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Navigating the Hindrances Arising at Macro and Micro-level from Practicality of Transformative Pedagogy

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Abstract

The present study intends to probe the impediments for the practicality of Critical language pedagogy (CLP) in higher education system of Iran. To do this, 20 Iranian university instructors, holding Ph.D. degrees in TEFL, were asked to read a passage reflecting the main characteristics of transformative pedagogy. To explore the main obstacles, they were invited for a semi-structured interview. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The data were analyzed using Thomas (2006) inductive approach including frequent, dominant, or significant themes. The results revealed a number of themes that illustrate macro and micro inhibiting factors Iranian EFL instructors encounter toward implementing the principles of CLP. The findings are discussed and suggestions are provided for teachers to transform transmission approaches into transformative and dialogic ones.

Keywords: transformative pedagogy, EFL instructors, hindrances, thematic analysis, micro level, macro level, dialogic-driven pedagogy

Introduction

Critical pedagogy (CP) is a movement inspired by the work of Paulo Freire (1972) in his classical writing of “pedagogy of the oppressed”. His early contribution is a distinction between banking -education through which students are regarded as passive recipient of the predetermined knowledge and teachers are considered as disseminators and unquestioned authorities who are responsible for filling "empty vessels" (i.e., Students) with information, while in problem posing education (PPE) students are active and responsible participants in the appropriation of information in relation to their existential life concern (Morrow & Torres, 2002). From a CP perspective, education is conceptualized as a “vehicle for social control, for ethnic assimilation and reproduction of privileging norms” (McLaren, 2001, p. 129). This framework has colored ELT as confirmed by the hegemony of apolitical, asocial and cognitive-linguistic view of language (Pennycook, 1990).

Recently, many practitioners have explored the educational side of ELT and its contribution to learners’ critical consciousness. Therefore, upon encroaching critical language pedagogy (CLP) inside the ELT community, few practitioners have started to “engage themselves in an academic debate about the putative neutrality of ELT and need to consider the social and political implications of ELT” (Cox & Assis-Peterson, 1999, p. 434).

Freire (1970, p. 28) approaches education philosophy through the lens of “co-intentional education” to break the “culture of silence”. In this regard, he proposed that students’ real-life concern should be the cardinal course content and negotiation should form the educational context. Students employ materials developed by themselves and the “teacher engages in the process of knowing as a learner among learners” (Riasati & Mollaei, 2012, p. 223). Later, Henry Giroux (1983) coined the term CP on Freire’s work to criticize a “Reagan-era-educational culture of positivism that used school as forms of social regulation to preserve the status quo” (Groenke & Hatch, 2009, p. 3). Currently, this movement is known as dogme ELT (Medding & Thornburry, 2009). Chappell (2014) argues that a dogme syllabus calls for a dialogic-driven pedagogy with an emergent language rather than the content of course books.

As Giroux (2003, cited in Barjesteh & Birjandi, 2015, p. 1016) asserts, CP is an educational movement aims to "disclose the hidden cultural values of an educational setting, to make both teacher and students transformative

intellectuals, to recognize authoritarian propensities, and to connect knowledge to power as well as the ability in order to take constructive action". This movement in education is based on teaching requirement. Thus, a teacher's role changes from an "instructor to a facilitator or a reflective practitioner" (Ghaemi & Asadi Piran , 2014, p. 18). Adapting Freirian pedagogy, Shor (1992) believes that a teacher needs to research what students feel, think and experience. She coins the term "empowering education" to demystify CP as a critical-democratic education for the social change. For Shor, empowering education is a dialogic-driven pedagogy in which both teachers and students probe every themes through negotiation and posing problems. Thus, students are considered active agents of their learning who examine their perspectives in relation to the public issue. Although many definitions of CP have been proposed, scholars have come to a realization that there does not exist an all-encompassing definition. Based on the different ways in which many scholars (Giroux, 1988; Hui, 1997; McLaren, 1995; McLaren & Leonard, 1993; Pennycook, 1990; Shor, 1986) have looked at this approach, CP can be defined as a dynamic framework of education promoting reflective, contextualized, dialogic and a critical-bound approach.

The current L2 professional literature foregrounds a critical oriented shift in applied linguistics agenda worldwide. In the relevant literature review, there has been a growing tendency toward the application of CP focused on language learning. Despite the advancement of CP, it has not yet encroached into the practical aspects of L2 materials development in Iran due to a number of reasons. First, the language policy makers and materials developers advocate a top down policy in Iran by imposing teachers and students to follow what has already been defined in textbooks.

In Iran, the textbooks are designed by the Ministry of Education for all levels without considering teachers' voice and students' needs for materials preparation. Second, the test-oriented ideology and the lack of critical-oriented approach in all educational levels call for each student show their knowledge through high score. They wait for teachers to provide them information in an academic program. This approach is in vogue in many educational contexts of Iran at B.A. and M.A. programs. More precisely, the syllabus is about the content of a course and less about a dialogic-driven pedagogy.

A glimpse over the context of education in Iran reveals that a transmission style classroom is the dominant approach in the educational system. This pedagogy offers an outside source that officially decides the instructions for teachers inside the cycle of language teaching. More specifically, the system of education places emphasis on mastering content knowledge through memorization. This system views teachers as transmitters and students as passive receivers of knowledge. Quite recently, a growing body of research (Abdelrahim, 2007; Aghaei, 2009; Aghagolzadeh, & Davari, 2012 ; Aliakbari & Allahmoradi, 2012; Sadeghi & Ketabi, 2009) highlights a critical oriented shift in Iranian ELT community. While many authors repeatedly debated the dissatisfaction of the mainstream ELT in Iran, adapting or adopting the theoretical underpinning of CP in their curriculum such as materials development, course books, teacher development, student-teacher relationship seems to be in its incipient stage.

There is a consensus among the researchers (Canagarajah, 2005; Freire, 1970; Kumaradivelu, 2003, Norton & Toohey, 2004; Shor, 1986) that education is interwoven with social, cultural, political and economic construction in everyday life. Over the last decades, the application of CLP in the educational contexts draw many researchers' attention (Barjesteh, Nasrollahi & Esmaili, 2016; Fahim, & Pishghadam, 2009; Ghaemi, & AsadiPiran, 2014; Niknezhad, 2015; Riasati, & Mollaei, 2012; Sadeghi, & Ketabi, 2009; Safari, & Pourshamsi, 2012). They focused on the theoretical aspect of CLP. Some criticized CLP due to its limitation at the theoretical level. To address this gap, the present study sets out to probe if there is a room for implementing the theoretical principles of CLP in the higher education system of Iran. More precisely, this study examines the impediments EFL teachers encounter towards implementing the principles of CLP in educational system of Iran. In fact, what motivated the researcher to probe the practicality of CLP was the educational and sociopolitical context of Iran. To do so, this study provides a rather detailed account of the obstacles for implementing of CLP in Iran at micro and macro-level. To undertake this project, a phenomenological study was undertaken to find answer to the following research question:

What obstacles do Iranian EFL instructors encounter toward implementing the principles of CLP in Iran?

Method

Participants

This study probes Iranian EFL university instructors' attitudes toward the obstacles for applying the principles of CP in the educational context of Iran. A convenience sampling was used to investigate the barriers Iranian language instructors encounter toward implementing the philosophy of CLP. In so doing, 20 Iranian university instructors (6 females and 14 males) who were aware of the principles of CP were questioned using a semi-structured interview. The participants were faculty members in ELT departments who train prospective teachers. They had 10-25 years of teaching experience holding Ph.D. degree (14) and Ph.D. student (6) who passed their comprehensive exam successfully in TEFL and English literature. Their ages ranged from 32 to 55. They had teaching experience at four state (Golestan, Mazandaran, Tehran, Yazd) and four Islamic Azad universities (Amol, Tonekabon, Ghaemshar, Karaj).

Instrumentation

Critical Pedagogy Attitude Interview. The preset study utilized a critical pedagogy attitude interview (CPAI) to probe the obstacles Iranian EFL university instructors encounter toward implementing the principles of CP in Iran. CPAI comprised two parts: (a) reading passage on CLP, and (b) interview questions. The passage summarized some characteristics of teaching and learning process in CP. Specifically, it began by a short description of the originator of CLP, the corresponding school of thought, and the main phases of Freirean pedagogical model. In order to come up with a comprehensive understanding of the main principles of CP, the researcher summarized the main tenets of CLP in a reading passage. The passage clarified the goals of CLP in a classroom, the characteristics of teaching and learning process, the criteria for the content selection, the role of the teacher, the role the students, the nature of their interaction, and assessment from a critical perspective. Following the passage, they were asked to read the questions in order to answer in the semi-structured interview in part B. To tap the validity, the interview questions and passage were reviewed by two experts in the field. Based on their comments some vague items were revised and the complex sentences reworded.

The CPAI comprised five questions in Persian which aimed to uncover the problems in implementing CLP strategies in everyday classroom life. More specifically, the questions sought EFL university instructors' attitudes in the following aspects: (a) educational objectives, (b) the role of the teacher, (c) the role of students and their interaction, (d) the role of curriculum developers in materials preparation, and (e) the place of CP in Iran. Put it differently, the interview questions aimed to explore the extent to which the principles of CP can be employed by EFL university instructors in Iran, how they defined their role as a teacher, the nature of student and teacher interaction, and what barriers the curriculum developers encountered in applying the principles of CP in their everyday classroom in Iran. Since one can associate numerous practices with CP, the researcher delimited the interview questions on general guidelines proposed by Aghagolzadeh and Davari (2014), Akbari (2008), Aliakbari and Allahmoradi (2012), Kumaradivelu (2001).

Procedure

To provide a deeper understanding of the obstacles Iranian university instructors encounter in the way toward implementing the principles of CP in Iran, 20 Iranian university instructors, holding Ph.D. degrees in TEFL, were invited for an interview. The data were collected through face-to-face in-depth semi-structured interviews with academics from different universities. They had 5 years teaching experience at M.A. level. Before conducting the interview, the university instructors were asked to read a passage reflecting the characteristics of teaching and learning process in CLP. The passage is deemed advisable because it is hypothesized that some of the university instructors would not cooperate unless they remember what CLP is. After reading the passage, the researcher appointed a time to meet the interviewee at their office.

To collect data from the interviewee, some sample questions on the rationale for applying CLP in Iran were used. The interview questions were based on five classifications that sprang up from extensive reading of the literature. Some questioning styles such as rapport building, thought provoking interjections, and critical event analysis techniques, proposed by Ritchie and Lewis (2003), were present during the interview including explanatory and exploratory probing. The interviews were conducted in Persian. It soon felt like

a natural exploratory conversation. Each interview lasted up to 45 minutes. In the interview session, the researcher did not interrupt the interview, but listened carefully and sometimes posed some questions to get more explorative ideas from the university instructors. Their discussions were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim. To pursue the reliability and validity of the data, the transcribed version returned to the participants for verification. In addition, all participants were provided with the same questions. Due to the subjective nature of this study, attempts were made to present bias free account of the subjects' opinions. To assure the university instructors' awareness of the principles of CP, a passage along with a number of questions reflecting on major tenets of CP were designed based on the review of the related literature to introduce the basic principles of CP to them.

Data Analysis

The researcher advocated the ethical guideline proposed by Christians (2005) as follows: Informed consent, avoiding deception, protecting participants' privacy and confidentiality of the data. The raw data were analyzed using a general inductive approach that focused on research findings from frequent, dominant, or significant themes (Thomas, 2006). This thematic analysis involved seeking commonality in the data, differences, or distinctive features across the data set in order to disclose the main barriers to applying CP principles from Iranian EFL instructors' points of view. More specifically, the coding process in inductive analysis comprised: (a) initial reading of the text; (b) identifying specific text segment; (c) labeling the segment of text to create categories, (d) reducing overlap and redundancy among the categories, and (e) creating a model incorporating the important categories.

Results

The results of thematic data analysis of the face-to-face semi-structure interviews revealed some inhibiting factors for the practicality of CP in the educational system of Iran from Iranian EFL instructors' points of view. The obstacles were classified at macro and micro level due to the nature of responses. More precisely, the external hindrances labeled macro level and internal obstacles classified as micro level. In the following section, different themes based on the analysis of data address the respective themes at macro level.

Centralized Planning System

One of the first challenges that teachers should encounter is the curriculum and syllabus they should follow. The authorities in charge in the government take all decisions, correspondingly schools and teachers must conform to the pre-packed decision. Teachers are the performers of the governments' central policies.

The following excerpts quoted some Iranian EFL instructors who had experience in teaching at both schools and universities.

- *"a uniform English textbook is used for all students around the country without taking into account of their (learners) background ,needs and individual differences."*
- *"CP is not practical as long as preplanned decisions about courses, exams and teaching procedures are dictated to our teachers".*

Fahim and Pishghadam (2009) contend that Iran has been dominated by the ideas of modernism but there is no evidence of postmodernism in different level of education. They maintain that the top -down policy and the centralized system of education made no room for learners to express their voice. One of the basic components of CP is based on the assumption that no one program fits for all learners and a set of predetermined curriculum would never be imposed in a program (Giroux, 1997; Shor, 1992).

Macro Planning and National Willpower

One of the interviewees stated that :

- *"I think all we need is macro planning in higher level such as government and policy makers. I believe individual attempt is useless. We need a national power to invite all people incorporate the culture of critique, dialogue, and negotiation in their daily life."*

A similar concern, seeking social justice at macro level in a society, stated by one of the instructors as:

- *"I think, first the culture of dialogue and discourse should spread in the country. I mean we should create the discourse of CP in our educational settings such as schools and universities. CP seeks social justice and educational justice. This justice is not only for one class. Teachers should "first understand the "logic of deliberation" then train this logic to their students."*

One of the interviewees stated this concern by posing questions:

- *"The infra- structure is not ready yet. I think legislators should spread the concept via different ways. Do you think our teachers aware with the concept? Do they know the underlying philosophy? Are critical textbooks and instructional materials accessible for both teachers and learners? Do we have national or international conferences on critical perspectives in education?"*

McLaren (2003) argued that the notion of accountability is hidden in the critical theories so as to meet the logic of market demands. The proponents of CP maintain that the central goal of CP is to develop learners' self-actualization, critical awareness, social justice, equality, empowerment, language awareness, teacher and learner autonomy and to raise learners' critical consciousness in order to give voice to the status quo. The above goal does not happen overnight. It requires a long term planning.

Disseminating Western Thought

The philosophy of critical theory and Islamic education actually share a number of ideologies about human nature, society, knowledge, and education. With the emergence of this critical standpoint many scholars in this field consider ELT industry as pursuing the hidden goal of disseminating Western thoughts and ideologies (Kasaian & Subbakrishna, 2011). These hidden aspects and layers which are part of any course, including ELT, constitute what has been called the hidden curriculum (Cunnigworth, 1995).

Some of the instructors proposed Islamized CP (ICP). They remarked that most of the principles of CP have been realized in our Islamic values. They stressed that the principles are deeply rooted in our religion. The following quotes indicate their concern as:

- *CP and Islam share similar underlying philosophical assumptions. Our policy makers might think the concept is a western ideology focusing on political and social reform. We should elucidate the concept within our religious reasoning and publicize via media and scientific researches. Therefore, there would be no objection and resistance".*

Curriculum and Syllabus

Within the frame work of CP curriculum and syllabus is based on the assumption that a set of predetermined curriculum would never be imposed in a program. It is assumed that foreordained program content contradicts the ideology of problem posing instruction (Shor, 1992). Therefore, all curriculum decisions would be based on the needs of students involve in a program and the choices of what would be studied through negotiation or dialogical interaction (Giroux, 1997; Shor, 1992). Within the context of Iran, one problem that teachers should deal with is the curriculum and syllabus. They should follow and cover the syllabus. Most of the teachers claimed that students are not qualified enough to understand their needs or expectation. They might be affected by their interest that is not apt for teaching context. This is reflected in the following excerpt:

- *"Theoretically, I accept the negotiated syllabus but it is difficult to apply it in Iran because we are restricted with full of "must". We must teach the students, we must follow the syllabus, we must cover the entire syllabus, we must evaluate our students based on predetermined criteria. And a lot of must I think these restrictions oppose the underlying philosophy of CP".*

Some of the instructors consider teachers' resistance on negotiated syllabus as an obstacle towards implementing CP. The following excerpt reflects his concern:

- *"Most of the teachers do not accept negotiated syllabus because they were trained within the traditional system. They think negotiation might debilitate their authority and power among the students. In addition, it is time consuming... . I think CP is culture- bound".*

System of Evaluation

The term assessment and evaluation seem to be challenging in CP language classroom. The common practice in critical language assessment highlights ongoing evaluation on students' growth and empowerment that requires "evaluation not as a measure of linguistic skill, but as an expression of language awareness" (Reagan & Osborn, 2002, p.72). Crawford- Lange (1981) believe that norm referenced evaluation is not appropriate in CP classroom because the content of the course is based on the local needs. Control mechanism in universities and centralized high stakes test were the main obstacles reported by

instructors toward implementing CP in the system of education of Iran. The following quotes indicate the main contains EFL instructors encountered toward the system of evaluation in Iran:

- *"There are rigid frameworks that predetermine how teachers should test students. We must follow those rules. For example, currently, the exam bureau gave me a form. This form guided instructors how to design, construct and evaluate students performance for the final exam. We are restricted to test 70% of what students have been taught during the course. Do you think there is a room for teachers to have formative assessment? "*

The following table summarizes the excerpts and the emerging problems

Table 1.

Excerpts and Emerging Problems at Macro level

No.	Excerpts	Emerging problems
1	-Using a uniform text book for all students -Dictating preplanned decision to teachers	Centralized planning system
2	-Cultivating the culture of dialogue and negotiation at national level -Training teachers and holding national and international conferences on critical perspectives in education	Macro planning and national willpower
3	-Implementing negotiated syllabus -Culture bound nature of CP	Curriculum and syllabus
4	-Providing no room for teachers due to rigid rules and frameworks for evaluation	System of evaluation

In addition to the external factors, the coding process in inductive analysis revealed a number of internal obstacles. More specifically, after reading the excerpts, the researcher labeled them to create categories. The following hindrances emerged after reducing the overlapped redundancy.

Authoritarian Nature of Schools

Kanpol (1998) enumerates a number of factors that lead the authoritarian nature of schools: top-down hierarchy, control mechanisms, a strict rule structure, and a standardized curriculum. He maintains that within this authoritarian structure, clearly defined structural leaders and their subordinates form a hierarchical ladder of control and division of labor.

The educational system of Iran follows a similar structure with fixed roles for teachers, students, and school managers. When a new method or technique comes to play, there would be a strict negative reaction on the part of school managers to follow what have already dictated to the teachers. This is concerned to what Kanpol (1998) coined authoritarianism in the system of education in which the school administrators impose their authority to teachers. Kanpol stated that within CP the term authority could be democratically negotiated. Both teachers and students enjoy the knowledge of each others. Thus, learning turns to be reciprocal and dialogical. The following excerpt exemplifies the authoritarian nature of a private English school in Iran:

- *"When I came to know the principles of CP, I was interested to apply it in one of my classes in a private institute. I was badly behaved by the principal. She asked me about the reason I allowed students to assess their performance, the reason they should include their favorite texts in their classroom He told me I must follow the rules and regulation in this institute. Otherwise, they will not invite me for the next term".*

Culture of Critique

In the system of education of Iran, the culture of critique seems to be absent because any critique in education regards as an "unruly and unmanageable behavior which should be reprimanded" (Safari & Pourshamsi, 2012, p. 2553). This culture of silencing demands a serious attention on the part of language teachers. Some of the interviewees have expressed this unfavorable condition

N: There is a big gap between schools and universities. Many learners and even teachers should learn how to criticize the logic of arguments. I think we should create the culture of critique at home as the smallest unit of a society.

S: There is a poverty of critical learner and critical teacher in our system. First we have to learn how to criticize the logic of argument in every day situation.

T: In recent years, this concept [critical thinking] is in vogue. I read many papers published by Iranian authors. The reality is that our country in general and educational system in particular needs a real reform. To me, there is no room for the culture of critique because it has not appropriately evolved. We are not culturally rich enough to criticize our surrounding in general and our class in particular. We should cultivate this "seed" at home from kindergartens.

Crooks and Lehner (1998) highlight developing learners' critical awareness, critical thinking skill, and their autonomy by interrogating students' real life problems. They maintain that these factors should base the underpinnings of critical L2 materials. In line with how materials in critical L2 pedagogy can influence the classroom, Wink (2000) states

The learning is not just grounded in the prepared syllabus, the established, prescribed curriculum. Problem –posing opens the door to ask questions and seek answers, not only of the visible curriculum, but also of the hidden curriculum. Problem posing is very interested in the hidden curriculum, which is why many are uncomfortable with it. Problem posing causes people to ask questions many do not want to hear. (p. 61)

Freire (1970) posits that the aim of CP is to foster learners' critical thinking skills. The problem posing instruction and critical thinking are like body and the flesh. Once learners are able to critically analyze the problematic issue of their social life, they are able to be a "transformative intellectual," a term adopted by Giroux (1988). It means that teachers have particular qualities such as the knowledge and skills to interrogate and act as change agents of structural inequities in their place of employment. CP aims to integrate a language of critique with a language of possibility.

McLaren and Kincheloe (2007) posit that teachers should provide learners with the necessary knowledge and skills to enlarge their students' capacity to both interrogate deep-seated presumption and to take charge for taking part of the world they reside. The common practice in L2 professional literature

considers the necessity of the culture of critique in a CP classroom. It invites the learners to voice their ideas.

Instructional Facilities and administrative constraints

In the system of education of Iran, there is a paucity of materials to incorporate local culture in EFL classrooms. The findings of (Abdollahzadeh & Baniasad 2010; Baleghizadeh & Motahed, 2010; Davari 2011) reveal that the commercially produced textbooks in Iran are culturally skewed toward western capitalism and culture. In the same vein, Aliakbari and Allahmoradi (2012) posit that because of the paucity of standard textbooks on CP, teachers have no instructional resources to incorporate the principles of CP into their classroom. In this system, not all teachers and schools have equal chance to take the advantage of educational facilities such as internet, rich libraries, and journals. Limited class time, accessibility to the instructional materials, and the number of learners in a classroom were the major concern of interviewees. As some of them refer to this reality:

O: the word university student in Persian makes you think of the idea of those who eager in seeking knowledge. The problem is that the infrastructure is not ready yet. We do not provide them with basic facilities. We provide them with advanced internet services, rich library, and enough educational space. So within these limitations, it is difficult to train a researcher.

A: Our university, Mazandaran, is one of the high ranking universities in the north of Iran. But you see we only have 10 computers in the IT site for all students I mean, B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. Shall we expect them to be a good researcher?

As some of them state:

B: You know cooperation, collaboration, dialogue, and negotiation are the main cornerstone in a CP classroom. I did not believe my eyes when I saw 40 students in my M.A. classroom at the methodology course. How can you invite them to cooperate in such a large class size? Group work, negotiation, and dialogue cannot be reached in a crowded classroom.

C: How can we negotiate with the students of diverse interests and learning styles in such crowded classrooms? Even our Ph.D. classes

are comprised minimum 10 students. This makes no room for reflection, action and discussion.

A number of materials developers (Akbari, 2008; Baladi, 2007; Brown, 1990 Canagarajah, 2005; Crooks, 2009) oppose the content of mainstream materials in ELT world for westernizing young adults. Hurst (2007) argues that most of the commercially produced textbooks are accused of practicing a western hidden curriculum imposing western socio-cultural values that are hidden in their make-up. Suffered from inappropriate EFL materials, CP incorporates the controversial term of globalization to repudiate the use of instructional materials and commercially produced textbooks. Crawford (1978) asserts that such materials generate creativity and responsibility on the part of the learners.

Most principles of CP advocate a small number of students in the classroom. Almost all of the instructors encounters the administrative constraints such large classroom sizes and limited class times as problems for implementing CLP. They believed that these administrative elements seem to be a will-o the wisp in our system of education. Table 2 summarizes the excerpts and the emerging problems at micro level.

Table 2.
Excerpts and Emerging Problems at Micro level

No.	Excerpts	Emerging problems
1	-I should follow what has been imposed in the language institute.	Authoritarian nature of schools
2	-Teachers and learners should learn how to criticize the logic of argument. -The system of education needs a reform to train critical thinking.	Culture of critique
3	-We do not have infrastructures such as rich library, advanced internet, and enough educational space. -It is impossible to invite students collaborate in a large class size. -Group work and dialogue cannot be reached in a crowded classroom.	Instructional facilities and administrative constraints

Discussion

The results of the interviews indicated a sample of Iranian EFL instructors' ideas toward the obstacles in applying the principles of CP in Iran. Most of the instructors acknowledged on connecting the course with the real life experience in order to bridge the gap between theory and practice. In fact, almost all of the instructors concurred on transforming both teachers and students to become social agent in their community. Moreover, all of them supported dialogical interaction and negotiation in the third millennium. In line with Pennycook (1998), the interviewees admitted that teachers should help learners go beyond the text because education should be mind activators to aid students think critically. Most of them acknowledged the theoretical underpinning of CP but they enumerated a number of concerns and challenges toward implementing CP within the context of Iran.

The findings are in line with Pishghadam and Mirzaee (2008) who challenged the practicality of postmodernism at any levels of education in Iran. To them, top- down language policy and centralized system were the main barriers for the feasibility of the post-modernism. They maintained that the stakeholders in charge of education take all decision and teachers are not free to select a course book or change the system of evaluation. They suggested some modifications in the system of education to bridge the gap between theory and practice. These modifications could be decentralizing system of education, giving more power to teachers, giving more autonomy to learners, encouraging action research and taking in to account of individual differences. Similarly, Akbari (2008) believes that education is filled with politics but some control mechanisms make it politically inappropriate. He believes that language teaching is considered mainly as a cognitive activity with few socio-political implications due to the conservative forces that control education and society at large. He believes that these forces keep critical ideas out of school curricula and classrooms.

In addition, the findings of this study are in line with the results reported by (Aliakbari & Allahmoradi, 2012). Their findings reveal that in spite of teachers' awareness of CP, they are not able to apply them in practice due to conservative forces. In line with their findings, this study reported that CP is not politically appropriate in Iran because it is not logical to take risk to be the agent of social changes. Safari and Pourshamsi (2012) conduct a study to explore the rational for applying CP in the educational system of Iran. Following the same line of ideas, they address lack of familiarity of the approach and the principals' disinclination toward new approach were the main constraints regarding the practicality of CP in Iran. In the same line, they conclude that CP is not appropriate from political perspectives.

Some factors such as incorporating theoretical issue into students' lives, cooperation, collaborative activities, making social transformation as one of priorities in education, posing thought provoking questions, risk posing novel ideas make students more willing to participate in the classroom. All teachers agree with this utopia classroom. The overall findings of the present study reveal that incorporating the principles of CP are appreciated by almost all of instructors.

Almost all of them report that CP is practical in Iran if the stakeholders provide the infrastructures. They recite a number of inhibiting factors for putting CP into practice within the educational system of Iran. There are some inhibiting factors. among the factors reported by them in face to face semi-structure interviews, they unanimously blame top down policy, centralized educational system, authoritarian nature of schools, solid syllabus and curriculum, obligatory standard tests, limit class time, large class size, and the traditional ways of thinking as the main obstacles for implementing CLP in EFL teaching and learning context in Iran.

Despite the paradigm shift from traditional teacher centered to communicative language teaching (CLT) in educational system in Iran especially in private EFL institutions where cooperation, free discussion, and group works are appreciated, a typical coursework in Iran pursue a predetermine rigid lesson plan. We need a comprehensive mission for our system of education in order to expect the role a teacher has to assume as a learner, negotiator, syllabus designer and the agent of a social change. The qualitative analysis of the data revealed that most of the hindrances for implementing CLP principles are attributed to overarching policy makers and the rest could be ascribed to teachers, learners, and parents. Implementing CLP in a classroom in Iran might encounter abundance of hindrances at macro and micro level. At macro-level stake holders and policy makers should disseminate the culture of critique and democracy in society and invite all people incorporate the culture of dialogue and negotiation in the society, and at micro level parents should engage the children to transform knowledge during the life span.

The present study provided a clear picture of themes from a semi-structured interview for implementing CLP in the educational system of Iran. The respected themes illustrate obstacles and frustration EFL teachers encounter toward the applicability of CP in Iran. Analyzing in depth interviews uncovered a number of barriers for applying the principles of CP in Iran. The findings provide teachers with a platform from which they can overcome the obstacles. Although the findings delineated several frustrations for implementing CLP,

one should avoid jumping to this conclusion that CP is only at the theoretical level and devoid the applicability. The present study revealed a picture of frustrating themes for implementing CLP in Iran. It is clear that the themes emerged in this study are culturally and socially confined to the system of Iran. Related to this conclusion is the issue of whether skills associated to critical thinking are culture bound and therefore inappropriate for non-western society like Iran. A straightforward conclusion for the present study is that teachers should not only transmit the subject matter but also do their best to train qualified students to be the agent of their society. Put it differently, they should raise learners' awareness to the social, political, cultural and economic aspect of education while respecting all ideological beliefs. In so doing, a dialogic-driven pedagogy should be the corner stone of a course to transform what they have learnt.

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