COMPARING CRITICAL THINKING AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN LANGUAGE

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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CRITICAL THINKING AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

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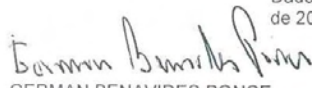
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Dedicated to

First and foremost, I want to dedicate this work to God for being with me all the way, and for all I have. This work is also dedicated to my two mothers Socorro and Blanca, my sister Paola, my brother Francisco, my grandfather Antonio, my aunt Guadalupe, and to my loyal friend Anthony on whose love I have relied through the hard times in life. Your unconditional comprehension and support had always helped me to keep on working hard to accomplish my goals.

Resumen

Maestros y aprendices de idiomas reciben una gran cantidad de información cada día. Ellos deben procesar esta información y usarla para tomar sus decisiones. De esta manera, promover una "actitud crítica" frente a la enseñanza y aprendizaje de los idiomas parece lógico. Sin embargo, cuando se piensa en esta actitud, dos tradiciones aparecen como opciones: el Pensamiento Crítico y la Pedagogía Crítica. Este trabajo busca comparar estas dos tradiciones. Además, tratará de resaltar los beneficios de la Pedagogía Crítica, sobre los del Pensamiento Crítico, en especial, en los lugares donde el inglés es aprendido como una lengua extranjera, por ejemplo: Colombia.

Palabras clave: pensamiento crítico, pedagogía crítica, idioma, enseñanza, aprendizaje, comparación.

Abstract

Language teachers and learners receive a huge amount of information every day. They need to process this information to make all the decisions that will shape the future of their lives. In this sense, fostering language teaching and learning that promotes a "critical attitude" sounds like a logic and natural process in a language classroom. However, when thinking about promoting this kind of attitude, two main traditions can come to mind: Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy. This paper aims to make a comparison between these two traditions in language teaching and learning. In addition, this paper will try to highlight the benefits for language teachers and learners, especially, in English as a Foreign Language settings like Colombia that Critical Pedagogy possesses over the ones that Critical Thinking offers.

Keywords: critical thinking, critical pedagogy, language, teaching, learning, comparison, contrast.

CRITICAL THINKING AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

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Comparing Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy in Language Teaching and Learning

Introduction

Nowadays, the world is changing fast, and education, especially language teaching and learning, is changing with it. Echeverri-Sucerquia, Arias, and Gómez (2014) suggest that globalization and current economic and technological advances have changed the educational paramount around the world. The authors mention that this is particularly true in language teaching and learning where those advances have brought with them benefits and challenges. In addition, these advances imply that language teachers and learners receive a huge amount of information every day. In the language classroom, this "information" is mainly the target language itself because as Noroozisiam and Soozandehfar (2011) mention, language is not just a tool for communication, language is an approach that engages learners in a fluid relationship between society and texts. Zainuddin and Moore (2003) suggest that both mainstream and language learners, around the world need to be able to critically generate new ideas and approaches, make decisions which impact them as students and citizens of their respective countries, and interpret information that is in different visual formats. Therefore, language teachers and students need to understand the role and importance of fostering "a critical view" in the language classroom and how this concept can have an impact on their future, as well as, on their present lives. However, when thinking about ways of introducing such view, language teachers are likely to find information related to Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy, two similar, yet different, traditions in education. These two traditions in education are not new in educational literature. This can be evidenced by authors such as Berk and Burbules (1999) who state that over the past two decades, literature on these two topics has dominated a great amount of the educational foundations. However, the dominance in educational literature does not always

imply dominance in real classroom settings. In this regard, Berk and Burbules (1999) assert that

Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy have a desire and sense of urgency about the need for

more critically oriented classrooms. In addition, the authors suggest that, yet with very few

exceptions, the literature about them do not discuss one another resulting on a conflicting view of

what "critical" education really involves. This conflicting view has been maintained over time in

the field of language teaching and learning. In this respect, Sarroub and Quadros (2015) mention

that research on the differences between Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy in language

classroom practice is scarce in literature.

Choosing between them and implementing these traditions in the language classroom may

result complex for teachers. In the case of Critical Thinking, authors, such as Halvorsen (2005),

mention that Critical Thinking is not easy to define and apply because it can mean different

things to different people depending on their contexts and cultures. Talking about Critical

Pedagogy, authors such as Javad and Mollaei (2012) mention that the complexity of this

approach comes from the very nature of Critical Pedagogy that requires a constant examination

of its own beliefs, aspirations and practices. Also, these two concepts can be easily confused with

one another because they have some features in common. In this respect, Berk and Burbules

(1999) suggest that at a broad level, Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy share the same

concerns related to students and teachers who are to some extent unable to discern certain

inaccuracies, distortions, and falsehood in the information that they receive every day.

This paper aims to show the benefits for language teachers and learners that the use of

Critical Pedagogy in classrooms can have, as well as, the advantages of implementing Critical

Thinking in a language classroom, favoring between them the former approach to critical

language teaching and learning, especially, in the case of English as a Foreign Language

(hereafter EFL) settings, such as Colombia. To accomplish this purpose, this paper provides a

comparison between both terms taking into account their origin, the main authors who have

developed on these two concepts, the research on both traditions, and the distinct ways in which

experts have understood and applied them in language classroom tasks. In addition, it shows

other important aspects such as their goals, and their limitations in terms of implementing them in

the language teaching and learning process. In this way, this paper will make readers, especially

language teachers and learners, ask themselves one important question: What is the difference

between using Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy in language teaching and learning?

Brief History of Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy

The first element that can help readers to distinguish between Critical Thinking and

Critical Pedagogy is knowing that they both are traditions in education that have different origins.

Sofos (2004) declares that the origin of Critical Thinking is traceable to 2,500 years ago, when

the teaching practice and vision of the Greek philosopher Socrates emerged. The author mentions

that it was Socrates who established the importance of asking deep questions that probe the

veracity of an idea before it is accepted as worthy. The author also mentions that Socrates

highlighted the importance of looking for evidence, deeply examining assumptions, analyzing

concepts that are considered as basic, and tracing out implications of words and actions. In

addition, according to Lai (2011), the works of Benjamin Bloom published in 1956 that aimed to

construct a taxonomy for information processing skills have been pivotal for the development of

the Critical Thinking concept as we know it today.

On the other hand, according to Ooiwa-Yoshizawa (2012), the most important educational

theory that supports the historical background of Critical Pedagogy is progressivism that emerged

at the end of 19th century. Darling and Nordenbo (as cited in Ooiwa-Yoshizawa, 2012) suggest

that the five main themes of progressivism are: criticism towards traditional education, a new

understanding of the conception of knowledge, a new understanding of human nature, a

democratic education, and the development of the whole person. Noroozisiam and Soozandehfar

(2011) explain that Critical Pedagogy began to take shape with the works of Antonio Gramsci

around 1923. In addition to Gramsci's works, Stanley (as cited in Berk & Burbules, 1999)

suggests that the idea of Critical Pedagogy also has its roots on the Frankfurt School created

around the same year. According to the author, the first Critical Pedagogy Theorists believed that

Marxism had not considered the importance of cultural and media influences in a capitalist

society. Also, they suggest that citizens in a capitalist society were forced both to know the

"right" place to where they belong to within a society, and to be content with their "destiny."

Bowles and Gintis (as cited in Berk & Burbules, 1999) explain that systems of education are

among the institutions that promote and reinforce such beliefs. In this sense, the authors express

that Critical Pedagogy constitutes the reaction of progressive educators against the system.

Noroozisiam and Soozandehfar (2011), assert that Critical Pedagogy only became wholly

recognized, when the writings of Paulo Freire emerged in the 1970s.

Thus, readers should understand that Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy are

different, in the sense that Critical Thinking is a neutral approach to education. It has always been

centered on thoughts and mental constructions of all sorts. In contrast, due to its very origins,

Critical Pedagogy does not look at education and knowledge as neutral elements. It focuses on

the ideologies of learners, but also on their political beliefs, and the ways how those beliefs shape

their lives. In the words of Javad and Mollaei (2012), teaching under the paradigm of Critical

Pedagogy is always a political engaging act, and not neutral as in Critical Thinking, and this

happens because Critical Pedagogy aims to create a social change. Noroozisiam and

Soozandehfar (2011) explain that when social change comes to focus, education demonstrates to

be a political subject in the need of being dealt politically.

Understanding Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy

After making clear that Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy have some differences

due to their origin, the next step to understand the dissimilarities between these two concepts in

language teaching and learning, is reviewing the definitions that some authors have proposed

about them.

Critical Thinking has been defined by different authors, including Moore and Stanley (as

cited in Ruiz, 2013) as a process that allows students to think and reflect about the world for

themselves. The authors state that Critical Thinking requires not only understanding about when

things have happened or who did something, but also the capability to explain why and how

those things have affected the world or the history. Moreover, Moore and Stanley (as cited in

Ruiz, 2013) mention that Critical Thinking is a higher form of thinking closely related to the

domains proposed by Benjamin Bloom about a taxonomy of learning in 1956. According to Al-

Nofaie, (2013), Higher Order Thinking Skills (hereafter HOTS), are the skills in the three last

domains of Bloom's taxonomy. As a consequence, Sarmiento (2010) points out that to achieve

Critical Thinking, learners need to go from the lowest level of the model, to the highest level of

it. Thus, Moore and Stanley (as cited in Sarmiento, 2010) mention that language teachers need to

know how to teach and assess learners at the different learning domains of the taxonomy in order

to promote higher thinking levels in the language classroom. Isaacs (1996) explains Bloom's

taxonomy of cognitive domain, in a more detailed way. The author suggests that the taxonomy is a hierarchy of six levels which from lowest to highest levels are:

- Knowledge: the subject recalls specific items.

- Comprehension: the person does a little more than just recalling items (e.g. discuss to some extent).

- Application: the subject knows and comprehends, and also can use information of an abstract nature in concrete situations.

- Analysis: the person can examine the constituent parts of communication, including the relationships among them.

- Synthesis: the subject can order disorganized elements to form a whole.

- Evaluation: the subject is able to judge the value of materials or methods.

In this sense, based merely on the definitions of both traditions, it is evident that Critical Pedagogy involves a series of elements that make it broader than Critical Thinking. As it was stated before, Critical Thinking is considered by many as a mental process or a form of higher thinking. In contrast, pedagogy itself is defined by Anderson (2005) as "the art and the science and the profession of teaching" (p.54). The author also mentions that pedagogy involves the ways teachers think and act, students' lives and expectations, and the definition of teachers as professionals. Moreover, the author mentions that pedagogy is a connotation of culture and a way to spread culture to next generation. As a consequence, the concept of Critical Pedagogy has to do with the subjectivity of each one of the before-mentioned elements. In this regard, Monchinski (2008) suggests that there is not a definition that explains the concept of Critical Pedagogy, but there are some common features to the various definitions of it. For Giroux, (as cited in

Monchinski, 2008) Critical Pedagogy is a political pedagogy that promotes students'

understanding and engagement to social issues. In the case of McLaren (as cited in Monchinski,

2008), Critical pedagogy is a way of thinking about, discussing, and changing the relations of

teaching, knowledge, institutional structures, and society. Freire (as cited in Monchinski, 2008)

defines Critical Pedagogy as a pedagogy that examines oppression and looks for emancipation.

Another element that can be compared between these two traditions is their distinct

objectives. Al-Nofaie (2013) mentions that the ultimate goal of Critical Thinking is transfer of

learning. Haskell (as cited in Al-Nofaie, 2013) defines transfer of learning as a process in which

learners use their past knowledge when learning something new and the application of that

knowledge to both similar and new situations. Al-Nofaie (2013) explains that there are two types

of transfer. First, "near transfer" that happens within the same type of issue in the same subject

domain. Second, "far transfer" that happens when solving a problem that is located between two

different domains.

In contrast, Critical Pedagogy has a more complex objective than Critical Thinking. For

Freire (as cited in Berk & Burbules, 1999), the concept of freedom starts with the recognition of a

system full of oppressive relations, and one's own place in that system. In this sense, Freire

asserts that the purpose of Critical Pedagogy is to lead "the oppressed" to a critical consciousness

of their situation. In addition, the authors explain that for Freire, concrete action and change in

consciousness are closely related. This concrete action is often dubbed by authors like Worthman

(as cited in Sarroub & Quadros, 2015) as emancipation. While it is true that the objective of

Critical Pedagogy is more complex than the one of Critical Thinking, it is still possible. In this

regard, McLaren (as cited in Echeverri-Sucerquia et al., 2014) suggests that the fact that history

keeps on changing makes emancipation a real goal that can usher the world to a completely new state.

This information gains value when analyzing specific language settings. For example, the decision of choosing one tradition over the other based on their objectives can also be supported by an analysis of the particular teaching and learning conditions of real language settings like Colombia. González, (as cited in Echeverri-Sucerquia et al., 2014) suggests that in this country language teaching and learning have been guided by "imported paradigms." In this respect, Echeverri-Sucerquia et al. (2014) explain that the prevalence of those paradigms have led people to ignore social problems that affect educational institutions such as violence, poverty, and inequality. Those problems have been ignored regarding the design of educational and linguistic policies, curricula, and teaching and learning methodologies. In this regard, the existence of oppressive relations in the educational system of Colombia is evident. Ortega (2014) made a qualitative study of Critical Pedagogy in Colombia. Some of the findings that the author mentions include that Colombian society has fragmented in a complex and fast way. Also, the author explains that schools have suffered the consequences of this fragmentation. For the author, schools in Colombia are encapsulated, closed, and comparable to ghettos. At the same time, the author points out that schools are interested in social issues and in people who are excluded from the system but in a shallow way. Thus, the author suggests that schools in Colombia have been led to a great paradox between inclusion and rejection. Moreover, Ortega suggests that schools from low-income sectors are characterized by breakdowns in the identity of the communities. Those breakdowns influence the lives of teachers, students, parents, and administrators. These schools also have other common features. First, the government does not fulfil its obligations, therefore, private organizations are taking the place of the government promoting privatization.

Second, they follow the national curriculum that enhances education towards efficacy but not towards justice. In this respect, Ortega suggests that Critical Pedagogy helps people to consider pedagogy as a field of re-signification in settings dominated by inequalities and exclusions. Moreover, Sarroub and Quadros (2015) explain that Critical Thinking fosters a set of learning strategies to analyze texts, which may impact classroom outcomes and student achievement, whereas Critical Pedagogy adopts an ideological position that is a response to power structures. Thus, the difficult language teaching and learning conditions of Colombia emphasize the need of applying Critical Pedagogy over Critical Thinking in language teaching and learning.

The difference regarding objectives of both traditions also affects the way they both define the role of teachers in the classroom. In the case of Critical Thinking tradition, the role of teachers is to facilitate the conditions for transfer to occur. In this regard, Marin and Halpern (as cited in Al-Nofaie, 2013) explain that the transfer of thinking skills depends greatly on the explicit teaching of HOTS. Billing (as cited in Al-Nofaie, 2013) points out that there are conditions that teachers should create to achieve transfer, especially, the transfer of problem solving skills. The first one is the emphasis on principles and concepts instead of learning facts. Another condition that the author names is cooperative work that includes the teacher, complemented by the teacher's feedback. In addition, giving learners training examples can promote transfer in the classroom, especially, when it is complemented by reflection.

In contrast, Kincheloe (as cited in Echeverri-Sucerquia et al., 2014) mentions that Critical Pedagogy goes beyond the management of teaching techniques because it requires teachers who can recognize the political structure of schools. Freire (as cited in Noroozisiam & Soozandehfar, 2011) points out that banking education assumed a one-way teacher-student relationship. It is important for the readers to know that banking education is a concept under which the teacher's

role is reduced to that of filling students with contents. Thus, schools are banks of knowledge

where students are seen as clients (Canestrari & Marlowe, 2004). In this sense, Freire suggests

the idea of problem posing education opposed to that of banking education. The author explains

that problem posing education allows learners to develop their skills to analyze issues in a critical

way including the way they live, and then changing reality around them. Within this concept,

Freire also questions the idea that teachers know everything and the learners know nothing. The

author suggests that teachers know more about some things, but not everything. Freire also

rejects the idea that teachers must be in charge of the class all the time. Freire (as cited in

Echeverri-Sucerquia et al., 2014) points out that this is a negative idea because learners are also

human beings who have the ability to think and challenge. In addition, the author rejects the

notion of teachers as the authority who chooses and enforces its choice, and then, learners

comply. Freire states that even if goals must be firm, teachers need to take into account students'

contribution along their learning process. Thus, the role of teachers in both approaches can be

seen as similar in the sense that they promote cooperative work. However, the role of teachers in

Critical Pedagogy is less traditional than the role of educators in Critical Thinking. In this sense,

traditional education is defined by Doskocil as "instructor-led lecture within a classroom" (2008,

p.6). Moreover, Simmons, Jones and Silver (as cited in Doskocil, 2008) name some

characteristics of traditional education including that the course administrator or the instructor

usually imposes the structure of the course.

In this regard, among the similarities of public schools in Colombia, Ortega (2014) also

mentions that they have policies to solve inequalities from an objective point of view that is

structured in a frame of three criteria: basic necessities, focus, and risk. The author points out that

this structured view is against the subjectivity of real-life education, therefore, its leads to a

concept of teachers as mere followers of a set of techniques of administration who are foreign to pedagogy. Thus, under this view, pedagogy is not necessary because teaching turns into a process of assimilation of information. Moreover, Zambrano (as cited in Ortega, 2014) expresses that a fair society is supported by teachers, their knowledge and pedagogy. In addition, the author expresses that a society without teachers is a society with no future. On the other hand, a forward-looking society is a society that supports education, and sees teachers as more than simple purveyors of knowledge. For this type of society, teachers are an important element that helps to build the society itself. Thus, the role of teachers in settings like Colombia needs to be more than that of a facilitator of transfer which is more compatible with the ideas expressed about teachers under Critical Pedagogy.

Also, the different objectives of these two traditions suggest another core difference between them regarding the way they define their target population. Berk and Burbules (1999) mention that for Critical Thinking their target population is the whole humanity as it seeks to produce a general effect on education, involving all social groups and classes. Thus, virtually almost all human beings can be educated under Critical Thinking tradition.

On the other hand, Berk and Burbules (1999) suggest that Critical Pedagogy has a specific target population that is composed by those who are "oppressed" by the educational system, who generally are rejected, and not able to live in a comfortable way. The authors explain that these people have less social, economic, and political possibilities, and are dubbed as "the oppressed". In this regard, McLaren (as cited in Echeverri-Sucerquia et al., 2014) points out that Critical Pedagogy direction is irreversibly on the side of those who are oppressed.

From this information, it can be deduced that knowing the difference between these two traditions is very important for language teachers because the decision of applying one tradition or the other in the language classroom can change learners' view about education, language, and society in a radical way. This view of learners goes from "world citizens" to that of "individuals oppressed by society" who need a radical change in their lives. For example, when looking information about EFL settings, such as Colombia, one can find claims like the ones of Reimers (1999) who mentions that in Latin America, there is a big amount of people living in poverty, and the poor usually are still illiterate or barely literate. The author also suggests that poor people usually do not get a chance to move out of poverty. The author mentions that the problem is that in Latin America there is an intergenerational transfer of poverty, and that this transfer has its origins in the dynamics of education. In addition, the author explains that the poor in Latin America are those with lower levels of education. This way the definition of the oppressed is very close to the concept of the poor in Latin America. As a consequence, language teachers in EFL settings, more specifically in Colombia, should lean towards Critical Pedagogy because a lot of the learners fall into the category of oppressed. This can be supported by different organizations around the world including the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] that in its "World Factbook" suggests that in Colombia: "income inequality is among the worst in the world, and more than a third of the population lives below the poverty line" (2016). In addition, the World Bank Group (2016) mentions that in Colombia there are considerable inequities in the access to education between groups of people who have different incomes, and between urban and rural population. The organization adds that the overall quality and efficiency of public education at primary, as well as, secondary levels are extremely reduced. It also explains that students from the lowest income are the most affected. It is important to recognize that the government is making efforts to overcome poverty and the problems related to education. However, more efforts are needed. In

this regard, the World Bank Group mentions that national government programs such as "Escuela Nueva" have made an important progress at extending education to the poor in Colombia. Nevertheless, the organization points out that if the government wants for the poor to gain access to good public education, it has to make significant new investment in primary, secondary and preschool programs. As a consequence, using Critical Pedagogy could help language teachers to cover the specific needs of learners in a better way than Critical Thinking in EFL settings with similar conditions to the ones suggested about Colombia. In this regard, Ooiwa-Yoshizawa (2012) suggests that a fundamental aspect of Critical Pedagogy is for learners to overcome unfavorable life situations by raising awareness of the power relations embedded in society.

Language Teaching and Learning

Regarding language learning and teaching there are specific elements that can be analyzed to facilitate a decision for language teachers.

First, the condition of language within society. In this sense, different authors support the claim that language is not a neutral element, it is a tool that influences individuals. In this sense, Noroozisiam and Soozandehfar (2011) suggest that language is a very powerful tool, and that its power is usually underestimated especially when it is merely learnt it for the sake of being a competent speaker, reader or whatever. In addition, Peirce (as cited in Sarroub & Quadros, 2015) argues that it is necessary to expand the views of language as neutral because "English, like all other languages, is a site of struggle over meaning, access, and power". Pennycook (as cited in Noroozisiam & Sozandehfar, 2011) questions the political neutrality of English Language Teaching and points out its tendency to favor some people over others. In this case, Critical Pedagogy is closer to this view about language as critical language pedagogy is committed to

issues such as power, inequality, and social change (Toohey, as cited in Echeverri-Sucerquia et al., 2014). In the case of Critical Thinking, as it was explained before, a neutral view of language and education is suggested (Javad & Mollaei, 2012).

Another element that could tip the balance in favour of the use of Critical Pedagogy is the fact that promoting Critical Thinking can be considered as a method in language teaching and learning (Al-Nofaie, 2013). In this respect, Alexander (as cited in Al-Nofaie, 2013) mentions that meaningful classroom dialogue requires students to use their HOTS. Thus, Critical Thinking can also be considered as a helpful method to promote the development of "conscientização", usually translated as "critical consciousness" which is a concept developed by Freire (as cited in Berk & Burbules, 1999). In this sense, it is important for the readers to know that critical consciousness can be defined as the ability of subjects to consciously re-evaluate and re-interpret their links with their culture, their social and politic context, and their historical age (McAuliffe, 2008). In addition, Freire (as cited in Berk & Burbules, 1999) explains that the pedagogical method that Critical Pedagogy promotes is *dialogue*. In this respect, the author asserts that "cultural action for freedom is characterized by dialogue, and its preeminent purpose is to make people more conscious of their own lives." For Giroux (as cited in Davis-Seaver & Davis, 2000), a prominent author in Critical Pedagogy tradition, Critical Thinking is a political act which holds the key to the continuance of democracy and an open society. This act implies teaching the students to think and reflect for themselves and to gain a better understanding of reality, truth, and knowledge. Thus, as a method, Critical Thinking can help Critical Pedagogy to accomplish its ultimate purpose in a partial way. In this regard, in Critical Pedagogy the betterment of understanding must be used for the benefit of others and to bring about a more democratic and just society (Giroux, as cited in Davis-Seaver & Davis, 2000). At this point, it is important for the readers to

remember the fact that within teaching, a method can be defined as a "way of teaching." (Salandanan, 2008, p. 3). Meanwhile, pedagogy is a broader term that involves "a series of coherent and consistent methods of instruction" (Nicholson, 2016).Thus, Critical Pedagogy may use Critical Thinking as a method. To finish this paragraph, it is important to remember some of the elements of Critical Thinking that make it a complex method in language teaching and learning as it involves the development of a series of cognitive skills described in Bloom's taxonomy. Those skills include recalling facts, interpreting, classifying, executing, implementing, organizing, critiquing and creating (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

In terms of benefits for language teachers and learners, both traditions are suitable in different language contexts. Moreover, from the before-stated information, it can be deduced that Critical Pedagogy can benefit from the positive aspects of Critical Thinking when using it as a method. The benefits of using Critical Thinking tradition in language teaching and learning include the betterment of cognitive skills such as thinking creatively, making decisions, solving difficulties, and understanding language or its contents (Shirkhani & Fahim, 2011). The authors also explain that Critical Thinking can help language learners to become aware of their own thinking, so that, they can evaluate and improve their own ways of learning more successfully. In addition, Halvorsen (2005) explains the two main benefits of the use of tasks that promote Critical Thinking in a language classroom. First, classes which involve critical thinking tend to be generally more interesting and engaging for language learners. The second benefit that Halvorsen explains is that using Critical Thinking issues gives a classroom a more meaningful and cohesive environment. Students feel that they are part of the learning process. Therefore, they will be more likely to attend classes and will be more motivated while they are there. Halvorsen also explains that by using Critical Thinking teachers can learn the importance of adapting or modifying

lessons. The author observes that most experienced teachers assert that the more you know about

the backgrounds and interests of learners the more appropriate and interesting your classes will

be. This idea is even more relevant when talking about language classes with a focus on Critical

Thinking because not all students will respond to different topics equally. Moreover, the author

explains the importance of using questions to foster Critical Thinking in the classroom. In this

sense, the author points out that most of language course books have some form of "discussion

questions" which are designed to give students opportunities to practice language use. The writer

suggests that based on his own work as a teacher, trainer and observer, he has noticed that those

questions are often used as a tool, or even worse, as a kind of hurdle teachers need to get over

before moving on to the next topic. For the author, even if it is true that these questions are often

written in a way that can be seen as really far from Critical Thinking, language teachers need to

remember that they always have the power to modify or adapt lessons to their own

circumstances. It is easier for teachers, if questions just pass by with the students simply

considering some information from a reading or listening passage. However, the long term

message this sends to students is that the topic is not really of any importance. Therefore,

profiting from the benefits that Critical Thinking could offer depends greatly on teachers'

knowledge about this tradition. Also, even if some authors support Critical Thinking based solely

on topics close to learners, this tradition still provides teachers with the opportunities of

connecting or not their lessons to this type of contents. In this sense, it can be considered as more

flexible than Critical Pedagogy.

In contrast, Echeverri-Sucerquia et al. (2014) explain that Critical Pedagogy gives

teachers a language to understand, inquire and eventually make changes in the world around

them. Other benefits of Critical Pedagogy include the ones described by Noroozisiam and

Soozandehfar (2011) who suggest that cultures are on the way of knowing and treasuring their true identity and the people of those cultures are showing those identities. According to these authors, language is no exception and it can be considered as a tool to achieve the goal of showing the identity of people around the world. Thus, the authors mention that in the case of foreign languages , more exactly English, the idea of an "universal language" that allows to transfer discursive and pedagogical norms is by itself an idea of total cultural destruction. The authors mention that Critical Pedagogy can help language teachers to avoid the destruction of the identity of language learners. Thus, by using Critical Pedagogy language teachers will obtain a closer look on their real context and that of students. Also, the fact that Critical Pedagogy is highly concerned about the context of learners can help language teachers to cover the specific needs of their students. In this sense, Noroozisiam and Soozandehfar (2011) mention that for Critical Pedagogy making a difference in language as EFL or English as a Second Language (hereafter ESL) is also making a difference between the identities of learners. In respect of critical EFL pedagogy, Javad and Mollaei (2012) suggest that learners at EFL settings usually come from different backgrounds, have different gender and belong to different social classes. As a consequence, micro-relations of power always exist inside and outside the language classroom. These kinds of relations can be analyzed in a deeper way by using Critical Pedagogy. For example, Javad and Mollaie (2012) explain that when learners are actually the most powerful members of a society, Critical Pedagogy may play an important role in education because it constitutes a positive approach to exercise their power in a right way turning the world into a better and more equal place.

Promoting Critical Thinking in the Language Classroom

In this section, some strategies that promote Critical Thinking in the language classroom will be described. Jones (2004 a) explains an activity designed to promote Critical Thinking and self-reflection named *Critical Thinking: What a Character.* To accomplish the goal of the task, learners need to brainstorm for vocabulary related to personality traits. Then, the teacher shows them a video that contains a dilemma and involves characters with various types of personalities. Students discuss the dilemma and the personalities of the characters classifying them as attractive or unattractive. Then, students are asked to write a short essay about a character they like or dislike, and to read and respond to some essays of his or her classmates. The author suggests that this task is more suitable for first-year non-English majors enrolled in a mandatory university EFL course. However, the author makes clear that depending on the context, this activity may be useful at other language teaching and learning settings. Another activity proposed by Jones (2004 b) is the one that the author has named as *Critical Thinking: How Much of You Is You?* In this activity, students will be encouraged to think about the influences of mass media and popular culture on their lives. The writer mentions that the first step in the procedure is asking students to create an outline about their daily activities. Then in pairs or small groups, students discuss and prepare a report about the actions of their daily lives which they think are being influenced by media and popular culture. Groups report to the class solving any doubts that their teacher or classmates may have. Later, students watch a collection of short videos that can be commercial, dramas, sit-coms, MTV, etc. The class take notes on what they watch and listen to, especially, about influences on individual actions and lifestyle. Students share notes within a different group. In the new group, students are given magazines and are asked again to look for messages or pictures that may change people's actions and lifestyles. The new groups, write a short essay on

their opinion about the influence that mass media and popular culture have on their lives. Finally,

essays are posted for public viewing, and later used as a class resource. Jones also suggests that

this task is designed for first-year non-English majors enrolled in a compulsory university EFL

course. Nevertheless, the author makes clear again that depending on the context, this activity

may be a good resource for language teachers at other settings.

Halvorsen (2005) suggests two classroom techniques that the author has used or seen in

large and small classes at EFL and ESL settings, in different levels of proficiency and knowledge

from lower to advanced, and generally in a vast number of teaching situations. First, Halvorsen

proposes media analysis. The author explains that this technique gives learners the opportunity to

think about issues such as media bias and censorship and to explore other topics that affect their

own lives. The first step to apply this technique is choosing a form of media and a topic. This

should be done most preferably by students. Then, learners must have enough time to make a

deep analysis of the required elements they will be asked to work with. Once the whole class

understands the activity and the topic, the teacher should introduce the questions designed to

promote critical reflection. The author gives some examples of these type of questions including:

Who is the author? Why did he or she write or report this piece? Do you feel the facts are

accurate? How does this information make you feel personally? How do you feel other people

around the world would feel about it? As a follow-up activity, the author explains that learners

can write a response to the author of the piece expressing their opinion about it. The last

technique that Halvorsen (2005) describes is problem solving. The author suggests that it works

because problems exist everywhere inside and out the classroom. Thus, the author mentions that

analyzing a complex problem like those related to a city's poor public transport system can give

learners a range of opportunities to think critically. The first step to implement this activity is for

the class to identify a problem that is relevant to their lives. Some examples include the high cost

of education at the school, and visa difficulties for international students. The next step is for the

class to work together at defining the problem in a clear way. All students must have almost the

same definition to ensure a good start for the activity. Then, the teacher can divide the class into

small groups or pairs and ask them to list the causes of the problem. Later, the teacher identifies

two or three causes that are common among students and ask them to propose real-world

solutions to those causes. Finally, the language teacher elaborates an action plan using student's

ideas and share it with the class, and if possible with the official statements involved in the

problem.

Structured Controversial Dialogues are another tool that can be used in a language class to

enhance Critical Thinking. This technique is supported by the work of authors like Zainuddin and

Moore (2003).The authors recommend this technique at ESL settings. It uses a cooperative

learning style in which students work in groups, and argue different perspectives of an issue in

order to move from their advocacy position to a "broader" position that summarizes all

perspectives. Johnson, Johnson, & Smith (as cited in Zainuddin & Moore, 2003) mention that this

technique enhances intellectual inquiry including coherent intellectual arguments, facing others'

arguments, and looking for reasoned judgements. Zainuddin and Moore (2003) describe the

procedures to use this technique. The first step is to divide the class into groups of four and re-

divide the group into two pairs. Then, the teacher assigns each pair an advocacy position and give

them some supporting references to conduct their research on the topic. Next, the teacher asks

students from different groups with the same advocacy to compare and to highlight the main

arguments they can defend. Later, the teacher asks pairs to come back to their original group and

share their position with the other pair of students. After this, the teacher can reverse perspectives

of the two pairs and make students present the best case for the opposing position. This way

students will see the issue from different perspectives. Next, each group of four prepares a short

dialogue showing the two positions including supporting evidence, different characters, a short

title that summarizes the controversial problem, a dilemma, and a question that advocates the two

positions. Then groups exchange their dialogues, prepare an answer to the dilemma and to the

question posed. Finally, the author gives teachers some samples of structured controversies (See

Appendices A, and B, for more information).

Promoting Critical Pedagogy in the Language Classroom

At the beginning of this paper, it was mentioned that one of the problematic situation

when establishing a difference between Critical Pedagogy and Critical Thinking is that research

on the differences between Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy in language classroom

practice is scarce in literature (Sarroub & Quadros, 2015). This idea becomes a reality when

analyzing in a deeper way language tasks designed by different authors under both traditions.

Kabilan (2000) proposed a methodology using a series of tasks under the name of

"Creative and Critical Thinking in Language Classrooms." The author mentions that proficiency

in a language is only achieved when learners think critically and creatively about it. Then, the

author makes a short introduction about Paulo Freire's ideas and approach, especially the

concepts of Problem-Posing education and the Pedagogy of Questions. Later, Kabilan describes

thoroughly the role of language teachers in the methodology to introduce Critical Pedagogy in

classrooms. First of all, the author explains that if teachers determine to produce learners who

would only obtain good results in their tests, they will choose activities and strategies that help

them to achieve this goal. On the other hand, when language teachers want to nurture creative

and Critical Thinking, the activities, and techniques used in class will help learners to reach this

purpose. In other words, the author explains that the only element teachers need to turn their

classes into more creative and critical spaces by using Critical Pedagogy is to review their

attitudes on learners, pedagogy, and themselves as teachers. Kabilan points out that under Critical

Pedagogy teachers need to acknowledge the individuality of students to engage them in the

classroom, and to let them know that their opinions and beliefs are important. In this sense,

Kabilan supports Freire's idea that teachers and students must have an equal relationship. Kabilan

also mentions that teachers need to adopt a new attitude toward pedagogy. The author supports

the Pedagogy of Questions proposed by Freire (as cited in Kabilan, 2000). This pedagogy

involves posing questions to learners and listening to learners' questions. According to Kabilan,

this practice challenges students to think in a creative and critical way, and to assume a critical

attitude toward the world. In addition, language teachers should know different ways to ask

questions and to guide classroom talk in order to improve cognitive development areas (See

Appendices C, and D for more information). Then, Kabilan describes Freire's problem-posing

methodology to develop critical and creative language students in a detailed way. Freire proposed

a method based on real-life situations of students that are made into problem-solving situations,

and focuses on showing students that they have the right to ask questions. The first step of the

process is listening to students' issues. Later, the teacher chooses and brings familiar situations to

students in a pictorial form. Next, the teacher asks different inductive questions (from concrete to

analytical) related to the discussion of the situation. The discussion should follow five steps

(Nixon-Ponder, as cited in Kabilan, 2000) that include: describing the topic of discussion,

defining the problem, personalizing the problem, discussing the problem, and discussing the

alternatives of the problem. Kabilan describes that in this method, the aspects of posing critical

questions are very consequential and they show learners' thoughts based on their personal beliefs,

experiences, and views of the world. Then, the author gives examples on problem-posing, and decision making activities that can be implemented in language classrooms (See Appendices E, and F, for more information).

Some conclusions that can be drawn from this section. First, Kabilan (2000) combines the ideas of both traditions to design a language task that is similar to the ones purely based on Critical Thinking tradition. At this point, it would be useful to remember that Critical Thinking can constitute a method within Critical Pedagogy (Al-Nofaie, 2013) which could explain the combination. These conditions of the relation between Critical Pedagogy and Critical Thinking had led to a lack of description of tasks that help language teachers and learners to achieve the ultimate goal of Critical Pedagogy that is social change. Probably, one activity under Critical Pedagogy that is close to generate this kind of change is the one described by Andrew (2014) who suggests the creation of a bridge from the classroom to the real world by leading language learners to volunteering in their own communities as a means to achieve conscience about the local context and its needs. The author describes that one of the biggest benefits from this practice is that it leads students to rethink and examine their own ideas and attitudes toward aspects such as identity, class, and economic injustice. In this sense, this practice can constitute one step to build a critical opinion on learners that can be complemented by other activities involving the use of the target language inside and outside the classroom. Second, the connections that can be done between both traditions in language teaching and learning is reflected in the similarities among the activities that had been proposed to implement them. Some of those similarities include activities that seek to activate different cognitive skills such as forming relationships, comparing and contrasting, identifying right from wrong, identifying main ideas, making decisions, and solving problems. Other similarities regarding process are the

importance of working on controversial topics that are close to students' world. Third, regarding

the types of activities that can be implemented in the language classroom to promote both

traditions, Critical Thinking activities are simpler to apply in the sense that they usually can be

accomplished in the classroom setting. In the case of Critical Pedagogy, the activities that

intervene both inside and outside the classroom are preferred. However, the lack of practicality

could be a determinant factor in the number of proposals on activities of this type. This lack can

also be justified in terms of adverse teaching and learning conditions which can be found,

especially, at some EFL settings.

Research on Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy

An objective derived from the main purpose of this paper is helping language teachers to

ponder the implementation of Critical Thinking or Critical Pedagogy. Besides the before-stated

information, another step towards this objective is to look at some studies around the world on

this implementation and their conclusions. Regarding Critical Thinking, the first conclusion that

can be made is that the background of learners could influence to some extent the results of its

implementation. However, it is important for language teachers to remember that: not all schools

or students are the same (Reimers, 1999). In this sense, Roether (as cited in Al-Nofaie, 2013)

made a study to explore Critical Thinking skills among a group of South Korean students of an

American language institute and then making a comparison of their performance to that of

students of the United States. The researcher concluded that the reason for the lower scores of

Korean students compared to that of American students was the background of students.

Stapleton (as cited in Al-Nofaie, 2013) made a study to identify aspects of Critical Thinking in

second language writing. The study was carried out in Japan, and the results showed that opposite

to the idea about Japanese students as passive students, a lot of participants had many aspects of

Critical Thinking. Moreover, Floyd (as cited in Al-Nofaie, 2013) studied the influence of first language and second language on the application of Critical Thinking skills in China. The results of the research showed that contrary to assumptions, Chinese students can demonstrate that they have a Critical Thinking. Second, there are some aspects language teachers need to work on with learners when introducing Critical Thinking. For example, an open-minded view on the perspective of others. In this sense, Pessoa and Freitas (as cited in Al-Nofaie, 2013) did a case study on identifying challenges of discussing critical themes in order to teach English in a Brazilian language center. Researchers concluded that learners had positive thoughts about discussing Critical Thinking topics regarding engagement and self-realization. Nevertheless, the view of learners and teachers can be dominant. Thus, ways of recognizing the importance of opposite views need to be implemented. In addition, a study named "Working by projects: A way to enrich critical thinking and the writing process in a third grade EFL classroom" took place in Colombia (Ruiz, 2013). The research aimed at describing, analyzing, and documenting the way students developed their English writing skill through project work and Critical Thinking. The results of the study showed that using project work improved the Critical Thinking and writing skills of students. Participants were also able to connect their previous knowledge to the new language learned to help them to find the meaning of words, concepts, and texts in the foreign language. In other words, transfer of skills was successful. In addition, they learnt to interact in a better way with their classmates. Moreover, they learnt the importance of learning English in their lives. Furthermore, their confidence when speaking and writing in English increased, and they became more reflective, critical about their thoughts, words and about what happened around them. Another example is the need of preparing a throughout plan for an implementation that reaches different levels of knowledge, especially when working with beginners. Regarding this idea, Park (as cited in Al-Nofaie, 2013) studied the benefits and challenges of introducing

newspaper articles into reading curriculum as a pedagogical tool in order to develop Critical

Thinking skills of students in a reading classroom in South Korea. The researcher found that

students made significant progress regarding their use of specific expressions that revealed their

ideas and their involvement in Critical Thinking. However, the researcher concluded that this

pedagogical tool requires a lot of preparation from the teacher when it is used with learners who

have low levels of knowledge and proficiency. In addition, Mehrad and Ahghar (as cited in Al-

Nofaie, 2013) did a quantitative study on the effects of teaching cognitive and metacognitive

strategies on the development of the reading comprehension of learners in Iran. The results of the

study showed that cognitive and metacognitive strategies to enhance Critical Thinking could be

inappropriate for beginners who have language boundaries that prevent them to identify the

purpose of writers. In the case of advanced learners, they made positive progress. Third, direct

instruction on critical skills can be considered as positive. Alwehaibi (as cited in Al-Nofaie,

2013) made a study in Saudi Arabia. The purpose of the study was to develop five general

Critical Thinking skills including causal explanation, argument, and prediction, determining the

reliability of sources, and determining parts- whole relationships. The results of this study

showed that direct instruction enhanced language learners' Critical Thinking skills. Furthermore,

a study named "A Guided Reading of Images: A Strategy to Develop Critical Thinking and

Communicative Skills" took place in Colombia (Sarmiento, 2010). It had the goal of describing

the effects of guided reading using the technique of questioning to enhance critical thinking of

EFL students. The results of the study showed that guided reading of images activate children's

mental process, and help them to move from basic to higher levels of Critical Thinking while

children express what they think in Spanish, as well as, using vocabulary in English. Fourth,

introducing Critical Thinking can help learners to establish a connection between language and

human experiences in real life. In this regard, another study named "EFL Students' Perceptions of

Social Issues in Famous Works of Art" was conducted at a Colombian public school in Bogota

(Bautista Urrego & Parra Toro, 2016). The research wanted to engage participants in the practice

of Critical Thinking as a strategy to appreciate art that expresses social issues taking into account

that from the point of view of researchers, English classes should foster language skills, however,

there should also be a space where they can explore the culture of the target language speakers. In

this regard, the authors express that "languages are a window to understanding society". To

accomplish the purpose of the research famous works of art were presented to students. Then a

conversation club was created. In this club, students were expected to recognize and debate over

the social issues implicit in the works of art. The results of the study showed that by using their

Critical Thinking skills, participants recognized that behind a work of art there is a human

experienced coded by the artist. This way researchers also conclude that the participant felt linked

to the feelings and experiences that the artists were trying to convey, and that they were able to

recognize social issues in works of art by using their Critical Thinking skills. Moreover,

participants acknowledged that Critical Thinking is a powerful instrument to find the knowledge

that lays behind a work of art, not only as something on a canvas but as a human experience that

can be recognized in every one of them. Fifth, as an overall, the results of the implementation

presented in this paper have been positive. A study carried out in Taiwan (Chen, as cited in Al-

Nofaie, 2013) had the purpose of applying HOTS to develop learners speaking skill. This

approach to HOTS had a positive influence on learners speaking proficiency. Also, Chen

recommends to apply the same approach in EFL classrooms. A different study was made by

Allen in 2004 (as cited in Al-Nofaie, 2013). It took place in the United States. Participants wrote

portfolios about stereotypes of French culture using their analytical and research skills the results

showed that learners were engaged in the process of construction of the portfolios and that they

became conscious about their metacognitive processes. Finally, most of the studies presented in

this section, considered reading, writing and speaking skills within ELF teaching and learning. Thus, there is a need of further research regarding listening skill. In addition, there is a need of further research about the introduction of Critical Thinking in EFL teaching and learning in general. In this regard, Al-Nofaie (2013) suggests the implementation of Critical Thinking into education has recently become a worldwide goal. Moreover, the author explains that the introduction of Critical Thinking as language pedagogy in EFL is somehow a new trend, therefore, it requires further research.

There is also an array of studies that applied Critical Pedagogy in language classrooms around the world with different outcomes from them. First, introducing activities that lead students to form and convey their opinions can be a positive start to implement Critical Pedagogy in the language classroom. Ghahremani-Ghajar and Mirhosseini (as cited in Sarroub & Quadros, 2015) made a study in Iranian high schools using dialogue journals to convey learners' opinions on topics of interest. The results of the study found that students profit from the opportunity to use "their" English to convey opinions. This can be evidenced by the fact that most learners do not code the journals into descriptive and personal ways. They coded their writings into critical and creative essays. Moreover, Shin and Crookes (as cited in Sarroub & Quadros, 2015) employed Critical Pedagogy by creating projects in an English class in South Korea. The projects they used included slide presentations, travel plans, discussion groups, posters, and written essays. The results showed that students valued class discussions as opportunities for listening to their classmates' opinions to expand their views. Shin and Crookes point out that learners engage in the discussion by asking questions, revealing divergences, and clarifying their classmates' comments. Second, another element that is important when applying Critical Pedagogy is teachers' preparation for the process. In this sense, Noroozisiam and Sozandehfar (2011) made a

qualitative study in Ardebil, Iran. The study investigated the attitudes and perceptions of 10

language teachers from three popular institutes about the implementation of Critical pedagogy to

teach English. The study was done using observation and semi-structured interview. The results

showed that language teachers had positive attitudes towards the implementation of Critical

Pedagogy. However, teachers had the tendency to not applying all the features of Critical

Pedagogy because most of the teachers described their role in the language classroom as a

provider of knowledge and an authority that prevent chaos. Third, promoting students' reflection

and inquiry about the process of implementation can also contribute to make it easier. In this

regard, on a study conducted in Venezuela, Brutt-Griffler and Samimy (as cited in Noroozisiam

& Sozandehfar, 2011) used diary writing and discussions to trigger learners' reflection and

critical abilities. The authors highlight that it is important for this activity to make an ongoing

process of self-reflection in order to construct a subjectivity. Fourth, Critical Pedagogy considers

learners' background and identity as important elements to take into account when introducing

this tradition. In this regard, Huang (as cited in Sarroub & Quadros, 2015) taught in an English

reading and writing classroom in Taiwan. Taking into account the culture of learners Huang

decided to use writing journals focusing on critique, and different views of reading material with

the same topic to implement Critical Pedagogy. The results of this implementation showed that

learners started to read in a conscious way, to uncover hidden messages in readings, and to

consider different points of view. Learners felt encouraged to write because their writing turned

somehow into a meaningful activity. In addition, a research was carried out in Colombia. It was

named "The Use of English Songs with Social Content as a Situated Literacy Practice: Factors

that Influence Student Participation in the EFL Classroom" (Palacios & Chapetón, 2014). This

study analyses the factors that influence the participation of students when songs with social

content are used in an EFL classroom under the perspective of Critical Pedagogy. The results of

the research show that the factors that influenced students were those linked to the songs and the learners themselves. Another research that could support this claim is the one titled "A Case Study of a Critical Dialogue Between Expert and Novice Nonnative English Speaker Teachers" (Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015).This research examines the online, peer-peer dialogue between two groups of Nonnative English Students Teachers (hereafter NNESTs) who attend graduate programs in Colombia and the United States. The information was examined under the light of Critical Pedagogy and the concept of global professional identity (A professional identity of English teachers that is also internationally minded, in other words, it is conscious that any teaching context is situated at both worldwide and local scales simultaneously (Varghese, as cited in Nieto & Meadows, 2015). The results showed that the roles of expert vs. novice shaped to a great extend the positions of the participants regarding different topics. Moreover, teacher education programs for NNESTs should offer knowledge about Critical Pedagogy because it can help NNESTs to overcome a series of problems including the colonial legacy of ELT which affects NNESTs' professional identity. In addition, Critical Pedagogy can help NNESTs to build a healthy professional identity that is in line with worldwide complexities around them. Fifth, achieving a real change in learners' life is not just the product of raising critical consciousness and it takes time. Even if it is complex to reach, critical consciousness is still an important element that can help teachers to produce this change not only in students' lives but in their own lives. Sarroub and Quadros (2015) explain some studies about the arrangements that language teachers had to carry out to teach in a critical way. The authors mention that Sadegui (as cited in Sarroub & Quadros, 2015) made a study of the implementation of Critical Pedagogy in an Iranian classroom through the introduction of local forbidden topics or taboos, as well as, discussion about them using diverse articles, and students' own sources of information and knowledge, for example, texts, and pictures. Sadegui met resistance, so he suggested that critical

consciousness does not necessarily urge critical action. The author mentions that critical

consciousness gives learners the chance to resist or change. Another research that supports the

ideas expressed before is described in an article named "Critical Pedagogy in English Teacher

Professional Development: The Experience of a Study Group". In this article, Echeverri-

Sucerquia et al. (2014) explain the results of a case study that aimed to discover the experience of

a study group about Critical Pedagogy in Colombia. The study group was composed by seven

language teachers from different contexts. The members of the group gathered 2 or 4 hours every

week to discuss critical readings on different aspects of Critical Pedagogy. Through all the

activities the group did including writing reading reports, elaborating mind maps, and discussing

issues related to Critical Pedagogy, the members of the group increased their critical

consciousness (conscientização), and they identify two stages in the development of this

consciousness. First, self- and world- awareness including topics such as the reasons for their

own existence, and their actions. This way, members started their processes as critical language

teachers. Second, re-signifying Second Language Education which is the result of imagining

individually and collectively a "humanizing pedagogy" in language teaching and learning that is

theoretically clear, critically aware, and sees students as integral human beings. Sixth, more

research in the topic is needed, especially, research comparing different EFL settings when

applying Critical Pedagogy, and on the influence outside the language classroom that Critical

Pedagogy may have. In this sense, Sarroub and Quadros (2015) suggest that further research is

needed on classroom interaction in the context of larger cultural and social processes, especially,

in regions of the world that are experiencing political and environmental changes. The authors

also suggest that further research need to include the ways how Critical Pedagogy influences

Critical Thinking, ethnographic studies on the impact of Critical Pedagogy in different cultures,

and on conversational discourse for better understanding of the "critical issues" in Critical

Pedagogy classrooms. The lack of this kind of research can still be explained by the lack of

information about the differences on the application of both traditions in language classes, as well

as, the existence of a concept of Critical Thinking as a valuable method within Critical Pedagogy.

Comparing the findings in the implementation of both traditions presented in this paper,

some conclusions can be drawn. First, the implementation of both traditions in language

classrooms within the research before-mentioned, in general, has been positive. Second, in order

to implement any of these traditions, teachers need to know and reflect about them. Third, work

on students' attitude is needed for it to be more acceptant of the opinion and beliefs of others.

Fourth, they both consider learners' background and culture as valuable source of further

research. Finally, as an overall, the issue on the lack of studies comparing these traditions in

terms of practice within the language classroom has also reached the research on the

implementation of Critical Pedagogy.

Challenges of Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy in the Language Classroom

To finish this paper, some of the problems that language teachers may find when

implementing Critical Thinking or Critical Pedagogy in their lessons will be described. Also, this

section includes advice for teachers on ways to overcome some of those problems.

Al-Nofaie, (2013) made a case study on the boundaries of implementing Critical Thinking

in a language classroom. The author divides the findings into different categories including

boundaries related to the teachers, to the context, and to the learners. Regarding the boundaries

related to the teacher. The main limitation is the attitude that language teachers have in front of

the implementation. The author describes a situation where the teacher was hesitant about

applying Critical Thinking dialogue in the classroom. The author observed that at the end of the

course, the dialogue in the classroom had changed from critical to communicative. Thus, the

learners shared information without being involved in Critical Thinking. The author explains that

the teacher's concerns when applying Critical Thinking in the class led to a modification in the

interactional style. Another barrier regarding attitude is a teacher who discourages argumentation

by evading sensitive issues in the context of students, and making only a few conversational

connections in the last discussions to evade evaluations from the part of students. In addition,

Critical Thinking is difficult to implement when the teacher wants to control all the initiatives of

students. This can be generated by a traditionalist view of teaching related to the teacher's

obvious wielding of power in the classroom. Also, the very context of education in a determined

setting can constitute a boundary itself. The author names Saudi Arabia education, as an example

of this kind of settings. The author suggests that the educational system in Saudi Arabia is

bureaucratic, and its projects and changes are made by educational male authorities. Thus,

teachers' thoughts and efforts for making innovation that leads to discussion on gender equality

in education is usually demolished by the power of authorities. In this regard, Wachob (as cited in

Al-Nofaie, 2013) explains that if a teacher wants for learners to become reflective, he or she

should give them opportunities to express ideas and take part in the course projects. Al-Nofaie

also describes some barriers related to language learners when applying critical thinking in the

classroom. The first barrier can be linked to the use of complex language. In his theory of socio-

cultural interaction, Vygotsky (as cited in Al-Nofaie, 2013) proposes that learners' tasks should

be somewhat higher than their current levels. Al-Nofaie (2013) explains that dialogue requires

students to build on others' opinions and to extend their own speech. Thus, lack of vocabulary

can constitute a complex barrier in such kind of dialogue. Raschka et al. (as cited in Al-Nofaie,

2013) recommends EFL teachers to allow the use of the native language of learners especially at

first stages of the implementation to encourage talk. Al-Nofaie (2013) explains that the main

purpose of the implementation of Critical Thinking is transfer. However, there are many

opportunities when transfer does not occur despite learners and teachers' effort. In this regard,

Wade and Reynolds (as cited in Al-Nofaie, 2013) explain that transfer does not occur when there

is no metacognition. A commonly accepted definition of metacognition is the one stated by John

Flavell in 1976 (as cited in McCormick, 2003). The author explains that metacognition is

knowledge related to one's own cognitive processes and the outcomes of those processes. In

addition, Paris and Winograd (as cited in cited in McCormick, 2003) suggest that the two most

relevant aspects of metacognition are "knowledge about cognition and control over cognition"

(p.79). In this respect, Alabdelwahab mentions that enhancing metacognition seems to be more

difficult when teachers work in a contexts where reflection is not part of educational policies and

curriculum (as cited in Al-Nofaie, 2013). Al-Nofaie (2013) explains that transfer should not be

rejected as an element of the Critical Thinking approach even if teaching metacognitive skills is a

challenging process. Therefore, it is important for language teachers to look for strategies that

lead learners to metacognition of topics.

Critical Pedagogy also faces a variety of challenges that language teachers need to know in

order to implement it in language classrooms. First of all, the conditions of some languages,

especially English, regarding specific societies. In this sense, Eastman (as cited in Sarroub &

Quadros, 2015) questions the appropriateness of introducing and implementing Critical literacy

into classrooms where learners have more of an interest in learning English language itself, rather

than an interest in raising their critical awareness about it. Also, the author questions this

implementation into a curriculum in which English is learned as a means to survive and to reach a

cultural status. Rogers et al. (as cited in Sarroub & Quadros, 2015), questions if teaching English

using Critical Pedagogy will make a real difference in the lives of students and their families.

Moreover, Sarroub and Quadros (2015) explain that in the case of English Language Teaching,

the political imposition of English interferes with local multilingualism. In this regard, Phillipson

and Canagarajah (as cited in Sarroub & Quadros, 2015) explain that local communities suffer

when English is imposed. The authors take the example of countries of the "third world" where

English can be used as a tool to increase population' dependence and subjugation. The authors

add that English can be used as a means of transmission of the values of the consumerism culture,

which reflect aspects of capitalist societies and countries that are under the status of great powers.

Pennycook (as cited in Sarroub & Quadros, 2015) complements this idea and mentions that the

international spread of English historically has paralleled the spread of Western cultural norms.

Another element that can be challenging are the different ways teachers need to prepare in order

to implement Critical Pedagogy. In this regard, Freire (as cited in Kabilan, 2000) mentions that

the current situation in language classrooms is that teachers practice the "pedagogy of answers

and solutions." The author suggests that, usually, this is done subconsciously. Thus, many

teachers do not realize that they are spoon-feeding the answers to students most of the time.

Freire also explains that teachers tend to assume the pedagogy of answers because they are

sometimes afraid of questions to which they are not sure about the answers, and also because

perhaps the questions do not correspond to the answers they already know. Moreover, Freire (as

cited in Shirkhani & Fahim, 2011) also suggests that giving the answers to students steals the

rights that they have to question, and the learners are not encouraged to reason and show higher

order thoughts. As a consequence, teachers need to use activities which require students to be

more active and questioning in the classroom. Moreover, the author explains that it is vital for

teachers to have positive beliefs and attitudes towards Critical Pedagogy. Furthermore, Rocha-

Schmid (as cited in Sarroub & Quadros, 2015) wonders if it is possible for teachers to be able to

take distance from their ideologies and not influencing and controlling the course of classroom

dialogue. In addition, the author proposes the need of thinking about which voices are silenced when using a "liberatory" pedagogy such as Critical Pedagogy. Cox and Assis-Peterson (as cited in Sarroub & Quadros, 2015 made a study in Brazil about empowering discourse, the concept that language teachers had about it, and the way they used it in their classrooms. The results of this study showed that teachers were not conscious of this concept or had any understanding of Critical Pedagogy. Ko and Wang (as cited in Sarroub & Quadros, 2015) explain some of the challenges that language teachers faced in Taiwan to introduce Critical Pedagogy in their classes. Those challenges include lack of classroom time, large class size, and cultural expectations. Thinsain (as cited in Noroozisiam & Soozandehfar, 2011) mentions that language teachers who apply Critical Pedagogy need to be careful about total isolation of learners from mainstream issues because this would limit their vision about the world. Another issue has to do with the level of learners. In this sense, Shin and Crookes (2005) mention that a challenge language teachers can face when teaching using Critical Pedagogy is the limited language proficiency of learners who are beginners to participate in a discussion in the target language. Other challenges that Sarroub and Quadros (2015) mention include learners' dislike towards idealized concepts that are often used in Critical Pedagogy, learners and experts' skepticism towards the "empowering" results in students' lives when using Critical Pedagogy.

As a conclusion of this section, a common challenge for both theories is overcoming the problems that can emerge from teachers' attitude towards the implementation, as well as, their lack of knowledge about the key aspects of every tradition. Moreover, they both share a concern for the learners who have low levels of proficiency and knowledge about the target language.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Some conclusions can be drawn from the information presented in this paper. First, Critical Pedagogy's origin gives this tradition a political, social and cultural approach to education and language. In contrast, Critical Thinking tradition has more neutral approach to them. In this sense, language is considered by a vast quantity of authors as a political, social, and cultural tool. Thus, Critical Pedagogy is closer to the overall view of language teaching and learning. Second, based on the definitions of both traditions within education, Critical Thinking can be considered as a set of cognitive skills that language teachers can improve by using different techniques in the classroom. Critical Pedagogy involves a bigger series of elements, including techniques in the classroom, teachers' approach to language and education, teachers and learner's culture and background, etc. Thus, Critical Pedagogy can be considered as broader than Critical Thinking. Third, both traditions have different objectives. In the case of Critical Thinking its objective is the transfer of a set of cognitive skills. For Critical Pedagogy, the main goal is to produce a real change in the lives of learners through a process of emancipation from the oppressive and dominant system. In this sense, language teachers need to analyze teaching and learning conditions to be able to choose the tradition that suits better to them and their students. For example, the oppressive conditions at EFL settings, such as Colombia, may lead teachers to choose Critical Pedagogy over Critical Thinking. Fourth, the role of teachers is different in both traditions. Critical Thinking sees teachers as facilitators of transfer. On the other hand, Critical Pedagogy defines teachers as experts on the political structure of education who are able to learn from students and to help them to overcome difficult circumstances using the knowledge they possess, as well as, the knowledge they receive at schools. In this sense, the role

of teachers within Critical Pedagogy is further from a traditionalist view of education. As a

consequence, taking into account the "oppression" that teachers and learners live in settings like

Colombia, the role of educators should transcend from that of a facilitator of transfer of skills.

Fifth, a key difference between Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy is that the former

considers as its target population the whole humanity, meanwhile, the latter considers those

considered "oppressed" by the system as its target. In this regard, the decision of applying one

tradition or the other can change learners' perceptions about education and about themselves. For

example, at EFL settings where many learners face difficult life conditions such as poverty,

Critical Pedagogy could help learners to overcome those difficulties through education. In this

sense, the power of languages within society, especially English, can be used as a tool in favor of

those who are in need of a radical change in their lives. Sixth, a point of convergence between

these traditions is the fact that Critical Thinking can be considered as a method within language

teaching and learning. As the definition of pedagogy includes methods used by teachers, Critical

Pedagogy could develop Critical Thinking skills of learners as a method to reach its ultimate

goal. In this sense, some authors stated that the main problem when making a difference between

these two traditions is that there is not a lot of works that compare them in practice within the

classroom. This lack of comparison and the information stated at the beginning of this paragraph

have led researchers and language teachers to applying Critical Thinking development as the first

step towards Critical Pedagogy's implementation. This tendency is not harmful as Critical

Thinking skills can constitute an important basis to analyze and therefore change the lives of

learners. However, as developing these skills is more practical than actually producing and

monitoring the changes in the lives of students, Critical Pedagogy tasks and research has been

reduced to a focus on Critical Thinking skills and the results of the development of those skills.

In these sense, there is a gap in the research and application of language teaching and learning

Critical Pedagogy. Seventh, both traditions offer distinct benefits that language teachers need to ponder regarding factors such as language and teaching conditions, and students' background. The benefits of implementing Critical Thinking development in a language classroom include the improvement of cognitive skills. In addition, Critical Thinking may help learners to be more conscious of their own thinking having more opportunities to improve their learning processes. Also, classes that promote Critical Thinking tend to be more engaging and meaningful for language learners. Moreover, it can help language teachers to have more confidence in their own work, as it usually leads them to make changes in the lessons and adapt materials which pushes them to trust themselves. On the other hand, Critical Pedagogy can empower teachers and learners to make changes in their lives using language as a tool to show and defend their identity in front of others around the world. This aspect is crucial in a society dominated by a view of languages as a tool to impose the dominant culture over the other. In addition, it can help language educators and students to obtain a closer view of the world around them and its problematics in order to solve them. In the case of EFL settings, there are always issues related to power that can be analyzed and understood in a better way by using Critical Pedagogy. To finish this paragraph, it is important for readers to remember that developing Critical Thinking can be considered as a method within Critical Pedagogy. This way, Critical Pedagogy can profit from the benefits of Critical Thinking. Eighth, both traditions can be challenging for teachers when trying to apply them in the language classroom. In the case of Critical Thinking, those challenges include administrators and their policies against the implementation, and the complex mission of helping learners to reach metacognitive knowledge of language. For Critical Pedagogy the imposition of the language teaching and learning process can represent learners who are only interested in the language itself and not in other elements that come together with a new language such as culture. Some common challenges that these two traditions face when introducing them

in the language classroom have to do with teacher's attitude and amount of knowledge on the

pivotal elements of these traditions, and students' level of knowledge and proficiency about the

target language.

Recommendations

The main pedagogical recommendation towards the implementation of Critical Thinking and Critical Pedagogy in language teaching and learning is for language teachers to work not only on their proficiency and knowledge about the target language but on their understanding about both traditions, especially, regarding their boundaries and the characteristics that set them apart. This way misunderstanding about aspects such as their concepts, goals, and target population will be avoided. Secondly, analyzing the challenges that these two traditions face that were named before in this paper could help language to decide on the best strategies to implement both approaches in the language classroom. In addition, further research on the differences and similarities in language teaching and learning of both traditions is suggested, as well as, research on the practice of them both at different language teaching and learning settings is needed. In this sense, researching on the use of Critical Thinking as a method or a strategy within Critical Pedagogy is also a topic that needs further development.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Zainuddin, and Moore (2003) mention that the activity named "Telling on a Bully" is appropriate for primary ESL learners. In the example, a boy whose name is Hiro is a witness of the act of bullying on the part of another student who Hiro wants to friend. The controversy revolves around abstract concepts like morality, crime and punishment, fear, and power. The teacher can provide students with material such as grade-level storybooks about bullying. Here is the description of the activity: many primary children will face or witness the actions of a bully sometime during their schooling. Some children may tell their teachers or administrators to make the bullies stop what they are doing. Other children, particularly language minority children, may feel reluctant to tell on a bully for fear of retribution, which may lead to a disruption of their acculturation process in and out of school. Let's listen in on a conversation between two elementary school children on this issue:

Hiro: I have a problem and I don't know what to do.

Erica: What happened?

Hiro: I saw Dylan kicking Antonio and taking Antonio's lunch out of his bag. He threw the lunch on the ground!

Erica: Dylan is really a bad boy. He likes to bother a lot of people. So what's the problem? Aren't you going to tell Mrs. Sanchez what Dylan did?

Hiro: I don't like Dylan, but a lot of people think he is "all that". He gets to be the captain to pick teams for soccer and baseball after school. I have waited since I moved from Japan last year to be picked to be on a team. Nowadays he is picking me because I'm a good player. I think a lot more

people want to play with me because Dylan starting picking me for his team.

Erica: Just because Dylan picks you doesn't mean people like you. Anyways, isn't Antonio your friend, too?

Hiro: Yes, Antonio is my friend.....since last year.

Erica: If Antonio is your friend, why don't you tell on Dylan? Dylan's a big bully anyway.

Hiro: I'm afraid Dylan won't pick me anymore if he finds out it was me who told on him. Can you tell the teacher for me?

Erica: Hiro, I wasn't there, you know. You were the one who saw everything.

Think about Hiro's problem with Dylan. Think also about what Hiro and Erica said. What do you think Hiro should do about Dylan? Why do you think so?

Appendix B

In the activity labeled "Digital Pirates" (Zainuddin & Moore,2003), it is described that

many people have been downloading video games for free off of the Internet instead of paying

for them from stores for a number of years. Many believe this is not a crime and wealthy

companies that create the video games are rich enough to take a loss here and there. Here is the

conversation between two teenagers on this issue:

Vanessa: I just downloaded the latest version of "The Simtastics". I can even pick out what gym

shoes they wear!

Yukiko: How much did you pay for it?

Vanessa: Pay? Are you kidding? I downloaded it for free off the Internet. Why pay money when

you can get it for free?

Yukiko: Don't you think that the programmers who wrote the program should get paid for their

work?

Vanessa: Yeah, right. The company that makes it is worth 100 billion dollars. They won't miss 39

dollars from me...

Yukiko: Maybe not, but what if 1 million other people do the same thing? Now we're talking

about 39 million dollars!

Vanessa: Anyway, programmers don't get some of the sales money for every video game that the

company sells. They get a yearly salary. So, I'm only taking money away from greedy software

companies!

Yukiko: I know software companies are rich, but don't they deserve the money they make, too? After all, software companies have to pay the salaries of all their computer programmers. Not every video game sells as well as "The Simtastics", you know. Software companies sometimes lose a lot of money when they create and market a video game. Remember that stupid video game last year called "More Homework, Please!" that nobody bought?

Vanessa: Yeah I remember, but who cares about a billion-dollar company losing a few dollars here and there because some of us want to download some programs for free. Don't they realize that we aren't all rich like they are? We can't all afford to pay $39 for a video game!

Yukiko: You say they are already rich from selling programs. What about new games? What if every video game player was like you and downloaded their programs for free instead of paying for it? Why would they want to hire program designers to make new games for us anymore?

Vanessa: Not everybody downloads programs, you know. Some players will still buy their programs. Some download a few games just to see if they really like them before buying them.

Yukiko: Isn't your mom a web designer, Vanessa? What if people ripped off your mom's web designs and gave them away for free? Don't you want your mom to get paid so she can support your family? What if the loss in sales of her designs caused her company to collapse? Do you think your family can make it without your Mom's salary?

Vanessa: Well ...

Think about what both Yukiko and Vanessa said. Do you agree with Yukiko or Vanessa? Is there a perspective on this issue that was not presented by either person? Is there a compromise solution to this controversy that would please both sides?

Appendix C

Using Precise Terminology to Encourage Thinking (Costa & Marzano, as cited in Kabilan, 2000)

Instead of Saying:	Say:
'Let's look at these two pictures.'	'Let's compare the two pictures'
'What do you think will happen when ...'	'What do you predict will happen when ...'
'What do you think of this story?'	'What conclusions can you draw about this story?'
'How can you explain ...?'	'What evidence do you have to support ...?'
'Let's work this problem.'	'Let's analyze this problem.'

Appendix D

Encouraging Learners to Think about Thinking (Costa & Marzano, as cited in Kabilan, 2000)

When Learners Say	Teachers Say:
'The verdict is, guilty as charged.'	'Describe the steps you took to arrive at that answer.'
'I don't know how to solve this question.'	'What can you do to get started?'
'I am ready to begin.'	'Describe your plan of action.'
'I like the large one the best.'	'What criteria are you using to make your choice?'
'I am finished.'	'How do you know you're correct?'

Appendix E

Kabilan (2000) explains a sample activity about Problem-Posing methodology. The author suggests that the questions 1 and 2 require creative thinking skills on the part of the learners because they challenge learners to produce their reasons, to imagine that they are at the particular place. In addition, learners need to identify what makes the bin so attractive to the 'things'. The author points out that the description of the activity does not have a lot of details to make learners use their own experiences to describe and analyze the situation showed in the picture. The third question involves both creative and Critical Thinking skills because the learners would need to expose their opinions about if the situation presented reflects cleanliness or not, and the reasons for it. The last question probes the learners' skills to find a solution on how cleanliness could be accomplished.

Sample Activity: Problem-posing

Topic: Cleanliness

Objectives:

- Think creatively and critically

- To find solutions to problems based on logical reasons

Task: Based on the picture (a picture of unattended waste bin) given, answer to the following questions:

- Why are there so many 'things' flying over the bin?

- Where have you seen this scenery?

- Do you feel that this picture reflects cleanliness? Why?

- What is the one thing that is needed to ensure cleanliness in the places that you have

  mentioned?

Appendix F

Kabilan (2002) describes the steps of the design of a Decision Making activity. First, the teacher needs to recognize common but real problems that can be discussed by learners. Then some steps of decision-making strategies are suggested including finding creative solutions to problems, making a list of reasons for and against the most promising solutions, making a careful choice out of the list of reasons (Mirman & Tishman, as cited in Kabilan, 2000). Kabilan mentions that questions 1 and 2 of the second activity need creative thinking, questions 3 and 4 require creative and critical thinking, and the last two questions require critical thinking skills to pass the verdict and the sentence. According to Kabilan In this activity, learners act as the judges, examine the evidence given, justify the reasons, and consider their judgments. This activity help learners to express their opinions, thoughts, beliefs and views, and to improve their creative and Critical Thinking in relation to the real problems that they find in the real world.

Sample Activity: Decision Making

Topic: Anwar Ibrahim's Corruption Trial

Objectives:

- Think creatively and critically

- Decision making based on logical reasons

Task: You are the judge for Anwar Ibrahim's corruption trial. You have heard the evidences and closing submissions by the prosecutors and the defense counselors. You have to give your verdict for this trial based on the evidences and submissions provided by both parties. (Note: Teachers

need to provide the evidences. They also need to display impartiality on this issue). But before

you give your verdict, consider these procedures:

- Can this trial be thrown out? Why?

- Does this trial have to go on? Why?

- Is he guilty? Why?

- Is he innocent? Why?

- What is your verdict? Why?