On the Consequences of the Violation of Critical Pedagogy Principles from Iranian EFL Teacher Trainers' Perspectives

Goudarz Alibakhshi

Assistant Professor, Allameh Tabataba'i University

alibakhshi@atu.ac.ir

Sohrab Rezaei Mezajin

Assistant Professor, Allameh Tabataba'i University

Sohrab_rezaei@yahoo.com

Abstract

The application of critical pedagogy in educational contexts has received adequate research attention over the last decades. The main focus of this strand of research has, however, been on raising awareness of the educators. Nevertheless, little is known about the consequences of the violation of critical pedagogy principles from EFL teacher trainers' perspectives. To begin to address this gap in research, a qualitative (phenomenological) study was carried out to explore the main consequences of violating critical pedagogy in the higher education system of Iran. The participants were 15 faculty members of TEFL and English Literature at 10 Iranian state universities. The data were collected through in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews and analyzed according to Radnor's (2001) model. The results indicated that the main consequences of the violation of critical pedagogy were educational (related to teaching, learning, and testing), psychological, social, and ideological. Therefore, it was concluded that educators must follow the principles of CP in order to avoid the negative consequences and foster the learning and teaching processes more effectively.

1. Introduction

1.1 Theoretical Background

The most frequently used concepts associated with critical perspectives such as critical literacy, critical pedagogy, and critical language awareness in the field of education have been studied by a group of experts whose intellectual roots are perceived as a realization of critical theory of pre-World War II Frankfurt School (Azimi, 2007; Pinar & Bowers, 1992; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994), which advocated a Marxist analytical model making use of injustice and class subjugation as the primary lens for understanding human experience (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994). Emerging from within the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, the critical pedagogy concept is often associated with the work of researchers such as Freire (1970), Luke (1988), McLaren (1989), Giroux (1992), and Simon (1992) in the field of education. These scholars have a lot in common in their perceptions of critical pedagogy. Such realizations, accompanied with propositions and introductions by very famous leading figures, were very influential in maintaining basic assumptions and principles of critical pedagogy. Recently, Aliakbari and Faraji (2011) reviewed and listed critical pedagogy's principles. They listed a number of these principles including problem posing education; political educational system; use of authentic materials; avoidance of marginalization; paradigm shift in the assumed roles for teachers and students; learners' empowerment; development of critical consciousness, praxis, dialogism, and learners' conscientization.

Problem posing education is one principle of critical pedagogy which was introduced as an alternative to the banking model education in which students are passive in the learning process while the teacher is active (Freire, 1970). Shor (1980) argued that problem posing education can encourage critical learning. Such kind of learning helps people recognize what holds them back. It

also helps them in imagining a social order that supports their full humanity. Through problem posing, teachers and students examine their experiences and perspectives in light of those of other people and in relation to large public issues and processes of domination and liberation (Akiakbari & Allahmoradi, 2012, Aliakbari & Azimi Amoli, 2014). As certain theorists of the field (e.g., Giroux, 1997; Shannon, 1992; Shor, 1992) believe, the most important theme running through critical pedagogy literature is that educational systems worldwide are political. According to Keessing-Styles (2003), school and political analysis of life should be at the center of the curriculum. As Shannon (1992) believes, all of the decisions made by educators regarding lesson goals and program, the nature of teacher interaction with students and the materials to be used, "are actually negotiations over whose values, interests, and beliefs will be validated at school" (p. 2).

Another principle of critical pedagogy is the use of authentic materials. The authentic materials help students link their knowledge to the existing problems in society and take necessary actions for their improvement (Akiakbari & Allahmoradi, 2012). Ohara, Safe, and Crooks (2000) assert that a critical pedagogy lesson plan should be developed on the basis of authentic materials such as commercials, video movies, TV programs, etc., which are representative of the culture which is to be examined by the students and which serves as the core for discussion and critical reflection of the culture.

Teachers and students, in critical pedagogy, are asked to adopt new roles. Freire (1970) argues that the teacher is no longer the only one-who-teaches, but the one who is taught in dialogue-with the students, the one who while being taught also teaches. As Kanpol (1998) believes, a critical pedagogue will seek education by understanding that authority has multiple meanings and can be democratically negotiated. The teacher is an authority over his/her subject

3

matter. Teachers can use their authority to create relationships which, in turn, enhances an education relationship which challenges schooling notions of oppressive race, class, and gender stereotypes. Teachers and students share each other's knowledge. Critical pedagogy requires a democratic classroom environment, where students' viewpoints are highlighted through discussion and there is shared power and dialogue among teachers and students. Momenian and Shirazizadeh (2009) argue that critical pedagogy resembles a tree with central branches, or the basic principles. "Empowerment" is one of those main branches mainly concerned with developing self-esteem in students and teachers to criticize the power relations in society (McLaren, 2003; Peterson, 2003).

One aim of critical pedagogy, as Freire (1970) believes, is to return to marginalized groups, their lost voices and identities to think about their situation and find out why things are the way they are. Critical pedagogy focuses on power relationships between different groups and on how power is used. According to Kincheloe (2008), students must be able to identify who gains and who loses in specific situations and they must be made aware that privileged groups often have an interest in supporting the status quo to protect their advantages.

Another principle of critical pedagogy is praxis. The key assumption in praxis is the ongoing partnership among reflection, action, and dialogue. Monchinski (2008) argues that praxis is a complex activity through which individuals create society and culture. Additionally, human beings can become critically conscious.

For Freire (1970), dialogue is a conversation with a focus and a purpose that indicates that the object of study is not the exclusive property of the

teacher. Knowledge is not produced somewhere in offices and a textbook and then transferred to students.

The last principle of critical pedagogy is conscientization or making students' consciousness of the inequalities and the injustices surrounding them. Walker (2008) asserts that conscientization cannot exist without or outside praxis but the two exist in unity and express the permanently dialectical properties of the way people transform the world the way they are.

Edmondson and D'Urso (2007) believe that those who make educational policy rarely engage in classroom practice. That is, these policy makers in quite many cases completely disregard the concerns of classroom teachers and the expertise and dictate the most specific modes of institutional practice to them. In spite of the fact critical pedagogy has received worldwide attention, it seems to be a rather new issue in the Iranian context, where it is neither practiced by teachers nor supported by those involved in educational policies. According to Aliakbari and Allahmoradi (2012), the educational system in Iran represents a top-down approach with a noticeable emphasis on authority and discipline.

Awareness of the advantages of critical pedagogy in education and the significant role of teachers in classroom settings and the fact that every implemented educational policy reflects underlying assumptions related to concepts of school, values, and society justified research on the consequences of violating the principles of critical pedagogy in an Iranian context. Accordingly, the present study investigated the consequences brought about by violating the principles of critical pedagogies in the higher education system of Iran.

1.2. Review of Literature

Recently, critical pedagogy has gained much interest and much practice has been done in this area (Akiakbari & Allahmoradi, 2012; Aliakbari & Azimi Amoli, 2014). McLaren (2003) has defined critical pedagogy as "a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nation-state" (p. 35). Kincheloe (2005) believes that critical pedagogy deals with transforming relations of power which are oppressive and results in the oppression of people. Kincheloe (2008) considers the understanding of the politics of knowledge, identifying sources of power; the political nature of education, the rejection of economic determinism; justice and equality in education; the lessening of human suffering; changes in the nature of the relationship between students and teachers as central characteristics of critical pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy has been considered useful in fields other than education, including teacher training (Bartolome, 2004; Keesing-Styles, 2003), intercultural studies (Hovey, 2004), and post-modernity (Giroux, 2004; James, 2008). Shor (1996) discussed his experiences with trying to engage in critical praxis in his *Utopia* course, highlighting the success, challenges and lessons his students and he learned when trying to practice critical pedagogy. Similarly, Horan (2004) identified some of the success and challenges that she and her students experienced when attempting to put the theory of critical pedagogy into practice.

Alibakhshi and Macky (2011) also investigated the status of critical pedagogy among Iranian EFL teachers. They used a mixed design method. They argued that although Iranian EFL teachers were somehow familiar with

critical pedagogy principles, they were not able to apply the principles in their EFL classrooms. The results of the qualitative part of their study showed that the main barriers of applying critical pedagogy are organizational and personal barriers as well as barriers related to learners.

Aliakbari and Allahmoradi (2012) investigated Iranian school teachers' perceptions of the principles of critical pedagogy. They surveyed 200 Iranian school teachers' views concerning critical pedagogy at elementary, secondary, and high school levels. Adopting the instrument of the principles of critical pedagogy scale developed by Yilmaz (2009), they examined differences in teachers' views on critical pedagogy by age, gender, and the level they teach. They argued that there was no significant difference between teachers' views concerning the given variables except for gender. Moreover, in spite of teachers' agreement and approval of critical pedagogy and its principles, they indicated the absence of critical pedagogy in the Iranian educational system, which can be attributed to the centralized top-down educational management.

In a similar vein, Yilmaz (2009) conducted a study in Turkey to investigate the views of elementary school teachers concerning critical pedagogy by gender, education, seniority, and place of school. The results showed that teachers were moderately in agreement with the principles of critical pedagogy. There was significant differences among their views according to educational background, professional seniority, and the environment of the school where they worked, while there was no significant difference among their views according to gender. In the same vein, Jorge (2009) explains that familiarity with and action concerning critical pedagogy is split across elite and grassroots sectors in Brazil, including language teachers.

Abdelrahim (2007) investigated the relationship between gender and experience in teachers' awareness of critical pedagogy. His study employed a

mixed-method approach in which the qualitative part, one-on-one semi structured interviews with English language teachers, preceded and shaped the quantitative part in terms of data collection and analysis. The overall findings of both sections indicated that there is no significant difference between gender and experience in teachers' awareness of critical pedagogy.

In line with the above researchers, Hollstein (2006) evaluated the extent to which per-service social studies teachers, both during their junior year of undergraduate studies at Ohio University, and immediately prior to their student teaching experience, understood, assimilated, and used critical pedagogy. Three themes emerged as the conclusion of the study. First, participants lacked an understanding of critical pedagogy due to lack of immersion. Second, participants were unable to apply critical pedagogy in a lesson plan. Third, the participants inadvertently subverted the aims of critical pedagogy for social activism for change.

2. Purpose of the Study

Despite the great emphasis laid on the application of critical pedagogies, it is really surprising that very little attention has been devoted to the application of critical pedagogy as well as the consequences which the violation of its principles might have in the EFL education system of Iran. This study is an early attempt to explore the consequences which violating the principles of critical pedagogies might have in EFL education system of Iran. More specifically, the study sets out to deal with the following research question:

What are the consequences of the violation of critical pedagogy principles in EFL classrooms from Iranian EFL teacher trainers' perspectives?

3. Research Methodology

To understand and interpret participants' own descriptions of the phenomenon they individually and directly experience, phenomenological approach was used. Phenomenology is a strategy of enquiry which examines "how human beings construct and give meaning to their actions in concrete social situations" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 204). It focuses on understanding the meaning events have for persons being studied (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The role of a phenomenologist is to first understand how people within a context collectively and individually understand and interpret phenomena. They then aim to record, interpret and explain the meanings which these individuals make of their experiences. This research study required qualitative instruments which would explore in depth the perspectives of EFL teacher trainers' perspectives about the consequences of the violation of critical pedagogy. Hence, data collection was initiated with the intent of conducting semi-structured face to face individual interviews.

3.1. Participants

For the individual interviews, a non-random sample of participants was selected based on the criteria that they were faculty members with at least five years of experience. The identified population thus comprised a homogeneous group of individuals based on their employment context and experience as well as familiarity with critical pedagogy. In the present study 15 EFL teacher trainers from different universities were interviewed. The criterion for selection of the participants was familiarity with critical pedagogy principles.

3.2. Data Collection

The data of the study were collected through the technique of in-depth semi-structured individual interviews. Participants' described personal experiences during the interview were tape recorded. After each interview, the data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed, and then the next interview was carried out. The initial interview questions were raised in particular ways to encourage the participants to freely talk about critical pedagogy theories and the problems which may occur if the educators do not conform to critical pedagogy principles: For instance "tell me what happens if a teacher does not follow the principles of CP. The later interview questions were, more technical, allowing the researcher to explore the issues that were raised by the participants in earlier interviews. Each session lasted between 30 to 70 minutes, with an average of 50 minutes. Interviews were terminated when data redundancy occurred. Data saturation occurs at the level in which no further information is obtained from present interviews and data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Theoretical saturation continued throughout the research process. We documented our analytic ideas and insights in relation to participant data, through memo writing.

3.3. Data Analysis

Radnor's (2001) step by step guide to qualitative data analysis was followed. Interviews were first transcribed and multiple copies of the transcripts were printed. The transcripts were read for topic ordering to draw out and list topics that are linked to the original research question. These were listed on an A4 sheet of paper and color coded for use as a reference guide for subsequent readings of the transcripts.

A second careful reading of transcripts helps the researcher identify the explicit and implicit categories that emerge within each topic. The researchers color coded the categories using colors that corresponded with colors of the topic that they are part of. In case of more than one category in a topic, we used numeric coding. A third reading for content helped to identify quotes that are aligned with each category within the topics. The researchers labeled the quotes according to the category they represented. Keeping the master copy intact, we then used the word processor to copy and pastes the categories and quotes on separate Microsoft Word documents representing each topic. These were printed and read again to look for subtleties of meaning, in order to understand data, interpret it and write down the descriptions of my interpretation.

3.4. Research Validity

The conversations were recorded for accurate interpretations (Maxwell, 1992), while the participants were engaged in discussions, notes were taken and member checking was incorporated (Padget, 1998) by returning transcripts to participants for respondents' verification. Data were collected at the outset of each term of the academic year to guarantee a high degree of participants' involvement (Robson, 2002).

Hence, bearing in mind a researcher's status can impact on the participants' responses, the researchers tried to establish a trusting professional relationship with the participants. In addition, instead of selecting the participants randomly, the researcher invited volunteers from a homogeneous context.

3.5. Research Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness or reliability of methods and research practices in qualitative research is concerned with dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) or the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions (Silverman, 2000). Therefore, dependability of the research was increased in three ways. Firstly, all participants were provided with the same standardized questions which were carefully worded after piloting (Robson, 2002). Secondly, interviews were transcribed as accurately as possible and returned to participants for verification. Finally, according to Kirk and Miller (1986), all procedures of the research including transcripts, drafts and final reviews of data were documented, according to which the study could be replicated or reconstructed.

3.6. Research Objectivity

Trustworthiness in interpretive research is extremely valuable to assess the research quality. Hence, while the subjective nature of this research is acknowledged, the researchers attempted to the best of their ability to present an accurate, complete, detailed, and bias free account of the participants' views, perceptions, and feelings they were revealed to researchers and as they were experienced by participants.

4. Results of the Study

The content analysis of the interviews indicated that ignoring critical pedagogy principles by faculty members and teachers at any multicultural education system leads to several consequences. The main consequences were

categorized into educational, social, psychological, ideological, and ethical categories. Each of these themes is subcategorized into several sub-themes which are illustrated in the following parts.

4.1. Educational Consequences

This theme is subcategorized into teaching, learning, and testing subcategories.

   a. Teaching consequences

Almost all participants argued that if teachers do not conform to the principals of critical pedagogy, they certainly practice teacher-oriented activities in their own EFL classrooms. They do not pay attention to the students' preferred activities and strategies. An EFL teacher trainer argued:

> *I sometimes observe classrooms at high schools. I always watch teachers teaching in their own ways and trying to finish their job without paying appropriate attention to the learners' styles of learning. They rarely pay attention to the students' comments at all. Well, such teachers follow their own ways of teaching, and in fact a kind of hidden dictatorship is practiced.*

A 48-year-old EFL teacher trainer argued:

> *Recent approaches to teaching lay more emphasis on the interactive roles of learning in selecting teaching materials and teaching activities. One of the assumptions of critical pedagogy is to ask for the learners' comments on the elements of a curriculum including teaching methods and materials. Therefore, if the students are not given a chance to contribute to the teaching process, the outcome will certainly be a teacher dictated curriculum which may be boring to the learners.*

Another subcategory of teaching consequences which emerged from the results of the present study was teaching irrelevant and unnecessary materials. That is, teaching materials which are not in line with the learners as well as society needs. The following quotation highlights the theme.

An associate professor of applied linguistics at one of the state universities argued:

One of the principles of critical pedagogy is to make use of materials which are needed by the learners and society at large. That is, the social problems and the materials which learners love to learn must be covered within an educational curriculum. If not, the results will be a sort of materials which are not preferred by learners and are not related to the social problems of the society.

a. Learning Consequences

Almost all participants argued that if educators do not obey the principles of critical pedagogy, some learning problems will occur. One of these problems is low learning achievement due to the teachers' ignorance of learning theories. An associate professor of a TEFL department argued:

Recent learning theories are much concerned with individual differences, learners' personality types, and learners' styles of learning. If teachers' teaching methods are not consistent with learners' affective and cognitive attributes, they might not learn appropriately and they may not be able to acquire educational objectives.

A 43-year-old assistant professor of the department of English language literature stated:

Teachers should bear in mind that if the teachers in the classroom act against what students like to learn, and if teaching materials are against

14

students' beliefs, cultural values, and personality attributes, the students will certainly resist the teachers and do not pay attention to teaching activities at all. As the results, no learning takes place.

Rote learning and lack of criticality among the learners also occur if educators do not follow the principles of critical pedagogy. An associate professor of language teaching believed:

When the learners' innovations and creativities are repressed by the teachers, they just follow the teachers' instructions and memorize whatever is dictated by the teachers. Memorization as put by behavior psychologists will lead to rote learning. As the results, the learners are not able to make use of whatever they learned in their real life situations.

C. Testing Consequences

The third subcategory of educational consequences is testing related issues. The participants argued that if critical pedagogy principles are violated, several negative consequences will occur such as test unfairness and test bias.
An assistant professor of applied linguistics argued:

There is a relationship between learners' personality traits and testing method. That is, students with specific personality trait may like multiple choice questions but the test takers with another personality trait may prefer essay type questions. Therefore, the test methods which are not in line with learners' personality traits may be bias to a group of learners and test takers.

Fairness in testing and measurement is another theme extracted from the analysis of the data. The participants argued that it is sometimes observed that the contents of test are familiar to certain groups of test takers. It has been

15

verified that background or cultural familiarity influences the performance of test takers. Therefore, when test items and contents lead to test facility for students with a specific cultural background and cause difficulty for the other test takers, the test takers violate the principle of test fairness.

An associate professor interested in testing and assessment stated:

Because of my interest in testing, I sometimes ask my students to list their favorite testing methods and formats. Surprising, students list different testing method preferences. Therefore, making use of one single testing method does not seem to be fair and test takers with different personality types have different performances on tests with different test methods.

The participants also believed that if critical pedagogy principles are not taken into account, there will be a centralized testing system. In fact, centralized testing system is not appropriate for countries in which universities and schools are not equipped with the same facilities, teachers, etc. Therefore, a test particularly high-stake ones such as the national entrance examination to universities would not not fair. The following quotation from an associate professor with 25 years of experience in teaching at universities exemplifies this theme.

You see our country consists of 33 provinces with different climatic conditions, facilities, and distances from the center. Educational facilities are not equally distributed among the provinces and cities. Despite such inequalities, one single national test is administered to select the most qualified candidates for entry to universities .undoubtedly; such a kind of test is not fair and will lead to discrimination among the stake holders...

4.2. Psychological Consequences

The second extracted theme was coded psychological consequences which includes anxiety, stress, negative attitudes, disappointments, and teachers' burnout. Each of these subthemes is described in details in the following parts.

a. Anxiety and Stress

A majority of the participants argued that the violation of critical pedagogy within any educational system will lead to stress and anxiety among the learners.

The following quotation from a professor of TEFL illustrates the theme:

> *When classrooms are not interesting and educators do not take into account learners' needs, interests, academic needs, abilities, and lacks, students will feel stressful and anxious.*

b. Motivation

Almost all participants believed that the violation of critical pedagogy principles can decrease the rate of motivation particularly intrinsic motivation among students.

An assistant professor of English language teaching argued:

> *Human beings like to learn and motivated students are more successful. If educators do not try to keep the students motivated by making use of interesting, local, and culturally related materials in the classroom, the learners may lose motivation and may not do their best to learn more.*

An associate professor interested in curriculum planning argued:

> *Sometimes through some case and action research studies, it is observed that teachers are reflective, do not confess their mistakes, and even resist*

insightful comments of the students. In such learning contexts, learners lose their motivation.

c. Self-confidence

Almost all participants argued that learners' high self-confidence plays an important role in learners' achievements. The acquired self-confidence during school and university days influences the people performance in all aspects of life. If educators reprimand students for minor mistakes repeatedly, if they always reject the learners' comments and wants, etc, they will lose their self confidence and self-esteem. An assistant professor argued:

> *Personality traits of the learners particularly their self-confidence, self-esteem, and attitudes are shaped by formal and hidden curriculum. Whatever, they acquire, observe, and use during university and school terms influence these traits. If whatever an educator does, does not suit learners' preferences, wants, needs, and lacks, their self confidence, self esteem and attitudes will be negatively influenced.*

4.3. Social Consequences

This theme is further subcategorized into unqualified citizens, indifferent and unfaithful citizens, gender segregation, violation of individual and minority groups' rights, uncritical citizens, and human resources' burn out.

The participants of the study argued that the goal of education is to train and prepare the citizens for life and as well as for taking social responsibilities in the future. They also argued that education is always political, and teachers and students within any education system should become transformative intellectuals and cultural workers who are capable of identifying and redressing

the inequalities, injustices, as well as myths of an often oppressive therefore, violation of critical pedagogy either directly or indirectly leads to training unqualified citizens, citizens who are indifferent to their society, and the citizens who act against their country and culture.

An associate professor argued:

Learners imitate their teachers. If they are informed about the real problems of the society, if the solutions to the problems are either through formal or hidden curriculum conveyed to the learner, they can become intellectuals who are concerned with the joys and pains of their society. Actually, through curriculum, learners can be turned into faithful soldiers for the country and society. In fact, they feel a sense of responsibility for whatever may happen in the society.

Gender segregation and violations of both individuals and groups' rights are some other consequences of violating the principles of critical pedagogy. As participants of the study and review of literature indicate, the main assumption of critical pedagogy is equality of male and females and minority groups and the groups with dominant culture and power. However, if educators act against this, they contribute to the violation of learners' rights and gender discrimination and segregation in contexts with dominant and minority groups.

An associate professor argued:

Critical pedagogy is really needed in learning contexts with different genders, social classes, immigrants as minority groups, and natives as dominant groups. If not, several negative consequences such as discrimination and segregation, and violations of rights will occur.

19

d. Human resources' burn out

Educators are important human resources for any country. Participants also agreed that when educators are aware of critical pedagogy but they cannot apply them, they get tired of their jobs and a burnout happens among them. The following quotation illustrates the point.

> *Sometimes in my classes, while talking about critical pedagogy, my PHD candidates state that they want to apply critical pedagogy principles in the classroom, but due to the localized system of education, they cannot. They say that they know some teachers who are burnout and have no motivation for teaching at universities because of these issues.*

4.4. Ideological Consequence

The next theme of the study which was extracted through content analysis of interviews was labeled ideological which is further categ-3orized into culture (shock and acculturation), language (loss and attrition), and beliefs (towards the local values of the society). Almost all participants argued that through education the ideology, culture, and native language of the learners can be developed, shaped, or endangered. If teachers teach in line with the principles of CP, ideology of the learners will develop, their cultural values are learned, and their native language is maintained. Otherwise, the attrition and loss of native language which is deeply rooted in civilization, tradition, and culture of nation are inevitable. They also argued that learners from minority groups and immigrants may easily forget their own culture and learn the culture of dominant groups. Moreover, they argued that in multilingual and multicultural setting, the learners may change their attitudes toward their own culture, native language, and social norms if the educators do not make them aware of the possible dangers.

5. Discussion

The results of the present study indicated that the violation of critical pedagogy principles in educational settings would lead to negative educational, psychological, social, and ideological consequences. First of all, the results indicate that in educational contexts in which critical pedagogy is not practiced, teachers only serve as transmitters of knowledge. This finding is consistent with Beydogan (2002) who has argued that teachers, by only transmitting information, would turn themselves into a part of the curriculum as course books, unit periodicals, and information sheets. On the contrary, schools are expected to be the contexts where there is intensive interaction and it is expected that learners develop a perspective on life itself in such settings.

Another finding of the study was that if critical pedagogy principles are violated, some negative learning consequences would certainly occur. The results are consistent with Alibakhshi (2011) who has argued that if the learners' personality types, attitudes, learning styles, motivations, and interests are not taken into account, learning does not take place and students' achievements will rapidly decrease. The results are also consistent with several conceptual and empirical research studies carried out by researchers (e.g., Eysenck, 1978; Hashway, 1998; Messick, 1996) who have argued that learners' personality and learning styles are closely linked, that many style theories are personality-based, and that styles should be the construct which can be used to build a bridge between learners' cognition and personality in education.

In addition to learning and teaching problems, the violation of critical pedagogy will lead to some testing related consequences. The findings are in line with those of Alibakhshi, Kiani, and Akbari (2009), Messick (1994, 1995, 1996), Davies (1997), Hamp-Lyons (1997a, 1997b, 2000, 1999), and McNamara (1999), who have argued for a professional morality among language testers to

protect the profession's members and individuals from the misuse and abuse of the high stake tests.

The second extracted main theme of the study was psychological which consisted of learners' affective domains: anxiety, stress, self confidence and self esteem. Learners' affective variables are greatly influenced if teachers are not well aware of these traits and do not try to meet these needs. As Griffs and Nguyen (2006) have argued, emotions and feelings are important to how students feel. These emotions and feelings are an important part of the interactions and relationships which shape within the classroom. Data of the study by Russell (2004) indicate that relationships in the classroom directly influenced the learning environment. Therefore, in line with Williams (2003), it could be discussed that learning is vital for students to master skills but the cognitive areas are greatly affected, if the affective domain is ignored. If one feels stressed, sad, threatened, etc., the learning process can break down. Respect towards individual differences is also a necessary characteristic of a healthy classroom environment which supports learning (Williams, 2003).

The results of the study are also consistent with the findings of Adkins (2004). He believes that three domains of psychomotor, cognitive, and affective are closely integrated aspects of human learning. Many institutions lay more emphasis only on the skills and knowledge domains. Quite many trainers of educational professionals have ignored the affective domain because of its complexity. Unfortunately, the cognitive domain looks like a skeleton without the skin if one forgets to nourish the affective domain (Adkins, 2004). The results are also supported by Thompson (2008) who believes that building and maintaining relationships in classrooms are necessary. And to build relationships, teachers must be able to build rapport and foster a learning

context which encourages questions, negotiation and processing, and finally, autonomy, rather than an over-dependence on teachers.

Next, the results showed that in the education contexts in which educators do not conform to critical pedagogy assumptions and rules, several social consequences occur. The main subcomponents are unqualified citizens, indifferent and unfaithful citizens, gender segregation, violation of individual and minority groups' rights, uncritical citizens, and human resources' burnout. The results are supported by Giroux (1988) who has identified and elaborated on themes which are now central to the field: restructuring the classrooms as democratic public spheres, critiques of the instrumental rationality at the center of theories of education, and the necessity to connect the activities of the classrooms activities to the marginalized students' everyday lives.

The results are also in line with Giroux (1988) and Freire (1998) who have emphasized that education is always political, and teachers and students within any educational system should become transformative intellectuals and cultural workers who are capable of identifying and redressing the inequalities, injustices, as well as myths of an often oppressive world.

Finally, in terms of the ideological consequences it could be argued that through medium of instruction, it is possible to negatively influence native language, ideology, and cultural values and beliefs of individuals as well as minority groups in multilingual and multicultural educational settings. These findings are also supported by Kramsch (1993), Phillipson (1992), whose main concern is the worldwide spread of English language. They believe that such rapid spread of language should by no means be considered as a homogenizing factor, which leads to cultural differences to disappear. Rather the increasing use of English across the world offers a medium of instruction to express and explain these differences. In English-speaking countries such as Australia, it is

not hard to notice the differences among native speaker news announcers reporting and pleading for the national or local channels.

6. Conclusions

On the basis of the results of the study, it could be concluded that the application of critical pedagogy in education system of any country is a must. More specifically, it could be concluded that educators should take into account the learners' affective domain in order to prevent the learning and teaching related issues. Moreover, test designers and interpreters should be aware of the social impacts of the high stake tests on test takers in order to avoid test unfairness and bias.

It could also be concluded that educators in addition to transmitting knowledge have to be concerned about social, political, and economical status of the education and should do their best to train qualified and faithful citizens. Moreover, it could be concluded that educators should respect all learners' gender differences, social class, native language, ideological beliefs, and cultural values.

References

Abdelrahim, A. T. (2007). *The relationship between gender and experience in teachers' awareness of critical pedagogy.* (Unpublished master's thesis). Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran.

Aliakbari, M., Azimi Amoli, F. (2014). Teachers' awareness of critical pedagogy: A case study of Iranian EFL teachers. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences, 3* (1), 128-134.

Aliakbari, M., & Faraji, E. (2011). *Basic principles of critical pedagogy.* Second International Conference on Humanities, Historical And Social Sciences *IPEDR, 17.* 78-85. Available Online at http://www.ipedr.com/vol17/14-CHHSS%202011-H00057.pdf.

Alibakhshi, G. (2011). On the impacts of gender and personality types on Iranian EFL teachers teaching efficacy and teaching activities preferences. *IJAL, 14*(1), 1-23.

Alibakhshi, G., & Macky, A. (2012). *Critical pedagogy in Iranian universities. Where are we?*. Paper Presented in Ninth International Conference of Iranian English Teaching and Literature Conference, Ilam University, Ilam, Iran.

Alibakhshi, G., Kiani, G. R., Akbari, R. (2009). On the consequential validity of ESP tests. *Applied linguistics journal of Tabriz Azad University, 1*(2), 103-126.

Azimi, H. (2007). *On the attitude of English teachers and university students in the Implementation of critical pedagogy.* (Unpublished master's thesis). Tarbiat Modares University. Tehran, Iran.

Babbie, E. (1990). *Survey research methods*. (2nd edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Bartolome, L. I. (2004). Critical pedagogy and teacher education: Radicalizing prospective teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 31*(2), 97-122.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Edmondson, J., & D'Urso, A. (2007). The importance of being critical: Opening possibilities and hope in education policy study. *Journal of Critical Education Policy Study, 5*(1), 23-35.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York, NY: Continuum Books.

Giroux, H. A. (1992). *Border crossings: Cultural workers and the politics of education.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Giroux, H. A. (1997). *Pedagogy and the politics of hope: Theory, culture, and schooling. A critical reader.* Boulder, CO: Westview.

Hollstein, M. S. (2006). *Critical pedagogy: Pre-service teachers' perspectives.* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Ohio.

Horan, N. L. (2004). *Finding oneself in the classroom: A critical auto ethnographic narrative chronicling the risks and rewards of a teacher and her students as they engage in the practice of a critical pedagogy.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Hovey, R. (2004). Critical pedagogy and international studies: Reconstructing knowledge through dialogue with the subaltern. *International Relations, 18*(2), 241-254.

James, K. (2008). A critical theory and postmodernist approach to the teaching of accounting theory. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting, 19*(2), 643-676.

Keesing-Styles, L. (2003). The relationship between critical pedagogy and assessment in teacher education. *Radical Pedagogy, 5*(1). Retrieved from http://radicalpedagogy. icaap.org/content/issue5_1/03_keesing-styles.htm

Kanpol, B. (1998). Critical pedagogy for beginning teachers: The movement from despair to hope. *Online Journal of Critical Pedagogy, 2*(1). Retrieved from http://users. monash.edu.au

Kincheloe, J. L. (2005). *Critical constructivism.* New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2008). Critical pedagogy and the knowledge wars of the twenty-first century. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy, 1*(1), 30-46.

Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. L. (1994). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 138-157). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Luke, A. (1988). *Literacy, textbooks, and ideology.* London, England: Falmer.

McLaren, P. (1989). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education.* White Plains, NY: Longman.

McLaren, P. (2003). Critical pedagogy: A look at the major concepts. In A. Darder, M., Baltodano & D. R. Torres (Eds.), *The Critical pedagogy reader* (pp. 69-103) New York: Routledge Falmer.

Maxwell, J.A. (1992). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. *Harvard Educational Review, 62*, 279-300.

Momenian, M., & Shirazizadeh, M. (2009). Putting things right: State-of-the-art on critical pedagogy and writing. *MJAL 1*(4), 223-243.

Monchinski, T. (2008). *Critical pedagogy and the everyday classroom.* Berlin, Springer.

Ohara, Y., Saft, S., & Crookes, G. (2000). *Teacher exploration of feminist critical pedagogy in beginning Japanese as a foreign language class.* Paper presented at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Padget, D. K. (1998). *Qualitative methods in social work research: Challenges and rewards.* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods.* (2nd edition). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Pinar, W. F., & Bowers, C. A. (1992). Politics of curriculum: Origins, controversies, and significance of critical perspectives. *Review of Research in Education, 18* (1), 163- 190.

Radnor, H. (2001). *Researching your professional practice. Doing interpretive research.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research.* (2nd edition). Oxford: Blackwell.

Peterson, R.E. (2003). Teaching how to read the world and change it: Critical pedagogy in the intermediate grades. In A. Darder, M. Baltodano, & R. D. Torres, (Eds.). *The critical pedagogy reader.* Great Britain: Routledge Falmer.

Shor, I. (1980). *Critical teaching and everyday life.* Boston, MA: South End.

Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education: Critical teaching for social change.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.

Shannon, P. (Ed.). (1992). *Becoming political: Readings and writings in the politics of literacy education.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Silverman, D. (2000). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook.* London: Sage.

Simon, R. (1992). *Teaching against the grain*. New York, NY: Bergin and Garvey.

Yilmaz, K. (2009). Elementary school teachers' views about the critical pedagogy. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 18*(1), 139-149.