

# **BALEAP 2025 Conference:**

## **EAP as Co-Construction**

14-17, April 2025

### *Navigating 'Third Spaces': A Philosophical Approach to EAP Co-Construction*

**Garth Elzerman**

Lecturer

School of Languages

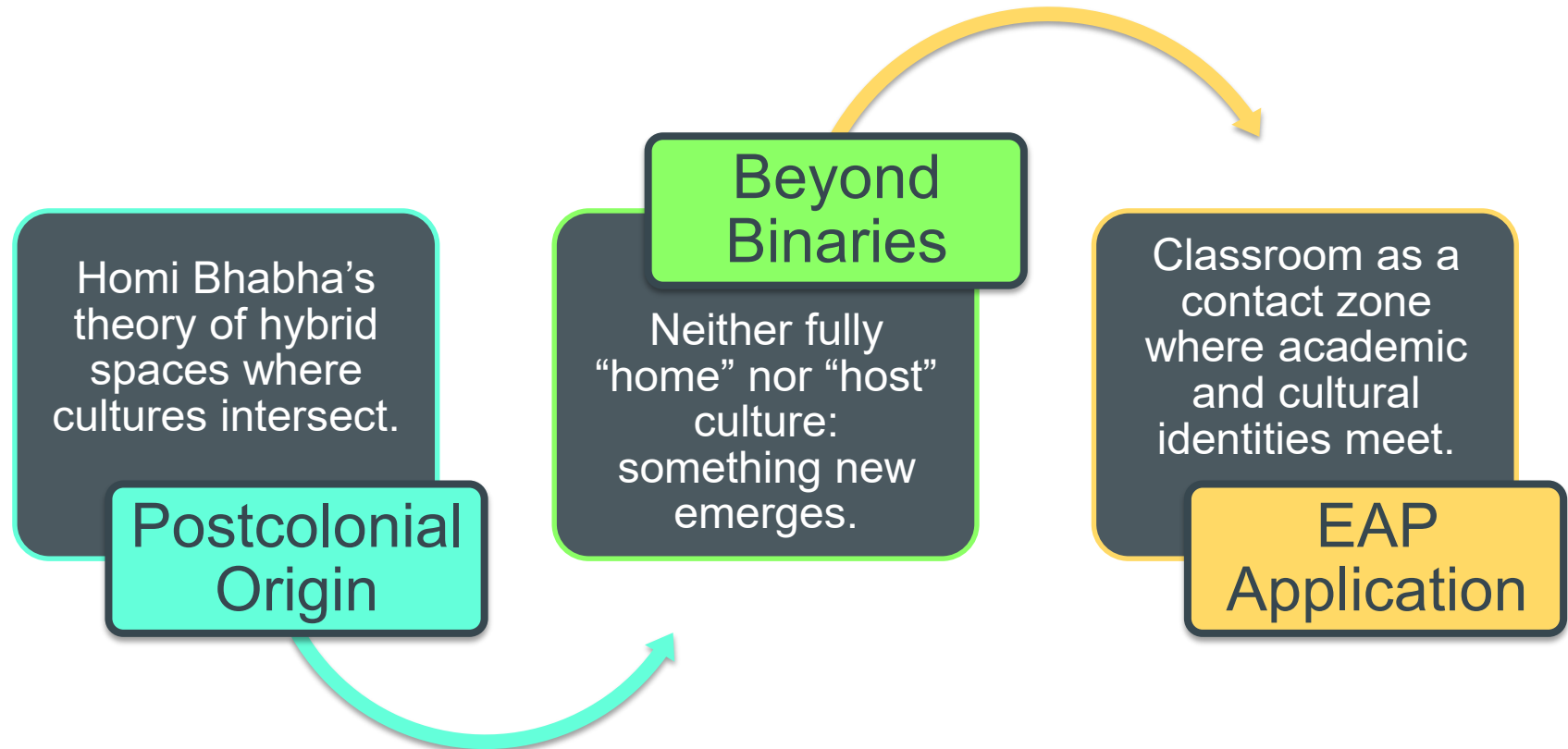
Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China



## ROADMAP

- ❑ Introducing 'Third Spaces' in EAP  
*What they are and why they matter*
- ❑ Philosophical Foundations  
*Postcolonial hybridity (Bhabha)*  
*Social constructivism (Vygotsky)*  
*Ethics of dialogue (Bakhtin & Levinas)*
- ❑ Rethinking the EAP Practitioner's Role  
*Ethical and pedagogical responsibilities in third spaces*
- ❑ Case Studies from Practice  
*Student experiences from Korea, Bangladesh, Nepal, and China*
- ❑ Co-Constructive Teaching Strategies  
*Practical ideas for facilitating collaborative, dialogic learning*

***“A third space is where cultural identities mix, meanings shift, and something new takes shape.” ~ Bhabha (1994)***



***“What a child can do in cooperation today, they can do alone tomorrow.”***

~ Vygotsky (1978)

# Social Constructivism



## **Independent Understanding**

What the learner achieves alone after support is removed.



## **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

Learning with guidance from teacher or peers: co-construction happens here.



## **Prior Knowledge & Social Context**

Cultural background, prior schooling, peer interaction.

***“Truth is not born nor resides in one head but is born between people collectively seeking it.” ~ Bakhtin (1984, p. 110)***

## Bakhtin

**Dialogism:** meaning arises through exchange

Every voice matters  
(dialogue is co-creative)

Teachers must respond to students' contributions

## Levinas

**The Other:** encounter creates ethical responsibility

Listening to the Other is the foundation of ethics

Ethical teaching means recognising student difference

***“As I see it: our role is not to overwrite students’ identities, but to help them write themselves into academic spaces.” ~ My reflection***

### **Cultural Mediator**

Help students navigate between home culture and academic norms

### **Collaborative Guide**

Engage students in shared exploration, not just instruction

### **Ethical Listener**

Listen to students’ voices with care and openness

### **Facilitator of Agency**

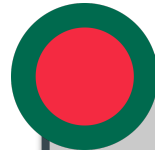
Encourage student ownership, choice, and academic voice



## KR Korea

*From silence to dialogue*

Built confidence through peer discussion and teacher scaffolding.



## BD Bangladesh

*From reproduction to voice*

Shifted from quoting to argument-based writing via one-to-one support.



## NP Nepal

*From deference to debate*

Encouraged respectful disagreement and ownership of ideas.



## CN China

*From indirectness to integration*

Adapted home rhetorical style into “Western” academic conventions.

***“In third spaces, teaching becomes a partnership; these strategies support that shared work of meaning-making.” ~ My reflection***



### **Invite Student Voices**

Encourage discussion of students' experiences and perspectives

### **Dialogue, Not Monologue**

Use open questions and shared discussion to build meaning

### **Scaffold Thoughtfully**

Build on students' prior knowledge with clear steps

### **Cultural Exchange**

Allow space to explore and compare academic norms across cultures


### **Reflect and Adjust**

Gather feedback and be flexible in your approach



# ***“Teaching in third spaces means walking with, not ahead of, our students.” ~ My reflection***


The EAP classroom is a space of dialogue and negotiation




Philosophical perspectives help us frame ethical teaching practice



Every student brings value; our role is to listen, support, and build together



Co-construction is a shared act of meaning-making across cultures



Empowerment comes not from authority, but from mutual recognition

## REFERENCES

- ❑ Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (M. Holquist, Ed.; C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). University of Texas Press.
- ❑ Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays* (V. McGee, Trans.; C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Eds.). University of Texas Press.
- ❑ Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.
- ❑ Canagarajah, A. S. (2013). *Translingual practice: Global Englishes and cosmopolitan relations*. Routledge.
- ❑ Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). Herder and Herder.
- ❑ Gutiérrez, K. D., Baquedano-López, P., & Tejeda, C. (1999). Rethinking diversity: Hybridity and hybrid language practices in the third space. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 6(4), 286–303.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039909524733>
- ❑ Lea, M. R., & Street, B. V. (1998). Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach. *Studies in Higher Education*, 23(2), 157–172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079812331380364>
- ❑ Levinas, E. (1969). *Totality and infinity: An essay on exteriority* (A. Lingis, Trans.). Duquesne University Press. (Original work published 1961)
- ❑ Lillis, T. M. (2001). *Student writing: Access, regulation, desire*. Routledge.
- ❑ Palmer, P. J. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. Jossey-Bass.
- ❑ Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds. & Trans.). Harvard University Press.

***We don't just teach English for academic purposes; we teach people finding their academic voices. And we do it together.***

~ My reflection

**Thank you!**

**Questions, thoughts or experiences to share?**