

[Call for submissions. Edited Volume: Transform the Modern Languages Classroom! A Critical Modern Languages Pedagogy](#)

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Call for submissions. Edited Volume: ***Transform the Modern Languages Classroom! A Critical Modern Languages Pedagogy***

Scholars, practitioners, and activists in the field of modern languages, and in fields such as sociolinguistics and education studies with modern languages experience, are invited to submit essays for a new volume on critical pedagogy for modern languages. ***Transform the Modern Languages Classroom! A Critical Modern Languages Pedagogy*** is intended to overcome the “resistance to ideas that challenge the ideological neutrality often claimed for language teaching and learning” (Morgan and Mattos, 2018). Taking an activist pedagogical stance (Preston and Aslett 2014), it follows Pessoa and Urzêda-Freitas’s understanding that if language can produce discrimination and inequality, it can also challenge and subvert oppressive practices (2012, 757).

In the context of Black Lives Matter, decolonising initiatives, #MeToo, climate emergency protests and other movements for social and environmental justice, the volume posits a simple question: how can modern languages be taught so that they challenge rather than reinforce social inequalities?

Even now, language learning is mostly taught as a technical process of decoding and encoding (Kramsch 2020). Yet languages are never neutral (Phipps and Guilherme 2004): they often legitimise social inequalities and marginalise minorities in ways that serve the interests of elites (Bauman and Brigg 2003). The languages and cultures of dominant groups are set as standards to be aspired to; conversely, the languages and cultures of minority groups are viewed as intrinsically deficient. The linguistic supremacy of the dominant group is enforced through state policies that enact linguistic symbolic violence by stigmatising “non-standard” speech (Alim and Paris 2017; Kramsch 2020). Language teaching that reproduces the dominant gaze unwittingly or otherwise enforces the normative aims of state authorities.

By contrast, critical modern languages pedagogy critiques oppressive linguistic systems and recasts the language classroom as a site of linguistic and cultural resistance and diversity. It advocates a shift away from the view of language learning as simply technical skills development and towards

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critical language learning that: (i) calls out language that participates in the production of unjust relations of power; and (ii) fosters progressive linguistic solutions that challenge and reduce social inequalities. With student-teacher collaboration at its heart, critical modern languages pedagogy unmasks the ideologies and hegemonies that lie behind key words (Duchêne and Heller 2007; McElhinney and Heller 2017) and affirms the value of minority linguistic and cultural practices.

Transform the modern languages classroom! This volume calls for fundamental change in the teaching of modern languages. It exposes the ways in which conventional language teaching abets the interests of elite state actors; at the same time, it advocates inclusive linguistic and cultural pluralism as a means to resist and transform oppressive linguistic practices. Inspired by Paulo Freire's (1968) critical pedagogy and H. Samy Alim and Django Paris's (2017) culturally sustaining pedagogy, the volume provides transformative approaches to modern languages teaching and learning that respond to the key social concerns of the twenty-first century.

Potential chapter contributions might include, but are not limited to, critical engagement with the following topics from the perspective of transformative teaching and learning in the modern languages classroom:

- racist and ethnicist discourses and anti-racist language pedagogy
- colonialist and neo-imperialist discourses and anti-imperialist language pedagogy
- xenophobic and anti-migrant discourses and culturally inclusive language pedagogy
- patriarchal and misogynist discourses and feminist language pedagogy
- heteronormative and homophobic discourses and queer language pedagogy
- transphobic discourses and gender-inclusive non-binary language pedagogy
- ableist discourses and anti-ableist language pedagogy
- classist discourses and anti-classist language pedagogy
- greenwashing discourses and climate emergency/environmental sustainability language pedagogy
- monolingualism and monoculturalism in education policies and practices, and translanguaging, multilingualism, minority languages, dialects, topolects, sociolects and ethnolects in the modern languages classroom
- slang, including social media and internet slang, in the modern languages classroom
- endangered languages and their role in the modern languages classroom

Chapters should draw on a critical pedagogy apparatus and from contributors' own modern languages classroom experience to (i) critique existing language teaching practices that reinforce oppressive hegemonic discourses and practices, and (ii) set out transformative pedagogical practices that offer progressive linguistic approaches to social issues and aim to foster social activist sensibilities in modern language learners. Chapters may discuss modern language learning for any age, educational stage, and language competence.

Chapter proposals are especially welcome from and about the Global South and marginalized and underrepresented groups in the field of modern languages.

Manuscript submission schedule and volume workshop

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Following an initial editorial selection process based on consideration of abstracts, authors will be invited to submit a full-length essay by 15 November 2021. Essays should range in length between 6,000 and 8,000 words, including footnotes and references. The essays should be developed for a primary global audience of modern languages students, teachers and academics. The volume is expected to have a larger impact on practitioners (e.g. modern languages teachers) than a regular academic tome. In January/February 2022, the editor aims to hold a workshop for all contributors to present and discuss their works in progress. The workshop may be held online to facilitate participation from all contributors. The workshop will facilitate a conversation across the various topics and approaches, and ensure greater cross-referencing and interpretative and analytical coherence. The editor is in discussion with Bloomsbury Publishing (Critical Pedagogy), and aims to submit the volume manuscript by May 2022 for peer review.

Abstract submission

Interested contributors are requested to submit a title, abstract (500 words) and short biography of the contributor (200 words, including author's academic titles and affiliation) to Derek Hird at d.hird@lancaster.ac.uk by 15 July 2021. All inquiries should also be sent to this email address. The language of the publication is English. Authors will be notified of the status of their abstracts by 31 July 2021.

Editor information

Dr Derek Hird is Senior Lecturer in Chinese Studies, Deputy Director of the Confucius Institute, and Head of the Department of Languages and Cultures at Lancaster University, UK. He has substantial experience in teaching Chinese language (Mandarin) and culture. His research has focused on masculinities, gender inequality and class in China from feminist perspectives. He has also published on Chinese discourses of happiness.

Contact Info:

Dr Derek Hird

Department of Languages and Cultures

Lancaster University

Contact Email:

d.hird@lancaster.ac.uk

URL:

<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/languages-and-cultures/about-us/people/derek-hird>