

Original Article

On the Iranian ELT Experts' and English Literature Teachers' Perceptions of a Technology-Laden Critical Pedagogy (CP)-based EFL Teacher Preparation Program: Any Discrepancy?Zahra Sabaghzade¹, Neda Fatehi Rad^{2*}, Leila Anjomshoa³

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Abstract

Using Critical Digital Pedagogy (CDP) considering the recent technological advancements in the field of education as well as the prevalence of critical pedagogy (CP) in the World educational systems. This qualitative study aimed to uncover ELT experts' and English literature teachers' perceptions of a technology-laden CP-based EFL teacher preparation program for the context of Iran within a basic interpretive design. A total of thirty male and female ELT experts with a PhD in TEFL who were selected through convenience sampling from among experienced university professors who had relevant research expertise in the field. They were university professors with PhD in TEFL with different years of teaching experience. To collect the data, a semi-structured interview was used. Data analysis was done by the MAXQDA. The results showed that the perceptions of ELT experts and English literature teachers were both in line with the tenets of CP and the use of technology in education. Further, it was indicated that the perceptions of ELT experts and English literature teachers of a technology-laden CP-based EFL teacher preparation program for the context of Iran were significantly different. The findings have some implications for EFL teacher education administrators, curriculum planners and educators.

Keywords

Critical Pedagogy (CP), Critical Digital Pedagogy (CDP), EFL Teacher Education, Technology.

Introduction

Generally, any educational program is remarkably led by a set of policies. In fact, the decisions made in such programs are policy-laden because they originally seek to promote ideologies of a specific school of thought by manipulating the reality. This leads to the suppression of the status quo and consequently to the emergence of Critical Pedagogy (CP) under the attempts of the Brazilian scholar, Paulo Freire (Giroux, 2004). Freire (1970) was a proponent of a pedagogy whose main aim is to change the stance of the oppressed from the recipients of the passive knowledge to the critical agents (Gao et al., 2020).

In the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching/learning, CP is a teaching/learning approach whose aim is to make the classroom environment intermingled with the sociocultural, political, and economic environment (Giroux, 2011). Originally, CP, in this context, seeks to transform society via language education through problem-posing education (Degener, 2001; Freebody, 2008; Mulcahy, 2011).

With the technology advancement, the possibility of applying CP into online teaching/learning has been proposed (Boyd, 2016). The interface of CP and technology is that both of them seek transformation (Gao et al., 2020). Both have the power to change the culture of people and

empower them (McLaren, 1995). To support this, following the introduction of social networks, professional and social communications were changed remarkably, and this led to the formation of a culture of online networking (Chambers, 2013). The contribution of technology to a variety of fields including education, economy, industry, international communications is significant (Gao et al., 2020). As far as the education field is concerned, technological advancements have transformed the way information is collected and shared among educational settings (Valdez, 2020). Thanks to new educational technologies, various information resources and communication platforms have been produced and used in educational settings (Allcoat et al., 2021). This has also affected teachers' perceptions of effective and successful teaching (Gao et al., 2020). The belief of many teachers is that technological tools are associated with more engagement and collaboration among students (Anthony & Clark, 2011). With the prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the application of technological tools in language education has been turned into a must (Volkov, et al., 2022).

Influenced heavily by this wave of the introduction of educational technologies, the concept of Critical Digital Pedagogy (CDP) has grown into a popular concept among researchers and practitioners. CDP refers to the application of CP's basic principles into digital contexts (Stommel, 2014). Furthermore, in today's technological World, teachers should deal with students' needs effectively with the help of educational technologies (Hu et al., 2021) so that critical consciousness of students is also increased as an attempt toward applying CDP (Gao et al., 2020; Morris & Stommel, 2018). However, what is observed in reality in the context of Iran is that although teacher education has been the topic of some studies (e.g., Demiroz & Yesilyurt, 2015; Sezer, et al., 2019; Shahvand & Rezvani, 2016; Zamani & Ahangari, 2016), this issue has been neglected by the researchers from the CDP viewpoint (Chambers, 2013; Zohrabi, Razmjoo, & Ahmadi, 2019). This is while, as mentioned above, CP and technological educational innovations have encompassed different aspects of the World educational systems. Closely related to this, Whyte (2011) suggests that teacher training programs should, among other things, aim at raising teachers' digital literacy. In sum, it seems that using CDP in the realm of teacher education in the context of Iran is not without its own advantages. With a view to this, this study aimed to uncover ELT experts' and EFL teachers' perceptions of a technology-laden CP-based EFL teacher preparation program for the context of Iran through the following research questions:

What are Iranian ELT experts' perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?

What are Iranian English literature teachers' perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?

Is there any significant difference between Iranian ELT experts' and English literature teachers' perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?

Review of the Related Literature

The Origin of Critical Pedagogy

CP dates back to the late 1960s and early 1970s when, among other scholars and philosophers, the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, proposed the idea of a liberating education through his seminal book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Drawing on the ideas and notions of critical theory of society (also known as critical theory) employed by the Frankfurt School, CP was put forward to raise individuals' awareness of oppressive conditions and to reject violation and discrimination against people (Keesing-Styles, 2003). Such critical theories are concerned with critiquing and transforming society by virtue of critically engaging with literacy skills such as reading and writing on the way toward social change (Luke & Freebody, 1997).

The Fundamental Principles of CDP

To use technology for the critical purposes, and to develop critical awareness in online environments, the nature and impact of the technology that is going to be used should be understood (Stommel, 2014). More importantly, instead of over-attention to technological tools, users of educational technologies must give priority to humans involved. "After all, information can be digitalized, but learning itself is still a very human business" (Gao et al., 2020, p. 177).

Morris and Stommel (2018) defined CDP as a channel through which teachers and students find themselves socio-politically and emotionally related. They proposed more interaction and engagement of learners in the light of CP and technological advancements (Buss & Wolf, 2021). CDP aims at providing learners and teachers with opportunities for active participation, creation, reflection, and dialogue (Morris & Stommel, 2018).

Stommel (2014) enumerates the fundamental principles of CDP as follows: CDP (a) places its practice on collaboration; (b) must welcome diverse opinions, and must re-define through invention the way collaboration and communication take form across cultural and political boundaries; and (c) cannot be defined by a single voice but must gather together a cacophony of voices; (d) must be used and applied beyond traditional educational methods.

When applied critically, educational technologies (such as social media platforms), particularly in online courses, may contribute to critical reflection and inter-personal meaningful dialogue (Morris & Stommel, 2018). However, educational technologies could simultaneously reveal and make obscure some power structures (Waddell & Clariza, 2018). As such, applying CDP with cultural and political sensitivity is of paramount importance. According to Waddell and Clariza (2018), CDP is closely associated with the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. They present three main frames of CDP as follows: (a) Authority is Constructed and Contextual: This frame helps learners critically examine the characteristics and contexts of digital objects and to ask questions about their origins; (b) Information Creation is a Process: Creating digital objects involves a unique process; (c) Information has value: Learners should be asked to consider the value digital information objects have in the information landscape.

Related Studies

Larson (2014) investigated the theoretical bases and justifications for the employment of CP and proposed some preliminary steps for teachers to follow in implementing critical pedagogy in English language teaching. Rahimi, Kushki, Ansaripour, and Maki (2015) proposed some ideas for material designers based on the premises of critical pedagogy. Taylor, Kumi-Yeboah and Ringlaben (2015) investigated pre-service teachers about their perception towards critical education and teaching of culturally and linguistically underrepresented diverse students and showed that the majority of pre-service teachers had consensus on the need for the inclusion of critical education to teacher education programs with regards to teaching linguistically culturally diverse students. Roohani, Hashemian and Haghparast (2016) developed and validated a questionnaire, namely Teacher Critical Pedagogy, to measure the amount of critical pedagogy employed in the classroom by English teachers in Iran. Childs (2017) investigated the history of critical education in the USA and concluded that since demographics of students is subjected to inevitable shifts, critical ideas should be integrated in such areas as planning future curricula, teacher education, etc. Enyew and Melesse (2018) examined the extent to which the issue of critical principles is infused into the environments of Universities in Ethiopia and disclosed that the issue of criticality is infused into the programs of the Universities. Waddell and Clariza (2018) indicate two examples from the University of Hawai'i at M noa Library where CDP was incorporated into a science course and a humanities classroom using infographics and digital storytelling. Parker (2019) addressed the values of critical education for ELT and teacher education in post-secondary education and recommended that stakeholders take these elements as starting points for re-conceptualizing their teaching principles and methods. Tabatabaei

(underpress) aimed at developing a scale for developing EFL materials based on critical pedagogy and some main themes were revealed as the main themes for CP-based EFL materials development.

Method

Research Design

This study benefited from a basic interpretive design. The basic interpretive design was the best choice for this study since this approach is the best one for exploration of people's perceptions. In the basic interpretive design, the researcher seeks to understand the meaning constructed for a phenomenon or situation by people involved in it (Dörnyei, 2007).

Participants

A total of thirty male and female ELT experts with a PhD in TEFL were interviewed to explore their perceptions of a technology-laden CP-based EFL teacher preparation program. These experts were selected from among experienced university professors who had relevant research expertise in the field. These participants were selected non-randomly, following a convenience sampling procedure. Moreover, thirty male and female English literature teachers were selected and interviewed conveniently to explore their perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program. They were university professors with PhD in TEFL with different years of teaching experience.

Instrument

In an attempt to explore the participants' perceptions of a technology-laden CP-based EFL teacher preparation program, a semi-structured interview was developed by the researcher in approximately five open-ended questions. In developing the interview questions, the researcher consulted the related literature. To ensure about the clarity of the interview questions, the developed interview was piloted with a small representative sample (drawn from the intended population). To cope with the constraints, the interview was conducted and audio-recorded virtually in WhatsApp and Telegram without any time limitation in English. To ensure comprehensibility of interview questions, they were piloted with a small representative sample (drawn from the intended population) in conditions similar to those of the main study.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Initially, a group of thirty ELT experts and thirty English literature teachers were selected, taking the research ethics into account, and interviewed to explore their perceptions of a technology-laden CP-based EFL teacher preparation program. The interviews were audio-recorded to facilitate the process of data collection. Then, the researcher transcribed the audio-recorded data verbatim for further analysis. The transcribed data were then entered into MAXQDA in cooperation with a qualitative statistician for obtaining more accurate and precise results.

To add to the validity of the interview data, a quotation was presented along with the extracted themes when presenting the results of thematic analysis. Moreover, the researcher checked some random parts of the results with the interviewees to ensure that the extracted themes are compatible with the intended meaning of the interviewees.

Results

Results of the first research question

To answer the first research question 'What are Iranian ELT experts' perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?', the following themes were extracted by the MAXQDA:

Teaching teachers to give priority to students' needs using technology

According to this theme, teachers should be taught to pay heed to needs of students via technology. The following quotation shows this:

EFL teachers should be trained to use technology to identify students' needs and consider these needs as important in the quality of teaching. To this end, they can have chats in virtual space with students, or follow students' posts in social networks. (Expert 5)

Teaching teachers to be aware of students' aims in learning English using technology

As expressed by this theme, teachers should be instructed to be informed of English learning goals of students through technology. The following quotation confirms this:

Teacher preparation programs are suggested to teach teachers to use various technological techniques to reach the students' aims in English learning. For instance, teachers can send clips showing different situations wherein English can be used to the students and see their reactions to them. (Expert 2)

Teaching teachers to be attentive to students and build a good relationship with them using technology

This theme says that teachers should be taught to pay attention to forming good communications with students by means of technology. This is documented by the following quotation:

Teachers should be instructed to benefit from different e-platforms to show their attention to students and make a friendly relationship with students by such acts as sending positive messages or picture messages to them, greet them in social networks, and so on. (Expert 10)

Teaching teachers to try to find solutions for social problems using technology

As verbalized in this theme, teachers are to be taught to use technology to solve various social problems. This is corroborated by the following quotation:

Teacher training courses must prepare teachers to take advantage of educational technologies like communicative networks which contain comments of people at different social or cultural classes to solve social problems. (Expert 14)

Teaching teachers to teach life skills to students using technology

As put forth by this theme, teachers should be instructed to take technology at the service of teaching life skills to students. Evidence of this is the following quotation:

Teaching life skills to students through using technology should be taught to student teachers. Technological advancements provide good opportunities for this purpose. (Expert 1)

Teaching teachers to help students seek change and social transformation using technology

According to this theme, teachers should be taught to ask for the help of technology to empower students to seek social transformation and revolution. The following quotation indicates this: If teachers learn to educate students to try to change the society via technological tools, teacher preparation programs can claim that they are technology-based and CP-based. (Expert 15)

Teaching teachers to identify cultural barriers on the way of students' learning using technology

This theme shows the need to teach teachers to take advantage of technology in recognizing cultural blocks on the path of students' learning. This is evident in the following quotation:

Teachers are to be trained for recognition of those cultural blocks which prevent students from learning by the help of technology.

They can do virtual interviews with students and parents. (Expert 12)

Teaching teachers to make parents conscious of the social problems using technology

As implied in this theme, teachers must be taught to use technology in making students' parents aware of social problem. This is confirmed by the following quotation:

During pre-service education, teacher educators should make bold the importance of parents' awareness of social problems. This is a mission of teachers to do this through technological means among which social networks can be mentioned. (Expert 17)

Teaching teachers to recognize limited learning capacities of some students using technology

As expressed by this theme, teachers should be educated to use technology with the aim of identifying constrained capacities of some students in English learning. This is confirmed by the following quotation:

Obviously, students' learning abilities are not the same. Some students suffer from learning problems. Teacher trainers should teach future teachers on this issue. They should understand that technology can help them in this regard. One tool available to them is to ask students with indications of dyslexia to read a piece of text, audio-record their voice and sent it to the teacher for further documentation. (Expert 19)

Teaching teachers to present instruction to students in the simplest way using technology

As put by this theme, teachers are to be instructed to teach in the simplest way by the help of technology:

Technology is here to make things simpler. Teacher education programs can teach simple technology-based teaching to teachers. Using effective writing models through asynchronous e-learning is an instance of this. (Expert 25)

Teaching teachers to be ready for critical events in class using technology

This theme says that teachers should be taught to be prepared to confront critical issues by means of technology. The following quotation supports this:

Teachers must be educated to predict critical class incidences by diverse technological channels. For example, there exist several samples of such events in YouTube which can be really helpful for teachers. (Expert 20)

Teaching teachers to plan dynamic lessons to improve students' learning using technology

According to this theme, teachers should be taught to develop lessons dynamically through the channel of technology. This is implied in the following quotation:

Teachers should learn to develop dynamic lessons reflective of different aspects by the use of technology. As a suggestion, flipped lessons can support teachers to reach this goal. (Expert 27)

Teaching teachers to make classes student-centered using technology

As stated by this theme, teachers should be trained to benefit from technology to make English classes learner-centered. This is evident in the following quotation:

The time has reached for teacher educators to incorporate lessons of student-centeredness in their curricula. Teachers should recognize that teacher-centeredness has come to its end. To build student-centered classes, they can resort to the technological doors which have different manifestations including assigning tasks to students which can just be prepared and presented through technological methods. (Expert 30)

Teaching teachers to put emphasis on students' communicative ability in classes using technology

As meant by this theme, teachers should be taught to give priority to learners' communication ability with the help of technology. The following theme shows this:

Teacher education programs should equip student teachers with the knowledge of significance of enhancing students' English communication through technology. To do this, they can build virtual groups wherein students can discuss and negotiate meaning in English without fear of being judged or scored. (Expert 11)

Teaching teachers to help students learn question asking skills using technology

As understood from this theme, teachers should be trained to teach question asking ability to students by means of technology. This is corroborated by the following theme:

Teacher trainers should not neglect the key role of teachers' tolerance of students' questions. They should teach teachers to enhance their tolerance and convey this to students that they can ask any question from their teacher without limitation. Technology is an appropriate ground for this. Personal response system is a good example. (Expert 13)

Teaching teachers to clearly state the purpose of every teaching activity or method in classes using technology

As demonstrated by this theme, teachers should be educated to use technology in explaining the purposes of class teaching activities or methods. The following quotation supports this:

Students have the right to know for what reason that activity or this strategy is used. Teacher education programs should put teachers' consciousness making in this regard in their agenda. Teachers should be prepared to do this through technological methods. A strategy to do this can be involving students in virtual lecturing to make them aware of teacher's emphasis on speaking skill in the class. (Expert 29)

Teaching teachers to use dynamic evaluation methods using technology

As put by this theme, teachers should be trained to evaluate students dynamically by means of technology. This is understood from the following quotation:

Teacher training courses are required to teach teachers to benefit from technology to assess students' learning in a dynamic manner. For example, teachers can be taught to ask students to build videos about their past in terms of educational achievements or their imaginations of their academic future. (Expert 18)

Teaching teachers to use cooperative teaching methods using technology

According to this theme, teachers should be made prepared to use technology to teach English cooperatively. The following quotation shows this:

Teacher educators have important duties including preparing teachers to use technology-based teaching methods which are built upon cooperation between students and teacher or among students. In this regard, teaching them how to use e-learning in combination with self-blended learning can be a useful option. (Expert 3)

Teaching teachers to be facilitators of learning rather than blockers using technology

As expressed by this theme, teachers should be trained to facilitate students' learning by the help of technology. The following quotation confirms this:

Teacher education administrators should make teachers facilitators of students' learning by utilizing technological advancements in education. Teachers should be taught not to block students in achieving their aims. As a technique for this, they can be trained to support students'

by motivating electronic stories which depicts success in spite of hard times. (Expert 7)

According to the results, Iranian ELT experts' perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program were as follows: Teaching teachers to give priority to students' needs using technology; teaching teachers to be aware of students' aims in learning English using technology; teaching teachers to be attentive to students and build a good relationship with them using technology; teaching teachers to try to find solutions for social problems using technology; teaching teachers to teach life skills to students using technology; teaching teachers to help students seek change and social transformation using technology; teaching teachers to identify cultural barriers on the way of students' learning using technology; teaching teachers to make parents conscious of the social problems using technology; teaching teachers to recognize limited learning capacities of some students using technology; teaching teachers to present instruction to students in the simplest way using technology; teaching teachers to be ready for critical events in class using technology; teaching teachers to plan dynamic lessons to improve students' learning using technology; teaching teachers to make classes student-centered using technology; teaching teachers to put emphasis on students' communicative ability in classes using technology; teaching teachers to help students learn question asking skills using technology; teaching teachers to clearly state the purpose of every teaching activity or method in classes using technology; teaching teachers to use dynamic evaluation methods using technology; teaching teachers to use cooperative teaching methods using technology; and teaching teachers to be facilitators of learning rather than blockers using technology.

Results of the second research question

To answer the second research question 'What are Iranian English literature teachers' perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?', the following themes were the output of the MAXQDA:

Teaching teachers to be aware of the recent advancements in the field of education using technology

As meant by this theme, teachers should be trained to be informed of educational technologies by means of technology. The following quotation shows this:

Teacher preparation programs' responsibility is big. They should warn teachers to remain up to date regarding educational advancements and use technology in this way. For example, they can use search motors to download new papers published in their field. (Teacher 5)

Teaching teachers to create equal learning opportunities for all students in classes using technology

As mentioned by this theme, teachers should be taught to put all students in the same educational opportunities by using technology. The following theme confirms this:

Teacher educators should tell teachers that they are obliged to take technology at the service of generating discrimination-free conditions so that the students with different cultures, religions, genders, and social classes can be exposed to equal learning opportunities. A work they can do is to provide the substrates of e-learning to all the students regardless of their background. (Teacher 9)

Teaching teachers to teach students problem-solving skills using technology

According to this theme, teachers should be trained to use technology to prepare students for problem-solving skills. The following quotation shows this:

Teaching students problem-solving abilities through technology should be a part of teacher education programs. Teachers should be made aware of the significance of problem-solving skills of students. To use technology, there are different ways. They can engage students in electronic games, as a suggestion I can give. (Teacher 3)

Teaching teachers to stimulate students' curiosity using technology

This theme says that teachers should be trained to trigger students' inquisitiveness with the help of technology. The following quotation confirms this:

Curiosity is a powerful tool which teachers should be educated to instigate with technology during pre-service courses. In so doing, for example, they can provide students with open-ended films and ask them to guess their ending. (Expert 12)

Teaching teachers to teach students how to recognize, understand, analyze and synthesize information using technology

As stated by this theme, teachers should be educated to prepare students for analytical skills using technology. This is supported by the following quotation:

Instructors or teachers of teacher education programs should train teachers to instruct their students about information analysis and synthesis through technology. Analysis and synthesis is as important as information comprehension. Using technology should not be forgotten. Teachers can send different pieces of electronic information through Adobe Connect or Sky Room and ask students to come to a general interpretation and send it to the teacher as an assignment. (Teacher 9)

Teaching teachers to teach students to seek reasons behind anything using technology

According to this theme, teachers should be trained to make students reasonable via technology. The following quotation corroborates this:

A task of teacher education programs should be instructing teachers to teach reason seeking to students by using technology. Students should be instructed not to accept anything without reason. Through technology, it can be done by holding question and answer sessions in virtual space wherein students ask any question they like from teachers. Or they can be provided with some specific matters and asked to find the reasons behind them in the related sites. (Teacher 17)

Teaching teachers to use inductive learning techniques using technology

According to this theme, teachers should be taught on the use of consequential techniques by means of technology. The following theme reveals this:

Teachers should be made informed of effective techniques including inductive learning and the usefulness of applying them in technology-based ways in their future classes. It is in this way that students learn to make inference instead of linear thinking. To add taste of technology to this, students can be taught using different platforms including SHAD and Sky Room and after a period, compare and contrast these networks with each other. (Teacher 17)

Teaching teachers to teach in a way that students are engaged in thinking using technology

According to this theme, teachers are to be instructed on encouraging students to think via technology. This is understood from the following quotation:

To encourage students to think more through technology, teachers should be trained by teacher educators. Teachers can ask students to design their own plans of synchronous or asynchronous teaching. (Teacher 1)

Teaching teachers to teach students how to go beyond the received information using technology

As unraveled by this theme, teachers should learn to empower students, via technology, to think beyond the boundaries of information they receive. This is comprehended from the following quotation:

A teaching skill that should not be given a weak load by teacher trainers is teaching, based on technology, to students to transcend the information they receive. Teachers can provide students

with class videos on different types of electronic corrective feedback from different contexts and be asked to select which one is more appropriate for the context of Iran. (Teacher 19)

Teaching teachers to enhance students' self-esteem and self-confidence using technology

According to this theme, teachers must be trained to corroborate students' positive personality traits through technology. This is evident in the following quotation:

Teacher preparation programs should be an opportunity for teachers to practice enhancement of students' personal skills such as self-esteem and self-confidence through the use of technology. Teacher can give innovative ideas to students to help them design electronic plans for simple softwares. (Teacher 17)

Teaching teachers to try to promote fair distribution of power in the educational settings using technology

As put by this theme, teachers should be trained to encourage just power distribution in educational environments by the help of technology. The following theme confirms this:

Teachers need to be trained to distribute power equally among all the students. They can use technology by providing all the students with distance learning, even dis-privileged students. Or they can, let say, build e-mail address for all the students to be in relation with each other and with the teacher. (Teacher 21)

Teaching teachers to encourage peaceful life among students using technology

As implied in this theme, teachers should be taught to make students oriented towards peace by the help of technology. The following quotation supports this:

Through teacher education programs, teachers should learn to generate peace among students through technology. For example, teachers can ask students to set collective picture of their classmates as their profile picture in social networks. (Teacher 13)

Teaching teachers to develop democratic attitudes in students using technology

According to this theme, teachers must be educated to introduce democracy to students by means of technology. This is shown by the following quotation:

Since critical pedagogy is not separate from democracy, teachers should be taught to make students' democratic in attitude by applying technology. To this end, teachers can administer electronic polls among students on a newly implemented teaching or evaluation method. (Teacher 10)

Teaching teachers to use diverse teaching methods and strategies using technology

This theme says that teachers need to be trained on using various methods of teaching via technology. Evidence to this is the following quotation:

Teacher training should emphasize teachers' use of various technological teaching methods. MALL, CALL and similar methods are good strategies to use technology in teaching. (Teacher 30)

Teaching teachers to use participatory teaching methods using technology

Comprehended from this theme is the point that teachers should be taught to implement participative teaching by the help of technology. This can be taken from the following quotation:

EFL teachers must learn to teach through participatory methods based on technology. They can assign each class session to each student to play the role of teacher and teach to the class in virtual space. (Teacher 20)

Teaching teachers to use mixed evaluation procedures using technology

This theme says that teachers are to be taught to benefit from different assessment procedures through technology. The following quotation shows this:

Teachers are to be educated to use both quantitative methods including multiple choice tests and open-ended exams and qualitative methods including interviews and biography writing in assessment of learners. These procedures can be used in the form of CAT. (Teacher 22)

As revealed by the results, the following perceptions were extracted for Iranian English literature teachers on a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program: Teaching teachers to be aware of the recent advancements in the field of education using technology; teaching teachers to create equal learning opportunities for all students in classes using technology; teaching teachers to teach students problem-solving skills using technology; teaching teachers to stimulate students' curiosity using technology; teaching teachers to teach students how to recognize, understand, analyze and synthesize information using technology; teaching teachers to teach students to seek reasons behind anything using technology; teaching teachers to use inductive learning techniques using technology; teaching teachers to teach in a way that students are engaged in thinking using technology; teaching teachers to teach students how to go beyond the received information using technology; teaching teachers to enhance students' self-esteem and self-confidence using technology; teaching teachers to try to promote fair distribution of power in the educational settings using technology; teaching teachers to encourage peaceful life among students using technology; teaching teachers to develop democratic attitudes in students using technology; teaching teachers to use diverse teaching methods and strategies using technology; teaching teachers to use participatory teaching methods using technology; and teaching teachers to use mixed evaluation procedures using technology.

Results of the third research question

To address the third research question 'Is there any significant difference between Iranian ELT experts' and English literature teachers' perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?', comparison of the perceptions of ELT experts and teachers shows that their perceptions are different. The followings were the perceptions of ELT experts: Teaching teachers to give priority to students' needs using technology; Teaching teachers to be aware of students' aims in learning English using technology; Teaching teachers to be attentive to students and build a good relationship with them using technology; Teaching teachers to try to find solutions for social problems using technology; Teaching teachers to teach life skills to students using technology; Teaching teachers to help students seek change and social transformation using technology; Teaching teachers to identify cultural barriers on the way of students' learning using technology; Teaching teachers to make parents conscious of the social problems using technology; Teaching teachers to recognize limited learning capacities of some students using technology; Teaching teachers to present instruction to students in the simplest way using technology; Teaching teachers to be ready for critical events in class using technology; Teaching teachers to plan dynamic lessons to improve students' learning using technology; Teaching teachers to make classes student-centered using technology; Teaching teachers to put emphasis on students' communicative ability in classes using technology; Teaching teachers to help students learn question asking skills using technology; Teaching teachers to clearly state the purpose of every teaching activity or method in classes using technology; Teaching teachers to use dynamic evaluation methods using technology; Teaching teachers to use cooperative teaching methods using technology; and Teaching teachers to be facilitators of learning rather than blockers using technology.

In contrary, the following perceptions of English literature teachers were extracted: Teaching teachers to be aware of the recent advancements in the field of education using technology; Teaching teachers to create equal learning opportunities for all students in classes using

technology; Teaching teachers to teach students problem-solving skills using technology; Teaching teachers to stimulate students' curiosity using technology; Teaching teachers to teach students how to recognize, understand, analyze and synthesize information using technology; Teaching teachers to teach students to seek reasons behind anything using technology; Teaching teachers to use inductive learning techniques using technology; Teaching teachers to teach in a way that students are engaged in thinking using technology; Teaching teachers to teach students how to go beyond the received information using technology; Teaching teachers to enhance students' self-esteem and self-confidence using technology; Teaching teachers to try to promote fair distribution of power in the educational settings using technology; Teaching teachers to encourage peaceful life among students using technology; Teaching teachers to develop democratic attitudes in students using technology; Teaching teachers to use diverse teaching methods and strategies using technology; Teaching teachers to use participatory teaching methods using technology; and Teaching teachers to use mixed evaluation procedures using technology.

Discussion

The current study aimed to answer three research questions. Regarding the first research question 'What are Iranian ELT experts' perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?', the following themes were extracted: The followings were the perceptions of ELT experts: Teaching teachers to give priority to students' needs using technology; Teaching teachers to be aware of students' aims in learning English using technology; Teaching teachers to be attentive to students and build a good relationship with them using technology; Teaching teachers to try to find solutions for social problems using technology; Teaching teachers to teach life skills to students using technology; Teaching teachers to help students seek change and social transformation using technology; Teaching teachers to identify cultural barriers on the way of students' learning using technology; Teaching teachers to make parents conscious of the social problems using technology; Teaching teachers to recognize limited learning capacities of some students using technology; Teaching teachers to present instruction to students in the simplest way using technology; Teaching teachers to be ready for critical events in class using technology; Teaching teachers to plan dynamic lessons to improve students' learning using technology; Teaching teachers to make classes student-centered using technology; Teaching teachers to put emphasis on students' communicative ability in classes using technology; Teaching teachers to help students learn question asking skills using technology; Teaching teachers to clearly state the purpose of every teaching activity or method in classes using technology; Teaching teachers to use dynamic evaluation methods using technology; Teaching teachers to use cooperative teaching methods using technology; and Teaching teachers to be facilitators of learning rather than blockers using technology.

Concerning the second research question 'What are Iranian English literature teachers' perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?', the extracted themes were as follows: Teaching teachers to be aware of the recent advancements in the field of education using technology; Teaching teachers to create equal learning opportunities for all students in classes using technology; Teaching teachers to teach students problem-solving skills using technology; Teaching teachers to stimulate students' curiosity using technology; Teaching teachers to teach students how to recognize, understand, analyze and synthesize information using technology; Teaching teachers to teach students to seek reasons behind anything using technology; Teaching teachers to use inductive learning techniques using technology; Teaching teachers to teach in a way that students are engaged in thinking using technology; Teaching teachers to teach students how to go beyond the received information using technology; Teaching teachers to enhance students' self-esteem and self-confidence using technology; Teaching teachers to try to promote fair distribution of power in the educational settings using technology; Teaching teachers to encourage peaceful life among students using

technology; Teaching teachers to develop democratic attitudes in students using technology; Teaching teachers to use diverse teaching methods and strategies using technology; Teaching teachers to use participatory teaching methods using technology; and Teaching teachers to use mixed evaluation procedures using technology.

On the third research question ‘Is there any significant difference between Iranian ELT experts’ and English literature teachers’ perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?’, through comparing the perceptions of ELT experts and teachers, it was indicated that their perceptions are different.

The extracted themes have been more or less reported in some previous studies by some scholars including Abdeli Soltan Ahmadi and Sadeghi (2016), Colombo (2013), Daryai-Hansen et al. (2015), and Sadeghi (2012). The findings are also similar to the results of some other related studies (e.g., Colombo, 2013; Honnett, 1992; Taylor, 1992). Further, the results are consistent with the study by Adams (2004), Aikman and Unterhalter (2007), Gollnick and Chinn (2002), Mohammadi, et al. (2016), Mostafazadeh, et al. (2015), Sadeghi (2012), Subrahmanian (2005), UNESCO (2003), Unterhalter (2007), and Wilson (2003).

To interpret the findings, the perceptions extracted in the present study are reflective of the reconciliation of the use of CP principles and technology. Indeed, such issues as attention to students’ needs, awareness-raising of students regarding aims of different teaching strategies, rapport in the classroom, social problem-solving, change and transformation are among the main tenets of CP (Colombo, 2013). Further, corroborating life skills, recognition of students’ capacities, making the load of learning as light as possible, incorporating diversity and dynamicity into teaching and evaluation procedures, putting teacher-centeredness aside are deeply emphasized in CP (Abdeli Soltan Ahmadi & Sadeghi, 2016). Additionally, heed to communication abilities of students, teaching question posing skills, facilitative role of teachers, and equal discrimination-free learning opportunities are basically propped in CP (Gollnick & Chinn, 2002).

Teacher preparation programs which are compatible with the recent advancements of the field of ELT, student curiosity enhancement, student information synthesis ability, reason seeking, and critical thinking are CP-based in reality (Wilson, 2003). Going beyond here and now, being involved with students’ self-esteem and self-confidence, and attention to democracy and peace are also among the ideologies which can give CP orientations to teacher preparation programs (Adams, 2004). However, as perceived by the participants of the study, it is just in the light of using technology that a technology-based CP-laden teaching preparation program takes form.

That the perceptions of experts and teachers were different does not reject awareness of both groups of CP principles and fundamentals. It is just a matter of seeing things from different angles. Given the breadth and depth of CP principles, this difference was not unexpected. It is unfortunate that both groups of interviewees perceived the merge of CP and technology use as applicable in teacher preparation area.

Conclusion and Implications

In line with the findings of the study, it can be concluded that teacher educators’ mission to make EFL teacher preparation programs in line with technological advancements and CP doctrines is multi-faceted. In the absence of appropriate measures which center on the nature of class relations, students’ needs, aims clarification, social problems and problem-solving, it cannot be expected for a technology-laden CP-based EFL teacher preparation program to be materialized. Further, teacher educators should go beyond mere focus on teaching EFL skills and seriously remind teachers to put emphasis on life skills, as well as affective traits of students such as self-confidence and self-esteem in the classroom. Removing discrimination, and cultural learning barriers, and promoting peace and quiet, making student learning simple, and moving towards learner-centeredness are to be incorporated in the body of teacher preparation policies to make the system

consistent with CP, albeit in the heavy light of technology. Last but not least, making students proficient in communication and inference making, taking advantage of a variety of teaching and evaluation procedures intermingled with diversity and mutual participation, tackling students' curiosity, and generating fairness in learning opportunities are at the heart of a technology-laden CP-based EFL teacher preparation program.

The findings may engage different groups of stakeholders to take appropriate measures and thus, contribute to transformations in the current EFL teacher education system of Iran. EFL teacher education administrators may take useful insights from the findings and re-define the guiding policies of teacher education in Iran. EFL teacher education curriculum planners' responsibility is to revise the current curriculum of EFL teacher education and plan the new one incorporating the themes extracted in the present study. EFL teacher educators can make their best to transform the current status of the system and pave the ground for the replacement of the system with a technology-laden CP-based framework.

Taking limitations and delimitations of this study, future researchers can triangulate the data collected in this study by other tools including reflective journals, open-ended questionnaires, diaries, etc. Moreover, since at the present, technology-laden CP-based teacher education is not implemented in Iran, exploring the challenges and problems of a technology-laden CP-based teacher education can be the topic of future studies.

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