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An application of the theory of ecofeminism in EFL classes

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Abstract

By drawing on ecofeminist philosophy, this paper argues that education should challenge gender ideologies and address environmental problems as interconnected forms of oppression. Educational policy in patriarchal societies is at high rates tinted with male dominance in decision-making, policy discourse, and administrative management. A recurrent idea in the literature is that gender ideologies shape our worldviews, language, and social structures and determine the organization of social and educational institutions. This paper sketches a preliminary application of the theory of ecofeminism in classroom settings, specifically English as a Foreign Language (EFL henceforth) education, to stress the role of educators in creating equal opportunities for sustainable learning and life-preserving values as part of a social transformation that has its roots in education and educational policy and that extends to the environment. This application is based on an ecofeminist pedagogy as a promising approach to promoting social and ecological justice, and to resisting all forms of domination. In proposing to address social inequities by adhering to ecofeminist theory, this paper supports the view that social change is necessary for ecological survival.

Keywords: ecofeminism, ecolinguistics, social justice, ecological justice

1. Introduction

The intent of this article is to outline a preliminary conceptual model of an education that challenges gender ideologies and ecological destruction as interrelated forms of oppression. The gravity of these forms of oppression has been extensively accentuated in different venues of academia, politics, and social activism. Yet it was not until the coming of ecofeminism that a straightforward conceptual interconnection between these forms of oppression was established (Gaard, 1993; Warren, 1989, 2000). Through a discussion of

some of the key concepts in ecofeminist philosophy, I propose an ecofeminist pedagogy as a promising approach to promoting social and ecological justice. I begin with a brief overview on the main tenets of ecofeminism. Next, I present a description of an ecofeminist pedagogy that is built on and entrenched in the ideals of ecofeminism, and whose overarching objective is the fostering of *eco-social justice*.

Researchers maintain that despite intervention, oppression of women and other groups is still present at schools (Apple, 2004; McMahon, 2007; McLaren, 2015). In Morocco, for instance, persistence of inequalities in education has been reported (Karim et al., 2015). This raises questions about the role of education in creating and maintaining social justice in a society, often described as patriarchal, where women are expected to participate in "ensuring the survival and well-being of the family and in doing their share of farming and of production, small trade, and services" (Ennaji, 2016, p. 1). The post-colonial era in Morocco (1950s-1970s) had witnessed the proliferation of social and political movements that aimed at improving the status of women. Among the primary concerns of these movements was the reform of the Family Code (Mudawwana). Despite the constitutionalized reform of women's social and political status in Morocco over the past two decades, their status yet seems to be that of a "catch-up with the men" (Mies & Shiva, 2014; Sadiqi, 2008). In light of the rise of Islamism in the region and the enactment of the 1999 National Plan of Action for Integrating Women into Development which drew upon the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the feminist engagement in this struggle took three forms: the Islamist, reformist, and secularist (Ennaji, 2016; Sadiqi, 2003; Salime, 2011). They differ in their views on the compatibility of Islam as a culture with feminism, and in what they see as a backdrop of their interpretations of Islamic teachings in the sacred texts, whether it is the religion itself, or the Western feminist thought. In this regard, some theology feminists advocated reinterpretations of the sacred texts as a response to what they believed to be a male-dominated hermeneutics, a patriarchal exegesis that denies women right of interpretation, and which, in the name of Islam, has contributed and continues to contribute to the low political and social status of women (Rddad, 2018). The feminist project in Morocco targets education as a means, among others, to empowering women (Sadiqi, 2008; Ennaji, 2016). The social mobilization of women has known significant improvements with the political reforms backed up by the state, the proliferation of NGOs, women's rights movements, feminism, and the development of women and gender studies in higher education (Sadiqi, 2008). A recent compendium containing a variety of works related to gender, identities, and culture reflects a growing development of gender studies in Moroccan higher education (see *Gender Studies Curriculum at Moroccan Universities: A Compendium of Resources*, 2019).

Formulating a pertinent statement of problem regarding the status quo of gender in Morocco requires a thorough consideration of political, religious/ethical, historic, economic, and societal aspects and their intersection. Given the multicultural trait of the Moroccan society and the social and political dynamics in this region, contextualizing any

discussion regarding women is a prerequisite (Sadiqi, 2008). What is suggested then is an *across-the-board* framework that situates the problematics in a discussion involving both the ecological and the social dimensions. From an ecofeminist perspective, ecological considerations are both useful and essential to this discussion for reasons that are discussed in the coming sections.

2. Ecofeminist theory: A brief overview

In this article "theory" is not to be understood in its conventional definition that posits a set of fixated conditions whose fulfillment or lack of grants right to predict certain outcomes. Rather, theory in here refers to worldviews and ways of perceiving and constructing reality. The term *theory* is employed here to emphasize a desired transition from the conceptual to the practical. When ecofeminism was being conceived of as a social and political movement, the diversity of approaches, perspectives, and disciplines that fed into its conception has made it virtually impossible to speak of a theoretical unity within ecofeminism (Plumwood, 1986; Lahar, 1991; Gaard, 1993; Warren, 2000; Eaton, 2005; Stephens, 2013). In fact, the "plurality of voices" is a central value in ecofeminism (Gaard, 1993; Warren, 2000), or, as Mies and Shiva (2014, p. 14) put it, "ecofeminism is about connectedness and wholeness of theory and practice". Also, Warren (2000) calls for a conception of theory that is not "static" or "pre-ordained", a *theory-in-process*.

"Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination", writes Rosemary Radford Ruether (1975, p. 204). This statement describes a fundamental principle of ecofeminism. Ecofeminism is a critical social theory, a grassroots movement, and an analysis of social dysfunction that "includes the human exploitation of the nonhuman environment in its list of interwoven forms of oppression such as sexism and heterosexism, racism and ethnocentrism" (Lahar, 1991, p. 29). Birkeland (1993, p. 17) sees ecofeminism as "feminism taken to its logical conclusion, because it theorizes the interrelations among self, societies, and nature". This logical conclusion is a new way of making sense of the cosmos, a transformative resistance to oppressive conceptual frameworks in modern and classical thought. It is a logical corollary of a long dissatisfaction with the mechanistic paradigm of science and the capitalist patriarchy. It is a logical outcome of the growth of environmentalism and feminism (Plumwood, 1986). Ecofeminism, as I see it, is an ethics of science and life. The ecofeminist theory is informed by theoretical concepts from ecology and social ecology, mainly the interdependence of all life forms. In addition, the feminist social analysis of the domination of women and other marginalized groups, including theological and spiritual strands of feminist analyses, constitute a major theoretical background for ecofeminism (Lahar, 1991). These theoretical backgrounds feed into advancing a major premise: "the ideology that authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature"

(Gaard, 1993, p. 1). According to Lahar (1991), a theory of ecofeminism aspires to be deconstructive and reconstructive. Both functions must work a social philosophy and critique that resist through direct action all forms of oppression and promote life-preserving values and policies.

3. An ecofeminist pedagogy

This section expands on the previous one by elaborating on some key concepts in ecofeminist philosophy. Simultaneously, some implications for educational practice are stated.

It should be clear at this point that the relevance of the ecofeminist philosophy to current debate on ecological/social justice and social change in Morocco cannot be disregarded. The inherent affinity between women and nature that is accounted for historically and/or empirically does not only suggest the relevance of ecofeminism to this debate, but also suggests its necessity. One area of this debate that this article is concerned with is a discussion of how the ecofeminist paradigm could address concerns about education for social and ecological justice. It is also concerned with a discussion of an ecofeminist pedagogy and the possible ways of its concretization in classroom settings, EFL classes specifically. The interest in this task stems from my own personal experience as an EFL instructor. The importance of addressing gender ideologies in classrooms was made more apparent to me when I began teaching English to a group of women in one of the local training centers that is part of the Entreaide Nationale (National Mutual Aid) program in Morocco. The students were of different ages, marital status, and educational backgrounds with the majority having abandoned formal education and dropped out of school. During our first class, I asked the students about what they expected and wanted to learn. They were very reactive to my question and immediately started making suggestions. There was a disagreement among them as to what they needed to learn. At a certain point, one student commented: "Let the man do his job, he knows better", the "man" being a reference to myself. This comment is an ideologically-loaded expression of opinion if we consider the contextual elements of its production such as who said it and to whom, and the linguistic choices that the student attended to, whether consciously or not.

By definition, an ecofeminist pedagogy is essentially one that espouses the ideals of ecofeminism: it critiques oppressive social norms and practices (Lahar, 1991; Warren, 2000; Mies & Shiva, 2014); resists the "logic of domination" and the "isms of domination" (Warren, 2000); dismantles *hierarchal dualisms* (Warren, 2000; Birkeland, 1993; Plumwood, 1986, 1993); broadens the scope of education (Li, 2007); antagonizes anthropocentrism and androcentrism; fosters the human-nature dialogue; challenges the domination of women and nature (Howell, 1997; Gaard, 1993); questions the mechanistic paradigm of modern science (Shiva, 1993; Plumwood, 1986); asserts the interconnectedness of all life forms and opposes the disjunction of self and other (Gaard, 1993). An ecofeminist pedagogy celebrates both cultural commons and cultural differences. The former are,

according to Bowers (2009, p. 196) the "narratives that are the source of individual and group identity", and which include "activities, knowledge, skills, and patterns of mutual support that do not rely on a monetized economy" (p. 198). Cultural commons are the carrier of intergenerational knowledge and skills that enable people to lead lives less dependent on consumerism and less harmful to the environment. On the other hand, cultural differences can be simply understood as the beliefs, practices, and languages considered unique to members of a certain group.

Ecofeminism is, as I see it, an eco-centered approach that focalizes both individuals and the environment, and that not only seeks to transform relationships between teachers and students, but also between humans and the environment on which life depends.

3.1. The logic of domination

In her discussion of *unjustified domination* and *oppressive conceptual frameworks,* Karen Warren (2000, p. 48) demonstrated that the logic of domination "functions both to explain and justify domination-subordination relationships" where greater value is attributed to that which is higher (Up) than that which is lower (Down). This "Up-Down" way of thinking, or the *value-hierarchal thinking*, she explained, cannot be detached from a value system which holds the moral premise of the hierarchal distinction between Ups and Downs, the premise that *superiority justifies subordination* (e.g., Up being men/rational/culture and Down being women/emotional/nature). Furthermore, Warren maintained that oppressive conceptual frameworks encourage *oppositional value dualisms*. The latter, in Plumwood's (1993, p. 447) terms, ground a hierarchy whereby the dualized other and the qualities and cultures associated with it are systematically depicted as inferior. Both Warren and Plumwood trace the roots of dualisms to rationalism, distancing, discontinuity, radical exclusion and classical logic. In particular, Plumwood argued that logic and rationality are subject to a process of *selection* that privileges certain forms of rationality over others, e.g., certain scientific theories are selected and others not. On this basis, acknowledging the plurality of logics unveils the intricacies of selection in much the same way as it unveils the deep roots of androcentrism.

Plumwood (1986) cautioned against a simple reversal of polarity, and against "seeing liberation for women as their joining males in the sphere of the mental, of transcendence of physicality and nature, without questioning the basis of this assumed superiority" (p. 133). In the same vein, Bowers (2017, p. 55) cautioned against relying on said conceptual frameworks because they are passed down by those who "were unaware of the ecological crisis and how the patterns of thinking contributed to it".

Some ecofeminists asserted that historically the oppressive conceptual frameworks that identified women with nature, emotion and the physical, and men with culture and the mental are patriarchal, without disregarding the cross-cultural variations in the conception of women and nature. The instrumental identification of women with nature is, in the view of some ecofeminists, what spawned the domination of women, nature, and other

oppressed groups. In Morocco, the identification of women with nature may not be salient enough to support these claims. Nevertheless, a study on the impact of deforestation and shortage of water supply on rural Moroccan population of the Rif Mountains confirmed that women in these areas were most affected by these forms of environmental degradation (El Mdaghri, 1995). The effects were the increase of daily workloads and the migration of men to seek jobs in urban areas. Out-migration caused a sense of inferiority in unmarried women who "lost men" for marriage, which was considered a strong determinant of social status and an escape from backbreaking chores. The study observed that in order to save on wood, five or six families shared one oven to bake their bread. The main reason for these observations is the gendered division of labor in which the management of water and wood, domestic tasks, provision of daily subsistence, and caring for goats and sheep were to a large extent female tasks. In this regard, Lahar (1991, p. 32) maintained that "the dark side of the woman/nature association is especially vivid in the intersections of women's oppression and the exploitation of nature in many developing countries".

The classroom is likely to be a place of domination, whether justified or unjustified. Teachers, by virtue of their institutional and knowledge authority, can either empower or oppress. Teachers have control over time and space. Lovett (2010) argued that domination creates a condition of dependence on social relationships in which arbitrary power is exercised by particular social groups on others. Quite similarly, Plumwood (1993) argued that "a dualism, I argue, should be understood as a particular way of dividing the world which results from a certain kind of denied dependency on a subordinated other" (p. 443). This dependency, she added, shapes the identities of both self and the other. Domination could manifest for instance in the teacher-student relationships, classroom discourse and interaction. Freire (2005, p. 72) noted in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that the projection of an absolute ignorance onto students and the positioning of teachers as necessary opposites to them are characteristics of the ideology of oppression. Accordingly, education — in more concrete terms, the classroom — is perceived as a world created by the oppressor, the teacher, and the educated individual is one that adapts to better fit with this world.

The discussion of these key concepts is geared toward reconceptualizing the power relations between students and teachers through an ecofeminist perspective. This is envisaged as part of a larger fundamental social transformation of unequal power relations that is at the core of the ecofeminist enterprise. Some practical pedagogical implications that can be discerned along the lines of this discussion are the following. Teachers must not present themselves as power holders, but power protectors. Teachers must be conscious of the hegemonic power relations inherent in the school system and in the social fabric at large, and must consider that part of their role as educators is to disrupt these relations. Not only that, power must be negotiated in a power-with rather than power-over fashion (Warren, 2000; Plumwood, 1993). Moreover, value-laden hierarchies and dualisms in the classroom must be resisted. Gendered roles and differentiations and sexist language must be utterly minimized. For instance, girls' tasks and boys' tasks should be discouraged by focusing more on cooperative learning. Students should be encouraged to see

differences as particulars and complements, rather than oppositional attributes. Teachers must ensure a non-dualized content that could either create or reinforce resistance to the ideologies of domination.

3.2. The mechanistic paradigm of modern science

Another key concept central to debate in ecofeminism is the mechanistic and reductionist paradigm of modern science (Ruether, 1975; Merchant, 1980; Easlea, 1981; Plumwood, 1986; Lahar, 1991; Shiva, 1988, 1993). In general, the position that some ecofeminists take in this regard is that science is founded on power and domination. In her critique of the ontological and epistemological assumptions of reductionism, Shiva (1993), drawing on the historical analyses of Carolyn Merchant and others, claimed that modern science is rooted in an epistemology of violence that has led to the subjugation of nature and women, and fragmented perceptions of reality, truth, and knowledge. The pitfalls of the so-called scientific method, she argued, are twofold: uniformity and divisibility.

> Uniformity permits knowledge of parts of a system to stand for knowledge of the whole. Divisibility permits context-free abstraction of knowledge, and creates criteria of validity based on alienation and non-participation, which is then projected as 'objectivity'. 'Experts' and 'specialists' are thus projected as the only legitimate seekers after and producers of knowledge. (p. 24)

Furthermore, she asserted that reductionism provides a logic to the capitalist organization of economy and politics, and the uni-functional exploitation of nature. To draw an implication, I propose that teachers must not use content that presents reality as static or passive. That is, content must not be devoid from its cultural and environmental context. More importantly, selection and delivery of language content should adhere to an "approach that is sensitive to the need to strengthen the local cultural traditions" (Bowers, 2001, p. 76; Stibbe, 2004). Moreover, content should be presented as a "lived experience" that does not exclude or undermine the experiences of the subaltern (Harding, 1993). In an EFL class, a common belief is that aspects of the British or American cultures (among other English-speaking cultures) are useful and essential in acquiring a *socio-cultural competence* (van Ek, 1986). For most educators, this may imply an emphasis on the native speaker as a model which is an "impossible target and an inevitable failure" (Byram, 1997, p. 11; Kramsch, 2013). The native speaker being a model thus places the learners in a struggle over power and identity, especially in contexts where learners have a sense of inferiority toward the target culture (Kramsch, 1993, 2013, 2014). Furthermore, teachers must encourage individuality and subjectivity in the construction of knowledge. However, their individuality must not be pushed to privileging self-interest and personal interpretations of the living experience. The shortcoming of "emancipating the individual" or *individualism* which is founded on the culturally specific assumptions that "constant change is the

expression of progress, that humans need to bring the environment under rational control" (Bowers, 2001, p. 87), is that these assumptions lead to ignoring elder knowledge and sustainable *cultural commons* that maintained community interdependence and sustainable lifestyles in the past. In consonance with Bowers, Shiva argued that "the ontological shift for an ecologically sustainable future has much to gain from the worldviews of ancient civilizations and diverse cultures which survived sustainably over centuries" (1989, p. 41). One way of translating this into practice in an EFL class is the use of content that is most relevant to the learners' local cultures and which reflects relevant intergenerational knowledge (Stibbe, 2004). More particularly, addressing the ecological crisis in the classroom should be framed locally; that is, while recognizing that it is a global crisis, the local aspects of the crisis should be emphasized and its local cultural roots must be exposed and challenged, as well as encouraging the life-preserving values and traditions of the local cultures. For this aim, Byram's *intercultural communicative competence* model (1997) is useful because of its focus on knowledge of self and other, on attitudes and valuing other, and on developing skills of interpretation and discovery, and critical cultural awareness. The latter refers to "an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (p. 53). The aim of critical cultural awareness is to help learners establish knowledge of the world and the environmental crisis, and critically evaluate their ideologies and determine those that could possibly lead to conflicts and destruction of the world.

3.3. Eco-social justice through an ecolinguistic approach to EFL instruction

So far I have argued that the need for an ecofeminist pedagogy is urgent and self-constituted if education is to address critically and practically the social inequities that are part of a certain local social reality. The extent to which social injustice is woven into the destruction and degradation of the physical environment demands that ecological justice be coalesced into social justice, or, as Bowers (2001) expressed it, "any definition of social justice that does not take account of how human demands on the natural environment are affecting the lives of future generations is fundamentally flawed" (p. 3). Bowers's philosophy of ecojustice indicates that "environmental issues must have primacy in thinking about educational reform" (2001, p. 14); and not only that, an ecologically informed educational reform "should lead to a general rethinking of the core of education and the processes inherent within it" (Bowers, 2017, p. 53). Social justice is understood as the attainment and protection of human rights, and equity in access to resources and opportunities. Ecological justice refers to justice for environment and the conditions that sustain the life of all beings (biotic and abiotic); it "extends beyond people and imbues the natural environment with moral standing" (Parris et al., 2013, p. 71). Although the terms *ecological* and *environmental* justice are sometimes used interchangeably, there is a great deal of debate over the distinction between the two, and the moral philosophy on which the social construction of "justice" is based, and whether both sentient and non-sentient

organisms are included in moral and ethical considerations. Low and Gleeson (1998), for instance, understand environmental justice as the just distribution of resources and harms among people, while ecological justice is the just relationship between humans and the rest of the natural environment. This section defines the angle through which I propose to implement an ecofeminist pedagogy in EFL classes. I propose framing language teaching and learning within the ecofeminist philosophical and pedagogical frameworks that aim at resisting the interconnected domination of women, nature, and other oppressed groups. By the same token, I propose that language teaching and learning must take account of these forms of oppression and set learning objectives and standards that emphasize social and ecological justice. To do this, I propose *ecolinguistics* as a point of departure in examining language features and use in pedagogical contexts as a way to promoting eco-social justice.

The roots of ecolinguistics can be traced in two seminal talks by Einar Haugen (1972) and Michael Halliday (1990). The two scholars gave rise to two major approaches to ecolinguistics: on one hand, ecology is understood metaphorically and thus language is seen as part of a larger ecology where it interacts with the environment and other languages in the minds of bilingual speakers; on the other hand, ecology is understood in its biological sense and thus linguistic and discursive practices are believed to contribute to environmental degradation. Central to the view on the natural ecology of language is the belief that language depends on and exists in a material world that constitutes the natural habitat of language users. Drawing on the ideas advocated by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf as to the connection between linguistic structures and the speaker's perception of the environment, ecolinguists (e.g., Peter Mühlhäusler, 1995, 1996, 2003) attempt to not only understand this connection but most importantly to grasp whether/how language affects the natural ecology. Researchers dealing with questions of this kind adopt an eco-critical approach aiming at exposing unecological discursive practices in different kinds of discourse and more interestingly revealing unecological ideologies embedded in the language system itself (i.e., the grammar) (see, for example, Goatly's "Green Grammar and Grammatical Metaphor", 1996). In his "New Ways of Meaning", Halliday (1990) took ecolinguistics to a "critical turn" (Steffensen & Fill, 2014) when he claimed that "there can never be a total disjunction between the symbolic forms and the material conditions of their environment" (Halliday, 2001, p. 180) and thus took the position that language (especially scientific language) misrepresents the world by the use of grammatical metaphor or nominalization. He also emphasized that unecological ideologies are contained not only in texts but also in the grammar and based on this, he stressed that issues of environmental destruction are issues that should also concern people working in social sciences namely applied linguists (Halliday, 2001). Halliday (2001) adopts the view that "our 'reality' is not something ready-made and waiting to be meant — it has to be actively construed; and that language evolved in the process of, and as the agency of, its construal" (p. 179); that is, "language is at the same time a part of reality, a shaper of reality, and a metaphor for reality" (p. 180). On this basis, he claimed that lexicogrammar — the theory of experience — shapes experience and transforms perception into meaning. To further disseminate his

view, the following passage is worth quoting at length:

> […] languages like English make a categorial distinction between two kinds of entity: those that occur in units, and are *countable* in the grammar, and those that occur in the mass and are *uncountable*. […] Our grammar (though not the grammar of human language as such) construes *air* and *water* and *soil*, and also *coal* and *iron* and *oil*, as 'unbounded' — that is, as existing without limit. […] We know that such resources are finite. But the grammar presents them as if the only source of restriction was the way that we ourselves quantify them: *a barrel of oil, a seam of coal, a reservoir of water* and so on — as if they in themselves were inexhaustible. (Halliday, 2001, p. 194)

Halliday and Martin (1993) argued that through nominalization (also nouns and nominal groups) the scientific discourse has construed a reality of "things" as opposed to a reality of "happenings/processes" that is fixed and determinate, and that obscures agency. For instance, environmental problems are often presented as nominalizations such as *deforestation, habitat loss, loss of biodiversity*. Against their claims, Goatly (1996, p. 548) argued elaborately that the clausal mode and transitivity are "inadequate to the representation of the world demanded by modern scientific theory, especially ecological theory". His argument is grounded on a criticism of the transitive clause which he sees as an "obstacle in conceiving the notion of undivided wholeness" that — through a division into Agentive Participants, Affected Participants, and Circumstances — creates a "false unidirectionality of cause and effect" in the sense that the agent of environmental destruction is affected by the consequences of his/her actions toward the environment. He added that the environment as represented by the Location Circumstantial elements of the clause is suggested to be either powerless or not affected. I suggest a simplistic reconciliation between the views of these scholars in pedagogical terms. Teachers must explain nominalizations in terms of clauses. Students should be pushed to critically reflect on agency when nominalization is used. I give the following examples to stress four elements respectively: human agency, concealment of agency through nominalization, reciprocity of action, and environmental agency. Students need to know that "people *kill* forests" and this is called "deforestation"; "deforestation affects negatively both people and the environment" and "forests grow and die on their own". The latter is to describe ecosystems as self-regulating. Even though I recognize the "paucity of information value of the word *people*", as Schleppegrell (1997, p. 247) put it, I see in it a recognition of people's responsibility for both the destruction and the preservation of the environment.

In order to incorporate these views in an approach to EFL instruction, careful attention to the content of textbooks is necessary. Stibbe (2004) contended that EFL textbooks covering environmental issues had been gaining more popularity and this demands focus be centered on analyzing the ideologies on which these books are based. His analysis of EFL textbooks in Japan showed that textbooks fail to challenge, and, at times, propagate

the cultural values behind environmental problems by focusing on technical solutions that only address the immediate physical symptoms of the ecological crisis. Thus, Stibbe maintained that environmental education has to set goals beyond what he referred to as *shallow environmentalism*, and challenge cultural and political assumptions behind ecological degradation. He suggested falling back to the philosophy of *deep ecology* which establishes a two-way intercultural communication that challenges the values behind ecological destruction and considers alternatives from traditional sources (p. 243). In an EFL context, said goals may include the development of critical language awareness (Fairclough, 1989; Byram, 1997). The aim of critical language awareness is to establish the intercultural speaker's knowledge of language and the relationship between language, identity and notions of power and hegemony.

4. Conclusion

This paper, although fragmented, is primarily meant to offer suggestive reflections on the possible and necessary application of the philosophy of ecofeminism in EFL classes. It set out to bring the ecofeminist philosophy closer to educational practice. It was shown that educational reform and pedagogy ought to be informed by conceptual frameworks that resist all forms of domination and their interconnectedness. In particular, it was shown that language teaching and learning should integrate into its agenda serious considerations of social and ecological justice. As a concluding statement, I argue that the readiness of educators to endorse an ecofeminist pedagogy and enact its praxis depends largely on their willingness to bring about what Chet Bowers called a "paradigm shift". I also suggest a deepening of the understanding of the issue of domination through the incorporation of theological analyses that seek out the connections between local cultures and religions, and the ecological crisis and the domination of women and nature.

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