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PEDAGOGICAL TASKS FOR FOSTERING CRITICAL TRANSFORMATIVE EFL TEACHERS: PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHER-EDUCATORS

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Abstract

Critical pedagogy as a teaching approach aimed at helping learners attain critical consciousness by means of questioning and challenging domination and the beliefs and practices that dominate has drawn inspirational attention in many EFL teaching and learning contexts. The argument is that critical pedagogy is concerned with challenging and transforming the traditional teacher-centered pedagogy into not only a learner-centered pedagogy but also a dialogic pedagogy whereby the teacher is not the only knowledge provider, and the learner is not a sole knowledge recipient. However, the praxis, i.e. the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice, is still a major concern for many EFL/TESOL student teachers as much of the discussion about critical pedagogy is “too abstract, theoretical, and couched in exclusionary language” with little attention to practicing teachers (Johnston 2002, p.70). To fill this void, this paper aims to re-envision some pedagogical tasks for fostering critical transformative EFL teachers. These pedagogical tasks attempt to offer possibilities that are contextualized and socio-politically engaged rather than certainties and are aimed at urging EFL pre-service teachers to reconceptualize traditional roles and responsibilities. In particular, the primary goals of these re-envisioned pedagogical tasks are twofold: (1) to raise pre-service EFL teachers’ awareness about critical pedagogy and (2) to help and guide them to practice critical pedagogy in their classrooms.

Key Words: critical pedagogy, transformative, problem-posing, critical intervention, or critical consciousness

Introduction

Critical pedagogy is a teaching approach that aims to help learners attain critical consciousness by means of questioning and challenging domination and the beliefs and practices that dominate (Giroux, 1988; McLaren 2003). Shor, (1992) clearly captures its ideology in the following except:

“ [it is a] habit of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional clichés, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse”(p. 129).

This view suggests that critical pedagogy is an approach that fosters students teachers’ ability to think critically about their situation and allows them to explore connections between their individual problems and experiences and the social context in which they are surrounded. In this way, they will become critical transformative practitioners. Critical transformative in this paper means pre-service EFL teachers “who exercise forms of intellectual and pedagogical attempt to insert teaching and learning directly into the political sphere by arguing that schooling represent both struggle over power relation” (Giroux, 2009 p.439). Indeed, such pedagogy has drawn inspirational attentions in many English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching and learning contexts because it is concerned with challenging and transforming the traditional teacher-centered pedagogy into not only a learner-centered pedagogy but rather a dialogic pedagogy whereby the teacher is not the only knowledge provider and the learner is not the sole knowledge recipient (Giroux, 1988; McLaren

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2003; Simon 1992; Nieto, 1999). Instead, both teacher and learner construct, deconstruct, reconstruct and co-construct the knowledge (i.e., English).

Therefore, it is not surprising that courses/syllabi such as critical approaches to teaching English to the speakers of other language (TESOL), critical issues in EFL, topics in TESOL pedagogy and critical pedagogy for EFL teaching have become indispensable components of Master's of Art (MA) and Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) TESOL programs in most western universities and language teacher education programs (Motha, 2006). In such courses EFL student-teachers from different countries, including Saudi Arabia, are taught throughout their programs the ideologies of democracy and the pedagogy of emancipation—to challenge and transform oppressive social conditions and to create a more equal society in their teaching and learning classrooms. However, the praxis, i.e. the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice, is still a major concern for many EFL/TESOL student-teachers (Benesch, 2009; Morgan, 2009). More specifically, because each EFL teaching context is historically, politically, culturally, linguistically and socially rooted and interests bound, EFL student-teachers face many challenges. Such challenges range from difficulties of how to practice “democracy, problematize asymmetrical structure of power, embrace a commitment to the education of oppressed [students]” (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009, p. 436), to how to transform such ideologies into their teaching practices. For instance, due to misinterpretations of the hidden relations of power and inequality between teachers and students in most Eastern contexts as well as false copies of the master voice (i.e., western ideologies), most of those new EFL student-teachers get discouraged after leaving their programs and find it difficult to transform such ideologies into their classrooms. The argument is that, as Johnston (2002) persuasively contends, much writing about the notion of critical pedagogy seem “to be too abstract, theoretical, and couched in exclusionary language [in which] many theorists have failed in their moral obligation to make their ideas fully accessible to others, especially practicing teachers” (p. 70). Therefore, it is imperative to help EFL student-teachers, with different social, historical and linguistic backgrounds, critically “explore pedagogies of engagement rather than the passive transmission of disciplinary content, as is conventionally assumed” (Benesch, 2009, p. 87) in many TESOL courses as well as language teacher education (LTE) programs. Such pedagogies of engagement can empower EFL student-teachers to make decisions in order to meet their socio-political contexts, as well as their institutional needs.

To achieve this end, this paper intends to re-envision some pedagogical tasks for fostering critical transformative EFL teachers. These pedagogical tasks attempt to offer possibilities that are contextualized and socio-politically engaged rather than certainties and are aimed at urging EFL pre-service teachers to reconceptualize traditional roles and responsibilities (Benesch, 2009; Morgan, 2009). In particular, the primary goals of these re-envisioned pedagogical tasks are twofold: (1) to raise pre-service EFL teachers' awareness about critical pedagogy and (2) to help and guide them to practice critical pedagogy in their classrooms.

Before discussing pedagogical tasks for fostering critical transformative EFL teachers, this paper will address some historical, theoretical and empirical accounts of critical pedagogy and the need for fostering critical transformative EFL teachers. Then, it will tackle some critical issues for fostering critical transformative EFL teachers and practical ways for paving the way to critical transformative EFL pedagogy. More importantly, these pedagogical tasks can be a starting point for language teacher educators in different ESL/EFL contexts to redesign other possible pedagogical tasks that suit their particular foreign or second language learning and teaching context, goals, and expectations. Finally, the paper will discuss some challenges in the pedagogical tasks that both teacher-educators and pre-service teachers may face when fostering critical transformative pedagogy.

Literature Review

A Brief Historical Overview for the Concept of Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy (CP), by and large, has originated from the critical theory of the Frankfurt School. Since then, this term has influenced the work of many educational researchers, most notably, Dewey's work in *Democracy and Education* and Paulo Freire's work in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Paulo Freire's work of educational philosophy, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is one of the most renowned in the field of

education in general and second language teaching and learning in particular. Freire views the concept of critical pedagogy from the development of the critical *consciousness* perspective, which allows students to meaningfully notice relationships between their individual problems and experiences and the social contexts in which they are embedded. The attainment of critical consciousness is seen as the crucial first step of praxis, constructed as an ongoing, reflective approach to taking action (McLaren 2003; Simon 1992; Shor, 1992). Freirean critical pedagogy has influenced and generated critical insights on many educational theories today.

Among other theories, the postmodernist notion of power/knowledge (e.g., Foucault, 1980), feminist research in education (e.g., Weiler, 1991), resistance theory, reproduction theory, and postcolonial theory have played major roles in terms of expanding and transforming Freirean critical pedagogy. Such theories shift the predominant focus of critical pedagogy from social class to include issues such as race, identity, gender, nationality, institutions, social structure, resistance and possibilities of change, and other elements. Informed by the Freirean vision of emancipatory education, feminist researchers in education, for example

“validate differences, challenges universal claims to truth, and seek to create social transformation in a world of shifting and uncertain meanings. In education, these profound shifts are evident on two levels: first, at the level of practice, as excluded and formerly silenced groups challenge dominant approaches of learning and to definitions of knowledge; and second, at the level of theory, as modernist claims to universal truth are called into question” (Weiler 1991, p.449-450).

Similarly, by reviewing the reproduction theory of education and resistance theory Canagarajah (1999) argues that both theories are informed by the Freirean vision of emancipatory pedagogy. According to him, the former (reproduction theory) captures "how students are conditioned mentally and behaviorally by the practice of schooling to serve the dominant societal institution" (p. 145). He goes on to elaborate on a vicious cyclical process of EFL teaching and learning as follows: (i) first, the dominant social arrangement passes its ideologies to the school, (ii) then, the school through its curriculum and pedagogy passes on those ideologies to the students, and (iii) finally, the students subsequently advocate the status quo. This vicious cyclical process of EFL teaching and learning, therefore, suggests that the first task of EFL teacher-educators, from a critical-pedagogy viewpoint, is to foster critical transformative EFL teachers. The latter (resistance theory) "explains how there are sufficient contradictions within institution to help subjects resist and subvert such reproduction, gain agency, conduct critical thinking and initiate change"(p.145) which also calls for the need of fostering critical transformative EFL teachers so that they can negotiate, challenge, and appropriate the reproductive process according to their own contexts.

Undoubtedly, these historical as well as theoretical foundations of critical pedagogy offer a comprehensive “set of discourse-analytic tools with which to historicize and politicize disciplinary claims to knowledge, revealing the social interests advanced or maintained through current arrangements” (Morgan, 2009, p.88). However, despite these considerable discussions and theorizing of this concept, many EFL teaching contexts have not enjoyed and benefited from its full potential in the classrooms. As this is the central discussion of this paper, it is imperative to provide an operational definition for critical pedagogy and then elaborate on how EFL student-teachers can benefit from the practical implications of this notion in their classrooms.

Operational Definitions of Critical Pedagogy in EFL Teaching

Although definitions for the concept of critical pedagogy (CP) provided by established researchers (e.g., Akbari, 2008; Heyman, 2004 McLaren, 2003) are varied, the predominant theme of this concept, which is raising students’ critical consciousness, remains present. This term, by and large, has undergone many definitions and transformations as teacher-educators and researchers have deployed new approaches to confront changing social and historical contexts (McLaren, 2003). Researchers such as McLaren, (2003) and Peterson, (2003), for example, define critical pedagogy as an educational theory and teaching and learning practice that is aimed at raising students’ critical consciousness pertaining to oppressive social conditions. This connotes that CP perceives education as a political enterprise that aims to raise students’ critical consciousness to make them more aware of power games of society as well as their voices and positions in that game as Burbules and Berk (1999) point out.

Similarly, Akbari (2008) defines CP in ELT as “an attitude to language teaching which relates the classroom context to the wider social context and aims at social transformation through education” (p. 276). This notion suggests that critical pedagogy has a more ‘collective political component’ in a sense that the attainment of critical consciousness is perceived as a vital first step towards a wider ‘collective political struggle’ to challenge and transform oppressive social conditions as well as to construct and co-construct a more democratic society (Akbari, 2008, p. 277). In this same vein of thought, critical pedagogy is defined as “pedagogy of inclusion” (Pennycook, 2002, p. 130) that aims to provide the marginalized students the “right to speak” (Peirce, 1997, p. 409) by means of breaking away from the notion of the “banking concept” (Freire, 1998) of education and fostering a mutual “dialogue” (Hones, 2002, p.163) among teachers and students. Such definitions of critical pedagogy clearly suggest that in language teacher education programs, for example, student-teachers or pre-service teachers are supposedly prepared to gain the ability to critically analyze and resist domination and oppressions thereby aiming for social critical transformation both in the classroom as well as in large scale in society.

Therefore, in this paper, informed by the work of Canagarajah (2005), Benesch (2009) and Morgan (2009), critical pedagogy is defined as not a set of ideas or theories, but a way of meaningfully transforming these theories into practice (i.e., a way of “doing” learning and teaching Canagarajah, 2005, p. 932). It is a practice inspired by a distinct attitude toward classrooms and society. Critical student-teachers or prospective teachers are prepared, for example, in language teacher education programs to situate learning in socio-politically relevant contexts. They are prepared to critically address the implications of power in pedagogical activity and commit themselves to transforming the means and ends of learning, to construct, deconstruct, reconstruct and co-construct more democratic, unbiased, and ethical educational and social environments that suit their particular foreign or second language learning and teaching contexts, goals, and expectations.

The argument is that critical pedagogy focuses on the notion of social justice and social change through education. It contends that “educational systems are reflections of the societal systems within which they operate, and since in all social systems we have discrimination and marginalization in terms of race, social class, or gender, the same biases are reproduced in educational systems” (Akbari, 2008, p. 276). For instance, in language teacher education or MA/Ph.D. TESOL programs, the same teacher-educators who possess power in terms of making decisions in the programs are the ones who also possess the power in terms of designing the curriculum and implementing educational systems. Therefore, their ideologies, values and beliefs get accepted and fostered whereas the ideas and beliefs of disempowered EFL learners are stigmatized. More specifically, as mentioned earlier, in EFL teaching and learning the dominant social arrangement usually forwards its values to the school, then the school through its curriculum and pedagogy passes on those values to the students, and the students later espouse the status quo (Canagarajah, 2005). This view suggests that education in general and schools in particular are considered an “intrinsically political-power related activity” (Akbari, 2008, p. 277). Therefore, it is imperative to foster critical transformative EFL student-teachers or pre-service teachers from different countries in language teacher education or MA/Ph.D. TESOL programs. In the next section, this issue will be elaborated in detail.

Critical Pedagogy and Language Teacher Education: The Need for Fostering Critical Transformative Pre-service EFL Teachers

Schools that offer MA/Ph.D. TESOL programs or language teacher education are considered crucial social institutions which shape and reinforce the attitudes and beliefs that student-teachers or prospective teachers bring to their clinical experiences (Giroux, 2009; Ladson-Billing, 2009; Morgan, 2009). To put it simply, schools have influential impacts on learners’ lives and futures. As such, “critical pedagogy identifies teacher education as one of the key ideological state apparatuses implicated in the production and transmission of capitalist values and the hegemonic procurement of consent” (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009 p. 433). Teacher education is seen as “the space in which classroom educators are socialized and initiated into pedagogical attitudes and practices that support the power asymmetries of larger society” (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009 p. 433). Today in many language teacher education and TESOL programs at American universities, for example, great attention has been placed on the notion of critical pedagogy aimed at social transformation through education. In such programs, student-teachers are taught

courses such as critical approaches to TESOL, topics in TESOL pedagogy and critical pedagogy for EFL teaching with great attention being placed on educational, linguistic, socio-political, discursive principles of critical pedagogy and its rationale.

By viewing education as an intrinsically political and power-related activity, supporters of critical pedagogy attempt to identify the discriminatory foundations of education and call for social change in such a way that ensure more inclusion and representation of disempowered groups or students. Critical pedagogy places the classroom context into the wider social context with the beliefs that “what happens in the classroom should end up making a difference outside the classroom” (Baynham 2006, p. 28). In language teaching, critical pedagogy calls for the importance of raising students’ awareness—to question and challenge domination and the beliefs and practice that dominate. It stresses the ideology of providing the marginalized students the right to speak (Peirce, 1997) by means of breaking away from the notion of the banking concept education and fostering a mutual dialogue among teachers and students. From a discourse perspective, critical pedagogy encourages

“the discourse of liberation and hope; it is the discourse of liberation since it questions the legitimacy of accepted power relations and recognizes the necessity of going beyond arbitrary social constraints; it is also the discourse of hope since it provides the potential for marginalized groups to explore ways of changing the status quo and improve their social conditions” (Akbari, 2008, p. 277).

Undisputedly, the above principles and rationales of critical pedagogy suggest that social transformation through education and liberation are the primary goals. Critical pedagogy aims to legitimize the voices of practitioners and learners and give them the scope to exercise power in their own local context. It has been assumed that by teaching EFL student-teachers courses such as critical pedagogy in TESOL and critical approaches to TESOL they will be able to gain critical understanding, examine externally imposed demands and negotiate their responses as well as learn to explore ways to change their oppressed society for a better and more democratic life.

However, the praxis, i.e. the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice, is still a major concern for many EFL/TESOL student-teachers due to the way in which learning in an educational system has been socially and historically constructed. This is also because many of these courses and programs are subject to the heavy “evangelical zeal” of the western institutions who have offered their theories, methods or approaches, materials, and books to EFL students from different countries “often with doubtful relevance to the sociological, educational and economic context of the Outer Circle” (Pennycook, 1994, p. 690). Consequently, EFL student-teachers from Asian and Middle Eastern countries seeking to develop a conceptual role for themselves after finishing their MA/Ph.D. TESOL or professional development programs at American universities often encounter ideological and methodological challenges as they embark on teaching (Benesch, 2009; Morgan, 2009). One possible reason for the occurrence of such ideological and methodological challenges, as mentioned earlier, is that much of the discussion about critical pedagogy is “too abstract, theoretical, and couched in exclusionary language” with little attention to practicing teachers (Johnston 2002, p.70). Another possible reason might be attributed to the fact that “when classroom life is discussed in teacher education [or TESOL] programs, it is usually presented as fundamentally one-dimension set of rules and regulative practices, rather than as a cultural terrain where a variety of interests and practices collide in a constant often chaotic struggle for dominance” (Giroux, 2009, p. 446). Consequently, international prospective teachers from Saudi Arabia, for example, got the impression that classroom culture is to be free from ambiguity and contradiction. Another example is that a student-teacher teaching minority or working class in Saudi Arabia from the perspective of critical pedagogy may find it hard to establish a well-articulated framework for understanding the class and cultural ideology that informs classroom life. Similarly, if a student-teacher is assigned to teach in a school that is largely populated by socio-economically disadvantaged students, he or she may experience difficulties in terms of practicing critical pedagogy in classrooms. This is because each classroom is socially constructed, historically determined and reproduced through institutionalized relationship of class, gender, race and power (Motha, 2006; Zeichner, 1993). Student-teachers are often not instructed to view schooling as a neutral land devoid of power and politics; as a result, “they struggled with and negotiated the complexities nestled at the nexus of race, language, power, and learning in their teaching lives” (Motha, 2006 p. 497).

Another possible reason argued by Morgan (2009, p. 88) is that in the field of language teacher education, “where exposure to professional roles in EFL such as transformative practitioner is initiated”, there have been a few examples of critical work that shed light on pre-service contexts and issues (e.g. Clarke, 2008; Pennycook, 2004; Ramanathan, 2002; Reagan & Osborn, 2002). In other words, the shortage of works that foster critical transformative pre-service EFL teachers and “serve as a vehicle for institutional change and the promotion of social justice both within and beyond the university” (Morgan, 2009, p.88) is also seen as an obstacle for the praxis.

In essence, the above arguments mirror the needs for fostering critical transformative pre-service EFL teachers through language teacher education and MA/Ph.D. in TESOL programs. Such programs should center their academic missions on the education of pre-service teachers as “transformative intellectuals” (Morgan, 2009, p. 87) so that they can challenge and negotiate dominant ideologies and appropriate them according to their teaching and learning contexts. As such, teacher educators should help pre-service teachers critically analyze various interests and contradictions within society and “[develop] the knowledge and skills that will advance the possibilities of generating curricula, classroom social practice, and organizational arrangement based on and cultivating a deep respect for a democratic ethically based community” (Giroux, 2009 p.445). In this way critical transformative teachers will gain the ability to look at the bigger picture of teaching and learning and become informed about the larger cultural, linguistic, economical and socio-political factors that form the whole educational agenda, rules and curricula. This in turn will help them to become informed about the different possibilities of teaching at the micro level of classroom.

Having discussed the importance of fostering critical transformative EFL teaching in LTE or MA/Ph.D. TESOL programs that meet student-teachers’ socio-political and institutional needs, questions such as what should be done in order to put such notion into classroom practices Are there possible pedagogical tasks that teacher educators can employ to foster critical transformative EFL teachers for which it was originally intended logically arise.

Paving the High Roads with Critical Transformative EFL Teachers: Pedagogical Tasks for Pre-Service Teacher Educators

As mentioned in the introduction, critical pedagogy has drawn inspirational attentions in many language teacher education (LTE) as well as TESOL programs. This is because it advocates voice, social transformation and agency as major goals of education. In particular, it is concerned with challenging and transforming the traditional teacher-centered pedagogy into not only a learner-centered pedagogy but rather a dialogic pedagogy whereby the teacher and the learner become mediators in co-constructing and navigating knowledge construction (McLaren 2003; Simon 1992; Nieto, 1999). However, “most of the discussion on CP has been limited to its rationale and not much has been done to bring it down to the actual world of classroom practice, for which it was originally intended” (Akbari, 2008, 276). Therefore, this paper attempts to re-visit some pedagogical tasks for fostering critical transformative EFL student-teachers by means of problem-posing, critical intervention, or critical consciousness tasks. Since all language teacher education and TESOL programs are supposed to examine the context of TESOL and address how different factors influence and inform such elements as classroom methodology, administration, and program design, student-teacher are asked to approach these problem-posing, critical intervention, or critical consciousness tasks as follows:

- Select an issue that is relevant to your particular context within which you are expected to teach after leaving these programs.
- Structure a response that in some way work as problem solving (i.e., problem-posing, critical intervention, or critical consciousness).
- Responses may include, but are not limited to, lesson plans, curriculum innovations, narratives, advocacy letters to policy makers and research essays.

Conceptually, these problem-posing, critical intervention, or critical consciousness tasks entail two main issues that teacher-educators should take into consideration when implementing them. The former is related to de-briefing what constitutes as problem-posing, critical intervention, or critical consciousness tasks and their key elements to raise student-teachers' awareness. The latter is concerned with providing student-teachers with a sample to help them conceptualize possible tasks for problem-posing, critical intervention, or critical consciousness.

What Constitutes Problem-posing, Critical Intervention or Critical Consciousness Tasks: Key Elements

Teacher-educators should spell out clearly what constitutes problem-posing, critical intervention, or critical consciousness tasks for student-teachers in the language teacher education or TESOL programs. He or she should inform prospective teachers about the fact that EFL teaching and learning occur within complex socio-political, cultural and economical settings. Thus, there are five key elements that should be taken into account in order to be a critical transformative teacher as shown in figure one below: (i) attention to specific institutional needs and rights, (ii) attention to textual patterns and cycles of texts, (iii) attention to multimodal resources and their affordances, (iv) the identity of teacher and students as texts, and (v) attention to the notion that all teach and all learn (Bazerman, 2004; Morgan, 2004). These interactive and interrelated five key elements are aimed at raising student-teachers' awareness. This is because as Clarke (2003) clearly elaborates, "empower" and "liberate" are not transitive verbs. Grammatically, of course, this is not true; both verbs require objects and therefore are transitive....Pragmatically, however, the matter is not so straightforward. Empowerment and liberation are not serums that can be administered to other. They are not states of grace that we confer on our students. We do not empower others by declaring them to be liberated, nor can we harass them into being empowered...In other words, liberation education is not a direct-instruction phenomenon. The best we can do is work to create the conditions under which students will begin to take the initiative. (p. 175)

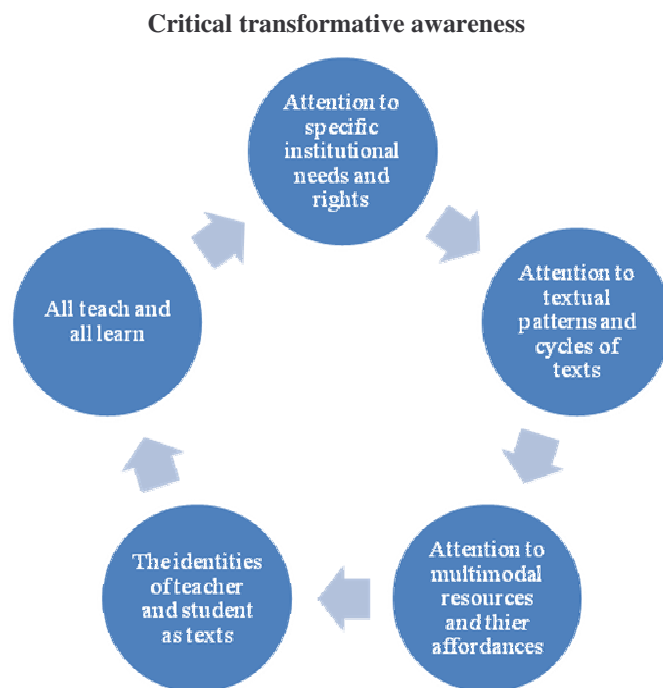


Figure 1: Critical transformative awareness as an emergent phenomena taking place through the interaction of the five key elements.

Since liberation education is not a direct-instruction phenomenon, the best approach for teacher-educators is to create the conditions under which students will begin to take the initiative and transform the knowledge according to the socio-cultural and political needs of their own institutions. In doing so, teacher-educator should first negotiate with these pre-service teachers about their *specific institutional needs and rights* as EFL/ESL teaching and learning takes place within complex socio-political, cultural and economical settings. As Benesch, (2001) elaborates, teacher-educators should consider their student-teachers' needs—in response to their specific institutional and academic requirements, and their rights—through pedagogical tasks that urge them to question and challenge the socio-political of these requirement and appropriate them according to their own teaching and learning contexts. Negotiations for the duality of needs and rights should occur through dialogical processes (i.e., enacting praxis). Such dialogical processes should utilizes student-teachers'

“linguistic and cultural understanding as sources of knowledge and motivates social participation. As an integral part of critical pedagogy, dialogue can engage teacher and students in an interactive exchange about their lives, where social, economic, political and cultural issues are addressed critically and an opportunity to challenge the power relationships within the community is provided (Hones, 2002, p:163).

These dialogical processes or negotiations of their needs and rights will draw their *attention toward multimodal resources* (e.g., digital, print, and gesture) and their affordances (Lier, 2004). In this regard, teaching methods, reading tasks, materials or classroom activities assigned by teacher in the language teacher education or TESOL programs may offer the potential for critical consciencization in which student-teachers will be able to question, challenge, negotiate and appropriate such reading tasks and teaching methods according to their needs. However, the maximum outcomes of such tasks or activities are not bounded within the text or method itself. Instead, the outcomes arise from the way each student-teacher constructs, de-constructs, re-constructs and co-constructs these tasks to suit his or her needs, memories, and abilities to comprehend and utilize the knowledge from these reading materials and tasks (Morgan, 2009). This is because “affordances are detected, picked up, and acted upon as part of a person’s resonating with, or being in tune with, her or his environment...This means that when we perceive something, we perceive it as it relates to us. So, the object [i.e., reading tasks, teaching methods or lesson plans]..is not ‘as it is,’ but ‘as it is to me’” (Lier, 2004 p. 91). This view also suggests that critical consciousness can be fostered through *textual patterns and cycles of texts*. Textual patterns and cycles of texts here means that through multiple reading, discussing and negotiating, analyzing, and questioning the reading tasks, teaching methods and activities with peers and teachers, critical transformative teaching can be fostered. In this way, the students and teachers will become critical co-investigators in dialogue with each other, i.e., *all teach and all learn*. As Freire (1998, p. 96), suggests "no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. Men teach each other, mediated by the world, by the cognizable objects which in banking education are owned by the teacher". When student and teacher become critical co-investigators in dialogue with each other, the *teacher’s identity as texts* occurs—“teacher’s identity as textual resources, co-construct with students and potentially deployed in transformative way that invigorate course content and meaning making” (Morgan, 2009, p.91). All the above five key element are believed to be interrelated in which critical awareness occurs from the interaction of these five key elements.

A Sample of Problem-Posing, Critical Intervention or Critical Consciousness Tasks

In order to help prospective teachers conceptualize a possible problem-posing, critical intervention, or critical consciousness task, this paper provides three examples for fostering critical transformative teachers based on the five key elements discussed above. In these three examples, the teaching methods, classrooms activities, and reading assignments that are usually given to prospective teachers in the LTE and TESOL programs are utilized.

Examples of Critical Transformative Action

No	Theme	Possible reading tasks and materials	Possible problem-posing critical intervention, or critical consciousness task
1	Exploring teaching hidden identities	Vandrick, S. (1997). The role of hidden identities in the postsecondary ESL classroom. <i>TESOL Quarterly</i> , 31(1),153-157	Design a lesson plan on human rights and present it in a group
2	Learners' L1 as source to be utilized	Teacher-educator can utilize the available literature and researches to explain how learners' L1 can be used as an asset in L2 teaching.	A workshop to show how an individual's L1 is part of his or her identity.
3	Raising students' awareness of the issues faced by disempowered group	Teacher-educator can bring to the class different sample of English course-books produced by international publishers and ask the students to critically examine the appropriateness of these course-books to their own teaching contexts.	Evaluate the course- books used for English instruction in your country and write language-in-education policy recommendations

Theme one (exploring teaching hidden identities) on the above table responds to the complexity and challenge of EFL classrooms in the context of a growing number of international students from a wide variety of ethno-linguistic, academic, economic and professional background learning English at Western universities. As Nelson (2005) clearly states there is “dearth of literature on teaching in a ‘contact zone’ environment that [is] simultaneously transnational, transcultural, multilingual and multisexual” (p. 109). Besides these obvious identities (e.g., ethno-linguistic and academic background), there are also invisible identities such as lesbian, gay, and religious minority. Students with such invisible identities should be recognized because they are part of the entire classroom identities and so that they can feel secure and safe. This suggests that EFL teaching and learning is not only a process of language socialization but also a process of the teacher’s identity negotiation. In this regard, pre-service teachers should be urged to negotiate and construct their teaching hidden identities for the sake “of developing an effective academic voice across L1 and L2 texts and genres and of negotiating/confronting identity options some of which were previously unavailable and/or stigmatized in [their] places of origin” (Morgan, 2009, P. 93).

Based on Vandrick’s (1997) article (or any other article that teacher-educators may find useful), for example, teacher-educator can ask students to form a group of two or three students and analyze an article or develop a lesson plan and present it in the classroom by answering to the following questions: “What are the boundaries in the classroom? Which aspects of a person’s identity are public, and which are private? Teachers talk about making the classroom a safe place, but can it be truly so? If instructors explicitly try to make it a safe place, how can they be sure that students will preserve that safety? How does the distribution of power relate to participants’ knowledge of each others’ possibly hidden identities?”(p.156). Indeed, in such tasks prospective teachers can discuss their teaching identities and how they might impact on EFL teaching and learning. This task will not only foster their ability to think critically about their teaching hidden identities like sexuality, race, class, spirituality and emotional trauma as Vandrick (1997) argues, but these critical intervention,s or critical consciousness tasks will also enable them to identify connections, between their individual problems and experiences and the social context in which they are embedded.

Theme two (i.e., learners’ L1 as source to be utilized) responds to the common practice in L2 teaching and learning that rejects the learner’s L1 as a negative force that slows down their progress by interfering with L2 development. EFL teachers, for example in Saudi Arabia are often instructed not to use the target language at all in their classes, and they are even punished by supervisors for not giving their students ample practice opportunities in using L2 in class. In order to raise prospective teachers’ awareness of this issue, teacher may conduct a workshop that invites prospective teachers to collaboratively unpack the exclusion of L1 in EFL instruction and develop a conceptual framework that serves their institutional needs and rights in the future. During the workshop, the teacher-educator should encourage the students to critically think about an individual’s L1 is part of his or her identity. He or she can initiate different critical points to urge the students to think about these issues. One possible way to do so is to raise questions such as, Can you think from a scientific perspective if there is enough evidence to support the exclusion of L1 usage in the class and its negative impact on student’s language development? How students’ L1 “can be [utilized] as an asset that can facilitate communication in the L2 and as part of her communicative experience on which to base her

L2 learning” (Akbari, 2008, p. 279)? Teacher-educators should encourage students to support their argument based on their previous learning and teaching experiences. Such tasks should help student-teachers realize the fact that teachers sometimes can use L1 in classrooms to explain certain grammatical points that might be difficult for students to understand in the target language or to maintain discipline in their classes (Cook, 2001). Discussions and taking place in the workshop should further help them realize that “the rationale for the total exclusion of L1 from classes, therefore, must be sought mostly in the political/economic dimensions of L2 teaching and the inability of native English teachers to utilize the mother tongue potential of their learners” (Akbari, 2008, p. 279).

It should be mentioned that the intention of this workshop is not to advocate for an excessive use of L1 in EFL classroom; instead it is to draw student-teachers toward the fact that their students’ L1 is part of their identity, which plays a major role in that identity formation. As the notion of critical pedagogy calls for the importance of empowerment and recognizing individual voices, utilizing learners’ L1 connotes who they are and the values they represent. This is because language itself plays a vital role when it comes to marginalization or disempowered group of students. Language is seen as “an important refuge, a badge of honor, a safe haven, or a stable point where one would feel secure in being who he/she is” (Baynham, 2006, 25). More importantly, factual respect for human rights and the dignity of people should begin with one of the most basic rights, i.e. their linguistic human rights (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson 1995). So by careful use of students’ L1 in EFL classroom as a teaching aid, student-teachers will be able to realize the notion of empowerment and positive social change in their own teaching context.

Theme three responds to the need for raising students’ awareness of the issues faced by a disempowered group of people when learning English. Some students attending English classes aim at gaining more social respectability and a higher level of self-actualization because they belong to lower and/or middle class in their societies. These students sometimes “by virtue of their social position, are unaware of the way the majority of their society’s citizens negotiate their day-to-day lives or even their survival” (Akbari, 2008, p.281). To make this matter worse, EFL teachers rarely consider the socio-economical and political backgrounds of their working class students. As a result, these students are often dispositioned by their English teachers as failures or having intellectual deficiencies. Teacher should not lose the sight of the fact that the majority of EFL teaching methods and coursebooks have been “anesthetized to make them politically and socially harmless for an international audience” (Akbari, 2008, p.281). For instance, many international English textbooks producers and writers, either deliberately or not, do not recognize and represent certain groups of people (e.g., working class, minority students, and old people) because they often assume these groups of people might not fit in exactly with the expectations of their middle and upper class language learning clients.

One possible way to raise the prospective teacher’s awareness towards such facts is for the teacher educator to bring to the class different samples of English course-books produced by international publishers and ask the students to critically examine the topics and guidelines of these books and the underlying assumptions behind them. Teacher-educators should inform students about the fact that publishers usually advise course-book writers to comply with set of guidelines in order to ensure that controversial topics such as sex, religion, and alcohol are not included (Akbari, 2008; Gray, 2001). A common set of topics that publishers advise their book writers and producers to avoid are summarized as PARSNIP—Politics, Alcohol, Religion, Sex, Narcotics, Isms, and Pornography. Consequently, most publishers include topics such as food, clothes, cars and traveling in order to avoid the controversial topics. Nevertheless, there are still many groups of students such as minorities and working class people who are not equally represented in these course-books. Based on the classroom discussions, the teacher should ask his or her student-teachers to write a recommendation letter to their policy makers, or design a syllabus or teaching materials that can accommodate their institutional and social-political needs and rights. This is because as Akbari (2008) clearly states,

“the transformation of a society will be impossible unless trouble spots are identified, space is provided for all citizens to make their voices heard, and all members of the society come to the realization that there are multiple perspectives on reality; by creating a sense of respect and tolerance the first steps towards social change can be taken” (p. 282)

In this way prospective teachers will take professional responsibility to deal with theoretical concerns, professional expectations and interpersonal relations that may negatively influence his or her teaching practices after he or she leaves the programs. In essence, it is important to reiterate that these problem-posing, critical intervention, or critical consciousness tasks attempt to offer possibilities that are contextualized and socio-politically engaged rather than certainties and are aimed at urging EFL prospective teachers to reconceptualize traditional roles and responsibilities and begin to take the initiative.

Challenges of the Problem-posing, Critical Intervention or Critical Consciousness Tasks

It is important to note that these re-envisioned pedagogical tasks for fostering critical transformative EFL teachers may cause some challenges for teacher-educators when implementing them. One of the most noticeable challenges is that student-teachers lack pedagogical experience, institutional knowledge and teaching background in LTE and TESOL programs. Consequently, they may encounter a lot of difficulties in conceptualizing and contextualizing these pedagogical tasks. Nevertheless, when these prospective teachers progress in their career, they “build up more practical exposure and understanding of specific institutional constraints, these initial [challenges] may be re-conceptualized to provide a foundation for stronger” (Morgan, 2009, p.95) EFL pedagogies that reconcile and transform existing inequities in their own teaching and learning contexts.

Another challenge is that some international student-teachers in LTE or TESOL programs may not regard or appreciate collaborative works or group-based projects that need time and energy. This might be true in the increasingly corporatized university where individualized competition for grades and entrance to professional degree programs are often preeminent concerns (Starfield, 2004). In order to address this problem, the teacher-educator needs to inform his or her students that negotiation and collaboration in different projects are important skills for critical transformative pedagogy. Negotiating with colleagues, having different interpretations of pedagogical issues or problems, building alliances amongst like-minded colleagues, and identifying areas of consensus and disagreement in support of curricular or administrative change are all important aspects of effective leadership in educational institutions in general and EFL teaching and learning in particular.

Conclusion

This paper argues that although the focal concerns of most language teacher education and TESOL programs are centered on emancipatory pedagogy and critical topics in EFL teaching, most of the classroom discussions are too abstract with little attention to classroom practice. As a result, prospective teachers encounter many methodological challenges when they start teaching. To address these issues, this paper re-envisioned some pedagogical tasks for fostering critical transformative EFL teachers. The main assumptions behind these pedagogical tasks are to provide possibilities that are contextualized and socio-politically engaged rather than certainties and are aimed at urging EFL per-service teachers to reconceptualize traditional roles and responsibilities. As such, student-teachers will become aware that there are different possible ways to work towards social transformation. More importantly, they will be able to realize that being a transformative practitioner does not only mean showing resistance or rejection towards certain ideologies or methods but it also a way for them to be constructive and engaged in specific problem-posing critical intervention or critical consciousness tasks. Such skills in turn will help them become successful critical transformative EFL practitioners.

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