A Plea for the Introduction of Critical Pedagogy
in Pakistani Classrooms

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Abstract

Critical pedagogy (CP) in the context of Pakistan is of central significance, for it is a behavior which links classroom teaching to broader socio-cultural context. It helps develop critical consciousness in students through education. Critical consciousness is required to resist oppression against commonly approved dogmatic beliefs prevailed in a society. Though there are schools and education systems which have a reasonable understanding of critical pedagogy, and they practice it too, its fuller realization and broader application is a goal yet to be achieved. In this study, the researchers use the framework of Paulo Freire for the discussion of critical pedagogy and its proposed application in the Pakistani context. The researchers have observed ten second language teachers for almost six months in various parts of Pakistan to learn about their teaching praxis. The results have disclosed that the critical pedagogy, despite being a potential approach, is considerably insufficiently investigated or practiced in Pakistan. Therefore, the researchers intend to investigate the power-oriented structures embedded in the sociopolitical situation of Pakistan and their possible effects on and relations with pedagogic conditions in Pakistan. In this way, the researchers aim at working out guidelines/suggestions to foreground CP in the language classrooms of Pakistan and give it a wider application.

Keywords: Critical pedagogy, Pakistan, English, language, teaching, critical thinking

Introduction

The supporters of critical pedagogy contend that in education generally and in language education particularly literacy is required to be in a continual collaboration with the social, political, cultural and economic realities of life. Not only is literacy in language education influenced by the social structures, but it also plays a role in resisting and, in time, reforming the status quo (Kincheloe, 2008; Moreno-Lopez, 2005). These supporters further maintain that literacy programs including language education are never neutral or value-free; rather, they focus on producing the citizens who tend to ratify the power structure of a society (Shor, 1999).

Critical pedagogy is usually associated with the Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire. Building upon the ideologies and the critical theories of the Frankfurt School, Freire laid down the broad contours of critical pedagogy and effectively theorized its details. Among its leading figures include Henry Giroux (1989), Joe L. Kincheloe (2008), Michael Apple (2004), and Peter McLaren (2015).

Critical pedagogy, in fact, is not a single theory; rather, it is an assortment of potential educational rejoinders to social structures and relations that are repressive, unequal and silencing. The word *critical* in the approach denotes the ability of people to scrutinize, interpret, uncover and challenge the concealed sociocultural and political procedures that are a part of knowledge production and consumption (Christensen & Aldrige, 2013). It also denotes to go beneath the surface meanings, received opinions, prevalent myths, officially patronized stereotypes and so-called first impressions.

One important goal of education, at least in principle, in Pakistan is to prepare young people for their role as citizens and, for this purpose, the state has introduced what is called *citizenship education* and such subjects as *Pakistan Studies, Ethics, Social Studies and Civics*. But, unfortunately, every political transition has resulted in the formation of new educations policy which charted out new directions for citizenship education "aimed at ensuring dissemination of the ideology of the government in power and their political system" (Kennedy, Lee, & Grossman, 2012, p. 129). Down the years, heavy reliance has been placed on the transmission orientation with the hope to achieve the objectives of citizenship education but, as regards critical pedagogy, there is still very little either in the policy documents or in the actual classrooms. True, citizenship education enables students achieve a critical awareness of their role in the society but a considerable part of it is recognizably ideological and nationalistic in the Pakistani context.

Review of the literature

Critical pedagogy talks about social justice and social change through education and it believes that educational systems are, indeed, expressions of societal systems within which they operate and they can also change if concerted efforts are made. Since most of our social systems have value-laden agendas and ideological schemes, it is but expected that the same biases, official pronouncements and handed down clichés will be presented to students through curricula, teaching practices and assessment procedures (Giroux, 1983).

Dominant groups and social actors take policy decisions and these are their preferences which then get implemented in the society, and one of the most effective ways for this implementation is the education system. This is how the privileged discourses and narratives are 'naturalized' in the social cognition, and ideologies are created and then perpetuated.

Contrarily, those on the margins, are suppressed and routinely silenced. Education is manipulated as a tool to further the political programs and ideological positions;

whereas this approach is geared towards the creation of a just social order in which people take control of their political, economic and cultural destinies. It can only happen if the oppressed and the marginalized are emancipated and empowered in such a way that they are able to transform the conditions of their lives according to their own free will.

Critical pedagogy seeks to relate the classroom context to a wider societal context so that "what happens in the classroom should end up making a difference outside the classroom" (Baynham, 2006, p. 28). In the context of second language teaching, it is "about connecting the word with the world. It is about recognizing language as ideology, not just system; it is about extending the educational space to the social, cultural, and political dynamics of language use" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 70).

Therefore, the academic position occupied by language teaching in Pakistan should function in tandem with the sociological sphere which, after a 10-year military rule of General Pervez Musharraf, is now a site of emerging democratic traditions. This is one of the most viable ways of conceptualizing English language teaching from the perspective of not only language ideologies but also cultural pedagogies. Moreover, specifically in Pakistan, recognizing language as ideology is important as it will help better appreciate how a range of cultural praxis can be enacted in the classrooms and how, in turn, they can influence the pedagogical practices. In this way, linguistic literacies can be more effectively achieved along with a global cultural awareness.

Freire (1973) passionately says that learners should be saved from being mere objects of education, and should be converted into subjects of their learning, autonomy and emancipation. In this way, they will, in time, be able to act in a transformative way. He advises teachers to manipulate the techniques of problem posing, solving and questioning while discussing problematic issues pertaining to the lives of the students in class. It "reaffirms human beings as subjects" (Roberts, 2002, p. 55) and help them think critically about the issue in hand and how to develop critical consciousness. Thus this approach not only contests some of the most visible forms of dominance, it is also an educational response to rampant inequity and social deprivation (Kessing-Styles, 2003).

Freire (1973) has elaborated three stages of consciousness development with reference to critical pedagogy. The first stage is known as *semi-intransitive consciousness* which is characterized by a limited worldview. It is usually based on survival issues and is generally indifferent to other challenges except for one's own immediate biological needs. The second stage is known as *naïve transitivity* which is characterized by oversimplification of the problems, practicing of polemics instead of dialogues, and displaying insufficient interest in diverse factors. Freire (1973) says that it is almost impossible to relieve oneself of this stage completely and, therefore, one should be doubly aware of its perils. The third and the last stage is *critical transitivity* which requires learners' in-depth analysis of situations, analytical rigor, insightfulness of understanding and an evasion of diatribes.

The advocates of the critical perspective in language teaching, which is also a central educational praxis in communicative language teaching and which is in tandem

with critical pedagogy, also believe that most of the classrooms set up a monolithic discourse where educational programs are either bottom–up or top-down (Shor, 1999).

This monolithic discourse, in fact, puts the students in only one so-called legitimate situation in which knowledge is always transmitted from teachers who act as experts to students who act as recipients.

Hence, it prevents learners from acquiring critical consciousness, and hinders them from actually taking part in the real world affairs with their original thoughts and critical ideas (Freire, 2005). On the contrary, this encourages submission and a culture of silence which effectively excludes students' real life experiences and voices (Alford, 2001; Freire & Macedo, 2003; Monchinski, 2008).

Likewise, second language teaching, learning and learning theory ought to emphasize larger socio-historical and political aspects of students' lives because these aspects are part and parcel of people's identities and cultural characters (Hall, 1995). Nevertheless, it has been observed (not the least so in Pakistan) that second language classrooms are far removed from such sociocultural pragmatics of learning (Okazaki, 2005). On the pedagogic highway, there seems to run only one-way traffic of knowledge sharing, i.e., from teachers to students.

A similar culture can be observed in the classrooms which fails to "make central the most fundamental pedagogical questions regarding student empowerment" (Pennycook, 1990, p. 304). Instead of supporting students to cultivate critical thinking skills and an active sense of agency (Shor, 1992, 1996; Asghar & Shahzad, 2015), numerous ELT practitioners keep focusing on formal linguistic, cognitive and asocial aspects of language learning (Crookes & Lehner, 1998).

As a result, the emphasis is usually put on the mental processes required to acquire English as a foreign/second language through such techniques such as cramming, reproducing and drilling. However, it by no means implies that all the ELT settings are plagued with this kind of pedagogic uncriticality. We do have certain well-documented cases/examples (even in Pakistan) wherein critical thinking and pragmatic teaching and autonomy learning are encouraged and practiced in order to inculcate sociocultural and political consciousness among students (Benesch, 2009; Crookes, 2010; Ghahremani-Ghajar & Mirhosseini, 2005; Morgan, 2004; Norton & Vanderheyden, 2004; Perveen, 2015; Wachob, 2009). However, despite all such efforts, an optimum realization of the principles and ideals of critical pedagogy with a clearly emancipatory and transformative agenda in sight, is yet to be achieved in most of the classrooms (Crookes & Lehner, 1998; Pennycook, 1990), especially in Pakistan.

Analyzing the context of two of the Pakistani Universities
In a democratic country like Pakistan where language education is supposed to be framed as a powerful equalizing force, critical pedagogy is of utmost value. It can inculcate critical consciousness in students and promote the habit of questioning about themselves and, instead of encouraging a culture of silence, it can help them take control of their

lives. It can also guide the students as to how to transform the relations of power in order to dismantle the oppressive social apparatus. (Kincheloe, 2008; Parveen 2015). Moreover, it has the potential to empower the students to discern various disparities and underlying power relations in such a way as to do something to alleviate them wherever possible.

When Pakistan came into existence on 14 August 1947, there was only one institution of higher learning, the Punjab University and about 40 colleges spread all over the country. The same year the government established the University Grants Commission (UGC) − a statutory body charged with determination, coordination and maintenance of standards of higher education. The same year, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan stated while addressing a National Education Conference attended by high-profile policy makers and academicians:

> [The] importance of education and the type of education cannot be over-emphasized ... There is no doubt that the future of our State [of Pakistan] will and must greatly depend upon the type of education we give to our children, and the way in which we bring them up as future citizens of Pakistan.... We should not forget that we have to compete with the world which is moving very fast in this direction (Bengali, 1999, pp. 1-2).

Jinnah's vision was enshrined in policy documents, reports, guidelines and official statements. The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training is a federal and the highest-mandated educational ministry of the Government of Pakistan. Its *Vision* reads as follows:

> Developing Pakistan as a progressive and prosperous country by providing equal opportunities to all citizens enabling them to acquire knowledge through Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education including Technical and Professional training; creating a knowledge society leading to knowledge economy (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, n.d.).

And its Mission Statement reads as follows:

> Endeavour to create conducive environment for teaching-learning and to promote affordable quality education, in all academic disciplines to ensure holistic growth and sustainable socio-economic development of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, n.d.).

Notwithstanding what Jinnah said or what was laid down in the policy documents, the state of education in Pakistan is far from being satisfactory. The situation gets more discouraging when it comes to the possibility of raising critical consciousness through

education. A considerable number of private educational institutions and some leading public sector institutes do practice some of the basic principles of critical pedagogy. However, the teachers, more often than not, act as an authority and the final court of appeal. The role of the students most of the time remains that of passive listeners as lecturing is still one of the most widely used teaching techniques. Similarly it is rare for the teachers to ask their students to relate their classroom knowledge with the larger social and power structures.

With reference to ELT in Pakistan, there are two mainstream education sectors: public and private. With one of the lowest literacy rates in the world, Pakistan faces huge challenges in the field of education. Though the government launched a countrywide initiative in 1998 with the purpose of eradicating illiteracy and providing a basic education to all the children, explosive population growth continues to hinder educational development in the country. It is pertinent to mention here that the language classrooms are mostly traditional where the second language teachers are considered the repositories of semantic and grammatical knowledge. Mostly this knowledge is handed down to the students piecemeal. Similarly, in most of the cases critical questioning and peer learning is not very much encouraged especially in the public sector institutes.

Lastly, the working conditions faced by the teachers also have adverse effects on the classroom practices and, in turn, force the teachers to resort to a perfunctory and uncritical pedagogy. The teachers usually remain overburdened and logistically underequipped. "Rush! You have to complete the course" (as it is often phrased in the Pakistani English) is what an average university teacher in Pakistan has as his/her main worry. An average university teacher in Pakistan has a workload of nine to twelve credit hours a week and they are required to teach for about twenty two weeks a semester. Besides, most of the universities are teaching universities. Even those universities which have been founded as research universities usually burden the teachers in a similar way.

In order to investigate these considerations and explore their implications the researchers selected two renowned universities: the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad and the University of Gujrat (UoG).

The NUML is a flagship institute and the only language university in Pakistan which is known for its innovative and communicative language teaching (Shahzad, 2011). The researchers have selected two levels to conduct their study: the BS (Honors) in English and Masters in English. The BS (Honors) is a four-year program after the intermediate level whereas the Masters in English is a two year program after the bachelor level. The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) has recognized both the programs as undergraduate courses comprising sixteen year education. Therefore, both the programs are equivalent in terms of academic standing.

Similarly, the University of Gujrat is one of the newly established major public sector universities in the Punjab, the largest province of Pakistan. The university was established under the act of provincial assembly to cater for the needs of higher

education. The UoG, though offering the BS (Honors) in English, does not have Masters in English program.

Research Methodology

The researchers have used qualitative form of inquiry for the study. They have employed observation technique as a main research method, for it helps to answer the "what" and the "how" of the study (Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge, 2001, p. 38). The classroom observation gave the researchers not only the first-hand insights into the pedagogic workings, but also enabled them to conceptualize as well as problematize their research questions in a broader and more inclusive way. For this purpose, a considerably elaborate observation sheet was designed and pilot tested with the help of some of the senior colleagues. This was done to enhance and ensure the validity and meaningfulness of the observation process. This observation sheet has been attached in appendix.

Research Setting

The researchers have conducted their study at two renowned Pakistani universities and at their regional campuses: the NUML and the UoG. The NUML has its main campus in Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan, and its regional campuses in six cities: Peshawar, Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Karachi and Hyderabad. Similarly, the UoG has its main campus at Gujrat, an important industrial city of the Punjab, and its regional campuses in two cities: Lahore and Sialkot. The permission of the authorities concerned was duly sought before visiting the classrooms. The researchers also had meetings with the English language teachers of these universities.

Research Participants

The researchers observed three ELT classes over a period of two weeks at the Departments of English at the NUML and the UoG (from September 2014 to June 2015). The total number of teachers whose classes were observed was ten. Three of them were from the NUML main campus and one each from the NUML regional campuses: Peshawar, Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Karachi, Hyderabad and the UoG, main campus. Each class comprised an average number of twenty seven students and had duration of sixty minutes.

Data Analysis

The researchers adopted a sufficiently elaborate data analysis procedure. The observation sheet was designed, pilot tested and administered to the participants. Since this observation sheet was non-structured, the data were mostly qualitative in nature. Therefore, the researchers decided to use the thematic analysis method for the data analysis. The thematic analysis method offered the researchers an important investigative strategy which assisted them to go through a wide-ranging reading of the data in order to determine themes and seek evolving patterns. To achieve and maintain analytic rigor, the researchers read and re-

read the data and the emerging patterns were then categorized into various groups and codes. They were again given multiple readings after some time and the categories were reduced to a manageable number in order to maintain the analytic focus.

The observation sheet had three major parts: classroom dynamics, students' behaviors, and teacher's activities. The researchers observed that most of the classes were overly formal; they started on time and finished on time. Quite often the students were found sitting in an inflexible way i.e. in multiple rows facing the teacher and the whiteboard. The classroom environment, though mostly favorable to learning, was at times less conducive due to the outside noises. The teachers usually came to class, greeted the students and started the lecture. An example of this in one of the classes at UoG is presented below:

> Students: (All rise as the teacher enters the classroom and greet in Urdu) Assalamualaikum Sir! ("Peace be upon you, Sir")!
>
> Teachers: Waalaikumassalam ("Peace be upon you too")! Please take your seats. How is everyone?
>
> Students: Fine, Sir.
>
> Teacher: Good. Today we will talk about the précis writing. (Glares at the students still talking and asks someone to be quiet, teacher begins writing on the whiteboard). (Personal observation, October 25, 2014).

In most of the cases it was observed that the agenda or the learning objectives were not made quite explicit. In quite a few cases it was also noted that knowledge was being transmitted uncritically from the teacher to the students. The contents were not usually discussed with a critical rigor, and whenever they were discussed the discussion was largely confined to purely academic and linguistic aspects. It was considerably rare that the classroom issues got related to the broader social structures in such a way that the students could establish a linkage between the formalized experience in the classroom and the lived experience outside of the classroom (Giroux, 1997). In this way, whereas, the teachers would tend to emphasize the 'what' part of pedagogy, the 'why' and the 'how' parts would usually get ignored. Moreover, the teachers are in fact discouraged to discuss the religious and political issues in the Pakistani language classrooms.

Second, the data also demonstrated that the teachers would give more importance to the content such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and syntax. Look at the following example which illustrates this issue:

> Teacher: You (students) must know that tenses are the foundation of language, arguably the most important part of language. You can't think of using language if you don't have thorough grounding in tenses (Personal observation, March 31, 2015).

This criterion of grammaticality, in fact, flouts the significance of the transforming experience required in fashioning meaning through language. Freire calls this practice

'sonority of words' which tends to contract the learning experience of the students and ground them only in the form of language and not in the actual meaning-construction process (1979, p. 70). Constructing meaning should be the ultimate task of any language teaching program as it brings the promise of transformative power of their learning experience. A substantial amount of research, in fact, indicates that people learn second/ foreign language best when the emphasis is given to the content in such a way that it is related to the socio-cultural norms of the society (Newmark & Reibel, 1968; McNamara, 1972).

Third, it was also observed that more often than not the teachers had a tendency to omit the socio-cultural foreign contents. This can hinder the growth of an inter-cultural imagination on the part of the students and confine them in their own cultural cocoons. A considerable number of teachers presented the rationale that as this material is too foreign, hence cannot be explained to the students. In one of the classes, the researchers observed, this is how the teacher explained away the phrase "college of cardinals": A college of cardinal is like "Majlis-ash-Shura". Now this explanation is deeply flawed as it discounts what is culturally foreign and seeks to force it into familiar patterns of domestic understanding and that too in a very crude manner. "Majlis-ash-Shura" is a politico-religious consultative body with legislative and executive powers. In this context what is not realized is that culturally foreign material offers an ideal opportunity to inculcate not only a new linguistic knowledge but also a keen sense of transcultural solidarity and appreciation. Omitting such material or explaining it crudely contradicts the principle of real life learning as the students are blinded to the actualities of the social experiences.

Fourth, the researchers observed that the teachers usually focused on essay writing and other such compositional topics as later they would assess the students on the basis of such questions. It was also noticed that a considerable number of essay topics were being recycled from semester to semester and quite a few of them happened to be what you may call clichéd or stereotypical e.g. *My First Day at the University, My Favorite Personality, Science—A Blessing or a Curse,* etc. One of the senior students commented on the situation:

> It's all too predictable...I mean...you know what they will ask you to write about. What? I mean what new they have? Perhaps nothing. Either it will be about your future plans, science vs. religion, importance of education...or, at best, some quotation. Even quotations are repeated (Personal communication, April 01, 2015).

Then there were other system-related issues as curricula, textbooks, teaching praxis and testing procedures. The testing procedures, for example, demand from the students to be able to reproduce what they have studied in the class and what is given in the textbooks. It is also not uncommon to come across the teachers who insist on rote learning and the students capable of this mostly get good grades. Therefore, going against the set procedures simply mean either low grades or outright failure in the exam. This is how the

learners are alienated and disempowered because the purpose of education for them is to reproduce the knowledge as they receive it from the teachers or the textbooks.

Fifth, the researchers observed that mostly there was little pair or group work in the classes. Only the pre-writing activities were done. The teacher did not quite often involve the learners in some interactive tasks which could encourage them to discuss social issues, present their worldviews logically, or listen to alternate viewpoints. The data, in fact, displayed that the teachers believed that the students are not proficient enough to discuss sociocultural issues. One of the teachers had this to say when asked why she did not involve the students in sociocultural discussions:

> I'll much prefer to do that but that's not possible. At least not in our institution. Or you can say in Pakistan. Such discussions require competence and proficiency which students don't have. So that would waste their time (Personal communication, March 20, 2015).

Therefore, the teachers consider themselves obliged to maintain their focus on just *language.* What is not realized is that language operates in a society and has its meanings in relation with the larger social structures.

Sixth, the data also showed that the teachers, in a large number of cases, did not make use of the audio-visual materials. Most widely used tool remained the whiteboard. Boredom, lack of motivation and innovation were also observed in quite a few cases. To the great surprise of the researchers, one of the teachers, when asked whether he makes use of the AVA, answered in Urdu: *"Yeh dramay bazi muj se nahi hotein"* (I can't perform this gimmickry!) (Personal communication, December 05, 2014). The teachers used questioning technique quite sparingly and, whenever this technique was used, a quick response was expected from the students and they were mostly not given sufficient time for critical thinking (Asghar & Butt 2018). The researchers also detected a communication gap — a dialogic distance — between the teachers and the students. Lack of linguistic proficiency on the part of the students may possibly be one reason for this.

Lastly, the researchers also found that most of the teachers were working in two shifts: the morning shift and the afternoon shift. This was mostly done in order to supplement the income and meet the financial challenges. This remains mostly at the cost of their intellectual and professional growth as they find very little time for research and reflection. This also seemed to prevent the teachers from checking and returning the student assignments in time. Lack of in-service training programs also creates significant technical problems with the methodology of the teacher i.e. even if they have the knowledge of the subject, they remain unable to actualize it in the classroom and relate it to the real life challenges.

Recommendations to Implement Critical Pedagogy in Pakistan
Taking the model of critical pedagogy as presented by Freire and the main points of the data analysis into consideration, the researchers recommend five steps which can go a

long way in introducing critical pedagogy in the Pakistani language classrooms. They include: describing the content of discussion, defining the problem, personalizing the problem, discussing the problem, and discussing the alternatives of the problem. These concepts can be realized by employing the following four techniques: *posing problems*, *dialogues*, *personal narratives* and *positionality*.

Problem-posing has been suggested, for it disturbs people whereas problem-solving comforts people (Freire, 1985; Wink, 2005). Problem posing is what Jean Anyon refers to as "power analysis" (Anyon as cited in Apple et al. 2009, p. 393). Problem posing takes students to play a more active role in the class. While teaching language, teachers and students are suggested to evaluate the causes and solutions of current challenges associated with socio-cultural background of the society. Anyon considers that teachers and students should be answering such questions as: *What is the problem itself? Who is affected by it? Who is making the decision? What formal and informal powers do they have? Whose interests are being served and whose interests are affected?* Exploring these questions and working out answers to them is directly in line with CP (p. 393).

The second technique which language teachers ought to adopt is to promote *critical dialogue* in classrooms between students and students, and between students and themselves (Cummins, 2001; Freire, p. 185). They can go on to have one extended session of dialogue or they may have numerous micro sessions of negotiations among themselves. The second language learners get to know each other and, this way, knowledge is acquired and identities are also negotiated. It is very important to have dialogue because it "creates and re-creates multiple understandings", and "changes us or our context" (Wink, 2005, p. 41). The dialogue technique assists students to interrogate the real world by leaving their own world and construct their knowledge and identify issues other than their truths. To Takacs, "We live much of our lives in our own heads, in a reconfirming dialogue with ourselves" (2002, p. 168). Engaging students in a critical dialogue is what enables them to question everything in the world, and hence to share knowledge and acquire a critical consciousness.

The third step is to enable the second language learners to think outside the box and to act innovatively. This can be accomplished with the help of *personal narratives* which can make learners go beyond the commonplace by narrating and discussing the personal subjective accounts (Jamil-Asghar, 2016). Indeed, the students have their personal narratives to share, and they should be encouraged to do so in writing and speaking. Furthermore, the SL teachers need to share these personal narratives and their own narratives in such a way that they could inter-relate all these narratives to the maximum possible extent. This assists to generate more stories and discussions, and enhances intimacy. These personal narratives are also known as "personal literacies" which teachers and students bring with them to the classrooms (Wink, 2005). These personal narratives function as a supplement to critical literacy, and are the mainstays of creating 'meaning' along with a comprehensible input (Cummins, 2001; Freire, 2005). Hence, the SL teachers can generate meaning coherently and logically by tapping into the

learners' personal narratives or literacies, permitting them to investigate and relate to one another in an empathic manner.

Moreover, personal narratives, as an important technique for critical pedagogy, not only help foster critical consciousness in students, but also lay the foundations for them to attain maximal cognitive engagement and identity stock. Therefore, to develop critical consciousness in SL students, teachers are required to first comprehend the students' personal literacies/narratives and become learners themselves and "identify with the students" (Nieto, 2002, p. 217). In other words, educational institutions need to become two-way "learning institutions", where teachers are also required to learn from their students (Cummins, 2001, p. 123). Once teachers and students have shared personal literacies, there is an opportunity of personal transformation to happen.

The fourth technique which the second language Pakistani teachers can employ besides narratives and dialogues is *positionality*. All the students have their positionality or sometimes multiple positionalities which are in tandem with their background experiences. Students, indeed, position themselves in relation to others in different ways such as: "dominant/subordinate, center/ marginal, empowered/powerless" in order to judge the world (Takacs 2002, p. 168). *Positionality* has been defined as "understanding where you stand with respect to power. From this understanding, we have a standpoint from which to challenge power and change ourselves" (p. 168). The SL teachers are usually well aware of their students' perspectives and ideas since they are also the part of the society where students come from. Therefore, if they contextualize their lives as well as their learners' lives into the second language teaching and learning experience, it will go against the "banking model of education" (Freire, 2000, pp. 71–86) and attend to the requirements of critical pedagogy. Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* maintains that the efforts of the teachers "must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization" (2000, p. 75).

Lastly, the efforts made by the teachers have to be impregnated with a firm conviction in in SL learners and their creative powers. In order to attain this objective, they have to be associates of the learners in their relationships with them. On the other hand, students, on their part, are required to come out of their positionalities and see the world from different perspectives in order to transform and align themselves with a critically different point of view. Once teachers form a kind of partnership with students, there positionalities are more likely to achieve harmony and critical engagement. Hence, teachers should be seen as *problem poser*s, and in the words of Giroux, *transformative intellectuals*, who not only have knowledge but also skills to evaluate and eliminate the existent inequities in society.

Furthermore, the SL teachers must strive against hegemonic dogmas and disparities in the classrooms, recognizing that any sort of struggle in any setting entails a presence of repressive forces (Au, 2009). Last but not least, they need to engage students in sociocultural discussions and further educate them about the use of social media: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc. This can help students make their contributions to

social networking, scrutinize the prevailing visualizations and examine the images/portrayals for prejudiced judgements. They can also disengage themselves from long-term conditionings born of several socializing discourses and the power relations essential to them.

Conclusion

Critical pedagogy indeed seeks to create a link between the word and the world. It is a pedagogy of the oppressed and decentered people; it aims at giving human beings dignity, voice and respect. In fact, it is the true spirit of a democratic country, and is need of the hour in Pakistan—a country with formidable challenges as well as tremendous potential—a country of 200 million people with a large middle class, one of the highest youth population, a vibrant media, an emergent corporate culture and an extremely significant geostrategic location. Taking into consideration the context of Pakistani classrooms, the researchers have analyzed the significance of critical pedagogy and recommended some steps for its introduction. The roles of the teachers and students have also been discussed in terms of teaching methodology, content and testing practices. In Pakistan, second language classrooms will continue to undergo psycho-cultural unresponsiveness and sociopolitical numbness if decision makers and teachers do not decentralize their authority and empower students. In order to materialize this, democratic behaviors have to be adopted right from the classrooms where learners' life experiences are affirmed and legitimized through a scholarship which is at once liberating and enlightening.

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<u>**Appendix**</u>

Essay Writing Class
Observation Sheet for English Language Teachers and Students

Institution: _____   *Classroom Dynamics:* <u>*formal, informal, friendly*</u>

Teacher: _____   *Lesson:* _____

Date: _____   *Year/Class*: _____

Agenda _____   *Student Strength:*   (M)____ (F)_____

Activities planned   group work   writing / thinking activities   revision & exercises

Key: Y = Yes, N = No, G = Good, S = Satisfactory, I = Improvement Required

Beginning and End	**Y**	**N**
1 Lesson begins punctually		
2 Clear explanation of lesson's aims and objectives		

Classroom Environment	**Y**	**N**
3 Classroom is neat and organized		
4 Adequately quiet environment and conducive to learning		

Quality of Teaching	**G**	**S**	**I**
5 Teacher has appropriate specialist knowledge in the subject taught			
6 Effective preparation and organization of resources			
7 Appropriate classroom control			
8 Effective management of time			
9 Effective individual, group and whole class monitoring			
10 Used a range of appropriate strategies and resources			
11 Lesson pace is appropriate to pupil ability			
12 Effective use of voice			
13 Demonstrated enthusiasm for the subject			
14 Good teacher/pupil relationships			
15 Teacher behavior when students participated or asked questions.			

Student Behaviours	**G**	**S**	**I**
16 Students are attentive and on task			
17 Students demonstrate appropriate levels of contribution and enthusiasm			
18 Students demonstrate confidence and independence			
19 Students demonstrate the ability to contemplate their work and self-evaluate			

20	Students reaction to the day's agenda and topic	
21	Students work alone	
22	Students work in pairs	
23	Students work in groups	

Homework		
28	Homework is assigned and recorded by the student	

Teacher Activities

Did the teacher model a particular writing strategy?   _____

Did the teacher address class as a whole?   _____

Did the teacher address a small group?   _____

Did the teacher speak with an individual student?   _____

Did the teacher present the lesson?   _____

Did the teacher explain assessment and marking criteria?   _____

Did the teacher use constructive critical commenting in oral & written work?) _____

Did the teacher make effective use of praise both orally and in writing?_____

Did the teacher mark the work?   _____

Comments

Summary of Observation and/or other pertinent information

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signed: _____   **Dated:** _____