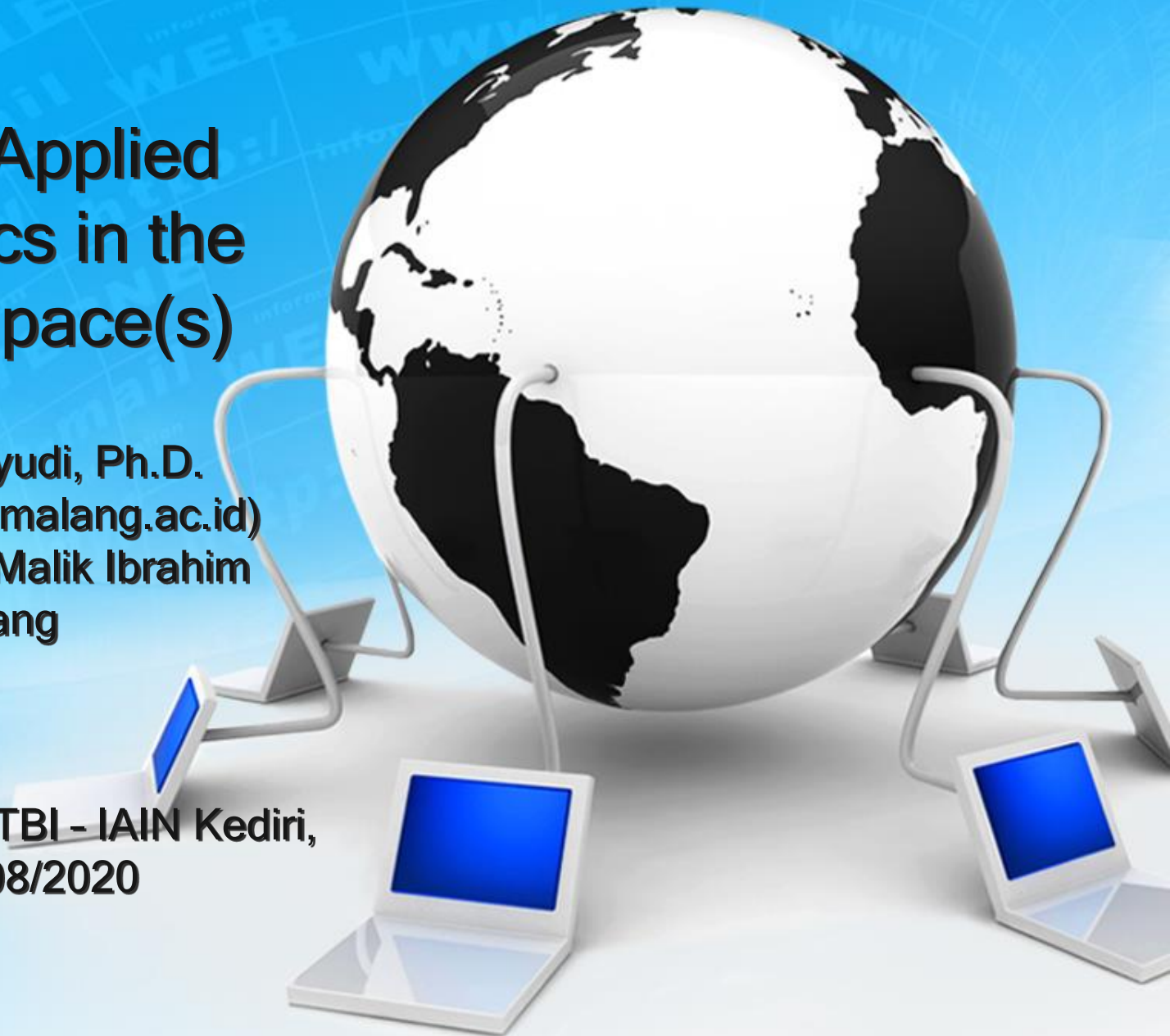# Critical Applied Linguistics in the Digital Space(s)

*Ribut Wahyudi, Ph.D.
(ribut@bsi.uin-malang.ac.id)
UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

Protabinar 4 TBI – IAIN Kediri, 19/08/2020

The contents of presentation

- The definition and scope of Critical Applied Linguistics (CAL) (Pennycook, 2017)

- Darvin's & Norton's (2015) Model of Investment: Ideology, Capital and Identity (with two case studies from digital space(s)

- Helm's (2017) Critical Approaches to Online Intercultural Language Education

The definition and scopes of CAL

- Pennycook (2017, p.173) defines CAL as "an approach to language use and education that connects the local conditions of language to broader social formations"

- The intersection of various domain of applied linguistic work be they under "critical" labels or not but still operate related critical principles

- e.g. CDA, critical literacy, critical pedagogy, anti racist pedagogy
- the issue of power, agency, inequality, ideology, domination and so on become the main interests

Darvin and Norton (2015)

FIGURE 1. (Color online) Darvin and Norton's 2015 Model of Investment.
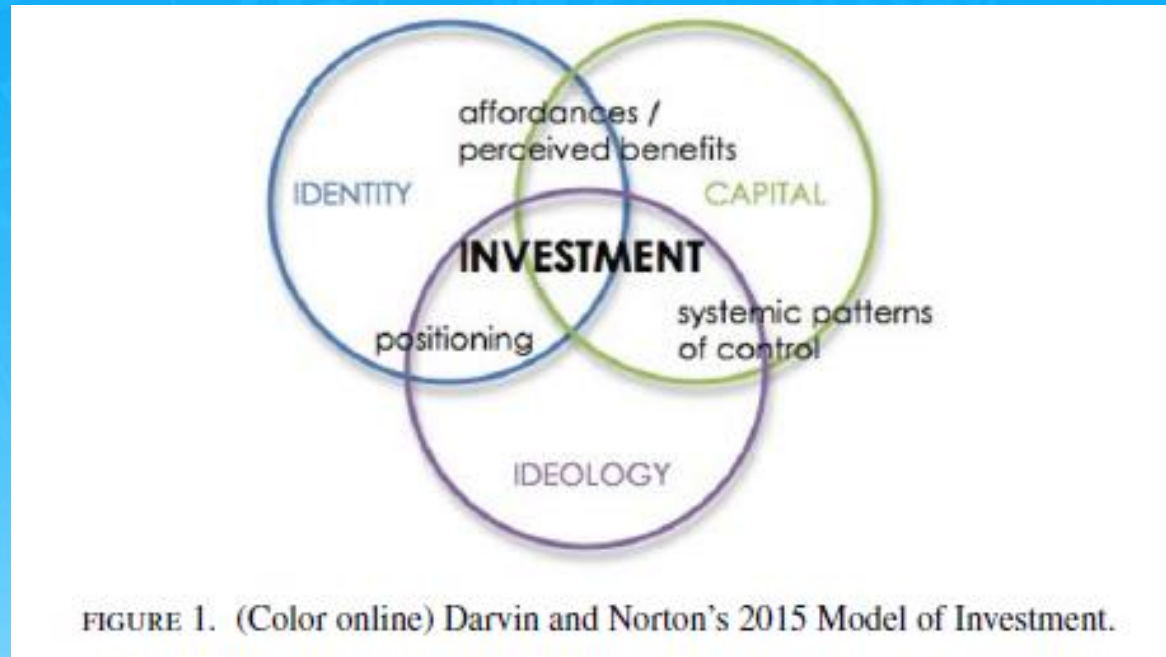
- Model of investment in the "New World Order"
- Ideology, capital and identity

Model of investment: cont...

- Norton (2013) constructs *Identity* as "how a person understands his/her relationship his/her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p.45).

- Identity as "multiple, changing and a site of struggle" (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p.36).

- Language learning process is implicated in "relations of power"

- Investment is "socially and historically constructed relationship between language learning identity and learning commitment" (p.37)

Cont...

- Inspired by Bourdieu, Norton argued that learners' investments in language will lead them to acquire "a wider range of symbolic and material resources" which will in turn increase the value of "cultural capital and social power" (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p.37)

- Norton also recognized that the "conditions of power in different learning contexts" position the learners in "multiple and often unequal ways" (p.37).

- Learners' investments in a target language depends on "the dynamic negotiation of power" in different fields and therefore, investment is "complex, contradictory and in a state of flux" (Norton, 2013).

Cont…

- Ideology = "normative set of ideas" constructed by symbolic or "world making power" (p.43). It can create mode of "inclusion" and "exclusion". e.g. "Native" speaker ideology

- Ideology is "complex and layered space" where interaction and contradiction may occur among "ideational, behavioral and institutional aspects" (pp: 43-44).

- Ideologies are "constructed" and "imposed" through the "structure of power" and "reproduced" through "hegemonic practices" and "consent" (p.44). They are therefore, the *dominant ways of thinking* which "organize" and "stabilize" societies while concurrently "exclude" and "include" and "marginalize" and "privilege" people, ideas etc

Cont...

- **Capital** is "power" and it extends from "material/economic to the cultural and social" (Bourdieu 1986 cited in Darvin and Norton, 2015).

- Economic capital = wealth, property, income

- Cultural capital = knowledge, educational credentials, specific cultural norm e.g. " students' silence" ?

- Social capital = it has something to do network of power

Cont…

- Capital shifts values in different contexts (p.44)
- The value of the "diverse forms of capital is determined by ideological structures" and is "continually negotiated in different *fields*" (p.44).
- Capital can also be symbolic (Bourdieu 1987 cited in Darvin & Norton, 2015). Thus, capital is fluid and dynamic and is subject to the dominant ideologies.
- Symbolic capital is relevant to understanding "investment" in the New Word Order

Cont..

- Identity = a struggle of habitus, desire, competing ideologies, and imagined identities (p.45)
- Habitus provides a conceptual understanding of what is "reasonable" and "possible" and the way to think and act in the dominant ideology
- Learners are positioned with regard to their gender, race, ethnicity etc

Con...

- Positioning and subject positions allows learners to exert their agency
- Desire can be shaped by habitus, but through desire learners act and exercise their agency
- Learners are able to express their desire in the realm of imagined identities (Norton, 2013)

Two case studies

- Henrietta, an 18 y/o female student from UGANDA, with low social economic background and thus with very limited internet access (facilitated by Norton). She used internet to learn computer, to learn to access information. Her desire was to "join the group of knowledgeable people in the world".

- Ayrton, 16 y/o male Pilipino who lived in Vancouver from high socio-economic background and excellent internet access. He joined online course of *currency trading* and learned about market and opportunities. He learned this entrepreneurial spirit from his father. His use of internet reflects *neoliberal ideology* where individual is considered as *entrepreneur* (pp: 49-51).

Helm (2015) critical approaches to online ILE

The researcher deconstructed the following assumptions by providing (somewhat) contradicting research findings:

- Assumption 1: Intercultural contact leads to understanding and fosters equality.
- There are indeed tensions, difficulties, and failure in tele-collaboration projects
- Assumption 2: The native speaker is the ideal interlocutor
- "Native" speaker ideology "marginalized" and "devalued" non-native speaker's identities.
- Assumption 3: We should aim to foster communicative and sociocultural competence
- Helping students to feel comfortable with conflict is "more important" than to deny disagreement

Con...

- <u>Assumption 4</u>: Technology is a neutral medium
- Technology is not neutral. Wahyudi's (2014) article on how to use post-structural and postcolonial works to interrogate Massive Open Online Courses has shown that.
- *Recently, online intercultural exchanges under "lingua franca" platform rather than 'native' speaker ideology has gained a momentum.*

Concluding remarks

- CAL in the digital space(s) has expanded the field of Linguistics research and (pedagogy)
- CAL makes us aware of the social inequality and power differentials in the digital spaces
- CAL makes us aware that digital technology is not neutral
- CAL enables the appropriation of the dominant English in the digital space(s).
- CAL helps us *critically* and *strategically* position ourselves in relation to dominant ideologies, and to navigate our imagined identities.

References

- Darvin, R. & Norton, B. (2015). Identity and a model of investment in Applied Linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 35, 36-56.

- Helm, F. (2017). Critical approaches to online intercultural language education. In S. L. Thorne & S. May (Eds). *Language, education and technology*. (pp: 219-231). Cham: Springer.

- Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and Language Learning*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

- Pennycook, A. (2017). Critical applied linguistics and education. In T. L. McCarty and S. May (Eds). *Language policy and political issues in education* (pp: 173-184). Cham: Springer.

- Wahyudi, R. (2014). "Democratic" online courses as "glocalized communication" and applied linguistics: A proposal. *JOGLTEP*, 2(3), 248-260.

Con...

THANK YOU