

Critical Pedagogy in Higher Education

Insights from English language teachers

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Abstract

In this thesis, I explore the experiences of English language teachers who have knowledge of the theory and practice of critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy is grounded on a vision of impacting social change through education and in the context of English language teaching (ELT), personal and social reform is sought through language education. Critical pedagogy is greatly needed at a time when the world continues to suffer from violence, poverty, war, injustice, and environmental change. In the midst of such adversity, critical pedagogy seeks to bring forth a hope for an improved and transformed future. Teachers who engage with critical pedagogy make a stand for justice and equity in their respective classrooms and are intent on nurturing students to become critic and conscience of society.

The teachers who participated in this study were from various higher education institutions that were located in different parts of the world. Eleven teachers self-identified as ‘critical pedagogues’, while two others had rejected critical pedagogy in their professional practice. I conducted semi-structured interviews with these thirteen teachers who were from Canada, Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Turkey, the US and the UK. Many had also lived and taught in other countries, and so they also drew from their experiences in Australia, Nepal, Indonesia, South Africa, Macedonia, Poland and Hungary. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and were then analysed based on a general inductive approach. The themes that emerged from my analysis related to why teachers became critical pedagogues, how they implemented critical pedagogy in their ELT classrooms, and how they and their students were affected by this process. Additionally, I found out why two teachers who were familiar with the theory of critical pedagogy had decided to reject it.

The choice to become a critical pedagogue was a value driven one. There were five main influences including the theoretical, pedagogical, religious, institutional and political values that the teachers had been exposed to. When these teachers embedded critical pedagogy in their respective classrooms, they ensured that

students' experiences were prioritised. So, they sought to negotiate and co-construct knowledge with their students. Besides that, an environment of trust was created because teachers problem-posed topics that were politically charged and related to students' experiences. Lastly, ELT teachers who were critical pedagogues researched their students learning experiences so that they could find out more about the impact of adopting critical pedagogy.

It was found that critical pedagogy had its share of challenges, and one of the main reasons was that it was largely 'unknown'. As a result, some teachers found themselves dealing with their personal safety and had to learn to manage a considerable amount of emotional upheaval. In addition, teachers faced resistance and antagonism from those within and outside their institutions. Despite such challenges, all continued to work with critical pedagogy, and in the process found themselves transformed as teachers. They gained new perspectives of the world, and also became critically reflective. They also reported that they observed transformations in their students. Students were seen to gain new worldviews and changed their lives outside the classroom. Furthermore, students were transformed as language learners because they were learning a language that was connected to their immediate reality and experiences.

In this thesis, I also explored the views of teachers who did not subscribe to critical pedagogy. Data showed that their decision to do so was also one that was driven by values. They sought to remain neutral in the classroom, because they did not want to enforce any particular ideology on their students. The rejection of critical pedagogy was attributed to a personal ethical position that these teachers held on to.

The findings from this study provide implications for both critical pedagogy and ELT teaching and research. Firstly, teachers may want to consider how ideology and indoctrination can be used for virtuous purposes when focused on transforming social life. Secondly, the risks and consequences of engaging with critical pedagogy need to be managed. Thirdly, teachers may want to strengthen the voice of critical pedagogy outside the classroom through action research and

develop communities of practice (COP). These implications will be useful for critical pedagogy researchers and teachers who find themselves inspired and want to contribute to its theory and practice.

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This thesis is dedicated to all those who take a stand and fight to make this world
a better place ...

Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Figures	xiii
List of Tables.....	xiv

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction	1
Background to the study.....	2
Context for study.....	3
Aims for the study	8
Research Questions	10
Research Approach	10
Thesis Structure.....	11
Definition of terms	13
a) Higher education	13
b) English Language Teaching (ELT).....	13
c) Critical pedagogy	14
d) Critical pedagogy in ELT.....	15
e) Critical pedagogues.....	16
f) ELT teachers	16
Summary	16

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction	18
The Purpose of a Higher Education	19
a) Institutional views	21
b) Teachers' views.....	22
c) Students' views	26
The social purpose of higher education	27
Critical Pedagogy Interpreted	29
1) Student experience	31
2) Value-laden education.....	33
3) Transformative education.....	34
4) A caring heart, critical eyes and a body of action	36
The roots and routes of critical pedagogy	38
The roots of critical pedagogy	38
The routes of critical pedagogy	42
A brief history of ELT.....	45
Critical pedagogy in ELT.....	51
The case for and against critical pedagogy in the ELT higher education classroom	54
1) The case for	54
2) The case against	59
Summary	63

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Introduction	65
Research Philosophy	65
Ontology.....	66
Epistemology	68
Research Paradigm.....	71
Methods.....	72
Participant Recruitment	73
Data Collection	75
(i) Interviews	75
(ii) Documents	79
Data Analysis	80
Ethics.....	82
Judgement Criteria	83
Summary	86

Chapter 4

Becoming a critical pedagogue: The road taken

Introduction	87
a) Theoretical values	88
b) Pedagogical values.....	91
c) Religious values	94
d) Departmental and institutional values.....	95
e) Dominant political values	97
Summary	98

Chapter 5

'We make the road by walking': Living critical pedagogy in the classroom

Introduction	99
a) Negotiated, co-constructed knowledge	100
b) Nurturing trust.....	104
c) Problem-posing	109
d) Researchers of students' experiences	111
Summary	113

Chapter 6

Travelling without maps: The unknown path of critical pedagogy

Introduction	115
a) On dangerous ground.....	116
b) Learning to navigate	119
c) Roadblocks.....	122
Summary	126

Chapter 7

Critical pedagogy: A journey of transformation

Introduction	127
Teachers' transformation	128
a) The teacher-student	129
b) The critically reflective teacher.....	131
Teachers' perceptions of students' transformations.....	134

a) Transformed worldviews	134
b) Transformed lives outside the classroom.....	137
c) Transformed language learners	139
Summary	140

Chapter 8

The road not taken: Voices against critical pedagogy

Introduction	142
Background and Context.....	142
Tina.....	142
Dev	143
a) A value driven choice	143
b) Striving for neutrality.....	145
c) Personal ethical position	149
Summary	151

Chapter 9

All roads meet: Research summary

Introduction	153
Research summary	153

Chapter 10

Standing at the crossroads: Discussion and implications

Introduction	161
Discussion	161
a) Managing knowledge imposition and indoctrination.....	161
b) Risks involved.....	165
c) The question of legitimacy.....	168
d) Strengthening the voice of critical pedagogy outside the classroom	172
Further implications for research	176
Limitations of the study	178
Concluding Remarks.....	180
References	182
Appendices.....	206
Appendix A: Information sheet and consent form for participants.....	207
Appendix B: Publication arising from this thesis	213

List of Figures

Figure 1: Transformation through critical language education.....	57
Figure 2: The case for critical pedagogy.....	58
Figure 3: The case against critical pedagogy	63
Figure 4: Data analysis model.....	82

List of Tables

Table 1: Definition of common names related to critical pedagogy	43
Table 2 : Location and identification of participants	75
Table 3: Interview protocol for critical pedagogues	77
Table 4: Interview protocol for teachers against critical pedagogy	77

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

I would like to start this chapter with the words of Catherine Booth, the wife of William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, who in her sermon on *Adaptation of Measures* said, ‘There is no improving the future, without disturbing the present’ (Booth, 1883, p. 57). In many ways, I find her words capturing the essence of this study on critical pedagogy in English language teaching (ELT). Booth’s (1883) provocative words reveal her firm belief that it is impossible to change the future, without first disrupting the present, and that is precisely what critical pedagogy does. Critical pedagogy problem poses by asking questions that many may not want to hear (Wink, 2000). It is primarily concerned with social injustice and investigates ways to transform inequitable, undemocratic, or oppressive institutions and social relations (Burbules & Berk, 1999). Critical pedagogy aims to strengthen the voice of learners and inspire critical consciousness (Cho, 2006), by guiding students to name problems, critically reflect and then act on these problems. (Wink, 2000).

In this thesis, I aim to capture the experiences of critical pedagogues in higher education who engage with critical pedagogy in their respective ELT classrooms. I begin by providing a brief background on how I became interested in this topic, and then go on to describe the context and rationale for the study. From there, I introduce the three main research questions, the research approach and the thesis structure. The chapter ends with definition of important terms that will be used throughout this study. Here, important terms related to higher education, critical pedagogy and ELT will be explained.

Background to the study

I first became aware of the term ‘critical pedagogy’ when I came to New Zealand to study for a PhD in higher education. Before coming to New Zealand, I was an English language teacher, back home in Malaysia. I taught academic writing at a local college, and found the subject I taught very interesting because it allowed me to link ELT to issues such as science and technology, history, economics and politics. Starting out as a new teacher, I strongly believed that students needed to have knowledge of current issues and needed to be interested in what was happening around the world. However, I never really considered how students could use this knowledge to impact social change. I never imagined what was discussed in my ELT classes could be empowering, and could help students improve their lives and the lives of others around them. Hence, when I initially came across the idea of critical pedagogy, I could not help but feel that it seemed like such an ideal approach to education. Surely all teachers would want to teach for social change and transformation! Why wouldn’t any teacher want to use education to make the world a better place?

However, as I began to engage with the literature, and talk to people involved in ELT, I began to see that critical pedagogy was a highly contested area. There were valid reasons why teachers were against its implementation in higher education classrooms. My own convictions towards critical pedagogy surfaced when one day, my supervisor asked me if I would be a critical pedagogue. I thought I would easily be able to say ‘yes’, but I could not help but hesitate. Instead, in my mind, ran all the reasons why I would not be able to be a critical pedagogue. I found that the practice of critical pedagogy was a tall order, and I was unsure if I could capture the heart and soul of critical pedagogy in my own ELT classroom.

Upon reflection, I am glad my supervisor asked me if I would be a critical pedagogue. It made the contentious nature of critical pedagogy even more real, and it also motivated me to want to understand the complexities around its practice. I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of why critical pedagogues chose to do what they do, and how they engaged with critical pedagogy in their respective classrooms. I was interested in finding out if there were any obstacles

that hindered their work, and if they had experienced any transformations through their involvement with critical pedagogy. At the same time, I was intrigued by the stories of those who were against critical pedagogy, and wanted to capture their perspectives as well. Therefore, I hope that this will be a journey of discovery for me, as I attempt to learn from the life and experiences of ELT teachers who have different perspectives on critical pedagogy and in doing so, be able to contribute to the theory and practice of critical pedagogy in ELT.

Context for study

Shapiro (2010) describes the present as troubled times, when the world is faced with threats such as global warming, poverty, violence, ethnic hatred and war. However, she notes that although this is a time of crisis, there is also renewed hope as we reconsider the meaning of education for a generation that will bear the brunt of these extraordinary challenges and dangers. Kincheloe (2008a) adds that those with a passion for fairness, justice, freedom and human dignity can make their presence felt, by fighting for a social good and a rigorous social justice based education. The notion of social justice has its roots in theological, political, philosophical, ethical and jurisprudential conceptions about the nature of a fair and just society (Singh, 2011). The idea of social justice, which is a contested concept, has been defined by Craven (2011) as fair access to rewards for all individuals and groups within society. This conception refers to ‘an egalitarian society that is based on the principles of equality and solidarity, that understands and values human rights, and that recognises the dignity of every human being’ (Zajda, Majhanovich, & Rust, 2006, p. 1).

Higher education can play a role in the quest for social justice because as Nagda, Gurin, and Lopez (2003) observe, universities and colleges are arenas that prepare students for public democracy, civic leadership and public service. ‘Higher education institutions must be conscientious members of society by engaging in socially responsible activities, and advocating for social justice throughout the world’ (Kimura-Walsh, 2010, p. 540).

Issues of social justice are addressed in the English language classroom by those who draw on the values and principles of critical pedagogy. Crookes (2013) goes on to explain how critical pedagogy works in an ELT setting:

Critical pedagogy is teaching for social justice, in ways that support the development of active, engaged citizens who will, as circumstances permit, critically inquire into why the lives of so many human beings, perhaps including their own, are materially, psychologically, socially and spiritually inadequate – citizens who will be prepared to seek out solutions to the problems they define and encounter, and take action accordingly. Second language professionals within the project of critical pedagogy focus on language and culture – matters which, to a large extent, make human beings what they are. Such language teachers are creating the subfield of critical language pedagogy, as some specialists and practitioners have been doing off and on for some thirty years now.

(Crookes, 2013, p.8)

Here, it is evident that language teaching does not take place in a vacuum. Instead, language teaching is a value-laden, ideological enterprise (Akbari, 2008b; Benesch, 1993; Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1999). This is because language constructs and socialises our consciousness which allows us to make sense of the world and conduct our thoughts (Canagarajah, 1999). In addition, Giroux (2007) argues that what teachers do in the classroom cannot be separated from the economic and political conditions that have shaped their work. For example, it is difficult to avoid political issues prevalent in ELT such as the heterogeneity of English varieties, values behind teaching methods and course materials, as well as unequal classroom relationships and roles because everything teachers do is influenced by a social and ideological sensitivity (Canagarajah, 2008). So, the ELT teacher can never be neutral because certain attitudes towards society, personal preferences, concepts and understandings of power relationships may be subtly revealed to students through interactions inside and outside classrooms. All

these arguments suggest that like all knowledge, ELT is ideological, political and ‘interested’ because it is socially constructed and reflects the interests of certain individuals or groups who are often in positions of power (Canagarajah, 2008; Pennycook, 1989). However, many ELT teachers adopt a mere functional understanding of language in their classes (Pessoa & de Urzêda Freitas, 2012). These teachers understand language as something that is apolitical and ahistorical; devoid of any moral, cultural or ethical character. For this reason, Pennycook (1990) encourages teachers to go beyond teaching functional language skills, and instead teach for emancipation and transformation.

In the area of teacher education, Evans-Winters (2009) found that many of her students entered her course with the perception that teaching was apolitical and culturally neutral. She explains:

From these students’ point of view, the act of teaching is merely comprised of a set of techniques and their manifested outcomes. The outcomes are also narrowly reduced to grades and test scores. Every now and again, teaching may lead to students’ interests in, or excitement for, a subject, but rarely do these students believe the act of teaching has larger social, political, or economic consequences

(Evans-Winters, 2009, p. 142)

It is for such reasons that Kincheloe (2008a) urges for a critical teacher education. He states that it is important for pre-service teachers to ‘gain a more complex conceptual understanding of the multiple contexts in which education takes place and the plethora of forces shaping the process’ (Kincheloe, 2008a, p. 111). While there is a need for critical teacher education, research shows that pre-service teachers are initially often resistant to such approaches. For instance, a study conducted by Hatch and Groenke (2009) revealed that a majority of undergraduate pre-service teachers actively and passively resisted critical pedagogical theories and methods that they were introduced to. In another study, Evans-Winters (2009) reported how many students who enrolled in her course were wary of engaging in

discussions related to racism, sexism and funding inequality, because they believed that teachers should leave their personal biases out of the classroom. She added that any discussion of social justice posed a threat to these students because they already had a pre-conceived notion about the intended functions of education and what is needed to become an effective teacher. Another example can be seen from Lin's (2004) experience of introducing a critical pedagogical curriculum in the Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language (MATESL) course in a Hong Kong university. She noted that the term 'critical' carried a negative connotation and she related a particular incident which reflects this:

A telling piece of evidence can be seen in a staff-student consultative meeting. When this new proposed course was discussed, a student representative misunderstood critical as behaving in an impolite and difficult way and remarked that her classmates might not want to do such a course. ... it seems that in the Hong Kong context, any culturally dirty word (e.g., critical, often taken to mean disturbing harmony by creating dissent) has to be strategically concealed under a mainstream, neutral or instrumental, technical name (e.g. Understanding Classroom Practices) so as to be acceptable and not scare students away.

(Lin, 2004, p. 271)

While such responses towards critical pedagogy may not be universal, it is evident that in some contexts, students tend to resist critical approaches in their teacher education courses. However, teachers such as Lin (2004), and Evans-Winters (2009) continue to include a critical agenda in their teacher education courses. Sung (2007) developed a graduate level critical English language teaching (CELTE) programme in Korea which explored theoretical and pedagogical concepts such as situated learning, dialogism, and post-structural and post-modern approaches to ELT. Adedun (2012) reports the contributions of a critical EFL teacher education course to Iranian teachers' professional identity construction while Love (2012) documents how he embedded critical pedagogy to facilitate

student engagement in his graduate level TESOL programme in Korea. Therefore, these teachers see the value and relevance of critical pedagogy and see a need in introducing their language learners and pre-service teacher education students to critical pedagogy.

While some teachers are strong advocates of critical pedagogy, there are others who have criticised critical pedagogy as having no practical value in the classroom (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003), and associate critical pedagogy with imposing particular views of society (Mejía, 2004) and indoctrination (Burbules & Berk, 1999). Others find the language of critical pedagogy inaccessible and exclusionary (Johnston, 1999) and are of the opinion that critical pedagogy's aims for empowerment are too vague and universalistic (Ellsworth, 1989). With such criticisms and reservations towards critical pedagogy, it is interesting that some teachers continue to find inspiration from the theory and practice of this radical pedagogy. It seems as though critical pedagogy is a minority activity that has been relegated to the periphery because it is not widely accepted by most teachers. In fact, Canagarajah (1999) makes a distinction between critical pedagogy and mainstream pedagogy and highlights that they differ from one another. This author suggests mainstream pedagogy assumes learning as a purely cognitive activity, while critical pedagogy sees one's identity, consciousness and relationships also implicated in the educational experience. Furthermore, mainstream pedagogy treats knowledge as devoid of any moral, cultural or ethical character. In contrast, critical pedagogy regards everything as value-laden. Besides that, Canagarajah (1999) notes that mainstream pedagogy assumes established facts, information and rules are simply to be transferred from teacher to students, while critical pedagogy views knowledge as a changing construct that is negotiated between teacher and student. Considering critical pedagogy appears to stand in opposition to much of mainstream pedagogy, it is worth investigating why there are still groups of teachers who champion critical pedagogy, and how they put their belief in critical pedagogy into practice.

Finally, the essence of a liberal university – one which functions to serve the needs of society is under threat because of the drastic changes brought about by

the demands and pressures of neoliberal policies (Peters & Roberts, 2000). Neoliberalism is an economic logic that is grounded on the idea that the best way to ensure prosperity and equal opportunity is to transform all economic and social arrangements to operate as if there were a free market (Vassallo, 2013). In this light, universities are seen as ‘businesses’ and students as ‘customers’ (Cowden & Singh, 2013). Advocates of neoliberalism argue that ‘democratic values be subordinated to economic considerations, social issues be translated as private considerations, part-time labour replace full-time work, trade unions be weakened, and everybody be treated as a customer’ (Giroux, 2004, p. 13). The implication for education is that it is reduced to an exchangeable commodity and becomes the equivalent of a ‘battery farm growing graduates to fulfil the demands of the market’ (Cowden & Singh, 2013, p. 16). Hence, we need university teachers who are involved in rigorous intellectual work, social responsibility and political courage to challenge the dominance of neoliberal policies.

Aims for the study

The first aim for the research is to explore the various experiences of ELT teachers who seem to be practicing critical pedagogy in isolation. This study gives voice to ELT critical pedagogues who are scattered in different parts of the world, and who may at times feel isolated in their practice. Individual stories and experiences are brought together to foster a sense of collectivism, and a space for learning from each other’s experiences is created. ‘Well-meaning academics, individually trying to ‘do it’ in their own classrooms, cannot achieve the complex social objectives of critical pedagogy; at least, they cannot achieve them on their own’ (McArthur, 2010, p. 500). For this reason, McArthur (2010) encourages critical pedagogy to link more individuals and groups together. Hence, in this study individual voices are brought together to enrich the collective voice of critical pedagogy. These stories and experiences have the potential to enlighten, inspire and motivate others who are involved in the practice of ELT to explore new opportunities that may exist in their own local classrooms.

The second aim is to gain insight into the diverse knowledge and experiences that critical pedagogues around the world have to share. The ELT teachers who

participated in this study came from different backgrounds, and have taught in various settings and contexts. Kincheloe (2007) stresses that the future of critical pedagogy rests with lessons to be learned from peoples around the world because at this point, it has failed to engage with people of African, Asian and indigenous backgrounds and traditions. He relates his fear that critical pedagogy has become too much of a North American and European ‘thing’, and that is why he calls for more diversity in critical pedagogy. Therefore, teachers from countries such as Korea, Malaysia, Canada, Turkey, Hong Kong, the US and the UK, who also draw on their experiences of teaching in Australia, Nepal, Indonesia, South Africa, Poland and Hungary bring diversity into the field of critical pedagogy in ELT. Their experiences shed light on how critical pedagogy is practiced in different educational and political situations around the world.

The third aim is to gain a better understanding of the practice of critical pedagogy. This study expands research on teachers who engage and are inspired by critical pedagogy because as noted by Bell, Washington, Weinstein, and Love (2003), there has been extensive writing on students that engage with critical issues in the classroom, but not on the teachers who actually facilitate these lessons. Furthermore, Akbari (2008b) observes that the practical implications of critical pedagogy have been rather undeveloped, and focus has mostly been on theory. So, this study aims to examine what can be learnt from the experiences of ELT teachers as well as explore how their stories can influence practice and enhance theory.

The final aim is to find out the reasons why some teachers reject critical pedagogy. Literature reveals that critical pedagogy is a highly contested area that is often relegated to the margins. Therefore, this study aims to capture the tensions surrounding the theory and practice of critical pedagogy, from the perspective of ELT teachers who have made a conscious effort to understand it and then reject it.

Research Questions

In line with the aims for this study, the following research questions (RQ) were developed:

RQ1) Why and how do teachers implement critical pedagogy in ELT?

RQ2) How does critical pedagogy impact on the experiences of ELT teachers?

RQ3) Why do some ELT teachers, experienced in critical pedagogy reject it?

RQ1 focuses on two aspects. Firstly, it examines the reasons behind ELT teachers' decisions to become critical pedagogues. It aims to uncover the various influences that have shaped their dispositions towards critical pedagogy. The second aspect that RQ1 explores is how teachers embed elements of critical pedagogy into their lessons. It seeks to reveal the practical dimensions involved in an ELT critical pedagogy classroom. RQ2 explores the impact of critical pedagogy teachers, including their thoughts to student experiences. This research question sheds light on the practical implications of critical pedagogy from the perspective of teachers who engage with it. Finally, RQ3 is directed at ELT teachers who have decided that critical pedagogy is not part of their professional practice. This question aims to find out the reasons behind their reservations.

Research Approach

This qualitative study focusses on the lives of thirteen ELT teachers in higher education. These teachers were located in different parts of the world, and were identified through personal referrals and publications. Ten of these teachers were involved in critical pedagogy action research and they researched their critical pedagogy classroom practices in their respective settings. Findings of their research were presented through journal and book chapter publications, conference presentations, on websites and in research higher degrees theses. In-depth interviews with these teachers were conducted through face-to-face interviews, Skype and telephone interviews, as well as through e-mail

correspondence. An interpretive approach was employed, and data were analysed using a general inductive method.

Thesis Structure

The present chapter has provided an introduction and background to the study. In Chapter 2, a review of literature on important issues relating to ELT in higher education is discussed. The chapter begins with examining the purpose of higher education, followed by an examination on the history of critical pedagogy, and how it has been interpreted by different scholars in the field. Next, the origins of ELT and the emergence of critical pedagogy in ELT are explored. To gain a deeper understanding of critical pedagogy, a section on its basic underlying principles and tenets is also included in Chapter 2. Finally, arguments for and against critical pedagogy are presented to understand why critical pedagogy has become such a contentious issue within higher education.

Next, Chapter 3 explores the research methodology employed. Discussion in this chapter includes my research philosophy, research design, methods of data analysis, ethics and judgement criteria.

Findings are presented in Chapters 4 to 8. Canagarajah (1999) observes that while critical pedagogy has become fashionable in some disciplines, it generally has evoked much hostility in ELT. In light of the antagonism towards critical pedagogy, the forces behind the decision to choose a pedagogy that strays from the mainstream is further investigated. According to Brookfield (1995) one's autobiography as a learner and teacher provides insight into one's practice. The rich descriptions on the life experiences of the ELT critical pedagogues allow for a deeper understanding on why they do what they do.

The idea 'we make the way by walking' will be explored in Chapter 5 in relation to critical pedagogy and ELT. This phrase comes from the title of a 'talking book' between Myles Horton and Paulo Freire. Its origin is traced to a Spanish proverb which means 'in walking, the path is made', 'you make the way as you go', or 'you make it as you go along' (Cochran-Smith, 2004). So, the stories and

experiences of the ELT critical pedagogues will be examined to gain greater insight on how they impacted the path of critical pedagogy through their classroom practices.

In Chapter 6, the various challenges faced when travelling the path of critical pedagogy will be scrutinised. The struggles that the ELT critical pedagogues face can provide an understanding of the implications that arise from making the way by walking. It closely examines the extent to which the teaching and learning process is enhanced (or disrupted) through critical pedagogy as well as some of the challenges associated with the practice.

Chapter 7 deals with transformations that happen in teachers and their perceptions of changes for students. Self and social transformation are strong agendas for critical pedagogy (Wink, 2000). Transformation from first-hand accounts of critical pedagogues, and their observations of students who have been impacted by critical pedagogy will be analysed. These explorations uncover how the personal and professional lives of teachers have been transformed, and how students have also been affected in the process.

Chapter 8 sheds light on the voices of teachers who do not support critical pedagogy in ELT. This chapter outlines some of the reasons why these teachers do not subscribe to critical pedagogy, and some of their views on this pedagogy. Their perspectives may reveal some of the realities and practicalities that exist for those who are critical pedagogues or for those wanting to utilise critical pedagogy.

In Chapter 9, a summary of chapters one to eight will be presented and in Chapter 10, important issues that have surfaced from the findings of the study will be discussed. From the discussion, the implications that exist for ELT teaching and research will be described. Finally the limitations that were present in the study will be noted, with final concluding remarks on the thesis.

The findings from this study focus on the experiences of teachers from different parts of the world, who engage with critical pedagogy by highlighting their

inspirations, challenges and transformations. The life stories of these teachers contribute to the theory and practice of critical pedagogy because they relate to the practicalities that exist for university teachers who are charged with being critic and conscience of society. Additionally, the study explores the views of teachers who have chosen to reject critical pedagogy. Their perspectives allow for the theory and practice of critical pedagogy to be better understood.

Definition of terms

In this section important terms that will be used throughout this study will be delineated and described.

a) Higher education

UNESCO (1997) defines higher education as:

...programmes of study, training or training for research at the post-secondary level provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent state authorities, and/or through recognized accreditation systems

(UNESCO, 1997)

Barnett (1990) traces the history of higher education in the UK, and notes that traditionally, it was an activity that was carried out entirely by universities, however at present other institutions such as polytechnics and colleges have begun to be accepted as institutions of higher education. In this study, the term 'higher education' shall be used to refer to institutions such as universities, colleges and polytechnics.

b) English Language Teaching (ELT)

English language teaching (ELT) is a British term which refers to the teaching of English as a second / foreign language to non-native speakers (McArthur, 2003). Exploration into the field of ELT reveals that there are three types of English language speakers (Graddol, 1997). The first category that Graddol (1997) identifies is 'native speakers'; who speak English as a first language and in most

instances, the only language. The second category are those that speak English as a second language (ESL), and the third are those that speak English as a foreign language (EFL). ESL and EFL represent twin traditions in ELT, with its historical roots stemming from the 19th century (Graddol, 2006). According to Howatt and Widdowson (2004), the origins of the term ELT can be traced back to the autumn of 1946, when it became the title of the British Council's new journal. They note that the term ELT was popular because it was able to cover the 'foreign' / 'second' language distinction that had surfaced in the 20th century. Furthermore, the name ELT did not connote or suggest an idea of 'membership', unlike terms such as Teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) and Teaching English as a second language (TESL) (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). In the context of higher education, the term English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has also been popularised. This term refers to English language courses that ESL/ EFL higher education students take to help them overcome linguistic difficulties involved in studying in an English medium learning environment (Gillett, 1996).

In this study, a broad definition of ELT will be employed because ELT will be used to refer to the practice of English language teaching in other contexts as well. For example, ELT will not only be used to describe ESL/EFL and EAP, but also teaching to native speakers. Examples can be found in TESOL/TESL/TEFL teacher education programmes and the teaching of academic writing and composition studies to university level native speakers.

c) Critical pedagogy

Critical pedagogy with its strong agenda for change is grounded on the belief that education and society are intrinsically inter-related; and because of that, the aim of education is for the improvement of social justice for all (McArthur, 2010). Critical pedagogy teaches people to recognize, oppose and reorganise social forms that are exploitative, racist, classist, sexist and spiritually diminishing (Brookfield, 2003). Among some of the central characteristics of critical pedagogy that Kincheloe (2008a) highlights are its social and educational vision of justice and equality, its dedication to the alleviation of human suffering, the

belief that education is inherently political, its commitment in cultivating the intellect and its regard for teachers as researchers. Hence, it is through education that critical pedagogy attempts to build more egalitarian power relations, strengthen the voices of learners, and inspire critical consciousness in order to promote social change (Cho, 2012).

d) Critical pedagogy in ELT

In the field of ELT, critical pedagogy is interested in the relationships between language learning and social change (Norton & Toohey, 2004). In other words, ‘critical pedagogy in ELT is an attitude to language teaching which relates the classroom context to the wider social contexts and aims at social transformation through education’ (Akbari, 2008b, p. 276).

Critical pedagogy in the area of ELT is developing in different parts of the world such as Korea (Love, 2012; Shin & Crookes, 2005; Sung, 2007), the US (Benesch, 1993; Chun, 2009; Crookes, 2013; Wink, 2000), Hong Kong (Lin, 2012), Canada (Goldstein, 2004; Guo, 2013; Morgan, 2002) Tajikistan (Fredricks, 2007), China (Guo & Beckett, 2012), Taiwan (Ko, 2013), Iran (Abednia, 2012; Aghagolzadeh & Davari, 2012; Rashidi & Safari, 2011; Safari & Pourhashemi, 2012) and Australia (Luke, 2000; Starfield, 2004).

Critical pedagogy in ELT has been described in various ways by different theorists and practitioners. Some common terms used in the field of ELT are ‘critical language pedagogy’ (Crookes, 2013), ‘critical practices in ELT (CELTY)’ (Sung & Pederson, 2012), ‘critical language teaching’ (Pessoa & de Urzêda Freitas, 2012), and ‘critical literacy teaching’ (Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 1999; Lau, 2012). All these terms have similar goals and aspirations which is ‘to foster language learning, development, and action on the part of the students, directed towards improving problematic aspects of their lives, as seen from a critical perspective on society’ (Crookes, 2013, p. 8).

In this study, critical pedagogy in ELT is defined as a practice that challenges oppressive structures in society, with the hope of bringing forth self and social

transformation. Critical pedagogy has a social objective and aligns itself with democratic ideals. Most importantly, critical pedagogy is not just a way of thinking, but a way of action. It invites students to make a change and *be* the change that is needed in the world.

e) Critical pedagogues

The term ‘critical pedagogues’ will be used to describe ELT teachers who draw on the foundational values and theories of critical pedagogy. While some explicitly teach courses on critical pedagogy (e.g. teachers who teach teacher education courses), others embed elements of critical pedagogy into the respective ELT courses that they teach (e.g. those that teach ESL/EFL courses). Similarly while some teachers openly label and self-identify as ‘critical pedagogues’, others choose not to be defined by a label, even though they theorise and practice critical pedagogy. Therefore, the name ‘critical pedagogue’ will be used to describe all these groups of teachers that draw inspiration and attempt to align their teaching to the foundational principles and values of critical pedagogy.

f) ELT teachers

‘ELT teachers’ is used when discussing the stories and narratives of critical pedagogues who participated in my study. It is also used in Chapter 8 to refer to the two teachers who are involved in ELT, but reject the ideas and ideals of critical pedagogy. In the context of this study, ELT teachers are used when referring to teachers who teach ESL/EFL, as well as teacher educators and those that teach academic writing courses in higher education.

Summary

In this introductory chapter, a background and context to the study along with the aims, research questions, research approach, and thesis structure were described and discussed.

In Chapter 2, a review of literature which contains more detailed descriptions to the background and context of the study will be provided. The issues discussed in

the upcoming chapter will help in the understanding of critical pedagogy and its role in ELT.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Chapter 2 presents the background and context to critical pedagogy in ELT in higher education. The first section provides a brief introduction on the purposes of a higher education based on the viewpoints and expectations of the institution, teachers and students. Next, an interpretation of critical pedagogy is presented, based on how it has been theorised by various scholars in the field. Four ideas which embody the basic principles of critical pedagogy are discussed. These guiding tenets provide an understanding of the values and aims of critical pedagogy. They are:

- a) Student experience
- b) Value-laden education
- c) Transformative education
- d) A caring heart, critical eyes and a body of action

Following the discussion of these four tenets is a section on the roots of critical pedagogy which traces its historical traditions, and the routes of critical pedagogy which describes how critical pedagogy has evolved over time. Chapter 2 also specifically addresses the presence of critical pedagogy in the field of ELT. It discusses some of the reasons why there has been a lack of engagement between ELT and critical pedagogy. The final section of the literature review presents a case for and against critical pedagogy in the ELT higher education classroom. It brings together the voice of advocates and critics, so that a space for interrogating and problematising critical pedagogy is created.

The aspects discussed in this chapter present my interpretation, analysis and evaluation of the relevant literature. It aims to justify my research and locate it within the field of critical pedagogy and ELT in higher education.

The Purpose of a Higher Education

As delineated in Chapter 1, higher education is defined as:

...programmes of study, training or training for research at the post-secondary level provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent state authorities, and/or through recognized accreditation systems

(UNESCO, 1997)

Barnett (1990) notes that the term 'higher' implies a level of individual development that goes over and above the meaning of 'education'. Hence, higher education possesses a set of distinctive aims and values which set it apart from other levels of education. Barnett (1990) traces the history of higher education in the UK, and notes that traditionally, it was an activity that was carried out entirely by universities. However, he mentions that over the years, other institutions such as polytechnics and colleges have begun to be accepted as institutions of higher education.

In many parts of the world today, there is much debate over the purposes of the university (Barnett, 2012). Traditionally, universities were seen to have two main roles, which were to create and disseminate knowledge (Bourner, 1996). The contemporary university in the 21st century however, is not just confined to knowledge production and knowledge transfer, because it plays a variety of roles through its relationship with state and society (Barnett, 2012).

Four common conceptions towards the purposes of higher education that Barnett (1992) outlines are:

1. Higher education as the production of highly qualified manpower
2. Higher education as a training for a research career
3. Higher education as the efficient management of teaching provision
4. Higher education as a matter of extending life chances

(Barnett, 1992, p. 5-7)

According to Barnett (1992), the first conception refers to the process of filling the economy with graduates who will be productive in the economy. He goes on to describe the second conception as aimed more towards staff compared to students, because it refers to the research profiles and outputs of those working within higher education. The third conception relates to the current system of mass higher education where institutions are under pressure to harness their resources to achieve a high level of teaching efficiency (Barnett, 1992). Finally, he explains the fourth conception as a civil good that offers opportunities for social mobility. Barnett (1992) argues that these four perspectives tend to be dominant views on the purposes of higher education. However, alternative conceptions exist. For example, the initiation to and exposure of students into academic forms of knowledge and experience, the development of student autonomy and the ability to be their own person, the formation of general intellectual abilities and viewpoints, and finally the development of critical reason (Barnett, 1992). These marginal perspectives that Barnett (1992) offers are closely aligned to that of a transformative view of higher education (Watty, 2006).

Greater insight into the various interpretations of the purposes of higher education can be gained by examining the views of different groups within higher education. Both dominant and alternative or marginal perspectives will be examined to get a sense of how higher education is understood by different parties.

Three views will be presented in the following sections:

- a) Institutional views
- b) Teachers' views
- c) Students' views

a) Institutional views

Insight into the aims and purposes of higher education can be gained by viewing the mission statements and teaching plans of universities. An institution formalises its meaning and intent by declaring its values, principles and tenets through its mission statements. 'If institutions of higher education hope to maintain their relevance to contemporary society, they must strongly affirm their values and ideals openly and clearly' (Mouritsen, 1986, p. 51). Mission statements may be criticised by some scholars and academics as 'a collection of stock phrases that are either excessively vague or unrealistically aspirational' (Morphew & Hartley, 2006, p. 457). However, they provide a view of the goals that these institutions of higher education have in mind for its staff, students and society. Scott (2006) notes that American universities were the first to come up with mission statements, followed by British, Canadian and then other universities. He adds that at present, these statements are based on teaching, research and public service.

Aside from mission statements, graduate attributes also provide insight into the aims and goals of higher education. 'One way in which universities have sought to articulate the outcomes of a university education is through a description of the attributes of their graduates' (Barrie, 2006, p. 215). According to Hager and Holland (2006), graduate attributes are distinct from disciplinary or technical knowledge and often relate to thinking skills and effective communication. Some qualities that are referred to are critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, problem-solving, logical and independent thought, communication and information management skills (Bath, Smith, Stein, & Swann, 2004). Furthermore, graduate attributes also encompass 'personal attributes such as imagination, creativity and intellectual rigour; and values such as ethical practice, persistence, integrity and tolerance' (Hager & Holland, 2006, pp. 2-3). Graduate attributes have been

defined differently by different universities and in different contexts, and some of the terms which it broadly covers includes ‘generic, core or key competencies or skills, personal or transferrable skills, and generic attributes of graduates’ (Barrie, 2006, p. 217).

While most of the attributes mentioned may be commonly associated with the idea of acquiring a higher education, graduate attributes are not homogenous and are often contested and disparate (Donleavy, 2012; O'Connor, Lynch, & Owen, 2011). This claim is evident through a study conducted by Barrie (2006), who concluded that graduate attributes were understood by academics in different ways. Therefore, although universities may have a description of graduate attributes, teachers may have different perceptions of academic work. In the next section, various views on the purpose of a higher education from the perspective of teachers will be explored.

b) Teachers' views

Teachers play an important role in higher education, and their values and conceptions of teaching and learning, can shed light on the purpose of a higher education. Fanghanel (2011) offers five common conceptions that teachers have towards their students. These conceptions provide teachers' insights into how they understand academic work, and what they believe the purpose of higher education entails. The five conceptions that Fanghanel (2011) highlights are:

- a) The student as a consumer
- b) The student as deficient
- c) The student as becoming
- d) The student as a vehicle for social transformation
- e) The student as a recipient of the desire to teach

According to Fanghanel (2011), ‘the student as a consumer’ is a utilitarian paradigm which has its focus on performance and satisfaction, where the teacher is expected to deliver and the students play their part in ensuring they succeed. The second conception she highlights is ‘the student as deficient’, which in

practice ‘translates into views of students lacking in basic skills, and the necessity to provide some corrective input to remedy this deficit’ (Fanghanel, 2011, p. 58). Although ‘the student as becoming’ also signifies a sense of incompleteness, it differs from ‘the student as deficient’ because it emphasises the student as being in the making, and the teacher engaging in this process of becoming (Fanghanel, 2011). The fourth conception is ‘the student as a vehicle for social transformation’. Fanghanel (2011) notes that this perspective focuses on the role that education has to play in redressing social and economic inequalities as well as developing students who are global citizens. The final conception is ‘the student as a recipient of the desire to teach’, and it relates to the pleasure and satisfaction teachers gain from interacting with students and reflects the passion that teachers have for teaching. What these differing conceptions reveal about the purpose of a higher education is that at times, teachers believe education to be a commodity, while at other times it is regarded as a way of developing other capabilities within students. The cultivation of these capabilities might be aimed at enriching the individual, or even aimed at benefitting society.

Teachers’ conceptions of students may be influential in determining their perspectives towards teaching. These views can also provide a snapshot of what teachers believe the aims of higher education ought to be. An example comes from Pratt (2002) who describes five perspectives on teaching, after conducting a study among over two thousand teachers from different countries. He mentions that each of these perspectives is a combination of beliefs, intentions and actions; and reflect philosophical orientations towards knowledge, learning and the role and responsibilities of being a teacher. Firstly, Pratt (2002) notes that teachers who have a transmission perspective are passionately committed to their subject matter and believe that it is their responsibility to accurately and efficiently present content to their students. The second perspective he introduces is the apprenticeship perspective whereby teachers believe that students learn by observing them in action as they work on authentic tasks in real settings of application or practice. The third is the developmental perspective which aims to utilise the learners’ prior knowledge and skills to ‘bridge’ knowledge gaps. Fourth is the nurturing perspective which supports the development of the whole person,

instead of just the intellect. Teachers with the nurturing perspective always strive to strike a balance between challenging people to achieve their best, while at the same time nurture and support their efforts to be successful. Finally teachers with a social reform perspective are committed to social issues and believe that they are an advocate for the changes they wish to bring about in society (Pratt, 2002).

If these conceptions of teaching were to be linked to the purposes of higher education, it may be said that teachers who have a transmission, apprenticeship and developmental conception believe that higher education should be mainly about developing intellectual abilities and the cultivation of skills. Teachers with the nurturing conception may believe that higher education ought to be about developing holistic individuals, while providing pastoral care to students. Finally, those with a social reform conception might have a slightly different perspective because they view higher education as playing a role in bringing forth social change and working for the betterment of society.

Additionally, the conceptions that teachers have towards academic work can also be helpful in providing insight into the purposes of a higher education. A study by Kreber (2000) reveals some conceptions that experienced university teachers who have won university teaching awards have towards academic work. Seventeen aspects were identified:

1. Learning about new developments in one's discipline
2. Counselling students on programme and career issues
3. Off-campus lectures and conference presentations to professional societies
4. Public talks, consulting, community service
5. Informal conversations with colleagues
6. Reviewing and evaluating the work of colleagues
(manuscripts, grant proposals, etc.)
7. Formal instruction
8. Networking with colleagues
9. Advising/mentoring/assisting colleagues

10. Conducting research
11. Preparing for teaching
12. Writing books, articles, monographs, grant proposals, etc.
13. Learning about one's teaching
14. Preparing and conducting evaluations of students' work
15. University and departmental committee work
16. Being a member/participant of professional associations
17. Advising students on assignments, projects and theses

(Kreber, 2000, p. 66)

While it is unlikely that all higher education teachers share similar conceptions of academic work, this list that Kreber (2000) provides does give some indication on what academics believe their roles and responsibilities are. Conceptions of academic work shed light on the alignment that exists between the purposes of higher education and academic work. The activities that Kreber (2000) identifies, can generally be divided into three common areas of academic work – teaching, research and service. Therefore, from the perspective of teachers in Kreber's (2000) study, it may be concluded that teaching, research and service are important functions of higher education.

It needs to be stressed that teachers' conceptions of academic work may not always correspond with institutional aims and goals. A telling piece of evidence is from Watty's (2006) study among academics involved in accounting education in an Australian university. Her study revealed that fundamental differences existed between the current views promoted by higher education and what they believed the purpose of higher education ought to be. For example, she found that the institution advocated ideas relating to developing work-ready graduates, delivering efficient teaching and extending opportunities for individuals. However, these were not the main aims that academics felt should be prioritised. Instead, they believed that the purpose of higher education ought to be about developing critical reasoning, promoting lifelong learning and assisting the formation of intellectual abilities and perspectives (Watty, 2006).

The examples from the studies conducted by Fanghanel (2011), Pratt (2002), Kreber (2000) and Watty (2006) provide a snapshot of teachers' views on students, teaching and academic work. Teachers represent an important group within higher education, and therefore, their perceptions and actions reflect the work that higher education is involved in.

c) Students' views

The purpose of a higher education can also be gained from the expectation of students. Harland (2012) discusses a study he conducted among university students, who categorised their views on the purposes of a university education. Ranked in order, they were – 1) personal intellectual development, 2) skills training, 3) personal growth, 4) socialisation, 5) being productive in society (Harland, 2012). Another study which reflect orientations towards higher education is that of Spronken-Smith, Buissink-Smith, Grigg, and Bond (2009). Four orientations were identified – 1) gaining a qualification for a specific job, 2) preparation for a job, 3) developing life skills and learning how to think, and 4) education for its own sake: growing as an individual. These findings suggest that students believe that higher education functions to provide them with skills and experiences that will be useful in their future world of work; and which will be beneficial for their self-development. Henderson-King and Smith (2006) examined the meanings undergraduate students associate with higher education, and ten meanings emerged. Some examples include higher education for career preparation, independence, finding direction for the future, learning, self-development, making social connections, and changing the world (Henderson-King & Smith, 2006).

The studies conducted by Harland (2012), Spronken-Smith et al. (2009) and Henderson-King and Smith (2006) reveal that students largely seek out a higher education for personal and instrumental reasons. This view is also echoed by Chan, Brown, and Ludlow (2014), and they have found that there exists a misalignment between higher education institutional aims and purposes and those that students have in mind. After reviewing approximately 20 peer-reviewed articles, eleven books, three magazine or newspaper articles, and two policy briefs

on the goals and purposes of undergraduate education; Chan et al. (2014) conclude that institutional aims tend to be global, long-term, and high-minded, while students are generally oriented towards ambitions that are more personal, short-termed and economically profitable.

From the findings of the studies discussed in this section, it appears that while most students view higher education from an instrumental and economically profitable perspective, there still exists a small group who believe that gaining a higher education would enable them to benefit society and to change the world. This marginal perspective towards higher education will be further explored in the upcoming section.

The social purpose of higher education

McArthur (2013) believes that education and society are strongly inter-related; and while on the one hand, education holds great potential for greater social justice, at the same time it sustains aspects of injustice as well. She highlights that only a proportion of society participate directly in higher education, and in many countries, the purpose of higher education has been narrowed to serve mostly economic functions. In this light, it also has been noted by many scholars that higher education has been influenced by neoliberal ideological changes which embrace notions of students as customers, competition, efficiency gains and value for money. Higher education as a public good that enriches both the individual and society is being replaced by business models of education, and audit and accounting regulatory culture (Walker, 2006). Additionally, Gourley (2012) highlights that although universities are said to stand on three fundamental pillars of teaching, research and service to the community; a large number of institutions lean more to the first two pillars, compared to the last. While this may be the case, there is still space for higher education to be socially responsive. Manathunga et al. (2011) believe that a significant aspect of higher education is its focus on the cultivation of global citizens who have a concern for social justice, equity and environmental sustainability. This idea is also championed by many other researchers and scholars such as Giroux (2002), Walker (2006) and McLean

(2006) because they believe that higher education should play a role in developing individuals who can have a positive impact on society.

Furthermore, mission statements of universities, graduate attributes and higher education research suggest that higher education institutions should have a moral and civic responsibility. For example, the contemporary focus on graduate attributes highlight the debate on the purpose of a university education and how to cultivate ‘well educated persons who are both employable and capable of contributing to civil society’ (Hager & Holland, 2006, p. 4). Social aims that can be found in some university’s graduate attributes, such as being ethically and socially aware, and having a global and interdisciplinary perspective, indicate that students are expected to develop more than disciplinary and work-place related knowledge and skills. The moral and civic responsibilities of higher education is also reflected through UNESCO’s recommendation for its member countries to strive to cultivate responsible citizens who are capable of serving the community (UNESCO, 1997). There also exists groups of teachers and students that believe higher education should be a vehicle for social change. While this may be a marginal perspective, it nevertheless shows that the societal responsibility of higher education has been recognised by various parties.

Barnett (2012) proposes the idea of a university which is not just *in* society, but *for* society. He claims that this would mean that universities would be interested in not just reflecting society, but helping society move towards becoming a better society. He adds that it would also mean that a university forms a sense of its own collective virtues, which develop a capacity among its members to care for each other and to live in harmony and respect for one another. Barnett’s (2012) views echo those of Gibbons (1998) who believes that a new paradigm on the functions of higher education have gradually emerged in the 21st century. The idea of pursuing knowledge for its own sake has been replaced by a view of higher education that serves society; primarily by supporting the economy and promoting the quality of life of its citizens (Gibbons, 1998).

In light of the social purpose of higher education, a pedagogy that seeks to address societal problems is needed. Hence, a space is opened up for critical pedagogy, which has an activist and transformative agenda at heart.

Critical Pedagogy Interpreted

With its roots in the philosophical work of the Frankfurt School in Germany, critical pedagogy, which is a critical theory of education, has developed and evolved to a point that no one single definition fully encompasses the depth and scope of its significance and complexities. In this section, the interpretations offered by theorists and people who work in this area shall be explored. In addition, the different names that critical pedagogy has taken on, and the different disciplines that it has found its place in, will also be examined.

The term ‘critical pedagogy’ is a somewhat new term in the field of education. Although the theoretical landscape of beliefs and principles that frame the basis of this radical social thinking has existed since the early 1900’s, it was only in the 1980s that the first textbook use of this term was found (Darder et al., 2003). The first formal usage of the term ‘critical pedagogy’ can be traced to Henry Giroux’s 1983 book entitled *Theory and Resistance in Education* (Darder et al., 2003). Since then, critical pedagogy has been interpreted and developed in different ways by drawing upon the divergent views of critical theorists and radical educators of the past and present.

The word ‘critical’ does not always mean to criticise. Instead, it carries the connotation of prodding and probing into something, and offers new ways of seeing, knowing and looking beyond (Wink, 2000). It is also important not to confuse ‘critical pedagogy’ with ‘critical thinking’, although they share some similarity with one another. While critical thinking aims to develop individuals who rigorously seek reason, truth and evidence; critical pedagogy aims to nurture individuals who are empowered to seek justice and emancipation (Burbules & Berk, 1999). Critical pedagogy examines the inequalities that exist within class, race, gender, sexuality and ethnicity, and how social, cultural and power inequities intersect and interrelate with one another (Pennycook, 1999).

In the area of language and literacy, Luke (2004) notes that while it had been previously quite common to use the term ‘critical’ to refer to higher order reading and writing skills; in recent years, critical approaches also include ways in which texts and discourses are used to construct and negotiate identity, power and capital. In a general sense, pedagogies that use the term ‘critical’ employ a perspective on teaching and learning that does not conform to the status quo, but instead subjects it to critique (Crookes, 2013). Critical pedagogy embodies all these elements of criticality and goes one step further to impact the world outside the confines of the classroom. McLaren (1997a) provides a description on the scope of critical pedagogy:

Critical pedagogy is a way of thinking about, negotiating and, transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relationships of the wider community, society, and nation state.

(McLaren, 1997a, p. 1)

This definition reveals that critical pedagogy is a cognitive act that aims to change and create new knowledge and interactions in the world around us. These changes have goals such as improving liberty, equality and justice for all (Crookes, 2013).

Yet another explanation as to what exactly critical pedagogy constitutes is from Brookfield (2003) who states that critical pedagogy should not be confused with mere reflective thinking about teaching practices. To him, critical pedagogy stems from a deep belief and conviction that society is organized in an unjust manner. Hegemonic structures within society provide a justification for the uncontested reproduction of systems that should instead be seen for what they are – ‘exploitative, racist, classist, sexist, and spiritually diminishing’ (Brookfield, 2003, p. 141). When critical pedagogy is implemented, students are taught to recognise and oppose such situations. The transformative dimension that critical pedagogy possesses, makes it possible to teach students to identify and resist

dominant anti-democratic, oppressive ideology and from there go on to organize and create social forms that are genuinely democratic and which reject neoliberal free market domination (Brookfield, 2003).

Besides that, critical pedagogy extends beyond a set of fixed methods or techniques. In discussion with Ira Shor on the idea of a 'liberating education', Freire asserts that he does not advocate mere techniques for learning, or for gaining literacy of expertise (Shor, 1987). Freire's sentiments are echoed by Shor who agrees that liberating education should not be a 'manual of clever techniques', but instead a critical perspective on school and society, and learning for social transformation (Shor, 1987). 'Teaching a critical pedagogy involves more than learning a few pedagogical techniques and the knowledge required by the curriculum, standards, or the textbook' (Kincheloe, 2008a, p. 2). Hence, Wink (2000) concludes that critical pedagogy is not a way of 'doing', but a way of 'living'.

An exploration of some of the underlying values and tenets that drive critical pedagogy will be presented in the following four sections. These four tenets relate to student experience, the value-laden nature of education, the transformative goals of critical pedagogy and the importance of having a caring heart, critical eyes and a body of action.

1) Student experience

Student experience is at the forefront in a critical pedagogy classroom. Meaningful personal experiences are a valuable resource in learning because they become an object of inquiry that can be affirmed, critically interrogated and used to engage with broader modes of knowledge and understanding (Giroux, 2011). Those specialising in higher education often urge teachers to be student focussed or student centred, which simply means understanding pedagogic issues from the students' point of view (McLean, 2006). In the case of critical pedagogy, participatory, situated, dialogic learning is called for in the classroom (Shor, 1993).

In a classroom situation where dialogue is valued, the teacher-student relationship is horizontal instead of one-directional and vertical. When classes are organized in this way, students learn from teachers, and teachers learn from students (Darder et al., 2003). In order for reciprocity to happen, teachers need to relinquish their authority as truth providers, and assume the role of facilitators of student inquiry (Kincheloe, 2008a). It is only through this two-way process that each can learn from the other. Dialogue and analysis lead to reflection and action; which provide students with a deepened sense of awareness of the social realities that shape their lives, and allow them to re-create and act upon the forces around them (Darder et al., 2003).

In a dialogic classroom, critical pedagogues may utilise a problem posing approach to teaching. The problem-posing approach to teaching and learning is an idea that Paulo Freire expanded on, based on active, participatory models of education (Nixon-Ponder, 1995). 'Problem-posing brings interactive participation and critical inquiry into the existing curriculum and expands it to reflect the curriculum of the students' lives' (Wink, 2000, p.51). Subject matter is not presented using academic jargon or as theoretical lectures, but instead problem posed to reflect the life and thought of the student (Shor, 1993). Teachers who problem-pose employ various strategies to uncover reality, and strive for the emergence of consciousness through a critical intervention of reality (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). Problem-posing focuses on the experiences of students and makes learning meaningful because it invites students to assert ownership on their education.

An important distinction exists between problem posing education and a banking concept of education. The teaching and learning process based on the banking concept is likened to the act of depositing money into a bank, where the teacher is the depositor and the students the depositories (Freire, 2005). Such an approach to teaching and learning dehumanise students because they are regarded as empty vessels which need to be filled with knowledge. Transmitting static knowledge to students is dehumanising because it invalidates their knowledge and experiences, while silencing their voice and decision-making capacity (Vassallo, 2013). In

contrast, problem-posing education is humanising and responds to the essence of consciousness and student experiences. Problem-posing supports the political and personal development of students because it is dialogic, and focused on real-world issues meaningful to the student (Crookes & Lehner, 1998). Therefore, the critical pedagogy classroom is a value-laden, political terrain and cannot be regarded as a neutral site.

2) Value-laden education

Freire in a conversation with Shor argues that the whole activity of education is political in nature, and this is evident through conditions such as the student-teacher relationship, classroom discourse, course content, and testing and evaluation (Shor, 1993). Critical pedagogy affirms that every dimension of schooling and every form of educational practice are politically contested spaces (Kincheloe, 2008a). Some teachers may think that they are neutral and impartial if they do not bother with politics, and only focus on subject teaching in the classroom, however Giroux (2007) contends that teachers can claim to be fair, but never neutral. From this perspective, the very act of proposing a pedagogy is to propose a political vision, because teaching practice cannot be separated from politics (Simon, 1987).

Freire relates how Latin American representatives at a UNESCO meeting refused to ascribe him the title 'educator' because they criticised his 'politicisation' (Freire, 1994). In response, Freire (1994) commented:

They failed to perceive that, in denying me the status of educator for being 'too political', they were being as political as I. Of course, on the opposite sides of the fence. 'Neutral' they were not, nor could ever be.

(Freire, 1994, p. 7)

It is evident that critical pedagogy positions the teacher as a political agent (Freire, 2005; McLaren, 2003; Simon, 1987) and requires teachers to take a political

stance. Consequently, teaching is never ‘neutral’, because neutrality reifies the status quo by failing to challenge dominant discourse. Wink (2000) recalls how she believed that teachers should not be concerned with politics because their subject was their only responsibility. In retrospect, she notices that her view of teaching was naïve and elitist. She explains:

Teaching and learning are a part of real life, and real life includes politics and people. Schools do not exist on some elevated pure plain pedagogy away from the political perspectives of people

(Wink, 2000, p. 77)

Therefore, Apple (1979) argues that we cannot assume our activity is neutral, just because we do not take an overt political stance. He goes on to explain how social and economic values are already embedded in the design of educational institutions and are reflected through the choice of curricula, modes of teaching, principles, standards and forms of evaluations. Hence, schools are sites of cultural and economic reproduction that not only ‘process’ knowledge, but ‘process’ people (Apple, 1979).

3) Transformative education

Critical pedagogy is based on the premise that a critical approach to education can make the world a better place. It is concerned with discrimination and oppression (Freire, 2005) and aims to alleviate human suffering by bringing forth social change and transformation (Kincheloe, 2008a). In other words, critical pedagogy allows for the social, economic, political and religious contradictions experienced in everyday life to be interrogated, and urges for improvements in society. Hence, critical pedagogy ‘involves a strong agenda for change: within education, through education and throughout society’ (McArthur, 2010, p. 493).

Drawing from the literature on transformative learning theory, transformation refers to a deep shift in perspective, which causes habits of mind to be more open, penetrable and better justified (Cranton, 2011). A social-emancipatory conception

of transformative learning is rooted in the work of Freire, and refers to individuals who are constantly 'reflecting and acting on the transformation of their world so it can be a more equitable place for all to live' (Taylor, 2008).

From this perspective, transformation is not just limited to altered world-views and perceptions because actions and behaviours are also changed when critical pedagogy comes into play (Mayo, 2004). Critical pedagogy distinguishes itself from most other pedagogies because it enables students to act upon and use their knowledge for self and social transformation (Wink, 2000). At the content level, Nagda et al. (2003) note that transformative education draws on the excluded perspectives and experiences of marginalised groups of people. They go on to add that at the pedagogical level, students are engaged as critical thinkers and active learners, who participate together in envisioning alternative possibilities of their social reality. Therefore, it is unlikely that transformation will end in the classroom, but will instead go on to impact on the wider community (Kincheloe, 2008a).

Transformation is also not limited to the lives of students. Kanpol (1994) highlights that critical pedagogy makes learning meaningful and introspective for teachers because they gain greater insight by connecting the curriculum to students' lives. Engaging with critical pedagogy provides learning experiences for teachers because it 'informs teachers who are transformative agents in and out of the classroom' (Kanpol, 1994, p. 55). Therefore, transformation is a two-way process that enriches the lives of both the teacher and the student.

The transformational aims of critical pedagogy for teachers, students and society may be criticised as utopian or idealistic. However, Freire in no way idealises educational work by claiming that it is enough to change the world; but what he undoubtedly believes is that teachers have the power to challenge the status quo and dominant ideology, and make some good contributions in the classroom (Shor, 1987).

4) A caring heart, critical eyes and a body of action

Wink (2000) notes that a caring heart and critical eyes are central in a critical pedagogy classroom. However, it seems that critical pedagogy goes one step further to create a body of action as well. What this means is that critical pedagogy does not just end with a renewed attitude or disposition, rather, it ends with an act.

Higher education is committed to social justice, and Pessoa and de Urzêda Freitas (2012) note that critical pedagogues develop students' critical thinking so that they can learn how to fight against oppression in their lives. This view highlights that an element of action is required for education to be committed to social justice. Freire claims that only political action in society can cause social transformation, not critical study in the classroom' (Shor, 1987). Therefore, it can be summarised that critical pedagogy begins with a caring heart, which nurtures critical eyes, to become a body in action.

Pedagogical caring should be balanced with critical reflection on theory and practice (Wink, 2000). A caring heart can be demonstrated in many ways, for instance through love. Freire (2005) argues that love, faith and humility are some of the important prerequisites in order to enter into dialogue with students. In a critical pedagogy driven classroom, dialogue takes centre stage; and is founded on love, humility and faith, which result in an environment of mutual trust (Freire, 2005). Therefore, love in the classroom opens minds and hearts and it has the power to challenge and change (hooks, 2013). A pedagogy of love embraces kindness, empathy, intimacy, bonding, sacrifice, forgiveness into the teaching and learning relationship (Loreman, 2011). What sets Freire apart from most other educators, is his unashamed stress on the importance of the power of love (McLaren, 1999). It has been highlighted by hooks (2013) that some educators consider love in relation to the teacher-student relationship as taboo, and would rather associate love with the discipline or the process of teaching. However, there are still educators like Freire (2005), Loreman (2011), Wink (2000), hooks (2013), Darder (2002) who strongly believe in the power of love in all aspects of teaching and learning, including the teacher-student relationship.

Teachers can also demonstrate a caring heart by being interested in the lives of their students. Critical pedagogy calls for teachers to be researchers of their students' lives (Kincheloe, 2008a). In doing so, teachers can achieve a new level of educational rigour and at the same time learn and understand how students perceive themselves and their social reality (Kincheloe, 2008a). Critical pedagogues listen to students' voices to learn more about their historical, cultural, social and economic circumstances and differences (Kanpol, 1994). They can play a positive role by learning, understanding and appreciating the subjugated knowledge that their students possess, especially in times where great student diversity exists (Malott, 2011). Hence, a caring heart seems to be a requirement if teachers want to engage with critical pedagogy in their classrooms.

According to Freire (2005) another prerequisite for meaningful dialogue is critical thinking. He explains that this thinking perceives reality as process that can be transformed and does not separate itself from action (Freire, 2005). Teachers with a caring heart strive to nurture critical thinking or critical eyes so that their students will be empowered to think and act for justice. In line with critical pedagogy, the ability to critically reflect and interpret the world is not sufficient; one must also be willing and able to act to change that world (Burbules & Berk, 1999). Freire calls and urges for a balance between critical eyes and a body in action. Reflection without action is mere 'verbalism' or idle chatter; on the contrary, action without critical reflection can result in activism or action for action's sake (Freire, 2005). It has been noted by Giroux (2004) that guiding students to deconstruct texts and developing a culture of questioning are important pedagogical interventions. However, he stresses that more is required because teachers need to link knowing with action and learning with social engagement. Therefore, teachers need to ensure that they strike a balance in the classroom as they strive to nurture critical eyes which later become empowered bodies of action.

The roots and routes of critical pedagogy

This section presents the history and development of critical pedagogy by tracing its roots and following the different routes it has taken over time. Although many have contributed to the underlying theories of critical pedagogy, the philosophical work of the Frankfurt School will be used as a starting point. Next, an introduction to the life and work of Paulo Freire, who is regarded as one of the founding fathers of critical pedagogy will be presented. Finally, the different routes that critical pedagogy has journeyed through will be traced.

The roots of critical pedagogy

The philosophical work of the Frankfurt School, a privately endowed research institute for the study of socialism was established as part of the University of Frankfurt in 1923 ("Frankfurt School," 2008). The term 'critical theory' was first used in 1937 (McLean, 2006) and can be seen as a starting point of the inception of critical pedagogy because as Giroux (2003) points out, critical theory is needed to provide insight and background into developing a critical foundation for the theory of critical pedagogy. 'Critical' not only refers to a critique of social conditions, but also the idea of self-reflecting on taken for granted assumptions, identifying the constraints of injustice and the effort to seek for fairer alternatives in society (McLean, 2006). In Giroux's (2003) opinion, critical theory is a process of critique that is needed for social transformation and emancipation. Wolin (2006) traces the inception of critical theory to the 1930s and notes that it addressed the shortcomings that existed in philosophy and the social sciences. It seemed that Philosophy only focused on 'ideals' and 'ultimate ends' and neglected genuine concerns of reality and existence; while the social sciences tended to be preoccupied with 'facts' and seemed to be antagonistic towards 'values' (Wolin, 2006). The perceived limitations of philosophy and the social sciences caused its interdisciplinary integration (Wolin, 2006). For this reason, prominent, first generation figures such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and Walter Benjamin from the Frankfurt School worked in the area of critical theory and focused on the importance of critical thinking for self-emancipation and social change (Giroux, 2003; McLean, 2006).

Critical theory distinguished itself from ‘traditional theory’ by articulating a ‘practical’ or utilitarian purpose oriented towards human emancipation (Bohman, 2001; McKernan, 2013). The ‘critical theory’ of the Frankfurt School has been instrumental in social reform and its nineteenth-century Marxian roots are evident through its socialist message (Webb, 1996). First generation figures of the Frankfurt School from 1923 – 1950 were influenced by Marxist methods of inquiry (Stern, 1983), however many other critical theories such as feminism, race theory and queer theory have consequently emerged as a means of explaining society and culture (McKernan, 2013). Torres (1999) argues that critical theory is interdisciplinary and has three dimensions:

It is a *human science*, hence providing a humanistic, antipositivist approach to social theory. It is a *historical science of society*, hence it is a form of historical sociology. Finally it is a *socio-cultural critique* which is concerned with normative theory, that is a “theory about values and what ought to be”

(Torres, 1999, p. 92)

Critical theory has also greatly contributed in shaping the ideas of critical pedagogy through its implicit goal of advancing the emancipatory function of knowledge. One of the founding fathers that assumes a hallowed position in the field of critical pedagogy is Paulo Freire from Brazil. He dedicated himself towards promoting literacy among peasants by teaching them to understand the reason behind their oppression. Freire used ideas, words and feelings from his students’ immediate environment, and he focused on ‘reading the world’ instead of ‘reading the word’ (Wink, 2000). Freire was greatly influenced by his personal relationships and the environment in which he grew up (Bhattacharya, 2011).

According to McLaren (1997b) one of Freire’s major successes was in Recife in 1962, when he taught 300 adults to read and write in 45 days. He lived communally with groups of peasants, which enabled him to identify generative words which related to their phonetic value, syllabic length and social relevance

(McLaren, 1997b). In an interview, Freire describes the work he was involved in as the coordinator of the Adult Education Project of the Movement of Popular Culture in Recife: ‘...we started groups we called culture circles. Instead of teachers, we had coordinators; instead of lectures, dialogue, instead of pupils, participants’ (Cox, 1990, p.76). Freire’s success was supported by President Goulard, however in 1964 a military coup overthrew the Goulard government, and Freire was arrested (Gadotti & Torres, 2009). He was then accused of being a communist and a subversive; and was jailed for seventy days and subsequently exiled for the next 16 years of his life (Gadotti & Torres, 2009).

Freire’s exile eventually led him on a journey that took him to Harvard, and onto the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland (Kirylo, 2013b). His arrest and exile had a tremendous deepening effect on his emerging political and educational views, and he subsequently became more involved in research and writing. He was involved in teaching, consulting and setting up literacy programmes in countries such as Chile, Nicaragua, Australia, Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania, Portugal and Mexico (Cox, 1990). Bhattacharya (2011) notes that Freire’s life in Chile was an important period that influenced the development of his thoughts and works. Firstly, he contributed to the area of adult literacy by developing material and training teachers (Bhattacharya, 2011). Secondly, he wrote important texts such as *Education as the Practice of Freedom, Extension or Communication?*, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, *Sobre la Accion Cultural*, and the first eight chapters of *The Politics of Education* (Bhattacharya, 2011). The third contribution Bhattacharya (2011) highlights is Freire’s impact on educational theory and practice. For instance, Freire introduced ideas such as the ‘banking concept of education’, ‘problem posing education’ and the ‘culture of silence’. Finally, it was during his life in Chile that Freire started to embrace the notion that education should be more political (Bhattacharya, 2011).

Freire’s ideas and philosophy confronted the Eurocentric nature of most dominant traditional social and political thought and argued for the deconstruction of those categorized as ‘the oppressed’, by calling for greater diversity and humanisation of individuals (McLaren & Leonard, 1993). The term ‘humanisation’ refers to

human liberation, and for Freire, this goal can never be fully achieved because it requires an ongoing encounter with reality, and which is in itself constantly changing (Blackburn, 2000). Hence, Freire's focus is not on the creation of a new 'liberated' society, but the process by which oppressed individuals strive for greater humanisation (Blackburn, 2000).

In a critical pedagogy classroom, personal experiences are at the forefront; giving students the opportunity to relate their own narratives, social relations, and histories to what is being taught (Giroux, 2010). Central to Freire's message is a challenge to teachers and students to 'empower themselves for social change, to advance democracy and equality as they advance their literacy and knowledge' (Shor, 1993, p. 25). Freire's conception of critical pedagogy is rooted in the idea that education can address issues such as dominance, oppression and marginalisation. Education empowers students and instigates social change.

Over the years, Paulo Freire has been named as 'the most labeled educator'; and just some of the examples of names he has been called are communist, revolutionary, philosopher and genius (Wink, 2000). However, Wink (2000) regards the best label to describe Freire is 'freer'. In many ways, Freire's ideas and the work he was involved in alludes to the notion of a liberator and 'freer'. For instance, he strove to fight the oppression experienced by the Brazilian working class by encouraging them to critically examine and transform social structures that gave way to economic disparity (Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2011). Furthermore, da Silva and McLaren (1993) add that Freire's main aim was to create an educational alternative for the disenfranchised people of his nation so that they would be able to participate more in transforming archaic and unjust political and economic structures that had been jeopardising society for so many years.

Until his death in 1997, Freire continued to publish and speak extensively to educators across the United States. His influence in the development of literacy programmes are not limited to Brazil and Latin America, but extend to Africa, North America, Australia and Europe (Freire & Macedo, 2013). Although his

writings focused on issues relating to pedagogy, his ideas widely impacted postcolonial theory, ethnic studies, cultural studies, adult education, and theories of literacy, language, and human development (Darder et al., 2003). His pedagogical conceptions have certainly withstood the test of time and continue to remain applicable even in present day as many educational programmes worldwide have adopted ideas that he proposed over 50 years ago.

The routes of critical pedagogy

According to Canagarajah (1999), early traces of critical pedagogy were seen in the 80's and 90's in fields such as college composition, literature, social sciences, feminist studies, and cultural studies. More recent explorations of critical pedagogy can be seen in areas such as management education (Currie & Knights, 2003), music (Abrahams, 2005; Beazley, 2012), nursing education (Perron, Rudge, Blais, & Holmes, 2010) and physical education (Culpan & Bruce, 2007; Fitzpatrick, 2013). It has influenced a wide spectrum of areas such as sociology, anthropology, literacy, ecology, medicine, psychotherapy, philosophy, pedagogy, critical social theory, museology, history, journalism, and theatre (McLaren, 2001). The diverse areas in which critical pedagogy functions reflect its significance for academic research and scholarship in higher education.

Critical pedagogy has taken on different names such as 'border pedagogy' (Giroux, 1988, 1991; Janmohamed, 1993; Kazanjian, 2011), 'liberatory teaching' (Shor, 1987), 'pedagogy of possibility' (Simon, 1987, 1992), 'postmodern pedagogy' (Kellner, 1988; Kilgore, 2004), 'empowering education' (Shor, 1992), 'pedagogy of resistance' (Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1993) and 'emancipatory pedagogy' (Gordon, 1985; Swartz, 1996). Table 1 provides examples of some common terms that critical pedagogy has embraced and how it has been defined by those who use it.

Term	Definition
Border pedagogy	Border pedagogy is a multicultural educational approach which is attentive to developing a democratic public philosophy that respects the notion of difference. Border pedagogy aims to remove cultural and political barriers to attain a greater conceptualisation of the human experience; and links the notions of schooling and education to a more substantive struggle for a radical democratic society (Giroux, 1991; Kazanjian, 2011)
Pedagogy of possibility	Pedagogy of possibility is a moral practice that interrogates social forms and their possible transformations in correspondence with three basic principles : 1) securing human diversity, 2) securing compassionate justice, and 3) securing the renewal of life (Simon, 1992)
Public pedagogy	Public pedagogy is a concept focussed on learning outside formal schooling environments and educational scholars who frequently use this term often situate it within feminist, critical, cultural, activist dimensions (Burdick, Sandlin, & O'Malley, 2014)
Emancipatory pedagogy	Emancipatory pedagogy takes a fundamental interest in equity and social justice and is a process of teaching and learning that involves multiple ways of knowing, being and behaving in the world. It challenges dominant patterns of knowledge formation, and presents alternate perspectives that are antithetical to the status quo (Swartz, 1996).
Postmodern pedagogy	Postmodern pedagogy recognises that education is a situated, collective learning process with difference at its core. This pedagogy enables the naming of institutional, cultural, and socioeconomic trajectories that individuals bring into the classroom (Kilgore, 2004).
Empowering education	Empowering education is a student-centred, critical-democratic pedagogy aimed at self and social change. The goals of this pedagogy are for multicultural democracy in school and society; as well as the development of academic knowledge, habits of inquiry, and critical curiosity towards society, power, inequity and transformation (Shor, 1992).

Table 1: Definition of common names related to critical pedagogy

After systematically reviewing more than thirty journals devoted to the study of critical pedagogy, Ellsworth (1989) noted other common names that have been ascribed to this area - 'pedagogy of critique and possibility', 'pedagogy of student voice', 'pedagogy of empowerment', and 'pedagogy for radical democracy'. Though different theorists may choose different terms for these critical pedagogies in education, it is important to recognize that at its core, these practices have the same goals and aspirations at heart – greater dialogue, empowerment and justice for all. Haque (2007) supports this idea by commenting that all these different terms can be subsumed under the term 'critical pedagogy' because all of them descend from the same school of thought, and have overlapping principles with what is regarded as mainstream critical pedagogy.

Over the years, there are many who have contributed to theorising critical pedagogy. A book titled *A Critical Pedagogy of Resistance: 34 Critical Pedagogues We Need to Know*, which is edited by Kirylo (2013a) brings together critical pedagogues from various parts of the world, who in their array of complex political, historical, religious, theological, social, cultural, and educational circumstances displayed leadership and resistance; by advocating for a more just, equal, and democratic world when repressive forces are at work dehumanising, oppressing, and marginalising people (Kirylo, 2013a). Among some prominent critical pedagogues featured in this book are: Michael Apple, Stanley Aronowitz, Maria Montessori, Aung San Suu Kyi, Noam Chomsky, Antonia Darder, John Dewey, Lev Semenovich Vygotsky, Henry Giroux, bell hooks, Myles Horton, Ivan Illich, Joe Kincheloe, Ira Shor, and Shirley Steinberg. The life and works of these important figures reflect the diversity that exists within the field of critical pedagogy and reveal the different directions that critical pedagogy has taken over the years.

Research and publication in the area of critical pedagogy in ELT reveals that it is practiced by teachers from all corners of the world, even though it has been noted by Crookes (2010) that some ELT specialists dismiss the idea of critical pedagogy in Asian contexts. While critical pedagogy has been theorised and practiced by teachers in Western, democratic countries such as the United States of America (Benesch, 1993; Chun, 2009; Crookes, 2013; Wink, 2000), Canada (Goldstein, 2004; Guo, 2013; Morgan, 2002) and Australia (Luke, 2000; Starfield, 2004); critical pedagogy has also found its place in other countries as well. For example, teachers have employed critical pedagogy in ELT teaching in classrooms in Korea (Love, 2012; Shin & Crookes, 2005; Sung, 2007), Hong Kong (Lin, 2012), Tajikistan (Fredricks, 2007), China (Guo & Beckett, 2012), and Taiwan (Ko, 2013).

Additionally, in the span of the past five to six years, there has been a surge in the number of studies conducted on critical pedagogy in Iran. For example, Aghagolzadeh and Davari (2012) provide a rationale for utilising critical pedagogy in Iran, Safari and Pourhashemi (2012) examine whether Iranian ELT

teachers are ready to embrace critical pedagogy as part of their classroom practices and Rashidi and Safari (2011) offer a model for EFL material development based on the tenets of critical pedagogy. Besides that, Davari, Iranmehr, and Erfani (2012) investigate the attitudes of the Iranian ELT community towards critical pedagogy, Abednia (2012) uncovers the contribution of a critical EFL teacher education programme in Iran on the professional identity of teachers, and Akbari (2008b) outlines how critical pedagogy in ELT can transform lives. These are just some of the examples of publications that have come out of Iran in recent times; and it shows how critical pedagogy has been adapted over the years.

A brief history of ELT

Britain's colonial expansion and the dramatic rise of the United States of America as a global superpower in the 20th century led to the spread and development of the English language as an international or world language (Graddol, 1997). The dominance of the English language has increased the demand for competence and mastery in the language, and this has resulted in a surging rise for English language teaching. As a world language, or global language, English is widely used in domains such as international commerce and trade, education, science and technology, culture and is also very often the basis of global communications (Graddol, 1997).

English as a foreign language (EFL) is associated with countries where typically English is not a medium of instruction or government, but is learnt at school (Phillipson, 1992). According to Graddol (2006), EFL traditionally emphasised the importance of emulating native speaker language behavior. He describes the EFL learner as a linguistic tourist who is allowed to visit, but does not have the rights of residence, and is always required to respect the superior authority of native speakers. Howatt and Widdowson (2004) note that some of the earliest traces of the term EFL can be found in books written for teachers as early as 1944 and further usage is seen through the adoption of this acronym for teachers' associations such as Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (ATEFL) in 1967.

English as a second language (ESL), on the other hand has been traditionally situated in countries where English is not the native language, but is used widely as a medium of communication in domains such as education and government (Phillipson, 1992). ESL in these contexts address issues of identity and bilingualism (Graddol, 2006). Howatt and Widdowson (2004) trace the history of the phrase 'English as a second language', and identify two contexts in which this term has been used. They explain that it was first used as colonial coinage in the 1920s to reveal the bilingual objectives of education in the colonies. It was used to express the function of English for specific purposes which could not be easily met by the native languages in colonised territories (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). The second context in which the term ESL was used was due to the undesirable connotation of the term 'foreign' (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). They note that the term 'second' seemed like a better alternative than 'foreign' in an imperial context, and also with countries that had experienced migration.

A look back at the language teaching profession reveals that from the mid-1880s to the mid-1980s, language practitioners actively worked towards discovering the ultimate method that could be generalisable across widely varying audiences, contexts and languages (Brown, 2007). Some examples are the Grammar – Translation Method, Direct Method, and Audiolingual Method (Andon & Leung, 2014).

Grammar-Translation was a popular method in the nineteenth century, and had its goals in benefitting from the mental discipline and intellectual development that arose from learning a foreign language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Therefore, little focus was given on speaking and listening skills and much attention was given to translating sentences, memorizing vocabulary lists and comparing the students' native languages with the foreign language learnt (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). As Hall (2011) points out, this method focuses on the deductive teaching of a language with sentences being translated both to and from the second language. It has been observed by Brown (2007), that one of the reasons why the Grammar-Translation method remained popular was because it required limited specialized skills on the part of teachers. He explains that this is because tests of

grammar rules and of translations can be easily constructed and objectively scored. However, towards the mid and late 19th century, rejection and opposition to this method of language teaching emerged, and alternatives were explored (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The Direct Method, which at times is called the Natural Method was first introduced in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century (Hall, 2011). The Direct Method promoted very different principles compared to the Grammar-Translation Method. Hall (2011) notes that the Grammar-Translation Method failed to develop language learners who could communicate in the target language. He adds that The Direct Method aimed to fulfill what the Grammar-Translation Method had failed in, because the late nineteenth century was a time where language communication gained importance for international business and travel purposes.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) identify eight important principles that underpin this method:

1. Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language
2. Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught
3. Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully graded progression organized around question-and –answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes
4. Grammar was taught inductively
5. New teaching points were introduced orally
6. Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures; abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas
7. Both speech and listening comprehension were taught
8. Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasised

(Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 12)

Unlike the Grammar-Translation Method which used both the target language and native language as a medium of instruction, the Direct Method used the target language exclusively. Some of the limitations of this method, like the overemphasised similarities between first language and second language acquisition and the ignored practical realities in a language classroom were among the reasons why it was difficult for this method to be implemented in public secondary schools (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In addition, it greatly required teachers to have native-like fluency in a foreign language and relied heavily on a teacher's skill rather than on a textbook (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Although the Direct Method received considerable popularity at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially in private language schools, its wide acceptance began to decline at the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century (Brown, 2007). However, by the middle of the twentieth century, the Direct Method was revived and redirected to perhaps one of the most visible of all language teaching 'revolutions', which came in the form of the Audiolingual Method (Brown, 2007).

The Audiolingual Method was developed to address the drawbacks of the Direct Method. Crookes (2009) describes the Audiolingual Method as one that views language learners as mechanistic and non-cognitive beings. Such behaviour is developed through practices that involve presenting correct models of sentences and dialogues to students and expecting them to repeat these structures over and over again (Brown, 2007). According to Brown (2007), all instruction was done in the target language; however language forms were presented orally before being seen in written form. He also notes that vocabulary teaching was limited and learned in context; and there was great effort to produce error-free utterances. The main aim of this approach was to train language learners to use certain constructs and pattern drills until they are able to use them spontaneously. Hall (2011) highlights that Audiolingualism has left behind a legacy in ELT, which can be seen through activities such as drills, dialogue-building and emphasis on practice. While it is rarely used in full as a systematic practice, many teachers fall back on, or dip into it from time to time (Hall, 2011).

Yet another popular method in ELT is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which is an interactive approach to second or foreign language acquisition. This method focuses on practicing basic language structures through meaningful, situational based activities. Kumaravadivelu (2006) notes that the phrase ‘competence in terms of social interaction’ best summarises the goals of CLT. It involves a dynamic and interactive process of student involvement by allowing them to experience the language as well as to analyse it (Savignon, 1987). CLT’s purpose is to prepare students of the second-language world that they will experience outside the classroom walls (Savignon, 1987). Typical activities in a CLT classroom include role plays, interviews, discussions, information gap activities, language games, language learning simulations, problem solving tasks, quizzes, and surveys (Sreehari, 2012). These activities which require interaction and cooperation help develop confidence, fluency and judicious usage of grammar and vocabulary among language learners.

CLT had great appeal among those who viewed language teaching from a more humanistic perspective, because previous approaches tended to focus only on grammatical competence instead of communicative proficiency (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In line with CLT, communicative competence refers to:

- Knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions
- Knowing how to vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants (e.g., knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication)
- Knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g., narratives, reports, interviews, conversations)
- Knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one’s language knowledge (e.g., through using different kinds of communication strategies)

(Richards, 2006, p. 3)

After the initial hype and enthusiasm that surrounded CLT had faded, it began to be viewed in a more critical manner and issues surrounding teacher training, material development, testing and evaluation, implementation were looked into and examined further. For example, Mitchell (2002) identifies that many students do not have a firm understanding of structure and grammar, and CLT has often been regarded as an oral approach which marginalises the development of reading and writing skills. However, she believes that it is only through the maturation of this approach that problems and limitations surrounding CLT will surface, which eventually will make clear the issues requiring debate and experimentation.

With greater research into the area of second and foreign language teaching, more and more methods and approaches to language instruction began to develop. For instance, Brown (2007) identifies a list of ‘designer’ methods that grew out of the 1970s such as Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, The Silent Way, Total Physical Response and The Natural Approach. Although these methods have mostly been developed in English speaking countries, they have been used and adopted widely to teach the English language in second and foreign language environments. It also once again reinforces the importance and currency of the English language because teaching methods and approaches are constantly being examined, revised and developed.

The ‘methodical’ period of language teaching has resulted in the criticism of the concept of method. For instance, Pennycook (1989) claims that ‘methods’ prescribe a positivist, progressivist and patriarchal view which ignore issues of class, race and gender inequality, in its quest to transmit a fixed canon of knowledge. Another criticism comes from Kumaravadivelu (2003) who states that the methods concept is a colonial construct that has been formulated by theorists and not actualised by teachers in their classrooms. He argues that all these methods have theoretical principles and classroom techniques that have colonial character. Hence, he argues for a ‘postmethod pedagogy’, which is governed by parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility. Particularity occurs when pedagogy is responsive and responsible to the local, individual, institutional, social and cultural contexts in which language learning and teaching take place

(Kumaravadivelu, 2003). He explains: ‘A pedagogy of particularity, then, is antithetical to the notion that there can be one set of pedagogic aims and objectives realisable through one set of pedagogic principles and procedures’ (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 538). Additionally, Kumaravadivelu (2003) comments that practicality comes into play when a personal theory of practice is developed by the practicing teacher. Finally, he explains that the parameter of possibility draws on Freirean critical pedagogy which invites students to critically reflect on their social and historical conditions. His rationale is that students are not just shaped by learning or teaching episodes, but also broader social, economic, political situations they encounter in their lives. It has been observed by Akbari (2008a) that one of the strengths of postmethod is its association with critical pedagogy. Therefore, set against the scene of ‘methods’, emerges critical pedagogy which draws on the lives and experiences of students to bring forth social change and transformation through language education. Critical pedagogy not only has a significant place in ELT education, but also in higher education because it corresponds with the purpose of higher education to be socially responsive and engaged.

Critical pedagogy in ELT

While it has been argued that higher education has a social purpose, there appear to be groups of ELT teachers who tend to have a more instrumental view of education. Pennycook (1990) notes that language teaching has very often fallen into the trap of being a technical process prescribed and implemented by teachers. He claims that there is a lack of focus on the social, cultural, political and historical context of language teaching and questions regarding student empowerment are often ignored. This is why he argues for a critical pedagogy in language teaching - one that provides an opportunity for critique, explores the interrelationships that exist between culture, knowledge and power, whilst providing a possibility of transformation.

The lack of engagement between critical pedagogy and ELT in the past was due to the way in which university departments were traditionally placed. ELT teaching related to EAP and ESL/EFL were very often situated within departments of

language and linguistics or as separate units of their own, which has resulted in its strong attachment to technical language learning rather than education (Crookes & Lehner, 1998; Haque, 2007). Because of its weak ties to education, the moral and philosophical bases for teacher education have not been strong; and in general, ELT teachers have not been encouraged to address sociopolitical issues that lie at the heart of critical pedagogy (Crookes & Lehner, 1998). Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994) attribute a lack of criticality in ELT to English teachers' submission to applied linguistics which tended to only emphasise formal and methodological issues.

Although more than a decade has passed since Philipson's (1992), Pennycook's (1994) and Crookes and Lehner's (1998) early observations, it appears that critical pedagogy as an approach is still limited. Akbari (2008b) comments that although the concept of critical pedagogy has been around in ELT circles for more than twenty years, interest in its principles and practical implications has only surfaced recently. Previous interest was mostly seen in the area of its theoretical rationale and there has been limited exploration of classroom practices and application (Akbari, 2008b).

Additionally, ELT has for a long time strived to emphasise neutrality and avoid provocative issues (Wallace, 2003). ELT course book developers tend to steer clear from controversial topics and instead focus on topics such as family, sports, travel, hobbies; while often presenting a romanticised image of British and American culture (Banegas, 2011). A set of informal guidelines on topics to avoid are summarized as PARSNIP; which refer to politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, isms, and pork (Gray, 2002). Most of the topics covered in commercial course books are far removed from students' lives and disregard the localness of language learning (Akbari, 2008a; Banegas, 2011). The neutrality that was sought for in ELT reflects the absence of critical pedagogy which draws on the political, social and cultural aspects of students' lives.

Canagarajah (1999) summarises some other reasons why ELT has been slow to embrace critical pedagogy. Firstly, he highlights that ELT's roots with the

colonial enterprise in the past made it suitable to treat ELT solely as a value-free, cognitive activity. Second, critical pedagogy consists of complex theoretical constructs and jargon, which many perceive to be incomprehensible. Canagarajah (1999) also argues that those who resist the implementation of critical approaches in teaching and learning may be the very people who are responsible for the perpetuation of oppressive practices. Finally, he notes that critical pedagogy has been rejected because of its confrontational, radical and disturbing nature which threatens stability and rational order both inside and outside the classroom (Canagarajah, 1999).

While critical pedagogy might not be widely incorporated in mainstream ELT teaching, there undeniably have been shifts in ELT that suggest greater emphasis on social, political, cultural and economic contexts. Many ELT researchers and teacher educators are adopting a strong sociocultural view of teaching and learning and are foregrounding the interplay between individual agency and institutional and societal structures (Davison & Cummins, 2007). Researchers in the area of ELT such as Pennycook (1990), Canagarajah (1999), Wink (2000), Norton and Toohey (2004) and Crookes (2013) have addressed the highly political nature of language and have noted that there is certainly more to language learning than the acquisition of communicative skills.

The discussion in this section relates some of the reasons why critical pedagogy has been slow to flourish in the field of ELT. As seen through the discussion, critical pedagogy appears to be controversial because it takes into account the social, political, cultural and economic contexts of students' experiences and does not treat education as a neutral, apolitical activity. In the next section, a case for and against critical pedagogy in the ELT higher education is made, in order to capture the tension that exists around this area.

The case for and against critical pedagogy in the ELT higher education classroom

Critical pedagogy has proved to be contentious because while there are many supporters, there are those who are against its theory and practice. This section provides arguments for and against critical pedagogy, so that greater understanding into the reasons why teachers support and reject critical pedagogy can be gained.

1) The case for

Although universities have traditionally served the role as critic and conscience of society, many institutions around the world are in crisis because they have abandoned their democratic function dedicated to providing a public service and addressing social problems in society (Peters & Roberts, 2000). These changes have been ascribed to neoliberal ideals that shift academic life towards the authority of market forces (Harland, Tidswell, Everett, Hale, & Pickering, 2010) and focus more on the individual as a competitive actor in an economic world (Servage, 2009). The reforms happening in higher education have been described as ‘ideologically driven, undemocratic, anti-intellectual and antithetical to the principles of education itself’ (Cowden & Singh, 2013, p. 91). Additionally, Dale and Hyslop-Margison (2011) describe the current education system that emphasises instrumental learning as a state where students sit in a classroom as objectified human capital being prepared for globalisation. Therefore, higher education needs to reclaim the ‘links between education and democracy, knowledge and public service, and learning and democratic social change’ (Giroux, 2009, p. 11). This can be done through critical pedagogy because neoliberalism finds itself confronting a rival ideology in critical pedagogy. Freire’s (2005) critical pedagogy challenges teachers and students to empower themselves for social change and defies some of the reforms advocated through neoliberal practices.

In a period where neoliberal ideals are influencing higher education, teachers can play a part in assuming the role of a public intellectual because they are ‘endowed

with a faculty of representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, a philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public' (Said, 1996, p. 11). To do this, Cushman (1999) believes that public intellectuals should combine their research, teaching, and service efforts to address social issues faced by community members in under-served neighborhoods. In this context, critical pedagogy provides a space for teachers to carry out their responsibility as an engaged social agent. Giroux (2004) argues why it is so important for teachers to assume this role:

I believe that academics have a particularly important role to play as engaged public intellectuals at this particular moment in history. The most dangerous problem they now face is the spread of neoliberalism, with its all-consuming emphasis on market relations, commercialization, privatization, and the creation of a worldwide economy of part-time workers. As society is defined through the culture, values and relations of neoliberalism, the relationship between a critical education, public morality, and civic responsibility as a condition for creating thoughtful and engaged citizens is sacrificed all too willingly to the interest of finance capital and the logic of profit-making.

(Giroux, 2004, p. 8)

In Giroux's (2004) opinion, teachers need to rise up against the threat of neoliberalism. He sees neoliberal practice as oppressive because it has caused democratic values to give way to commercial values. He adds that higher education, as a public sphere, is deeply implicated in how it relates to broader social, political and economic forces that bear down on students (Giroux, 2004).

While it may appear that much of teaching and learning has shifted towards student self-interest and economic gain, there are still institutions and programmes that are being run in various parts of the world that continue to champion different values. This phenomenon has been described as 'pockets of resistance' (Harland & Pickering, 2011), and these can have an effect on opposing the changes brought

in by neoliberal reforms. Therefore, higher education needs the continued efforts of critical pedagogues who function as public intellectuals and resist instrumental views of education so that teaching can also concentrate on intellectual self-empowerment and addressing societal needs.

Critical pedagogy is not only needed in higher education, but also specifically in the field of ELT. Critical pedagogy plays an important role in ELT because of the global expansion of the English language. Sung (2012) highlights some of the implications that have arisen due to the globalisation of English. Firstly, he comments teaching and learning in ELT has been restricted to the limited sets of knowledge and skills that have been packaged and delivered by predominantly Western companies. Secondly, he notes that hegemonic and oppressive practices related to knowledge creation and distribution, human desire and identity formation exist, because the cultures and learning styles of non-native speakers are often regarded as undesirable and inferior to those from native speaking countries. He also raises the issue of the preferential treatment given to teachers who are native speakers of English during the hiring process in many Asian countries. The conditions that Sung (2012) describe imply that many are silenced and marginalised because of prevailing ideologies and oppressive practices within ELT. Hence, critical pedagogy in ELT provides teachers and students with communicative skills which empowers them to speak out and be heard in institutional settings where they are normally inaudible (Simpson, 2009).

Additionally, critical pedagogy in ELT is needed because it has the potential to bring forth transformation by providing individuals with a language to name the world. Wink (2000) explains that 'naming' takes place when non-dominant groups within society articulate their thoughts and feelings about specific social practices to dominant groups. 'To name is to call an *ism* an *ism*: racism, classism, sexism' (Wink, 2000, p. 64). The link between language learning and transformation is a strong theme in Freire's work. Language leads to critical consciousness because it enables people to remember meanings, generate interpretations and also interpret their interpretations (Berthoff, 2013). Additionally, language allows for the envisioning of a desirable future 'because

we can name the world, and thus hold it in mind, we can reflect on its meaning and imagine a changed world' (Berthoff, 2013, p. 22). According to Freire, critical pedagogy gives students the opportunity to read, write, and learn for themselves, by inviting them to engage in a culture of questioning instead of rote learning (Giroux, 2010). Action and reflection, which Freire terms as praxis, are key elements in critical consciousness because it results in (re)forming social configurations which affirm the humanity of others (Vassallo, 2013). In summary, language leads to critical consciousness, which in turn leads to the ability of envisioning change, which subsequently allows individuals to make choices to bring about further transformation (Berthoff, 2013). Figure 1 provides a representation of transformation through critical language education, as explained by Berthoff (2013):

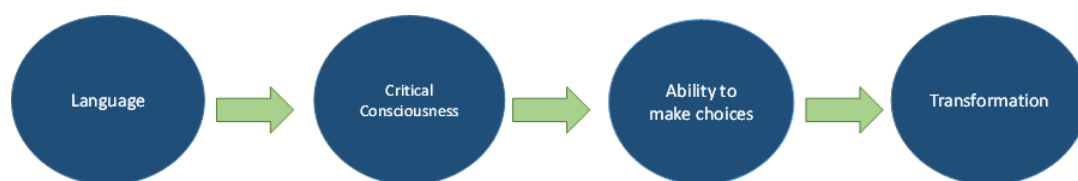


Figure 1: Transformation through critical language education

Additionally, critical pedagogy plays a significant part in ELT because it does not regard language learning as a technical process that is neutral and value free. ELT has to explicitly take into account social concepts so that learners understand that language is tied to their social and political lives. It is difficult to separate language learning from politics because all education is inherently political. It is argued that: 'teachers' decisions about subject matter, teaching methods and assessment reflect a range of political positions, from wholehearted endorsement of the status quo in school and society, to tacit approval, to critical dissent' (Benesch, 1993, p. 707). This view suggests the impossibility of neutrality in ELT education. Hence, Pennycook (1989) encourages teachers to realise the social and political roles they play and the social and political implications of the theoretical paradigms that underpin their work. It is important for teachers to recognise this because as Giroux (2006) argues, what teachers do in the classroom cannot be separated from the economic and political conditions that have shaped their work. For example, it is difficult to avoid political issues prevalent in ELT such as the

heterogeneity of English varieties, values behind teaching methods and course materials and unequal classroom relationships and roles because everything teachers do is influenced by a social and ideological sensitivity (Canagarajah, 2008). So, the ELT teacher can never be considered as a truly neutral entity, even though they may consciously try to be, because certain attitudes towards society, personal preferences, concepts and understandings of power relationships may be subtly revealed to students through interactions inside and outside classrooms. All these arguments suggest that like all knowledge, ELT is ideological, political and ‘interested’ because it is socially constructed and reflects the interests of certain individuals or groups who are often in positions of power (Canagarajah, 2008; Pennycook, 1989).

Although critical pedagogy should not be regarded as a ‘universal’ or an ‘absolute’ approach; critical pedagogy has significantly contributed to the field of ELT because it understands language learning as locally situated, personal, socio-historical, and political (Okazaki, 2005). In the area of ELT, some have seen a great need for critical pedagogy, and they recognise language learning is not a neutral activity. They would argue it is necessary for critical pedagogy to reclaim the social relevance of ELT instead of treating it as an apolitical and neutral enterprise, and fulfill the social purposes of a higher education.

To conclude, Figure 2 summarises the discussion in the section on the need for critical pedagogy in higher education ELT classrooms:

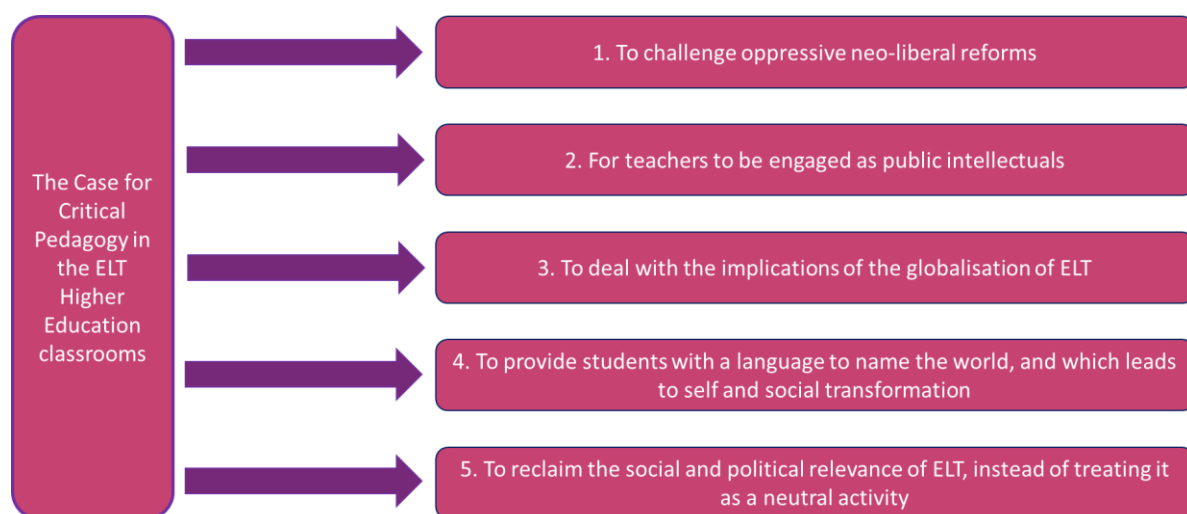


Figure 2: The case for critical pedagogy

2) The case against

Critical pedagogy has been criticised for being political and having little to no practical value within the classroom (Darder et al., 2003) because it is founded on a social and educational vision of justice and equity, and problematises issues such as class, race, gender and sexuality by drawing upon the lives and experiences of disenfranchised populations (Kincheloe, 2008a). Critical pedagogy has also been accused of indoctrination because of its enthusiasm for prescribing only one particular type of narrative which generally revolves around the framework of struggles over social justice, capitalism, and cultural and material oppression (Burbules & Berk, 1999). It is perceived as ideological because in this context, ideology 'claims to explain the state of society (or some aspect of society), from which it argues that the state of society ought to be changed or preserved in certain respects' (Collier, 1982, p. 12). The backlash that critical pedagogues have received regarding their practices reveals the tensions that exist within domain of critical pedagogy with regards to issues such as 'indoctrination' (Burbules & Berk, 1999) and 'knowledge imposition' (Mejía, 2004). According to Mejía (2004), knowledge imposition occurs because critical pedagogues or Freirean educators impose a particular view of society onto students. The issue of knowledge imposition is also addressed by Evans (2008) who notes that critical pedagogues may tend to come across as dogmatic, because they are critical of capitalism, militarism, sexism, racism, etc. He contends that this dogmatic posturing that stems from a sense of moral outrage can be somewhat alienating for some colleagues, students and administrators.

There are others who highlight the limitations of critical pedagogy, and Freire's ideas in particular are critiqued. For example, Blackburn (2000) observes that Freire has always claimed ideological neutrality in that he was not liberating people from any particular political ideology, but instead simply wanted to empower the oppressed with tools to achieve their own liberation. However, Freire's self-proclaimed neutrality is problematic because firstly, he presupposes that the oppressed have no power in the first place, and that an outsider might possess the 'formula' to facilitate political growth and social awareness (Blackburn, 2000). Secondly, it is assumed that this 'formula' is universally

applicable and is a kind of absolute good, regardless of the socio-cultural context of the individuals perceived to be oppressed (Blackburn, 2000). Besides this, another limitation of Freire's pedagogy is that has been noted is that it does not emancipate people from views that they have or will adopt uncritically in the future or views that come from other sources (Mejía, 2004). These criticisms are dangerous for critical pedagogy because they imply that students are not allowed to formulate their own views and opinions for themselves. Ironically, the critiques against critical pedagogy such as knowledge imposition, indoctrination and alienation indicate an orientation towards a 'banking concept' of education and marginalisation; both of which critical pedagogy strongly opposes and seeks to reform.

In his book, *Save the World on Your Own Time*, Fish (2008) advocates for university teachers to only devote themselves to intellectual inquiry, and abandon any notions of being an agent of social change. He strongly believes that a transformative approach to learning could indoctrinate students towards moral thinking, which is not the job of a teacher in higher education. What is urged for is 'academicising', where an academic topic is detached from the real world context in which it exists, and instead it is embedded into a context of academic urgency where an account is to be offered or an analysis is performed (Fish, 2008). He does not suggest that material that is political, social, ethical, religious and moral be excluded from the classroom. In fact, he states that any ideology, agenda or crusade can prove to be appropriate for study and 'academicising'. What he suggests is looking at the subject matter, then interrogating and analysing it as an object of academic inquiry, in contrast to an object of affection. Here, feelings and emotions need to be separated from the subject of inquiry as 'academicising' focuses on objective analysis alone.

In the area of ELT, Sowden (2008) argues that many students want to learn English for purely instrumental reasons. Therefore, they may not necessarily find it desirable when their English language teachers push for a social justice agenda in the classroom. He explains:

... there are many groups around the world (business people, diplomats, international students, secondary school pupils studying it as a foreign language), whose main interest in learning English is instrumental, for whom its cultural baggage and ideological embedding is largely irrelevant. They are concerned to develop an adequate proficiency as efficiently as possible, and will look favourably on any activities which facilitate this.

(Sowden, 2008, p. 285)

Hence, students might feel that all they require from a language teacher is language, and students may feel that they can make value judgements for themselves. Timmis (2002) also questions the rights that teachers have to politically re-educate their students, and problematises the fine line between awareness-raising and proselytizing.

Yet another criticism of critical pedagogy is by Ellsworth (1989) who asserts that critical pedagogues fail to make explicit and clear what they intend to empower their students for. She argues that critical pedagogues answer the question 'empowerment for what?' in a depoliticised and ahistorical manner. This is because teachers urge students to strive for a common universal good in a vague, unclear way. Ellsworth (1989) claims:

As a result, student empowerment has been defined in the broadest possible humanist terms, and becomes a "capacity to act effectively" in a way that fails to challenge any identifiable social or political position, institution, or group

(Ellsworth, 1989, p. 305)

Based on his own experiences engaging with critical pedagogy, Johnston (1999) outlines four of his reservations. First, he observed that critical pedagogy fails to address institutionalised power imbalances between teachers and students. He found that it was impossible to balance out power relations between the teacher

and the student because teachers retain authority in the classroom. Secondly, critical pedagogy places greater emphasis on the political nature of education, instead of the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching. The third reservation he has is the positioning of critical pedagogy as a postmodern enterprise, which he believes is based on a partial or slightly faulted understanding of the meaning of the term 'postmodern'. Lastly, Johnston (1999) finds the language used by critical pedagogues exclusionary, off-putting and pseudorevolutionary because it often uses terms such as 'struggle', 'emancipation', 'liberation', 'revolutionary' and 'radical'. He concludes:

...I feel that critical pedagogy would do well to exercise moderation in its use of language. There will be no revolution—at least not one led by university professors; and I believe critical pedagogy would find a broader hearing if it did not require its adherents to dress themselves up linguistically as Che Guevara.

(Johnston, 1999, p. 563)

Many other scholars have also echoed Johnston's (1999) observation on the elitist language of critical pedagogy. According to Darder et al. (2003), working-class educators believe that the theoretical language of critical pedagogy functioned to create new forms of oppression rather than liberate those who had been disenfranchised by intellectual discourse. Critical pedagogy has alienated many teachers with its dense use of language, and it has failed to connect with many because the works of many critical theorists remain unclear and unintelligible (Brookfield, 1991; Evans, 2008). Therefore, one of the reasons why critical pedagogy has received much hostility is because of its use of 'specialised jargon, grand theoretical constructs and imposing names' (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 21).

Therefore, there are many good theoretical and practical arguments against critical pedagogy, with researchers and practitioners believing that it does not have a place in higher education, and in ELT. Awareness of these views helps critical pedagogues gain a deeper understanding of issues surrounding critical pedagogy, and can be beneficial in informing their practice.

The arguments for and against critical pedagogy will be used as a basis to further examine some of the views of all the ELT teachers in this study. These differing perspectives provide a framework for exploring the complexities that relate to the practice of ELT in higher education. Figure 3 provides a summary of the arguments against critical pedagogy in higher education ELT classrooms:

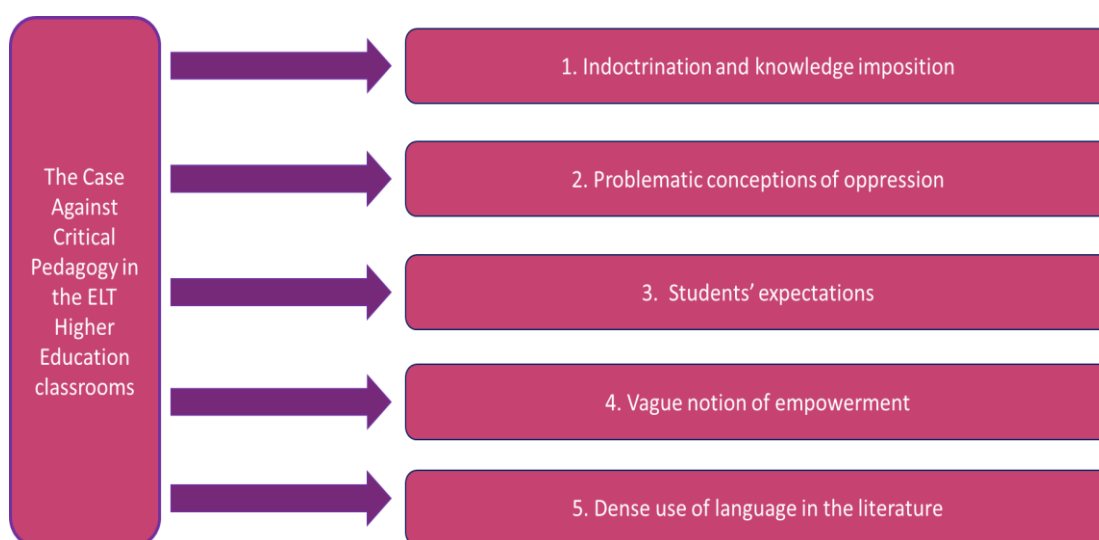


Figure 3: The case against critical pedagogy

Summary

In this chapter an overview to critical pedagogy in ELT was provided. It began with an outline of the purposes of higher education, and an interpretation of the term 'critical pedagogy', with special attention being given to the foundational principles and values that underpin critical pedagogy. Next, a historical outline of ELT, discussion on the origins and development of critical pedagogy as a theory and practice and an exploration of its presence in ELT was explained. Finally, arguments for and against critical pedagogy were presented so that the tension surrounding this area could be captured. These arguments also provide an insight into the strengths and limitations of critical pedagogy as a theory and practice.

The review of literature has highlighted that the social aims and visions of higher education have provided a space for critical pedagogy in many disciplines, including ELT. While there are groups of teachers who have embraced critical pedagogy, there are also those who find it problematic and irrelevant. With these views in mind, I aim to explore the experiences of higher education teachers who

have chosen to engage with critical pedagogy in ELT, to find out why they have chosen to be critical pedagogues, and how they put theory into practice. Because of the transformative nature of critical pedagogy, I also aim to find out how teachers and students have been transformed in the process. Finally, an alternate perspective of critical pedagogy will be presented from two teachers who are against it.

The next chapter provides exploration into the research methodology, by first describing my research philosophy, followed by the research design, methods of data analysis and the ethics and judgment criteria adhered to.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of my study is to gain understanding of my own discipline and the implications that arise when ELT teachers engage with critical pedagogy. This inquiry examines the perspectives of critical pedagogues and those against critical pedagogy. My aims are:

1. To gain insight into why and how ELT teachers from different parts of the world draw inspiration from critical pedagogy in their classrooms.
2. To identify the practical implications of critical pedagogy in ELT on the lives of teachers
3. To understand the perspectives of those against critical pedagogy in ELT

In the following sections, I discuss the methodological aspects of this study. The chapter begins with a description of my research philosophy and the subsequent sections discuss areas relating to research design, methods of data analysis, ethics and judgement criteria.

Research Philosophy

In this section, I present my research philosophy through considering my ontology and epistemology. I discuss my subjectivities as a researcher and describe how they have influenced the study. I also outline my view of knowledge and the beliefs that have guided the research design.

Ontology

Ontology is the starting point of all research and refers to what we may know about the world (Grix, 2002). Drawing from this understanding, my ontology has influenced my perception of social reality and has impacted on the way I view the information gathered for this study. I have formed an understanding of the world I live in by interpreting it based on my personality, the way I have been brought up, and what I have learnt from my surroundings and the people around me. For this reason, I shall attempt to give an outline the various influences in my life that have affected my outlook of the world.

Firstly, I have found that my education as a Masters student in postcolonial literature has taught me to read things from an alternate perspective. Prior to that, I was always taught not to question authority, and hence, found it easy to believe in an 'absolute truth'. For example, I could not comprehend how what I had learnt in history, was suddenly now regarded as just an interpretation and not as the truth. Perhaps it took one of my lecturers from my Masters course to explain to me that if there were three spectators viewing a scene from three different angles, the stories they reported would be very different from one another. Only then could I reconcile with the idea that there is no such thing as an absolute truth, and have decided to settle instead with the notion of 'multiple realities' (Creswell, 2007, p. 16). This perception towards truth aligns with what Lincoln and Guba (2003) describe as antifoundational, which 'denotes a refusal to adopt any permanent, unvarying (or "foundational") standards by which truth can be universally known' (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 273). Throughout my study as a postcolonial literature student, I was able to see how different readings of texts produced different interpretations. For instance how both a feminist or postcolonial or formalist reading of a text could be analysed and interpreted in very different ways. Similarly, I have come to realise that the world can be read and understood in many different ways as well. As a result, I have chosen to embrace the notion of multiple realities and I accept that 'different researchers embrace different realities, as do also the individuals being studied and the readers of a qualitative study' (Creswell, 2007, pp. 17-18).

My interest in exploring the alternate voice of the ‘other’ is based on two reasons. Firstly, coming from a country where certain liberties such as the freedom of speech are curtailed, I value what each voice has to say. Because I have seen how people are silenced in my country, I believe in the importance of allocating a space for those against critical pedagogy to have their voice heard. I do not want to silence any group in this research, and hence seek to represent their alternate perspectives. Secondly, it is the very nature of my being to strive for balance and fairness. These are two important values that I hold on to because of my upbringing and religious convictions. That is why I see the significance of having an alternate voice, which can possibly provide vital lessons for not only critical pedagogues, but other ELT teachers in general.

I believe that my interest in critical pedagogy has stemmed from my ontological viewpoints. In retrospect, my interest in critical pedagogy can be traced to my Masters education in postcolonial literatures in English. It was at that stage when I was introduced to critical theory and studied the world from the lives of the marginalised and oppressed. Besides that, my religious upbringing as a Christian also helped shape my views on justice and equality. Therefore, I found it easy to align my values to the values of critical pedagogy because of the similarities that existed between them. The last contributing factor that influenced my interest towards critical pedagogy was my own teaching experience in higher education. For three and a half years, I was involved in teaching the Cambridge A-Level General Paper subject, which was an international examination that Malaysian pre-university students took before applying to study in overseas and local universities. This examination was an academic writing paper that assessed students’ ability in language and content as it drew on all sorts of topics such as social issues, politics, philosophy, science, history, and the arts. As a teacher, I found incorporating global issues such as these a great way to expose students to the wider world, through language education. Although I was not a critical pedagogue, and was not even aware of critical pedagogy at that time, I would say that my underlying values and beliefs in relation to ELT seemed to mirror that of Freire and critical pedagogy: not only to read the word, but to read the world (Wink, 2000).

Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with the knowledge-gathering process (Grix, 2002), and explains how the researcher knows what they know (Creswell, 2007). It has been noted that an epistemology seeks for arguments of objectivity of certain forms of beliefs to create greater authoritative distinction between knowledge and beliefs that masquerade as knowledge (Hughes, 1990). Reflection on the theory of knowledge has revealed that my study is situated under the epistemological umbrella of constructivism.

In discussing my ontology, I have acknowledged that I assume a relativist ontology, which recognises the existence of multiple, socially constructed realities (Coll & Chapman, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). My relativist ontology has resulted in a naturalistic inquiry which rests on the assumption that there are multiple realities and that the inquiry will diverge rather than converge, once more and more is known (Guba, 1981). This view aligns with a constructivist epistemology which regards the nature of knowledge as a construction of the participant's experience and action; and the nature of truth as multiple, contextual and historical (Neimeyer, 1995). Another important factor to consider in narrating one's experiences is the distortions of memory to create multiple realities. As human beings, total recall is not possible, hence making memory partial and fragmented, and impacting one's perception of reality.

Salman Rushdie, in his book *Imaginary Homelands* (Rushdie, 2012), likens the fragmented, fallible nature of memory to broken glass because human beings are incapable of remembering in whole.

Rushdie (2012) explains:

But human beings do not perceive things in whole; we are not gods but wounded creatures, cracked lenses, capable of only fractured perceptions... Meaning is a shaky edifice we build out of scraps, dogmas, childhood injuries, newspaper articles, chance remarks, old films, small victories, people hated, people loved; perhaps because our sense of what is the case is constructed from such inadequate materials that we defend it so fiercely, even to death

(Rushdie, 2012, p. 12)

Rushdie's description reinforces the distorted, partial nature of human memory and has allowed me to understand how multiple realities can come into existence because of this.

Another insight which led me to see how multiple realities are present is the interpretive nature of the study. Critical hermeneutics highlights that all research is an act of interpretation (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003). This means that interpretive models that claim to reveal the final truth are rejected because language is problematic and it is impossible for the depth of human experience to be fully disclosed. (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003). It is argued that hermeneutic theory can only interpret the meaning of something based on a particular perspective, standpoint, or a situational context because reality is constructed on the basis of the researcher's interpretation of data (Patton, 2002). Researchers cannot separate themselves from their traditions, environments and personalities, hence making research and inquiry a value laden arena (Cousin, 2002). Therefore, my ontology plays a significant role in determining how I have viewed and analysed the data I have obtained from the participants. My values and beliefs seem to align with the basic principles and tenets of critical pedagogy, and it is through this lens that I attempt to interpret the stories of the participants.

Additionally, interpretive research is also regarded as a multi-layered endeavour because the researcher and participants are mutually interpreting their interactions in dialog with their histories and social networks; which consequently makes interpretive research located to specific times and places (Rauscher & Graue, 2010). A constructivist view states that when researchers interact with the participants to acquire data; inquiry changes both researcher and participant, which yet again reinforce the notion that knowledge is time and context dependent (Coll & Chapman, 2000; Cousin, 2002; Krauss, 2005). So, it needs to be established that the data that I have captured only represents the views of the participants at one, particular moment in time. It may not necessarily be a representation of their current viewpoints and beliefs because their understanding of reality may have shifted over time. Knowledge production was a result of co-creation between myself and the research participants. This process is a reflection of the interrelated relationship between the researcher and participants in a naturalistic inquiry (Guba, 1981).

However, multiple interpretations can also be problematic if they contradict one another. The tension that arises from contradictory perspectives does not have to be regarded as something negative and instead can be turned into a learning experience. For this reason, I have also chosen to include the stories of two ELT teachers who oppose critical pedagogy. Because I do not hold to the idea of a single, absolute truth, I see their interpretations as being equally valid and legitimate and as a crucial element in understanding the practice of critical pedagogy. I see these two teachers as the 'other' because their views are not consistent with the general views upheld by the critical pedagogues who are the major focus of my work. Therefore, I find it important to represent the voices of those against critical pedagogy because their interpretations can enrich my learning and understanding.

In summary, my constructivist epistemology is evident through:

- My relativist ontology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003)
- My antifoundational epistemology which refers to the refusal to adopt any permanent or foundational standard by which truth can be universally known (Crookes, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 2003)
- The view of knowledge as being a construction of the participant's experience and action (Neimeyer, 1995)

These are the beliefs that have guided the research design and methods that have been subsequently been used.

Research Paradigm

I have adopted an interpretive-constructivist paradigm for this study. The term 'paradigm' refers to a set of philosophical assumptions about the nature of the world (ontology), and how we can understand it (epistemology) (Maxwell, 1998). Hence, an interpretivist paradigm was employed because it corresponded with my ontology and epistemology. An interpretivist paradigm is one that affirms that: 'Reality as we know it is constructed intersubjectively. Meaning and understanding are developed socially and experientially' (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008, p. 333). Thus, my relativist ontology enabled me to see that 'there are many differing realities in the world and so research needs to take into account how human situations, behaviours and experiences construct realities which are inherently subjective' (Brooke, 2013, p. 431). My relativist ontology has also subsequently led me to adopt a relativist methodology which is hermeneutic. What this means is that the nature of this work is interpretive, because it attempted to accurately depict individual constructions as closely as possible. It also means that it was dialectical, because individual constructions were compared and contrasted with each other. Therefore, based on my research paradigm, it is evident that I hold on to the view that reality only exists in the context of a mental framework. Although there may be many constructions of reality, there is no foundational way to choose among them (Matsuda & Silva, 2005), except through my own lense of interpretation.

Additionally, a constructivist paradigm was also greatly influential in my work. I recognised that my own background and experiences shaped my interpretations of my findings and that these interpretations changed throughout the study as I learned more from the data and from theory. As Creswell (2007) highlights, the researcher's aim is to make sense or interpret the meanings that others have about the world; and similarly, this is my intent as well.

Methods

This section outlines the methods used for this study. It highlights the plans and the procedures that were undertaken and provides an outline of the methods used for data collection and analysis.

A general phenomenological approach and narrative inquiry (Hammond & Wellington, 2012) were undertaken in order to understand the lived experiences of ELT teachers. These two approaches were chosen because a phenomenological study focuses on the 'descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience' (Patton, 2002, p. 107). Phenomenology also allowed for an exploration into educational experiences and the educational significance of a pedagogy (van Manen & Adams, 2010). Therefore, a study with a phenomenological focus helps provide understanding into why some ELT teachers have chosen to be critical pedagogues, and how teachers make sense of their experiences as critical pedagogues.

Besides that, narrative inquiry was also incorporated because it allowed for a specific focus to be examined, and enabled participants to be purposively selected (Hammond & Wellington, 2012), while at the same time allowing access into the inner world of participants (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2013). Narrative inquiry was also employed because of it allowed me to use the stories of individuals to understand phenomena from the perspectives of those who experience them (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon under study (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Hence, a phenomenological focus with narrative inquiry seemed to suit the design

of this research project. In the next sections, the methods undertaken for data collection and analysis will be further explained.

Participant Recruitment

The recruitment of participants began by identifying ELT teachers from around the world, who worked in higher education, and employed critical pedagogy in their lessons. Recruitment was mainly done by conducting an internet and library search on journal articles and published books or book chapters on ELT teachers' involvement and practice in critical pedagogy. Identifying teachers through their published work seemed the only plausible way to locate teachers from different parts of the world because critical pedagogy is not a mainstream approach and employed by very few ELT teachers. Hence, by referring to published work which outlined practical experiences with critical pedagogy, suitable teachers who fitted the research aims and objectives could be chosen. It was found that a significant number were involved in action research. Action research, which is also commonly known as practitioner research or practice led research or practice based research, refers to inquiry into one's own practice (McNiff, 2013). These teachers examined their engagement with critical pedagogy and made their findings known through conference presentations, websites, books, journals and research degree theses. A second way participants were identified was through personal referrals. It seemed that a small number of critical pedagogues had formed a close network among themselves, and because they were informed about each other's work, they were able to suggest other possible participants.

Additionally, I decided that the voices of two teachers who rejected critical pedagogy as a practice would be included. These two teachers were identified through personal referrals. After preliminary discussions and e-mail correspondence it was clear that they understood the theories of critical pedagogy, and had made a conscious decision not to include any part of critical pedagogy in their ELT practices. For this reason, these two teachers would form the alternate voice, to make the case against critical pedagogy.

In line with my epistemology, having participants from different countries and backgrounds contributed to multiple descriptions of realities. Referring to hermeneutics or what broadly may be defined as the theory of interpretation, Crookes (2009) emphasises that is important for ELT teachers to recognise the significance of their locally situated and locally developed knowledge. Similarly, I see value in drawing upon the locally situated knowledge of these participants, which would result in the production of multiple interpretations and not just one single theory of truth. In fact, it is argued that simply understanding that there is a range of 'theories of truth' instead of just one such theory is in itself emancipating for teachers (Crookes, 2009). So, I find value in exploring the stories of critical pedagogues who have had diverse experiences due to their individual contexts and backgrounds. Because these participants provide various descriptions of their realities, there is much to be learnt from their stories.

I was also able to give specific focus into the inner world and experiences of participants through narrative inquiry. It allowed me to see why some ELT teachers chose to be critical pedagogues and enabled me to understand this phenomena from the perspectives of teachers from diverse backgrounds and settings.

The final thirteen participants are listed on Table 2, and pseudonyms are used to protect their identity. The table notes the countries these participants were located in; as well as whether they were identified through their publications or through referrals.

No.	Name	Location	Identification
1.	Ben	Malaysia	Referral
2.	Celia	Turkey	Publication
3.	Dev	Malaysia	Referral
4.	Grant	United Kingdom	Publication
5.	Jack	United States of America	Referral
6.	Jin	Hong Kong	Referral
7.	Katie	United Kingdom	Publication
8.	Kenneth	Korea	Publication
9.	Lisa	United States of America	Publication
10.	Lynn	Canada	Publication
11.	Ming	Korea	Referral
12.	Rob	United States of America	Publication
13.	Tina	New Zealand	Referral

Table 2 : Location and identification of participants

Although these participants currently reside in the countries listed in the table above, their experiences extend beyond their present location. In the interviews, they also drew on their experiences living and teaching in other countries such as Australia, Indonesia, Macedonia, South Africa, Nepal, Poland and Hungary.

Data Collection

Two main sources of data were collected. They were in the form of interviews and documents.

(i) Interviews

It was determined that interviews would serve as the major data collection strategy because it enabled textual, qualitative data which reflects the personal perspectives of participants. The scattered locations of the participants had to be considered, and that is why Skype and phone interviews were chosen as a preferred method for most interviews. This form of computer-mediated communication was selected because it saved on financial and time resources, and at the same time allowed for greater participant accessibility (Knox & Burkard, 2009; Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010). However, there was one instance

where a face-to-face interview was carried out because the participant and I were located in the same country and long distance travel was not required.

The selected teachers were e-mailed a summary of the study which had relevant information on the background and purpose of the research project. All thirteen teachers who were interested in participating were then sent an information sheet and consent form (Appendix A), which was signed and returned. A copy of the interview protocol was also included. Providing participants with a copy of the interview protocol helps them reflect on their experiences and be prepared to discuss those experiences with the researcher (Hill et al., 2005).

The interview questions spanned 4 broad areas:

- a) teacher
- b) student
- c) world
- d) transformations

Under each of these areas were open-ended questions that probed further into the lives of the participants and their experiences relating to critical pedagogy. Because the research participants comprised of critical pedagogues and those against critical pedagogy; interview questions slightly differed for each of these two groups, although they still addressed the four broad areas previously mentioned – teacher, student, world and transformation. The two tables below display the list of questions that were included in the interview protocol.

Areas	Questions
Teacher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Could you describe your role as an ELT practitioner who teaches at an institution of higher education? 2. In shaping your identity as a critical pedagogue, what have been some of the greatest influences in your life?
Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How is the course presented to the students? 2. Can you describe one of your classes, and how you incorporate critical pedagogies into the lesson? 3. How do your students respond to your teaching approaches?
World	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As students at university level, what global issues do you think are important for your students to be aware about? 2. What issues do you tend to draw upon in your lessons? Could you give an account of how you bring the 'world' into your classroom? 3. Is it possible to do this in ALL of your classes? Could you explain some of the challenges and constraints that you may face? 4. How are you, as a critical pedagogue viewed by others around you?
Transformations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What transformations have you noticed in your own life, as a critical pedagogue? 2. What changes have you noticed in the lives of your own students?

Table 3: Interview protocol for critical pedagogues

Areas	Questions
Teacher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you understand by critical pedagogy in ELT? 2. Would you call yourself a critical pedagogue? Explain. 3. In your teaching, do you ever use content that could be seen as to bring about social change?
Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do you think your students would react if critical pedagogy were to be brought into the classroom? 2. If you were to step outside what was specified in the curriculum, how would your students react?
World	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does ELT prepare students for academia and beyond?
Transformations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ELT teaching can be seen as being transformative. From your experience, can you give an example of major changes you have noticed in the lives of your students?

Table 4: Interview protocol for teachers against critical pedagogy

Interviews were audio recorded and field notes were also made during the interview process, which later served as a source of data. Interviews were semi-structured and lasted between 45-90 minutes. This semi-structured exploratory approach involved specifying key themes beforehand, and then formulating them into questions (Gibson & Brown, 2009). In other words, the interview questions were constructed based on broad areas of interest that were related to the research questions, and in doing so, an in depth exploration into the personal, professional and social lives of the participants was conducted. All the interview questions were open ended, so that participants could elaborate and provide justification for their answers. Meanwhile, it also gave the researcher flexibility to ask questions according to the response given by the participants, and ask for clarification when necessary, or explore an issue in more depth.

The exploratory nature of the interview process led to knowledge being socially constructed between myself and the participants. Meaning was co-created and perceptions of events and experiences related to critical pedagogy and higher education teaching were reconstructed by the researcher and research participant. The co-creation of knowledge happened because, I acted as an instrument; and through carefully designed questions, attempted to elicit opinions, attitudes, and knowledge from the participants.

Due to the varied nature of the teachers' backgrounds and experiences, the stories they related were not only confined to experiences from within their current higher education environments. In many instances, they drew upon their earlier experiences of teaching in schools, language centres, and other informal settings. After interviews were conducted, the audio recordings were sent to be transcribed verbatim.

Finally, the completed transcripts were sent to participants to be checked for accuracy. Participants were asked to read through the transcripts and make changes to the information where necessary. While not all of the participants made changes to the transcript, some chose to add and remove information

disclosed during their interviews. At the end of the study, participants will be sent a copy of this thesis, to inform them of the results of this research.

(ii) Documents

In addition to interviews, the research design also included documents as a supplementary source of data. Document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods such as interviews in order to seek convergence and corroboration across data sets (Bowen, 2009). Narratives that were obtained in the form of texts such as e-mail correspondence, published works from participants and my research notebook entries were seen to serve as supplementary data which was a valuable addition to the knowledge base. These documents are stored in my password protected computer which is located at the University of Otago. Additionally, printed documents such as my research notebook, and published works by the participants are stored in a locked cabinet at the same location.

Document analysis is not only limited to print material, but also includes computer-based and internet-transmitted material (Bowen, 2009). It was previously noted that computer-mediated communication was employed to connect with participants. This took the form of interviews and regular e-mail correspondence. E-mail correspondence took place to clarify issues discussed during the interview, and also to update participants on the progress of the research project. At times, participants also expressed views that they had forgotten to mention during the interview. Thus, e-mail correspondence played an important part in enabling me to develop a relationship with these participants over time. Regular e-mail correspondence also helped in the co-constructing of knowledge and interpretation of interview data.

The second type of document that has been included as data is the published works of the participants. Although I had initially identified seven participants through their publications on critical pedagogy, I later found out that those I got to know through personal referrals were also involved in action research projects. Their published works contained detailed descriptions of their critical pedagogy

projects and provided views towards critical pedagogy in general. These participants had published in books, journals, websites and through their research degree theses; thus making their work available in the public sphere. The published works that I accessed enabled me to go ‘inside the worlds of the participants’ and get a feel of what their critical pedagogy classrooms looked like. Consequently these works also helped me to understand and interpret critical pedagogy from their different perspectives. These documents provided a background and context, which was a helpful guide towards additional questions that were asked during the interviews (Bowen, 2009). The published works of these teachers will not be listed in order to protect their anonymity.

Finally, entries in my research notebook also served as a supplementary data source. Throughout my research process, notes were jotted down to record feelings, observations, and new insights. As noted by Saldana, Beretvas and Leavy (2011) cognitive and affective processes relating to inferring, intuiting, empathising and evaluating are also part of the data collection process. Therefore, whatever that is thought, felt and done during the entire research process is considered as data as well (Saldana, Beretvas, & Leavy, 2011). For this reason, it was thought important to include entries from the researcher’s notebook as part of a data source.

Data Analysis

This section documents how analysis of interview transcripts, regular e-mail correspondence, published articles and field notes were carried out. Data were analysed using a general inductive approach which focused on research findings from frequent, dominant, or significant themes from the raw data (Thomas, 2006). This thematic analysis involved examining commonality in the data, differences or distinctive features across the data set and relationships between the various elements in the analysis (Gibson & Brown, 2009).

For the purpose of data analysis, participants were assigned pseudonyms, and affiliations to institutions were removed to provide anonymity. Data was coded as:

- a) I – Data from interviews
- b) E – Data from e-mail correspondence
- c) W – Data from participants published works

Page numbering from the printout of the interview transcript was also used to enable systematic data analysis. For example, if the interview transcript of one of the participants under the pseudonym Mary was quoted, it would read ‘Mary, I, pg. 3’. This coding system was devised to establish a systematic referencing system, so that data analysis could be carried out methodically.

The process of data analysis closely followed the procedures outlined by Thomas (2006). It began with the preparation of raw data files which were formatted, page numbered and printed to ease with the referencing process. Then, all forms of data were closely read in order to gain familiarity with relevant content. The next step involved the creation of themes. These were identified from the research aims and also from actual phrases or meanings in specific text segments. The final stage involved continuous revision and refinement to the themes that emerged from the data. After the preliminary themes were created, sub-themes were identified and collapsed if they were similar. At times, certain segments of texts were assigned into more than one sub-theme. At other times, there was considerable amount of text that was not coded into any category because it did not relate to the research objectives. Appropriate quotations that conveyed the core ideas of each theme were selected to further exemplify the essence and key aspects of each theme. Throughout the data analysis process, a few strategies were employed to ensure credibility. For instance regular consistency checks were carried out on the categories derived by discussing the themes and data sets with my supervisory committee to ensure credibility (Shenton, 2003). After feedback was received, data would be re-examined. These frequent debriefing sessions allowed for the widening of visions and at the same time provided a sounding board for developing ideas and interpretations to be tested (Shenton, 2003). In addition, research questions were constantly referred to in order to ensure alignment with the aims for the study. Alignment was sought by constantly revisiting the data, coding process and categories to identify emergent themes that were important.

Figure 4 presents an overview of the inductive analysis process:

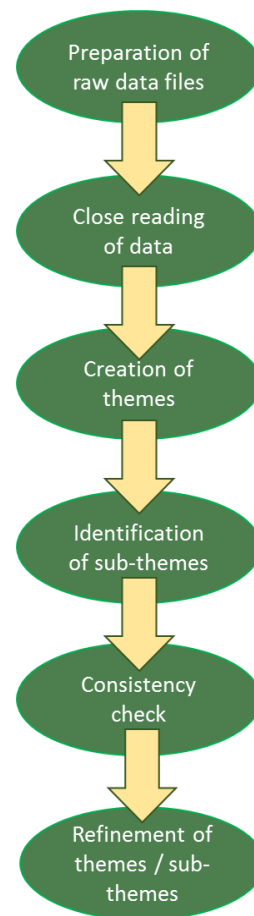


Figure 4: Data analysis model

Ethics

Ethical considerations were necessary because of the involvement of human participants. Interactions with participants aligned with the general principles of most studies such as voluntary participation and the right to withdraw, protection of anonymity of participants, obtaining informed consent (Cresswell, 2013).

Before conducting data collection, this study had to obtain a Human Ethics approval from the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. Participants were sent an information sheet which outlined the research project and stated what was expected from them. There was also a consent form that participants had to sign and return to the researcher to indicate their willingness to take part in this project. A copy of these forms can be found in Appendix A.

Some of the moral and ethical questions that I had to grapple with included: Am I exploiting people with my research? How do I present the views of those who rejected critical pedagogy? How do I maintain the anonymity of my participants when some have made their involvement in critical pedagogy public through their research and publications? Because they mainly wrote about their work with critical pedagogy in their book and journal publications, I had to think of a way to utilise the information they had made public, in a way that made them anonymous.

Judgement Criteria

Criteria need to be developed in order to judge quality. Tracy (2010) presents eight criteria of qualitative quality which can be flexibly adopted to suit the goals of the study and preferences or skills of the researcher. The eight criteria are:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Worthy topic | 5. Resonance |
| 2. Rich rigour | 6. Significant contribution |
| 3. Sincerity | 7. Ethical |
| 4. Credibility | 8. Meaningful coherence |

(Tracy, 2010, p. 839)

For the purpose of this study, four criteria that were proposed by Tracy (2010) were selected. They were:

1. Worthy topic
2. Sincerity
3. Ethical research
4. Meaningful coherence

A worthy topic has been described as one that is ‘relevant, timely, significant, and interesting’ (Tracy, 2010, p. 840). The present study is a worthy topic because it seeks to understand a developing phenomenon among ELT teachers as critical pedagogues, at a time where there is great need for social justice and

transformation. The study is significant because it sheds light on how critical pedagogues from different parts of the world are committed to having a social purpose in higher education and how they attempt to create transformational possibilities for their students. The element of having an alternative voice to the voice of critical pedagogue makes this study interesting because opposing views from two other ELT teachers are raised. This thesis provides a space for alternative voices to problematise and critique the practice of critical pedagogy.

The second criteria is sincerity, which refers to ‘self-reflexivity, vulnerability, honesty, transparency, and data auditing’ (Tracy, 2010, p. 841). I have displayed sincerity through the transparency in the methods used. I did this by providing an account of the research design and the process of data analysis.

Self-reflexivity was displayed by my attempt to be honest to myself, my research and my audience. That is why it was important to describe my research philosophy; that highlights ‘past experiences, biases, prejudices and orientations that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study’ (Creswell, 2007, p. 208).

It has been noted that self-reflexivity is important because:

A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions

(Malterud, 2001, p. 483)

For this reason, I found it important to unpack my baggage as a researcher, and articulate them through my ontology and epistemology. I also kept a researcher's notebook to record my impressions during the data collection period and also other ideas that emerged throughout the research journey. Having this notebook

facilitated the practice of reflexivity or in other words, the epistemological assumptions that help guide acts of inquiry (Patton, 2002).

In addition, to establish trustworthiness, I incorporated some suggestions by Shenton (2004) such as engaging in frequent debriefing sessions with my supervisory committee and maintaining a researcher reflective commentary throughout the research project. Besides that, I also gave participants opportunities to refuse to participate in the project so that only participants who were genuinely willing to take part in the project offered data freely. Furthermore, participants were clearly aware that they had the right to withdraw at any point. These strategies were helpful in encouraging participants to share their ideas freely without fear (Shenton, 2004).

The third criteria I adopted was ethical research, which considers procedural ethics, situational and culturally specific ethics, relational ethics and exiting ethics which takes place once the researcher leaves the scene and shares the research. Procedural ethics was evident through the approval I received from the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee to conduct this study. I was also very mindful of protecting the identity of my participants, which guided me to providing them with pseudonyms and not disclosing the institutions they were from. Besides that, I also considered situational ethics which often question whether the means justify the end and whether the harms of the research practices outweigh its moral goals (Tracy, 2010). Situational ethics was one issue I grappled with when wanting to introduce two critical pedagogues to each other because they would be attending the same conference. I was afraid that this might jeopardise the anonymity of these two teachers. Therefore, I had to carefully think about how I dealt with this situation and how I had to go about getting their consent for meeting each other.

The final criteria I would like to choose is meaningful coherence which determines whether the study:

- a) achieves what it purports to be about
- b) uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goals

- c) meaningfully interconnects literature, research questions/foci, findings, and interpretations with each other

(Tracy, 2010, p. 840)

Some strategies that I incorporated in order to ensure that I fulfilled this criteria was by having regular meetings with my supervisory committee, and by seeking feedback on my writing from other researchers in the field. It has been noted: ‘Such collaborative sessions can be used by the researcher to discuss alternative approaches, and others who are responsible for the work in a more supervisory capacity may draw attention to flaws in the proposed course of action’ (Shenton, 2004, p. 67). I also constantly revisited my research questions to see if they were reflected throughout the thesis.

Summary

The methodology outlined has provided transparency to the research process. In this chapter, I have made clear my position as a researcher through a description of my ontology and epistemology, and this is aligned with the methodology and methods used. Also included were data collection and analysis approaches, followed by ethics and judgement criteria. Articulating my positionality as a researcher has enabled me to see how my history, educational background, and personal and professional values have shaped my understanding of the world and has thus influenced the design of this research and data analysis.

The next five chapters present an analysis of findings that emerged from the research questions. Chapter 4 to 7 relate to findings on experiences of critical pedagogues, while Chapter 8 focuses on the two teachers against critical pedagogy. I analyse the interview transcripts and other relevant documents to find out how and why critical pedagogy is embedded into ELT classrooms. I also aim to examine the transformational impact that critical pedagogy has on the lives on teachers, and what transformations they observe in their students. In Chapter 8, I bring focus onto those who have rejected critical pedagogy, and explore their rationales for doing so. In Chapter 9, I revisit the research questions and provide a summary of the main points to show how the data informed these questions. Chapter 10 is a final discussion bringing together this thesis.

Chapter 4

Becoming a Critical Pedagogue:

The Road Taken

Introduction

The title of this chapter was inspired by Robert Frost's poem, *The Road Not Taken* (Frost, 2009). In this poem, a traveller came to a point where a decision was needed on which path to follow. This poem reflects the many moments in life where choices have to be made. Similarly, ELT teachers in this study had to decide on the sort of ELT teacher they wanted to be. For all, critical pedagogy was the path they chose to take. Critical pedagogy was the road taken.

Analysis of interview transcripts revealed that the choice to be a critical pedagogue was value driven. Academic identities are 'influenced by individual values and beliefs as well as by institutional culture and positioning' (Harris, 2005, p. 426). But what sort of values would an ELT critical pedagogue espouse? According to McLean (2006), such teachers will be oriented towards teaching as a social act rather than as a technical endeavour. She explains that such individuals would push forward the social, critical and moral aims of a university.

Data showed that the underlying values that drove the practices of many of these critical pedagogues did not develop in isolation, but rather were dependant on various sources of influences, such as:

- a) Theoretical values
- b) Pedagogical values
- c) Religious values
- d) Departmental and institutional values
- e) Dominant political values

A number of teachers were inspired by the theoretical values of critical pedagogy and chose to travel the road of critical pedagogy only after being exposed to its literature. Others were greatly influenced by the pedagogical values of their own teachers from the past. Many of their attitudes and values towards teaching were shaped by people who had taught them, and it may be inferred that these values corresponded closely with the foundational values of critical pedagogy. There were also a small number of teachers who reported that their religious values influenced their choice to become a critical pedagogue. These teachers saw many similarities between their faith and critical pedagogy. Another influence was departmental and institutional values. Being in a supportive, critical pedagogy oriented environment allowed these teachers to grow and thrive as critical pedagogues. Such institutional values encouraged pre-existing dispositions towards critical pedagogy and allowed them to develop and flourish. Finally, teachers were also influenced by political values. In this case, they chose critical pedagogy because they currently lived or had previously lived under an oppressive political climate. Each of these five influences is now explained in greater depth, with evidence presented from the interview transcripts.

a) Theoretical values

One of the influences that determined the choice of becoming a critical pedagogue was the theoretical values of critical pedagogy. A number of teachers recollected that they became critical pedagogues after they were exposed to the literature of critical pedagogy. These teachers learned about the subject when they took certain courses in university.

Grant, a teacher from the UK talked about his first encounter with critical pedagogy while pursuing his Masters:

...And that's where I sort of first came across, you know, Paulo Freire and Giroux ... I saw work by Pennycook and that whole kind of political thing in ELT. I sort of became aware of it through my Masters programme when I started reading around in those areas...It came about largely through encountering the ideas in the literature, I think. And then trying to think, I could see sort of a degree of personal relevance in these things. It kind of makes sense to you from where you stand and your view of the world and trying to make sense of those in terms of the classroom.

(Grant, UK)

Grant's engagement with the literature enabled him to see that the basic tenets and values of critical pedagogy aligned with his own personal values and worldviews. These ideas were intellectually stimulating and appealed to his personal moral code. He adds, 'It didn't really start in terms of I was teaching the practical environment and I wanted to help my learners. It came more from reading ideas and thinking, ahh, that makes sense' (Grant, UK). So, Grant was inspired because he could see the importance and relevance of the guiding values of critical pedagogy.

Rob from the United States of America had a similar story to share:

...in my Masters second year, I took a course with a professor, a course titled Critical Pedagogy. Interestingly enough, it was a course in which we did not only study what critical pedagogy was but study the debate for and against critical pedagogy that had been happening since the 1990s in the United States ... I was upset with the critique of critical pedagogy. I thought it was sort of deliberate redefining of critical pedagogy, narrowing it down to oppose it. I

didn't like that and I was a staunch supporter of the fundamentals of critical pedagogy ...

(Rob, USA)

Like Grant, Rob first developed an interest from the literature. After studying the debates for and against critical pedagogy, Rob realised that he was more inclined towards it instead of being opposed. He went on to say how the foundational values of critical pedagogy, such as relating education to the larger problems and realities of society, making teaching purposeful and meaningful to society at large and instilling a sense of global citizenship among students were what inspired and motivated him.

It was apparent that almost all respondents were familiar with the literature associated with critical pedagogy. They frequently mentioned names like Michael Apple, bell hooks, Henry Giroux and Paulo Freire in their narratives. They also tended to draw upon theoretical aspects of critical pedagogy in justifying or providing a rationale for their actions. Hence, it was evident that these teachers were both familiar with the theory and inspired values.

The data showed that it was important to be connected to the theoretical dimensions that inform practice because as Kincheloe (2008b) explains, critical pedagogy is ever changing, and evolving as it continuously embraces new theoretical insights, problems and social circumstances. 'In this context, critical theorists/educators become detectives of new theoretical insights, perpetually searching for new and interconnected ways of understanding power and oppression and the ways they shape everyday life and human experience' (Kincheloe, 2008b, p. 27). Because these critical pedagogues had a sound knowledge of the theoretical aspects underpinning critical pedagogy, they could examine and evaluate its advantages and limitations, and consider ways they could appropriate it to suit their individual contexts.

Wheelahan (2012) discusses the importance of theoretical knowledge for students, but in many ways, her arguments can be applied to teachers as well. She argues

that theoretical knowledge allows individuals to participate in the controversies and debates in their respective fields; it enables individuals to acquire disciplinary styles of reasoning and provides access into society's broader conversations. Similarly, teachers who are familiar with the theoretical dimensions of critical pedagogy will be able to enter into dialogues with other theorists in the field and see how their classroom practices have a place in society. It also enables them to think and act like a critical pedagogue, which is likely to be helpful as they navigate the complexities they face in the different contexts they find themselves in.

In summary, it was found that theoretical values influenced choice. They not only influenced the decision about choosing the road of critical pedagogy, but were significant in the growth and development of ELT teachers.

b) Pedagogical values

Ben, Kenneth, Jin, Lynn and Ming talked about how they had been significantly influenced by the values of their teachers. While most were not taught by teachers who explicitly called themselves 'critical pedagogues', they nevertheless implemented some of the foundational values of critical pedagogy in their classrooms. This inference is made because most of the respondents did not label themselves or openly tell their students that they were critical pedagogues. Yet, they embedded and practiced it in many different ways. Likewise, their teachers could have been inspired by critical pedagogy, or have taught with similar values without explicitly labelling themselves.

Here is an example of how Lynn from Canada who had grown up in South Africa, recalled a teacher who had a profound influence on her:

... I think I became politicised myself when I was at university and my major was Political Science and I had an amazing professor, Dr X, and I think he really politicised a whole generation of young people, myself and the people in my class and he, he was a Marxist and, and I mean in those days, you were not allowed to be a

Marxist, of course, and he was very political and ended up actually getting murdered by the regime. Although he was a white man himself, he was very political. He started trade unions and he did a lot of work with politicising the black people in South Africa. So I think he was a huge, he was probably my first huge, big influence...

(Lynn, Canada)

Lynn was changed as a person and it led to becoming politicised. Her experience shows that some of her values may have been formed and shaped during this crucial stage of learning. Lynn's teacher provided her with a model of teaching and learning, which subsequently helped in constructing her professional identity.

For Kenneth an ELT teacher from Korea, inspiration came in almost an accidental manner. He noted that it was a matter of simple luck that he had enrolled in the doctoral programme at an American university:

I got to know about critical theory and pedagogy and critical literary at X University ... Back then, there were some people who really went along in their area like Henry Giroux, Joe Kincheloe, elementary education. There is Pat Shannon and also social constructivism, Jamie Myers, so I was really influenced by these scholars.

(Kenneth, Korea)

It was also again by mere chance that he took courses from people like Joe Kincheloe and Henry Giroux, who had theorised critical pedagogy. Kenneth described that he was challenged academically by these renowned scholars and it was through them that he was also introduced to the critical works of Paulo Freire, Peter McLaren, Alastair Pennycook, Ira Shor and many others. Kenneth's experience of learning from critical scholars changed his values towards ELT. He began to see that teaching English was a social and political act. He was inspired

to establish an ELT programme in his home country in Korea, where students could use English as a critical tool to create and disseminate social knowledge in their respective communities and in the wider world.

A respondent from Malaysia had studied in Australia and recalled teachers from quite an early point in his life who had a powerful impact on him:

...as far as my attitude towards teaching, a really strong influence would be the Mercy nuns and Christian Brothers who educated me ... I think back about a lot of the things that happened through my schooling and realise that a lot of the attitudes I have towards education, I got from them... I think some of the more unconventional teachers had a big influence on what I do in classrooms because all the things you're not meant to do in classrooms, that's what I do.

(Ben, Malaysia)

Ben's current philosophy towards teaching was partly influenced by his education and he taught in the way he had been taught. The data showed that his teachers had a powerful impact on his teaching career, and that his values were formed early while he was still a student. Brookfield (1995) highlights that the autobiography of the teacher is useful, because teachers are very often influenced by formative memories, experiences and philosophies of teaching learned from formal study. He explains, 'Our autobiographies as learners in childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood frame our approach to teaching at the start of our careers, and they frequently exert an influence that lasts a lifetime' (Brookfield, 1995, p. 50). Flores and Day (2006) found that positive and negative personal experiences of being a learner provides individuals with a 'frame of reference', which help them make sense of teaching and understanding themselves as teachers. Similarly, critical pedagogues such as Ben, Kenneth, Jin, Lynn and Ming gained a frame of reference through their autobiographies as learners; and this subsequently shaped their values towards teaching and learning.

c) Religious values

In two cases, teachers ascribed their interest in critical pedagogy to their religious convictions and beliefs. Lisa and Jack, both from the United States of America, recounted that their faith seemed to be instrumental in the formation of their identities. Both related how social justice, an important value in critical pedagogy, was also the foundation of the Catholic and Christian faith. When asked how she became interested in social justice education, Lisa answered: ‘I guess a lot of it is my Catholic faith which is very much informed by the tradition of social justice’. Additionally, Jack, on numerous occasions tended to draw on biblical characters and passages to further justify his work and his views. For Lisa and Jack, religious values were empowering and enlightening; and also provided them images of what good teaching should be. They felt that the pedagogical values of critical pedagogy aligned with their religious values and consequently contributed to their growth as critical educators. Freire’s writings were also grounded on the Christian faith and he acknowledges that his Christian background had a profound influence on his thinking and actions. He shares an early experience with Myles Horton:

I remember that when I was 6 years old, one day I was talking with my father and my mother, and I protested strongly against the way my grandmother had treated a black woman at home--not with physical violence, but with undoubtedly racial prejudice. I said to my mother and to my father that I couldn't understand that, not maybe with the formal speech I am using now, but I was underlining for me the impossibility of being a Christian and at the same time discriminating against another person for any reason.

(Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 243)

Later on in this conversation, Freire brings up his faith again : ‘When I went first to meet with workers and peasants in Recife's slums, to teach them and to learn from them, I have to confess that I did that pushed by my Christian faith’ (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 245). From Freire’s experiences, we can see that he was inspired by Christian values and teaching. However, he did not advocate a

proselytizing faith, and was not interested in static, institutional religion (Neumann, 2011). Instead, his faith seems to be ‘a religion of the street and of the slum, with a prophetic investment in the historical material reality of the poor and oppressed’ (Neumann, 2011, p. 612). Therefore, it should not be surprising that teachers like Jack and Lisa found it easy to accept and embrace similar values which lie at the heart of critical pedagogy.

Faith can have an influence on one’s professional practice and numerous studies have been carried out to examine the role of faith, particularly Christianity in ELT e.g. (Varghese & Johnston, 2007; Wong, Dornyei, & Kristjansson, 2012). Studies in this area reinforce the idea that values shape teaching, scholarship and research (Canagarajah, 2012).

d) Departmental and institutional values

Two teachers found themselves in institutions that prioritised social aims in teaching and learning. Such an environment made it easier for these them to grow and develop as individuals who believed in teaching for self and social transformation.

Ming related that his department in Korea was critical pedagogy oriented and that his head of department was a critical pedagogue. He taught in a programme that was developed by a self-identified critical pedagogue, and he went on to explain that one of the reasons why he was hired was because his department valued his background in literary theory and recognised it would be useful in his teaching. The values that were upheld by Ming’s department made it natural for him to incorporate elements of critical pedagogy into his lessons. Ming’s experience as a new teacher were reflected in the findings of a study conducted by Flores and Day (2006) who found that the influence of the workplace could either facilitate or hinder professional learning and development in new teachers. In Ming’s case, departmental values had a positive impact because they helped him to construct his critical pedagogy identity.

Lisa provided an example of how her previous place of work in the United States encouraged teachers to have social aims in their classes:

I should say my previous institution actually had a teaching award for difference in inequality. So different teachers could submit lesson plans to this Difference in Inequality Teaching Award and you actually won, I think it was \$200 if you had the best lesson plan. So it was something they valued. They had a Difference in Inequality Committee that would like you know, work on curriculum development and things like that. So it was definitely something that was valued

(Lisa, USA)

It should be highlighted that Lisa did not become a critical pedagogue simply for obtaining external rewards. Instead, what can be learnt from her story is that the institution was supportive of teachers who sought to address issues of 'difference in inequality' in their lessons. Such an environment would have made it possible for Lisa to develop and grow as a critical pedagogue.

Lisa went to work in a new institution. She joined because she knew that the university was very oriented towards social justice. Lisa explained how outreach and community service was built into the mission statement of the university, and how the students there had a mandatory service component in their first and second year of study. She added that everyone talked openly about the service programmes and how there was funding and support for those activities.

It should be clarified that Lisa did not become a critical pedagogue solely because of the institutions that she was a part of. In the previous section, it was shown that religious values were also important. However, institutional values did play a role in reinforcing and encouraging her growth and she made a conscious effort to move to an institution which had a strong social justice oriented mission.

e) Dominant political values

Three teachers were influenced by the political climate that they had lived in or were currently living in. Lynn grew up in South Africa, Grant was from the UK and Celia was from Turkey. These teachers experienced living in oppressive societies, and their hostile political environments fuelled their passion for critical pedagogy.

For instance, Lynn credited her development to the South African apartheid society that she grew up in, while Grant recounted being deeply affected by the period in the UK when Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister. Brookfield (2003) notes that a critical approach often stems from a deep conviction that students need to be taught to recognize injustice so that dominant ideologies that tend to reproduce oppressive practices within society can be resisted. As Freire (2005) argues, it is the oppressed that best understand oppression and the need for freedom:

Who are better prepared than the oppressed to understand the terrible significance of an oppressive society? Who suffer the effects of oppression more than the oppressed? Who can better understand the necessity of liberation?

(Freire, 2005, p. 45)

Celia explained that many people were fighting for greater freedoms in her country because liberties were curtailed. For example, citizens did not have the freedom to openly discuss issues related to their ethnic backgrounds or religion, some did not have equal educational opportunities and certain groups of people were not able to speak their own language freely. Celia recognised that change would not come quickly or easily, however, she continued to practice critical pedagogy with the hope of reforming society, by starting with her students. Teachers like Celia can face risks because of the curriculum they teach in the classroom. When engaging with social justice issues, all ELT teachers challenge traditional content, as well as traditional teaching processes and norms about the

student-teacher relationship (Bell et al., 2003). Teachers who challenge dominant political ideologies and values may find themselves in a vulnerable position. However, critical pedagogues like Celia were not deterred and the repression experienced was used to fuel passion and commitment towards critical pedagogy, even to the extent that she published her views in an international journal.

Summary

It was clear that there were various influences that helped steer these ELT teachers to take the road of critical pedagogy. It was a choice based on a range of values that were dependent on the different backgrounds and contexts that each critical pedagogue found themselves in. These values were instrumental in shaping teachers' understanding on what it can mean to be a higher education ELT teacher.

In most cases, it was not just one influence that was instrumental in determining choice. The various influences revealed history, background and socialisation significantly affect teacher development. It may be inferred that it enabled them to have a 'social reform perspective of teaching' (Pratt, 1992). Such teachers can then empower students and see themselves as instruments and advocates of change (Pratt, 2002).

The next chapter provides findings on how critical pedagogues practice critical pedagogy in ELT and the classroom conditions they strive to create.

Chapter 5

‘We Make the Road by Walking’: Living Critical Pedagogy in the Classroom

Introduction

‘We make the road by walking: Conversations on education and social change’ is the title of a ‘talking’ book between Paulo Freire and Myles Horton (Horton & Freire, 1990). Their conversations on their life experiences and educational practice took place over a few days, and were then later transcribed. The phrase ‘we make the road by walking’ is an adaptation from a Spanish proverb ‘se hace camoni al andar’ which can be found in Antonio Machado’s poem, ‘Calminante’ (Traveller) (Bell, Gaventa, & Peters, 1990). This line has been translated as ‘in walking, the path is made’, ‘you make the way as you go’, or ‘you make it as you go along’ (Cochran-Smith, 2004). I have found that the line ‘we make the road by walking’ suitably summarises the main theme of this chapter, which focuses on how critical pedagogy is practised in the classroom. Teachers made their own path of critical pedagogy through practice.

I will discuss how critical pedagogy plays out in the ELT classroom. As noted in previous chapters, empirical research into the practice is still largely underdeveloped because focus has tended to center on the conceptual dimensions and theory of critical pedagogy (Akbari, 2008b). Therefore, based on first-hand accounts from ELT critical pedagogues, this chapter aims to provide insight into how critical pedagogy has constructed ELT practices in various classroom settings.

Interviews with participants showed that when living critical pedagogy, the voice and experience of students were made priority. This condition was regarded as an important element for critical pedagogy to thrive, and hence affected classroom practices in the following ways:

- a) Negotiated, co-constructed knowledge
- b) Trusting environments
- c) Problem-posing
- d) Researchers of students' experience

The first section in this chapter reveals how teachers and students were mutually responsible for negotiating and constructing knowledge. Secondly, it was found that trust was an important condition which is why so many teachers strove to create a respectful, safe environment, where students could come together and talk about important personal and politically laden issues. The next finding sheds light on another aspect of critical pedagogy, which is problem-posing. Here, teachers drew and problematised issues pertinent to students' so that they could make decisions that would lead to self and social transformation. The final section discusses why a significant number of teachers were involved in researching student experiences. Teachers explored their students' socio-economic and political backgrounds and classroom behaviours and experiences in order to get a deeper understanding of their learning needs.

a) Negotiated, co-constructed knowledge

Emphasis on student experience and participation resulted in negotiated and co-constructed knowledge. All respondents were engaged in some form of mutual knowledge sharing and development with their students. When knowledge is jointly created, it is argued that students have the right to co-develop and evaluate the syllabus (Shor, 1993). A negotiated environment where knowledge is co-constructed raises issues relating to authority and freedom in teaching. In fact, the notion of authority is a key element in Freire's analysis of education; and Freire emphasises that there is a need for both freedom and authority and that one should not be at the expense of the other (Irwin, 2012). Authority within a critical

pedagogy tradition recognises that teachers have professional authority and authority over their subject knowledge area. But teachers are not the only authority in the classroom because students bring knowledge and share this in a reciprocal and dialogical manner (Kanpol, 1994). Although one may argue that power can be misused, and that teachers can use their authority to oppress students, Kanpol (1994) claims that teachers also have the power to use their professional authority in a beneficial way by creating caring and nurturing relationships with students that also challenge oppressive relations such as those related to gender, race and class.

There were many examples how authority and freedom worked in the classroom. For example, Rob, Katie, and Celia sought students' views on topics and content to be covered, which led to both parties being responsible for the subject knowledge. Besides that, co-intentionality was fostered because teachers presented problems for inquiry related to key aspects of their students' experiences. This example of mutualism shows knowledge is collectively owned, rather than the sole property of the teacher (Shor, 1993).

Rob provided an example of how knowledge was co-created through a negotiated syllabus. His actions demonstrate how he gave students the freedom to choose what they were interested in, while still maintaining some form of authority in the classroom:

I gave the course, the syllabus and tell them to go to the schedule and ask them to mark what things they find most interesting, relevant, useful. And so I take an anonymous survey and I take off up to 30 percent of the course based on what they don't like ... but in some cases, I said, I negotiated with them and I said, no, I cannot take this off because it's at the heart of this course.

(Rob, USA)

Co-construction of the knowledge area occurred because Rob wanted learning to be connected, purposeful and relevant to students' and it provided a more equal playing field for all those involved. This was an indication that Rob did not want to impose his own ideas and opinions on students and that they were free to challenge his ideas. However, there were also times when it was a challenge to have a negotiated syllabus. Rob reported that sometimes students wanted to remove topics that were central to the course's aims and goals. When this happened, he had to defend the significance of those topics to learning. Rob reported that in doing this, he opened up an honest, intellectual discussion in the classroom, instead of imposing knowledge on students. He added that his students allowed him the chance to prove the importance and relevance of topics they were not initially interested in.

From Rob's example, it is evident that it is difficult to have a negotiated syllabus at all times. There are instances when the teacher needs to exercise authority. It is also challenging to have a negotiated syllabus when there is a fixed course outline and students sit for common exams. Lynn, Katie, Ben, Jin and Celia taught courses with pre-determined course outlines. Lynn explained how she needed to make sure she covered the course objectives and skills and then introduce material that had a critical agenda. Jin, an ELT teacher from Hong Kong who had just begun to trial critical pedagogy in his classroom was also greatly challenged by the course syllabus: 'It (the syllabus) was set by my colleagues several years ago, a long time ago. I can't change it myself because it has been set'. Therefore, some of these teachers were constrained by requirements to be able to fully negotiate and co-construct knowledge with their students.

There were a whole range of classroom activities that enabled students to be freely involved in the knowledge creation process. Many of the teachers gave students the autonomy to choose their own research projects and topics for class presentations. Students brought in extra material, frequently led classroom discussions and were encouraged to challenge ideas discussed in the classroom. Working with a negotiated syllabus where there was active student involvement required teachers to display flexibility. A student driven learning environment did

not mean that teachers had no authority in the classroom. It simply meant that teachers transformed their authority. Freire explains this idea and notes that ‘authority’ is different from ‘authoritarianism’ (Shor, 1987). He argues that a democratic teacher never stops having authority because authority enables the freedoms of the students to be shaped. In relation to Freire’s view, Shor (1987) introduces the term ‘mobile authority’, which means a willingness on the part of the teacher to be flexible and move along with the class, whether it be in conducting a lecture, leading a discussion, organising small study groups, supervising field research or even compensating for missing points of view.

In Ming’s class, students were required to post Moodle questions on assigned readings they were given each week. The questions posted were to be discussed during class time. To ensure that these discussions were student-led instead of teacher-led, Ming had to exercise authority and refuse to respond to questions and comments that students posted about the readings. After the first few classes, students usually stopped looking to him to answer the questions. ‘The authority of the critical teacher is dialectical; as teachers relinquish the authority of truth providers, they assume the mature authority of facilitators of student inquiry and problem posing’ (Kincheloe, 2008a, p. 17) .

Ming also provides an example of how he maintained authority while upholding student liberty:

I can’t force them to think a certain way, so I let them voice their opinion and I may mention that other people don’t agree and that will be about it. ... I will also try to integrate a reading which will cover areas when I notice certain insensitivities in class.

(Ming, Korea)

Ming regarded himself as a liberating teacher, did not relinquish his authority towards student learning, but provided students with alternate views and opinions. Ideas were not imposed on students in an authoritarian manner, but instead,

Ming's exercise of authority 'gave students the ability to become self-directed human beings capable of producing their own knowledge' (Kincheloe, 2008a, p. 17).

As previously noted, mobile authority is present when teachers can change and evolve according to the needs of their students (Shor, 1987). The willingness to adapt was portrayed by Lynn who drew upon her student's needs and appropriated these into her lesson:

... a Chinese student came into class and he was very agitated and he said that he and his friends were going to take part in a protest because they were very upset with how they were being presented in the Western media. ...I kind of threw out what I had planned for that class and discussed his feelings, why he felt that way and how, how the Chinese were portrayed in, in our Western media... and we built the whole lesson around that discussion

(Lynn, Canada)

Her actions showed that she valued both student voice and experience. She legitimised her student's concerns and her actions reflect her belief that students student had something valuable to contribute to learning.

Therefore, it is important that teachers use the authority they assume to preserve the freedom of students through negotiating and co-constructing the learning environment. In doing so, students can become critical agents who are capable of producing their own knowledge. This view is reaffirmed by Giroux (2007) who argues that teacher authority goes beyond providing the conditions for simple acts of knowing and understanding and includes the cultivation of self-definition and critical agency.

b) Nurturing trust

Nurturing trust among students was a dominant theme. All teachers were committed to creating a safe, trusting environment in which students could

critically reflect, and act on their individual situations. This sort of classroom atmosphere was important because of the nature of topics that were raised. Trust was a prerequisite that enabled students to feel confident and comfortable discussing personal and politically laden issues.

Celia recognised the importance of providing a safe haven and secure base for her students:

... I feel that this is a trust issue. I mean students have to know the teacher and the teacher has to have that good mutual understanding with the students and good rapport with the students. This is something really important before you start, especially with sensitive topics

(Celia, Turkey)

Celia found it important to get to know her students and develop a good rapport with them because she knew that it would help build trust. Lynn also spent a lot of time building good relationships. She was conscious of not being 'preachy' and introduced students to topics a little bit at a time. She was cautious not to 'blast into it (lessons)' in order to create a trusting, respectful environment. Rob explained why it is so important for trust to be nurtured in the classroom:

... trust is the most powerful teaching tool. When you turn on that trust, a lot of things are turned on. You can joke. You can, you know, you can challenge. You can disrupt the boundary between the teacher and student. You can do a lot of things when trust is turned on. When trust is turned on, the student can become the teacher in class.

(Rob, USA)

Because all teachers recognised the significance of a respectful, trusting classroom environment, they sought to forge a horizontal relationship with their students,

instead of the top-down, teacher-student relationship that Freire criticises. Dialogue caused the ‘teacher-student’ and the ‘student-teacher’ to emerge, and this relationship signifies that: ‘The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach’ (Freire, 2005, p. 80). By crossing the ‘invisible line’ between teacher and student, Rob gained the trust of his students; and for him it was at that important moment when teaching switched into learning

An interesting point to note is that teachers broke vertical patterns of through the way they strategically positioned themselves in relation to students. Katie from the UK mentions:

...a lot of my teaching is around teaching horizontally, not vertically. So it’s sitting with the students ... you have a group of people sitting in a circle with you and each one of them says something and then throws the rope to the next person who says something...

(Katie, UK)

According to Brookfield (1995), sitting in a circle rather than in rows is a physical manifestation of democracy because a group of peers face each other as respectful equals, while giving everyone a chance to be seen and heard. Ming practiced something similar, and mentioned that sitting among students provided a sense that he was a participant in the classroom, rather than a lecturer. bell hooks (1994) raises the issue of the teacher’s physical positioning:

Liberatory pedagogy really demands that one work in the classroom, and that one work with the limits of the body, work both with and through and against those limits: teachers may insist that it doesn’t matter whether you stand behind the podium or the desk, but it does

(hooks, 1994, p. 138)

Therefore, a simple strategy like sitting among students managed to foster trust and build a horizontal relationship between teacher and student so that learning could be mutually owned by both parties. However, a trusting relationship between teacher and student does not end in the classroom, but extends outside as well. Ben described how he took the time to build good relationships and bond with his students:

I go to a lot of effort to make students feel comfortable ... which is why, when I was at (institution), I was always having lunch downstairs with students, talking to them ...that's the kind of atmosphere I like to encourage so when you get to something which people normally wouldn't really talk about in the classroom because they were afraid they might offend someone; they know, in my classroom, they can do that. It's, it's a safe environment for them to talk about things that they actually have concerns about.

(Ben, Malaysia)

Ben's actions reflect care for his students, which consequently enabled him to foster a trusting atmosphere inside the classroom. Through his interactions with students outside the classroom, he was indirectly being a researcher of his students' experiences. It has been noted that studying the lives of students, so they can be better understood and taught, is a central aspect of critical pedagogy (Kincheloe, 2008b). Ben gained insight into his students' social, political and cultural backgrounds. From Ben's account, it is evident that gaining his students' trust was important so that they would feel safe discussing issues inside the classroom.

While there was focus on trust, the issue of love did not seem to emerge from the data. Love has been recognised as an important aspect of critical pedagogy (Darder, 2002; Freire, 2005; hooks, 2013; Loreman, 2011; Wink, 2000) and Freire (2005) is strongly convinced that dialogue, an important aspect of critical pedagogy can only exist in the presence of love:

Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself. ... If I do not love the world—if I do not love life—if I do not love people—I cannot enter into dialogue.

(Freire, 2005, p. 89 - 90)

Freire (2005) seems to think that love is an important prerequisite to enter into dialogue with students, and he goes on to claim that love, humility and faith produce mutual trust among dialoguers. However, none of the critical pedagogues interviewed seemed to locate their practice in relation to love. Therefore, it might be worth considering if love is indeed a necessary condition in a critical pedagogy classroom, or if it is simply a difficult concept for educators to understand and talk about.

When discussing a pedagogy grounded on love, Loreman (2011) urges teachers to provide age and context appropriate affection to students, so that teachers will be viewed as a safe haven and secure base. Bonding is best achieved when students feel comfortable coming to the teacher with troubling academic or personal issue (safe haven); or when they want support for taking some type of initiative (secure base) (Loreman, 2011). In many ways, the critical pedagogues in the present study did want to serve as 'safe havens' and 'secure bases' for their students. But, was this because they 'loved' their students? Could they still provide trusting environments in the absence of love? Kincheloe (2008a) provides greater insight into what Freire called 'radical love': 'Such a love is compassionate, erotic, creative, sensual and informed' (Kincheloe, 2008a, p. 3). It is uncertain whether those in this study felt such a love for their students; however, it is certain that they were able to nurture an environment of trust.

c) Problem-posing

All teachers sought different ways to problem-pose with their students. The reason for this is because teachers wanted to draw on their students' experiences and get them to be actively involved in learning, instead of transferring knowledge. The problem-posing approach to teaching and learning is an idea that Paulo Freire expanded on, based on active, participatory models of education (Nixon-Ponder, 1995). Problem-posing engages student experience and is linked to raising and highlighting issues instead of just resolving problems 'once and for all' (Happs, 1991). Teachers who problem-pose employ various strategies to uncover reality, and strive for the emergence of consciousness through a critical intervention of reality (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). Through problem-posing, issues that are pertinent to students are raised. Students become co-investigators with the teacher to attempt to find solutions for these problems. All teachers were involved in some form of problem-posing as a way of empowering and transforming students.

Teachers started off discussing topics related to students' immediate needs such as issues surrounding the family, work and study conditions. Learning began with the life of the students, and as one teacher mentioned: '... people learn more quickly if they learn ... language that matters to them. ... it's much easier than learning language which is abstract and removed from their reality' (Katie, UK). Hence, language learning became more meaningful, because it took place within the context of students' immediate needs.

In other classes, such as ELT teacher education and academic writing courses, teachers also problem-posed. However, the issues that were dealt with were slightly different. For example, Lisa, from the United States, who taught an academic writing course often raised issues relating to the questioning of individualistic ethic and privilege with her students. Katie, an ESOL teacher trainer from the UK worked with issues such as power, social class, ethnicity and the variability of language with her students.

Teachers who problem-posed did not practice the banking concept of education that Freire (2005) strongly rejects. Banking is a metaphor that Freire (2005) uses

because he likens this approach to teaching and learning to depositing money in a bank. Students in this model are passive because action is limited to just receiving, filling and storing these deposits of knowledge (Freire, 2005). For instance, some critical pedagogues reported that they did not just stick to prescribed textbooks and ‘fill’ students with knowledge that was not relevant and meaningful. Those who problem-posed were not just focussed on delivering content, but instead were interested in the larger experience they could provide for their students. To do this, teachers at times had to divert from the prescribed textbook. Grant mentioned that in certain instances, he had to move away from the course textbook because it did not address the immediate needs of the students. Another example was Celia, who said that she did not enjoy using commercial textbooks in class, because they did not explicitly deal with problems in her own country. Her students felt that it was important they learn about issues within their own country first, before they could go on to deal with other global issues. Grant and Celia’s experiences reflect the view that the content in many commercial course books are far removed from students’ interests and needs, and also disregards the localness of language learning (Akbari, 2008b; Banegas, 2011).

An interesting part of problem-posing is that it may challenge the deeply held beliefs of students, and may cause them to feel uncomfortable. There was one teacher who observed a very strong emotional response from her student who had just been introduced to critical pedagogy.

She burst out crying and she was very, hostile, at the start. ...as she got into it, she realised the transformation because popular education methodology which is a Venezuelan way of doing critical pedagogy, is very much about getting people to experience the pain. You almost have to experience the pain of your situation and then start wanting to change it.

(Katie, UK)

Here, we see that it was important for Katie's student to experience pain and discomfort over her situation, before she could take steps to act upon her situation. So, learning does not necessarily produce a 'feel-good' sensation but rather can result in students feeling uneasy and discontented. Only then can they make a change. Problem-posing education empowers students to recognise that they can change the future. It leads to critical consciousness which enables students to be transformers of the world (Freire, 2005). A problem-posing approach to education holds great potential for students to critically consider their immediate reality and guides them to act upon it.

However, Katie's experience also sends out an important message to teachers. It invites teachers to think about whether they want to be involved in a pedagogy that challenges the deeply held assumptions of students to an extent that it brings about such a strong emotional response. What would happen if such situations occurred in a class frequently? Would this disrupt lessons for other students who have also come to learn? How many teachers have the maturity, skills and preparedness to play a counsellor-type role? And how many teachers want to be placed in a position of picking up the pieces, or letting a student leave the class upset and feeling insecure? Therefore, these are some of the consequences of engaging with such a provocative and confrontational pedagogy.

d) Researchers of students' experiences

Nine of the eleven critical pedagogues who took part in this study were involved in researching their students' experiences of learning. This research was important because it informed teaching practices.

According to Sung (2012), ELT teachers are called to be agents of change who are engaged in action research or other forms of teacher research, so that they can learn from teaching rather than be taught how to teach. The nine teachers investigated not only their students' experiences, but also their own experience as teachers. Some examples of research undertaken include studying how critical pedagogies challenged and inspired adult learners from privileged backgrounds, how critical pedagogy worked with multicultural ESL students, and how critical

pedagogy transformed habits and worldviews. Explorations into student engagement in these classes were done in various different ways. At times, research was conducted as part of a larger study, such as a PhD dissertation, while at other times it took the form of analysing student evaluations and student reflections. Investigations were published in books, journals, on websites and were also in the form of oral presentations.

The studies were a reflection of concerns over how critical pedagogy impacted the lives of students. Lynn and Katie, conducted post-course reflective research with their students. Lynn collected data from copies of students' class and homework assignments, students' oral journals, and conducted individual interviews with former students. Other teachers like Ming obtained data from students through anonymous class evaluations, short-open ended questionnaires and also narrative descriptions of the classroom. The act of research indicates that they took students' experiences seriously. They were interested in discovering students' perceptions because they knew that the voice of the student mattered in a class that draws on the basic principles and tenets of critical pedagogy. For this reason, Kincheloe (2008a) points out that a central aspect of critical teacher research involves studying students, so they can be better understood and taught.

Additionally, teachers should also understand the socio-cultural background of their students because it helps them understand how they make sense of schooling and the world (Kincheloe, 2008a). Jack conducted a study on how English education raised public consciousness in Indonesia. By looking at the social, economic and political context of Indonesia, Jack was able to have greater insight into the complexities of his students' backgrounds and conditions.

While most teachers researched their students, there was one who researched together with his students. Rob applied principles of critical pedagogy when conducting a participatory action research project with his international students. These students were invited as 'participants' and took 'action' through storytelling. The participatory nature of this research was aimed at helping international students successfully navigate the new system of higher education

that they faced in the United States of America. The research dimension of Rob's participatory action research project involved Rob and his students analysing data together. Material for this scholarly discourse was produced through student narratives both on and off line. His students gained a sense of empowerment because they were not considered the 'subject' of study to the same degree as more conventional research. Rob's participatory action research project was aligned with some of the basic principles of critical pedagogy because the researcher enters the situation as a learner and not as an expert (Udas, 1998). Importantly, influence from Freire's (2005) notion of praxis is evident because participants are also guided to 'address problems, reflect on their actions, and learn for improved future action' (Udas, 1998, p. 605)

The various research projects that these teachers were involved in once again reflect concern for students' responsiveness in the classroom. Teachers were not solely preoccupied with their own critical agendas. Instead, they were researchers of and with their students so that students' voices and experiences could drive their critical pedagogy inspired practices.

Summary

The teachers in this study made the path of critical pedagogy by negotiating and co-constructing knowledge with their students, demonstrating trust, problem posing and researching their students' experiences. One common thread that ties these four areas together is the voice and experience of the student. Student experience is the focus in a critical pedagogy classroom. Experiences are a valuable resource in learning because they become an object of inquiry that can be affirmed, critically interrogated and used to engage with broader modes of knowledge and understanding (Giroux, 2011).

When ELT teachers want to be critical pedagogues, the life of the student has to become the priority. Students play an active role in shaping and developing knowledge with their teachers. For this to happen, teachers need to provide a safe and secure space to let their students' voices be heard. When teachers problem-pose, the students' life takes center stage and learning becomes more meaningful

because it relates to immediate needs. Teachers who embrace such practices strongly believe that they must relate their teaching and learning to life, and the communities they are a part of in order to drive self and social transformation (Wink, 2000).

Those specialising in the subject of higher education and academic development often urge teachers to be student focussed or student centred, which simply means understanding pedagogic issues from the students' point of view (McLean, 2006). This call is evident through the increasing interest that has developed over the years in researching and publishing topics related to transformative learning, student-centred learning, active learning, inquiry guided learning, problem-based learning and dialogic strategies in education (Kovbasyuk & Blessinger, 2013). Therefore, other higher education teachers who have similar interests may find critical pedagogy as simply one more option to being student-centred.

Chapter 6

Travelling without Maps: The Unknown Path of Critical Pedagogy

Introduction

The title for this chapter is inspired by a conversation between Ira Shor and Paulo Freire in 'A Pedagogy for Liberation' (1987). Although their dialogue was on how teachers can become liberating educators, I use the metaphor of a traveller travelling without a map and extend it to reflect the uncertainties and 'unknowns' that come into play when engaging with critical pedagogy. These challenges emerged from the data and are examined in the following sections:

- a) On dangerous ground
- b) Learning to navigate
- c) Roadblocks

The journey for two teachers demonstrated that sometimes, the path of critical pedagogy can be risky. These critical pedagogues were treading on dangerous ground as they put their personal safety at stake because of the radical and controversial practice they were involved in. Additionally, some teachers found that they had to learn how to navigate through the unknown terrain of critical pedagogy. This unpredictable road with its mixed terrains was something they had to learn how to navigate. The final challenge for critical pedagogues was the roadblocks that they confronted on their way. They faced hostility and resistance from students and others within and outside the university. All these 'unknowns' allude to a challenging journey that at times made teachers feel that they were travelling without maps.

a) On dangerous ground

Critical pedagogy is controversial in nature, and can easily disturb the rational of the classroom. Issues such as race, politics, sex and privilege are interrogated and are controversial. Two teachers found that their involvement resulted in treading on dangerous ground. One reported a considerable amount of risk because of the nature of issues discussed. Both encouraged students to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions, and to question the status quo. As dissenting voices, safety was at risk because in their societies, asking critical questions could lead to being tortured or killed. In certain institutions, raising awkward questions can cause one to gain the reputation of a subversive troublemaker who refuses to play by the rules (Brookfield, 1995). Celia understood her practice as one of daily risk from authorities outside of the university:

... when I start dealing with such issues, I'm also taking a big risk. Because there are students from different backgrounds. Like there are students from military backgrounds ... the father is a policeman, for example or very religious students...

(Celia, Turkey)

Celia was passionate about social change and she engaged in a project on social conditioning. She and her students reflected on how they had been conditioned, and on their experience of living in a world with people who had also been conditioned. Celia was aware that this project would be risky. She recognised the dangerous ground that she was treading on, and even described an air of secretiveness when discussing details with her colleagues and course co-ordinator. Celia knew that the moment there was student resistance she would be placed in a compromising position. Yet, she continued and has made this work known through journal publication. Celia's concept of critical pedagogy was aligned to the idea of the public intellectual. Said (1996) explains that public intellectuals articulate representations of their beliefs through means such as talking, writing, teaching, or appearing on television. He adds that representing is done despite barriers and it involves both commitment and risk, and boldness and vulnerability.

Through her research publications and teaching, Celia has managed to embody the role of a public intellectual who is committed to representing her voice to the public.

While it may be perceived that there is free speech in academia, this is not necessarily the case, even in more liberal settings. Drawing from her experiences in the United States, hooks (2003) notes that self-censorship is often imposed because university teachers fear that they may not receive promotions or might even lose their jobs. In some cases, teachers have found themselves labelled. For example, Priya Parmar, a critical pedagogue from the US was named as one of the ‘101 Most Dangerous Academics in America’ by David Horowitz in 2006 (Parmar, 2008). Despite such criticism, she continues to advocate for critical pedagogy.

In certain situations, the ‘dangers’ associated with critical pedagogy may seem like a constraint for teachers. They may seem like a threat, especially when one’s personal safety is at stake. To keep these ‘unknowns’ manageable, teachers need to be aware of the risks that they are taking so that they can take measured steps to negotiate them. Instead of being a deterrent, risks need to be evaluated and explored further so that teachers are fully aware of the implications for practice. One participant reminded his students: ‘... no matter how many constraints there are, you have to find ways to sort of subvert that system ... you are trailblazers in this area. (Kenneth, Korea).

With regards to the case of Celia, it is evident that she is learning about the limits of what she can do through trial and error. Celia showed an experimental attitude as she explored transformational potential for her students. Shor (1987) reaffirms such actions: ‘When we learn limits, real limits in our classrooms or in other arenas of society, we also gain some concrete knowledge on how much or even how little can be accomplished right now’ (Shor, 1987, p. 58).

The second example of a teacher who commented about the risk of speaking out was Jack. He related the situation in his home country, Indonesia, when the reign of a powerful leader had come to an end:

To criticise the government openly is very dangerous and very risky. You may be imprisoned ... when Suharto stepped down from power, the euphoria of speaking openly has been quite persuasive and this is something that I would like to avoid actually. To some extent, I jumped onto the euphoria bandwagon. I didn't want to be opportunistic in the sense that, ah ok people are now talking openly about or criticizing or lambasting the government very openly, so I can just use Critical Pedagogy for my own purposes. I didn't want to be, in that sense. I just wanted to make use of the opportunity in Indonesia where there is some openness about dissenting voices, about not having to conform with the government's voice all the time.

(Jack, USA)

Jack mentioned not wanting to be 'opportunistic' and not wanting to jump onto the bandwagon of people openly speaking out against the government. Yet, at the same time he wanted to exercise the greater freedoms people in his country had gained. Jack described an inner struggle as he dealt with managing the changing political scene in his country. His practice could not be separated from the economic and political conditions that shaped his work.

Of course issues relating to personal safety and risk are relative concepts and it is doubtful if all teachers would understand these in the same way. However, the efforts of these two critical pedagogues were examples of 'pockets of resistance' that challenged typical university practices, in terms of teaching techniques, aims for student learning and values (Harland & Pickering, 2011). All ELT critical pedagogues provided a different voice within their discipline and their institution. In this context practice was partly about making a political statement because all teachers chose to discuss issues that were largely counter to prevailing ideology in

order to challenge dominant power structures in society. Fear has also been recognised and teachers who are attracted to critical pedagogy may be worried about possible repercussions (Shor, 1987). They may believe that education should be liberating but at the same time are afraid because they do not want to stand out as radicals and or as people who ‘rock the boat’. There is no assurance of only ‘pleasant’ or ‘positive’ emotions and so teachers considering critical pedagogy will have to decide for themselves if they want to accept the likelihood of travelling without maps.

b) Learning to navigate

The critical pedagogy journey was about learning how to navigate through challenging terrain. Part of the navigation process led to some teachers gaining confidence in their practice, while at other times, moments of uncertainty crept in. Contrasting emotional experiences reflected some of the ‘unknowns’ that critical pedagogues faced as they learned to travel without maps.

Ming initially experienced mild panic attacks because he liked to be fully prepared on every topic before entering the classroom. However, in a more participative classroom based on dialogue this was impossible. Such insecurities have been recognised by Shor (1987) who comments: ‘Dialogic classes are creative and unpredictable, invented in-progress, making some teachers worry that they might make mistakes in class and lose control or respect’ (Shor, 1987, p. 53). Ming learned to rise above these feelings and a transformational point came when he accepted that he did not have to be the knowledge expert and it was perfectly fine to have conversations flowing in directions that he may not be able to control. Ming’s experience as a novice critical pedagogue is not uncommon, as others also reported doubts and fears about their competency in the classroom. Teachers frequently find themselves having to always appear certain about what they know because they are assumed to have the expertise in what they teach (Bell et al., 2003). A study conducted by Spronken-Smith and Harland (2009) among teachers who engaged in problem-based learning (PBL) also showed that beginner teachers found it more difficult to assume a facilitative role in the classroom, compared to

those with more experience. Learning how to relinquish control was an important step in Ming's development as a teacher.

In contrast, Lynn described how being acquainted with critical pedagogy gave her an added sense of confidence as a teacher. She was in every sense practicing the basic principles of critical pedagogy, but had yet to discover a name or a theory for it:

... in the early days, I was very tentative about who am I, ... I was always political, ... But I wasn't quite sure how other people viewed me or anything so I think the transformation for me has been more one of developing confidence and seeing that there were people already out there theorising about it.

(Lynn, Canada)

What she needed was reinforcement that her teaching was legitimate and also that she was not alone in her efforts. Knowing that there were other critical pedagogues in the field made her feel less alienated and isolated in the ELT community.

Teachers also had to navigate critical pedagogy's road by dealing with charges of knowledge imposition and indoctrination. It seemed like critical pedagogues knew what the criticisms against critical pedagogy were, and that is why, they constantly mentioned not wanting to impose knowledge onto students.

... I don't want to indoctrinate anybody. To me, it's very important that students sort of come to their own conclusions rather than me just telling them what to think... And so I think that's a very valid concern and I think that critical pedagogy can be done very wrong very easily as well

(Lisa, USA)

Lisa had a strong concern for not wanting to indoctrinate her students and from it is also evident that she recognised criticisms aimed at critical pedagogy. Lynn is an example of another teacher who explicitly expressed her opposition towards knowledge imposition:

... I'm very conscious of not being on a soapbox. I think it's that tension between, not replacing one hegemony with another. ... I don't want to impose on them. I want to inspire my students and I want to use critical pedagogy as a way to inspire them...

(Lynn, Canada)

In fact, Lynn reported that one of her biggest challenges was managing the balance between critical pedagogy and covering the required curriculum. She felt that it was unfair to push for a critical agenda, if her students were not learning English. Therefore, Lynn did not want to sacrifice language learning for the sake of activism. She recognised that it was important to strike a balance between the two. A strategy that was used to avoid knowledge imposition was described by Celia:

... They (students) get the data. I don't give them any topics. They find their own topics. I tell them to find their own topics, the things that they want to really learn about. So I don't lead them. ... They get the information. They form their own groups and so sometimes they ask me questions. They ask my ideas or my opinions...And I don't tell my opinion when they are working in their own group. I discuss all kinds of different opinions with them but I don't tell my opinion at first. I don't want to really make them (unint.)... to see that, oh, the teacher has this kind of a point of view, so we should work it out in this way. So I tell them, okay, my opinion is not the thing that we are discussing, so I'm not going to say anything about it. We can talk about it after you finish your project

(Celia, Turkey)

Students were given the freedom to find their own topics of interest and source for information by themselves. Celia believed that any topic could be examined from a critical perspective, and that is why she did not intervene in their choice of topic. Most importantly, Celia highlighted that she did not disclose her views and perspectives to students. Non-disclosure was a strategy that she may have employed to manage the accusation of indoctrination that critical pedagogues are often faced with. Perhaps she felt that making her opinions known in the classroom might coerce students into thinking a certain way. Brookfield (1995) however, has noted something different: ‘Students told me that my unwillingness to intervene too directly in class discussions for fear of overemphasising the power of my own voice was actually allowing for the perpetuation of differences of class, race, and gender that existed outside the classroom’ (Brookfield, 1995, p. xii). This alternate view may be helpful in leading teachers to think about whether their lack of classroom intervention speaks an unintended message to students. Teachers who avoid making clear their agenda or concerns may still enforce an ideology and so indoctrinate students towards accepting particular views of society. As such, it appears that critical pedagogues are faced with a dilemma. On one hand, they may feel like they do not want to exert power and coerce students into accepting their outlooks and viewpoints, but on the other hand, educators like Brookfield (1995) believe that letting discussions flow with minimal interruption (a sign of respect for students’ voice) could end up perpetuating inequalities.

c) Roadblocks

While travelling down the path of critical pedagogy, teachers faced unexpected roadblocks. These ‘unknowns’ took the form of resistance and antagonism from those within and outside the teachers’ institutions. Although none of the teachers had experienced aggressive resistance towards their practices, hostility was still displayed in certain situations.

Resistance occurred when the aims of the teacher differed from that of the student. Lisa teaches a writing course and she explained her students’ hostility towards a service learning project.

This project involved predominantly privileged students working with underprivileged high school students:

... my students in my classes were often very resistant to it because they didn't understand the point. They didn't really like the kids. They didn't have anything in common with the kids ... they think that they're paying money for just this education that's going to teach them how to be better writers than they are.

(Lisa, USA)

In this instance, students were resistant towards the activity because they could not identify with it and could not understand Lisa's purpose. Her aim was to work with the overall educational experience and to provide students with more than just the vocational, technical skills that they had come to learn. However, from her students' point of view, they had come to her class to acquire better writing skills, and that was all they wanted. When Lisa got a job at a new institution, she still incorporated it into her course. Her dedication towards getting her students to approach learning from a much broader perspective is certainly evident. Perhaps what is needed to minimise student resistance is to gradually bridge the gap between the teacher's aims and student's expectations.

Rob was interested in getting students' opinions about what they wanted to learn, and how they wanted to be taught. As a result, one of his students commented: '... why do you ask us? If you don't know how to teach, you shouldn't be teaching' (Rob, USA). Rob's student's response was possibly due to a sense of authority-dependence. Freire highlights that when students are invited to co-develop the class with the teacher; students often doubt that it is 'real' education; because in their minds, 'real' education does not involve negotiation and dialoguing (Shor, 1993).

Five teachers experienced roadblocks because of prevailing cultural and institutional values. Lisa and Rob taught in Western, democratic countries, where

it is assumed that greater freedom of expression existed. However, Lisa said that her students would be hostile if she questioned the roots of their privilege. Rob had a similar experience and in his case, he was aware that students might not be responsive if he was overly supportive of gay people. Rob attributed this hostility to culture: ‘... culture comes in and puts on a nice persona of ‘we don’t talk about that in our culture’. Ira Shor, in his American classroom experienced something comparable, and credited it to what he called the ‘culture of silence’. He describes his students as being committed to tradition and because of that, they saw the class as a threat to their established values. Consequently, they were either silent and unresponsive or aggressive, because they found his approach an imposition to the passive learning that they were used to (Shor, 1987).

Students were not the only ones who posed challenges. There were cases when teachers risked being perceived as ‘different’ by others within their faculty. Grant was a teacher trainer who worked in a department where others approached teaching differently. When asked how his colleagues viewed him, Grant responded:

Well, some probably think ... I don’t do enough practical stuff with teachers. I don’t really deal with the day to day, nitty-gritty of classroom management or language analysis or, I prefer to deal with ‘but have you thought about this, but have you thought about that’...

(Grant, UK)

Teachers within his department perceived him more of an ‘ideas man’ instead as one who provided students with practical skills needed for their future profession. However, Grant noted that from students’ feedback, they seemed to like being challenged with new ideas and being offered new possibilities. Although Grant recognised the need to focus on practical classroom issues, it was something that he was not particularly interested in. It was this different approach that set him apart from his other colleagues. In some ways, Grant’s experience could be

termed as ‘cultural suicide’ because: ‘A teacher who is challenging assumptions, experimenting with different approaches, and trying to realise democratic values is an affront to those who have settled for the illusion of control and predictability’ (Brookfield 1995, p. 236).

Another ‘roadblock’ was the lack of teacher autonomy within the institution. Two reported that they needed to get the permission from their superiors before incorporating any elements of critical pedagogy. One of these teachers was Celia, who as mentioned earlier, was from a country where certain liberties were curtailed. One strategy that Celia used to navigate through the roadblocks along her path was by withholding certain information from her superior:

I would be sharing it with my coordinator because I have to first ask for permission of course. I’m going to tell her that I’m working on critical pedagogy ... and I’m not probably going to tell her that we are going to work on Kurds or Armenians. But I’m going to tell her that we are going to talk about different social, political perspectives

(Celia, Turkey)

Celia recognised that openness could lead to possible censure from her supervisor. In some ways, she was taking an even bigger risk by withholding this information because hostile students could complain. However, a paradox exists because although she strove to maintain a degree of confidentiality, she also published her critical pedagogy project in an international journal.

In contrast, Jin from Hong Kong is an example of a teacher who experienced resistance from superiors within the institution that he was in, because he openly revealed the issues that he wanted to draw upon in the classroom. He was teaching a course that already had a pre-existing syllabus and was interested in bringing in issues related to identity. Jin found that there was a barrier preventing him from doing so: ‘... so I have been proposing this kind of topic but so far it hasn’t been accepted’ (Jin, Hong Kong). Jin went on to say that he will continue to look out

for openings for his ideas but lacked the freedom and autonomy to develop his course. It seems that this made it difficult for him to explicitly deal with critical pedagogy in the classroom. Critical pedagogues travelling without maps cannot escape the roadblocks that shaped practice. However, roadblocks did not stop anyone continuing on their journey.

Summary

In this chapter, the uncertain path of critical pedagogy was explored. It was evident that for some, their journey involved treading on dangerous ground. Engaging with critical pedagogy had an impact on teachers because for some, their safety was at stake. Besides that, all had to learn how to navigate as they ‘travelled without maps’ because they had to contend with unpredictable emotions and learn how to manage criticisms such as knowledge imposition and indoctrination that were commonly aimed at critical pedagogy. This journey was not without its share of roadblocks, and therefore, teachers had to deal with the impact of facing resistance from people inside and outside of their classrooms. These ‘unknowns’ were challenging, yet they never abandoned their passion for critical pedagogy.

In the next chapter, the impact of critical pedagogy on teachers and students will be explored in the context of transformation.

Chapter 7

Critical Pedagogy: A Journey of Transformation

Introduction

In this chapter I draw on transformative learning theory and the theories of critical pedagogy to explore participants' narrative. Transformation refers to a deep shift in perspective, which causes habits of mind to be more open, penetrable and better justified (Cranton, 2011). Transformative learning theory was introduced by Jack Mezirow in 1978 who drew inspiration from the ideas of Freire (Mezirow, 2009). Freire's concept of consciousness-raising or *conscientization* aligns with the theory of transformative learning (Dirkx, 1998). Following Mezirow's work, other scholars have critiqued and elaborated the theory which eventually led to its theoretical development in many different directions (Kucukaydin & Cranton, 2013). Most transformative learning that takes place in higher education is interested in the development of more reliable beliefs by exploring and validating their fidelity to enable more informed decisions (Taylor, 2008).

The term 'frame of reference', is important and Mezirow (1997) explains that it refers to the acquired concepts, values, feelings, conditioned responses and assumptions which make up the body of experience used to give meaning to one's life and one's world. Hence, transformative learning aims to transform 'problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, and emotionally able to change' (Mezirow, 2009, p. 22). Like Freire, Mezirow advocates critical reflection and dialogue, and recognises that knowledge is constructed by the individual in relation to others (Dirkx, 1998). Critical reflection enables frames of reference to be altered, which then results in a perspective transformation (Taylor, 2008). Dialogue is also important and leads to communicative learning, which occurs when one gains understanding to what others mean through communication (Mezirow, 2009).

However, when critical pedagogy comes into play transformation is not just limited to altered world-views and perceptions because *actions* are also changed (Mayo, 2004). Critical pedagogy distinguishes itself from most other pedagogies because it enables students to act upon and use their knowledge for self and social transformation (Wink, 2000). This social objective suggests transformative learning is unlikely to end in the classroom, but will impact on the wider community.

In the present study, there were many stories of transformation. The first half of this chapter explores transformations with ELT critical pedagogues, while the second half focuses on what teachers had to say about their students. Two main transformations were observed. Firstly, teachers assumed the mindset of students. What this means is that they were willing to learn from their students, and this consequently resulted in a reassessment of personal values and beliefs. Secondly, transformation came through critical reflection that was a direct outcome of practicing critical pedagogy. Both changes impacted personal and professional lives, enabling teachers to relate to students better, gain deeper insight on theory, as well as develop greater criticality towards practice.

The second half of Chapter 7 examines transformations that teachers found in their students. All the critical pedagogues interviewed told stories about student transformation and those who evaluated their courses also had written evidence for the effectiveness of change. There were three significant contexts for students that included changed worldviews, their lives outside the classroom and learning the English language.

Teachers' transformation

Analysis of interview transcripts indicated that teachers experienced transformation when they assumed the role of a 'teacher-student' in the classroom. They found that there were many valuable lessons that they could learn from students. Secondly, teachers became more critically reflective after engaging with critical pedagogy.

a) The teacher-student

There were several instances where teachers reported learning with and gaining a wealth of knowledge from students. In the context of transformative learning theory, learning is defined as: ‘the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience, which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation, and action’ (Mezirow, 1990, p. 1). Through dialogue, teachers and students mutually constructed knowledge together, and this resulted in teachers learning alongside their students. Freire (2005) deliberately conflated the term ‘teacher-student’ and ‘student-teacher’ to show that knowledge is not solely the property of the teacher alone but instead is something that is shared by both. Exchanges between teachers and students resulted in significant changes in critical pedagogues. For instance, some reported how listening to the life stories and experiences of their students changed the ways in which they had begun to think and perceive things around them. Communicative learning happened because teachers were able to validate or justify contested beliefs through communication with students.

Celia reported how she learnt through her interactions with students:

...students also talk about their own stories, their own backgrounds, their own real stories and I realise that there are so many things that I already don't know about the students who live in this country and every new thing, every new topic, every new student is something new to me that I know that I have to see and feel and share...So it's also a big realisation to my part as well... this is one of the most important things about the critical pedagogy. I mean it doesn't only transform the student. I mean the transformation is for everybody. Also for the teachers.

(Celia, Turkey)

Celia had moved from a culturally expected didactic form of teaching to using discussion that focused on critical issues identified by students. She found a need to move beyond teaching the functional aspects of language – basic grammar and

vocabulary; and instead saw the need for creating some kind of awareness about the world. To do this, she needed to draw on the personal experiences of her students. It was through interactions such as these that Celia's frame of reference was altered. She gained a new frame of reference that was more inclusive, and open. Celia heard stories that were beyond her experience and so she needed to re-cast herself as a learner. The educational strategy in critical pedagogy is essentially dialogical with the teacher and student having something to contribute (Darder et al., 2003). Students learn from teachers and teachers learn from students.

Another example came from Grant. His engagement was also transformational, because like Celia, he experienced perspective transformation and new motivation. Grant commented:

... I'm lucky enough to work with people from so many different cultures and so many different ways of seeing the world... I've learned more about other people, other parts of the world through a critical approach and that maintains motivation and also, it kind of fits in with my world view of what we should be doing as educators.

(Grant, UK)

Here the traditional role of the teacher as 'knowledge provider' was reversed. Learning from students played a significant role in Grant's development. It has been suggested that a teacher's experiences are also dependent on openness to reassessing their own beliefs and values (Taylor, 2008). If they are resistant to perspective transformations, it is unlikely that learning will happen. Freire clearly states:

Liberatory education is fundamentally a situation where the teacher and the students both have to be learners, both have to be cognitive subjects, in spite of being different. This for me is the first test of

liberating education, for teachers and students both to be critical agents in the act of knowing

(Shor, 1987, p. 33)

This type of transformation causes a change in terms of thoughts and perceptions about the world. It is a learning process that needs to first start with a cognitive transformation, and this is apparent through the communicative experiences of the critical pedagogues. It yet again reinforces one of the basic tenets of critical pedagogy of enabling teachers to learn with and from their students.

b) The critically reflective teacher

Teachers became more critically reflective about the theory and practice of critical pedagogy. Critical reflection is important transformation because it leads to changed perspectives. Three teachers talked about learning through reflection and changes in terms of worldviews and actions were evident. Learning from critical reflection allowed them to gain greater insight into the way they taught, which then empowered them as practitioners. As Cranton (2011) notes, transformative learning occurs when there is a deep shift in perspective and noticeable changes in actions are observed. Rob reported: ‘I also become a little critical how critical pedagogy itself can be used, because anything can be misused’ (Rob, USA). He was able to see some of the limitations of critical pedagogy, and this provided him with a sense of caution when utilising it. Perhaps critical reflection led to his rejection of being labelled a ‘critical pedagogue’. He explained:

I would define myself as someone who will adopt some of the fundamentals of critical pedagogy, who’s inspired to think critically about education, in terms of its function in society, in terms of the, the libertory functions ... The reason I don’t label myself as a critical pedagogue is that then it would feel like I don’t draw my inspiration from other isms, other ologies, or other pedagogies because I want to be open to drawing my inspiration, my resources, my skills, my ideas from all kinds of pedagogies ... Sometimes I’m

a critical pedagogue plus... I'm not rejecting it but I'm saying if I give myself one label, I'm afraid I would be called just that

(Rob, USA)

There were stories about how engaging with critical pedagogy enabled teachers to become more thoughtful about practice. Lisa sees critical reflection as a direct outcome of critical pedagogy:

... it helps me get to know my students more which I think always makes me a better teacher and I think it helps me reflect on my classroom more because when you do critical pedagogy, you have to be super reflective.

(Lisa, USA)

She also gave examples of how new perspectives allowed her to relate to her students and she noted becoming more forgiving and empathetic. Students' opinions mattered to her and she came to understand that their way of experiencing the world was as valid as hers. Lisa noticed that teaching subjects that had a greater focus on critical issues allowed her to critically reflect on her own practices more. Teachers learn by carefully thinking and reflecting about their experiences of practice, such as how their class went, and what needs to be changed (Harland, 2012). For Jack, the outcome of critical reflection was not easy:

I think I am more conscious about myself. It's not always an easy journey. It's not always preferable. It can be painful because sometimes you know what you are supposed to do but cannot do it, and I feel sad ... I need to be much more aware of the struggles of the students. I need to be more aware about where the students are coming from. Sometimes I can over generalize that they are coming from the same starting point as I did when I was a student for example. So expect my student to be like me...

(Jack, USA)

Jack described his journey of transformation as ‘painful’ and ‘not always preferable’. He recounted how he became more conscious about his teaching practices, and realised that at times, the expectations he had of students were oppressive. Brookfield (1995) notes that it can sometimes be humiliating, and at the same time humbling when teachers realise that their teaching actions may have been grounded in unchecked assumptions that turn out to be oppressive.

Although Jack’s experience was painful, it eventually provided him with a sense of empowerment. Kanpol (1994) argues that critical empowerment can occur when teachers consciously reflect on the decisions they make in the classroom. Critically empowered teachers seek to answer questions related to whether they are reproducing inequities, reinforcing stereotypes, and how their teaching affects race, class and gender (Kanpol, 1994). These are the questions that Jack pondered on, and in the process he became critically empowered to change oppressive practices that were related to his expectations of students.

Jack was the only teacher who found engaging in critical reflection challenging. There were no reports from others that indicated that it had an undesirable effect on them. A study by Brookfield (1994) proved otherwise:

Many adult educators complained that being critically reflective had only served to make them disliked by their colleagues, had harmed their careers, had lost them fledgeling friends and professionally useful acquaintances, had threatened their livelihoods, and had turned them into institutional pariahs

(Brookfield, 1994, p. 209)

‘Critical reflection involves a critique of the presuppositions on which our beliefs have been built’ (Mezirow, 1990, p. 1). As a result, critical reflection led to a change of attitudes and actions among Rob, Lisa, and Jack. This journey of transformation enabled them to learn more about their students and the theory that

drove their practice. The process of critical reflection was necessary in the lives of these critical pedagogues for personal and professional development.

Teachers' perceptions of students' transformations

All the critical pedagogues had stories to share on how their students changed as a result of learning in a critical pedagogy driven environment. Three changes will be discussed in this section. These are:

- a) transformed worldviews
- b) transformed lives outside the classroom
- c) transformed language learners

a) Transformed worldviews

Conscious steps were taken to offer students an alternate way of viewing the world using a variety of teaching approaches. Teachers refused to play the role of 'classroom technicians' (Pennycook, 1990) who reduced language learning to a system of transmitting messages, while ignoring the social, cultural, political and historical context and implications of language learning. By not solely teaching English as a communicative tool or a transactional language, teachers directly opposed dominant ways of teaching a subject. Evidence came through classroom discussions as well as student feedback. Rob reported a student's comment:

... "I don't want to learn about the poverty and the terrorism and the economic crisis and the suffering of women in Chinese factories ...I want to be comfortable. It's none of my business". But at the end, they said, "oh my God, it feels good to know, it feels good to say that I am part of a larger world"...

(Rob, USA)

This student's comfort zone was disturbed as the harsh realities of the world were presented. As a result, values shifted and the student saw the world in a different, more inclusive way. Critical pedagogy presupposes a notion of a more equal and just future (Freire, 2005) and deliberately functions to provoke students to go

beyond the world they know and feel comfortable in, and to expand their understanding of a range of possibilities (Giroux, 2011).

The transformation of students' worldviews was not something that happened overnight. It was a process that took time, because it involved changing deeply ingrained attitudes and beliefs. Aside from the time factor, it also was not always an easy process for the students. For example, Katie recounts how for one student, the process of transformation was difficult:

She burst out crying and she was very, hostile, at the start. ... and then as she got into it, she realised the transformation; because popular education methodology which is a Venezuelan way of doing critical pedagogy, is very much about getting people to experience the pain. You almost have to experience the pain of your situation and then start wanting to change it.

(Katie, UK)

The theory of transformative learning suggests that sometimes, when underlying thoughts and assumptions are challenged, feelings such as discomfort, disorientation and grief may arise (Moore, 2005). While the consequence of changing one's world-view is frequently represented as positive, the study showed that experiences could be troubling (Taylor, 1997). It was expected that there would be many reports of negative responses from students but these were rare and might be explained through a tendency for students to suppress emotions publicly, simply because a considerable amount of emotional upheaval is difficult to deal with in a classroom (Moore, 2005). There was one teacher who highlighted some reasons why his students may not have reacted negatively:

... as far as I know they did not resist. Perhaps because they want to conform. Perhaps they wanted to conform to my style of teaching or to my department. Or they wanted to get a good grade.

(Jack, USA)

Jack's response revealed that students may avoid resistance or suppress unfavourable responses for the simple reason of wanting to conform, or even to ensure their chances of getting a good grade is not jeopardised. Therefore, transformative learning is very much rooted in ideals, and when its practice is explored, it is difficult to anticipate how it plays out in the classroom (Taylor, 2009).

Brookfield (1991) describes some possible consequences when students' world-views are transformed:

People experiencing a critical thinking episode often report a sense of grievance for their old certainties, for the time when the world was understood in clearly dichotomous ways as being comprised of black and white, good and bad, right and wrong. Sometimes this sense of grieving for a dualistic era of lost innocence is so strong as to be overwhelming and to turn people away from a journey into further ambiguity. There is also the emotional risk for learners that questioning deeply held assumptions may lead to learners losing the support and sustenance of intimates and friends. Stepping beyond the boundaries of acceptable questioning to challenge conventional norms may be a form of cultural suicide.

(Brookfield, 1991, p. 10)

In situations where students are exposed to emotional upheavals, critical pedagogues may need to consider if they are providing students with adequate support. In Chapter 5, it was found that many critical pedagogues created a safe, trusting classroom environment for their students. But is this enough? Dealing with transforming the worldviews of students is a complex endeavor, and not all university academics will have the competency to deal with student outcomes that result from transformative learning in critical pedagogy. Therefore, teachers may need to consider how prepared and qualified they are to deal with such intense emotional experiences. Furthermore, despite a teacher's best intentions,

sometimes it is unclear what students are transforming into; and at times transformative learning can result in unpredictable and unintentional outcomes (Moore, 2005). Teachers may need to consider the following: ‘What do I do if my students’ worldviews are transformed in unintended ways?’ and ‘Am I responsible for my students’ transformed worldviews that may not allude to the improvement and betterment of society?’

b) Transformed lives outside the classroom

All teachers valued the change in both the affective domain and the actions of the learner. Most of the participants recounted stories of how their students gained a sense of agency and eventually went on to improve their own lives and start to advocate for what they believed in. Ben recalled how his students became involved in the Arab Spring. In his language classroom overseas students experienced new meanings about freedom and democracy:

... a lot of the material at (Ben’s institution) lends itself to things like nationality, religion, culture, race and that can be put across into politics and government policy ... and then they go home to Libya and Colonel Gaddafi.

(Ben, Malaysia)

Ben reported that students discussed the oppression they were experiencing in their respective countries and could see different possibilities ahead of them. They were taught that people have the power to bring about change in society. Ben also based his teaching on problematising the experiences of his students, which enabled them to connect with the situations that they came from. In this case, he was not what Giroux termed a ‘model of moral indifference’ (Giroux, 2009).

There were reports of students making conscious efforts to change the lives of others. Lynn provided examples of how her students had gone beyond the confines of their classroom to seek change in their communities. She gave an

example of one student who attempted to change attitudes among family and friends in China about homosexuality and capital punishment.

Lynn used the metaphor of the 'Philosopher's Tea House' to describe her class where individuals gather as equals to discuss critical issues and this concept inspired her student:

...she wanted to go back to China and she wanted to start a tea house and she wanted to run it by herself and she wanted to run it along the lines of my classroom and she said she wanted to have a topic every time, every day and, a topic that people could argue about and discuss and talk about, a controversial topic...

(Lynn, Canada)

The concept of praxis, which lies at the heart of Freire's idea of critical literacy, is at work when students are able to reflect and act on their circumstances. 'An education based on 'praxis' is one that allows people to act on their material surroundings and reflect upon them with a view of transforming them' (Mayo, 2004, p. 45). It is this sort of education that all the critical pedagogues aimed to provide for their students. The experiences reported reflect Giroux's (2004) call to teachers to link knowing with action, and learning with social engagement.

These transformations may appear small and Freire, reasons that the activities of educators will not be sufficient in themselves to change the world but are necessary and capable of making a contribution (Shor, 1987). The response of one participant perhaps best sums up the possibilities for the change: 'It's not big revolution but it's big transformation' (Katie, UK).

While it is encouraging to hear transformational stories, there are concerns that need to be addressed. For example, what will students do with the new knowledge? Teachers may need to consider the possible repercussions of students' actions. In Chapter 6, it was shown that engaging with critical pedagogy

could be potentially risky for teachers in some parts of the world. What would teachers do if they found out that their students were harmed in the process of trying to bring forth change in their respective societies? Would these teachers feel responsible? Are teachers prepared to face such situations? These are some questions that critical pedagogues have to ask themselves as they engage in critical pedagogy.

c) Transformed language learners

In certain cases, critical pedagogy took place within the context of learning a second or foreign language. Language improvement and the development of linguistic knowledge was the main goal of students and English language acquisition was highly sought after. In a critical pedagogy oriented ELT classroom, language development happened in a slightly different way. In general, teachers believed that language development occurred independently of the critical issues in the lesson and the reason for success was mainly because students were given opportunities to practice speaking. One participant explained that discussing any topic or issue could have led to language development, for instance, commonly found topics in ELT courses are ‘holidays’, ‘daily lifestyles’ and the ‘environment’. However, topics such as ‘prejudice’ or ‘linguistic imperialism’ were seen to lead to improved language development because such critical issues carried more value, interest and significance to the student. Another commented on how language improvement happens:

... when things like this come up, they’re focusing more on what they’re saying as opposed to how they’re saying it. However, this is not a bad thing because ...they speak from the heart and so their language actually does get better. Because students are not merely repeating structures out of a book, language becomes more natural, and this is where language transformation takes place.

(Ben, Malaysia)

Katie employed a ‘shared reading method’ with her students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and focused on their stories instead of content from a prescribed

textbook. Her approach resembled that of Wink (2000) who proposes that learning has to be about making meaning together with joint ownership of the learning experience. Learning was certainly not about transmitting ideas to students and Katie suggested that language learning was less demanding when the context was meaningful for the student.

At times, critical pedagogy was explicitly taught in TESOL teacher education courses. As noted in Chapter 2, one of the criticisms against critical pedagogy is its dense, complicated use of language, which often refer to abstract concepts such as justice, empowerment and oppression. Therefore, Kenneth, a teacher educator who taught Korean pre-service teachers to teach TESOL was asked whether his students found the learning the language of critical pedagogy challenging. He responded:

Yes, but you know, I think the disciplinary terms in English education like acquisition theories, teaching methods, some of the research terms, they are as complicated...

(Kenneth, Korea)

Therefore, Kenneth believed that if his students were capable of acquiring the theories of language and pedagogy, they would be able to understand the theories and concepts in the literature of critical pedagogy.

Summary

The themes that emerged from the data reflect the aim of transformative learning theory, to transform 'problematic frames of references to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, and emotionally able to change' (Mezirow, 2009, p. 22). It was also found that critical pedagogy started at the classroom, and went out into the community with the aim of making life a little better (Wink, 2000). However, it was not only students and the outside community that were transformed. Critical pedagogy offered teachers a personal journey of transformation as well. From this journey, teachers learnt to re-think their subject,

teaching and values. Additionally, they became more reflective on the theory that guided their practice; and in some cases, became transformed practitioners over time.

Teachers observed changes when students began reflecting upon their respective situations, and recounted how they would act for social justice and change. Besides that, students learned language in a context that truly mattered to them, and not just language for a future career. Teachers discussed issues that were important to students and that is why teaching and learning were affirming and not dehumanising. As Vassallo (2013) points out, transmitting static knowledge to students invalidates students' knowledge and experiences, while silencing their voice and decision-making capacity.

Although teachers emphasised students' voice and experience, students were not encouraged to abandon academic pursuits for activism. In fact, critical pedagogy is as much about cultivating the intellect as it is about social change (Kincheloe, 2008a). Therefore, critical ELT practices also enabled students to gain linguistic competence and engage with a rigorous body of knowledge.

In closing, ELT teachers may need to find out the long-term impact that critical pedagogy has on their students because teachers did not seem to have considered the possible repercussions of students' transformed worldviews and actions. For example, what happens when a student's country is not ready for a 'Philosopher's Teahouse'? Those who took part in the study tended to lose contact with their students after graduation and relied on students to keep in touch. So, a further step of staying in contact with students may be required and this would provide insight into the lasting impact of the experience, and also inform the practice and values of critical pedagogy.

It would be interesting to see how society and institutions would react to a hypothetical position in which *all* ELT teachers became critical pedagogues, especially in countries where certain freedoms cannot be taken for granted. Or does critical pedagogy's survival depend on it being a minority activity?

Chapter 8

The Road Not Taken: Voices against Critical Pedagogy

Introduction

In this chapter, the views of those opposed to critical pedagogy in ELT will be explored. The dissenting voices are important because such opinions offer a critique and discussion of critical pedagogy, which can be helpful for understanding this complex theory.

The chapter begins with a brief background of the two ELT teachers who were against critical pedagogy followed by discussion on important emergent themes:

- a) A value driven choice
- b) Striving for neutrality
- c) Adopting a personal ethical position

Background and Context

I came across two ELT teachers who were opposed to critical pedagogy through personal referrals. I decided to include their views because both were familiar with the theory of critical pedagogy. They had reflected on the implications of using critical pedagogy in ELT teaching and had made a conscious decision to reject it. Teachers had valid concerns about theory and practice.

Tina

Tina is currently a TESOL teacher educator in New Zealand, who had lived under the South African apartheid regime. She grew up having what she now understands as racist views of society, but these changed when she entered university. She began to see the world in a different light and since then, has

become actively involved in social activism. She believes in being critical of societal structures such as government and politics, in her own capacity as an individual but not as a teacher.

Dev

Dev is an ELT teacher who currently teaches foundation level students in a UK university that has a campus in Malaysia. Although he is currently in Malaysia, his experiences extend to other countries such as Poland, Hungary, Macedonia and the UK.

a) A value driven choice

One prominent theme that emerged was Tina's and Dev's conception of ELT teaching. They were against some of the underpinning tenets and principles of critical pedagogy, and hence believed that it had no place in the classroom. Both Tina and Dev had a good understanding of theory, and were familiar with its practice. However, they felt that their values were different from the principles and aims of critical pedagogy, and that is why they decided not to travel along its path. Their accounts revealed that they did not have a social reform conception of teaching, which according to Pratt (1992), is grounded on the vision of seeking a better society. The approaches teachers use in the classroom are influenced by their conceptions of teaching (Postareff, Lindblom-Ylänne, & Nevgi, 2007). For instance, Tina expressed her ideas on what language teaching should be:

...I don't see the point of that (critical pedagogy) because to me, language teaching is about skills. It's about communication. It's about getting people skills that they can use out of the classroom, in terms of communication and it's not, to me, about changing people's political views. I believe they're entitled to their political views. They can have whatever political views they have so long as they're not racist or objectionable to other people in the classroom, so long as there's harmony in the classroom...

(Tina, New Zealand)

Tina viewed ELT as a technical discipline, with skills that students needed to acquire. She was against critical pedagogy because she thought of it as a way of manipulating students' political views. She believed that students were entitled to their own political stance and opinions, and that teachers were not responsible for changing these views. In other words, she found it important for teachers to keep their personal beliefs and opinions private, so that students will not feel coerced into thinking something because the teacher thinks that way.

In some ways, Tina's values were conditional. While she was accepting of students' diverse political views, she mentioned that their views should not be racist or objectionable to other people in the classroom. A paradox exists here because it presupposes certain values to be foundational. Brown (2007) notes that teachers are responsible for creating an atmosphere of respect for the beliefs and opinions of others; while maintaining a threshold of morality and ethics in the classroom. However, when teachers ensure either foundational or moral values such as love, equality and tolerance are manifested in the classroom, respect for each other's beliefs and opinions may be violated (Brown, 2007). A teacher's pedagogy becomes 'critical' when their actions are grounded on basic values such as a vision for a better and more humane life (Brown, 2007). Therefore, although Tina attempted to be neutral in the classroom, sometimes her actions could not help but be predicated on certain values that presuppose a vision of a better society. Like Tina, Dev also believed in keeping his personal views and beliefs private:

I was teaching out in Macedonia, in ex-Yugoslavia and ... you encountered some quite what's the word, for want of a better word, Stone Age views, about the roles of women, about race, about all kinds of things and I was very young. ... And I did start going down the, the route of, "No, that's, that's not right. That's not how we think in the West". But I stopped that very quickly because the guys were coming here, were coming to the school to learn English. Not to be told what to think.

(Dev, Malaysia)

From Dev's story, it is evident that it can be easy for teachers to impose their values on students, especially in oppressive situations. Dev related that he was tempted to do so, however, he decided that if he wanted to work for social justice and to make the world a better place, he would do it on his own time. He stressed that it was not the place of the ELT teacher to enforce an ideology. Dev recognised that his teaching did not take place in a vacuum; and there were social issues that needed to be addressed. However, he felt deeply suspicious of any teaching which had an underlying ideology to push, even if it was an ideology that he shared.

Perhaps a misconception of what critical pedagogues do exists because critical pedagogy does not tell students what to think, but instead offers students different ways of thinking. Kincheloe (2008a) stresses that critical pedagogues take a stand, and make that stand understandable to students. He adds that critical pedagogues do not have the right to impose their viewpoints on students. In fact, Kincheloe (2008a) argues that is the central tenet of critical pedagogy.

b) Striving for neutrality

Both Tina and Dev realised that power imbalances existed in their classrooms. They recognised the power teachers have to influence their students' values and that education needed to be separated from politics. Therefore, as ELT teachers who understood critical pedagogy, they consciously sought ways to ensure neutrality in the classroom. However, contentious issues did come up and Dev explained how he dealt with them:

...what I try to do is ask students to hold up their own beliefs to scrutiny- to examine the reasons that they hold these beliefs and ask themselves if there are reasons behind these beliefs. For example, many of my students opposes Gay Rights. I try to ask them why. Is it religion? Is it what they have been told at school? Or perhaps by their families? However, what I avoid doing is teaching them that gay rights are in some way "correct" or "natural". I believe it is my job to help students learn how to think critically, not what to think.

(Dev, Malaysia)

Dev was mindful not to share his opinions with his students although it was a value choice to ensure they learn to think critically and he encouraged students to develop a values critique. Dev's classroom practice differed from the principles of critical pedagogy because as Kincheloe (2008a) points out, critical pedagogues take a position and make it understandable, while being mindful not to impose their values on their students. What Dev did was different because he withheld his own opinions to maintain neutrality.

What message are teachers sending out when they refrain from disclosing personal views and opinions on issues? It is understandable that some recognise their position of power and may not want to coerce students. However, Brookfield (1995) has argued against this by suggesting that withholding views can be oppressive. Even in silence, an important message is sent. Therefore, Dev could be making the power difference between teacher and student visible by asking students to articulate their beliefs and values, without disclosing any of his own personal beliefs and convictions.

In Tina's ELT classroom, there were lessons that touched on issues of culture and race. She claimed that she did not bring up these topics because she wanted to train her students to be non-racist. Instead, she presented her lessons in terms of promoting intercultural communication and knowledge about other cultures. She chose these issues because they were an important part of communication in a second language. She saw it directly leading to the knowledge that her students were going to use in the future. She also said that her teacher trainee TESOL students had a very varied reading list, and Marxist theory and the teachings of Paulo Freire were included. But, she made it clear that her students should not set out to teach any specific body of knowledge or information. Tina told them that they should not enter a classroom with the aim of giving information about any issue discussed in the class or with the aim of changing views. Topics or themes should only serve as a vehicle for language learning and practice. According to this strategy, any topic or theme could prove to be useful. She always reminded them that they were teaching a language, a set of skills; not providing students with information.

In the quest for neutrality, Tina may not have believed that discussing politics had a place in the classroom, but it cannot be denied that her practices were politically underpinned. Wink (2000) explains that social, cultural and political implications come to the fore every time a teacher chooses a curriculum and decides what to teach and what not to teach. Therefore, Tina's decision to include readings on Freire and Marxism, and views that she explicitly imparted to her students such as teaching a set of skills and not a body of information was politically influenced. Even her perception of what knowledge would be useful for students in the future was politically coloured. Benesch (1993) claims:

... teachers' decisions about subject matter, teaching methods and assessment reflect a range of political positions, from wholehearted endorsement of the status quo in school and society, to tacit approval, to critical dissent

(Benesch, 1993, p. 707)

Therefore, it is hard to separate education from politics. Shor (1993) explains this is because individuals and society are constructed through education, and that is why the learning process cannot help but be political.

Additionally, while Tina did not believe in changing her students' political beliefs she aimed to influence their existing beliefs about teaching. Tina's attitude towards indoctrination seems to reflect the views of Harland and Pickering (2011) who note that teachers often deplore instilling students with partisan or ideological points of view but find it acceptable to indoctrinate students towards the instruction of a body of doctrine or principles. Similarly, Tina believed that it was permissible to alter attitudes and views towards the discipline she taught, but not views towards issues that sat outside what she believed was her discipline and her responsibilities as a teacher.

Perhaps teachers who perceive critical pedagogues as those who indoctrinate students need to consider the implications of attempting to be neutral in the classroom. Kincheloe (2008a) offers a thought-provoking view:

To refuse to name the forces that produce human suffering and exploitation is to take a position that supports oppression and powers that perpetuate it. ...The argument that any position opposing the actions of the dominant power wielders represents an imposition of one's views on somebody else is problematic. It is tantamount to saying that one who admits her oppositional political sentiments and makes them known to students is guilty of indoctrination, while one who hides her consent to dominant power and the status quo it has produced from her students is operating in an objective and neutral manner.

(Kincheloe, 2008a, p.11)

Kincheloe (2008a) negates arguments against critical pedagogy which suggest indoctrination carries guilt and is therefore seen as wrong; and to be silent is seen as virtuous and correct. Instead, he sees silence as the acceptance of the status quo, which can allow dominant ideologies to prevail.

Furthermore, from Tina and Dev's experiences, it is evident that teachers interpret disciplinary responsibilities differently. Ideas about disciplinary norms are relative because what they regarded as unacceptable, may have been acceptable to a critical pedagogue. These two ELT teachers also recognised power imbalances in the classroom, and sought for neutrality. Their stories provide insight into what happens when teachers try to keep their personal and political views private, and their experiences invite others to think about the implications that arise from being neutral and non-aligned.

c) Personal ethical position

Tina and Dev were against critical pedagogy because of their own personal code of ethics. They both found that being involved with critical pedagogy would breach an ethical position:

A final point is a very personal contradiction. I work in a university in a country where there is still widespread poverty, and where there is an ethnically based quota system in education. It's a country with a variety of democracy which I see as deeply flawed, and systematic, if not common, abuses of human rights. All of this goes against my own personal beliefs. Yet, I am happy to live my comfortable life style, paid for by the fees of rich students studying at an expensive university- one which the majority of people in the country couldn't afford. I feel it would be the basest form of hypocrisy to live this life style, yet still push an ideological agenda to students from within this system.

(Dev, Malaysia)

In a sense, Dev felt that he would not be living his values if he were to teach for social change and social justice. He recognised all the problems that existed in the society that he lived in, and yet felt compelled to remain silent. Tension surfaces here because he thought it was hypocritical to enjoy the privileges that he had, and yet push an ideological agenda that resisted the status quo. Dev may have felt that he would be living a contradiction if he were to fight against the prevailing dominant culture in the country that he was part of. Therefore, he found it unethical to subvert the system that he was benefitting from.

Looking at this situation from the lense of critical pedagogy, it would seem as though Dev was in support of the status quo because he had chosen to remain silent. Wink (2000) explains how she was once told by her student that passivity can also be regarded as a powerful political act. Therefore, not taking a stand may not necessarily mean that one is neutral, it simply means that one has accepted the

status quo. So while Dev may not want to openly express his views to students in the classroom, his actions outside of this, and personal code of ethics, may signify a political stand. Tina also rejected critical pedagogy because of her own personal code of ethics:

One of the most significant reasons why I don't like using critical pedagogy is that my students have paid fees (sometimes quite hefty fees) to be taught a specific course by me. In effect I have entered into a tacit contract (via my employer) with these students. I feel very strongly that it is my contractual duty to provide my students with the skills they seek and which they have paid to acquire and which they expect me to guide them in acquiring. I believe that it would be a breach of the transaction between me and the students if I were to use my class time to pursue any other agenda with them.

(Tina, New Zealand)

She felt that it would be unethical to pursue any other agenda aside from providing students with the necessary skills that they had come to university to acquire. For both Tina and Dev, the fact that students were paying fees for their education seemed to be an important determining factor in influencing their choice of what to include. They viewed their students as customers who had come to buy a service, and for that reason they should only give their students what they had come to 'buy'. It might be worth considering if Tina and Dev would act differently in a situation where education was free.

Both Tina and Dev seemed to have clear ideas about what students expected from a university education. In many ways, their views corresponded with Sowden (2008) who argues that many students learn English for purely instrumental reasons. Therefore, both Tina and Dev found that it is not their responsibility to include other issues.

However, it is also worth looking at what universities articulate their purposes to be. In New Zealand, where Tina taught, the Education Act (1989) charges universities, teachers and students to accept the role as critic and conscience of society. Harland et al. (2010) define this role:

If you want to be critic and conscience of society, it's about having an awareness of what that society is doing and having the ability to critique it and then developing some sort of attitude towards it, some sort of conscience.

(Harland et al., 2010, p. 93)

Although the role of critic and conscience of society does not explicitly stress an element of critical action; which is an important characteristic of critical pedagogy, it is still apparent that close links between critic and conscience and critical pedagogy exist. For example, the idea of critic and conscience of society goes beyond skills training, and invites all members of the university – both staff and students to develop an attitude and conscience towards society. Since this societal role is embedded in legislation, it would seem that all should accept this responsibility. Therefore, it could be argued that it is part of Tina's contractual duty to go beyond skills training and develop students who are critic and conscience of society. However, how she might do this may or may not be labelled as 'critical pedagogy'.

Summary

In this chapter, the dissenting voices that have considered the road of critical pedagogy have been presented. Tina and Dev's accounts revealed some tensions that exist between those for and against critical pedagogy. Some issues that arose from the discussion in this chapter suggested that the defining of one's discipline and the neutrality of one's practice is a relative idea. Furthermore, ideas about indoctrination and ideology were subjective and this possibly resulted in some misconceptions about critical pedagogy. Since the idea of indoctrination and enforcing an ideology have been important concerns for both critical pedagogues

(Chapter 6) and those against it, it will be revisited in Chapter 10. This final chapter brings the voice of critical pedagogy's advocates and the voice of its dissenters together at a crossroad, and opens up a space for discussion on some of the implications that have arisen for critical pedagogy as a theory and practice.

Chapter 9

All roads meet: Research summary

Introduction

The chapter presents a brief summary of findings, based on the three main research questions.

Research summary

1. Why and how do teachers implement critical pedagogy in ELT?

The first question sought to find out the reasons why some ELT teachers chose to travel the path of critical pedagogy, and how exactly they went about incorporating elements of it into their classroom practice. It was found that there were various reasons why teachers were inclined to critical pedagogy, even though it is commonly regarded as a minority activity.

Critical pedagogues were influenced by:

- a) theoretical values
- b) pedagogical values
- c) religious values
- d) departmental and institutional values
- e) dominant political values.

Not all five domains were present in all teachers but they had at least one of these influencing their professional lives.

There were some teachers who chose the path of critical pedagogy after being introduced to its theories and theorists. However, critical pedagogy is not a unified field and it is defined and understood in different ways (Cho, 2006). Therefore, teachers who were influenced by theoretical values, may have also had distinctive conceptions of critical pedagogy. However, a variety of practices allows the theory to be better understood.

There were five teachers who became critical pedagogues because of pedagogical values that they had been exposed to when they were learners. Brookfield (1995) comments that a teacher's autobiography or experience as a learner shapes his or her approach to teaching. If these critical pedagogues were so powerfully influenced by their teachers, it is possible that their students would be similarly inspired to become critical pedagogues as well. If critical pedagogy gains greater acceptance, it may no longer be viewed as marginal but find a home at the centre of institutional life.

For another two teachers, their Catholic and Christian values contributed to their choice to become critical pedagogues. Although only these two religions were mentioned in the study, critical pedagogy has been linked to other faiths and ways of life in other contexts. For example, Hattam (2008) and Adarkar and Keiser (2007) discuss critical pedagogy in relation to Buddhism, Roberts (2012) finds similarities between Freirean philosophy and Taoist ideals, and Dantley (2003) explores what he terms as 'critical spirituality' through critical theory and African American prophetic spirituality. Perhaps one reason why critical pedagogy is easily adopted by different faiths is because it champions universal values such as love, respect and justice for all. Therefore, there may be some who find it easy to identify with the ideals of critical pedagogy and attribute attachment to their respective religious or spiritual convictions.

For a small group of teachers, departmental and institutional values, such as teaching for social justice and equity, affected their choice. According to Flores and Day (2006), the influence of the workplace can either facilitate or hinder professional learning and development. So for some teachers, a supportive

departmental and institutional environment that embraced critical pedagogy influenced them to become critical pedagogues. In these instances, critical pedagogy was not relegated to the margins. It needs to be noted that no one adopted critical pedagogy simply because they felt pressured by their respective departments or institutions and all mentioned other influences.

Finally, dominant political values were also influential for three teachers mainly because of the political climate that they were in, or had been previously exposed to. All found the political situation in their countries repressive, and for that reason sought change. It is interesting to note that Lynn and Tina grew up under the South African apartheid regime, but both were influenced differently. Lynn embraced critical pedagogy, while Tina rejected it because she saw how teachers could abuse it.

Another aspect that the first research question explored was how critical pedagogues embedded critical pedagogy into teaching. It was found that they all emphasised their students' voices and experiences. As a result, they negotiated and co-constructed knowledge and ensured that an environment of trust was fostered. Additionally, teachers also employed an approach of problem-posing, which problematised important issues identified by students. Finally, it was found that there were a significant number of teachers who were researchers of their students' experiences both inside and outside the classroom because they wanted to gain a deeper understanding. Therefore, teachers ensured that four student-centred conditions were created in their respective classrooms. They were:

- a) negotiated and co-constructed knowledge
- b) trust in action
- c) problem –posing
- d) being a researcher of students' experiences

It was not always easy to negotiate and co-construct knowledge. While in some cases this was possible, there were times when the teacher had to insist certain topics were covered because they related to the course aims and learning

outcomes. When teachers co-construct and negotiate knowledge together with their students, issues of knowledge and power come into play. Clifford (1999) explains why this happens:

The traditional image of a lecturer as the subject expert who distils and dispenses knowledge to the student gives the lecturer control of the learning environment. Some lecturers are reluctant to relinquish this control as their rewards from teaching come from demonstrating their expertise and ‘losing control’ of the learning environment is viewed as very threatening.

(Clifford, 1999, p. 124)

Therefore, teachers may need to learn how to let go and move in directions they may not always be familiar and comfortable with.

Trust is another important condition that was fostered in the classroom. Freire (2005) notes that trust is a prerequisite in order to enter into dialogue with students. Furthermore, he adds that teachers need to trust in their students’ ability to critically reason and reflect. The teachers in this present study gained the trust of their students through various strategies (Chapter 5). It was also found that not all teachers explicitly made it clear to their students that they were critical pedagogues, nor did they use the term ‘critical pedagogy’. In such situations, are teachers jeopardising the trust that is being built, because they are not explicitly stating their identities, or the theories they are drawing from? Will students’ trust towards their teachers be shaken, once they realise that the course they are taking provides something beyond their expectations?

Problem-posing happens when teachers raise pertinent issues from students’ experiences (Happs, 1991). When facilitating problem posing, ‘The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach’ (Freire, 2005, p. 80). Here, learning is a mutual process, and both the teacher and student learn from

each other. However, how can teachers play the role of facilitator when they may have limited or no knowledge on a certain issue? Would they be able to pose relevant questions to students in order to promote critical reflection? How would teachers seek to problematise and engage in discussions on issues that they may have no knowledge of? Therefore, without insight into the social, economic and political background of students, facilitating problem-posing may be difficult.

Lastly, one way to learn about students' experiences is by researching their experiences. There were nine teachers who were involved in action research projects, and teachers like Lynn, Kenneth, Rob, Ming, and Celia explored their students' educational experiences. Kincheloe (2008a) notes that a central aspect of critical pedagogy is studying students so that they can be better understood and taught. He adds that this can be done through research dialogues, where the teacher listens carefully to what students have to say about their communities and the problems they are faced with. Teachers who take the time to learn about their students show that they are engaged and interested in more than just intellectual development.

2. How does critical pedagogy impact on the experiences of ELT teachers?

The second research question sought to discover the impact of critical pedagogy on teachers. Firstly, it was found that the path of critical pedagogy was not always an easy one to follow. In many ways, teachers were like 'travellers without maps', and they faced many 'unknowns' along the way. One challenge was related to the risks involved in engaging with critical pedagogy. These teachers were in countries where certain freedoms were curtailed, and hence they felt that their personal safety was at stake because of the controversial nature of the issues that they constantly dealt with in the classroom. Freire notes that having fear is normal, however teachers should not let their fear immobilise them (Shor, 1987). Those in this study acted in spite of their fear, because they had a clear vision of what they wanted to achieve.

Critical pedagogy also impacted teachers by evoking in them a range of contrasting emotions. One reason for this is because dialogic classes are unpredictable and invented in-progress (Shor, 1987). Some teachers experienced 'positive' or 'pleasant' emotions through their engagement with critical pedagogy, while for others, negative emotions were evoked. Therefore, they had to learn how to navigate by managing these emotional experiences.

Lastly, there were unexpected roadblocks. Examples were in the form of resistance from students and other teachers, prevailing societal values, as well as resistance from superiors. It was found that although teachers had to face many 'unknowns', they were not deterred from continuing their journey.

Because critical pedagogy is a minority activity, critical pedagogues may feel a sense of loneliness as they are confronted with all these challenges. Therefore, by establishing networks with other ELT critical pedagogues from other institutions, the journey may become less arduous. By forming networks, beginner critical pedagogues may be able to gain 'tools for navigation' from those who are more experienced. More experienced colleagues can provide valuable strategies on how to transform the 'unknown' path of critical pedagogy into one that is more 'known'.

The impact of critical pedagogy can also be seen from the transformations of both teachers and students. The first sign of transformation was evident through the teacher-student relationship. Teachers reported how much they learned from students, and this transformed the way they saw the world. Their 'frame of reference' (Mezirow, 1990, p. 1) was transformed and they began to have a revised understanding of the world. Secondly, there were some teachers who became critically reflective because of their engagement with critical pedagogy. As a result, they became more critical about theory and became better teachers. Critical pedagogy impacted on students as well and teachers observed changes in their students. Teachers talked about how their students' worldviews were changed, and how their lives outside the classroom were transformed. Finally,

language learning was also transformed because it took place within the context of critical issues that were significant to the student.

In Chapter 7, many positive stories of teacher transformation were discussed. The findings suggested that teachers are powerful agents of influence and change. Therefore, they need to be thoughtful about how both critical reflection and action bring forth transformation, and ensure that one is not sacrificed for the other. Freire (2005) points out the dangers of reflection without action as mere ‘verbalism’ or idle chatter. On the other hand, he notes that action without critical reflection can result in activism or action for action’s sake. Therefore, teachers have to be especially mindful in striking the right balance in the classroom.

The analysis also suggested that critical pedagogy could never be something prescribed by theorists as a method that could be carried out by following a series of steps. Wink (2000) explains that the teachers’ voice must be as strong as the theorists’ voice in critical pedagogy, because it is always easier to state a theoretical concept than it is to live it in the classroom. Teachers are therefore encouraged research their own practice and to share their work and make it public as they develop personal theories of critical pedagogy.

3. Given the choice, why do some ELT teachers reject critical pedagogy?

The final research question involved analysis on the experiences of Tina and Dev who were against critical pedagogy. Tina and Dev’s rejection of critical pedagogy was a value driven choice because their values did not correspond to those of critical pedagogy. As Harland and Pickering (2011) argue, values influence the way people see the world and how they operate in it. Therefore, Tina and Dev chose to operate as teachers who dismissed critical pedagogy from their professional lives. Furthermore, they felt that critical pedagogues imposed ideology and were indoctrinating students. They stated that this was not the role of

the teacher, and that is why they sought ways to be neutral and non-aligned in the classroom. Their rejection was part of their own personal code of ethics.

The fact that both Tina and Dev had explored critical pedagogy theory and had clear expectations for societal change suggest that this rejection was largely about unwillingness to label their practice and have that practice lived in a tightly proscribed manner. If they called themselves critical pedagogues, they would feel obliged to bring in social theory for change. Without the label, they could act in a critical manner and equip their students with critical theory abilities while remaining true to their values and avoid what they saw as indoctrination, or practices beyond those required of a university teacher.

Chapter 10

Standing at the Crossroads: Discussion and Implications

Introduction

In this chapter, I stand at the crossroads and bring together the voices of critical pedagogues and those who have chosen to reject critical pedagogy to see what implications arise for teaching and research. Discussion is organised in four sections:

- a) managing knowledge imposition and indoctrination
- b) risks involved
- c) the question of legitimacy
- d) strengthening the voice of critical pedagogy outside the classroom

Finally, the limitations of the study are discussed.

Discussion

a) Managing knowledge imposition and indoctrination

There were eleven ELT critical pedagogues who believed that education could transform students' lives and make the world a better place. It is important to note that when discussing a 'better' society, or a 'better' education system, the concept and practice of 'ideology' is invoked, because it is through ideology that individuals navigate the political world to attain a better (or worse) vision of society (Vincent, 2011). Hence, notions of social justice and equity, both of which underpin critical pedagogy are influenced by ideological perspectives.

One of the main criticisms against critical pedagogy was that particular views of society and reality are imposed by teachers on students (Mejia, 2004). When teachers influence students in this manner, they might indoctrinate students

towards embracing a particular ideological stance. ELT teachers who were against critical pedagogy believed that critical pedagogues tended to enforce such a particular ideology (Chapter 8).

Critical pedagogues seemed to be aware of this criticism, and that is why, on various occasions, they expressed their need to ensure that their personal views were not imposed on students. At the same time, they tried to mitigate their views by encouraging students to develop their own ideas and opinions, because they recognised that critical pedagogy could be misused. Teaching in an ideological space, withdrawing opinion to appear neutral, while at the same time promoting critical thinking and self-determination, is a complex balancing act that all critical pedagogues must face. Letting novice students loose in the political and social arena without guidance is likely to be dangerous, and guidance is expected from teachers. If their grammar is incorrect, then the teacher corrects this, yet if a student's conclusions about a more equal society are flawed, then what is the teacher's role? Critical pedagogues should consider their role in helping students come to a clear understanding that what they are experiencing in class is motivated by a single position and that this should also be open to question.

Blackburn (2000) gives two illustrations of how critical pedagogues can sometimes use critical pedagogy to serve their own hidden agendas. The first example is a Freirean literacy programme that was launched among indigenous communities in Mexico. Here, literacy classes were followed by bible readings in the local language in which the educator (missionary) prescribed a particular world-view to which the students had to conform to (Blackburn, 2000).

The second example concerns a literacy crusade in Nicaragua, which was hailed as one of the greatest achievements of the Sandinista regime:

Under the banner of liberation through mass-literacy, the fledgling Sandinista regime sought to stamp a particular Nicaraguan identity on people who had always seen themselves as separate from the rest of the population. ... In other words, the Sandinistas used Freire as

a subtle form of 'banking education', depositing in people a certain type of information and world-view, rather than allowing them to come to their own conclusions

(Blackburn, 2000, p. 12)

Although the two programmes claimed to be Freirean, they clearly were not because ideology was used for pernicious purposes. If critical pedagogy is seen as a deliberate act of influence and control, it is potentially dangerous to minds that are vulnerable and malleable. Because of this, great care must be taken. Each teacher will decide on the limits of what they deem is appropriate for students and when critical pedagogy is practiced in such a way, professional judgment will be the starting point for determining what is acceptable.

So, does this then mean that ideology is always negative? Perhaps there needs to be focus on what good can come out of ideology. If it can be used for pernicious purposes, can it also be used for good? To answer these questions, ideology needs to be understood from a broader perspective. It has been noted that teachers often resist instilling students with partisan or an ideological point of view, but find no problem in instructing students towards a body of doctrine or principles (Harland & Pickering, 2011). From this perspective, universities appear to be sites that are super-saturated with ideology, which allow academic standards and values to seep into teaching practices, research activities and policies, both at institutional and national levels (Barnett, 1996). Therefore, one way of utilising ideology in the ELT critical pedagogy classroom is by simply acknowledging that all ELT practice is 'interested' (Pennycook, 1989), political (Wink, 2000) and ideological (Benesch, 1993).

Critical pedagogy in the field of ELT is susceptible to being negatively labelled as 'ideological' because it refuses to ignore social issues and critically examines canonical knowledge with the intention of effecting social change (Benesch, 1993). However, this does not mean that other approaches towards ELT are neutral or less ideological because 'being unaware of the political implications of

one's choices, or claiming that those choices are neutral, does not mean that one's pedagogy is free of ideology' (Benesch, 1993, p. 707). Perhaps with this in mind, teachers can accept that the role they play can shape students' values and conscience.

Such an act on the part of the teacher does not have to be regarded as a 'bad' or 'undesirable'. As McLaren (1988) argues, ideology has positive and negative functions. Ideology can be viewed in a positive light when it functions to enable human action in the interest of social transformation (Giroux 1983 as cited in McLaren 1988).

If teachers were to indoctrinate students towards critical pedagogy's goals and ideology, then they should also:

...make their own commitments clear as they construct forms of teaching consistent with the democratic notion that students learn to make their own choices and beliefs based on the diverse perspectives they confront in school and society

(Kincheloe 2008a, p.11)

However, it cannot be denied that there is a valid concern for the abuse of critical pedagogy. In higher education, one of the roles of an academic is to provide a voice as critic and conscience of society and it could be argued that holding a particular ideological position makes this role more challenging. It is likely that language teachers are regarded as having language expertise, rather than knowledge of social issues, and taking a stance on an issue, especially outside one's subject area, can be associated with indoctrination. Both the academic community and wider society generally view this negatively. Therefore, criticism of ELT critical pedagogues may stem from a matter of principle and deeply held ideas about academic norms and values.

Teachers may need to carefully consider if they are abusing the power they have in influencing students, and then develop strategies to manage the ideological nature of the work they are engaged in. Critical reflection and thoughtful practice are needed. One of the greatest dangers of critical pedagogy is that 'it can be used as a very subtle Trojan Horse, one which appears to be a gift to the poor, but can all too easily contain a hidden agenda' (Blackburn, 2000, p. 13). Therefore, it might be helpful if critical pedagogues recognise and acknowledge the potential damage critical pedagogy could cause, and constantly reflect on whether they always have the students' best interest at heart.

Besides that, there is potential for critical pedagogy to be misused because all teachers share successes and failures. Critical pedagogues have been raised in environments with ingrained language biases, and although much time may have been focused on egalitarian thinking, academic training and professionalisation, it is doubtful that all childhood prejudices have been purged, neutralized and accounted for (Crovitz, 2006). Therefore, critical pedagogues, like other teachers will be capable of misusing their position of power. It is in the midst of such situations that the need for critique is important. Interrogating and problematising critical pedagogy can keep teachers in check. Self and peer critique can serve as a 'watch dog' to ensure that critical pedagogy is not used perniciously. 'To claim that ideologies merely distort and falsify consciousness can only continue to cause the categories of critique, struggle, and transformative practice to further dissolve' (McLaren, 1988, p. 179). In other words, if ideology is seen only as pernicious, then it will impact on the development and transformative goals of critical pedagogy.

b) Risks involved

Critical pedagogy's preoccupation with the politics of social change can be risky. Brookfield (1991) describes what it could be like for teachers who engage in such practice:

In overtly repressive, totalitarian societies the struggle is likely to be more violent than in societies where a democratic culture is

espoused. In societies espousing more democratic values the costs of the struggle may be felt more in an exclusion from avenues of economic advantage or in an alienation from mainstream culture. A sense of ostracism can be quite exhilarating for a while and can even induce a heightened sense of one's own identity but sustained over a period of time it is demoralizing, embittering and psychologically perilous.

(Brookfield, 1991, p. 10)

If involvement in critical pedagogy puts the teacher's personal safety at risk and causes ostracism and alienation, then what are its implications for students? Are students also in danger after they encounter critical pedagogy? How do teachers manage these risks? Educators such as McLaren call teachers to assertively direct students towards becoming critical thinkers (and doers) 'in the face of war, violence, corruption, imperialism, greed and waste of natural resources' (Brown, 2007, p. 513). If this is the call for classroom practices, then how do teachers ensure that their students are safe in situations such as war, violence and imperialism? For instance, Ben reported that his students were involved in the Arab Spring and Lynn recounted how her Chinese student wanted to go back to China and set up a Philosopher's Tea house where controversial issues were to be discussed (Chapter 7). Then there was Celia from Turkey, who worked with students in a country where many freedoms were curtailed. If students are exposed to dangerous ideas, how can teachers ensure their safety? What responsibilities does the teacher have for what happens outside the classroom?

Although the topic of risk seems underrepresented in the literature of critical pedagogy, Freire in a conversation with Shor articulates his views on the topic: 'If you don't command your fear, you no longer risk. And if you don't risk, you don't create anything. Without risking, for me, there is no possibility to exist' (Shor, 1987, p. 61). Perhaps in this instance, Freire's words need to be taken with caution, because taking risks without reflection and deliberation can lead to perilous consequences. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on the possible

repercussions of drawing upon radical issues in the classroom, and theorise concepts such as ‘safety’ and ‘risk’ in relation to their practice. In countries where teachers have limited freedom, measured steps need to be taken, and the consequences of one’s actions should be carefully considered. Brookfield (1991) offers some insight for teachers:

The tension for critical practice arises when in stressing the liberatory, empowering dimensions to critical thinking educators fail to give due attention to the dangers and difficulties this transformative practice involves. Not to explore with learners the risks and consequences of thinking critically is ethically wrong. Not to give some guidance on how to minimise these risks and consequences is to set people up for personal and political damage.

(Brookfield, 1991, p. 9)

Teachers will only know the limits of what they can do through critical reflection, and deciding how far to push the boundary is a complex issue that only can be answered by one’s own conscience.

On the other hand, a poem that is attributed to Martin Niemoller, a German, anti-Nazi pastor, provides an alternative perspective into the issue of exposure to risk. Although there are many variations of this poem, the essence of Martin Niemoller’s message is captured in the following lines:

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out--
 Because I was not a Socialist.
 Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out--
 Because I was not a Trade Unionist.
 Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out--
 Because I was not a Jew.
 Then they came for me--and there was no one left to speak for me.

(Museum, 2013)

Teachers should be concerned about putting students' safety and security at risk, but by not speaking out on important social and political issues dominant ideologies will prevail (Kincheloe, 2008a). In countries with oppressive regimes, teachers might fail if they do not guide students into seeing alternative possibilities. In more liberal countries, could teachers be risking the lives of other people around the world because they refuse to discuss politics in the classroom? Do the words of Nobel Peace laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi, 'Please use your liberty to promote ours' (Kyi, 1997, p. 1) have a place in these classrooms?

Grace (2010) notes that universities have a 'balance of power role' and act as an independent check towards whatever political party or political ideology that is presently in power. In light of this, academics are given the responsibility to work for the common good of society, even if it means passing judgements on aspects of that society (Jones, Galvin, & Woodhouse, 2000). 'In fact, it could be argued that the privilege of a higher education places a special responsibility on students and academics to give something back to the society they serve' (Harland & Pickering, 2011, p. 85). In this light, teachers may need to have a clear conception of their role as university academics so that they can put the issue of risk into perspective and decide on the limits they are willing to push in their classroom. Social, economic and political structures within their country should not be ignored.

c) The question of legitimacy

Sowden (2008) problematises the legitimacy of ELT teachers to comment on political and social matters. This criticism has important implications for critical pedagogues because it questions the 'right' of individuals who have been trained as language teachers to teach outside their discipline, and broach topics such as politics, economics, and sociology. How qualified and knowledgeable would they be, when they have not received any formal training in these disciplines? To understand this, it might be worth considering a simplistic argument on whether an engineering lecturer or a biology lecturer, or a history lecturer could teach English and train future English language teachers? If such a situation is deemed unacceptable, then why should it be acceptable for ELT teachers to teach about

politics, society and culture; disciplines in which these teachers have had no formal training?

Sowden (2008) raises an important concern. Literature that explicitly touches on issues of academic legitimacy, especially in the context of critical pedagogy appear to be scant. Considering that there is a significant body of work that challenge the ideals and practice of critical pedagogy, it seems rather surprising that there is limited focus on the rights critical pedagogues have to teach outside their discipline. Perhaps greater attention in this area is needed because Sowden (2008) points out, aspiring sociologists, political scientist and cultural experts in the form of ELT teachers have the potential to cause grave damage. This disciplinary-expert view of an academic's role suggests that a teacher's prime responsibility is one of helping students to learn authorised knowledge. In this context, critical pedagogy seems to be an 'easy target' for criticism and the lay-person or lay-academic may disapprove when they have not spent the time trying to fully understand the motives and underlying values of the concept.

While concern over the issue of legitimacy is justifiable, some of the findings that have emerged from the present research provide reasons why it is acceptable for critical pedagogues to continue venturing out of their respective areas of expertise. Firstly, none of the teachers interviewed claimed to be experts or specialists in all the issues they discussed in their classrooms. For example, in Chapter 6, Ming explained how he experienced fear and insecurity because he felt it impossible to be a knowledge expert at all times. Instead, critical pedagogues saw themselves as facilitators, who experienced learning alongside their students. Because teachers have positioned themselves in such a manner, students clearly know what to expect from their teachers. Students are aware that their teachers are not economists, or sociologists, or political scientists, and therefore they do not expect to get an economics lecture from an economics expert in their ELT lesson. Academics from other fields also know that these critical pedagogues are not experts outside ELT, and are not assessing students on knowledge of politics, or economics or social issues. Instead students are assessed on knowledge related to ELT. Therefore, critical pedagogues do not have to feel that they lack a sense of

legitimacy because they have not set out to be ‘experts’ or ‘specialists’ in fields outside ELT.

Besides that, there was an example of the participant who invited a guest speaker with AIDS to give a talk to the class when the subject of AIDS was discussed. This example shows how teachers can also draw on the knowledge and experience of others to move towards a more legitimate or acceptable epistemological position. There is great potential for such initiatives to grow, especially in a higher education setting, where access to knowledge, expertise and research abound. Briguglio and Watson (2014) discuss the importance of embedding English language education across the curriculum in higher education. Similarly, knowledge from other disciplines such as economics, sociology and politics can also be embedded into ELT classes to enrich the teaching and learning process, and to ultimately impact social change. Briguglio and Watson (2014) note that collaboration between academic staff in all disciplines is needed to carry out negotiated activities such as guest lectures/tutorials and the development of support materials for students. Thus, negotiated activities with academics from other fields allow ELT critical pedagogues to draw on the knowledge and expertise of other specialists from across the university.

Furthermore, the idea of focusing on a single discipline, which was common in the nineteenth and twentieth century, is slowly fading (Manathunga & Brew, 2012). The pressing scientific, social and economic problems of the twenty-first century such as climate change, terrorism and health, call for more than one disciplinary lense to bring these problems into view (Land, 2012). As the world becomes more globalised and integrated, interdisciplinarity finds an increasingly central place in higher education (Davies & Devlin, 2010). Furthermore, in this present day and age, Manathunga and Brew (2012) note that many, if not most academics, do not identify as being associated to only one particular discipline.

The idea of ‘academic tribes and territories’ (Becher, 1989), in which disciplines have their own academic territory with its very own academic culture, sets of norms, bodies of knowledge and modes of inquiry, is becoming less and less clear

(Paltridge, 2002). As Hyland (2004) points out, academic tribes, can no longer be considered as monolithic and unitary entities because they bring with them diverse experiences, specialisation, commitments and influences. Barnett (2010) uses the metaphor of water, and terms the university as a liquid university that is always on the move, and interacting with its environment. It is a place where 'boundaries between disciplines tend to dissolve in this epistemic freneticism' (Barnett, 2010, p. 113). Another example of a water metaphor is used by Manathunga and Brew (2012) who introduce the term 'oceans of knowledge', which refer to the wild, vast, fluid and life-giving nature of knowledge. They highlight how the 'oceans of knowledge' view enables academics to engage with interdisciplinary ways of thinking and being. However, they also caution: 'Harvesting ideas and approaches from the sea of knowledge can be a risky venture because there are no knowledge borders or boundaries; no hierarchies of knowledge; and no order' (Manathunga & Brew, 2012, p. 53).

In this light, it can be concluded that the once clear boundaries of ELT may have become blurred, and for that reason, it cannot always be regarded as a discrete, autonomous discipline of its own. Instead, teachers are encouraged to flow and merge into different knowledge groupings. These porous borders might indicate that ELT teachers are no longer trapped within the boundary of applied linguistics, or teacher education, but are challenged to venture out and draw on knowledge from disciplines. However, this might not be an easy task for teachers because it can cause them to feel a sense of unhomeliness or discomfort, and also brings along uncertainty and risk (Manathunga & Brew, 2012). Critical pedagogues face this complexity because knowledge areas are becoming increasingly interconnected and there is a need to engage beyond the borders of one's own discipline.

Lastly, as noted in Chapter 2, some students may have an instrumental and an economically profitable expectation of higher education. If students in the study found that ELT critical pedagogy oriented classes had failed to fulfil their expectations, surely complaints would have been made against critical pedagogues? Therefore, perhaps a sense of legitimacy can be gained if teachers

receive positive feedback from students, and hence seem to meet students' expectations.

Although these ELT teachers may not have had expert knowledge in the subjects discussed in the classroom, they were language experts. While this situation may not be usual or desirable in a university, it is necessary because all university teachers are charged with to function as critic and conscience of society. Teachers were acting as public intellectuals who used their position as academics to play a 'balance of power role' (Grace, 2010, p. 89) in challenging the status quo. They had taken a stand for justice and equity in their respective classrooms and in doing so gained legitimacy because they addressed some of the social purposes of a higher education. However, as teachers act as critic and conscience of society, it is important that they consider the moral foundations of their thinking and how their decisions and actions might impact teaching and learning because these will have an effect on disciplinary teaching, research and service (Harland et al., 2010).

In conclusion, one reason why critical pedagogy in ELT may not be a mainstream activity is because others consider it an illegitimate approach to subject teaching. However, the research showed critical pedagogues understood it as a viable and justifiable practice. Legitimacy appeared to depend on how teachers positioned themselves, and the claims they made about their knowledge areas and expertise.

d) Strengthening the voice of critical pedagogy outside the classroom

As noted in Chapter 2, critical pedagogy resides on the fringes of mainstream higher education. The voices of critical pedagogues to an extent have been silenced because there has been extensive writing on students that engage with critical issues in the classroom, but not on the teachers who actually facilitate these lessons (Bell et al., 2003). Furthermore, although substantial work has been done on critical pedagogy to develop a conceptual critique of the theory, there are few studies and little empirical data that address the experiences of teachers who adopt it. Because teachers practice in relative isolation from each other, it is important to foster a sense of collectivism to strengthen the aspirations of critical

pedagogues. Teachers can draw strength from colleagues with similar ideological positions. They can do this through research and by developing a community of practice (COP).

The majority of the critical pedagogues in this study engaged in action research, and their work was presented at conferences, published through websites, books, journals and theses. Inquiry into practice enabled them to become better teachers with greater insight into the experiences of their students. Action research provided important learning experiences because it enables teachers to check if their practice is carried out in the manner they feel it should be (McNiff, 2013). By engaging in action research, teachers in the present study were able to interrogate and challenge ideas and theories that underpin critical pedagogy. McArthur (2010) explains that literature on critical pedagogy should not be regarded as canonical texts that outline what should be done in the classroom. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to come up with their own theories to inform practice, and one way of doing this is through research: ‘critical pedagogy needs to gain strength from different perspectives, contexts and ideas – shared and argued over in safe, creative public spaces’ (McArthur, 2010, p. 501). Making research *public* allows for the incorporation of new ideas, and provides a space for discussing and interrogating new perspectives.

Additionally, action research also helps in resolving misconceptions that exist about critical pedagogy. It has been noted by Wamba (2011) that both critical pedagogy and action research grew out of a critique of traditional empirical research and traditional pedagogy. Furthermore both critical pedagogy and action research share common values which include community, collaboration, reflexivity, dialogue, critique, risk taking, and advocating for change. The action research projects that the critical pedagogues were involved in provided them with a voice because they had the opportunity to share their experiences with a wider audience. Therefore, perhaps once the voice of the often side-lined critical pedagogue is heard, and once the practical implications of critical pedagogy are researched and made known, critical pedagogy may find a ‘legitimate’ place in the eyes of other teachers, especially in the research-led university.

The experiences of critical pedagogues in this study revealed that action research is one effective way to develop personal theories of critical pedagogy, and to share practice in a systematic and formalised manner. The second option for these critical pedagogues to achieve similar outcomes is by forming a community of practice (Wenger, 2000). Critical pedagogues were scattered in different parts of the world, and worked mostly in isolation. One way of bringing more voices together is by forming a COP. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002) define COPs as groups of individuals who share a concern for a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who develop their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis. Therefore, a COP is a social learning group that is developed with individuals participating in a common enterprise (Spronken-Smith & Harland, 2009). Critical pedagogues have similar passions, goals and aims. McArthur (2010) argues that the ideas and theories of critical pedagogy should be interrogated and challenged as part of practice, and it is important for its broad ideas and ideals to be challenged, interpreted and reinterpreted in different contexts. Therefore, by forming a COP, critical pedagogues can put their beliefs and practice under scrutiny, to re-examine and reinvigorate their approaches towards teaching. The strength gained from joined voices can help to ensure that critical pedagogy is no longer regarded as a minority activity relegated to the periphery, of mainstream academia.

Servage (2008) provides some examples of what teachers can do within these professional learning communities:

Participants can share formative experiences as teachers or students that shaped their beliefs and values about schools; explore what it means to "learn" or to be "educated"; or consider the social, economic, and political characteristics of their local school communities. Short, provocative readings can be used to stimulate conversations about the impact of government policies on the work of schools; gain insights from comparative/international education; or explore the relationships between political ideologies and education.

(Servage, 2008, p.74)

Wenger (2000) suggests that when designing COPs, the following elements should be considered: events, leadership, connectivity, membership, projects, and artefacts. These elements could prove useful when designing an ELT critical pedagogy COP. For example, such a community can organise public events like a conference that brings members together. Wenger (2000) also mentions connectivity, and this refers to brokering relationships among people. In fact, connectivity was already established through the present study. I managed to introduce two critical pedagogues who previously did not know each other. Because I found out that they would be attending the same conference, I decided to put them in touch through e-mail so that they could later meet face-to-face at the conference. Before introducing them to one another, I checked if they were happy to share contact details. One of them related how enriching it had been to hear the work of the other critical pedagogue.

The nature of the COP for these ELT critical pedagogues could be one that is global and mostly virtual because its members are distributed in different geographical locations. Participation in virtual communities allows members to free themselves from constraints of time and space. So participating in online groups and forums could play an important role in facilitating connections among critical pedagogues who are separated by time and space. In terms of leadership, more experienced critical pedagogues can serve as mentors to beginners in order to help the community develop (Wenger, 2000). Hence, these are some ways that a COP could help critical pedagogues improve their competence and social learning because it opens up a space for these teachers to share experiences, identify problems and eventually work out how to manage these.

COPs also have challenges. Some examples include: reconciling the different agendas of members, developing trust and personal relationships, dealing with technical limitations and communicating knowledge (Wenger et al. 2002, Jewson, 2007). Such limitations could present complex management challenges but being aware of such risks will increase the likelihood of a productive relationship among members of a community. Hence, these challenges should not be seen as a

hindrance, but instead examined as part of the process of developing a valuable and effective COP.

Further implications for research

- 1) The idea that all ideology is pernicious needs to be explored. Since all forms of pedagogy are ideological, perhaps ELT teachers can consider how they can use ideology to serve virtuous purposes. For instance, they can consider how ideology can be used to fuel students' desires to challenge oppressive structures, and to bring forth change for themselves and others. Ideology can be used to show students that certain practices may be repressive and contribute to society's problems. However, it is important that teachers acknowledge how they use ideology and make their commitments clear to their students from the start.

- 2) The issue of risk is an issue worth exploring further because the concept seems to be underrepresented in the literature. Critical pedagogy has been labelled as 'radical', and for that reason, teachers need to be aware if they are exposing students to dangerous ideas that could somehow put them at risk. Because ideas relating to safety and risk are relative, teachers need to decide for themselves how far to push. Critical pedagogy is not a unified field which prescribes a fixed set of methods, so teachers need to adapt the theory to suit their individual contexts and circumstances. When critical pedagogy is appropriated in such a way, teachers can determine for themselves what is acceptable. Perhaps 'risk' needs to be problematised so teachers can study the implications that arise from exposing students to knowledge that has potential to radically transform their world.

- 3) The critical pedagogues in the present study are examples of teachers who have made their work known through research and publications. When teachers engage in action research, they open themselves to critique, which is important to improve practice. Additionally, the theory of critical pedagogy is further advanced to include the views and contexts of diverse groups of people around the world and others can draw inspiration from these projects. Action

research can also play an important role in deepening the understanding of critical pedagogy in ELT because it is a highly contested, radical practice, therefore, continued effort in sharing, and making one's work public is encouraged. If critical pedagogues make their voices heard and share how they strive to embed critical pedagogy in ELT, new knowledge and understanding will result.

- 4) Teachers can formalise their involvement in critical pedagogy by developing a community of practice (COP). The theory of critical pedagogy can be strengthened, and teachers can also share their practice with others who have similar aims and interests. The experiences of critical pedagogues from different parts of the world can also add to the diversity of views, instead of relying mainly on North American and European perspectives. A COP could also provide a form of mentoring for beginner critical pedagogues who are keen to learn from others more experienced in the field.
- 5) The present study also has implications for critical pedagogy research. For example, the long-term effects of critical pedagogy on students after they have left university can be studied. A longitudinal study may be insightful to find out what effects critical pedagogy has on students and whether they use their new knowledge after they graduate to transform the world.
- 6) It will also be worth researching transformation from the perspective of students. First-hand accounts from students on the transformation process are rare and may provide insight into whether transformations were disorienting or welcomed. Besides that, research into how transformation affected students' interactions and integration into society will be useful. For example, how did family and friends react to students and how did transformation impact the way students interacted with the rest of the world?
- 7) Eleven teachers in this study clearly self-identified as critical pedagogues. One of these teachers reported that she had been practicing critical pedagogy since she had started teaching, however, she only theorised and labelled her practice

years later as a more experienced teacher. Therefore, it might be worthwhile researching if there are many more ELT teachers who, in every sense, practice critical pedagogy, but just do not have a name for their practice yet. Would exposure to theory begin to change their practice?

Limitations of the study

In this section, some of the limitations of this study are acknowledged. Because critical pedagogy resides on the fringes of higher education, the participants were drawn from a very specific population. While two were not critical pedagogues, the remaining teachers in this study were those who were involved in ELT, used critical pedagogy and had published their work. Therefore, the experiences of teachers in this thesis are limited to a very specific group of ELT teachers.

The main data source was in the forms of narratives from participants. So, the descriptions gathered from the teachers are influenced by factors such as self-perceptions, institutional values and the fallible nature of memory. The second half of Chapter 7 which deals with student transformations is based on the recollections and interpretations of the teachers involved and not through direct communication with students.

The study also largely relied on interviews and written accounts from participants in the form of e-mail and publication over two years. Follow-up was done with some teachers when doubt or uncertainty was encountered. If I were to conduct this study again, I would request that teachers keep reflective journals of their journey as critical pedagogues teaching a particular course for one semester. It would be interesting to see how such a structure impacted on developing views over time and how respondents reflected on their engagement with critical pedagogy.

Additionally, the present study only included the views of two teachers who were against critical pedagogy. It could have been more insightful if there were more teachers in this category. However, it is challenging to find teachers with

knowledge on the theory and practice of critical pedagogy, and now have decided to reject it in their professional lives.

Finally, there was the challenge to protect the anonymity of the participants. Many of the teachers were identified through their research and publications on critical pedagogy and ELT. While they have shared their work in the public domain, their identity is undisclosed in this research project. Therefore, there have been times where certain information needed to be omitted and certain descriptions had to be vague in order to protect the anonymity of all involved.

Concluding Remarks

I have provided a summary of findings, and shown how the three main research questions were answered. At this crossroad, discussion focused on four main areas. They were related to managing knowledge imposition and indoctrination, considering the risks involved, the question of legitimacy and strengthening the voice of critical pedagogy outside the classroom. Discussion provided a number of implications for ELT teaching and research.

The findings of this study open new spaces for future research. For example, the long-term impact of critical pedagogy on the lives of students, the development of action research and COPs among ELT critical pedagogues and an in-depth exploration of the effect of transformation on students. These research areas can inform the theorising and practice of critical pedagogy in the future.

This research journey has led me to see that critical pedagogy remains a highly contested area. I started out as a strong supporter of the values and ideals of critical pedagogy, and through this journey, I have gained a deep sense of admiration for the good work that critical pedagogues are doing. Their stories are inspirational and provide hope for the great things that can be accomplished within the confines of an ELT classroom.

I believe that through this research project, I have been able to make an important and unique contribution to the theory of critical pedagogy. To do this I focused on the experiences of teachers who were in support of critical pedagogy and those who were against it. Such a design contrasts with most other works which examines an individual's experience or focuses on the philosophical/sociological bases of critical pedagogy. Besides that, narratives from critical pedagogues around the world have revealed new insights into ideas relating to risk and personal safety. For example, it is unlikely that teachers from Western, liberal universities understand risk and danger in relation to practice in the same way as those from countries where freedom of speech is limited. These experiences were particularly valuable and insightful because the issue of 'risk' is underdeveloped in critical pedagogy theory.

The two ELT teachers who had rejected critical pedagogy shed light on how it could be used as a tool for indoctrination. To understand this criticism better, I chose to explore some of the complexities of ideology and indoctrination. The teachers against critical pedagogy had valid concerns and I was eager to find out how critical pedagogues sought to deal with some of the challenges associated with critical pedagogy.

After listening to stories from both critical pedagogues and those against critical pedagogy, I feel myself more oriented towards the path of critical pedagogy. However I would need time to fully grow into this being of a ‘critical pedagogue’ and to be able to think and act like one. Therefore, like Freire, who saw human life as an ‘unfinished project’, I see my journey towards the path of critical pedagogy as ‘unfinished’.

In time, I am sure I will be able to confidently claim that I am a critical pedagogue. For me, the journey starts now, and like the traveller in Frost’s (2009) poem, I hope:

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

(Frost, 2009, p. 9)

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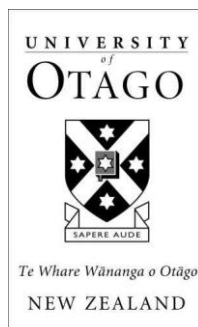
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Appendices

Appendix A: Information sheet and consent form for participants



TAKING SIDES: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN ELT TEACHING

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the Aim of the Project?

This project involves a Doctoral research under the supervision from the Higher Education Development Centre. It aims to examine how English language practitioners in institutions of higher education around the world incorporate (or do not incorporate) critical pedagogy, which has its focus on social justice and transformation in their classrooms. It also aims to uncover the life story of these critical pedagogues in the process – to share stories of how their English language practices can be seen as a means of empowerment and emancipation against repressive structures in society.

What Type of Participants are being sought?

Fourteen participants are sought for this study including English language practitioners who use and do not use critical pedagogy in their classrooms. These respondents shall be found by contacting self-identified critical and non-critical pedagogues in the area of ELT.

What will Participants be Asked to Do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to.....

- *Read through and prepare suitable responses for interview questions that will be given beforehand. Questions will focus on the following areas :*
 - a) *Descriptions of how critical approaches are used in the English language classroom*

- b) Reasons for having a particular stand on incorporating or not incorporating critical pedagogy in ELT*
- c) Constraints and challenges faced as a critical pedagogue or a non-critical pedagogue*
- d) Perception of identity and role as an English language practitioner in higher education*
- e) Students' responsiveness and feedback towards the incorporation of critical approaches in the classroom*
 - *Allocate time so that a 1 – 2 hour interview can be scheduled*
 - *Provide additional details that may be needed for the project through e-mail correspondence*
 - *Check interview transcript and final draft of case for factual accuracy and fair representation*

Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?

- Interview data will be recorded and transcribed verbatim and then analysed using an inductive approach to develop themes. These themes will be theoretically illustrated by semi-fictional life stories. These life stories will be sent to the respondents to ensure that they are comfortable with the representation of their ideas and their anonymity. No narratives will be published without the full consent of the respondents
- The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. Data obtained as a result of the research will be retained for **at least 5 years** in secure storage. Any personal information held on the participants such as contact details, audio or video tapes, after they have been transcribed etc., may be destroyed at the completion of the research even though the data derived from the research will, in most cases, be kept for much longer or possibly indefinitely.
- The results of the project may be published and may be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity.
- This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning include issues pertaining to English language teaching

practices and critical pedagogy. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used.

- In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that you may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.
- You will also be given the opportunity to view the final draft of this project and be able to correct or alter any data involving yourself to maintain balanced representation of data obtained.

Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What if Participants have any Questions?

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Joanna Joseph Jeyaraj

and/or *Associate Professor Anthony Harland*

Department of Higher Education Development

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TAKING SIDES: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

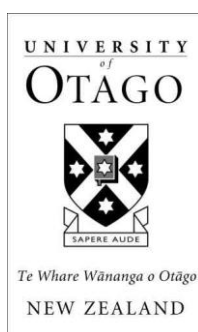
1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. Personal identifying information e.g. video-tapes / audio-tapes etc. will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years;
4. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes questions related to English language practices in higher education and critical pedagogy. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops and that in the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind.
5. I am free to withdraw from the project should I anticipate any form of discomfort or risks
6. No remuneration, compensation issues, or any external funding, shall be provided and there shall be no commercial use of the data
7. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand) and every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity
8. I will remain anonymous in any publications arising from this project and I will check for factual accuracy of how my personal data has been represented

I agree to take part in this project.

Name :

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Date)



Appendix B: Publication arising from this thesis

Journal of Transformative Education

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Transforming Teaching and Learning in ELT Through Critical Pedagogy: An International Study

Joanna Joseph Jeyaraj and Tony Harland

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Transforming Teaching and Learning in ELT Through Critical Pedagogy: An International Study

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Joanna Joseph Jeyaraj¹ and Tony Harland¹

Abstract

In this study, the voices of academics who use critical pedagogy in English language teaching have been brought together to shed light on how this practice transforms teaching and learning. Data were collected through semistructured interviews with academics from Canada, Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States, and Turkey. Teachers were exposed to considerable emotional upheaval and sometimes risk as they sought to change student worldviews, and student transformation was evident both inside and outside the academy. Students learned their new language through ideas that truly mattered to them instead of learning through neutral knowledge contexts. We conclude that critical pedagogy requires a balance between critical reflection and action as teachers learn to cope with the unexpected in their classrooms. It is suggested that teachers follow up students after graduation in order to determine the long-term impact of critical pedagogy on teaching and learning.

Keywords

transformation, transformative pedagogy, social change

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Critical pedagogy is based on the premise education can make the world a better place. It is dedicated towards alleviating human suffering by situating disciplinary learning in the social contexts in which students and teachers find themselves (Kincheloe, 2008). In particular, it is concerned with discrimination and oppression (Freire, 1972). Critical pedagogy allows for the social, economic, political, and religious contradictions experienced in everyday life to be interrogated and urges for improvements in society. When one strives to improve the future in such a provocative way, the present is inevitably disturbed. In teaching, critical pedagogy also disturbs by using problem-posing techniques in which students question received knowledge. It thus encourages them to be creators and not just consumers of knowledge. In these contexts, transformations take place as old assumptions, values, and feelings give way to new ways of knowing, seeing, and being in the world.

Drawing from the literature on transformative learning theory, *transformation* refers to a deep shift in perspective, which causes habits of mind to be more open, penetrable, and better justified (Cranton, 2011). However, when critical pedagogy comes into play, transformation is not just limited to altered worldviews and perceptions because actions are also changed (Mayo, 2004). Critical pedagogy distinguishes itself from most other pedagogies because it enables students to act upon and use their knowledge for self and social transformation (Wink, 2000). This social objective suggests critical pedagogy transformation is unlikely to end in the classroom but will impact on the wider community. For this to happen, the theoretical domain has to constantly interact with the lived domain, so that both scholarship and transformative action are enhanced (Kincheloe, 2008).

Critical pedagogy has proved to be highly contentious in higher education (Crookes, 2010; Ellsworth, 1989; Luke, 2004). Although one of the knowledge functions of the university is to serve as critic and conscience of society (Peters & Roberts, 2000), Giroux (2010) has observed that institutions around the world are in crisis because they have abandoned their democratic function dedicated to providing a public service and addressing social problems in society. Although universities are said to stand on three fundamental pillars of teaching, research, and service, a large number of institutions lean more to the first two functions (Gourley, 2012). Giroux's "crisis" manifests itself in higher education business models and an audit and accounting regulatory culture (Walker, 2006). These changes have been attributed to neoliberal ideals that shift academic life towards the authority of market forces (Harland, Tidswell, Everett, Hale, & Pickering, 2010) and focus more on the individual as a competitive actor in an economic world (Servage, 2009). Hence, neoliberalism finds itself confronting a rival ideology in critical pedagogy. Freire (1972) asks teachers and students to empower themselves for social change in a way that challenges the reforms advocated through neoliberalism.

Although it may appear that neoliberal ideals dominate higher education as teaching and learning shifts towards student self-interest and economic gain, there are still institutions and programmes in various parts of the world that continue to champion

alternative values. This phenomenon has been described as “pockets of resistance” (Harland & Pickering, 2011) that oppose the changes brought in by reform through focusing on teaching for intellectual self-empowerment and addressing societal needs. Such pockets of resistance can be found in English language teaching (ELT) in higher education across the world, and a small but significant number of educators have made conscious efforts to adopt critical pedagogy in teaching and make their work known through their research and publication. Critical ELT teachers use complex societal problems as a vehicle for learning the language in contrast to the traditional ELT teachers who typically select content for its neutrality. It is these people with whom the present research is concerned, as they provide an example of the possibilities of critical pedagogy within a subject that is not normally associated with transformation and social change. Interest in the practical implications of critical pedagogy has surfaced only recently and most discussion has been limited to theoretical exploration (Akbari, 2008). In addition, theory has been focused on possible student engagement with critical issues, but not about the teachers who actually facilitate learning (Bell, Washington, Weinstein, & Love, 2003). This study provides a significant space for language teachers engaged in critical pedagogy, as they reflect on the transformational nature of their practices.

Method

In 2012, 13 academics working in ELT in higher education were interviewed about their experiences of critical pedagogies. Nine participants were identified from their published research on ELT and critical pedagogy and the others through personal referrals. These teachers worked in institutions in Canada, Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States, and Turkey, but their teaching experiences extended to countries such as Nepal, Indonesia, Macedonia, Poland, and Hungary. Academics were asked to explore how adopting critical pedagogy had transformed their personal and professional lives and what changes they had noticed in their students. Interviews lasted up to an hour and were transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed using a general inductive approach that focused on research findings from frequent, dominant, or significant themes from the raw data (Thomas, 2006). This thematic analysis involved examining commonality in the data, differences or distinctive features across the data set, and relationships between the various elements in the analysis (Gibson & Brown, 2009). Analysis began with the preparation of raw data files that were formatted, page numbered, and printed to ease with the referencing process. Then, all forms of data were closely read in order to gain familiarity with relevant content. The next step involved the creation of themes. These were identified from the research aims and also from actual phrases or meanings in specific text segments. The final stage involved continuous revision and refinement of themes. Quotes use pseudonyms and country, and educational systems are described where appropriate. The results are presented in two sections: first, the impact on teachers and then the student experience.

Results and Discussion

Impact on Teachers

Academics who adopted critical pedagogy faced numerous unpredictable and unexpected moments. These uncertainties impacted their lives at both a personal and a professional level. The main ideas that emerged were concerned with emotional upheaval, safety, and isolation and critical reflection.

Emotional upheaval. Becoming a critical pedagogue invoked a range of contrasting emotions and intense feelings. Martin initially experienced mild panic attacks because he liked to be fully prepared on every topic before entering the classroom. However, in a more participative classroom based on dialogue, this was impossible. Such insecurities have been recognized by Shor (1987) who comments: “Dialogic classes are creative and unpredictable, invented in-progress, making some teachers worry that they might make mistakes in class and lose control or respect” (p. 53). Martin learned to rise above these feelings and a transformational point came when he accepted that he did not have to be the knowledge expert and it was perfectly fine to have conversations flowing in directions that he might not be able to control.

In contrast, Laura described how getting acquainted with critical pedagogy gave her added confidence as a teacher. She was, in every sense, practicing the basic principles of critical pedagogy but had yet to discover a name or a theory for what she was doing. Laura expresses her transformation in this way:

... in the early days, I was very tentative about who am I, ... I was always political, ... But I wasn't quite sure how other people viewed me or anything so I think the transformation for me has been more one of developing confidence and seeing that there were people already out there theorising about it.

(Laura, Canada)

What she needed was reinforcement that what she was doing felt legitimate and that she was not alone in her efforts. Knowing that there were others in the field made her feel less alienated and isolated in the ELT community. Fear was also recognized and teachers attracted to critical pedagogy may be worried about possible repercussions (Shor, 1987). They may believe that education should be liberating but at the same time are afraid because they do not want to stand out as radicals or as people who “rock the boat.” There is no assurance of only “pleasant” or “positive” emotions and so teachers considering critical pedagogy will have to decide for themselves if they want to accept the likelihood of some emotional upheaval.

Safety and isolation. Critical pedagogy can bring with it a high degree of personal risk in educational settings where the politics of that society are repressive and freedom of speech is curtailed. In this study, only two of the eight countries seemed to clearly

fall in this category. The participants from the six more liberal settings all felt they had the freedom to talk about controversial issues in the classroom without worrying about jeopardising their personal safety. In contrast, Mary understood her practice as one of daily risk from authorities outside of the university:

... when I start ... dealing with such issues, I'm also taking a big risk. Because there are students from different backgrounds. Like there are students from military backgrounds ... The father is a policeman, for example or very religious students ...

(Mary, Turkey)

Mary's passion for social change is reflected in the degree of risk that she has been willing to take. She recognized barriers ahead of her and even described an air of secretiveness when discussing the details of her critical pedagogy project with her colleagues and course coordinator. Mary knew that the moment there was student resistance, she would be placed in a dangerous position. Yet she continued to discuss radical issues with her students and published her critical pedagogy action research project in an international journal. Mary's story reveals that her personal safety was at stake because of the controversial discussions in the classroom. In some societies, asking critical questions can lead to torture or death, and in certain institutions, raising awkward questions gives one a reputation of a subversive troublemaker who refuses to play by the rules (Brookfield, 1995).

A second example of a teacher who commented about risk was Jack from the United States. He related the situation in his home country, Indonesia, when the reign of a powerful leader had come to an end:

To criticise the government openly is very dangerous and very risky. You may be imprisoned ... when Suharto stepped down from power, the euphoria of speaking openly has been quite persuasive and this is something that I would like to avoid actually. To some extent, I jumped onto the euphoria bandwagon. I didn't want to be opportunistic in the sense that, ah ok people are now talking openly about or criticizing or lambasting the government very openly, so I can just use Critical Pedagogy for my own purposes. I didn't want to be, in that sense. I just wanted to make use of the opportunity in Indonesia where there is some openness about dissenting voices, about not having to conform with the government's voice all the time.

(Jack, United States)

Jack mentioned not wanting to be "opportunistic" and jumping on the bandwagon of openly speaking out against the government. Yet at the same time, he wanted to exercise the greater freedoms people in his country had gained. Jack's narrative revealed an inner struggle, as he dealt with managing the changing political scene. However, it was clear that his practice in the classroom was not separated from the economic and political conditions that shaped his work.

Of course, safety and risk are relative concepts, and it is doubtful whether all teachers would understand these in the same way. However, the efforts of these ELT teachers were examples of pockets of resistance that challenged typical university practices, in terms of teaching techniques, and aims for student learning and values (Harland & Pickering, 2011). This study showed that ELT critical pedagogues provided a different voice within their discipline and their institution. In this context, practice was partly about making a political statement because teachers chose to discuss issues that were largely counter to prevailing ideology in order to challenge dominant power structures in society.

Critical reflective practice. Critical reflection and action was important for teachers and it has been argued that transformational learning occurs when there is a deep shift in perspective and noticeable change in actions (Cranton, 2011). Teachers' new ideas and fresh conceptions about the world came from reevaluating deep-rooted assumptions and beliefs. Learning from critical reflection allowed them to gain greater insight into the way they taught and new insights were seen to empower them as changed practitioners. Mary reflects on bringing the subject of conditioning into her classroom: "... I also realise that I probably am conditioned in different perspectives as well... the more we share, the more I learn and the more they learn." Her observation also reinforces Freire's idea that within critical pedagogy learning is a two-way process (Freire, 1972). However, teachers' experiences also depended on their openness to reassessing beliefs and values (Taylor, 2008). There were many stories about how engaging with critical pedagogy enabled study participants to become more thoughtful about practice. Lisa sees critical reflection as a direct outcome of critical pedagogy:

... it helps me get to know my students more which I think always makes me a better teacher and I think it helps me reflect on my classroom more because when you do critical pedagogy, you have to be super reflective.

(Lisa, United States)

Lisa also gives examples of how new perspectives allowed her to relate to her students and describes herself as being more forgiving and empathetic. Students' opinions mattered and she learned that their way of experiencing the world was as valid as hers. Like Lisa, Steven had also thought carefully about teaching, but his concern focused more on the ideological limits of critical pedagogy:

The more I learn about critical pedagogy, the more I'm motivated. I also become a little critical about how critical pedagogy itself can be used because anything can be misused.

(Steven, United States)

For Jack, the outcome of critical reflection was not easy and the journey of transformation was described as "painful" and "not always preferable." Jack recounted

how he became more conscious about his teaching practices and realized that at times, his expectations of his students could be oppressive. Brookfield (1995) noted that it can sometimes be humiliating, and at the same time humbling, when teachers realize that their teaching actions have been grounded in unchecked assumptions that turn out to be oppressive. Perhaps this is why Jack found his transformation a struggle. At the same time, his experience eventually provided him with a sense of empowerment. Critical empowerment can occur when teachers consciously reflect on the decisions they make in the classroom (Kanpol, 1994).

It has been suggested that if ELT practitioners want to be change agents, they should not only engage in reflection but research their teaching practice (Sung, 2012). Ten of the participants in this study had published research about their experiences and this required the rigour of systematic enquiry and high levels of reflective and critical thinking.

Impact on Students

Academics who utilized critical pedagogies in their teaching had many opportunities to create transformative experiences for their students. In fact, transformation, as a deep shift in perspective (Cranton, 2011), was seen as an essential outcome and measure of success. All those interviewed told stories about student transformation and those who evaluated their courses also had written evidence for the effectiveness of change. Three significant contexts in relation to student transformation emerged, namely student worldviews, students' lives outside the academy, and learning the English language.

Students' worldviews. Conscious steps were taken to offer students an alternate way of viewing the world using a variety of teaching approaches. Teachers refused to play the role of "classroom technicians" (Pennycook, 1990) who reduced language learning to a system of transmitting messages, while ignoring the social, cultural, political, and historical context and implications of language learning. By not solely teaching English as a communicative tool or a transactional language, teachers directly opposed dominant ideologies. Evidence for this came through classroom discussions and student feedback. Steven reported a student's comment:

... I don't want to learn about the poverty and the terrorism and the economic crisis and the suffering of women in Chinese factories ... I want to be comfortable. It's none of my business. But at the end, they said, oh my God, it feels good to know, it feels good to say that I am part of a larger world ...

(Steven, United States)

This student's comfort zone was disturbed, and the harsh realities of the world were presented instead. As a result, values were changed and the student saw the world in a different, more inclusive way. Critical pedagogy presupposes a notion of a more

equal and just future (Freire, 1972), deliberately functions to provoke students to go beyond the world they know and feel comfortable in, and expands their understanding of a range of possibilities (Giroux, 2011). The transformation of students' worldviews was not something that happened quickly because it involved changing deeply ingrained attitudes and beliefs. Katherine recounts how one student found the process challenging:

She burst out crying and she was very, hostile, at the start. . . . and then as she got into it, she realised the transformation; because popular education methodology which is a Venezuelan way of doing critical pedagogy, is very much about getting people to experience the pain. You almost have to experience the pain of your situation and then start wanting to change it.

(Katherine, United Kingdom)

The theory of transformative learning suggests that sometimes, when underlying thoughts and assumptions are challenged, feelings such as discomfort, disorientation, and grief may arise (Moore, 2005). While the consequence of changing one's worldview is frequently represented as positive, the experiences that cause these transformations are often troubling (Taylor, 1997). For this reason, it was expected that there would be many reports of negative responses from students, but none of the teachers in the study found this to be true. This outcome might be partly explained through a tendency for students to suppress emotions publicly, simply because a considerable amount of emotional upheaval is difficult to deal with in a classroom (Moore, 2005).

Students' lives outside the academy. Teachers valued the changes in the affective domain and the actions of their students. More specifically, change impacted the lives of those suffering and affected by discrimination (Kincheloe, 2008). Most of the participants recounted how their students gained a sense of agency and eventually went on to improve their own lives and advocated for what they believed in. Leonard recalled his students' involvement in the Arab Spring. In his language classroom, they experienced new meanings related to freedom and democracy:

. . . a lot of the material at (Leonard's institution) lends itself to things like nationality, religion, culture, race and that can be put across into politics and government policy . . . and then they go home to Libya and Colonel Gaddafi.

(Leonard, Malaysia)

Leonard reported that students discussed the oppression they were experiencing in their respective countries and could see different possibilities ahead of them. He based his teaching on problematizing the lived experiences of students, which enabled them to connect with the situations that they came from. From this, they learned that people have the power to bring about change in society. He was not what

Giroux termed a “model of moral indifference” (Giroux, 2009) and he incorporated a problem-posing teaching approach that used words, experiences, and situations that students could understand as they dealt with issues of concern to them (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003; Freire, 1972).

Transformation did not end with personal change since there were reports of students making conscious efforts to change others. Laura provided examples of how her students had gone beyond the confines of their classroom to seek transformational possibilities in their communities. She talked of one student who attempted to change attitudes among family and friends in China about homosexuality and capital punishment. Laura used the metaphor of the “Philosopher’s Tea House” to describe her class where individuals gather as equals to discuss critical issues and this inspired her student:

... she wanted to go back to China and she wanted to start a tea house and she wanted to run it by herself and she wanted to run it along the lines of my classroom and she said she wanted to have a topic every time, every day and, a topic that people could argue about and discuss and talk about, a controversial topic ...

(Laura, Canada)

The transformations described so far may appear small and insignificant, but Freire, in a conversation with Ira Shor, put this idea in perspective. Freire in no way tries to idealize the educational task of critical pedagogy and reminds teachers that their activities as educators are not sufficient enough in themselves to change the world (Shor, 1987). But he argues that it is necessary for teachers to realise that in their respective teaching spaces, they are capable of making a contribution (Shor, 1987). The response of one participant perhaps best sums up the possibilities for the change: “It’s not big revolution but it’s big transformation” (Katherine, United Kingdom).

Students’ language learning. Critical pedagogy took place within the context of learning a language. Language improvement and the development of linguistic knowledge are the main goals of students in the ELT classroom, and English language acquisition is highly sought after. In the critical pedagogies ELT classroom, language development occurred in a slightly different way. In general, teachers believed that language development was independent of the critical issues in the lesson, and the reason for improvement was mainly because students were given opportunities to practice speaking. One participant explained that discussing any topic or issue can lead to language development, for instance, commonly found topics in ELT courses are “holidays,” “daily lifestyles,” and the “environment.” However, topics such as “prejudice” or “linguistic imperialism” led to a different type of language improvement because such critical issues carried more value, interest, and significance for students:

... when things like this come up, they're focusing more on what they're saying as opposed to how they're saying it. However, this is not a bad thing because ... they speak from the heart and so their language actually does get better. Because students are not merely repeating structures out of a book, language becomes more natural, and this is where language transformation takes place.

(Leonard, Malaysia)

Katherine employed a "shared reading method" with her students who came from disadvantaged backgrounds and focused on their stories instead of a textbook. Her approach resembles that of Wink (2000) who proposes that learning has to be about making meaning together with joint ownership of the learning experience. Learning was certainly not about transmitting ideas to students and data suggested that language learning was less demanding when ideas presented were meaningful for the student.

Conclusion

The stories participants shared provided insight into the complexities of implementing critical pedagogy. The choice to adopt such an ideological position set the teachers on a path that required dealing with a number of new experiences that forced them to rethink their subject, teaching, and values. Teaching became much more unpredictable and carried a certain amount of risk that teachers had to learn to handle. Managing risk required thoughtful practice, so that the transformation experienced could be understood in a measured way rather than a radical change. Adopting critical pedagogy was clearly a complex transaction that required a great deal of tolerance of uncertainty from both teachers and students. Transformation seemed to be dependent on the amount of freedom the teacher had in their respective institution and country, as well as the amount of risk they were willing to take.

Ten of the teachers had published their work on critical pedagogy which helped them to understand and develop the change to their practices. The consequence of doing this was gaining access to a new community of researchers which reduced feelings of isolation that some experienced in their journey as transformative educators. Involvement in research of this nature also contributes to the traditional knowledge function of the university as critic and conscience of society (Giroux, 2010).

The concept of praxis, which lies at the heart of Freire's idea of critical literacy, was at work when students were able to reflect and take action. Mayo (2004) explains: "An education based on 'praxis' is one that allows people to act on their material surroundings and reflect upon them with a view of transforming them" (p. 45). Teachers reported that students' worldviews were transformed, which then went on to change the way they participated in the world and acted for social justice. Thus, the transformation that teachers and students experienced went beyond the confines of the classroom.

Students learned language that truly mattered to them and not just language for a future career. Learning was more authentic and humanistic instead of something

commodified. Teaching and learning did not serve current neoliberal ideals because critical pedagogy inevitably rejects such values. This rejection in no way suggested that students were encouraged to abandon academic pursuits for activism. In fact, critical pedagogy is as much about cultivating the intellect as it is about social change (Kincheloe, 2008). Therefore, critical ELT practices enabled students to gain linguistic competence and engage with a rigorous body of knowledge.

This study has several implications for ELT practice and the theory of critical pedagogy. First, teachers are powerful agents of influence and change. They need to be thoughtful about how both critical reflection and action bring forth transformation and ensure that one is not sacrificed for the other. Freire (1972) points out the dangers of reflection without action as mere “verbalism” or idle chatter. On the other hand, action without critical reflection can result in activism or action for action’s sake (Freire, 1972). Therefore, teachers have to be especially mindful in striking the right balance in the classroom. Second, it was clear that teachers have to be prepared to face the unexpected because of the uncertainties that arise from working with critical pedagogy. They may experience a considerable amount of emotional upheaval and risk related to the amount of academic and personal freedom allowed. The data suggested that critical pedagogy could never be something prescribed by theorists as a method that could be carried out by following a series of steps. Wink (2000) explains that the teachers’ voice must be as strong as the theorists’ voice in critical pedagogy, because it is always easier to state a theoretical concept than it is to live it in the classroom. Teachers are therefore encouraged to research their own practice and to share their work and make it public as they develop personal theories of critical pedagogy.

Finally, ELT teachers are encouraged to determine the long-term impact that critical pedagogy has on their students. For example, what happens when a student’s country is not ready for a “Philosopher’s Teahouse?” Those who took part in the study tended to lose contact with students after graduation and a further step of staying in contact with students may be required. Such communication would provide insight into the lasting impact of the student experience and also inform the practice and values of critical pedagogy. It would also be interesting to see how society and institutions would react to a hypothetical situation in which all ELT teachers became critical pedagogues, especially in countries where certain freedoms cannot be taken for granted. Or does critical pedagogy’s survival depend on it being a minority activity?

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