitical and cultural centralization” (270).

“Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward” (271).

“Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear” (271).

“Discourse lives, as it were, beyond itself, in a living impulse (napravlennost’) toward the object; if we detach ourselves completely from this impulse all we have left is the naked corpse of the word, from which we can learn nothing at all about the social situation or the fate of a given word in life” (277).

“Consciousness finds itself inevitable facing the necessity of having to choose a language” (279).