

# *Reflexive Graffiti Remixing: Curriculum, Corsican Language, and Critical Pedagogy*

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I am a fourth year PhD student enrolled in a cotutelle program that allows me to simultaneously study at two universities: University of Ottawa (Canada) and Université de Corse (France). This unique program affords me the opportunity to spend a minimum of one year at each university and work with a thesis supervisor at both academic institutions. In my first year of the program, I spent eight months studying and conducting field observations in Corsica, a beautiful island that is home to a complex sociolinguistic context I had read much about, but had never seen. The following article relates my experiences as a young researcher on Corsica and my interactions with Corsican graffiti.

### The Road to Graffiti: An Introduction

*The experience of language domination has multiple, and sometimes contradictory effects. On the one hand, it makes dominant language ideologies a part of the minority language speakers' structures of feeling and identity. On the other hand, it provides these speakers with an acute sensitivity to the mechanisms of domination and sets the scene for strategies of resistance to those mechanisms. (Jaffe, 1999, p. 283)*

Since the beginning of the 1970s, discourse regarding Corsican language and identity has taken on a larger role in the public domain. In fact, as the island obtained the right to teach its regional language in 1974, a number of years after most other regional languages in France, it seemed as though the status of diglossia



Figure 1. Graffiti on the road to the Université de Corse campus

between French and Corsican had evolved. Today on Corsica, however, politicians, educators, parents and youth are reunited to demand more rights and the co-officialization of the regional Corsican language. Resistance to the French dominant/majority language is at the heart of

the messages of graffiti that are highlighted in this article, most of which are written in Corsican. In turn, these graffiti create powerful discourses regarding this endangered language.

The number of students involved in the teaching of the Corsican

*Je suis une étudiante au doctorat qui a eu la chance d'étudier, de vivre une recherche ethnographique et de profiter de l'île qui est la Corse. Mon intérêt commun avec mes collègues corses est mon investissement dans la communauté de langue française (langue minoritaire) en Ontario, ce qui résonne à leur investissement dans l'institutionnalisation et l'enseignement de la langue corse, leur langue régionale et minorée.*

*J'ai passé trois séjours en Corse, même si la présente narration relève surtout de mon premier séjour de huit mois en 2010-2011. Mon terrain prolongé m'a exposée aux nombreux obstacles rencontrés quant à l'enseignement de la langue corse dans une société hégémonique française. J'ai aussi appris à sortir de ma bulle ethnocentrique lors de ces expériences à l'étranger. Je me rends compte que mon regard vers l'autre m'a également permis de poser un meilleur regard sur moi-même, sur mes conceptions de langues dominantes et dominées et sur mon processus réflexif de recherche.*

language has grown steadily since its inception in the publicly funded Corsican school system. The Deixonne Law of 1951 marked an important step in the teaching of regional languages in France. However, the law recognized only four regional languages: Basque, Breton, Catalan and Occitan. The Corsican language would not be admitted under this law until 1974, following a vigorous campaign by Corsican militants. Corsicans,

therefore, have only had the right to educate children in their regional language for nearly forty years. Today, significant progress has been made in Corsican schools regarding the instruction of this endangered language. More specifically, two types of Corsican curriculum and instruction are offered on the island: a standard stream with 3 hours per

week of Corsican language classes or the bilingual stream in which all subjects are taught both in French and Corsican in equal time. As both of these curricula remain optional for students and oftentimes represent additional hours on a student's timetable, they are taught similarly to foreign languages, an aberration as children must learn Corsican "as the language of the other" (Derrida, 1998; Egéa-Kuehne, 2012) on Corsica. As Corsican schools have a long history of imposing dominant French language policy, ideology and discourse on Corsican-speaking children, Corsican-language curricula are an important first step of a much longer process toward linguistic legitimacy.

Despite this crucial first step, the Corsican population still suffers from the diglossic relationship of Corsican and French as "signs of the high value of French and of Corsican linguistic insecurity persist today" (Jaffe, 1999, p. 86). While Corsican has entered a number of institutions such as schools and public media, it continues to lose its privileged place within the curriculum of the home. Its status as language of instruction as well as school discipline seems to condemn the Corsican language to circulate only within school walls, making it illusory to believe that its place in public schools can save this regional language (Comiti, 2005). For Corsican militants, there is but one answer: « *il faut donc officialiser le corse, la langue du citoyen* » (Thiers, 2008, p. 264). A co-officialization of the language is crucial in order to demystify the notion of France as a monolingual and monocultural country, and furthermore demystify imposed monolingual identities, which speaks to the *indisputabilité* of monolingualism and its omnipresence within language speakers

(Derrida, 1998). The *raison-d'être* of this co-officialization movement can thus be linked to a sociolinguistic awareness of the monolingualism of the Corsican people in a language that is not their own (Derrida, 1998).

Corsica is an island covered in graffiti. These painted messages devastate/decorate the walls of cities, towns, schools and homes. They have also spread to natural sites that include rocks, trees, and mountains. A number of curricular questions arise in regards to graffiti as literacy and

*Pendant mon temps en Corse, je suis progressivement devenue intéressée et, par la suite, captivée par les graffitis qui m'entouraient. Par conséquent, j'ai commencé à apporter mon appareil photo partout où j'allais. Je m'arrêtais dans la rue ou même dans le milieu d'une phrase lorsqu'un graffiti captait mon attention. Je ne savais pas pourquoi je devais photographier tous ces messages. J'avais simplement l'impression qu'ils me disaient quelque chose et que je voulais entrer dans l'espace discursif qu'ils me fournissaient.*

in particular regarding an endangered language: Is graffiti a performance of the aesthetics of vulnerability of a minority language? Could graffitied symbols represent a linguistic affirmation of Corsican identity? And what could engaging with these graffiti bring to Canadian curricular studies regarding minority languages?

The following article attempts to answer these curricular questions. It begins by tracing the research framework that shapes my research and analysis. Subsequently, I explore various methods of researching graffiti which include reading graffiti as praxis, marginalia, and empowerment. I also discuss youths' possible roles in (re)reading graffiti as an opportunity to remix and as an opening for critical literacy skills. This article, then, is embedded with photographs of Corsican graffiti that were taken by me during an academic *séjour* on Corsica. Furthermore, I

have included my personal narrative in text boxes throughout this article to share my ongoing reflexive process as a researcher (Ng-A-Fook, 2009, 2011). I have chosen to relate this narrative in French – my mother tongue and one of two minoritized languages that are at the heart of my research. This article therefore (re)mixes English, French, and Corsican throughout with as little translation possible to engage readers in a multimodal and plurilingual reading experience.

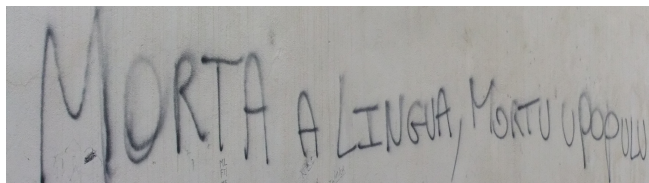
### Framework for Reading and Researching Graffiti

*A/r/tography dislocates complacency, location, perspective, and knowledge. A/r/tography becomes a passage to somewhere else.*

*(Springgay, Irwin & Kind, 2005, p. 909)*

For researchers and teachers, reflexivity is a key pedagogical component of both our professional and personal development. However, putting reflexivity into practice is an incredibly complex and destabilizing process. A reflexive posture or turning back on oneself (Davies, 2008), whether it be before,

during or post-action  
(Feuerverger, 2001;  
Perrenoud, 2004)



*Figure 2. Death of a language, death of a people.*

enables both a distancing and a reconciliation of action to facilitate the (re)construction of the research process. Reflexivity as a deconstructive exercise,

leads the analyst to take up the knots of place and biography and to deconstruct the dualities of power and antipower, hegemony and resistance, and insider and outsider to reveal and describe how our representations of the world and those who live there are indeed positionally organized. (Macbeth, 2001, p. 38)

As I pull from artefacts and narratives I collected during an ethnographic research project on Corsica, I have also chosen to depart from a role of researcher that looks solely to 'others'. My performance as researcher instead also looks to myself, as a deconstructive act of self-reflection. What's more, the specific act of engaging with graffiti also calls for this reflexive praxis as "graffiti— both in the presence of its images and the absence of its authors—forces (for whatever duration) a reflexive relationship to self/selves" (Halsey & Young, 2006, p. 298). The following article therefore explores my experiences, reactions, and voice in the hopes of a better (reflexive) understanding of otherness within me.

The present auto/ethno/graphy (de)constructs a bricolage of personal photographs taken of Corsican graffiti as well as my narratives of my time on Corsica. Morawski and Palulis (2009) qualify this methodology as auto/ethno/graphy, a mixing of biography, autobiography, and ethnography. In turn, this methodology affords one pedagogical opportunities "to unsettle the scripts of hegemonic discourse" and the slopes in its name, auto/ethno/graphy, "offer intervals for breaks and gaps and swerves. To trouble and be troubled by the (dis)course" (Morawski & Palulis, 2009, p. 9). The (third) spaces between *auto*, *ethno*

and *graphy* evoke the tension-filled spaces that are present, and perhaps crucial, for teachers and researchers to occupy. Homi Bhabha explores the concept of third space as hybridity, an ambivalent space that permits new positions to emerge. Additionally, “this third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom (Rutherford & Bhabha, 1990, p. 211). In turn, I seek methodologically to blend art and literacy, to live within the gaps and (third) spaces, in the hopes of remixing my interpretations and perspectives.

To do so, I also draw from Springgay, Irwin, and Kind’s work on a/r/tography (2005) which they define as “an inquiring process that lingers in the liminal spaces between a(artist) and r(researcher) and t(teacher)” (p. 902). As my personal and professional identities draw from these three spaces, my work also necessarily stems from these aesthetic processes of researching, teaching, and writing. The influence of a/r/tography couples well with my auto/ethno/graphic framework. This methodological practice constitutes a living life writing process that draws simultaneously from professional, political and personal aspects of my life (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2005, p. 903). In fact, this methodology has opened spaces in my academic research, particularly in what we might call the hybrid spaces of my writing. While utilizing an a/r/tographic and auto/ethno/graphic lens, I seek to feed my pedagogical curiosity and interest regarding hegemonic language power relations as forms of rupture.



### (Re)reading and (Re)searching Graffiti

*You can become 'more' than yourself in this subculture because you escape the need to represent yourself. Your graffiti ... "speaks for you", freeing you from the features or factors that might normally hold you back. (Macdonald, 2001, p. 161)*

In this article, I deconstruct graffiti as text, as a form of literacy. Carrington (2009) notes that graffiti as “unsanctioned texts are about writing oneself and one’s name and social commentary onto the urban environment itself in a powerful statement of representation” (p.419).



*Figure 3. The Corsican Language, a Living Language*

The role of language is therefore at the heart of graffiti. It creates ambiguity, tension and rupture of language in terms of its discursive governmental

status. In fact, Hall (1997) elucidates that language “is the property of neither the sender *nor* the receiver of meanings. It is the shared cultural ‘space’ in which the production of meaning through language—that is, representation—takes place” (p.10). It is also important to note that the concept of language and text applies to all graffiti, even when they are not accompanied by words, as their aesthetic representations are nonetheless able to send powerful messages.

The concept of representation is likewise crucial in my framework for studying graffiti. It speaks to Hall's (1997) work regarding semiotics which are interpreted according to a person's conceptual map, heavily influenced by culture.

Lidchi (1997) elaborates in regards to the semiotic approach by stating that "since all cultural objects convey meaning, and all cultural practices

*J'ai souvent eu de la misère avec ma position d' "outsider" au sein de la communauté corse. En réfléchissant sur mes premières impressions de la Corse et de ses graffitis, je me rends compte que les discours de culture de l'autre venaient influencer et construire ma perception. Qui plus est, étant donné que je ne connaissais pas le corse, cette langue de l' "autre", je n'ai pas pu tout à fait comprendre les messages qui m'entouraient. En passant plus de temps sur l'île, j'ai commencé à me réécrire et à relire les divers textes, un processus déstabilisant, mais enrichissant.*

depend on meaning, they must make use of signs; and in so far as they do, they must work like language works, and be amenable to an analysis" (p. 36). He adds that this argument is rooted in Saussure's work regarding the linguistic concepts of the signifier/signified and *langue/parole* which combine to make a *sign*. Keeping such significations in mind, I therefore (re)read graffiti as signs that produce and transmit meaning. I also deconstruct graffiti as a textual practice that destabilizes the reader's environment, providing meaningful spaces or gaps between Saussure's *langue/parole*. Derrida (1997) defines deconstruction as "the destruction, not the demolition but the de-sedimentation, the deconstruction, of all the significations that have their source in that of the logos. Particularly the signification of truth" (p. 11). This act, therefore, involves the interpretation, translation and "unmaking of a construct", including how it is conditioned by history, institutions and society and is

thus presented as natural or “truth” (Derrida, 1997). This process of unmaking allows the reader to rebuild and produce meaningful discourses that are socially relevant to his/her geographic, linguistic, political and sociocultural space.

### (Re)reading Graffiti as... Praxis

*Could I place myself in the center of the history of the oppressed without taking revolutionary action for social change? (Yoon, 2001, p. 291)*

As a researcher, I look beyond the passive role of reading and rather align myself with the notion of literacy as a form of action, which corresponds with Gonick’s (2011) analysis of marginalia as social action,



*Figure 4. Corsican Land, Our Land*

or an “interactive’ experience.” Literacy, therefore, is a process of collaboration, which leaves room for questioning and challenging the status quo. It evolves and changes constantly as an increasing number of author(s)/readers

are involved and, in turn, evolve themselves. When a passer-by looks up at a wall of graffiti, “the interpreter is not outside the act of interpretation; the subject is now part of the object,” (Watt, 2011, p. 67). Graffiti, therefore, draws in an

incredible wealth of readers who may look to it or stumble upon it in their day-to-day lives. These onlookers, who become part of the action, are asked to try to make sense of what they are reading and relate it to their experiences and narratives.

In this framework then, one can look to graffiti as

*En très peu de temps, je suis devenue une étudiante engagée sur le campus et une chercheuse active dans la communauté. J'ai passé beaucoup de mon temps à mener du terrain ethnographique dans diverses écoles primaires et plusieurs collèges. Ce faisant, j'ai commencé à mieux comprendre et à m'intéresser davantage aux défis d'un programme scolaire de langue régionale ainsi que les motivations affectives et culturelles qui inspirent les éducateurs de façon quotidienne. Je me suis également questionnée davantage sur la (re)construction continue des paroles des enfants corse dans ce contexte sociolinguistique complexe. Parallèlement, mon interprétation du graffiti (qui semblait me suivre partout sur l'île) a évolué.*

praxis, as an act of power against oppression in the hopes of social transformation. In the particular Corsican context, the political implications of this praxis is crucial as Jaffe (1999) indicates that “on Corsica, the political/symbolic value of the language far outstrips its level of practice in everyday life; there is more talk *about* Corsican than there is

*J'étudie le graffiti en tant que littérature puisque j'ai connu des réactions opposées aux mêmes graffitis lors de mon séjour en Corse. Je dois avouer que lors de ma première promenade sur le campus de l'Université de Corse, j'étais étonnée quant à l'abondance de graffitis sur les murs. Ces graffitis me semblaient chaotiques et sales. Je les considérais comme un acte contre l'institution et ne pouvais pas m'identifier avec les artistes et auteurs. J'ai tenté de lire les messages peints, mais je ne les interprétais pas comme une forme d'action. En fait, je ne pouvais pas m'empêcher de me demander: pourquoi personne n'a nettoyé ces graffitis?*

talk *in* Corsican. Everything to do with language on Corsica is politicized” (p. 280). Yoon (2001) echoes this notion of political praxis. In his research, he posits that “literacy can be a sociopolitical practice that struggles to free all people,

including the oppressors” (p. 290). Therefore, rereading graffiti as a political act/art is crucial for creating and contributing to the existing discourse regarding the sociopolitical structures, practices and progress of Corsican citizens working to create different spaces for appropriating their language.

### (Re)reading Graffiti as... Marginalia

*The text becomes a cultural weapon – the pretext for a law that legitimizes certain interpretations over others. (Gonick, 2011, p. 133)*

Zooming my narrative focus more closely toward understanding graffiti as text, I cannot help but ask: are these writings on the wall, also symbolized performances of othering/otherness? Graffiti is often met with varying and at times polarizing views: to some, an act of defiance and vandalism while to others, a captivating work of art. These varying

*À un moment donné, j’ai demandé au doyen de la Faculté des arts de l’Université de Corse au sujet du graffiti. Il m’a dit qu’ils ont tenté de peindre par-dessus les graffitis à maintes reprises, mais que les mêmes messages apparaissaient seulement quelques instants après que la peinture soit sèche. Enfin, l’administration a décidé que ces voix méritaient d’être entendues et ont arrêté de repeindre. Je considère cela comme une victoire incroyable pour ces voix marginalisées. Ce choix réitère l’impact que peuvent avoir ces graffitis sur les membres, même les plus puissants, d’une communauté.*

outlooks are socially constructed and heavily influenced by differing (dominant and/or marginalized) discursive regimes. Graffiti works as curriculum “outside the lines” (and, in most

cases, as a curriculum outside the law) which has many commonalities with marginalia. Just as Gonick characterizes the action of making notes in a margin as a “gesture towards a writing and re-writing of self, space, time and the dialogic creation of meaning” (2011, p. 135), so can one interpret graffiti. Furthermore, the notion of “writing and re-writing of self” calls attention to the fact that there is an author involved in the act of graffiti and though oftentimes anonymous and Othered, he/she has a crucial role to play.

The question of authorship in graffiti is central, particularly when the message is political. As this form of textual practice seems accessible to all, a variety of authors are invited to participate as even “individuals who are shy and unconfident find a voice through graffiti because they do not have to speak. Their name or ‘virtual self’ speaks for them which means they can recreate themselves and then sit in the wings and direct the performance” (Macdonald, 2001, p.173). Developing one’s identity as an author while remaining in the margins and anonymous is not an easy task. Power holders can publicly slight these works and create discourses that characterize them as unlawful or unjust. The authors, however, are limited to “discourses that take place ‘offstage’” (Gonick, 2011, p. 129) to convey their messages. This may create a certain disconnect between authors and readers. Nevertheless, the accessibility of their marginalized locations and the aesthetic appeal of such messages certainly have the potential to draw in a number of readers.

These messages that are written “outside the lines” not only speak to language, culture and politics, but also play a role in their development.

The choice of canvas, the island itself, is deeply political in its message. These graffiti make certain that no last word be spoken, but instead provoke discussion, debate and, in some cases, change. In fact, just as marginalia “represent a complex set of cultural activities that participate in the ongoing conditioning of developing personal and cultural knowledge and understanding” (Gonick, 2011, p. 131), so can graffiti come to destabilize the current state of affairs and bring about change. The fact that the Université de Corse’s policy about graffiti evolved is but one example of how this form of literacy can bring about real change.

The graffiti also reminds us, much like Derrida’s apposition, “We only ever speak one language or one idiom; We never only speak one language, or one idiom.”

### (Re)reading Graffiti as... Empowerment

*Teaching about power is the fundamental aspect of teaching for critical literacy: who has power and who is denied it; how is power used and how is it abused. (Wolk, 2009, p. 668)*

Literacy is above all else powerful. It has the ability to transform our sense of what we know and, in doing so, the world. The authors of graffiti are creating powerful discourses that challenge the dominating discursive regime of the French government and its official language as well as aesthetic representations of their identity and culture. Through these representations, “the self is situated in culture, the cultural is in the self” in a constant re/production of culture through language (Watt, 2011,

p. 65). As the construction of identity is a continuous and evolving process, the numbers of ways in which these messages can be read are infinite and directly impact Corsican curricula, culture and language.

Reading graffiti as an art/aesthetic of resistance indicates that it is not only an action that takes place outside the traditional lines, but one that is inextricably linked to political, social and cultural motivations. This form of unsanctioned writing carries an incredible message as graffiti “is

loud: it screams from the walls ‘I am here and I want you to know.’ It screams ‘I don’t respect your boundaries – textual or spatial’” (Carrington, 2009, p.418). The choice of this form of art/literacy is poignant

*J’ai commencé à lire les messages de ces graffeurs comme des actes politiques. Plus précisément, j’ai commencé à réaliser que les membres de la communauté cultivaient ou pratiquaient de l’art de la résistance sous mes propres yeux. Le choix de toiles varie de façon considérable, mais le campus de l’Université de Corse, le centre pédagogique de l’île, était une cible primaire pour les artistes et auteurs.*

and significant. These authors/artists are choosing to enact a form of resistance in the face of oppression. In choosing public and often very populated areas, these graffiti look to others to engage/participate/react. In the particular Corsican context, these messages attempt to obstruct the obstacles to language legitimization on the island. As every curriculum of language is politicized, these authors/artists are throwing their voices and themselves into the public debate, whether power holders like it or not. Graffiti as literacy, as a curriculum, can thus act to shift power relations regarding language. One can also hope that it has the power to inspire others to take action in this culture of resistance and perhaps pick



up a paint brush/pencil/microphone of their own to let their voices be heard.

What's in it for students?

(Re)reading Graffiti as... An Opportunity to Remix

*At the broadest level, then, remix is the general condition of cultures: no remix, no culture. (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008, p. 22)*



Figure 5.

This article also speaks to the conversational act/art of remix that readers can perform with texts (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008).

Readers are encouraged to build on the original

text and mix in their experiences, perspectives and ideas in order to create new text that can then be interpreted and remixed by others. The cyclical aspect of remixing remains fundamental as it encourages an endless amount of varying interpretations of a single work. This process never concludes: "in the sense that each new mix becomes a meaning-making resource for subsequent remixes, there is no end to remixing. Each remix in principle expands the possibilities for future remixes" (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008, p.26). The remixed photographs found in

this article are a first attempt to converse with Corsican graffiti. These

*Après avoir lu l'article de Knobel et Lankshear (2008) sur la pratique du remixage, j'ai décidé de mettre la théorie en action. J'ai effectué un "photoshopping remix". Les photos remixées dans cet article représentent une hybridation des photos, de ma perspective et de mes réactions aux graffitis corses.*

remixes are in no way final, but rather an opening for further (de)construction and remixes.

Though the term "remix"

may be new, the concept is not. In fact, the authors maintain that remixing "has always been a part of any society's cultural development" (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008, p.22). Various forms of literacy have always found ways to inspire both new creations as well as a variety of forms of reactions. Therefore, the act of remixing is also necessarily collaborative as both reader and author are inextricably linked during this process; one cannot perform his/her role without the other. This collaborative element is crucial as "social practices of literacy are discursive" and the result of these practices, discourse, "can be seen as the underlying principle of meaning and meaningfulness" (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008, p.28). Remixing, therefore, creates new and meaningful discourses.



Figure 6.



Figure 7. Author's reaction to censorship

(Re)reading (Remixing) Graffiti as... A Hybrid Space

*And hybridity is precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance, formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them.*

*(Rutherford & Bhabha, 1990, p. 216)*

As new (or different) discourses are created, culture is simultaneously transformed. Remixing Corsican graffiti, as with any other text, creates a certain opening. Knobel and Lankshear (2008) speak to the notion of *hybridization* as it “captures important dimensions of the relationship between cultural development and remix practices” (p. 25). In its most simplified form, this hybridization implies a mixture of elements. With the art of remix, hybridization allows readers to create narratives of their own. This also shifts some of the power from the artist unto readers in the form of a new space, a third space.

It is within this third space that culture, literacy and identity are transformed. While looking at rhetoric of hybridity, it becomes important to recognize that “the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation” (Rutherford &

*Alors que je continue à m’engager avec ces images/textes, je réfléchis constamment au rôle que j’ai à jouer dans la lutte pour cette langue minorée. Par la suite de mes séjours en Corse, je sais que je ne suis pas revenue au Canada la même personne. C’est à l’intérieur de ce troisième espace (third space) que mon identité hybride continue à se développer.*

Bhabha, 1990, p.211). The concept of negotiation is thus central as author

and reader as well as both dominant and dominated participate in the give and take in this third space. This notion of third space opens the door to a number of pedagogical discourses that can look beyond the traditional teacher-student relationship. The curriculum of third space invites all actors to take a step back to rethink their beliefs, perceptions and actions. Though this third space is necessarily filled with tension and uncertainty, such rich and authentic experiences invite all participants to live moments which are fecund for questioning, reflecting and learning. Such a space can, therefore, be greatly beneficial for youth.

Taking chances with critical pedagogy and encouraging students to find their own voice within this third space can also empower them to question “colonialist discourses that continue to shape language policies and practices in (post)colonial contexts today and that construct and

*Le graffiti que j'ai rencontré/qui m'a confronté ne sert pas seulement à annoncer l'identité de l'auteur/artiste, mais aussi à (re)construire la mienne. Cette praxis littéraire a eu un impact sur la construction de ma narration, mon récit.*

maintain binaries of Self and Other” (Waterhouse, 2008, para. 11). These colonialist discourses create and circulate signs, as *langue/parole*, of oppression. In this case, it is

fundamental to reiterate that “politics of representation becomes increasingly important – whose representations are these, who gains what from them, what social relations to they draw people into, what are their ideological effects, and what alternative representations are there” (Fairclough, 1999, p. 75). As Waterhouse deconstructs language monsters in her writing, she shifts away from discourses of language domination. Drawing from Widdowson (1998), the author insists that

“the so-called masters or colonists or native speakers *cannot claim natural ownership of the language either*” (Waterhouse, 2008, para. 8) and concludes that language is not “possessed” by a group or authority. Yet, this myth is promulgated throughout the academy, institutions and popular culture, leading to linguistic violence and causing linguistic insecurities around the globe. It is thus crucial to transform pedagogical practices and methods to encourage youth who are experiencing forms of linguistic violence to engage with this third space.

### Remixing Graffiti as... A Minority-Language Student-Centered Space

*Education as the practice of freedom—as opposed to education as the practice of domination—denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent and unattached to the world. (Freire, 2009, p. 81)*

Students on Corsica of all linguistic backgrounds are confronted by



Figure 8. Rejecting the dominant language

graffiti on a daily basis. Those who do not speak the Corsican language inevitably pick up bits and pieces of the Corsican vocabulary due to these messages. The words chosen are extremely

significant: *Lingua Viva*, *Libertà*, *Patriotti*, *Indipendenza* are but a few examples. This is not accidental, as “the rationale for creating, displaying or reading text must be understood ultimately as a social practice that takes place in the local” (Carrington, 2009, p.411) and Corsican graffitists provoke onlookers with messages that are deeply embedded in the local. In the images seen above, graffitists deface the dominant language and create a mirror image to the struggles of the minority language on the island. “You try to erase me, but I will not be erased!” seems a possible reading of this curriculum of defacement. The words are written across the island and become a part of the island’s vocabulary, inextricably linked to the Corsican culture.

*Les élèves avec lesquels j’ai eu la chance de travailler (et de jouer) dans une classe bilingue corse avaient d’importantes attaches à la langue corse. Pourtant, ils parlaient rarement cette langue entre eux en salle de classe et ne choisissaient jamais leur langue minoritaire sur le terrain de jeu. Les enseignants continuent à lutter pour trouver des moyens pour les encourager à trouver un espace pour cette langue en dehors des quatre murs de la salle de classe.*

Corsican-speaking students, however, are even more intimately affected by these discourses. The status of diglossia (between French and Corsican) on the island perpetuates a segregation of

the uses of the Corsican language. Kublu and Mallon (1999) express similar difficulties with the English language monster in Nunavut:

the first sign of decay is when the children play in English.

The second is when the parents speak in Inuktitut and the children reply in English. The third is when the language of the home is English, except for the elders in a corner, a generation cut off from their grandchildren. (para. 17)

Correspondingly, today's youth on Corsica rarely speak their minority language. They play and work in French and often times use this majority language at home as well. Paradoxically, a number of students are worried about this endangered language and rally with their parents during public debates. Quenot (2009) speaks to this as he writes the following about the Corsican language: « *on y tient, on la défend, on s'y réfère, mais on ne la parle pas* » (p. 85). Perhaps as a result of this situation, more and more parents on the island are choosing to enrol their children in the new bilingual education. Yet without the use of Corsican in other spaces, the school alone is not able to form Corsican speakers.

*Je comprends que la construction identitaire est un processus continu. Une personne a toujours à (re)négocier sa place au sein d'une culture, d'une communauté et d'une langue. Bien que cela puisse sembler un processus difficile, j'en suis venue à réaliser que c'est un processus extrêmement libérateur. Si l'identité n'est jamais figée, j'ai conséquemment la liberté de me réinventer et de trouver ma place dans des communautés différentes.*

As more students are learning the Corsican language in school than ever before, the role teachers play in the construction of linguistic identity is central. Fairclough (1999) speaks of the “need for critical

*Comment alors, en tant que pédagogue, pourrait-on encourager les enfants à considérer la construction identitaire comme un processus aussi positif? Comme une opportunité de remixer eux-mêmes en intégrant de nouvelles identités (artiste, auteur, citoyen engagé) à leur perception d'eux-mêmes?*

awareness of discourse in contemporary society” while emphasizing that educators “should make it a central part of language education in schools, colleges and

universities” (p. 79). How then do the graffiti that surround minority-

language youth create a unique and fecund curricular space for practicing critical literacy skills?

### (Re)reading Graffiti as... An Opening for Critical Literacy and Critical Pedagogy

*Writing ethnography as a practice of narration is not about capturing the real already out there. It is about constructing particular versions of truth, questioning how regimes of truth become neutralized as knowledge, and thus pushing the sensibilities of readers in new directions. (Britzman, 1995, p. 237)*

Encouraging students to critically deconstruct texts is an important component of critical pedagogy. The messages that graffiti convey

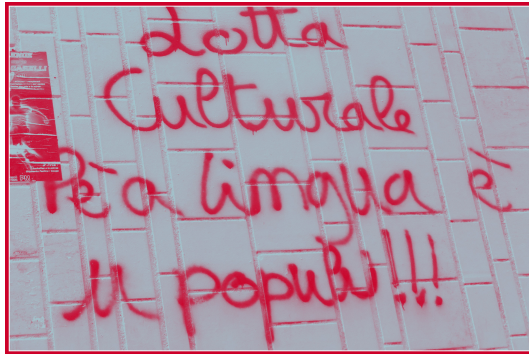


Figure 9

regarding Corsican culture and language form a hidden curriculum or public pedagogy that necessarily influences the inhabitants of Corsica. It is therefore imperative to focus

on the importance of developing approaches in the classroom that encourage youth to think critically and become engaged citizens. Giroux (2004) urges all pedagogues to take risks in their everyday teaching strategies in order to



develop “the pedagogical conditions for critical agency” which are required for today’s students to “be educated for democracy” (p. 124). Graffiti texts serve as a poignant starting point for critical class discussions.

In the context of deconstructing and (re)reading graffiti, there is also a need to move from critical discussion to critical action. I therefore incite pedagogues to use remixing in their classrooms

*Quand je (ré)agis aux graffitis et vis l'expérience de remixage, je me demande comment les enfants qui sont confrontés par ces graffitis de façon quotidienne peuvent être inspirés/touchés/transférés par l'acte et l'art du remix?*

as the art and act of remixing “provides an educationally useful lens on culture and cultural production generally and on literacy and literacy education more specifically” (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008, p. 32). Indeed, Freire (2009) asserts that “liberation is praxis: the action of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (p. 60). Inspiring students to remix graffiti in whichever form they wish simultaneously

allows them to deconstruct and reconstruct meaning regarding endangered-language discourse and the politics that are involved in order to transform their worlds. Responding to graffiti through the art of remixing engages students as “a response is not just a re-action, a protest, as it were, against being



Figure 10.

disturbed; it is, as the word indicates, an answer” (Dewey, 2012, p. 23) and therefore permits them to play within the third space where power is negotiated and transferred and exercise their own voice in curricular conversations that necessarily affect them. Consequently, remixing graffiti constitutes a form of praxis. Youth become the authors/artists of their own remix and in turn produce texts that speak their view regarding the regimes of truth of language domination and the role they wish to play within the process.

Working with graffiti also nurtures inquiry and allows pedagogues to teach for social responsibility, a critical curricular component in today’s classroom as Wolk (2009) states that “most students will not develop this social and civic literacy and the courage to act on it unless teachers make this knowledge an explicit and essential part of our classrooms” (p. 667). This practice accordingly encourages youth to reflect, question and ultimately take action within their community. As the pen is mightier than the sword, I can only imagine the impact that engaged students could have with the wealth of resources and technologies at their disposal.

### (Re)reading Graffiti as... Inconclusions

*Auto/ethno/graphies are live(d) experiences that work within the (im)possibilities of closures, conclusions, and convocations.*  
(Morawski & Palulis, 2009, p. 18)

Exploring a/r/tography and auto/ethno/graphy encourages a rereading of the self as artist, researcher, teacher and actor. In my reflexive

performance as auto/ethno/grapher, I have presented a bricolage of theory, photographs and narratives that deconstruct Corsican-language graffiti. I presented (re)readings of graffiti as praxis, marginalia,

*En m'alignant avec la notion de Gough (2008) d'"inconclusion", je ne veux pas conclure mon récit. Je choisis donc de prendre ce moment pour poser une série de questions curriculaires pour inciter une réflexion continue dans le contexte d'études du curriculum au Canada et à l'international: Comment pourrait l'acte du remixage influencer la sécurité linguistique des élèves de minorités linguistiques? Comment le remixage pourrait-il encourager les élèves à (ré)agir et à s'exprimer à travers l'art? Quelle influence pourrait avoir le remixage sur les pratiques des enseignants qui favorisent l'enseignement des compétences de littératie critique? Enfin, comment le remixage pourrait-il insister sur la nécessité de reconnaître et d'occuper un troisième espace pédagogique social, politique et linguistique?*

empowerment and hybrid space to contribute new perspectives in relation to minority-language curricular perspectives. I also explore my own remixing and the necessary call to pedagogical action that deconstructing graffiti evokes. It is within a space of hybridization and tension that pedagogues can truly be confronted with what it means to engage with students to encourage them to develop a critical awareness of signs and language. What's more, as

pedagogy involves praxis, so does the act of remixing graffiti call youth and teachers alike to action. How might we then as a curriculum scholars, teachers, and citizens here in Canada reconsider a curriculum of minority-language graffiti as a possibility, a rupture and as a prolific starting point for student discussion, reflection, remix and praxis? I choose to leave this question as well as my narrative suspended to create (third) spaces, which encourage readers to deconstruct this text and

rebuild discourses that are meaningful to their political, linguistic and curricular space.

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