

Craig K. JACOBSEN

Reconstructing the Foreign Teacher: The Nativization of David Crook in Beijing

Abstract This paper is a critical examination of the life and work of David Crook (1910–2000) as an English teacher in China from just prior to 1949 through the 1980’s. It describes Crook’s struggle to transcend attitudes of superiority commonly associated with native speaking English teachers at the time as well as his efforts to introduce innovations in English language teaching that were appropriate for the circumstances in China. The article concludes that an understanding of Edward Said’s notion of intellectual exile can assist in understanding Crook’s success at adjusting to a challenging social, political and educational environment in China and transcending the dichotomies separating native and non-native speaking teachers as well as Chinese and non-Chinese teachers.

Keywords native, non-native, China, English, education, exile

Introduction

In this article, the lived experiences of David Crook (1910–2000) are critically examined as an example of a self-defined “native speaking” English teacher in China who struggled to reconstruct himself as a native speaker and transcended the native/non-native speaker dichotomy in English Language Teaching (ELT). His efforts to introduce innovations in ELT and struggle against native speaker tendencies are discussed as examples of a transcendence made possible by his partial nativization in Chinese society and Chinese ELT. Although working in a different era with different challenges, Ruth Hayhoe’s own nativization in China and many accomplishments as an educator and educational administrator working in Hong Kong and China provide a similar example of how to transcend the dichotomy between Chinese and foreign educators. The article concludes that

Craig K. JACOBSEN(✉)

College of Global and Regional Culture, Okinawa International University, Ginowan City,
Okinawa 901-2701, Japan
E-mail:jacobsen@okiu.ac.jp

Edward Said's notion of the unique insight afforded by the detachment experienced by intellectuals in exile demonstrates how both Chinese and non-Chinese educators might challenge orthodoxies and move beyond this problematic dichotomy between these two groups.

At the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China was a nation devastated by a century of war and internal strife. To compound the situation, the Cold War had already begun, and the resultant break between China and the dominant English speaking countries meant that China would suffer a serious shortage of English speaking foreign talent who might help rebuild the country. The few English speaking foreigners who stayed or who were invited to come after 1949 played significant roles in education and other important aspects of Chinese life, some still active in China after more than sixty years. At a time when most Westerners were leaving China, this small group went against the flow to work in China. Those who made this choice were branded as spies, turncoats, defectors, traitors, dupes and apologists in their own countries, so though it may seem ironic that some of them were imprisoned as foreign spies during the Cultural Revolution, it is precisely in this state of detachment or exile, neither entirely part of one community nor the other yet intimately knowing both communities, that we may find their unique ability to transcend the notions of what it means to be natives of a place and native speaking teachers.

Of the more well-known foreigners in Beijing, David Crook and his wife Isabel are the only ones who worked primarily as educators and David is the only one for whom we have an extensive written record of his life and his work as a teacher there. This written record includes his autobiography, three books on China and a shorter autobiographical account co-written with his wife, articles he wrote, obituaries and reminiscences. The analysis of these records draws on the application of narrative inquiry by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) to the construction of the professional identity of teachers and the use of this by Hayhoe (2006) for understanding Chinese educators. The analysis of the strictly autobiographical works of Crook is adopted from narrative identity construction utilized by Pavlenko (2006) to analyze the use of autobiographies in the construction of narrative identities of immigrants. While Crook's autobiography would be useful in understanding a significant educator's construction of their narrative, the intent of this article is to analyze his experiences as a focal point from which to understand how to reconstruct the role of the foreign teacher and ultimately transcend the dichotomy between native and non-native speaking teachers and between foreign and local teachers (hereafter "the dichotomy"). To accomplish this larger question, this article therefore synthesizes the multiple narratives of Crook's fifty years in China, interviews with approximately fifteen

of Crook's contemporaries, family members and other individuals¹, secondary sources, and the narratives of his foreign colleagues to demonstrate how the lived experiences (both inside and outside classrooms and schools) of foreign teachers can illustrate ways of transcending problematic binary approaches which categorize teachers based on single traits such as native, non-native, foreign and local.

The significance of the transformation of David Crook lies in the fact that several aspects of his life are illustrative of what might be called "nativization," the acculturation of an outsider in a local teaching community. This nativization in the Chinese teaching community can be observed in his ability to innovate on Chinese terms and overcome typical native speaker tendencies while his equally important nativization in Chinese life outside the workplace can be seen in his level of integration into Chinese society. Crook's reflections on his teaching work and life allow us to longitudinally examine how the lived experiences of a foreign teacher over five decades in a single country assisted him in developing the ability to critique and adjust his role over time based on a critical understanding of himself and of local circumstances made possible by his intellectual detachment from both his native and adopted countries.

The notion of exile expounded by Edward Said is examined as a theoretical framework for conceptualizing how foreign teachers can develop unique skills of observation and analysis based on this intellectual detachment. These teachers are subject to the same experiences of detachment from the familiar and immersion in the unfamiliar that exiles encounter, experiences that can encourage the development of insight applicable to the transcendence of binary ways of thinking that have constructed the dichotomy and continue to reinforce it. The struggle which David Crook went through to transcend feelings of superiority and become somewhat nativized in China yet free to critique both China and his native country is illustrative of the potential for a detachment from orthodoxy which all teachers might develop and can serve as a model for ultimately transcending the dichotomy and reconstructing new roles for foreign teachers.

This article begins with a consideration of the significance of the native speaking teacher and of locale in the dichotomy. It then discusses the connection between David Crook's lifestyle and work style and his nativization. Based on this, the article then examines two aspects of his work as a native speaking teacher outside his native place: his struggle to implement change in ELT and his struggle against native speaking teacher tendencies. Finally, drawing on the

¹ Formal and informal interviews were conducted with approximately fifteen Chinese and non-Chinese individuals including three contemporaries of David Crook (Sidney Shapiro, Sidney Rittenberg, and Yang Xianyi), his spouse Isabel and two of his children, Carl, and Michael.

above, Crook's case is examined as an example of the reconstruction of the native speaking teacher and the transcendence of the dichotomy due to his having developed a stance analogous to that of the exiled intellectual of Said. This article concludes that the transcendence Crook achieved is applicable to all teachers. Readers familiar with Ruth Hayhoe's experiences in China will find many parallels.

The Dichotomy, the Locale, the Native Speaker and Nativization

Research on the global implications of the spread of English and the deconstruction of the myths of the native speaker has begun to transform ELT. It has resulted in calls for viewing the differences between natives and non-natives as a continuum rather than a dichotomy (Davies, 2003; Medgyes, 1992), for an emphasis on expertise, affiliation and inheritance rather than native or non-native status (Rampton, 1990), for consideration of a core of English as a lingua franca to replace native models (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2004), for a recognition of the concept of native speaker as a social construct lacking linguistic basis (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999), and other challenges to the validity and usefulness of the terms "native" and "non-native" and the dichotomy itself. The once widely accepted view of the native speaking teacher as the ideal teacher has begun to be supplanted by a recognition of the relative merits of the non-native teacher in terms of empathy for local students based on direct experience and knowledge of the problems faced by local students and of local educational systems and teaching approaches.

Despite these developments, however, the dichotomy is still prevalent in ELT, and there is still much to be understood about how it operates in different locales, how the role of native speakers might be reconstructed and how the dichotomy might be transcended. The enduring nature of the dichotomy is evident in the expectations of students, parents, teachers and administrators as well as in employment recruitment notices. In addition, despite attempts to supplant the terms "native" and "non-native" with less pejorative or more useful terms (Jenkins, 2000; McKay, 2002), their stubborn existence both in academic discourse and common parlance testifies to their resilience as concepts.

Our understanding of the dichotomy has also benefitted from the growing realization that more attention to both local (Canagarajah, 2005a; Pennycook, 2010) and global (Block & Cameron, 2002) implications in ELT is needed. Differing circumstances around the world, within countries and even between different schools in the same locale have caused the dichotomy to develop in ways that are only beginning to be understood (Braine, 1999; Llorca, 2006). While Braine (1999), for example, has demonstrated how non-native speaking

teachers have experienced discrimination in the universities of North America, we are finding the near elimination of the dichotomy in some elite university settings where faculty are hired and work is assigned on the basis of academic publications rather than birth, citizenship, ethnicity, accent, race and other determinants once commonly associated with native or non-native status. The question still remains, therefore, as to why the dichotomy works to encourage discrimination against non-native speaking teachers in some locales and against native speaking teachers in others.

The recent emphasis on non-native speaking teachers is laudable as they constitute the majority of ELT professionals and as research on them has begun to overcome myths and prejudices once widely accepted or tolerated. Additional research on *native* speaking teachers, however, will highlight the half of the dichotomy on which there has been somewhat less research in recent years and will help explain the origins and persistence of the dichotomy. Notable exceptions to this paucity of research on native speaking teachers are Davies (2003), who has examined the characteristics of native speakers and found all but early exposure to be contingent, Holliday (2005), who has described the movement occurring in ELT from “native speakerism” of the past to a new position associated with the inclusive “we” rather than the binary opposites “us” and “them” of the dichotomy, Luk and Lin (2007), who have performed classroom based studies of the negotiation of identities of native speaking foreign teachers and their local students, and Ouyang’s (2004) longitudinal study of critiques of native speaking teachers in a specific locale. Numerous issues related to native speaking teachers remain to be addressed. For example, native speaking teachers working in their own native country face issues which can be significantly different from those faced by the same teachers in less familiar settings abroad, and the experiences of these teachers on short term stays can be quite different from those for whom the locale becomes familiar over time. By examining the total lived experiences of native speakers with knowledge of, ties to and involvement in a local community over several decades, we can see how a broader understanding of expertise and affiliation which includes life beyond the classroom and the campus can demonstrate how teachers from outside a community can develop valuable skills equivalent to, different from and at times superior to local teachers. Crook’s critical assessment of his work and his transition from outsider to insider attests to the value of this bottom up approach to how change occurs in individuals and in particular locales.

Lifestyle and Work Style: Marxists Learning to Teach in Mao’s China

David Crook (1910–2000) was a British Marxist who came to China in 1947

with his China-born Canadian wife Isabel Crook, nee Brown, to conduct research on the land reform movement in a liberated area held by the Communist Party of China during the Chinese Civil War (1945–1949). Prior to this, Crook had traveled widely and engaged in a variety of activities which shaped his political, personal and educational philosophy. Leaving England in 1929 at the age of 18, he achieved a political awakening in the United States during the Great Depression though working in New York City, studying at Columbia University and engaging in various leftist activities. After graduating from Columbia University, he joined the Communist Party of Great Britain, fought against fascism in Spain with the International Brigade, engaged in espionage for the Soviet Union in Spain and Shanghai, taught in Chinese universities, and served in the British Royal Air Force in Asia during World War II. Hardly the typical caricature of the foreign teacher fresh out of college and ignorant of himself, China and the world, Crook came to China this second time in his mid thirties with a wealth of experiences. Their fieldwork on land reform completed, the Crooks were asked by the Chinese to delay the writing of their book on land reform² and become English teachers at a “foreign affairs training class” in the liberated areas.

The Crooks put their own agenda aside, accepted the offer to work for a Chinese determined agenda and ended up spending the rest of their lives at what is now called the Beijing Foreign Studies University. There, they worked as English teachers for several decades training China’s future diplomats and English teachers. An examination of the totality of David Crook’s lived experiences in China over more than fifty years demonstrates that it would be an oversimplification to simply describe him as a “native speaking English teacher” as his education related work in the Chinese speaking world outside his classroom including heading his department, editing a major dictionary, writing and editing textbooks, interpreting, conducting research, writing, and giving public lectures. Equally important, he also participated in Party life, political study and campaigns, harvested crops, planted trees and carried out other tasks in his community which were crucial to his understanding of life and work in China at that time.

In contrast to the many foreign colleagues who lived in the self-contained complex built in Beijing to house foreigners, the Crooks lived on campus alongside their Chinese colleagues, and their three Beijing born sons were sent to local schools and acquired Chinese as their first language. David’s ability to speak and understand Chinese was also in contrast to many of his foreign colleagues. According to his son Michael, David Crook’s Chinese was fluent

² Their dedication to their teaching work meant that the Crooks were not able to complete and publish their book on land reform until ten years later (Crook, I. & Crook D., 1959).

over a wide range of subject areas including the philosophical.³ Though obviously not Chinese, their lifestyle was as close as possible to that of their Chinese colleagues and students, a fact that was often mentioned decades later by those same individuals (Li, Ning, & Ying, 1995). Their intimate involvement in the life of the local community and college gave the Crooks insight into how English could be taught there, how the college operated, how it related to the local community and what conflicts existed within that local community and college.

When this lifestyle (*shenghuo zuofeng*) was coupled with his studies of China and Chinese, his Marxist ideology and previous experiences in China and elsewhere, David Crook was better able to appreciate and adapt to the ideology and work style (*gongzuo zuofeng*) of the new workplace than most foreigners and even some Chinese. The Chinese language equivalents for “lifestyle” and “work style” are included here to indicate that the English equivalents do not entirely capture the nuances of the Chinese or the distance he had to move in order to adapt: where living conditions were spartan, a cooperative spirit prevailed and people’s most minute choice of words, food, clothing, housing, furnishings, transportation, reading material and entertainment were all closely observed and commented on in their highly politicized world. Though non-Chinese and ultimately unable to become Chinese⁴, Crook nonetheless developed considerable expertise on and a strong affiliation for China that assisted him in his nativization and transcendence of the dichotomy. The first example of this transcendence comes from the following discussion of how Crook approached the issue of innovation in ELT teaching approaches.

Innovation in ELT: Learning Sino-Centric Approaches

One area of continuing conflict between foreign and local teachers has been the role native speaking teachers have taken in attempting to introduce innovations in ELT outside their native locales (Holliday, 2005). At a time when some foreigners were attempting to determine the agenda of the larger ELT community for the benefit of themselves and their home countries (Phillipson, 1992), Crook agreed to work for Chinese determined goals, in solidarity with Chinese colleagues and by adopting Chinese approaches to his teaching. His comments on his struggle with this conflict indicate how he appreciated the importance of

³ Michael Crook (personal communication, July 17, 2009).

⁴ Although marriage to a Chinese as in the case of Gladys Yang (Yang, 2002), the taking of Chinese citizenship as in the case of Sidney Shapiro (2000) and membership in the Communist Party of China as in the case of Sidney Rittenberg (Rittenberg & Bennett, 2001) were all markers of the assimilation of a foreigner in China, the concept of becoming Chinese remains foreign in China due to the racial connotations associated with being Chinese.

understanding the ways non-Chinese might negotiate among the competing approaches of colleagues, Chinese government policy and their own inclinations. In order to understand Crook's reactions to the different ELT approaches used over time in China, one must examine not only the teaching approaches which prevailed during those times in China but also the lived experiences and political ideologies of the individuals involved. This is because lifestyle, work-style and teaching methodology were often intertwined and inseparable, as well as influenced by government policy and political ideology on which the Chinese themselves did not always agree. According to Isabel Crook⁵, these differing political ideologies were at times a more significant dichotomy than any based on status as a native or a non-native speaking teacher.

When the Crooks first joined the foreign affairs training class in 1948, it was located in the rather poor village of Nanhaishan, ten miles to the west of the city of Shijiazhuang. Living and working with students, colleagues and peasants in the spare or abandoned rooms of villagers and in the surrounding countryside under wartime conditions that included air raids and a forced evacuation of the school, Crook learned the lifestyle and work style of the liberated areas where leaders and intellectuals kept close to the people, theory was combined with practice, labor was an important part of the curriculum, a collective spirit was encouraged to help build socialism, and simple living, hard work and self-sufficiency were necessary and considered virtuous.

Even though Crook was a dedicated Marxist and willing to make sacrifices for China, his earliest experiences in Nanhaishan indicated to him that his teaching approaches could come into conflict with Chinese approaches. Crook (2004) described one such attempt to innovate for which he was rebuked during that period:

I instinctively rejected the traditional approach to teaching: forced feeding and mechanical memorizing. To counter it, I organized discussions and debates. But getting the students to talk rather than listen to the teacher was like drawing teeth. In desperation I proposed a provocative debate topic: "Capitalism is superior to socialism", explaining that it was not necessary to believe what you argued for. (Chapter 10, p. 3)

The debate was quietly banned to save face. The topic was too controversial, regardless of the method employed. Crook continued to attempt to innovate, to be an agent of change, and to chafe at Chinese ways of work. Even during this early period, however, Crook (2004) was already aware that his "bourgeois ideology" hindered his work as a teacher and that it was necessary to "curb my

⁵ Isabel Crook (personal communication, September 20, 2009).

arrogance and impatience” (Chapter 10, p. 4). He was learning to innovate by testing the boundaries of Chinese acceptability and critically reflecting on his work.

With the liberation of Beijing, the school moved to Beijing, a distance of some 300 kilometers. David Crook walked most of the way with Chinese students and colleagues who had already become “comrades,” an indication of the beginning of his nativization (Li et al., 1995, p. 276). Following this move into an urban setting, Crook was faced with a new educational campaign, “overcome guerilla work style and regularize education,” which challenged the teaching philosophy of the liberated areas (Crook & Crook, 1979a, p. 48). Although this was a government directive, the situation was complicated as some (including the Crooks) still relished the ways of the liberated areas, while other newly arrived Chinese students and faculty at the college came from “bourgeois” backgrounds, had never experienced life in the liberated areas and brought different perspectives on lifestyle, work style and teaching. These conflicts over teaching approaches continued and resurfaced as a major issue during the Cultural Revolution (Milton & Milton, 1976, pp. 47–52).

Crook noted that there were two competing ELT approaches in Chinese universities prior to 1949: the traditional Chinese approach associated with colleges of the defeated Kuomintang government and the non-traditional approach associated with missionary or other foreign run colleges in China. Crook characterized the former as a teacher centered approach with emphasis on memorization, theory over practice, grammar over fluency and the study of the classics of English literature. According to the Crooks (1979a), this “taught them *about* the language but produced little proficiency in using it” (p. 29). This approach was commonly labeled “duck stuffing” in reference to the way ducks are force-fed. The latter approach was associated with “cultural aggression” (*wenhua qinlüe*) in that students were thought to be learning “at the expense of their own language and culture” (Crook, 2004, Chapter 10, p. 26), a concept akin to linguistic and cultural imperialism. Both approaches would be deemed to be lacking in the building of New China.

Following the move to Beijing, educational authorities instructed teachers “to draw on the best aspects of the old tradition, which had certain virtues; to apply useful experience gained in education in the Liberated Areas and to learn from the Soviet Union” (Crook, 2004, Chapter 10, p. 26). Crook was generally critical of the first trend and tended toward a combination of approaches associated with cultural aggression, the experiences of the liberated areas and the Soviet Union. Despite the potential for conflict between one approach associated with imperialism and two others with revolution against it, Crook at that time secretly saw himself as a “defender of a Communist approach to education” and contrasted this with the traditional approach which focused on literature and

linguistics and exemplified a “backlog of Confucianism and an upsurge of bourgeois academic snobbery and pedantry” (Chapter 10, p. 29).

The tendency of Crook to follow the approach of the foreign run colleges was evident as he argued the case for training students to communicate in English and emphasized these areas in his own teaching. Although he admitted that some of this involved embracing methods that were criticized for their imperialistic nature, he no doubt believed that it was possible to separate the imperialistic elements from the more appropriate teaching methods practiced at foreign run colleges and carried on despite the fact that his approach had its detractors among his Chinese colleagues. Crook and other anti-duck stuffers also had powerful Chinese supporters that included Mao Zedong who enjoined Chinese educators to “use the inductive method, not the ‘stuffing the duck’ method” (Milton & Milton, 1976, p. 49). Crook (2004, Chapter 10, p. 26) noted that due to the efforts of the anti-duck stuffers, the school developed a reputation for teaching the living language and producing students who could do more than just read and write.

In both lifestyle and teaching practices, Crook clearly adhered to the second trend of applying the experiences of education in the liberated areas. He achieved this through his spartan lifestyle, by keeping in close contact with his community and students, and by taking those students to farms, factories and tourist sites to role play acting as interpreters for foreign visitors, an approach in line with the integration of theory and practice which was associated with education in the liberated areas and in which he had direct experience. This entailed long hours of dedicated work in close contact with students, sharing his home with them, sharing meals in the student canteen and “forging close relationships” (Crook, 2004, Chapter 10, p. 3) with the community outside the college through participation in labor with his students and colleagues. While many Chinese educators resisted this approach, Crook, the outsider, embraced it.

Finally, regarding the third trend, to learn from Soviet experts, Crook appears to have been a keen but critical supporter. He formed close relationships with the Soviet experts who were dispatched to his college and was generally enthusiastic about the innovations they advocated which included observing and critiquing the classroom practices of fellow teachers. Regarding his critique of Chinese colleagues, Crook (2004) was conscious of the need to be tactful and mix his criticisms with praise (Chapter 20, p. 25) but later wondered if these colleagues may have resented his criticism, an indication that he developed an appreciation of the sensitive nature of criticism given by teachers from outside. In contrast to Chinese colleagues who advocated the wholesale adoption of Soviet models, Crook’s support for those models did not include a willingness to ignore situations in which Russian approaches were inappropriate for China. This is evident in the case of Russian-English textbooks that became widely used in

China but were heavily oriented to the linguistic needs of Russian speakers and needed to be “Sinicized” in Crook’s words (Crook & Crook, 1979a, pp. 50–51). Crook (2004) was also aware that although his own experiences in working with Soviet educators were generally positive, “in some other fields, they were out of touch with Chinese reality” (Chapter 11, p. 11). Crook thus had an intimate view of both positive and negative examples of the application of foreign models to local circumstances in China that no doubt assisted him in further appreciating the limits of his own role as a foreign innovator there.

As local teachers can themselves be divided on the issue of teaching approaches, teachers from outside that community, especially those asked to innovate, must be cognizant of local needs, trends, and divisions, and then develop means to succeed in cooperation with local teachers. Crook would have argued that far from being an agent of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) in which the teaching of English and adoption of British and American approaches serve to promote the interests of those countries, he was resisting linguistic imperialism as described by Canagarajah (1999). He was asked by the Chinese to teach English in order to strengthen China, working under Chinese direction to achieve Chinese determined goals and sinifying foreign models to make them more appropriate for China. Both Chinese and foreign participants interviewed for this study stressed that non-Chinese teachers are able to achieve significant innovations in China, including innovations that Chinese themselves may be incapable of achieving on their own, that it is the way in which foreigners attempt to innovate that is most crucial, and that their efforts will be more successful if there are Chinese who are also attempting to achieve the same results.

In summary, though non-Chinese and working under challenging circumstances, Crook was able to introduce innovations by blending foreign and local approaches so as to find optimum means of addressing local circumstances. He did so by availing himself of insider knowledge of life and work in China developed over time and by successfully negotiating the minefield of competing approaches with which the Chinese themselves were also struggling. A similar struggle is also apparent in his critique of himself as a native speaking teacher detailed in the following section.

Struggling against Native Speaking Issues and Tendencies

This section will delineate examples of the recurring issues and tendencies associated with the native speaking teacher and the dichotomy in ELT that David Crook became cognizant of and struggled to overcome. These include his feelings of superiority as a teacher based on his ability to use the language, his ideas concerning native, non-native and “other” accents, his dilemma regarding

medium of instruction, his use of English for professional communication, and his work as an administrator with authority over Chinese colleagues. That Crook was able to acknowledge the problematic nature of these issues and tendencies and then overcome them demonstrates the ability of foreign teachers to reconstruct themselves and transcend the dichotomy by developing and applying a critical approach and a perspective of detachment that is detailed in the following section. Finally, this section will also examine how local Chinese actors reinforced the dichotomy and the need to thus consider the crucial role local actors might play in overcoming the dichotomy.

The notion of the superiority of the native speaking teacher which equates proficiency in the use of the language with knowledge of the language and how to teach it is still evident today in ELT, so it should come as no surprise that Crook (2004) initially considered that “being an educated native speaker of English I knew the language and how to teach it, better than any of the Chinese staff” (Chapter 10, p. 14). Crook also notes how he complicated relations with his Chinese colleagues by setting himself up “as an authority on the English language because I was a native speaker. In fact I was rather proud of my ignorance of linguistic theory, which they were steeped in” (Chapter 10, p. 19). This stance is typical of the ill prepared native speaking teacher, but Crook’s commitment to serving local needs meant he was able to develop an appreciation of the need to overcome this tendency. This notion of superiority is one aspect of what Holliday (2005) refers to as “native-speakerism,” and Crook acknowledged that it could harm his teaching work and working relations with local colleagues. In transcending this, Crook moved from what Holliday describes as the binary position 1 of “native-speakerism” to a more inclusive position 2 where “we” replaces “us” versus “them” (pp. 11–12).

Despite working in an era of less awareness of other forms of English and their value, David Crook was cognizant of the issue and the need to teach them, and made considerable effort to do so. At the same time, Crook appears to have uncritically distinguished between what he termed “native speakers” (himself and others from the Kachruvian core), “non-native speakers” (Chinese colleagues) and speakers of “local accents” without acknowledging the problems this might entail, for example in depreciating Chinese and other accents. Because native speakers of English were at a premium in China during that time, Crook was always on the lookout for native speakers he could bring in as guest speakers, or use as actors for role playing. He also made extensive use of films to demonstrate different forms of native speaker English and cultures. At the same time, however, Crook (2004) also recognized the need to have students hear and understand people “from Asia, Africa and Europe speaking English with their local accents” (Chapter 13, p. 18). Given that he was training foreign affairs workers who were more likely to come into contact with speakers from outside the core English

speaking countries, it may seem natural for him to have done so, but there were Chinese colleagues who were not amused by his “practical” approach (Chapter 13, p. 18). His efforts to collect examples of differing accents even risked criticism on political grounds as it sometimes included visits to foreign embassies, a practice that was politically suspect at the time.⁶

The issue of medium of instruction can also be a source of problems for those native speaking teachers who are monolingual or who speak local languages and either choose not to use their bilingual abilities to facilitate their teaching or are enjoined from doing so by local authorities. Crook’s experiences offer a good example of a situation in which local authorities wanted native speakers to teach in English even when they are capable, as Crook was, of using local languages to assist in their teaching.⁷ In David Crook’s case, his ability to use Chinese in his teaching set him apart from most native speaking teachers in China who were unable to speak Chinese or those who believed in English only approaches. Organized visits to his home, however, were another matter as he seemed to use these more informal situations as attempts to recreate an English speaking environment where Chinese would not be used.

Although native speaking English teachers are often in the minority in workplaces outside their own countries, it can be common to find them relying on English as their means of communicating with colleagues outside the classroom and in the local community. This largely ignored issue of language use *outside* the classroom and the workplace can be a crucial determinant of successful and satisfying personal and professional lives. In addition, the politics of language choice in the workplace are often most evident outside the classroom, especially in meetings, as it is here that decisions are made, thus making spoken language proficiency a powerful tool that native speaking English teachers can use to silence opponents or protect themselves and their agendas. When faced with criticism for conducting English Department meetings in English, Crook initially insisted that there was nothing wrong with doing so and that this practice might even be good for his Chinese colleagues. Crook eventually accepted criticism of this practice, admitting that this choice was for his own convenience and acknowledging the problems it imposed on Chinese colleagues who, due to English abilities or problems of face, were unable to fully participate in meetings held in English. Although his Chinese abilities were sufficient for most interactions with Chinese, Crook also recognized that his facility with the written language was insufficient for carrying out this administrative work without considerable assistance (Crook, 2004, Chapter 10, pp. 17–18). His experience

⁶ Michael Crook (personal communication, July 17, 2009).

⁷ Isabel Crook clearly recalled that Chinese college authorities wanted them to teach in English but was unable to specify just who these authorities were. Isabel, Michael and Carl Crook (personal communication, September 20, 2009).

here speaks to the value of focusing on the importance of encouraging multilingualism, including literacy skills, in the workplace instead of on the question of native versus non-native.

The administrative work which Crook performed also provides insight into an equally problematic yet seldom addressed issue for foreign teachers, that of foreigners having authority over local colleagues. The problematic nature of this issue is commonly realized in injunctions against foreign teachers taking administrative roles or in administrative responsibilities being given to foreign teachers who are ignorant of local conditions. Although working in a period when China had just freed itself from decades of foreign domination, Crook was for some time appointed Deputy Dean (head in practice) of the English Department and Head of the English Research Room. That he would be given administrative authority over his Chinese colleagues at such a sensitive time was owing in part to the fact that as a trusted comrade who had worked in the liberated areas, Crook was seen as more politically reliable than some of his more bourgeois Chinese colleagues. Even today in China, it is quite rare to find non-Chinese academics in positions of authority over their Chinese colleagues. At that time, his assignment to these tasks was quite remarkable and demonstrates that although it can be problematic in some eras and locales to have foreign teachers in charge of local teachers, exceptions are made for exceptional foreigners. This is not to say that all went well for Crook as an administrator. He was criticized for his administrative work style, acknowledged that his “crude concept of Western efficiency apparently needed polishing and adapting to the subtleties of Chinese society,” and was able to understand why it eventually became inappropriate to have a foreigner, comrade or not, in charge of Chinese people and affairs (Crook, 2004, Chapter 10, pp. 17–18). Here again, this issue speaks to the need to acknowledge the significance of the work teachers perform outside the classroom and the need for knowledge of the local language and society that an outsider can acquire. As non-Chinese begin to again take on more administrative responsibilities in Chinese universities, the administrative experiences of Crook and Hayhoe will prove instructive.

In summary, the “self-criticisms” of David Crook discussed above demonstrate his struggle with several problematic tendencies and issues associated with native speaking teachers and his subsequent reconstruction based on his self-critique and nativization in China. That Crook was able to work through these problematic issues to reconstruct himself as a native speaking outsider in a local ELT community and move beyond the dichotomy, and to do so without the benefit of the types of training that now address these issues in ELT, demonstrates the value of examining other such examples of non-local teachers who have gone through similar processes of nativization. This transcendence, however, does not come without the type of self-confident self-critique based on

struggle over time that Crook embraced⁸ and which is discussed in the following section. It can also not occur without a consideration of how local teachers can also contribute to the preservation or elimination of the dichotomy.

David Crook's experiences also provide a useful illustration of local actors reinforcing the dichotomy due to the scarcity of native speakers, the value they place on them, local notions of hospitality and local suspicions of foreign intentions. Though Crook attempted to eschew privileges for foreigners that included salaries and living conditions on a par with those enjoyed by high government officials, Chinese attitudes dictated that some foreigners be given this special treatment which in turn reinforced their inability to be integrated into Chinese life. When local teachers view native speaking teachers as a separate and rare resource, preexisting notions of difference and superiority can be buttressed and the dichotomy thus accentuated. Given the ability of local teachers to reinforce the dichotomy, their role transcending it is thus worthy of further attention.

Teachers in Exile: Movement and Detachment from Orthodoxy

Despite more than two decades of calls for the death or transcendence of the constructs of the native speaker and the dichotomy between native and non-native (Paikeday, 1985; Rampton, 1990; Cook, 1999; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 2001), both constructs continue to exist as these calls have focused on the *need* to move beyond these constructs rather than detailing examples of *how* individual teachers might transcend or have transcended them. The notion of exile developed by Edward Said provides a means for understanding how sufficient physical and intellectual detachment from a teacher's native place and the place in which they are working can assist teachers in this process. The nativization of David Crook in China provides a concrete example of this that is potentially applicable to all teachers, regardless of their self-perception as native, non-native, local, foreigner, expatriate or otherwise.

The attention Said has given to the influence of exile on literary and academic work has demonstrated how the banishment of an individual and their loss of everything from familiar scents to their sense of identity has resulted in the despair of desolate refugee camps but also in significant literary and academic

⁸ Michael Crook (personal communication, July 17, 2009) noted that his father's self-confidence made it easy for him to participate in criticism and self-criticism. David Crook's contemporary, Israel Epstein (Crook, 2004, Summary: A life of dedication, David Crook), also noted that Crook appreciated the fact that he was allowed to join in the practice of criticism and self-criticism. His approach stands in contrast to foreigners who studiously avoided criticism sessions.

work engendered by exceptional insight into both the society lost and the society gained. There is thus within the notion of exile both a state to be avoided and a state to be aspired to. Said (2000) illustrates this when he posits that one can distinguish between “cosmopolitan exiles” in Paris and the “miserable loneliness” of undocumented refugees exiled in the same city (p. 176). Said (1994, p. 52) also draws a distinction between exile as an actual condition and as a metaphor, thus allowing for the attainment of the insight of exile without suffering the actual conditions of banishment.

For the intellectuals in exile, there are also two possible reactions; they may live mentally imprisoned lives or may apply their powers of reason to new thoughts and experiences. As Said (2000) describes it:

The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons, and are often defended beyond reason or necessity. Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience. (p. 185)

For Said (2000), this means developing a critical perspective of the native country and the country of exile, not by rejecting them but by “*working through*” one’s attachment to them (p. 185). The fact that exiles never belong entirely to either the new or the old society frees them to extricate themselves from the powers of control exerted by orthodoxy on either side and to develop a position from which to critique both, the position of intellectual detachment of the exile. The result of this can be the ability to see things in a double perspective, “both in terms of what has been left behind and what is actually here and now,” the tendency to “see things not simply as they are, but as they have come to be that way” and the ability to “become a beginner in your circumstances” (Said, 1994, pp. 59–62).

The application of the notion of exile to the field of ELT has already been considered for its potential to develop critical orientations based on “inbetweenness” (Canagarajah, 2005b, p. xxi) and to transcend the dichotomy (Jacobsen, 2003) yet these have been suggested beginnings in need of examples and elaboration. Movement has increasingly become a part of ELT, with flows of ideas and people involving both native and non-native speaking teachers. While the ability to break from familiar ways of thinking is a skill to be valued in all teachers, it is especially crucial for teacher surrounded by the unfamiliar. English teachers generally choose their exile, and when in exile and surrounded by the unfamiliar, they are faced with the choice of living in a cocoon of comfortable ideas brought from home or breaking with these familiar ways. Foreign teachers who seem to deplore their lives outside their native lands can be found isolated in culturally sterile foreign ghettos, recreating home like Robinson Crusoe, and

inventing idealized home countries in their mind. This inability to adapt to life in the new locale can be mirrored in their teaching. These negative reactions to detachment from the familiar all harden the dichotomy and help explain how the dichotomy was originally constructed by teachers from the metropole who, when faced with the unfamiliar, drew a distinction between themselves and their surroundings. According to Said (1994, pp. 50–51), the counterparts to this deplorable state that he refers to as the volatile and unstable reaction of intellectuals to exile, are the “marvels of adjustment” for which David Crook and Ruth Hayhoe stand as examples.

Despite having been imprisoned in solitary confinement for five years during the Cultural Revolution, David Crook never regretted his life in exile as a teacher in China. Rather, he reveled in the intellectual and personal challenges that this life presented, and his life is viewed by Chinese people (Li, et al., 1995) as one of successful integration into Chinese society and significant contributions to ELT in China. Unable to become Chinese but living closely among Chinese, detached from Britain but needing to interpret English and Great Britain for his students, Crook developed critical perspectives on both societies and yet never belonged entirely to either. As Crook (2004) described his situation in 1973, he “did not really belong anywhere” (Chapter 13, p. 1), but he also felt that China was his home and that in some ways he remained essentially British. The unique view of two societies which this position affords, the one partially lost and the other partially gained, became a resource for understanding both and for adjusting to the new locale, but it did not come without a critical struggle over a period of time, a critique of self and a critique of both societies. Crook’s self critique and resultant nativization as detailed in previous sections is evidence of his having, to again quote Said, “worked through” both his past and his present locales to develop his stance akin to Said’s description of exile. As a Marxist and Communist Party member, his critique of the capitalist West may need no elaboration, but his critique of China is worthy of some attention.

Throughout his time in China, Crook was both a supporter of China and a critic of several aspects of Chinese society, some of which he initially termed feudal thinking and behavior and other later criticisms of the Chinese political system. While his initial criticisms may owe something to the practice of criticism and self-criticism instituted throughout China after 1949 in part to ensure orthodoxy, his later criticisms exhibit the detachment from orthodoxy of the exiled intellectual of Said for whom there is no orthodoxy that is sacrosanct. His critique also shares much with Chomsky’s (1987) notion of the responsibility of the intellectual to refuse to serve power and with Gramsci’s (1971) organic intellectuals who develop a detachment from orthodoxy and power in order to serve the working classes rather than the authorities. As a supporter of New

China and a Marxist, Crook began as a firm supporter of the new government and ideology, similar to the Chinese “establishment intellectuals” (see Hamrin & Cheek, 1986) of the period, but one who did question the new intellectual and political orthodoxy. In time, however, Crook developed a perspective that Chomsky and Gramsci associate with a detachment from orthodoxy and power similar to that of the detachment of exiles described by Said: intellectuals who are able to distance themselves from the familiar and the orthodox. This detachment from the familiar and the orthodox allowed Crook to reconstruct himself in the new locale without coming under the thrall of new orthodoxies in that new locale. The ultimate expression of this by Crook was perhaps his decision to continue writing his autobiography so as to critique the events of June 1989 despite the fact that, according to one of his sons⁹, Crook had essentially completed it by that time. It can also be seen in an article he wrote (Crook, 1991) in which he highlighted the need for “friends of China” to critique China.

Changes in David Crook’s political thinking are also illustrative of his ability to challenge familiar beliefs. Although quite conscious of the advantage his Marxist beliefs and analysis initially gave him in integrating into the political culture prevalent in China, Crook (2004) came to acknowledge that he had tended to take a superior attitude toward Chinese colleagues who were not Marxists, thinking “that a foreigner with Marxism could understand China better than a Chinese without it. Indeed I confidently believed that being a communist I could understand any social or political problem better than anyone who was not” (Chapter 10, p. 14). Later, however, Crook realized that his blind faith in the political leadership was misplaced and had “stunted my powers of political analysis” (Chapter 10, p. 14). That he was able to critique his strongly held political convictions is further evidence of his ability to detach himself from familiar orthodoxies. This again demonstrates the importance of understanding the total lived experiences of teaching professionals, including their political beliefs and lifestyle, not merely their academic training and choice of teaching methodologies.

Conclusion

The lived experiences of David Crook argue for a perspective which recognizes that, irrespective of their status or self-perception as a local, an outsider, a native speaker or a non-native speaker, all teachers possess, and more importantly can acquire, skills which can make contributions to differing workplaces. All teachers

⁹ Michael Crook (personal communication, July 17, 2009).

have the ability to achieve states of intellectual exile in Said's sense of the term, states in which they transcend orthodoxies of place and profession and replace considerations of birth with those of educational expertise grounded in local realities. This in turn argues for a rejection of dichotomizing labels, such as native/non-native and foreign/local, and a new perspective of teachers as individuals rather than as members of either side of binary constructs.

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