Overview of Critical Pedagogy and its Core Pedagogical Principle the Problem Posing Paradigm

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Abstract:

Critical pedagogy (CP) is an educational movement initiated by the Brazilian theorist Paulo Freire in the seventies. It aims at contextualizing education in the social, political and cultural milieu of the learners. They are encouraged to critique, question and participate in the construction of the self, the other and the world. This active intervention in reality is expected to lead to possibilities of social change and transformation. CP's principles have been introduced in the field of education for about two decades now, but there is still a strong interest in finding possible practical ways of its implementation in classrooms. This is especially because CP has often been criticized for its detachment from real classroom practices. CP tended to focus more on general theoretical issues and social transformation. It did not pay attention to the micro classroom level whereby no clarifications were offered on its actual implementation in classrooms. Although there has been a lot of theorizing going on in the field, this wide theoretical work resulted in competing ideas rather than a unified body of thought. That is why this review sets out to try to solve this gap

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between theory and practice by attempting to answer a research question that addresses the possibility of bridging this problematic gap by means of enacting the Freirean problem posing paradigm (PPP). The PPP is CP's core pedagogical concept for which Freire identified three phases. This paper proposes using Freire's phases of the PPP to put CP into practice in language classrooms. This way, PPP could be CP's main theoretical concept as well as its implementation strategy.

Keywords:

Critical pedagogy, critical theory, teaching English as a foreign / second language, problem posing paradigm, critical consciousness, empowerment

السبعينيات، وكانت تهـدف إلى ربـط العمليـة التعليميـة بالسـياق الاجتماعـي والسياسي والثقافي للمتعلمين. وذلك من خـلال تشـجيعهم عـلى النقـد، والسـؤال والمشاركة في بناء الـذات والآخـر والعـالم الخارجي. وكانت النتيجة المتوقعـة لـذلك أن يؤدي هـذا التـدخل النشـط في الواقـع وتشكيله إلى إمكانيات التغيير والإصـلاح الاجتماعـي. وقد تم إدخال مبادئ التربيـة النقدية في مجال التعليم لنحو عقـدين مـن الزمن، ولكن لا يزال هناك اهتمام قـوي بإيجاد السبل العملية الممكنة لتطبيقهـا في الفصـول الدراسـية، خاصـة لأن التربيـة النقديـة كثـيرًا مـا تعرضـت لانتقـادات لانفصـالها عـن الممارسـات الحقيقيـة في الفصول. تميل التربية النقديـة إلى التركيـز بشكل أساسي على القضايا النظرية العامـة والتحـول الاجتماعـي، غـير أنهـا لا تـولي اهتمامــا لمسـتوى الفصـول الدراسـية الصـغيرة؛ حيـث إنـه لم يـتم تقـديم أي توضـيحات بشـأن التنفيـذ الفعـلي في الفصول الدراسية، وإن كان هناك الكثـير من التنظير المسـتمر في هـذا المجـال، وقـد أدى هـذا العمـل النظـري إلى مجموعـة واسعة، وفي بعض الأحيان متضاربة، مـن

الملخـص

التربية النقدية هي حركة تعليمية بدأها المنظـــر الـــبرازيلي بـــاولو فريـــري فى

الأفكار، بدلا مـن هيئـة موحـدة الفكـر. لذلك تهدف هذه المراجعة إلى اسـتعراض الجوانب النظرية المختلفة للتربية النقديـة، مـن أجـل سـد الفجـوة بـين النظريـة والتطبيق، وذلك مـن خـلال ربط هـذا الجانب النظري بالسبل الممكنة لتنفيذها في العمليـة التعليميـة، وتوضـيح أنهـا قابلـة للتطبيق الفعلي من خلال مقترحات بولـو فريرى، وأيضًا من خـلال إجابـة السـؤال البحثى الذى يتطـرق إلى طـرق اسـتخدام النمط الفريرى لطرح المشاكل فى سد هذه الفجوة بين النظرية والتطبيق.

1- Introduction

Critical Pedagogy (CP) is both an educational theory and a set of practices that are meant to reshape education and the existent pedagogy. Its ultimate goal is to transform the society as a whole towards the culture of democracy and citizenship. It emerged in the early 70s as part of the movements that called for radical democracy (Peters, 2005). Its philosophy relies mainly on the work of a Brazilian educator called Paulo Freire (Peters, 2005). Freire introduced the concept of CP into teaching pedagogy with the publication of his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in 1970 (Momenian & Shirazizadeh, 2009). It even goes further back to John Dewey's *Democracy and Education* in 1916 (Brown, 2013; Kincheloe, 2005; Momenian & Shirazizadeh, 2009). Dewy considered the human beings 'sophisticated thinkers' who have the ability to contextualize events in their life experiences. By emphasizing contextual aspects of knowledge production and education, Dewy anticipated one of the main theoretical tenets of CP (Kincheloe, 2005). Dewy also shares with Freire the view of education as a tool for social transformation and helping people

to become fully human (Biesta, 2005; Kellner, 2005).

The term 'critical pedagogy' itself was not coined except with the advent of Henry Giroux and his influential book *Theory and Resistance in Education* in 1983 (Brown, 2013). However, according to McArthur (2010), the work of the Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire (1970) is a landmark in the field of CP, he is often called "the inaugural philosopher". He is regarded as one of its major theorists, as well as one of its leading practitioners (Thomson, 2010). He travelled around the world in different educational contexts such as Africa, Europe and the United States to discuss the principles of CP and practice them, not only with oppressed groups but with academics and educators as well (Thomson, 2010).

Even today, Freire is still considered the most influential pedagogical philosopher of the late 20th century (Lange, 2009). The CP ideology is always associated with his work along with other famous theo30

rists and leading educators from North America such as Apple, Brookfield and Kanpol (Kincheloe, 2005; McArthur, 2010). There are also a number of theorists and prominent educators in the United States and Europe who advocated CP principles and practices such as Giroux, Gur-Zeʻev, Aronowitz, McLaren, Nixon, Rowland and Walker (Kincheloe, 2005; McArthur, 2010; Peters, 2005). Freire's revolutionary theory of pedagogy has a remarkable impact on educational and social movements throughout the world (Rugut & Osman, 2013). It

influences progressive educational practice and inspires educational activism around the world. The effect of his philosophical writings prevailed in other academic disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, theology, cultural studies and applied linguistics, as well as pedagogy (Rugut & Osman, 2013).

2- Critical Pedagogy's View of Education

CP holds the view that education is constantly shaped by ideologies originating from politics, culture, history and dominant powers (Kincheloe, 2005; McLaren, 2003; Wink 2005). Socio-political agendas constituted by history and privileged groups are cornerstones in designing educational curricula (Kincheloe, 2005). CP's philosophy aims at encouraging the learners to act against the dominant powers by raising their critical consciousness

and empowering them. CP encourages the learners to critically question and challenge all forms of dominant power hierarchies and social beliefs and practices that dominate them (Giroux, 2010).The ultimate goal is to help them reach new levels of social awareness of the mechanisms of power and oppression, and eventually obtain their freedom (Freire, 1970).

In his pedagogical philosophy, Freire (1970) identifies two types of education, namely adaptive or integrative, depending on the social structure which shapes it or of which it originated. The adaptive education is the kind of education that adapts the learners to the dominant system. The integrative, on the other hand, helps the learners to develop the necessary critical thinking skills and creativity that enable them to analyze their reality and work on transforming it to the better, i.e., transformational. Integrative

education entails developing the learners' capacity to make decisions and then carry them out to change reality. It advocates a" socio-politically situated" theoretical position of education and learning (Okazaki, 2005). It views teaching and learning as a sociopolitical process which is shaped by and shapes the way the learners understand their social and political surroundings, as well as themselves and their future possibilities (Norton & Toohey, 2004). In fact, Freire believes that the human vocation is basically to act on reality in order to change it to improve life conditions. Integrative education is the sort of education that Freire advocates in CP to achieve this human vocation (Crawford, 1978).

2-1 Contextualization in CP Education

The idea of contextualization in education is a focal point in the CP

philosophy (Lange, 2009). The proponents of CP principles went so far as to consider "that every dimension of schooling and every form of educational practice are politically contested spaces" (Kincheloe, 2005, p.2). According to CP principles, the micro classroom setting is expected to play an active role in developing the capacities of the learners and maximizing their involvement in reality and in the learning process (Giroux, 2010). It is expected to help the learners read the word and the world. That is to say, the way the learners comprehend the world, with its social, cultural and political facets, and also read and understand the words in a text; it is a two-way process (Shudak, 2014).

In that sense, CP "is grounded in social, cultural, cognitive,

economic and political context that is part of the larger community and society" (Breunig, 2005, p.109). Researchers acknowledge the importance of the social, political and cultural aspects of learning, and accordingly suggest that CP is a crucial theory expected to promote language learning and teaching (Okazaki, 2005). Along the same lines, Crookes and Lehner (1998) explain that:

Critical pedagogy should be seen as a social and educational process rather than just a pedagogical method. It is more concerned about how language can effect personal and social change than it is with "how to teach language" more effectively or in ways that simply encourage critical thinking on part of teacher and students. To restate, critical pedagogy results from personal and social choices that reflect a desire to understand both the word (i.e., language) and the world and to act upon these choices. (p.327)

CP emerged as a result of academic inquiry into many fields of study such as education, sociology, culture, psychology and philosophy (McLaren, 2003). CP is also inspired by the Marxist Theory and other radical ideologies (Lee, 2000) that stood against social injustice and oppression; and called for equal distribution of power and wealth in society (Kincheloe, 2005). It is similarly endorsed by other movements such as feminism, post-modernism, post-colonialism, multiculturalism and by the liberals in general (Gur-ze' ev, 2005). However, it relies mainly on critical theory; this is why it is due to shed light on how critical theory and CP are closely related and in what aspects.

3- *Critical Pedagogy and Critical Theory*

CP is deeply rooted in critical theory, e.g., the pre World War II Frankfurt School. In fact, CP is perceived to be a realization of the critical theory of the Frankfurt school established in 1923 (McLaren, 2003) since they share some historical and contextual characteristics (Keesing-Styles, 2003; Kincheloe, 2005). Critical theories of education expose the ways in which economic and cultural conditions and schools in particular oppress people, resulting in an undemocratic, unjust and unequal society (Heilman, 2005). In that concern, they embrace some of Marx's ideas regarding school and education, and his philosophy of labor (Breuing, 2011).The first critical theorists adopted Marx's ideas and views

and he was one of the main figures whose ideas and believes influenced the critical theory of the Frankfurt school (Safari & Pourhashemi, 2012). Likewise ,the theoretical underpinnings of the critical theories of education have been echoed through different theoretical iterations such as feminism, multiculturalism, post structuralism, post colonialism (Heilman, 2005;Peters, 2005), as well as CP (Heilman, 2005; Keesing-Styles, 2003; Kincheloe, 2005; Peters, 2005).

The principles of critical theory paved the way for the emergence of CP and acts as its central concepts. Key notions in CP philosophy, such as eliminating the causes of human oppression resulting from the unjust power relations in the society via social transformation,

are originally built in critical theory (Kincheloe, 2005). Critical theory is generally concerned with notions of power and justice and how the social system is constructed through the interaction of various elements including race, gender, class, ideologies, education and culture (Kincheloe, 2005). The different critical theories of education share this concern for examining the intersection of knowledge, power and identity and aspire for social justice (Heilman, 2005). In that sense, critical theory has often been considered a social theory which offers possibilities for transformative social effects, together with examining causes of oppression and calling for human liberation (Peters, 2005). Critical theory and similarly CP emphasize the political nature of education (Kincheloe, 2005; McLaren,

2003). They seek to understand and critique the social, political and historical conditions of schools. They wanted to change the nature of schooling by developing new progressive pedagogical practices with the aim of transforming the society at large (McLaren, 2003).

They also share the same concern for eliminating prejudice against people based on race, gender, sexual, cultural, class or religious discrimination (Kincheloe, 2005; McLaren, 2003). Both call for the rights of the oppressed, the minorities and the marginalized (Gur-ze' ev, 2005).CP in both its aims, e.g., liberation, emancipation, justice and democracy and its ways of achieving them, e.g., critical reflection, demystification, and ideology critique is an out sprout of the critical theory of education

(Biesta, 2005).Critical theory, in general, as represented by this ideology and principles started to portray an alternative approach to traditional teaching and learning starting 1923 (Breuing, 2011; Safari & Pourhashemi, 2012).

It is also worth noting that CP is also strongly allied with the Vygotsky 1984's learning theory of social constructivism. According to Vygotsky, knowledge is produced through social interaction. One of the major themes in Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the learning process because it enhances the cognitive processes and language acquisition. The classroom situation should accommodate this sociocultural role (Vygotsky, 1984). Sociocultural interaction provides the learners with experiences, the outcome of which represent their sources of knowledge. In other words, knowledge is socially constructed through interaction with other people. This goes inline with Freire's emphasis on the sociopolitical collective nature of education. Vygotsky also considers the educational process a dynamic one in which the teacher, the learners and the environment itself should be active. In a similar vein, Freire advocates that the learners and the teacher should be active co-participants in the learning process.

4- Research Problem

McArthur (2010) argues that a lot of work has been offered in the literature for the "reinvention" of education and the different pedagogical approaches. However, the problem is that little has been done on concrete implementation strategies of CP in classrooms.

There has been a lot of theorizing going on in the CP field. That is why, the treatment of CP has been considered largely theoretical and abstract (Scorza et al., 2013). As such, little is known about its potential in the classroom (Lee, 2000). There has not been enough research conducted on implementing the basic tenets of CP in teaching to guide the current pedagogical developments in the English language context (Barjesteh et al., 2013). Gui (2008) states that for the time being, CP is still an "untested feasibility"; a term which Gui borrowed from Freire (1970).

In fact, one of the criticisms taken against CP is its detachment from dealing with real practices in the classroom. CP has often been criticized for its tendency to focus on general theoretical issues and social transformation, and not paying enough attention to the micro classroom level where teachers and learners actually engage in the educational process (McArthur, 2010). Critics have often charged that CP's ideas are devoid of practical activities and specific techniques (McLaren, 2003). Only a few studies attempted to provide examples of empirical research on CP in practice in classrooms and various educational settings (Breunig, 2011; Scorza et al., 2013). Many questions remain unanswered; hence there is a crucial need for further research, especially empirical research that quantifies its abstract concepts (Scorza et al., 2013). Besides, all the different theoretical work has contributed to the broad movement of CP. However, it did not result in "one coherent and unified body of thought" (McArthur, 2010, p.495). On the contrary, it led to the

presence of many "competing discourses" (Shudak, 2014) that still need to be resolved.

However, nowadays there is still a strong interest in CP's principles and practical applications though it has been introduced in the field for about two decades (Lee, 2000). Many progressive educators argue that CP should be adapted in their curriculum and syllabus (Ooiwa-Yasizawa, 2012). A diverse sample of materials operationalizing the CP theories and practices need to be available for use in classrooms (Byean, 2011; Crookes, 2010; Ooiwa-Yashizawa, 2012). Hence, there is a need to come up with certain implementation strategies that would concretely make the CP principles applicable in the classroom (Byean, 2011). Once they are applied, teachers could try them and assess whether they are appropriate or not and if so what effects they bring about on learning.

4-1 Research question.

In an attempt to resolve this doubt about the feasibility of CP in language classrooms, this paper proposes the use of Freire's model of the problem posing paradigm (PPP) as a resource for teacher to see possible implementation strategies of CP 's core pedagogical concept, the PPP in language classrooms. The present paper seeks to answer the following research question:

1. How can Freire's PPP be implemented in language classrooms to bridge the gap between CP theory and practices?

5- _The Implementation of CP in Language Classrooms_

In language classrooms, Freire's CP critiques traditional

forms of education and promotes education that is based on the PPP. The main aim of PPP is to encourage the learners to critique and play a conscious active role in the construction of their society, the others and more importantly themselves (Lee, 2000). CP targets this end by emphasizing the concepts that highlight the crucial role of education in the social and political context at large, which eventually goes far beyond the narrow context of the classroom (Lee, 2000). The Freirean methodology can be roughly summarized in three steps. The first one has to do with the ability to perceive a problem or a situation in one's living conditions. Then, to have the competence to analyze the factors, e.g., the personal, cultural or political that led to the problem. And finally, developing the

capability to solve the problem or change an unprivileged situation (Kincheloe, 2005).

CP also seeks to help the learners "reconceptualize" the process of meaning production (Lee, 2000). This is done by showing how meaning construction is highly influenced by the active intervention of the learners (Lee, 2000). In other words, it encourages the learners to play an active role in meaning construction. Constructing meaning, therefore, is depicted as a relative phenomenon which has different facets and through which knowledge is constructed by the collaborative efforts of the learners and the teacher (Freire, 1970). In that sense, many of the tenets of CP regarding this idea of meaning construction are very much aligned with the constructivist approach to teaching and learning (Breuing, 2011).

However, according to Lee (2000), it is not important for teachers to meet the extreme objectives of CP. In other words, it is not essential that the learners engage in actual political actions in the society as a result of the critical writing pedagogy endorsed in the classroom. At least, CP develops the initiative for developing one's life and society towards better prospective. She further explains that teachers are not in control of the learning outcomes. Thus, they cannot enforce or impose their ends on the learners. She argues that "a distinction and a potential conflict exist between the enactment of a critical pedagogy and espousing its content" (p.46). This means that there is a gap between the theory and practice on one hand. On the other hand, there is a gap between the expected outcomes and the actual ones.

CP may not result in social transformation immediately, but at least it challenges the culture of silence (Lee, 2000). This silence can eventually result in frustration in a non-democratic society whereby learners prefer to distance themselves from a depressive reality (Izadinia & Abednia, 2010). There is hope in this case that the coming step is towards empowerment and transformation in society and not just in the learners' written texts. CP has the goal of providing the learners with an education that prepares them for participation in a democratic society (Riasati & Mollaei, 2012). In fact, transforming the society itself towards equality and democracy is one of the concepts inherent in CP philosophy (Riasati & Mollaei, 2012).

Through integrating CP in language classrooms, learners and

teachers can transform the traditional atmosphere of the classroom into a creative one that empowers them to have voices of their own (Momenian & Shirazizadeh, 2009). These voices develop through critical investigation of one's society and takes place through dialogue with others (Riasati & Mollaei, 2012). In that new atmosphere, the learners can also acquire language skills by means of a process of inquiry into the nature of the actual real life problems facing their community as learners (Spener, 1992).

6- *The Freirean Philosophy of Education*

The two main distinctive features of the Freirean CP approach are dialogue and problem-posing. Dialogue refers to a process of "two-way communication" in which the teachers and the learners are "knowledgeable equals" (Freire, 1970). According to Freire (1970), both parties posses knowledge; the teacher possesses academic knowledge, whereas the learners posses knowledge of reality and culture, and they communicate to learn with and through each other (Shudak, 2014). The importance of dialogue in Freire's philosophy is not only restricted to education; he considers dialogue an "existential necessity" (Shudak, 2014). To explain what is meant by the problem posing or the problem posing paradigm (PPP), Freire (1970) contrasted it with another paradigm which he called the banking paradigm.

The present paper seeks to present a detailed account of the Freirean PPP to shed light on the feasible practical side of the PPP in language classrooms. This

could possibly help in bridging the gap between CP theory and practice.

6-1 The banking paradigm.

The banking paradigm is a traditional type of education in which the learners, according to Freire, are treated as empty vessels in which knowledge would be deposited like the deposits in a bank. He argues that this paradigm makes the learners passive because they are denied enquiry and active participation in the classroom. The more the students act as deposits, the less they play an important role in their intervention in the world and transformation of reality (Freire, 1970). Freire states that the goal of this kind of education is to manipulate and domesticate the people to accept the unjust conditions imposed upon them by the dominant group, i.e., the oppressors. This way, the dominant group will improve or maintain their privileged conditions and interests. The banking paradigm is implemented in education by means of pre-prescribed curriculum, syllabus, courses or books which are irrelevant to the learners' lives and needs, and disregard their views and experiences. Freire calls these pre-prescribed plans "primers" because they marginalize and subjugate the learners and consider them objects (Freire, 1970).

In this banking paradigm, the teacher, whom Freire describes as an oppressor, is the one main source of absolute knowledge and authority. The teacher, as an oppressor, presents "communiqués" and chooses what is to be learned. The oppressed students, in turn, learn by absorbing what is taught.

The good ones are those who follow passively and do what they are told. In this dictatorial environment, the learners are exposed to a distorted version of reality. According to Freire (1970), this approach does nothing to promote the critical awareness of the learners or their critical engagement with reality. On the contrary, it seems to inhibit the development of their consciousness, as well as their creative powers (Freire, 1970). It also disempowers the learners and denies them having a voice of their own. The students stay at the level of what Freire calls "naive consciousness" in which the students resort to myth and dominant discourse for the explanation and solution of their problems. Because they are dominated by the teacher's imposed vision of reality through narration, they fail to employ any scientific approach to problem solving and

they are ignorant of their present social, political and cultural reality (Freire, 1974).

The teacher presents reality as if it is "motionless, comparmentized and predictable" (Freire, 1998, p.54). Teachers may also choose speaking and writing prompts totally different from the real life experience of the learners because their only task is to fill the mind of the learners with the content they target (Freire, 1970). The students are passive objects to be acted upon by the teacher who acts as the subject and the possessor of knowledge. Freire (1970) summarizes the teachers' and students' practices and attitudes in the banking method as follow:

a- " the teacher teaches and the students are taught;

b- the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;

c- the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;

d- the teacher talks and the students listens----meekly;

e- the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;

f- the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;

g- the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;

h- the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;

i- the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of students;

j- the teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects." (p.73).

6-2 The problem posing paradigm.

Having identified the banking approach in education which he finds problematic and is predominant in many learning environments, Freire (1970) presents an alternative approach which is quite the opposite, i.e., the PPP. The PPP is in fact the key principle in Freire's theory and its core pedagogical method.

In the PPP, education is introduced as a continuous cognitive process in which no one assumes superiority of knowledge and all contributions are respected. It is not education for or about the students; it is education with the students (Freire, 1970). Freire

(1970) regards the process of teaching and learning in the PPP as a process of liberation and humanization. The learners are encouraged to actively question the status quo, recognize the oppressive societal forces which leave a negative impact on their personal values and lives. Freire calls the PPP the pedagogy of freedom as opposed to the pedagogy of domination offered by the banking paradigm (Freire, 1998).

As opposed to the banking method, the learners start questioning answers rather than answering questions. They are also encouraged to participate in the construction of their own reality. They see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in process and in transformation. Both the teachers and the learners are continually reflecting on themselves and the world to

establish an authentic form of thought and action. Knowledge, in that sense, is produced through challenging archetypes and is no longer an existing body of facts for consumption (Freire, 1970).

According to Boyce (1996), in this PPP, the learners experience themselves as knowledgeable people. They are no longer objects that are acted upon, but subjects who play an active role in their learning process. Boyce (1996) identified a number of steps through which this transformation could happen on part of the learners by "writing, critically examining knowledge in a field, identifying the individual aspects and social context of a problem, and identifying possible collective actions" (p.7). These steps are meant to move the discussion of personal analysis to social analysis, and then to the action

level. Language is an indispensable tool in this process, Freire in his educational vision, considers language or what he calls "the word" a powerful instrument in social transformation (Thomas, 2011).

In this paradigm, the key is the relationship between learners and teachers. It is a progressive approach to education whereby the "teacher-student teaches the student-teachers" (Lee, 2000). The teacher and the learners should work together to solve problems on equal footing or least without the teacher claiming absolute knowledge and an authority superior to that of the learners (Lee, 2000). The teacher is no longer an authoritarian figure who gives instructions. However, Freire posits that the teacher is rather an authoritative figure who

has the authority to guide and direct the learners to think critically and reflect upon reality. The teacher respects the learners' autonomy and encourages them to build their knowledge (Freire, 1970).

The teacher poses questions for mutual dialogue, i.e., encouraging learners' participation. In this reciprocal relationship, the teachers no longer teach and they also learn from the students. The learners are not mere recipients of knowledge, they are not objects. They are subjects who are able to reflect and act on things that affect their learning and lives (Freire, 1970). It is a decentered learning environment in which all the participants whether the learners or the teacher actively engage in the process of meaning construction. The teacher/learner

dichotomy prevalent in the banking paradigm is destroyed and replaced by a democratic model of communication in the classrooms (Freire, 1970).

Freire (1970) encourages a dialogical relationship between the teacher and the learners through this PPP. He regards the PPP as both dialogic and future-oriented. It is considered a pedagogical process in which knowledge is pursued by both the teacher and the learners through engagement in discussion and critical analysis of their sociopolitical realities. Dialogue involves the active participation of both the learners and the teacher in discussion and analysis. However, it is not only limited to active participation of the learners, it is intended to develop critical social consciousness among the learners and empower them to transform an unjust society. Through dialogue,

the learners defy the culture of silence and gain a sense of empowerment, especially that this interaction is directed towards their actual personal life experiences, i.e., their "existential reality" (Freire, 1970).

In discussing a certain topic in the PPP, the objective is not to find a solution to a complex situation. It is rather to learn about a problem in its context and to identify ways in which the learners can take collective action that constructively responds to the problem (Boyce, 1996). That way, the learners may be able to objectify reality and become critically aware of their problems (Freire, 1970). What matters here is that the learners are no longer deposits; they are human beings who possess knowledge and are expected to share this knowledge with others in the dynamic process

of understanding reality (Freire, 1970). Besides, through this reflective dialogue, the learners are given the opportunity to transform their society at least through words (Freire, 1970).

6-2-1 Critical consciousness and empowerment.

Learners' critical consciousness (CC) and empowerment are two of the key principles in the PPP model of CP. They turn education into an act of freedom which is achieved by choosing topics relevant to the learners' existential experiences and conducting democratic decentered classrooms (Freire, 1970). In that PPP environment, the teacher and the learners trust each other and believe that their involvement will matter. They should also understand and be aware of resistance and institutional barriers

to change, but at the same time appreciate their own power and knowledge. They develop a new identity to replace the old one constructed by an oppressive society and culture (Freire, 1970).

6- 2- 1- 1 Means of initiating critical consciousness and empowerment in classrooms.

CC is at the core of the PPP and it is achieved through this dialogical relationship between the teachers and the learners, i.e., authentic dialogue which empowers the learners to engage in the CC process (Freire, 1970). The learners must be able to understand that authentic dialogue only exists when the interlocutors engage in critical thinking (Freire, 1970). In this process, CC is achieved through praxis; a process whereby the individual engages in both reflection and action. They could

happen simultaneously and repeatedly, not necessarily in a fixed order. It involves a process that intends to help the learners name the problems in their lives. Then, they identify the limits imposed upon them by this situation. After that, they take action to transform these unfavorable conditions. This idea of social transformation and adjusting one's experience from the objective to the subjective role is the goal of CC; it is often referred to as reading the world. This dialectic process eventually changes the individuals' internal and external worlds. Hence, they become capable of reading both the word and the world (Freire, 1970).

According to Lee (2000), in PPP, the learners are empowered with CC. That is to say, they are allowed and encouraged to reflect upon current events and controversial issues. They are urged to develop their power to critically perceive the way they exist in the world. This experience is believed to be socially, materially and ideologically constructed (Lee, 2000). The learners' ideas, values and opinions are appreciated by the teacher, but sometimes they are also questioned and challenged in order to develop their CC (Okazaki, 2005).

PPP is a tool for developing and strengthening critical consciousness skills because it is an inductive questioning process which takes place via dialogue in the classroom (Nixon-ponder, 1995). The learners, in this process, are transformed into "co-investigators" in a dialogue with the teacher (Nixon, ponder, 1995). By introducing specific questions, the teacher encourages the learners

to reach their own conclusions about the values and pressures of their society. Freire (1970) refers to this as an "emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality" (p.68). In that sense, according to Wink (2004), the teacher's role in the PPP is to create a safe place for it to happen, e.g., establish rapport, to ask hard questions to arouse the learners' curiosity, and to help the learners with codification. Stillar (2010) suggested a number of topics that could be used to that effect such as linguistic and cultural imperialism, cultures around the world, social issues, e.g., hate speech and immigration, topics in the news and global issues, e.g., wildlife conservation.

It is true that PPP helps evoke CC (Gui, 2008), however it is not limited to CC. It is beyond that

and entails transformative action; it is what Freire referred to as praxis. Freire proposes that action without reflection is activism, whereas reflection without action is reflectivism. What he advocates is praxis which integrates both reflection and action. This interaction is essential to have a transformative power in society (Freire, 1970). It also entails a close relationship between theory and practice; a juxtaposition relevant to classrooms. Praxis which is Freire's unit of reflection-action is the essence of Freire's philosophy of knowing, the method by which people know (Thomas, 2011).

6-2-2 Phases of the problem posing paradigm

To answer the research question addressed in this paper, this section presents a detailed

account of the Freirean phases of implementing the PPP in classrooms. Language teachers could easily follow these phases and practice the PPP in their classes. The PPP could be initiated in language classrooms by means of three basic stages: thematic investigation, codification and decodification (Freire, 1970).

Thematic investigation is the first phase. It is described as the phase through which the generative themes are introduced. These are topics that are of great concern and importance to the learners because they are relevant to the social, cultural or political aspects of their lives. They are usually introduced in the form of open-ended problems to generate the discussion. They are incorporated into class materials in a codified way as in pictures, comics, short stories, songs and videos, dramas…etc. These audio-visual materials function as an abstraction of the learners' life situations (Spener, 1992).They act as the spark for the generation of discussion (Rugut & Osman, 2013) and challenge knowledge that is both dominant and privileged (Scorza et al., 2013). These themes are presented to the learners to empower them to engage in the process of CC (Freire, 1970). Teachers and students must be co-investigators in the process of thematic investigation (Freire, 1970).

The second stage is that of codification. It is a representation of some reality to the learner through "objectification". Freire meant by objectification representing a situation in a form which is recognizable to the learners, yet separate from them through codes. It is used as a tool to gather

information to end up building a picture which represents reality (Rugut & Osman, 2013). According to Schleppegrell and Bowman (1995), the criteria for selecting the code is that it presents a situation that the learners can easily recognize, and that the problem it poses is likely to have several possible solutions, but not overwhelming or unsolvable. However, it does not provide solutions; the learners are expected to do so.

Freire (1970) points out that the posed problem has to represent concrete situations that are relevant to the learners' lives. However, Freire argues that it should not be interpreted as an attempt to transform the concrete into abstract thoughts. It is rather a way of holding onto both the concrete and the abstract.

Separating the two may hinder the learners' abilities to make the necessary connections required for critical analysis and synthesis of reality. This way, the learners are given the opportunity to speak from a position of authority, as they are reflecting on their everyday life experiences, i.e. both the concrete and abstract. The learners will eventually come to see the value of their education because it touches upon real issues they face and they will put more effort into learning (Freire, 1970).

The third and last stage is that of decodification. It is the process of describing and interpreting reality as represented in the codes. The teacher asks a series of open ended questions about the materials presented in the codes to encourage the learners to elaborate on what they see. The learners are

asked to reflect on their feelings towards the content of the codification. They are required to elaborate on the levels that exist within a certain broad social issue. They are expected to relate it to their personal experiences and to explain why it occurred on the first place. As they move on, they are encouraged to devise action plans that address this social issue (Freire, 1970).

Through dialogue, the learners collectively enter into a reflective decodification. They analyze the scenes using some decoding tools such as their background knowledge and contextual information, e.g., experiences, views, opinions, interpretations (Spener, 1992). In the process of decoding, the learners step back from the codified forms as they are able to examine them critically by being objective rather than simply experiencing them (Rugut & Osman, 2013). It is a process in which the learners are led to describe a certain situation and identify themselves with aspects of this situation until they feel they are part of it. Once they internalize the situation, they engage in critical reflection on its different aspects and analyze it until they resolve the problem, reach a solution and eventually gather information (Rugut & Osman, 2013). Their personal expressions combine and form a new perception of the codified situation which comes from the collective experiences the group has of that problematic reality (Crawford, 1978).

The questioning technique employed by the teacher in this process helps the learners to define real-life problems being represented (Spener, 1992). Unlike the banking

education, these questions are "thought- provoking questions". The traditional yes/no and information recall questions are replaced by ones that require critical thinking such as descriptions, reasons, analyses, perceptions and interpretations (Crawford, 1978). The solutions evolving from these discussions will entail actions in which reading and writing skills are required, thus giving the learners a concrete purpose for the literacy they are developing (Spener, 1992). It is a dynamic process in which the teacher presents the learners with materials to consider. After that, the teachers re-examine their earlier consideration of reality as the learners come up with theirs (Freire, 1970). In this process, both the learners and the teacher are involved in an active investigation of knowledge that eventually leads to a meaningful evolving reality

(Freire, 1970). Their own version of reality defies the dominant ideology and the mystifications of culture (Kincheloe, 2005).

6- 2- 3 The problem posing paradigm in language classrooms.

The positive capacities of the PPP in language classrooms have been reported on in the literature (Devers, 2009; Fahim &Mirzaii, 2014; Izadinia &Abednia, 2010; Hong&White, 2012). Schleppegrell and Bowman (1995) argue that the PPP addresses meaningful and interesting issues in the classroom which can eventually help the learners to develop their language skills. They explain that in the dialogic communicative processes in the PPP, the learners generate vocabulary and produce grammatical structures that can alert the teacher to the language

problems they have. The teacher can later on draw on them to provide practice opportunities or application activities that can help solve them (Schleppegrell & Bowman, 1995). .

Similarly, the PPP classroom provides the learners with meaningful authentic atmosphere of communication in which they are motivated to say in English the message they want to convey. In this process, they can easily acquire the vocabulary and structures they need and feel are urgent for effective communication and discourse creation (Schleppegrell & Bowman, 1995). This explains how the PPP can develop language skills and promote the learners' CC and empowerment simply by providing opportunities to practice and apply language for authentic purposes (Schleppegrell& Bowman, 1995). In fact, PPP has

been identified by Morrell (2003) as one of the tenets of the critical composition class.

It is necessary here to highlight the fact that problem-posing education is different from problem solving education. The latter seeks to present a problematic situation, break it down into its component parts, identify the problems and find efficient solutions to these problems. The subject matter usually defines the problem and the teacher starts off with having a particular solution in mind. Once the learners are led to the given solution, the task comes to an end (Crawford, 1978). Problem-posing education, on the other hand, is more of a cyclic process and it perceives the problem in its "larger totality". There is no dissection of the problem; on the contrary, the learners are

encouraged to examine the problem in its wider context. Once they perceive the contradiction, they are required to resolve it. However, the resolution is not the end of the endeavor, the cyclic nature of this paradigm entails that the resolution of one contradiction gives birth to a new situation to be posed as a problem (Crawford, 1978). For example, the perceptions the learners hold of the situation are also posed as problems, i.e., reality is never completely known. Each knowing creates a new situation requiring new perception and new praxis (Crawford, 1978, p. 97).

7- Conclusion

In conclusion, this theoretical review aimed at answering a research question pertaining to the means of solving the problematic gap between the CP theory and its practice. The review proposed implementing the three phases of the PPP offered by Freire to put CP into practice in language classrooms. This review sought to demonstrate that the Freirean PPP could be a possible feasible way of enacting CP in classrooms. The purpose is to provide evidence that could defend CP against the so-called accusations of being an "untested feasibility". This way the Freirean PPP could be considered the CP's core pedagogical principle as well as its means of implementation. The theoretical stance endorsed in the present paper also tends to be supported by the literature whereby a number of studies (e.g., Devers, 2009; Fahim &Mirzaii, 2014; Izadinia &Abednia, 2010; Hong&White, 2012) emphasized the positive potential of the PPP in language classrooms.

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