



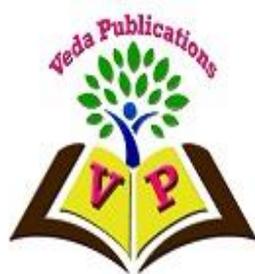
CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN NEPALESE EFL CLASSROOMS: PERCEPTIONS, PRACTICES AND PROBLEMS

Jnanu Raj Paudel

(Assistant Professor, Far Western University, Nepal.)

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ABSTRACT



Although critical pedagogy has brought positive changes in the field of education by shifting from traditional pedagogy to emancipatory pedagogy, not much attention has been paid to the implementation and problem side aspect in Nepal. This paper investigated the consciousness of English language teachers in the tenets of critical pedagogy. Moreover, it also presented the discussion of how Nepali teachers teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) practice the critical pedagogy approach and face the problems while putting the theory into action. I employed mixed method design arrive into the set objectives. The key findings revealed that though they do not follow the critical pedagogy procedures systematically in EFL, they attempts to be an active agent of transformation have been observed. Likewise, they have been found using techniques like dialogue, debate and reflective practices allowing the learners' experiences and opinions in the classroom discussions. However, status quo tendency of teachers and students and their attempts for safe method are observed as the major difficulties for proper implementation and practice of critical pedagogy in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: *Critical Pedagogy, Banking Mode, Problem Posing Mode, Dialogue, Praxis*

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CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND

Education has changed dramatically from rough thought of the previous traditional understanding of teaching and learning towards ideological education which has made a wide range of changes in the field of methodology. In the same line, English Language Teaching methods have been waxed and waned (Harmer, 2008) over the time. They have been shifted from knowledge imposing to knowledge generating mode, monologic to dialogic, authoritative to democratic mode. In traditional pedagogy, teachers are considered the sole authority in the classroom whose main responsibility is to transfer content knowledge from their minds to students minds (Freire, 1970). There is socially failed connection between the teacher and the students in the classroom and learners are taken as the passive recipient of knowledge. The present day world including the developed Euro-American countries is shifted to a new humanistic pedagogy called critical pedagogy.

Critical Pedagogy, with roots in the works of Paulo Freire (1970), the Brazilian educator, has influenced the area of education in general, and applied linguistics in particular. Though it has been traced back to Freire's work, In Jeyaraj & Harland (2014) words, it has received different names such as "participatory approach" (Auerbach, 1993), "border pedagogy" (Giroux and McLaren, 1994), "emancipatory literacy" (Wink, 1997), "critical education" (Apple, 1999), and "Critical work", "transformative pedagogy" (Penneycook, 1999). Freire (1970, pp71-86), in his celebrated book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* has presented two key concepts of pedagogy having contrasting denotations: banking concept and problem posing concept. In the banking concept of education, knowledge is imparted by knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. An educator looks at students as if they are empty container ready to be filled with knowledge. Freire (1970) believes- it is not surprising that banking concept of education regards men as adaptable, manageable beings. The more the students work at storing the deposits delegated to them, the less they develop critical consciousness. This model is

rejected because teachers do not give human beings the opportunity to critically reflect and act on the position within the society, (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). As alternative to banking model, Freire (1970) proposed problem posing model which can lead to critical consciousness. Problem posing concept affirms people as beings in the process of becoming- as unfinished, uncompleted beings and completeness is achieved only after being reflective and critical. It solves the student – teacher tension by recognizing that knowledge is not deposited from teacher to student but is instead formulated through dialogue and interaction between them instead.

Paulo Freire wants the individual to become rather than be made or formed. For this to happen, the educational topic needs to highlight daily experiences of the individual by avoiding drawback of artificial experiences. He describes some of the different methods, including ideologies, that the oppressors use to maintain their own status and the status quo, and if possible to oppress people even further, since these are a "law of life" that we cannot evade. In the same vein, Akbari (2008), asserts that critical pedagogy in ELT is an attitude to language teaching which relates the classroom context to the wider social context and aims at social transformation through education. Critical pedagogy is not a theory, but a way of doing learning, and teaching with an attitude (Penneycook, 2001; Canagarajah, 2005) . According to Byean (2011), in ELT, critical pedagogy primarily prompts teachers to scrutinize English language in light of the historical, cultural, sociopolitical and economic issues. Given the complexity and the role of English, Norton and Toohey (2004) believe that language teaching has to allow the space for practice where, learners understand themselves, their socio historical surrounding and their possibility for the future. In Crookes and Lehner's (1998) words, critical pedagogy in English should not be seen as a merely pedagogical method as to "how to teach English", but as a social and educational approach which is concerned about how English learning can affect personal and social change. In this sense, Byean (2011) discusses that in critical pedagogy, English pedagogy should be



focused on enriching not the English language, but the education of a country; in turn, CP values globalized English pedagogies in conjunction with local educational context.

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Like in many spheres of life, critical pedagogy has direct impact to English language teaching and learning. Hence, teachers and students should be familiar with the changing trends of ELT around the world. This is the world of postmodernism; it is the world of options, possibilities and alternatives which should guide the teachers to think and act flexibly and alternatively. There is no hegemony of a single thing. Critical pedagogy is an approach to language teaching and learning which according to (Kincheloe, 2005, cf. Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011), is concerned with transforming relations of power which are oppressive and which lead to oppression of people. It holds that education is not neutral, and it both influences and is influenced by the social and political relations in society. Critical pedagogy attempts to transform students from being mere objects of education to autonomous subjects of their own learning (Pishvaei & Kasaia, 2013). Students are expected to have voice and take part actively and critically in their education. Therewith, they are empowered to critique inequalities and start seeking justice in the confines of their classroom –what they will need to do in the larger society in the future.

ROLE OF LEARNERS IN CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Critical Pedagogy regards learning as active and creative process through critically thinking. It always puts learners at the central of teaching and learning activity, where the learners should struggle to gain such knowledge which helps them to fight against inequality and injustice in the classroom. Critical pedagogy advocates in favor of learners' freedom, to think for themselves, to behave intellectually without coercion from powerful elite, to cherish their beliefs and traditions and cultures without the threats of forced change (Brown, 2001, cf. Poudel, 2014). Students are active participants working together with the teachers in correcting the curricula and sharing ideas to challenge conventional assumptions.

They are the key agents to contribute to curriculum decision in an innovative way (Giroux, 1997; Degener, 2001).

ROLE OF TEACHER IN CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Teachers in this approach are viewed as problem posers. Dewey (1963) believes that learning through problem solving and practical application leads students to a more active role in determining their experiences and positions within society. In CP, teachers play the role of transformative intellectual since they are taken as agents of transformation in their society. Smyth, (2001, pp 22-233) writes "Teachers must go beyond the roles of technicians, managers or efficient clerks imposed upon them by others and be unwilling to continue to accept the way things are in schools." Poudel (2014) referring to Holliday's key speech, quotes NELTA editorial review of NELTA conference proceedings (2011):

...teachers' role as a passive-technician is not enough rather they have to be a transformative intellectual. Teachers should understand that classroom is socially constructed and historically situated and they should create such an environment where students from various backgrounds can get opportunities to utilize their prior knowledge. In general, English teachers are not simply in-charges of classroom but also agents for social changes. They can also contribute to foster democracy and critical thinking skill by creative inclusive learning environment where students can exercise their values, assumptions and identities shaped by local, national and global socio-cultural settings and expectations (p. III).

As the teachers are the agents to bring desirable change in the students, they are expected to bring the theories in to classroom practices. Teachers need more opportunities to reflect on their practice and engage in discussions with other teachers about their success and failure. Such discussions can be enriched by drawing on praxis.



CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND PRAXIS

Praxis is defined as "the self-creative activity through which we make the world" (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011, p. 82). When the ideological concept is brought to practice it is praxis. Praxis involves theorizing practice and practicing theory (Fahim & Masouleh, 2012). Praxis implies a combination of the awareness gained from ideological critique with reflective strategies for social change (Prasad & Caproni, 1997). Praxis aims at bridging the gap between theory and transformation action (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). Praxis for Freire (1970) is both reflection and action, both interpretation and change. Critical consciousness is brought not through intellectual effort alone but through praxis. Thus praxis is the critical reflection and action which aims at implementing educational practices. Though teachers in EFL context have positive perception about the theory of critical pedagogy, very few teachers are found to be implementing the essence of it through praxis. Critical pedagogy may be a challenging endeavor in EFL cultural context when there are hierarchies and constraints.

Critical pedagogy, though having a long history in the European and American language teaching system, has recently entered the Asian territory. In the countries like Nepal where English language is taught and learnt as a foreign language, the teaching-learning process has been inspired by the banking system (Freire, 1970). The teachers are taken as the sole source of knowledge, having abundant deposits and they provide it to the students according to their needs. The students are rarely taken to the critical situation with the opportunities of dialogue. They are spoon-fed gradually. Moreover, the teachers in the higher level are well theoretically informed about the need of interaction, contextualization of the teaching items, but they are not found implementing it. This research tries to explore the existing situation of the classroom in terms of the pedagogy the teachers implement to empower the learners.

From a decade of my experiences of teaching to the students of higher levels in a semi-urban area of Nepal, I realized that teaching and learning can better take place in a dialogic situation

and in a problem-posing way. The content in the course can be modeled in a critical way. In this backdrop, this study attempts to see what extent campus-level teachers are aware about the criticality of language teaching, how they implement these ideas in teaching and the problems they face while implementing the theory into practice.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

English language teachers being furnished with theoretical knowledge of critical pedagogy are expected to materialize it in practice. They should be made aware of the issues because no change will be made unless teachers and students realize that it is necessary. Pennycook (1999) points out, however, that this should not be a top-down attempt where instructors show their students how they are oppressed with limited dialogue and opportunities for reflections. Review of this research study reveals that praxis of critical pedagogy focuses the incorporation of problem-posing, critical and reflective teaching and dialogic learning. The focus is to empower the students with the praxis of dialogic opportunities and reflections in the classroom. They are pushed to the situation where they themselves can be the agent of their empowerment.

Crookes and Lehner (1999) adopted a more direct approach to engage in critical pedagogy. They set up an ESL Critical Pedagogy Teacher Education Course in which the students were involved in the negotiation of the course content and teaching and learning process. During the teaching process, they explored their understandings and application of critical pedagogy in the classroom. The students also started to develop awareness of the political and socio-cultural issues surrounding the English language teaching and learning. Another case of the application of critical pedagogy that is worth mentioning here is the one Shin (2004) did with Korean teachers of English in a course called Intercultural Communication for EFL teachers: Teaching Cultures in EFL Classroom. The researcher was guided by the goal of empowering students through reading-based activities. The students had to participate in problem-posing activities. In one of the activities, students were required to critically read articles on English as an international language and



asked to address the issues contained within the articles. Shin concluded that the pedagogy applied in the course has helped the students to gain cultural awareness and power dynamics that exists in it.

Among the several studies carried out on practices of critical pedagogy in the classroom, Sharma and Phyak (2017) draw on Freire's (1970) notion of *conscientization* (an ability to think critically about the issue of power privilege and oppression in society) to discuss how Nepali EFL teachers develop critical awareness in incorporating local sociopolitical issues in their lessons. In portraying Nepali EFL teachers' engagement in understanding and adopting a critical pedagogy they have argued that criticality is neither a priori ideology nor a finite amount of fixed theories but rather a dialogic process in which teachers develop alternative ideas. This research offers two major insights. First, it helps the teachers to organize and connect sociopolitical issues in their classroom pedagogy and invites them in critical dialogue. Second critical pedagogy can be implemented even in context where the education system pays much attention to testing rather than social justice and transformative agendas. They claim that teachers being educationally informed educators are to be taken into conflict filled situation so that they can think for alternative ideologies. This research provides me comprehensive schemata to understand the critical pedagogy practice in the context of Nepal. The way the teachers developed critical awareness theoretically and got practical insights on material development through workshop is the foundation for other critical pedagogy based research in Nepal. Referring to the Nepali EFL teachers participation in understanding and adopting critical pedagogy, they conclude that criticality is neither a priori ideology nor a finite amount of fixed theories and techniques but rather a dialogic process in which teacher develop an alternative ideologies.

Bearing in mind the vital role critical pedagogy envisages for teachers, Pennycook (1999) asserts that English teachers should bear even more responsibilities due to the global status of English. According to Gee (1994) "English teachers stand at the very heart of the most crucial educational, cultural, and political issues of our time" (p. 190).

Being "aware of the interlinked facets of English and its underlying ideologies in ELT, English teachers need to approach ELT with more critical minds" (Byean, 2011, p. 5). According to Canagarajah (1999), they should critically question the hidden curricula of their courses and also help their students develop a critical point of view toward hidden aspects of curricula. Teacher must empower his/ her students by raising their awareness. So teachers are transformative intellectual (Giroux, 1997) who have the knowledge and skill to critique and transform existing inequalities in the societies. The teachers in critical pedagogy communicate with students about the society and culture to help them reflect critically on various aspects of cultures they are studying about and preparing to enter into. Critical educators are concerned about emancipatory knowledge that helps students understand how relations of power and privilege distort and manipulate social relationship and help oppressed students by identifying with them (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). Critical pedagogy having multiple facets is shift from mainstream education system to problem posing learner empowering education system. I have reviewed the theoretical literature on the topic which helped me furnish my theoretical concept and better understanding of the title in question. I have been able to frame a theory along with the components of critical pedagogy. However, the study of empirical research studies carried out in the field is essential which will provide some practical guideline to accomplish my study. I present review of some empirical literature and my position in subsequent section.

Katz Leanna (2014) explores the experiences of nine high school teachers with some of the common themes in critical pedagogy. The study considers teachers as naive in applying critical pedagogy in their teaching. It was investigated on how feasible and desirable they find the common themes in critical pedagogy to be based on their teaching experiences. Power/authority among students and teachers, the political nature of education, and teaching about social issues in the classroom are the key themes drawn and discussed. Teachers revealed an unwillingness to share



authority with students or make space for students to be experts in the classroom in a meaningful way. Teachers demonstrated a desire to encourage students to improve society, but they believe the best way to achieve this is by teaching critical thinking skills and discussing social issues, allowing students to develop their own vision for an improved society. In his study, teacher was particularly enthusiastic about grounding their teaching in real world social issues. The most striking aspect of this study I found is the attempt to dig out how desirable and feasible it is for the teachers to use critical pedagogy in the classroom. He tried to get a sense of the practical usefulness of the theory of critical pedagogy. However, this study does not seem to cover the students' perspective on the issue. This study supports the present study by supplying some fundamental frameworks and tools.

The qualitative study carried out by Noroozian and Soozandehfar (2011) investigates the attitudes and perceptions of language teachers in critical pedagogy. The study has been conducted in a small scale with 10 language teachers in Iran. The results of interview and observation demonstrated that the teachers have perceived knowledge and positive attitude towards critical pedagogy. They have described their role in the classroom as a guide, perfect model of language and as an activator of learning process. All the teachers were not found to be practicing criticality in their teaching but as they were describing the activities they practice in the class, they unwarily seemed to work on activities that suit the interests of the learners. Putting it more specific way, the language classes were found just practicing whatever the theories including the dominant ones impose, and it was found that the easiest way to get on with the classroom is to stick to whatever the syllabus suggests. It is obviously a type of being after "one-model-fits-all".

The above studies in different countries including Nepal where English is taught and learnt as foreign language cover the perception, practices and problems of critical pedagogy. In all of the studies presented previously students were able to engage critically with the materials and topics presented in the class. Reviewing the literature about practices

and problems of critical pedagogy in different context, I draw an outline to see the common practices (praxis) adapted by English language teachers. This research is an endeavor to dig out the common practices employed by the teachers of campus level to empower the students critically. I realized from a decade of teaching experience in graduate level, there are different issues of criticality in the curriculum prescribed by the university. Whether these issues are dealt with the critical perspective or not and what possible problems do the teachers and the students face during the classroom teaching are the areas of concern of my research. I found very few research studies in this area and issue and motivated to have insights on it.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs mixed method research design (Creswell, 2009; Doyle, Brady & Byrne, 2016), which systematically integrates quantitative and qualitative method in a single study for the purpose of fuller picture and deeper understanding of a phenomena, (Creswell, 2009, p.203). Within the mixed method design, the researcher makes use of the convergent parallel design. In this design, quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently but remain separate (Creswell & Clark, as cited in Doyle, Brady & Byrne, 2016). Equal priority is assigned to quantitative and qualitative data and results are usually merged in the interpretation phase of the research where meta-inferences are developed (Doyle, Brady & Byrne, 2016).

This study comprises two phases: quantitative data were collected from 20 teachers who have been teaching at Bachelors and Masters Level through random sampling. The researcher reviewed resources including books, journals and research articles to develop a theoretical framework for the instrument. Apart from this, specific attention was paid to a few prominent figures' works of the field namely Friere (1970), Shor (1992), Giroux (1997), and Norton & Toohey (2004). A five point Likert scale was developed to find out the level of consciousness of Nepali EFL teachers in critical pedagogy.



The data elicited from the instrument were analyzed using descriptive statistics. After the first phase, the researcher selected three participants purposively to dig out the implementation aspect of critical pedagogy and problems. I visited the teachers in their convenient location, and had an in depth interview.. I agreed to use the pseudonym to protect their anonymity and for confidentiality. During my focused interview with them, I tried to maintain the natural environment. It was recorded in mobile phone recorder for the further analysis and interpretation. The descriptive mode of data was transcribed, coded, categorized and interpreted connecting with the theoretical tenets.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings related to both quantitative and qualitative data have been presented and discussed in this section. The findings from the quantitative data are simply presented in the frequency table with analysis whereas the data from the qualitative procedure have been presented in the pattern of themes.

Table 1 Awareness of EFL teachers in theoretical tenets of critical pedagogy

S.N.	Tenets of Critical Pedagogy	Responses in Percentage				
		SA %	A %	N %	D %	SD %
1.	Teachers make the learners learn, think, and act more independently.	75	25	-	-	-
2.	Teachers help students to develop their position and place in the world.	45	35	20	-	-
3.	EFL teachers should design teaching strategies & techniques based on learners' specific features.	50	50	-	-	-
4	Teachers books are those designed locally in light of learners' real life.	30	70	-	-	-
5	Teachers must share their authority with the students in the classroom	45	20	20	10	5
6	Teachers should participate in dialogue and discussion as learner among the learners.	65	35	-	-	-
7	Teachers are not only the source of knowledge.	25	55	20	-	-
8	EFL teachers should encourage and help learners to create learning opportunities themselves.	65	35	-	-	-
9	Teachers should use dialogue and open communication in EFL classroom for sharing ideas.	40	60	-	-	-
10	The content of EFL classroom and books in Nepal is unrelated to learners' real life concerns and problems	5	50	30	15	-
11	Genuine and real life dialogue should form the context of teaching and learning in EFL classroom.	30	70	-	-	-
12	EFL teachers should have critical and socio- political approach to the content of course books.	20	80	-	-	-



13	The role of a teacher is to improve learners' critical thinking skill.	25	65	10	-	-
14	Environmental, social, and political issues are suitable topics to focus on in EFL classroom.	20	55	20	5	-
15	Main goal of education is to understand the dominant social norms.	25	55	10	10	-
16	Teachers' role is to aware students about inequalities in society.	30	60	10	-	-
17	The teacher adopts negotiated syllabus.	35	45	15	5	-
18	The teacher and students collaborate with each other to draw the conclusion in the issue of discussion	60	35	5	-	-

Table 1 reveals the teachers' familiarity with the different aspects of critical pedagogy. The statements and the responses in five levels indicate their awareness and theoretical knowledge about it. Majority of the informants (75%) strongly agreed and (25%) agreed that teachers should work for learners' autonomy by allowing them to learn, think and act more independently. Equal number of teachers (50%) revealed their strong agreement and agreement on the need of teaching strategies based on learners' specific interests. Teachers (65%) accepted that they participate in class dialogue and discussion as learners. A large number (80%) of teachers believe in the creation of critical and social- political context while dealing with the content. The teachers responses varied from strongly agreed to strongly disagree in the issue of the aim of education, 55% teachers believe that understanding the dominant social norms as the key goal of education. Unlike it 25 % are strongly agreed on the same tenet whereas 10 % / 10% participants remained neutral and disagreed on the issue respectively.

In the issue of syllabus, 45% teachers agreed on the negotiated syllabus, 35% strongly agreed, 15 % remained neutral on the type of syllabus adopted in critical pedagogy. In overall, the frequency distribution displays that EFL teachers are conscious about the syllabus, content, materials, teaching techniques, activities and teachers' role envisioned by critical pedagogy. Though they show their informed awareness in overall critical teaching

procedure, there has been a question about its implementation in the real classroom. I conducted I in-depth interview to explore the models and patterns of its practice in the class. I draw the following themes from the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data.

CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND INFORMED PRACTICE

As it is the new concept in the context of Nepal, I wanted to explore the critical knowledge and practice of critical pedagogy among the teachers teaching at HEIs. I explored that both teacher A and teacher B having the qualification of M. Ed and M. A. and M Phil scholar in English Language Education are familiar with the theoretical tenets of critical pedagogy. Teacher A said that he had carried out many research studies on it and also presented a paper on the same issue at TESOL conference. While, teacher B admitted that he has heard about it but did not have in depth knowledge about the concept. Teacher B being engaged in teaching English more than eight years is subtly informed about the approach and has materialized in the classroom in his own way without being consistent to theoretical patterns. When I asked them about their eagerness in presenting the lesson critically, teacher A said:

... I am strongly and enthusiastically motivated to present lessons embracing critical pedagogy. As it is the pedagogy which relates teaching topics, teaching matters,



teaching contents to the local context meaningfully and it also values students' opinions experiences and interests. Most importantly, it is a generative mode of teaching... **(Interview excerpt: Teacher A)**

Teachers being theoretically informed about the critical pedagogy like teacher A are strongly inspired by generative mode of teaching similar to Freire's problem posing concept of teaching. The banking system of education is not followed which according to Monchinski (2008) pits teacher against students and both against the joys that the education can bring and should bring. At the same time, teacher B agrees to the concept of criticality and is inspired to create meaningful local context in teaching English language classroom.

I explored the teachers furnished with theoretical critical pedagogy approach are using it in practice. The teachers with knowledge and skills at both cognitive and affective levels have been found implementing the theory of praxis in the classroom. The classrooms activities are developed to address the concept of praxis (action plus reflection) as proposed by Freire (1970). The teachers have shared the actual classroom lesson with specific topic. While teaching Myth (a topic in Expanding Horizons in English), he provides them chance to put their understanding from their local context.

Before dealing with the topic **Myth**, I asked the students to tell if they are familiar with the myths. I gave them chance to put their understanding. I asked them to tell about the Nepalese myth, local myths for example; Ramayana that is familiar to them. Later, I presented the lesson relating to the local context of Nepal. And then, I assigned them group work and asked them to discuss on the myth; relating local myths to Norwegian myths... **(Teacher B)**

He encourages their opinions, understandings. The ideas received from them are discussed with the class. Teacher A demonstrates more openness to students interacting with their experiences. Affirming identities, making sure both teachers and students see each other as an intelligent and creative and welcoming all students, ideas and experiences are the basis of critical pedagogies in language teaching (Cummins, as cited in Norton & Toohey, 2004), teacher A presents the classroom teaching generating ideas from the learners and empowering them. The students' opinions and experiences are valued in the classroom. Connecting the classroom with the students' real life context is one way to ensure that teachers have been practicing the essence of critical approach.

On the other side of spectrum, there are dominant and prevailing ideologies that exist in society and academic institutions. Haynes, Gale and Parker (2015) state that we remain constantly aware of these types of ideologies to ensure that we do not bring cultural invasion of historically and socially constructed thinking to our interpretations and understandings as it is constructed from the notion of superiority/inferiority, male/ female, white/ black, poor/ rich . Praxis requires teachers to reflect upon these dominant ideologies and recreate knowledge and understanding in new, alternative and liberating ways. The students' positions and academic voices are to be addressed by the educators in order to promote equality in terms of race and ethnicity. While having the interview with teacher B, I explored that he creates comfortable classroom atmosphere to ensure the setting envisioned by critical pedagogy approach.

DIALOGUE, DEBATE AND DISCUSSION AS THE PART OF PRACTICUM

To Freire (1970), dialogism is the base of critical education. It is one means of actively involving students in the issue. The use and practice of dialogue limits teachers talk and encourages learners voice (Shor, 1992). It creates mutual acceptance and trust between the students and teachers. The teachers in my study have shown their strong



concern about dialogue, debate and discussions. They often listen to their students and learn about their problems that are important within their communities. Dialogue in opposition to monologue challenges a readymade truth and status quo and promotes egalitarian way of learning (Friere, 1970). Teacher A shares the experience of using these tools while teaching CULTURAL PLURALISM (a topic from Expanding Horizons in English: B Ed Second Year). He asks them to favor one stance either singularism or pluralism and debate over the issue. The teacher empowers the students and gives them voice which enables them to decode the hidden codes to construct reality.

PROBLEMS IN PLANNING AND PRACTICE

Despite the positive experiences within English language classrooms using critical pedagogy, problems and challenges have not been absent from these practices. Teachers involved in the interview have shared the challenges which they think should be addressed. The problems are related to curriculum, contents, instructional materials, time, and size of the class, cultural expectations, and readiness of the learners and so on. When teacher A was asked about the inclusion of content relevant to critical pedagogy in the courses he teaches, he pointed out the number of courses that have been designed incorporating critical pedagogy approach such as; course of compulsory English prescribed for B. Ed. first year, Reading Writing and Critical Thinking of the same year. Similarly, Expanding Horizons in English prescribed for B. Ed. second year and other literature courses of bachelor and masters level include the content. Moreover, it is not difficult to manage the instructional materials. On the basis of the nature of topic, the teacher can prepare the materials such photos, newspaper cutouts and so on in the classroom.

The most importantly, both the teachers agree that traditional power hierarchies and habituation in banking mode have been interfering in the implementation of the critical pedagogy. In one hand do not want to change their learning habit since they themselves are socialized from their earliest experiences in school to expect some manifestation

of the depositing concept of education in the classroom. On the other hand, teacher A claims that;

If we want to practice critical pedagogy in all classrooms of Nepal, you will also feel the same problem in teachers' side as well. Teachers feel much more comfortable to present in depositing mode. It is less risky.

(Teacher C)

There are a lot of good teachers who really care for their students, their subject matter and the art of teaching but in their daily practice perpetuated the banking concept of education (Monchinski, 2008). Furthermore, although critical pedagogy is the new concept in the context of Nepal, educators involved in higher education institutions have critical consciousness. The key problem is the comprehensive level of knowledge and strong desire to convert that knowledge into skill and practice.

CONCLUSIONS

This study uncovers the fact that though language teachers teaching HEIs of Nepal are aware of critical pedagogy and favor the beneficial consequences of its principles and premises, they occasionally apply such pedagogy in their teachings. Analyzing the quantitative data and reflecting on the in depth interview with the teachers I noticed some obstacles which prevent teachers from practicing the principles of critical pedagogy. Centralized education system in which decisions are made in top-down manner is the major problem. They argued that the pre-planned decisions about courses, materials and teaching procedures reduces the learners' creativity and criticality. They also complained that large number of students with diverse ethnic background in a single class prevents from conducting learner centered activities. Thus, it does not encourage the formation of friendly and supportive learning atmosphere in which learners could develop mutual trust and understanding of one another. Teachers who have been practicing critical pedagogy suggest that materials developers and language classes should be sensitive to learners' needs, their learning styles and



local knowledge in order to enhance quality of teaching and learning.

Language classrooms can be the places of genuine interaction. It is possible to say that working with critical language can be the great opportunity for the teachers to rethink their role and the role of students in the society. Critical pedagogy demands engaged and imaginative teachers who aren't afraid of leaving their "comfort zones" and taking risks in the classroom (Monchinski, 2008). There exists an imperative need to decolonize the methodological aspects of ELT and move toward the concept of post method by being sensitive to each learning context and consider it as a unique experience. Nepali teachers in this study being theoretically informed are reluctant to use this approach despite having knowledge about the tenets of critical pedagogy, lack of focused training and workshops, crowded classes, poor classroom management and logistic support. I witnessed teachers' appreciation for critical pedagogy and passion for practicing it for transformative education. They are also enthusiastically motivated to play the role of theoretically informed educators to active agent for social transformation.

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