Chapter 2
Critical Language Education

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Introduction

The twenty-first century has confronted educators with an educational revolution. A multiplicity of social, historical, cultural, economic, and political changes have occurred, which are reconfiguring the role of schools and universities and which in turn demand new teacher roles and professional identities (Garcia et al., 2018; Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016; Luke, 2018, 2019). The learners that schools and universities have historically provided for no longer exist. They are new social individuals who bring languages, cultures, knowledge, backgrounds, histories and stories, attitudes, values, resources, experiences, emotions, aspirations, and much more to the classroom. Furthermore, they are in permanent contact with information and technology; live in the age of the digital, hypertext and intertext; and interact (with information, with others, among themselves) in dynamic and complex ways drawing on available languages, resources, and their backgrounds fluidly. The tradition of the book in the modern school model, which has been at the center of literacy for two centuries (Cassany, 2000), is insufficient now for these children and youth.

Schools and universities around the globe have responded to these challenges in varied ways. In contexts with 'difficult circumstances,' these responses have been limited by such difficulties (Kuchah Kuchah & Shamin, 2018) and have

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foregrounded the fact people learn in other places beyond the school or university, for example, at a local club, a community center, a park or square, a community library, a community kitchen, and so on. These places become valuable 'funds of knowledge' (Moje et al., 2004). However, schools and universities are still important sites of learning. 'The conservative case is that schooling is a means for learning received skills and practices and canonical knowledge' (Luke, 2018, p. xii), in other words, tradition, custom, the print word, reading, and writing. They also provide access to 'knowledge that is not distributed in any other place: teaching to think, to understand, to teach intellectual autonomy, critical thinking, the ability to distinguish true from false information, to use information in problem solving' (Gvirtz et al., 2007, p. 10, my translation). In addition, they give access to 'dominant knowledge' (Garcia et al., 2018; Janks, 2019, p. 237; Luke, 2018, 2019) that learners need in order to avoid the reproduction of 'differential access to the culture of power that produces and labels knowledge as mainstream or marginal' (Moje, 2000, p. 4). In so doing, schools and universities provide 'equitable learning opportunities' as part of 'socially just' education (Moje, 2000, pp. 3–4).

However, this democratization of knowledge in terms of equity of access to learning opportunities and dominant knowledge, for instance, by fostering critical thinking, is not enough to enable children and youth to develop fully as human beings; participate actively in the life of their family, school, community, and beyond; acquire the tools for lifelong learning; and live democratically and respectfully in a world characterized not only by poverty, the unbalanced distribution of wealth and resources, diseases, drugs, and so on (the material conditions of social injustice) but also by troubled sociopolitical landscapes, hatred, segregation, suspicion of the other, conflict, struggle, racism, sexism, xenophobia, human rights abuse, environmental depredation, climate change, and other factors and conditions (De Costa, 2018; Garcia et al., 2018; Luke, 2018, 2019). In this context, De Costa (2018, p. 305) suggests that 'we need to problematize the material effects of social injustice in the lives of [the] people, places, and things (. . .) because we are all inextricably linked in a complex ecological web.' In this regard, the educational question that guides this book is: 'how might educators work with youth and children, families and communities to both defend and prepare them for difficult and unprecedented everyday challenges and problems, and to enable them to voice and build new cultural and political, social and environmental futures?' (Luke, 2018, p. ix). How can literacies 'be reshaped in response to these conditions' (Ibid, p. ix)? The purposes of education centered on integral development, lifelong learning, community bonding, and democratic values demand a critical literacy perspective that allows for the self-transformation of students' lives as they deem necessary given their specific circumstances. Luke (2018, p. xii) explains:

> An education for critical literacies is an invitation to join an intergenerational, intercultural and peer conversation that is about imagining and building what could be, about the utilisation of diverse cultural tools and knowledges to address real and pressing social, economic and environmental problems, about the collaborative dreaming of inclusive, generative and sustainable forms of life, about the engagement and use of cultural wisdom and scientific knowledge to address what appear to us to be insoluble environmental and planetary problems.

In this respect, learners need to become aware that they have possibilities for transformation which are in their own hands and this transformation can happen

when they gain a sense of agency. Agency is a key concept that transforms critical thinking and critical literacy into critical pedagogy, but it is also complex. Learners need awareness that agency is above all achievable, particularly in contexts with difficult circumstances, but also that it is relational, multidimensional, emergent, and spatially and temporally situated (Larsen Freeman, 2019). Awareness that agency is achievable and in their hands is of course not enough. Becoming agentive involves the ability to invest their social identifications with power and self-determination as they engage with others on the basis of their values and worldviews, situated in a broader framework of cultural, political, religious, and other values, using a range of semiotic resources such as the linguistic, the interactional, the nonverbal, the auditory, the performative, and more (Duff, 2019). The possibilities for transformation in this sense are the basis for 'social justice' education as distinct from 'socially just' only in terms of equity of access (Moje, 2000, p. 4).

As Luke (2018, 2019) argues, the foregoing requires an ethical perspective:

> The ethical imperative is not only to enable all citizens and young people to assert and protect their rights and those of others, but it is also to enable them to engage with how their societies and economies are shaped and governed at a time when their diverse standpoints and experiences are badly needed. It is to engage these people with the tools to map out and live gainful lives in ways that are not exploitative and destructive of the very places, communities and cultures where they live. (Luke, 2018, p. xii)

This chapter describes how this move can happen in language classrooms theoretically. It focuses on critical language education, beginning with critical thinking, to address then critical literacy and critical pedagogies. It is not possible to do justice to the wealth of bibliography available on the theme, and what follows is of course a partial picture.

Critical Thinking

What is critical thinking? The idea that to educate in any discipline is to teach to think is not new as I noted in the Introduction (Handschin, 1913; Robinson, 1909). More recently, but still half a century ago, Cartwright (1962), Devine (1962), Madison (1971), and Milton (1960) addressed the need for critical thinking in education. Dam and Volman (2004) point out that any conceptualization of critical thinking draws from the fields of philosophy and psychology:

> From a philosophical point of view, critical thinking is primarily approached as the norm of good thinking, the rational aspect of human thought, and as the intellectual virtues needed to approach the world in a reasonable, fair-minded way (. . .) Psychologists conceptualize critical thinking first and foremost as higher-order thinking skills and focus attention on the appropriate learning and instruction processes. (pp. 361–62)

Precisely because several disciplines are involved, critical thinking is hard to define, even today (Tian & Low, 2011). So what exactly does it mean to teach to think? Paul (2007) defines critical thinking as the kind of thinking that analyzes, evaluates, and transforms thinking to improve it. It is 'thinking while thinking to

think better' (Paul, 2007). Critical thinking transforms thinking into a more systematic and broader process, consequently reaching higher levels of thought. According to Fisher (1995), there are two types of thinking. Lower-level thinking involves the activities of knowing certain facts, understanding and applying them, using given information. Thought resulting from higher-level thinking, by contrast, involves processes of analysis (separating facts), synthesis (creating something new from those facts), and evaluation (assessing knowledge). Critical thinking is characterized as this kind of higher-level thinking and has a central feature: metacognitive control. The activities that promote it go beyond the level of information (Waters, 2006).

Waite and Davis (2006) argue that critical thinking, reflection, and self-directed learning have gained significance in education due to phenomena such as globalization, the possibility of access to knowledge and information through different media, sources and resources, and the dynamics and fluctuation of this knowledge. In this context, critical thinking is indispensable in two dimensions: learning to learn and learning to live together (Tedesco, 2005). On the one hand, learning to learn refers to the need to educate autonomous individuals, that is, people who are capable of grasping knowledge so as to engage in lifelong learning independently, responding critically to knowledge that is unstable and fluid and is mediated by technologies of information and communication (Cobo, 2013; Cots, 2006). Critical thinking is central to be able to learn to learn because it encourages the continuous monitoring and evaluation of one's own thinking, leading to a deeper appropriation of knowledge. On the other hand, learning to live together refers to the need to educate critical, participatory citizens who uphold democratic values and are respectful of human dignity and the rule of law in the complex societies of our times marked by diversity in terms of ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, age, religion, and so on (Garcia et al., 2018; Luke, 2018, 2019; Osler & Starkey, 2018; Powell et al., 2001). In this dimension, critical thinking fosters the analysis and evaluation of the naturalized basis of one's views, values, beliefs, and actions, and those of others, for example, by gaining awareness of stereotypes, prejudice, and cultural bias. Critical thinking permits the careful examination and revision of one's views, values, beliefs, actions, stereotypes, and prejudices by stimulating awareness and reflection that lead to the consideration of perspectives different from one's own, placing oneself in the shoes of 'the other,' and embracing intercultural perspectives through such perspective-taking and decentering (Byram & Morgan, 1994). This process enables a double consciousness, understood 'as neither binary nor deficit but quite the contrary (. . .) it is an enabling epistemic stance that (. . .) [is] enabling of third and fourth and fifth spaces that come from the juxtaposition of multiple worldviews' (Luke, 2018, p. 7).

Likewise, American philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1998, 2002, 2006) defines critical thinking as 'the capacity for critical examination of oneself and one's traditions' (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 388), 'tak[ing] responsibility for one's own reasoning, and exchang[ing] ideas with others in an atmosphere of mutual respect' (p. 389). The importance of intercultural dialogue to bridge difference is crucial:

> democracy needs citizens (. . .) who can reason together about their choices (. . .) Critical thinking is particularly crucial for good citizenship in a society that needs to come to grips with the presence of people who differ by ethnicity, caste, and religion. We will only have a chance at an adequate dialogue across cultural boundaries if young citizens know how to engage in dialogue and deliberation in the first place. (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 388)

This vision of criticality builds on Socrates and his idea that individuals need to live an 'examined life' that 'sets the stage for inquiry and questioning' (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 297) and 'produces challenges to tradition' (p. 293). The critical here means:

> a life that accepts no belief as authoritative simply because it has been handed down by tradition or become familiar through habit, a life that questions all beliefs and accepts only those that survive reason's demand for consistency and for justification. Training this capacity requires developing the capacity to reason logically, to test what one reads or says for consistency of reasoning, correctness of fact, and accuracy of judgment. (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 293)

A pedagogy that cultivates critical thinking encourages introspection, analysis, reflection, reasoning, deliberation, collaboration, and interdisciplinarity, where:

> what is indispensable is the time to sit together and read and work together, learning how the problems of a region of the world look from historical, economic, religious, and other perspectives. (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 298)

Looking at problems in regions of the world different from one's own taking historical, social, cultural, economic, religious, and other outlooks represents an involvement with multiperspectivity, contextualized historicity, and partiality that distinguishes this conceptualization of critical thinking from foundational cognitive-based views in the 1960s centered mainly on the development of abilities, skills, and competences (Cartwright, 1962; Milton, 1960). The reason is that it provides an opportunity to embed social justice aims. Nussbaum recognizes the importance of social justice aims in education (Boman et al., 2002) and suggests that they can be achieved by questioning 'how the [our] inner world can be shaped by forces of racism' (Boman et al., 2002, p. 309) and how specific rights granted to particular groups (women, ethnic minorities, LGBTI groups, and others) can in fact become sources of subjugation and power:

> We need to be very sure that benefits that we give to groups do not result in a further subordination of people within those groups. (Ibid., p. 309)

Another important element is the examination of what our conscious or unconscious complicity with such subordination, exploitation, and suffering is. In this way, critical thinking acquires a social justice basis that can be accomplished through multiperspectivity, contextualized historicity, and awareness of partiality. This social justice dimension is central in critical literacy and critical pedagogies.

Critical Thinking in Education, Language Use, and Language Teaching

Madison (1971) defines critical thinking as a generic term that encompasses different types of skills. It is not a single skill. It is, simultaneously, a dynamic process and a capacity that includes attitudes, knowledge, and specific skills. It does not automatically emerge as a result of teaching but it is not likely to develop spontaneously either. Cartwright (1962) introduces the idea that active thinking is a predominant way of dealing with daily life and in this sense, one aim of education is to extend and deepen the ability to observe, analyze, compare, predict, formulate, synthesize, reflect, clarify, and choose, among others, that individuals bring with them. The author also explains that thinking is always tied to the contexts or situations that promote it, is not developed in isolation, and needs to be supported not only by the implicit beliefs and values underlying instruction but also by specific practices designed to promote it. Such explicit approach is important because formal education, it has been argued, reinforces the tendency toward primitive, 'magical,' or irrational forms of reasoning (Benderson, 1990; Milton, 1960, p. 218) through its homogenizing practices, even in higher education.

In relation to how teachers teach to think, Marzano (1993) warns that although the use of elicitation techniques (questions), writing (e.g., diaries and journals), and general information processing strategies (e.g., comprehending gist, relating information, analyzing, representing, abstracting) is common, the development of higher-level thinking is associated with higher-order thinking and with the complexity or degree of difficulty of the task at hand. By contrast, Waters (2006) clarifies that tasks involving complex thinking may be simple and may require simple language from the learner. Marzano (1993) and Wright (2002) explain that fostering higher-order thinking involves more than developing skills. It also requires the cultivation of certain 'dispositions' or 'habits of mind' (Marzano, 1993, pp. 158–159) related to three categories: self-regulation (of one's thinking, resources, feedback), critical thinking itself (clarity of thought, mental openness, low impulsivity, and perspective-taking, with more than 20 identifiable mental habits), and creative thinking (active and enthusiastic engagement with learning, consideration of multiple views, creative self-regulation of learning).

Devine (1962) argues that critical thinking skills (over 30 identified in the literature) are in fact abstract mental constructs developed by researchers and cannot be taught directly in the classroom. He proposes that the development of critical thinking should be transversal to the curriculum across school subjects, meaning that the design of classes, modules, or programs specifically intended to foster it is inappropriate and inefficient. In this view, all school subjects can integrate critical thinking by engaging learners in critical work through the reading and listening of disciplinary content. Teaching *about* critical thinking skills or talking about their importance in the classroom is not enough because learners need to put these skills in use in the specific context of reading and listening, according to the author. What Devine (1962) is saying is that critical thinking skills are involved in the use of

language, be it in a language class or a content class (geography, history, biology, and so on), when learners have a message they wish to communicate. Since critical thinking skills operate in a verbal context, most of them can be taught as language skills (Devine, 1962) through critical language practices.

Bruner (1985), Vygtosky (1978), Wood (1988), and others have extensively referred to the relationship between logical and hypothetical thinking in reading and writing. Reading and writing involve ways of communicating that change thinking in the process since they lead to increasingly analytical forms of thought (Vygtosky, 1978). Readers construct hypotheses from the information in a text, and they corroborate, elaborate, or refute those hypotheses (among other operations), evaluating them and recurrently generating new hypotheses on the basis of the incoming text, the context, the communicative purpose, the writer's intention, and so on. In short, reading requires both high- and low-level thinking operations. In turn, writing is a self-regulated activity characterized by complex thinking operations. Writers imagine their readers and anticipate their reactions in a particular sociocultural context. In this way, they decenter from their own ideas and viewpoints and consider those of their readers. They simultaneously adopt the roles of writer and reader of their text in order to evaluate it. This process involves higher-order thinking skills.

Taking simultaneous and multiple roles when one uses language and imagining what the lives of one's interlocutors are like gives a significant role to diversity in the construction of learners' identities. This diversity encourages them to move away from the naturalized thinking of habitus (Bourdieu, 1990, 1997) toward an intercultural perspective that allows them to place themselves in the shoes of the 'other'; interact with those 'others'; discover, analyze, understand, and accept different perspectives and perceptions of the world; and consciously evaluate the differences (Benderson, 1990; Byram & Morgan, 1994; Byram, 1997, 2021). In this view, language learners become intercultural speakers or intercultural communicators who are able to interpret linguistic and nonlinguistic input critically in a comparative perspective, analyzing and reflecting on their thoughts and actions and those of others, questioning the naturalized basis of their presuppositions, values, and beliefs (Barnett, 1997; Byram, 1997, 2021; Liddicoat, 2021).

This view is consistent with the 'plea (. . .) for a social constructivist approach of critical thinking as an educational aim' (Dam & Volman, 2004, p. 370) considering the general consensus that the linguistic, cognitive, social, and moral development of children and youth is a constructive and active process in which they generate their linguistic knowledge and their knowledge of the world within a matrix of social interaction (Cambourne, 2001). As Byram (1997, 2021) explains, knowledge (linguistic, cultural, and of other kinds) is not enough, and attitudes, values, and skills are also important. In particular, the attitudes of curiosity and openness to otherness; the values of respect, solidarity, and cooperation; and the skills of observation, discovery, analysis, comparison and contrast, decentering, perspective-taking, and evaluation. These are the attitudes, values, and skills of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997, 2021), which promote the habits of mind that characterize critical thinking such as mental justice (fairness), intellectual humility,

intellectual courage, intellectual perseverance, faith in reason, and intellectual integrity (Paul, 2007).

Dam and Volman (2004, p. 359) explain that the 'characteristics of instruction that are assumed to enhance critical thinking are: paying attention to the development of the epistemological beliefs of students; promoting active learning; a problem-based curriculum; stimulating interaction between students; and learning on the basis of real-life situations.' In the language classroom, project work on themes of interest to learners, approached experientially (learning by doing), gives a genuine communicative purpose beyond the rehearsal of language per se. Language is learned as it is being used. Interdisciplinary project-based pedagogies (Moje, 2000; Hartman, 2000; Tian & Low, 2011) involve learners in collaborative research work on issues, questions, and problems of their own interest in the real world, and the approach is called dialogic inquiry (Rex, 2001) or inquiry learning (Schmidt et al., 2002). As Green et al. (2012, p. 321) state, 'in a classroom community of inquiry the teacher uses children's own questions and concerns as the motivation to engage in shared dialogue (. . .) The children themselves set the agenda for their discussions.' At the same time, engaging in research requires thinking operations that are typical of critical thinking such as observing, discovering, analyzing, synthesizing, interpreting, evaluating, and so on. Furthermore, project-based pedagogies resort to multiple texts and the discourses of the different school disciplines to learn new concepts and unfamiliar content. In this way, they facilitate the familiarization with different specific genres, access to them, and direct experience with them (Duke, 2000) in a diversity of discourses and a polyphony of voices that are crucial for the development of critical thinking. Finally, Dam and Volman (2004, p. 375) state that 'learning by participation always involves 'reflection'. The quality of the participation can be improved by reflection.' Cooperation is central in this process: 'cooperative procedures are considered to be highly valuable and 'social' instruction techniques such as discussion [and] student-led work groups (. . .) are frequently used' (Dam & Volman, 2004, p. 372).

In conclusion, it is clear that there are no simple recipes to foster critical thinking in the classroom. Moreover, Benderson (1990), Marzano (1993), and Waters (2006) claim that teachers do not often cultivate or reinforce the mental habits associated with critical thinking in their lessons. In turn, Wright (2002) highlights the difficulties posed by the 'school milieu,' which are related to accountability concerns, standardized testing, and teachers' conceptualizations of critical thinking mainly in terms of skills development:

> The evidence suggests that teachers hold a skills conception of critical thinking and are confused about the differing messages concerning how to teach critical thinking. I further hypothesize that teachers do not have the necessary abilities, dispositions and ethical beliefs that are conducive to critical thinking. Whether they have the necessary epistemology is unclear. Yet, even if teachers had the necessary abilities, knowledge and dispositions, the school milieu mitigates against the teaching of critical thinking. There is far too much emphasis on content coverage (rather than on deeper understanding of fewer topics), and standardized testing in the name of accountability. Censorship and a fear of teaching controversial issues also exist. (Wright, 2002, p. 150)

Teacher preparation to teach for critical thinking is therefore an area of concern addressed in this book.

Critical Literacy

Literacy, of course, involves more than reading, writing, listening, and speaking. As Cassany (2000) explains, schools have tightened their attention to literacy in this sense for two centuries, sometimes restricting the focus even more, to reading and writing alone, and this conceptualization is no longer satisfactory given the complexity of current times. Besides, literacy is not only a cognitive skill. It refers to the use of communicative practices located socially, historically, and culturally, and this is a sociocultural perspective of literacy (Janks, 2014a) in which meaning making transcends written and oral texts to embrace digital, nonprint, visual, artistic, performative, and other kinds (Kern, 2001; Kress, 2000a,b). In the process of creating and comprehending meanings, individuals interpret the world of their interlocutors, collaborate, use conventions of different types and cultural information, solve communication problems, reflect on how language is used in specific contexts, and monitor its use in concrete situations. They must know, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate, among other critical thinking operations.

Furthermore, the creation and interpretation of meanings is not neutral since all discourse contains voices that learners must learn to identify. They must also learn to make their voices heard. Communication is the social process of making meaning in a cultural context understood as a field of struggle for the meaning of life, where different voices and perspectives come into potential conflict. In this sense, learners need the capacity to participate in a plurality of discourses and a multiplicity of ways of understanding and producing significant texts in diverse contexts. The process involves the use of all available means, resources, and languages that enrich learners' lives in transformative ways.

Language plays a crucial role in this process. Janks (1988, p. 88) notes that:

> meaning is not fixed or given but constructed. The recognition that meaning has been constructed from a particular ideological perspective makes room for the recognition of alternative meanings from different positions. Meaning is thus plural not singular. No discourse is neutral. All language is a selection of words and structures and a linguistic analysis of surface-forms is able to show what is revealed and concealed by the selections that have been made.

She illustrates the point by analyzing the meanings that are made available by using nominalizations and passivizations and how agency can be obscured when particular surface structures are used. Because of this, she argues that learners need conscious awareness of the fact that meaning is plural and that 'choosing between alternative meanings is an ideological or political choice' (Ibid., p. 93). Awareness is not enough, and learners also need the tools to notice, and question if appropriate, such uses of language as well as knowledge of the alternative meanings from which they can choose (Janks, 1988).When issues of ideology, power, difference,

and identity are linked to language, literacy is critical. Janks (2010) and Kubota and Miller (2017) offer a historical development of the field where Freire (1972a, b) is identified as the pioneer to remark that literacy is more than being able to read and write and involves the ability not only to read the word but also the world. Janks (2010) explains that linguistic approaches to critical literacy comprise critical linguistics (Fowler & Kress, 1979), critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989), critical language awareness (Fairclough, 1992), critical applied linguistics (Pennycook, 2001), and multimodal literacies (Kress, 2003):

> *Critical linguistics* focuses on linguistic choices in speech and writing and their effects; *critical discourse analysis* focuses on how these choices are affected by the processes and the social conditions in which texts are received and produced; *critical language awareness* is a classroom application of these theories to teaching and *critical applied linguistics* questions the normative assumptions of the whole applied field of linguistics as well as the consequences of these assumptions (Janks, 2010, p. 45, her emphasis) (. . .) the *multiliteracies approach* to literacy asks us to re-examine meaning-making in an age of the visual sign [where] the verbal is just one of many modalities for making meaning [that] has been privileged in the teaching of literacy. (Ibid., pp. 49–50, emphasis added)

Critical literacy then means understanding positioning. It does not only mean reading against a text (critique) and in fact requires the ability to do three things (Janks, 2019):

(a) Read with the text (understanding the positions and meanings offered).
(b) Read against the text (interrogating and challenging the positions offered).
(c) Take a stand (ethically evaluating the interests at stake).

It combines text analysis with an analysis of power (Janks, 2018), for example, by asking whose interests a text serves and whose interests it hides:

> Both kinds of reading require critical thinking, an engagement with the claims, logic, and arguments of the text, which is different from critique, an analysis of how texts maintain or contest relations of power. Readers have to distinguish facts from opinions, the accuracy of facts and the soundness of opinions, the evidence for claims and the quality of reasoning in arguments. (Janks, 2018, p. 96)

In order to decide whether to take up the positions offered by the text (taking a stand), readers need to be able to engage with it (read with the text) and interrogate it (read against the text) (Janks, 2018). In other words, critical literacy is about 'setting the conditions for students to engage in textual relationships of power' (Luke, 2018, p. 170); it is 'about acquiring a disposition toward texts, a learned and inquiring skepticism' (Garcia et al., 2018, p. 77).

Critical literacy education therefore aims at 'teaching learners to understand and manage the relationship between language and power' (Janks, 2000, p. 176). According to Janks (2000), this relationship can foreground one of four dimensions, dominance, access, diversity, and design, and in so doing different realizations of critical literacy emerge. In terms of domination, language is considered a tool that maintains and reproduces relations of domination. Critical discourse analysis and critical language awareness help learners deconstruct issues of power and ideology in language use (Fairclough, 1989, 1992). The question of access involves a

paradox: 'if we provide students with access to dominant forms, this contributes to maintaining their dominance. If, on the other hand, we deny students access, we perpetuate their marginalization in a society that continues to recognize the value and importance of these forms' (Janks, 2000, p. 176). Janks (2000), Luke (2018, 2019), and Moje (2000) in the field of literacy and Kress (2000a, b) and Stein (2000) in TESOL, among others, argue that denying access to dominant knowledge, literacies, and languages is not an option and some pedagogies, like genre and multimodal pedagogies, are particularly suitable to address the access paradox. Genre pedagogies do so by providing access to the generic, prototypical, and obligatory features of relevant genres while allowing flexibility and the expression of identity through the creative handling of their optional elements; multimodal pedagogies do so by encouraging meaning making that resorts to the forms, mediums, and resources valued by schools, associated in general with the verbal, but also others that are particular choices of the individual located socially, culturally, and historically such as the visual, digital, performative, auditory, and more. In turn, diversity and design refer to the importance of valuing linguistic, cultural, and other kinds of diversity by helping learners use this diversity creatively with a variety of semiotic resources to make their own meanings and to challenge and change dominant discourses. Finally, the ways in which dominance, access, diversity, and design are interrelated are important in critical literacy as Janks (2000, p. 178) explains:

> Critical literacy has to take seriously the ways in which meaning systems are implicated in reproducing domination and it has to provide access to dominant languages, literacies and genres while simultaneously using diversity as a productive resource for redesigning social futures and for changing the horizon of possibility.

Critical Pedagogy

The bridge between critical literacy and critical pedagogy rests on two dimensions. One is the possibility for transformation and social action. The other is the ethical foundation. These two dimensions, the activist and the ethical, make critical literacy important for education. Janks (2014b, p. 349, her emphasis) explains:

> A *critical* approach to education can help us to name and interrogate our practices in order to change them. Critical *literacy* education focuses specifically on the role of language as a social practice and examines the role played by text and discourse in maintaining or transforming these orders. The understanding and awareness that practices can be transformed opens up possibilities, however small, for social action.

The possibility for transformation through action involves the ethical decision to care for the self and for others (Luke, 2018). It does so by raising learners' awareness 'about whether words, texts, discourses, policies, and practices help or hurt people,' by engaging them in 'righting what is wrong—in transformative redesign' through literacy practices (such as designing an awareness-raising poster or blog, interviewing people, and giving a talk), and by helping them 'consider ethical ways of being' (Janks, 2018, p. 98). These ethical ways of being encourage learners

'to find hope and well-being for themselves [ourselves] and to contribute to the hope and well-being of others' (Janks, 2019, p. 564). Here lies the social justice basis of critical approaches to education where power can be productive (Janks, 2000) and where 'a vision for change toward greater justice and more equal social relations is indeed central to critical inquiry' (Kubota & Miller, 2017, p. 147).

Likewise, critical ELT foregrounds social action. Crookes (2013, p. 77, 2021) defines critical pedagogy as 'teaching for social justice, in ways that support the development of active, engaged citizens who will, as circumstances permit, critically inquire into why the lives of so many human beings, including their own, are so materially (and spiritually) inadequate, be prepared to seek out solutions to the problems they define and encounter, and take action accordingly.' The goal of critical language pedagogy is to develop active citizenship by socializing students into the ways in which they can become active citizens, including the development of their dispositions and understandings. This action phase is very important because as students engage in activism, they need to use academic and language skills which are simultaneously developed as they are being used, and in turn the social justice aim strongly motivates their acquisition (Crookes, 2013).

Critical perspectives in TESOL emerged with strength about 30 years ago from the discussion of the language-culture relation in ELT with a focus on indoctrination. Language teaching was considered to involve the transmission of particular beliefs (Barrow, 1990; Valdes, 1990), and English teaching was thought of as a form of ideological and cultural colonization (Holly, 1990). As the learners' cultures were 'totally submerged' (Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984, p. 15), the prevailing idea was that language learning became a threat to their 'national' identities. Shortly after, the role of ELT in the world began to be challenged as Phillipson (1992) introduced the notion of linguistic and cultural imperialism and referred to 'the infectious spread of English' (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996, p. 436) and 'triumphant' English (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996, p. 440) emerging through processes of Americanization, Europeanization, and McDonaldization (Phillipson, 2001). He raised concerns about the role of political, cultural, religious, military, corporate, and other organizations, including TESOL, in such hegemony, highlighting its negative effects and pointing to the status of English as 'lingua frankensteinia' (Phillipson, 2008, p. 250, 2009). In this context, forms of resisting this imperialism in localized ways in the English classroom in peripheral countries emerged (Canagarajah, 1999), complemented with discussions in the field of language teaching and applied linguistics (Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pennycook, 1999). The discussion in the field is ongoing, and for example Canagarajah (Porto, 2021) suggests current theoretical and pedagogical issues and geopolitical developments framed in terms of critical pedagogies, translingual practices and research, and citizenship education. In turn, López-Gopar (2019) presents the theoretical and ideological debates around critical pedagogy and illustrates how they can be enacted in classrooms across the globe and particularly in the periphery.

Transformation through action, Janks (2014b, 2018) says, occurs as learners engage in redesign. The important question for teachers then is: how can social awareness be fostered in the classroom so as to stimulate learners' critical

imagination for redesign? In other words, how can their possibilities for transformation through ethically grounded social action be encouraged? Janks (2014b) illustrates critical literacy in practice in a South African context with the theme of access to water and its forms of consumption, in particular the use of bottled water and its detrimental effects on the globe. There are five steps:

(1) Finding and naming the issue (water conservation). Linking the issue to learners' lives (e.g., water elitism through the consumption of bottled water).
    Students make connections between something that is going on in the world and their lives, where the world can be as small as the classroom or as large as the international stage.
(2) Accessing relevant information (researching the theme).
    Students consider what they will need to know and where they can find the information.
(3) Textual design (analysis and interrogation of everyday texts such as water brandings and labels).
    Students explore how the problem is instantiated in texts and practices by a careful examination of design choices and people's behavior. They analyze, interrogate, and challenge local practices and texts through discussion with others and self-reflection (considering the historical, social, cultural, economic, and other root causes of the problem or theme).
(4) The social effects of the theme (e.g., comparing the effects of drinking bottled water in various countries/communities, connection with issues of identity, fashion, profit, climate change, or others).
    Students examine who benefits and who is disadvantaged by imagining the social effects of what is going on and its representation(s).
(5) Imagining possibilities for making a positive difference (design an awareness-raising campaign, stop drinking bottled water).

This last step is essential to enact the social justice basis for critical literacy and critical pedagogy because 'the act of redesigning enables 'readers' to resist textual positioning and to contribute in ways, however small or piecemeal, to the process of creating a world that is both just and sustainable' (Janks, 2014b, p. 355). It should be recalled that Janks focuses on the language arts, L1 literacy classroom, but as she says, the procedure has an interdisciplinary focus as themes can usually be addressed simultaneously from different school disciplines.

In TESOL, redesign in Janks' terms echoes multimodal pedagogies (Kress, 1997, 2000a, b; The New London Group, 1996) that see learners as 'socially located, culturally and historically formed individuals [who are] the remakers, transformers, and reshapers of the representational resources available to them' (Stein, 2000, p. 334). This conceptualization gives agency to learners as meaning makers who 'produce multimodal texts—visual, written, spoken, performative, sonic, and gestural (…) across semiotic modes' (Stein, 2000, p. 333). The focus is on multiliteracies, multimodality, creative and artistic expression, and translanguaging (Bradley & Harvey, 2019; Bradley et al., 2018; Cope & Kalantiz, 2015; Moore et al., 2020), which encourage students to use all their available resources, linguistic and

otherwise (visual, digital, auditory, and performative, including movement, music, dance, mimicry, singing, playing, acting, drawing, painting, handwork, crafts-making, collage, tableaux), to comprehend English and make their own meanings. Transformation and design or redesign in this sense are important because they contribute to softening the tension that exists in education between the provision of access to the dominant and the expression of the idiosyncratic, or the access paradox already referred to (Janks, 2000). Stein (2000, p. 335) describes the contributions that multimodal pedagogies can make in this respect in this way:

> Multimodal pedagogies highlight the indivisibility of body and mind, of corporeal communication between the person and the world across modes, senses, and communicative practices. Such pedagogies involve constructing tasks or projects for students that require multiple forms of representation, of which language is only one part. Multimodal pedagogies that work with multiple entry points for meaning making have the potential to hold in tension access to dominant discourses while incorporating the rich variety of representational resources that each student brings to the classroom context.

Returning to the five-step description of critical literacy in practice (Janks, 2014b), it is an example of empowerment education that draws from Freire's work (1972a, b), centered on dialogue and participation to help learners identify significant problems in their lives, assess their historical and cultural roots, imagine a better future for themselves and their communities, and take action to begin to resolve those problems. Wallerstein and Hammes (1991), in the field of health education, use problem-posing as a form of empowerment. It is a six-stage questioning strategy called SHOWED that shares the principles addressed by Janks (2014b):

> S SEE. Name the problem. What problem do we SEE here? Describe the situation.
> H What is really HAPPENING?
> O How does this story relate to OUR lives and how do we feel about it?
> W WHY has this happened? Identify the social, historical, and cultural root causes of the problem.
> E Explore how we can become EMPOWERED with new understanding.
> D What can we DO about these problems in our lives and in our community?
> (Wallerstein & Hammes, 1991, p. 252)

This problem-posing strategy was used in the teaching of English as a second language in the workplace (Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987) where Wallerstein came from public health and Auerbach from ESL adult education and together they engaged in critical reflection and social action in the USA. They worked in collaboration with educators from diverse fields such as community and adult educators, ESL and literacy teachers, public health educators, labor organizers, health and safety educators, community psychologists, high school teachers, and faculty in teacher education programs. Later they revised their work as 'popular education' (Wallerstein & Auerbach, 2004) with a practical guide for teachers.

This conceptualization of critical pedagogy in education has its roots in the French Revolution, which led to a significant transformation of society and of education built around the notion of democracy, freedom, and social change, and

paved the way for progressive and radical forms of education (Crookes, 2013, 2021). In a detailed historical overview of critical pedagogy, Crookes (2013) describes several forms of education that can be considered foundational. For instance, 'integral education,' designed for working people in France and associated with political theorist Proudhon, reacted against industrialization by integrating body and mind and promoting cooperation. It was spread first to Spain by Francisco Ferrer at the beginning of the 1900s and then to Europe, South America, China, and Japan. Ferrer's principles were radical in those times and were centered on coeducation, active learning, a research approach for the whole curriculum, theory and practice in combination, and the use of the surroundings not only as a context of learning but also as its source. Crookes (2013) also identifies the French educator Freinet as another forerunner in radical education. After World War II, the students in his system created their materials, negotiated schedules with the teacher, carried out research work in their communities, and exchanged their work and letters with students in other schools in the network. In the USA, Pestalozzi and Dewey are also associated with progressive education. Dewey is considered the pioneer of an activity-based and experiential curriculum, significant nowadays in language teaching, and his belief that schools should contribute to the improvement of societies resonates with current critical perspectives of education. Finally, the social movements of the 1960s led to social and educational change such as coeducation, the creation of school councils, sex education, and participatory syllabuses. In those times there were also adult education and literacy movements, for instance, in Latin American countries and particularly in Brazil, from where Freire developed his theory and pedagogy.

To conclude, critical theories and pedagogies for language teaching imply a reconfiguration of what literacy and foreign/world language learning mean. There is an instrumental dimension that involves teaching foreign and world languages for work, study, travel, or other purposes and which requires teaching the system of that language as well as communicative and intercultural skills. There is a complementary educational dimension that aims at fostering the development of the self and of democratic and peaceful societies. This combination of instrumental and educational purposes for foreign and world language education has been called 'intercultural citizenship' (Byram, 2008; Byram et al., 2017). Intercultural citizenship encourages learners to work with others collaboratively to imagine solutions to significant problems or issues they themselves identify and materializing those solutions in concrete social or civic action in the community simultaneously with the language learning that takes place in the classroom (Rauschert & Byram, 2017). This vision of language education demands new teacher roles and a new teacher professional identity beyond that of trainer of competences and transmitter of knowledge (Byram et al., 2021; Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016). This teacher sees herself/himself as an educator who is an agent of change and transformation and who has as a moral purpose (Dillon, 2000) to create a significant impact on the lives of learners by empowering them to use all their available languages and resources to transform their own lives in ways they deem necessary and significant. Kubanyiova and Crookes (2016) argue that this role and identity are those of a 'moral agent'

(p. 117) and that they require 'reflection on the philosophies, values, and moral purposes that guide their [teachers'] practices' (p. 124).

Conclusion

Critical language education has a history that can be traced back to the French Revolution. Educationalists in those times and after conceptualized education and learning in ways that we now take for granted, for instance, in terms of development and transformation not only of the self but also of the learner's social milieu. The means to achieve these goals involved autonomous learning; project work; analysis, introspection, and refection; negotiation and discussion; experiential and activity-based work; interdisciplinary content; and an inquiry-based framework, among others. However, as Crookes (2013, 2021) and López-Gopar (2019) warn, critical perspectives pose challenges, in particular in contexts with difficult circumstances (Kuchak Kuchah & Shamim, 2018). These difficulties are of a different kind than simply lacking resources. They comprise difficulties such as staying on topic, understanding and following instructions, understanding and participating in the dynamics of classroom interaction, and seeing the purpose of being in the classroom when your parents are unemployed or you have to take care of your siblings. These difficulties then imply ways of being and feeling, of seeing one's possibilities and potentialities in life. Critical language education in ELT can play a role in fostering in students a sense of self, of satisfaction, of pride, of self-efficacy, and this book shows how this happened in real classrooms in disadvantaged settings using locally produced critical materials.

Engagement Options

This chapter describes what a critical agenda in education might mean for language teachers, in particular English language teachers. It is an agenda with possibilities, challenges, and limitations, which Luke (2018, p. 25) describes as our 'generational challenge as educators, scholars and activists'.

1. Kubanyiova and Crookes (2016, p. 119) refer to 'the turn toward value-oriented, moral, and ethical dimensions' in language teacher identity development and research. However, they remark that the role of teachers as 'moral agents' 'remain[s], despite exceptions, insufficiently supported by contexts of work and societal expectations' (p. 128). Do you have this support in your setting? If so, what does it involve? If not, how can this role be supported and stimulated? What would you need in order to find this support in your own context? In teacher education, how can teachers candidates be helped to 'forge their moral visions and readiness for action' (p. 126)? What contributions can research and the field make?

2. In connection with this ethical dimension, Luke (2019, p. 140, his emphasis) states that 'the task of finding a 'grand narrative' for education and schooling that can embrace difficult debates over diversity and social cohesion, civil rights and civic responsibilities *sans* xenophobia, fear and nationalism still beckons. Education, teaching and, indeed, learning, without a broadly shared vision of 'what could be', and of how we should live, lacks purpose and substance, relevance and, indeed, soul.' What should this vision look like?
3. Luke (2019, p. xviii) argues that 'the neoliberal model of accountability, standardization and assessment' has led to the commodification even of the critical agenda, for instance, when problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking are framed as curricular skills amenable to measurement and verification, leaving behind 'the inconvenience of principle or philosophy, value or ethics' (p. xix). He continues to argue that 'what also has gone missing is education for innovation and originality, experience and experimentation. In the quest to gain efficiency with austerity, the institutional space and provision for human eccentricity, for unpredictable text and discourse, for exploratory digression, for local knowledge, and for diversity of cultural thought and action is falling by the wayside' (p. xx). How can a critical agenda address these needs?

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