



Teachers' critical thinking: A precursor for perception of critical pedagogy principles into the classroom?

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ABSTRACT

Despite the great emphasis laid on the importance of being critical, it is not really known whether English teachers are all aware of Critical pedagogy principles in ELT or whether different components of ELT curriculum, widely practiced in educational system, including material development, teaching styles and strategies, and testing methods and outcomes are consistent with principles of critical pedagogy. Therefore the present study was carried out to substantiate the relationship between the teachers' critical thinking and their awareness of critical pedagogy principles as the vital essence of language teaching (Birjandi & Bagherkazemi, 2010; Braa & Callero, 2006; Canagarajah, 1999, 2003). To fulfill this aim, measures of critical thinking ability of 112 Iranian EFL teachers, obtained by the Farsi version of Watson–Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal, Form YM (Watson–Glaser, 1961), were estimated and compared with the data collected through Critical Pedagogy Questionnaire (Maki, 2011). A statistically significant correlation between these two measures ($r= 0.55$, $p \leq 0.01$) was indicated through analysis done by Pearson Product–moment correlation. The findings of this study provide insight into the effective teaching and present suggestions for further research.

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Introduction

As is well known, education is of paramount importance for development of society and individual growth of people living in that society. The more developed and civilized one country is, the more well-educated people there are and vice versa. Although societies are developing at a surprising speed, the content and manner of our teaching, somehow, are not. Ian (2007) has described this issue as a common phenomenon in which theories are distinguished from practice and some materials in many textbooks are out of date. He has also mentioned John-Dewey's arguing that "too static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world" (p. 57). Accordingly, it can be inferred that there is still a long way to be taken to achieve our educational ideals. A great deal of attention in learning and pedagogy should be given to the sociohistorical and political forces residing in both the meanings of the linguistic resources and the social identities of language users, as Hall (1997) and Bartolome (2004) have argued. Regarding the manner of teaching, Quian (2007) explained that teachers' role as transmitters of knowledge has been taken for granted and has proclaimed them as absolute authorities in the classrooms and students are not supposed to challenge such authorities and foster opinions and thoughts. Teachers as both victims and practitioners of this long term educational practice find it burdensome to face novel ideas and viewpoints of students and even themselves. As a result, it goes without saying that, teachers should be considered as one of the key factors in determining the success of education and more specifically language teaching. Accordingly, it is not surprising if a broad range of language research endeavors has addressed the characteristic features of successful language teachers. Following the line of research in this information era, critical thinking ability as one of the teachers' characteristics and

critical pedagogy as one of the facets of this idealization have gained an ever greater saliency in the EFL/ESL studies and are considered as viable domains worthy to be investigated.

Critical pedagogy as one of the solutions –but not the only one– can be efficient in decreasing the demolishing effects of teaching problems. Critical pedagogy has been debated for more than three decades and appeared in many varied constructions and characterizations. But what is critical pedagogy? How and where can it be practiced? These questions remained pertinent; however a bulk of progressive teaching methods has concentrated on reaching this idealization in educational programs. Harvey (1996) has asserted that students' skills, habits, and dispositions necessary for the development of critical spirit will be enhanced if their teachers utilize the critical manner. Employing critical manner in the classroom means that the teacher always recognizes students' right to question and demand reasons; and consequently finds it obligatory to provide reasons whenever demanded. Quian (2007) elaborated the role of Critical pedagogy as a form whose primary purpose is to make the learners (both the teacher and the student alike) more fully human and whose ultimate purpose is to create a more just society. Accordingly, in critical pedagogy teachers and students are actively collaborating with each other. This critical manner of teachers and critical practices of teaching make the society developed with a higher and more efficient speed.

In general, critical pedagogy's summit can be defined as empowering students in order to foster critical consciousness. The aims of critical pedagogy potentially contest a wide range of educational practices and philosophies (Keesing-Styles, 2003). Burbules and Berk (1999) explained critical pedagogy as an effort to work within educational institutions in order to come up with new ideas and questions about "inequalities of the power, the false myths of opportunity, merits for many students,

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and about the way belief systems become internalized". They also added that raising questions is to "the point where individuals and groups abandon the very aspiration to the questions or change their lot in life" (Burbules and Berk, 1999, p. 50). Yilmaz (2009) has also counted creating the new and interdisciplinary forms of knowledge, addressing some questions about the relationship between the margins and centers of power, refuting the distinction between Culture with capital C and culture with small c, and illuminating the primacy of the ethical in defining the language used for particular language practices as the principles of critical pedagogy.

Keesing-Styles (2003) claims that critical pedagogy has some considerable commonalities in historical and contextual territory with critical theory. "Critical theory concerns itself with issues related to the socialization of people for existence in society, usually a society defined by dominant discourses, and this is also the starting point for critical pedagogy" (Keesing-Styles, 2003, p. 2). Critical pedagogy appears not only in relation to the practices of critical theory, but also in the tradition of critical thinking. Burbules & Berk (1999) claimed that in spite of vast similarities, critical pedagogy and critical thinking are not defined critically in the same manner. Keesing-Styles (2003) puts this distinction as:

"Critical thinking encourages an analysis of situations and arguments to identify faulty or unreliable assertions or meanings. While it may well encourage discernment in relation to the social and human condition, it does not specifically demand social action. Critical pedagogy, however, is preoccupied with social injustice and examines and promotes practices that have the potential to transform oppressive institutions or social relations, largely through educational practices. This expectation of action or social change clearly distinguishes critical pedagogy from critical thinking. Another key difference relates to the goals of the two. Critical thinking is primarily aimed at the individual and largely ignores the pedagogical relations, which occur between teacher and learner, or between learners. Critical pedagogy is more interested in collective action so individual criticality is intimately linked to social criticality" (Keesing-Styles, 2003, p.4).

Nearly everyone agrees that critical thinking has begun to play an outstanding role in education and turned to one of the main goals of education. Changes in technology and workplace have made the ability to think critically more pivotal than any time before. This ability to be involved in an ongoing reflection process is a prominent characteristic of an educated person. In recent years, a great deal of research has been devoted to critical thinking. In his initial attempt to define critical thinking, Ennis (1992) has mentioned that his concept of critical thinking encompasses seeking a clear statement of the thesis or question, seeking reasons, trying to be well-informed, taking into account the total situation, keeping in mind the original and/or basic concern, being open-minded, and so on. In similar vein, to Stout (1993), Critical thinking has been viewed as an intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. Critical thinking is "purposeful, reasoned, and goal oriented" (Halpern, 1999, p. 70). It refers to cognitive skills which can be employed in order to solve problems, formulate inferences, calculate likelihoods, and make minds. Although the priorities in today's classrooms include learners' critical thinking abilities, little attention has been paid to this skill from

the side of teachers as practitioners in such classes. Many studies (Bataineh & Zghoul, 2006; Ennis, 1993; Stapleton, 2001; among others) have been conducted to investigate assessing students' critical thinking abilities through using various well-known tests such as Cornell Critical Thinking Test, California Critical Thinking Skills Test, and Watson–Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal. Having a brief look at the literature, it is revealed that there are conflicting findings in terms of the relationship between critical thinking and a host of other factors. Some research (see Birjandi and Bagherkazemi, 2010; Elmore and Farley, 1992; Garrison, 2011, among others) has revealed a positive relationship between critical thinking and other items such as achievement, self-directed learning, reading and writing skills, and students' demographics like age, gender, academic level and grade point average. For example, Birjandi and Bagherkazemi (2010) found out a statistically significant relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' critical thinking ability and their professional success. They also indicated that 'drawing inferences', 'interpreting evidence', and 'evaluating arguments'—as three of five aspects of critical thinking—positively related to the scores obtained from teachers' professional success.

Critical reflection and action are considered as required implementations of a range of educational practices and processes with the goal of creating a better learning environment and society. Freire (1998) claimed that critical pedagogy was not merely an educational technique but a way of living in an educative practice. Based on his view education shouldn't be taken as means of transferring the raw knowledge, but something to produce collaborative perception among teachers and students. Some variables have dramatic effects on the teachers' point of view and, consequently, teachers' employing critical pedagogy practices in the classroom. Yilmaz (2009) carried out a study, determining different views of Elementary school teachers concerning the effect of such factors as sex, education, seniority, and place of school on critical pedagogy. The results of this study revealed that teachers "moderately" agree with the principles of critical pedagogy. Teachers participated in that study, had significantly divergent viewpoints concerning educational background, professional seniority, and their teaching environment, but no significant difference was observed between their views regarding gender. In addition, Cox and Assis–Peterson (1999) investigated 40 Brazilian English teachers to figure out their thought about critical pedagogy in ELT. Their finding revealed that teachers were unaware of critical pedagogy and saw themselves just as agents of good in that they prepared students to be successful in the world.

Carrilo and McCain (2004) carried out a survey study. The participants in the study were students from an education college in the southern region of the U.S with the aim of figuring out whether critical pedagogy is taught and assimilated by the students in order to confront the new realities of the crisis of capitalism or as an academic therapy to reproduce and hold to the traditional educative mode. It was revealed that most educators were not prepared to teach critical pedagogy as a component to their education program. Moreover, most participants in the study, through surveys, declared that they had not received formal education courses in teaching critical pedagogy. Several participants did not also have a clearly defined philosophy of critical pedagogy into educational process.

Sadeghi and Ketab (2009) investigated the barriers which prevent English teachers from application of transformative

intellectual principles in their teaching. Initially, they reflected upon overt/covert inequalities and injustice, and their roles in society. Then, they gained a terrible insight into how they subconsciously contributed to the reproduction and replication of higher-order hierarchy of power and access. Subsequently, through they gained a critical voice for their roles in the society through dialogues. Eventually, they tried to implement critical pedagogy in the classroom and enact their roles as Transformative Intellectuals. Instead of rigid guidelines as to content and structure, they followed an explorative and interpretive approach. Finally, they were interviewed about their experience of being transformative intellectuals. Based on these interviews, Sedeghi and Ketab (2009) concluded that taking into account the administrative constraints, teachers may encounter daily problems such as: large class sizes, rigid lesson plans, obligatory standard tests, limited class time, load of work and expectations, low payment and so on. Going beyond banking model of education, engendering critical awareness and becoming a transformative intellectual seem to be unattainable. No matter how motivated and open a teacher is, he/she will negatively be impeded by such constraints. Re-organizing institutions in order to provide more opportunities for diversity, flexibility and openness towards other modes of teaching and learning may help, as some of the teachers asked for.

It seems that the main principles and assumptions underlying CP can influence to a great extent the process, outcomes, possible dangers, and effectiveness of learning and teaching English to non-English-speaking countries. Looking at the literature, the researchers didn't find any study concerned with teachers' critical thinking abilities and their knowledge on critical pedagogy principles. If the correlation is substantiated, as far as language pedagogy is concerned, the study to be carried out has direct implications and applications for those involved in language education, ranging from language planners to teacher training course (TTC) designers, and more specifically to teachers. The study includes informative local implications as well.

Research Questions

This study was an attempt to address the following research question:

- Is there any significant relationship between teachers' critical thinking ability and their awareness of critical pedagogy principles?

Based on the aforementioned question, the following null hypothesis is formed:

- There is no significant relationship between teachers' critical thinking ability and their awareness of critical pedagogy principles.

Methodology

Participants:

The final pool of participants in this study was 112 (68 female and 44 male) Iranian intermediate and advanced adult EFL teachers from five language institutes in Arak, Iran. All of the teachers held a Bachelor's degree in one of the English related majors, including English Translation (n=58), English Literature (n=40), and English Teaching (n=14). The teachers aged from 21 to 28, and varied in ELT experience from 2 to 5 years. Outliers (novice teachers with few months of teaching experience and professional teachers with the experience of more than 5 years) had been omitted to keep participants homogeneous. The researchers decided to take age range, educational background, and ELT experience as control variables due to the fact that they play significant roles in

changing the teachers' viewpoints toward critical pedagogy (Yilmaz, 2009) and consequently in their knowledge of the critical pedagogy principles.

Instruments:

Research data were gleaned out through the following instruments:

Watson–Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal-Form A (Watson & Glaser, 1980)

The Watson–Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal-Form A devised by Watson–Glaser, 1961 includes five subsections of critical thinking abilities as defined by follow: (see Appendix A)

1. *The ability to define a problem.*
2. *The ability to select pertinent information for the solution of a problem.*
3. *The ability to recognize stated and unstated assumptions.*
4. *The ability to formulate and select relevant and promising hypotheses.*
5. *The ability to draw conclusions validly and to judge the validity of inferences.*

The total number of items included in this questionnaire is equal to 80. Here, each aspect of the construct consists of 16 items in favor of which Watson and Glaser (1980) claimed to be subject-related for each subsection of critical thinking. In addition to the face, content, construct, and criterion validity of the appraisal, its test-retest reliability was measured as ($r=0.68$) by Watson and Glaser (1980). The researcher used the Farsi version of the appraisal and scoring was facilitated through the availability of an answer key, yielding a composite score for five subsections of the appraisal from 0 to 80. The allocated time for filling this questionnaire is equal to 50 minutes (Watson & Glaser, 1980):

Test	suggested Time
1. Inference.....	13min
2. Recognition of assumptions.....	6
3. Deduction.....	11
4. Interpretation.....	12
5. Evaluation of arguments.....	8
Total	50 min

Critical Pedagogy Questionnaire (Maki, 2011)

Another instrument used for collecting data in the current study was Critical Pedagogy Questionnaire (see Appendix B) developed by Maki (2011). The researchers used this newly developed questionnaire in order to investigate the knowledge of teachers on critical pedagogy principles. This questionnaire consists of 30 items, falling into seven subcategories. These subcategories are:

“Attention to social and cultural issues” (items 1 to 9 of the questionnaire)

1. *Learning is a social process and it takes place as a result of social interaction.*
2. *Whatever is said in the classroom should help improvement of society.*
3. *Students must realize their knowledge in the society.*
4. *School is an appropriate place for discussing social problems and issues.*
5. *Language is an ideology, therefore, teaching a language is teaching a new ideology.*
6. *In writing language course books, local values, beliefs, and interests must be taken into account.*
7. *There is a relationship between language, power, and ideology.*
8. *Educational subjects can be domesticated.*

9. In test preparation, their effects and consequences on individual's lives, and on educational, Social and political contexts must be taken into account.

“Language and ideology ” (items 10 to 13)

10. Decisions about educational system are made by executive directors in a top-down process.

11. Teacher must be aware of hidden curriculum and ideologies hidden in contents of educational course books.

12. Language may lead to a change in individuals ' culture and beliefs.

13. Education is a political action and may lead to violation of the rights of some particular group

“Ethical issues and educational justice ” (items 14 to 18)

14. Teaching method in the classroom may lead to creation and reinforcement of social inequalities.

15. Gender differences may causes differences in language learners ' way of learning.

16. Considering gender differences in language teaching is an essential issue.

17. There should be relation between students ' abilities and learning styles and teacher's teaching methods and techniques.

“Attention to needs and differences of the students ” (items 18 to 21)

18. Course book contents must be based on the analysis of students needs.

19. Teachers teaching method must be compatible with students ' interests.

20. Learning attitudes and styles of male and female students are different.

21. If students are not satisfied with contents and way of teaching, teacher must revise them.

“Use of students comment in language teaching ” (items 22 to 24)

22. The only person who must think about students is the teacher, and students do not have qualification and ability to think about their affairs.

23. Only the teacher must speak in the class and students must only listen.

24. It is not necessary for the students to play a role in determining educational materials and resources.

“Attention to first language ” (items 25 to 27),

25. Learning English has priority over learning Persian.

26. In English teaching, to make students accent close to that of native speaker is the most important point.

27. In English teaching as a foreign language, Persian language must not be used.

“Creative thinking” (items 28 to 30)

28. Learning is a dynamic process which students learn by doing not only by memorization.

29. Prior experiences of students provide the basis for learning new subjects and materials.

30. Students must think about what they learn and take practical steps to realize them.

The internal consistency of the instrument, measured through Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was ($\alpha=.82$).

Procedure:

In order to fulfill the objective of the present study, certain steps were taken. To obtain and measure the perception of the participated teachers on critical pedagogy and their critical thinking abilities, questionnaires were administered among them, either directly or through some colleagues and emails. They were given instructions which clarified what they were supposed to do during the allocated time. Personal information

of participants including their sex, age, teaching background, and current level of teaching were also included as a separate part in critical thinking questionnaire. Having collected the data, the researchers set off data analysis to investigate whether EFL teachers' critical thinking ability is correlated with their knowledge on critical pedagogy principles.

Data analysis

The data gathered through questionnaires was analyzed using the 16th version of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). To find out whether there was statistically significant correlation between critical thinking abilities and having knowledge on principles of critical pedagogy among EFL language teachers or not, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient for the two sets of scores was calculated.

Results

The Table of descriptive statistics (Table 1) indicates that all the 112 teacher-participants who filled out the WGCTA-FA and CP questionnaire were included in the data analysis procedure as active valid cases. The participants' mean was 55.4 on WGCTA-FA and 93.9 on CPQ.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Critical pedagogy	93.9018	18.48981	112
Critical thinking	55.4375	14.89651	112

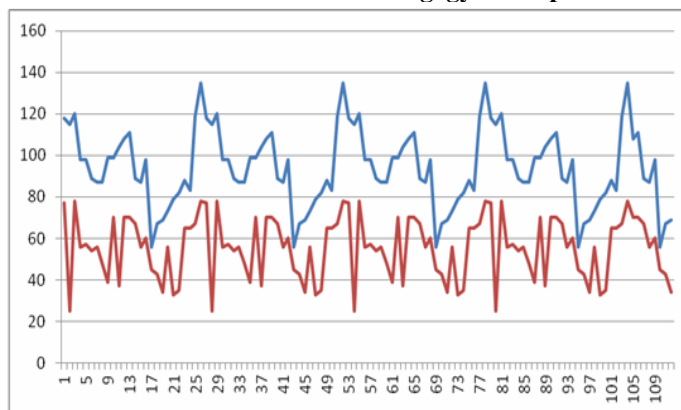
A Pearson correlation was run to probe any significant relationship between the critical thinking ability of the EFL teachers and their awareness of critical thinking pedagogy. The R-observed value was .55 (as represented in Table 2). This amount of R-value is higher than the critical value of .25 at 110 degrees of freedom and is significant at 0.01 level of significance ($r=0.554, p \leq 0.01$).

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Critical Thinking ability with Awareness of Critical Pedagogy Principles

		Awareness of Critical Pedagogy Principles	
Critical Thinking ability	Pearson Correlation	.554	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	112	

Thus the null hypothesis as there is not any significant relationship between teachers' critical thinking ability and their awareness of principles of critical pedagogy is rejected and a positive correlation is substantiated. The positive correlation is also presented by the following graph (but in a non-linear fashion). The rising-falling patterns of dots indicate that the two variables do not have a linear relationship.

Graph 1: Correlation between Critical Thinking and Awareness of Critical Pedagogy Principles



The size of this correlation reveals that generally EFL teachers' high levels of critical thinking are related to their high familiarity with critical pedagogy principles. As Birjandi and Bagherkazemi (2010) mentioned, "this is hardly surprising since teachers' critical thinking ability, as its various definitions denote, can be said to influence nearly all their pedagogical decisions regarding how to group learners, how best to enhance learner motivation and self-esteem, what additional materials and tasks to draw upon, and numerous other 'how's, 'what's and 'why's".(p.40).

Discussion

The location of the classroom can not simply be taken as granted due to the significant role of education as a leading road which enables people to use their talents and potentials in order to bring professional fulfillments. Instead it should be viewed as a place abundant with a rich life which unfolds over time, as events and process interact, and shape the way participants think, feel and act. Seid Motahhari (1998, p.67) counted "being an educational thinker" as the most significant role of education and is essential for achieving the greatest possible success. The question then is how teachers can do their best to make the best profit of this context in shaping learners' feeling, thinking, and actions. Considering these theories, many researchers (Bataneh and Zghoul, 2006; Canagarajah, 2005; Elmore and Farley, 1992; Garrison, 2011; Haller, Child & Walberg, 1988; Mirhosseini & Ghajar, 2005; Reinertsen & Wells, 1993; Stout, 1993; Tsui, 1999; Zohar & Dori, 2003) have been trying to find out new techniques to improve critical thinking abilities. This ongoing emphasis on critical thinking skills has fundamentally altered whatness and howness of teaching. This change has penetrated into material development too. Recognizing the most influential and critical techniques to be used in classrooms in order to help learners develop an analytical approach to the world around them, as opposed to quick, opinionated responses, has been considered worthy of being invested on. Gruenwald (2003) has claimed that critical pedagogies is of essence to challenge the assumptions, practices, and outcomes taken for granted in dominant culture and traditional education". The teacher is no longer a transmitter of information but a facilitator of learning who involves creating, managing meaningful learning experiences, and stimulating students' thinking through real world problems. Therefore, in such a context, students are not considered as passive recipients of teachers' knowledge, with little sense of their own agency in transforming their lives (Shor, 1992). Bartolomé (2004) discussed the significance of infusing teacher education curricula with principles of critical pedagogy in order to prepare educators "to aggressively name and interrogate potentially harmful ideologies and practices in the school and classroom where they work" (p. 98).she added that teachers need to develop political and ideological clarity to promote the chances of academic success for students. It is presumed that the underlying principles of critical pedagogy can influence the process, outcomes, possible dangers, and effectiveness of learning and teaching to a great extent. Although the great emphasis has been laid on the importance of being critical, to the best knowledge of the researcher, little research had been conducted on the factors involved in increasing critical pedagogy in EFL context. It is not even known whether all EFL teachers are aware of these principles in ELT. The current study substantiated the correlation between teachers' being critical and their perception of critical pedagogy principles. As Holestein (2006) has stated these two terms (namely critical thinking and critical pedagogy) are not alike and

their difference lies in the extent they cover. Critical thinking refers to being critical of information that is being presented and includes further analysis of the information; while critical pedagogy refers not only to critically sizing up the information but also critically questioning who is providing it and what are his/her interests. Holestein (2006) also mentioned the exact difference between them as critical pedagogy's profound look into not only why and what but also "the how".

In line with Sadeghi and Ketab (2009), teachers should not naively succumb to the prescriptions thrust upon them under the labels of value-free, neutral knowledge or scientific methods. They must interpret appropriately, criticize and transform the knowledge. They should critically evaluate the implications of their practice in the production and reproduction of social inequalities (Pennycook, 1994). Recent studies (e. g. Bataneh & Zghoul, 2006; Dinkelman, 2000; Gómez, 2010; Lightbown, 2000; and Okazaki, 2005) have also emphasized the highly influential role of teachers in creating a classroom environment that promotes critical thinking and claimed that in order to make this possible, EFL teachers should be allowed pre-service and in-service training opportunities to encourage the development of critical thinking. Critical thinking skills are vital to make the best possible choices and using resources to the greatest advantage. But as improving critical thinking skills is a continuing process, critical thinking must be an integral part of any teaching endeavor. Teachers need to be trained the best methods and techniques in order to integrate them into their classrooms and model good critical thinking practices to their learners. Critical pedagogy is powerful and interconnected to classroom practice. Giroux and Simon (1992) argued that

"Doing critical pedagogy is a strategic, practical task, not a scientific one. It arises not against a background of psychological, sociological or anthropological universals (as does much educational theory related to pedagogy), but from questions such as: how is human possibility being diminished here? (p. 230)

Akbari (2008) highlights the applications of critical pedagogy for L2 classrooms and provides hints as to how L2 teaching can result in the improvement of the lives of those who are normally not considered in ELT discussions. Although Maki (2011), based on the obtained information from his self-developed questionnaire, claimed that majority of Iranian language teachers are aware of principles and assumptions underlying critical pedagogy; investigating critical thinking abilities will shed more light on the realities of teaching and learning.

Ennis (1993, p. 180) reported that a person who is characteristically a critical thinker needs to do some actions including:

- Judge the credibility of the sources;
- Identify conclusions, reasons and assumptions;
- judge the quality of an argument, including the acceptability of its reasons, assumptions, and evidence;
- develop and defend a position on an issue;
- ask appropriate clarifying questions;
- plan experiments and judge experimental designs;
- define terms in a way appropriate for the context;
- be open-minded;
- try to be well-informed;
- draw conclusions when warranted, but with caution.

Considering this perspective, the result of this study will also be approved. A critical teacher who possesses all these attributes will be capable of comprehending and analyzing what is going

to be applied in the classroom. This critical thinker, as Halpern, 1999 mentioned, uses these skills appropriately, without prompting, and usually with conscious intent, in a variety of settings. Accordingly, he is well informed of critical pedagogy principles. Critical pedagogy places ELT in the students' reality in order to question and challenge the socio-cultural and historical aspects involved in learning English as a lingua franca in the world. Teachers do need to be critical thinkers in order to impart critical thinking abilities in the pedagogical context to their students who must be prepared to function in societies in which they are expected to deal with increasing amounts of complexities in a systematic manner.

Conclusion

Many educational programs have been strongly criticized by some theorists and researchers (Bartolomé, 1996; Lankshear & McLaren, 1993; Shor, 1992; to name a few). The critics have repeatedly stated that a majority of education programs apply a "one model fits all approach"—with a preset structure and curriculum that rarely takes into account individuals' needs. They added that such noncritical programs with an emphasis on a primacy of skills acquisition mirror some educators' belief that literacy and other academic skills alone will help to rectify the marginalized positions of the students who are enrolled. The analysis in this study has looked for ways through which critical thinking skills and critical pedagogy are substantiated to remove some of the shortcomings of the present educational programs in EFL classrooms. The present findings are hoped to have significant implication(s) for EFL teachers in general and Iranian EFL teachers in particular. At this point, a word regarding limitations of this study is worth mentioning. The findings of this study should be taken cautiously due to gathering of information just through questionnaires. Observations, diaries, and interviews can help next researchers to triangulate the data. Further comparisons could reveal more about the relationship between critical thinking skills and other prominent pedagogical solutions in ELT.

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