Negotiating competing narratives and discourses of culture in interviews as conversations – expressing intercultural identities

- Searching for new ways to understand
  - Every research experience brings new questions
  - Interviews as fickle co-constructions determined by framing (e.g. Miller 2011)
  - Populist politics – manipulating deeper, hidden prejudices
    - Narratives out there, waiting to be invoked (e.g. Goodson 2006)
    - Small culture formation on the go – shared cultural experience vs. Self and Other destructive discourses (Amadasi & Holliday 2017)

- Return to old diagram and how we get to an understanding of the emergent world (Holliday 2016b)

- Recent research – questions after the event (Dragas & Holliday 2017)

- The case of Chinese masters students
  - Established world – collectivist ‘context’, can’t be critical or autonomous, restricted by language (Zhao & Coombs 2012) – the details might be changing
Dominant imagined world – we feel good about helping them or allowing them to be who they are – the sustained details might be under revision

- e.g. Templar (2017) – the luxury hotel with the dusty or rural ‘real Morocco’ where ‘many women are working’ – feeling bad about the waiter ‘serving them’. ‘Two worlds’ when in fact there are many worlds

Imagined marginal world – collectivism as resistance against top-down globalisation – highly seductive – the details might be changing

Emergent world

- The established and imagined worlds are indeed political and professional fantasies (Gong & Holliday 2013; Mernissi 2001; Said 1978)
- Visible at the margins (Canagarajah 2004; Hall 1991)
- Unexpected de-centred criticality, claiming the world, bottom-up globalisation (Duan 2007; Honarbin-Holliday 2009; Kamal 2012; Wu 2004; Yamchi 2015)
- De-centred research methodology – diaries, fine art, reconstruction
- Fiction, drama, fine art combatting the ‘single story’ (e.g. Adichie 2009, 2013; Mami 2014)

Research trajectory

Teti takes Holliday’s (2016a: 268) citation of Yamchi’s phrase ‘I am not what you think I am’ and asks Chinese masters students to respond

Adrian is really happy when they all respond with marginalised statements about how they are taught in the UK

- Cultural contribution not recognised, lack of ownership, surveillance, un-meaningful ‘native speaker’ content, not expected to express ideas, teacher dominance
- Students hide who they are, accept being victims to stereotyping

New research question?

- What do the student responses signify?
  - Identity as marginalised cultural Other?
  - Identity as any students anywhere who would always express marginalisation in any classroom if asked within a particular frame?

- How are the researchers constructing the students?
  - Researchers’ sustained liberationist West as steward discourse?
    - Constructing students as a marginalised Other?
    - Constructing them as people?

The ‘data’ becomes the whole trajectory
- Teti’s questions and why they were asked – text, interview
- Adrian’s analysis, subsequent presentation and enthusiasm
- And so on

DO WE EVER ESCAPE FROM THE DOMINANT IMAGINED WORLD? CAN WE EVER CONSTRUCT PEOPLE JUST AS PEOPLE?

References

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