Critical Pedagogy in EFL Teacher Education in the United Arab Emirates: Possibilities and Challenges

Rana Raddawi*
DePaul University, United States

Salah Troudi
University of Exeter, United Kingdom

Abstract

This study examines the possibilities and obstacles present in adopting a critical approach to English language education in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Three main elements of critical pedagogy in language teaching were suggested: cultural representation in the curriculum, perceptions of global English(es), and local and global issues. Within a research design informed by an adapted action research methodology, six secondary public schools from three emirates were selected for inclusion in the study. The pre-action stage included questionnaires, interviews, and class observations. An action plan and intervention followed this first phase of data collection. The intervention was informed by Freire's (1996) "Conscientization" approach, Shor's (1992) generative themes, and Heaney's (1995) codification and problem-posing methods of teaching. The action phase consisted of a hands-on workshop for 20 volunteers from the 42 pre-phase participants. The results indicate that while teachers showed interest and even enthusiasm about critical pedagogy, they were aware of a number of obstacles and challenges in applying it in their classrooms.

Keywords: critical pedagogy, English teacher education, secondary schools, United Arab Emirates

Introduction

Globalization in its different manifestations, along with technological development and the internationalization of educational settings, has prompted major educational reforms at both the organizational and school curriculum levels. Furthermore, global economic crises and fierce job market competition are calling for distinction and innovation; the Arab world is no exception. The nature of schooling in Arab countries is urging reform of education based on critical thinking, innovation, and democracy (Akkary, 2014; Al-Suwaidi, 2010; UNESCO report, 2005)

There have been tangible changes affecting educational settings in most Arab nations in order to meet international standards. These have included the adoption of conventional teaching methods and curricula approaches, along with the jargon of education academia (Alrabai, 2016; Badry, F. & Willoughby, 2016; Education System and Curriculum in Dubai and UAE Schools, 2016). The researchers believe, based on their several years of teaching experiences in the Gulf, that a ubiquitous component is still missing in these educational contexts. There is still a lack of discourse that pays attention to the joy and essence of learning, the quality of

* *Email: rraddawi@depaul.edu. Tel. 16304028328. Address: Department of Modern Languages, DePaul University, SAC 310, 2320 N Kenmore Avenue, Chicago, Il 60614, USA*

teaching, and classroom content and its connection to the outside world including learners' "experiences and history" (Freire, 1996, p. 17). This discourse is the realm of critical pedagogy that can help in introducing these pedagogical elements in the classroom. Critical pedagogy which deals mainly with "politics of difference" (Pennycook, 2001, p. 114) links classroom environment to the wider society. This localized study followed an adopted action research approach to address this perceived lack of critical pedagogy within the ELT (English Language Teaching) space of the UAE.

Literature Review

Critical Pedagogy: History and Meaning

The term critical pedagogy is often associated with the work of Paulo Freire, especially *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1996—first published in 1968). In the traditional student-teacher relationship, Freire (1996) characterizes the teacher as the authoritarian figure who transfers decontextualized, impersonal information to passive students, perceived as objects. Freire refers to this type of education as "banking education" where the teacher is the "depositor," the students are the "depositees," and the educational experience itself is "an act of depositing" (see p. 53).

Freire (1996) contrasts banking education with "liberating education" (p. 53) in which teachers do not focus on transmitting information in a mechanical way but rather help students develop their cognitive abilities (see also Giroux, 2011). They maintain that critical evaluation and personal development are inherently human tendencies, so even those trapped by the shackles of traditions can free themselves and develop refined intellects if provided with a nurturing environment. In the learning situation of liberating education, the teacher-student hierarchy is reduced and instead they become co-learners in the classroom where information is shared through dialogue. Even though Freire did not coin the term, his views on educational reform form the foundational pillars of what we now refer to as critical pedagogy. Cho (2013) states that critical pedagogy shares many of its core principles with other critical theories prevalent at the time, such as social constructionism and postmodernism. Nevertheless, there was a gap that warranted the emergence of critical pedagogy.

A major concern of critical pedagogy is the nature of knowledge constructed and transmitted in society and schools. McLaren (2009) captured this concern stating that "critical pedagogy asks how and why knowledge gets constructed the way it does, and how and why some constructions of reality are legitimated and celebrated by the dominant culture while others clearly are not" (p. 63).

At the level of English language teacher education, there is a dearth of literature on how to introduce critical pedagogy to teachers in the Arab world in general and the Gulf region in particular. In her transformative L2 teacher development model (TLTD), which is based on twenty critical pedagogy principles adopted from Crawford (1978), Izadinia (in Wachob, 2009) argues that the practicality and feasibility of developing teacher education programs around the tenets of critical pedagogy are potentially tangible. She fends off criticism of critical pedagogy as practically gloomy, warning against the legacy and effect of the banking model of teacher education.

To date, Wachob's (2009) edited book of critical pedagogy studies conducted in the Middle East is one of the few compilations devoted entirely to the discipline in this part of the world. In the UAE, critical pedagogy is still in it its initial stages of classroom practice. To the best of our knowledge, only a few papers examine how the implementation of critical pedagogy can promote strong critical thinking skills in the UAE (Clarke & Otaky, 2006; Hall, 2011; McLoughlin & Mynard, 2009; Raddawi, 2011; Raddawi & Troudi, 2012; Smith, 2011). Referring to Qatar's new critical thinking-based educational reforms, Romanowski and Nasser (2012) write: "Religion and tradition…govern the political, economic, social, legal and educational aspects of society" (p. 124). The authors highlight religious principles in various MENA (Middle East and North Africa) states which inform civil practices, suggesting that these practices thus become "beyond question" (p. 125). Tertiary level education in the MENA region may still appear incompatible with Freirian pedagogy's focus on the "common good." For

example, Salame (2011) points out that higher education has neglected sustainable development. Some Middle-Eastern states even practice "state censorship" (Romanowski & Nasser, 2012, p.125) and academic freedom is still not seen as a fundamental facet of higher education (Nasser & Abouchedid, 2007).

Cultural Representation

Critical pedagogy is about relating classrooms to social, cultural, political, and ideological concerns (Auerbach, 1995; Benson, 1997). Troudi (2005) points out the necessity of critical knowledge for the TESOL teacher, which requires an awareness of the socio-cultural contexts of the students and "how these shape their approach to learning and attitudes to English as a second or foreign language" (p. 1). Critical pedagogy rejects the distancing of culture from the political and economic life-processes of society; it "cannot be abstracted from the historical and societal context that gave it meaning" (Freire, 1996, p. 39). Culture has become an "object" in Western society repressing its critical elements and even negation of its critical thoughts (Adorno, 1975; Horkheimer, 1972; Lowentha, 1979, Marcuse, 1978 as cited in Freire 1996, p.40).What these authors mean by western society is probably all communities that are directly derived from and influenced by European cultures.

To some, culture is "a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate" (Geertz, 1973, p. 89). To others, it is what people must know to act and make things in a distinctive way (Holland & Quinn, 1987). However, Samovar and McDaniel (2012) argued that culture is not static but dynamic and "transgenerational" at the same time. It is more than ethnicity, where members of a community inherit patterns such as skin color, food, and folklore. It is beyond the four 'F' approach advanced by some multiculturalists essentializing culture as Food, Fashion, Festivals, and Folklore (Banks, 2002; Sleeter & Gran, 2008;). Culture is the 'conscientization' (Freire, 1996) process in which individuals are aware of their own identities and way of living (one's self) while at the same time acknowledging variation and the other. We see culture as a set of shared experiences by members of a community in everyday life (Raddawi, 2015), and as "a field of struggle in which the production, legitimation, and circulation of particular forms of knowledge and experience are central areas of conflict" (McLaren, 2009, p. 65). It is this view of culture that will be investigated in the present study.

Global English and World Englishes

The concept of World Englishes has been addressed within the wider framework of critical applied linguistics and a critical stance to teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). As English has become globalized, many varieties of the language have emerged in different parts of the world. Kandiah (1998) explains that even in the earlier stages of its development within the confines of the British Isles, the English language, like any other national language, had remarkably different varieties. However, the language's spread from its homeland to settle in foreign territories "caused it to become even more differentiated' because it entered "new and unfamiliar contexts…marked by specific ecological, cultural, linguistic, and other characteristics…radically different from those of England" (Kandiah, 1998, p.2). He aptly summarizes the journey of the language from its homeland to new sociocultural settings as comprising three stages: "transportation, transplantation, and adaptation" (p.12). Kachru (1982) uses the term "acculturation" to describe the adaptation of a given language and adds that it results in "linguistic innovation" as foreign cultural and linguistic elements seep into the borrowed language. Scholars have used a variety of names to group together various 'Englishes' across the globe, including "New Englishes," "Global Englishes," and "World Englishes" (Jenkins, 2014; Kirkpatrick, 2007, 2012). Kachru and Nelson (2006) state that the unparalleled expansion of the English language has led to the notion of World Englishes and its major varieties include European, North and South American, African, and Asian English. In reference to Kachru's model of the three concentric circles of English (1982), the term World Englishes (WEs) encompasses all varieties of English—inner, outer, and expanding circle varieties (Sharifian 2009).

The Arabian Gulf region faces some major effects of the global spread of English, which is considered the medium of instruction and the lingua franca in the UAE, Qatar, and Oman. Mahboob (2013) states that despite the significant position of English in Middle Eastern countries, where it is taught as a school subject and used as a medium of communication in social interactions as well as in published materials, research on "the use of English in the region from a World Englishes perspective" (p. 14) is scarce. In fact, there is little research on the nature of the English language in the majority of Middle Eastern countries. Only eight articles published in *World Englishes Journal* focus on the use of English in the Middle East and just four out of these eight articles include a regional author (see Mahboob, 2013). A study by Abdel-Jawad and Abu Radwan (2011) exploring the nature of English used in tertiary institutions in Oman showed that it was used mainly for academic purposes as the medium of instruction and for communication purposes such as internet use, meetings, publications, and advertisements. A recent edited volume by Kirkpatrick (2017) provides insights into English language education in the MENA region. However, there was no mention of which English variety was used in educational institutions. The assumption or "natural position" is that it is one of the two inner circle varieties, British or American English.

Research Questions

The present study aims to examine the situation of EFL teacher education in public secondary schools in the UAE in an attempt to introduce a critical approach to teaching and raise teachers' awareness about the feasibility of critical pedagogy. The following two research questions informed the design of the study:

1. How familiar is the EFL teacher in the United Arab Emirates with critical pedagogy?
2. What are the possibilities and challenges of introducing three elements of critical pedagogy: cultural representation, World Englishes and local and global issues into the curriculum of the secondary EFL teacher education in the UAE?

Methodology

Research Design

The research design of the study is informed by an action research approach (Zuber-Sklerri, 1996) with a mixed-method design adapted to serve the critical aims of the study (Kemmis & McTaggert, 1988). The action/intervention element of the study allowed us to introduce three elements of critical pedagogy through a workshop to pre-service and in-service EFL teachers in the UAE. These elements are cultural representation, local and global issues, and World Englishes. The study had three phases: pre-action, action, and post-action. In the pre-action phase we explored how the EFL teachers perceived critical pedagogy and its place within the secondary curriculum, and the strategies they were prepared to adopt in their classrooms. Using a questionnaire and an interview at this stage helped us identify the nature of the professional development needs of these teachers. The action phase consisted of the intervention, which was a workshop delivered to EFL secondary school teachers. The post-action phase included a group discussion with the workshop participants to identify the feasibility and challenges of introducing the three selected elements of critical pedagogy to EFL in secondary schools. This marked the evaluation stage of the action research project.

Data Collection

The data collection in the first stage consisted of documentary analysis, questionnaire (see Appendix 1), semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 2), and observations. Documentary analysis was performed on print and online databases in addition to sample documents related to the EFL curriculum in the selected schools such as syllabus, curriculum map, lesson planning, textbooks, sample class handouts, exams, and students' work to investigate whether the three elements of critical pedagogy under scrutiny were evident. The goal behind the

interviews was to assess teachers' awareness and familiarity with elements of critical pedagogy and whether it is possible to make it part of their training. Upon the request of the participants, a note-taking process with no audio recording was used during the interviews and class observations. All interviews were conducted in formal academic English, with interviewees using a variety of Englishes such as Australian, British, Philippine, Pakistani, Indian, New Zealand, and American Englishes depending on their background. Field notes recording what was said by the participants were later shared with respective participants for verification purposes.

The data collection during the action- and post-action phases revolved around a workshop on critical pedagogy (the 3 elements driving this study) and the researchers' observations/reflections during the workshop. The data collected during the first stage drove this workshop.

Participants
A stratified purposive sampling technique was used in the study (Patton, 2002). The goal was to select teachers from representative public schools of both genders in some of the emirates.

Pre-action Phase
Three female and three male public schools at the secondary level from three emirates, Sharjah, Ajman, and Dubai, were selected to participate in the study. For the pre-action phase, 42 EFL teachers completed the questionnaire and 24 teachers from this group were available and agreed to the semi-structured interviews. Of the 42 teachers, 26 were females teaching in the girls' schools while 16 males were teaching in the boys' schools. These 42 participants and their contributions to the study would also act as the participant pool for the subsequent stages (see action/post-action discussions). Table 1 summarizes the pre-action phase participants' information.

Table 1
Pre-action phase participants' information

Number of Teachers:	42
Gender:	26 Female and 16 Male
Ethnicity:	3 Emiratis
	8 European, mainly British
	2 Indians
	1 Pakistani
	1 Pilipino
	27 from Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, and Sudan
Years of Experience:	More than 5 years
Pre-service Training:	5
In-service Training:	42

All teachers had more than five years of teaching experience whether in the UAE or in their home countries. Two of the three Emiratis were relatively new to the teaching profession.—Five out of the 42 participants had pre-service training, and all had in-service compulsory training whether through workshops or seminars. This is called 'professional development' and focused mainly on preparation for the CEPA (Common Entry Proficiency Assessment), a compulsory test that local students need to take prior to entering college.

Action Phase
Following the data collection or pre-action phase, which revealed an absence of critical pedagogical approaches in the English Language teaching process observed in the six public schools, an intervention phase was conducted via a workshop at a university in one of the emirates. An invitation to participate in the four-hour

workshop was sent to all 42 EFL teachers who took the questionnaire. Twenty of them replied positively to the invitation and registered to attend the workshop at a local university. There were 4 Westerners (2 British, 1 Australian, and 1 New Zealander) and the remaining participants were from the MENA region. The 20 teachers varied in terms of number of teaching years.

Ethics

All ethical dimensions and procedures of participant consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study were observed. Names of schools were kept anonymous and pseudonyms were assigned to participants.

Findings

Pre-Action Phase

Surveys and interviews of teachers revealed an absence of critical pedagogy awareness. None of the participants had heard of the term critical pedagogy, though two out of 42 asked whether it referred to "critical thinking." However, these two teachers, who came from the MENA region, reported being unable even to provide critical thinking-based activities in the classroom due to time and curriculum constraints; both had more than ten years of teaching experience.

While observing the two classrooms, the researchers could confirm the by-rote and lecture-based teaching methods. The "banking" process was followed in the first classroom. None of the students took the initiative to talk unless asked a particular question. However, in the second-class observation, the teacher tried to deviate from the textbook content to apply the formation of simple and complex sentences to some real-life situations such as the excessive use of mobile phones and their harmful effects on the students.

Cultural Representation

In the curriculum. Upon examining the teaching materials used by the participants in the different schools, the researchers could confirm that all public schools used the same textbook, "On Location" (Bye, 2011) for English language teaching, which is a series of three books that cover grades 10-12. In this context the term "curriculum" is used in a narrow way to refer to a set of handouts and course packets developed locally by the teachers (as is the case of Schools of the Future) as instructed by the Ministry of Education in the UAE or textbooks assigned for development by an international publisher. Teachers needed to cover all the units included in the textbook. In addition to the assigned textbook, they are required to prepare their own teaching materials based on the four language skills. Teachers have no say in designing the curriculum and are restricted in class content and time of delivery. Final exams and midterms are prepared and sent by the Ministry of Education. This information was conveyed to the researchers by some of the teachers during the interviews.

All 42 participants agreed that the "On Location" textbook does not match the students' needs and culture. Below is an excerpt from our field notes of what Samah, one of the interviewed EFL teachers, said:

> The previous book had more practical exercises on the four skills and further cultural references such as the high rate of dowry in the UAE and divorce issues. The actual textbook has one unit in Grade 10 called 'Proud to be Emirati' that refers mainly to the Emirati National Day. The rest varies between animals in the world, natural disasters and some 'know-how' that does not relate to the local context such as 'how to assemble a skateboard' or 'how to prepare a pizza.

Teachers expressed their dissatisfaction and frustration with the curriculum by using expressions such as: "we are slaves," "nobody listens to us," and "we hope that you can convey our voices to concerned authorities." According to our field notes, Ahmad stated in an interview:

> I wished I could do what I used to do in my home country…I once changed the textbook in the middle of the year [in my home country] as I noticed that the students were not responding to it properly.

While there is clear evidence of frustration and helplessness *vis-a-vis* the contents of the prescribed textbooks, there are also signs of teacher initiative and independence as described by Ahmad above.

In teaching philosophy and class interaction. Thirty-seven (88%) of the surveyed teachers said they delivered the traditional lecture format while 5 (12%) of the teachers said they discussed issues that are related to students' lives and experiences. For example, Iman, an English teacher with more than 15 years of teaching experience and a mother, stated that female students would tell her about their relationships with their mothers and take her advice on how they can improve them. Sarah described how she shows the picture of her favorite corner at home and asks the students to describe their preferred corners in English. Other examples of teachers' efforts are from Mustafa who made analogies and references to the local culture every time there was an opportunity, for example by asking them to talk about the heritage in one of the emirates compared to the Australian culture referred to in the book. Suad stated she would discuss issues such as the excessive use of mobile phones and its impact on students' lives while she is explaining the means of communication in general or discussing segregation in education, and so forth.

Conversely, in the same context, we noted that Maha said in an interview:

> I don't know how to tackle cultural issues. For example, I don't know how to discuss the issue of high rate of divorce in the UAE or racism in class, I never had courses on Intercultural communication.

Another issue raised by the teachers is the disparity between textbook contents and the exam questions. The latter come ready from the Ministry and the teachers have no knowledge of their content prior to the exam date. Two of the sample grade 12 final exams in English had questions on monuments in Dubai and Abu Dhabi whereas none of the textbook units had these cultural references. Exam questions required students to write a composition about these monuments.

During class observation, the only cultural reference used during the entire session occurred when one teacher, who dominated the speaking in the class, drew on the board a local senior woman wearing an *abaya* (traditional long attire) talking to her granddaughter.

Local and Global Issues

Teachers were not really concerned about relating classroom content to issues beyond the classroom, whether related to local or global topics. They were preoccupied with covering the assigned material to which they had no contribution. As Ibrahim stated, 'There is no way to link the readings in the textbook to the students' real world, you need to be creative and this requires time'. When asked in an interview whether she would discuss a subject like disabilities, we recorded that Maha's answer was straight to the point:

> NO! It is a taboo. Neither parents nor students admit that their children have disabilities even if they are curable such as dyslexia.

When asked in an interview whether he relates classroom content to students' lives, Samir, an English teacher in one of the male schools was recorded as saying:

> I do not see why we should bother about these issues since students are demotivated. They have a ready-made job waiting for them after graduating as long as they pass. They either go to army or to police stations. In both cases, they earn a good income.

A similar response was heard by the teachers in the female schools. Some comments were: "Most of the girls dream of getting married after graduating, that is their only ambition" and "…the same goes for parents in terms of lack of interest in their children education' said other teachers."

In the second-class observation, the teacher provided examples of real life experience such as the excessive use of mobile phones and their impact on the youth. She used these examples while revising a grammar lesson. The teacher asked them to provide examples of simple, compound, and complex sentences using excessive use of mobile phones as a theme. This observed pedagogical behavior contradicts the testimony of the interviewees who claimed that they were incapable of tackling local and/or global issues other than the ones mentioned in the textbook.

Absence of Englishes

The textbook "On Location" refers to British versus US spelling when there is a difference and sometime points out vocabulary variations. The handouts collected by some teachers to supplement their teaching material are selected from the Internet and are either written by British or American authors who would use regional vocabulary and spelling.

None of the interviewed teachers had heard about Englishes or Global English and paid little attention in their teaching to any kind of English apart from British vs. American in terms of existence, usage, and variations if any. In fact, in one of the two class observations, one of the researchers could hear the Emirati teacher impersonating the Indian accent by suddenly changing her accent to imitate the common Indian accent used in the Gulf region. Kubota (2009) states that liberal multiculturalism includes open-mindedness and non-prejudiced attitudes in interacting with people with diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. She suggests that "liberal multiculturalism promotes tolerance, acceptance and respect toward different cultures and culturally diverse people while supporting equality among them" (p. 30). This was certainly not the case for the teacher who imitated the Indian accent in the first class observed for this study.

Despite the fact that the majority of the participants did not belong to what Kachru (1985) called the "Inner circle" of English speaking countries, they were still compelled to teach according to the English teaching curriculum informed by inner circle countries, mainly the UK and the US.

Implications of Pre-action Phase

The generally qualitative findings reveal a common frustrating and demotivating teaching environment. There is a noticeable disconnect between the three main stakeholders of the studied educational settings: decision makers, teachers, and students. On the whole, teachers seem to be hopeless, disempowered, and demotivated. According to their teachers, students are demotivated because they have a ready-made professional future. This is of course not necessarily the case as there is an issue of unemployment among nationals of the UAE. Decision makers are located at the Ministry and send their correspondents or representatives to check that set policies and curriculum are well implemented. Yet, from the findings, it seems the reality on the ground is different. Policies are in place but the curriculum is disruptive and most of the time, it does not match final exam questions and students' aspirations. This could be confirmed by the low grades and negative outcomes of the English courses as reported by the teachers interviewed for the study.

The fact that, in the observed classes, most of classroom talk was teacher-controlled is a reflection of the dominance of the "banking" model of education (Freire, 1996). Class observation confirmed this view of the

teacher being a "depositor" of information and students a "depository". According to Freire, the banking approach will never encourage students to consider reality critically. Students need to "domesticate reality" (Freire, 1996, p. 56). They could then perceive reality as a "process," a constant transformation.

Students' lack of interest or demotivation can be traced to the disconnection between classroom content and their socio-cultural contexts. Some teachers confirmed that when issues related to students' heritage are discussed in class, learners show a considerable enthusiasm. Giroux (1988a, 1988b), Kanpol (1994, 1997), McLaren (1989), and others developed a critique of formal education to understand the cultural politics of schooling, addressing the marginalization and exclusions of schooling by encouraging students to develop their own voice. Education is more than "speaking" or "writing," it is rather another way of articulating reality (Pennycook, 2009, p. 130).

Giroux (1983, 2011), Pennycook (2007a), and Freire (1996) interpret students' absences, low performance and grades, disinterest in the curriculum, and misbehavior as a form of "resistance." Kumaravadivelu (1999) observes that sometimes students' lack of preparation and lack of ability to participate in class discussion is a form of "passive resistance" (p.454). Canagarajah (1993) suggests that this resistance in the classroom may play a role in "larger transformation in the social sphere" (p. 996). Gramsci (as cited in Darder, Marta, & Rodolfo, 2009) believes that the hegemonic spirit dominating in schooling reflects the "hegemonic process that reproduced cultural and economic domination within the society" (p. 7).

The fact that a few teachers have different teaching methods than others showing certain praxis in class means that change is not impossible. It implies that teachers can make a change even in the most restrictive teaching environment. The language of "possibility" and praxis (theory and agency together) are not a myth even in the most hegemonic teaching environments. Explaining a pedagogy of hope, Freire (1992) stresses that "one of the tasks of the progressive educator, through a serious, correct political analysis, is to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be" (p. 3).

Most teachers in this study did not have pre-service training which explains the narrow definition they ascribed to curriculum. Some were not familiar with the terminology to describe the components of a language curriculum (Troudi & Alwan, 2010). When asked about their role in the curriculum, they automatically referred to the textbook and supplementary handouts. They were mostly following a traditional pedagogy which according to Moreno-Lopez (as cited in Wachob, 2009) is a name assigned to a period that favored pre-defined syllabi and focused on agreed-upon course materials to be taught.

The limited reference to World Englishes and the emphasis of the studied curriculum on the "inner-circle" English reflect EFL teachers' lack of awareness of the importance of the three circles of Englishes and the evolving positions of English beyond its original geographical origins. The study also unveiled an absence of knowledge about the world's "shift of gears" from what was once "supremacy" of inner English as opposed to outer and expanding circles (Aktuna & Hardman, 2008; Kachru & Larry, 2008). It is not about a variety of English used from inner or outer circle in the classroom but rather the awareness that there exist Englishes other than the inner circle English in use in many parts of the world. These World Englishes are, or should be, considered by their users to be just as accurate and legitimate as the English of inner circle to its speakers. The English curriculum and textbooks of the UAE reflect an exonormative native speaker model (Kirkpatrick, 2007). This refers to the deliberate choice of a native speaker model of English as a reference for teaching and learning. Teachers' training and learning experiences have also been shaped by this model which is automatically reinforced in their classroom practice. In the case of the UAE, an expanding circle country, there is a logical and historical explanation for the exclusive choice of an inner circle model. Its legitimacy and prestige have long been established through media, public institutions and educational policies. Pragmatically, native speaker models, codified curriculum planners and teachers have easy access to dictionaries, grammars, reference tools and materials made available by established and competing publishing industries in the US and Britain. For policy makers in the UAE and similar contexts, codification also "brings with it the notion of acceptance as a standard-learners can be tested and evaluated against codified norms and standards" (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 184).

Action Phase
Structure of the Workshop
The workshop consisted of two parts. The first part was a review of the theoretical framework providing some background information on critical pedagogy. The second part of the workshop discussed the mechanism of introducing the three elements of critical pedagogy under study.

The hands-on workshop was based on the Freirian Conscientization concept in which students are viewed as subjects rather than objects in the classroom and in the world. Conscientization about the student teachers' cultural background, the country's linguistic reality and the link of classroom content to the outside real-life context was at the heart of the intervention. Three methods for achieving conscientization (Izadinia, 2009) were applied, first through codification (Heaney, 1995) then generative themes (Shor, 1992), and eventually the problem-posing method (Freire, 1996). An example of the codification approach was initiated by showing the teachers a picture of a child on a wheelchair and asking them what references the picture evoked. There were many responses to the question such as "disability," "special education," "taboo," "accident," "high speed," and "victim."

We divided the 20 student teachers registered for the workshop into five groups and asked each group to discuss one of the suggested references. The first group chose the theme of "disability and its different implications in the UAE," the second group discussed "taboos," the third chose "accidents," the fourth discussed "high speed," and the fifth opted for "victims of road accidents." At the end, each group had to present to their peers their synthesis on the subject thus narrating their own experiences and attitudes towards the topic in real life and sharing their knowledge of the subject matter. An element of Freirean Praxis (action-reflection-action) in this case was attained.

Subsequently, we followed the generative themes approach by writing the word "divorce" on the board. Teachers had different themes proposed upon hearing the word. Some suggested "high rate of divorce in the UAE," others said 'abandoned children in the Arab world' and so forth. The audience was divided into groups, with each group discussing one of the suggested sub-themes then sharing results with the rest of the participants. When asked if this method could be applied in real classrooms, 15 of the 20 volunteer teachers were positive about it. The third application method was the "problem-solution" approach which was introduced to the student teachers by sharing what could be a common and intriguing problem in the Gulf: "high speed." It was left to the audience to suggest solutions with arguments.

For the focus on Global English, the student teachers were given five anonymous texts written by authors from Kachru's three circles and were asked to identify the type of English in which each text was written. Ten (50%) of the teachers could distinguish between British, American, Australian, Kenyan, and Nigerian Englishes. This low rate can be explained in two ways. First, it is possible that the texts did not have significant variation of English as Crystal (2000) shows in their study of a number of newspapers published in various English-speaking countries. Crystal could find various cultural references and names of locations but not real linguistic differences among the studies texts. Another explanation could be that the teachers were not aware of Englishes other than UK or American; we believe it was the latter case.

Reactions to the Action Phase: Enthusiasm and Caution
The hands-on workshop outcomes reflect the reaction and attitudes of 20 EFL teacher volunteers out of the 42 participants who showed enthusiasm about introducing critical pedagogy in their classroom while at the same time expressing some concerns and challenges. The three elements of critical pedagogy: cultural representation, local and global issues, and Global English, were considered during this action phase. Enthusiasm was observed when the researchers introduced the concept of "Conscientization."

Yet, while the 20 EFL teachers showed great interest and motivation towards the introduction of elements of critical pedagogy in their teaching, they expressed some concerns about the applicability of this approach. The

workshop ended with a discussion and recommendations as to how these three core components of critical pedagogy could be introduced in the best way possible into the EFL curriculum.

The four points below are the main findings from the post-action phase:

1. *Constraints on academic freedom.* Educators thought that they should have the freedom to discuss any issue in the classroom provided it is related to classroom content. Lindsay was recorded as stating:

> We would love to have some space of freedom to discuss hot global issues in the classroom without being penalized later…

2. *Lack of teachers' participation* in setting up the curriculum and mainly not having a say in the choice of textbooks was raised by participants, we noted Suad's words as follows:

> We are like slaves…we do not have any say in choosing the teaching material and especially the textbook we teach.

3. *Lack of cultural competence* to be able to tackle culturally sensitive issues was an interesting finding. Our field notes recorded Fuad's explanation:

> To be honest, I don't think I have the necessary skills to discuss culturally sensitive issues in my class but this workshop helped in many ways and wish to see more of Intercultural Communication sessions in our Teacher Development Programs.

4- *Awareness of World Englishes*

> This workshop was an eye opener to many of us on the variety of Englishes in the world. There should be more of these texts written by authors of outer and expanded circles in the textbooks we teach but I can always add some into the supplementary teaching material. (Suad's statements as recorded in field notes)

Teachers' suggested solutions to these obstacles were to empower teachers by involving them in the curriculum development process and by adding an element of critical pedagogy to their in-service training programmes. Maha and Ahmad expressed a number of needs:

> Teachers need more pre-service training in critical pedagogy and deeper knowledge of Intercultural Communication. (Maha's statements as recorded in field notes)

> Individuals who are involved in creating the curriculum should be the same as the ones teaching it to experience the challenges that EFL teachers face in the classroom. (Ahmad's statements as recorded in field notes)

Ahmed also suggested transferring what he learned in the workshop into his classroom practice (according to our field notes):

> Look when we brought up the sub-topics to be discussed in this workshop, it worked very well and all participants were excited to take part in the discussion, why not do the same in the actual classroom and let students choose the topics they would like to examine…?

Summative Discussion

Teachers can be empowered through critical pedagogy by following relevant pre- and in-service training programs. Teachers' training could consist of cultural studies component, which will increase their cultural awareness (Samovar & McDaniel, 2012), and avoid "cultural essentialization" (Kubota, 2001 as cited in Aktuna & Hardman 2008, p. 168). Being culturally competent requires an awareness of the self and the other. Cultural competence is more than knowing about the existence of other cultures, it is also understanding how to approach and discuss culturally sensitive issues.

For many EFL teachers, the fact that they are multilingual and multicultural regardless of their ethnic, educational or cultural background can help in integrating critical pedagogy in their teaching. In fact, "their multilingualism will serve to know and share their students' concerns and experiences in learning a language" (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 187). He stresses that this multilingualism of English teachers gives them the advantage of understanding their students' difficulties and puts them in a position to empathize with them. In addition, when educators are exposed to new teaching and learning methods where the teacher and students exchange roles, collaborate (Lang & Evans, 2006) and together negotiate the curriculum (Norton & Toohey, 2009), learning becomes a joy and a pleasure to both the teacher and student.

Awareness of World Englishes, if incorporated into the teacher education curricula, can help trainees understand the local uses of English within a global context of communication. Also, such knowledge should counteract negative attitude towards variation and variability of world Englishes, especially since EFL learners usually use their English in outer or expanding circles rather than within inner-circle environments. Furthermore, EFL teacher education could present a broader scope of the ownership of English and show the teachers that English authority and ownership are not limited to those with "native like pronunciation and knowledge of sociocultural norms emerging from inner-circle countries" (Aktuna & Hardman, 2008, p. 167). Equally relevant and important constructs here are English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Jenkins, 2007, 2014; Mauranen, 2012) and English as an International Language (EIL) (Holliday, 2005; Jenkins, 2006). The two concepts along with World Englishes have important implications for English language teacher education, English language testing and ELT materials. Jenkins (2008) for example explains how an ELF approach will be increasingly needed to resolve problems of mutual intelligibility. This does not exclude native speakers from Britain or the US who have to "adjust their English for international communication" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 237). It should be noted that EIL does not escape criticism as it has also to be revisited against claims that it is a tool benefiting Westerns powers in a global race for international markets and resources (Phillipson, 2009). Pennycook (2007b) warns against the myths of EIL stressing that it should not be seen as a natural development. By doing so, he claims, we depoliticize English "making it innocent, giving it a natural and eternal justification" (Pennycook, 2007b, p. 109).

Another component in EFL teacher education is a clear distinction between professionalism in teaching and English proficiency. English proficiency is no longer limited to the mastery of grammar and lexicon (Nelson, 2011). There should be an understanding of the context in which the utterance is said and also an awareness of the "speech community" (Samovar & McDaniel, 2012). EFL teachers need training and deep knowledge of the language and the cultures (s) that shape it.

EFL pre-service training could foster critical approaches in teacher education. When English teachers have an understanding of how education is related to broader social and cultural relations rather than merely attempting to "fulfill predefined curricular goals" (Pennycook, 2009, p. 299), they can contribute to the making of knowledge in their classroom. Within this framework, the role of the language learner is not to imitate a "circumscribed and standardized model" of the native speaker but rather to act as a "border-crosser who negotiates between the universal" (the other/macro) and the "Particular" (the self/micro) "and combines a sense of belonging with a sense of detachment" (Giroux, 1994, p. 68).

The above statements contradict in some way Ellsworth's (1989) outdated claims that Freire (1996) and Shor's (1992) emancipatory authority implies that a teacher knows the object of study "better" than students do. During the workshop, the researchers proposed some local issues for discussion such as divorce and disability, but the students could also propose the topics and teachers facilitate the discussion, as is already the case in some writing courses in universities in the UAE. Ellsworth (1989) also hints at the failure of critical pedagogy to have a balance between teachers and students in terms of "institutionalized power imbalance" (p. 10). We believe that when roles between students and teachers overlap in the classroom, the goal somehow is to design class content and conceive programs that reflect this balance in and outside the classroom.

Furthermore, Johnston (1999) considers critical pedagogy as an exercise of EFL abstraction. However, the hands-on workshop showed the opposite; teachers spent almost two hours touching upon practical topics that relate classroom content to global issues through generative themes (Heaney, 1995) and codification methods (Shor 1992). The methods used allowed these teachers to "conscientize" not only about ethnic diversity in the classroom and hence in the country that hosts more than 200 nationalities (The National, 22 March 2009 as cited in Randall & Samimi, 2010) but also to "conscientize" about the possibility of overcoming some of the challenges that hinder their ability to introduce some elements of critical pedagogy into their teaching. There was no "dictation" to tell students teachers what to do. They led themselves into the different sections of the workshop while identifying some of the challenges and possibilities to apply this critical approach. This was a natural result of the hands-on workshop on critical pedagogy. A similar attitude from the students could be expected in a real critical teaching classroom.

Conclusion

This paper is an attempt to examine the possibility of introducing a critical approach to EFL teacher training in the United Arab Emirates. The ultimate goal is to empower teachers and subsequently their students to become agents of change. Conscientization is the awareness of being a subject rather than an object in the world (Heaney 1995) and according to Izadinia (in Wachob, 2009) 'conscientization' can be reached through codification or the generative theme or the problem–solving method.

The study revealed a gap in teachers' knowledge of critical pedagogy, mainly the three elements under scrutiny in this study: cultural representation, English in the world and local and global issues. A revamp of the EFL teacher pre-service and in-service training programs is required.

In the Arab world, critical pedagogy is still in the infancy stage. Although some teachers are conscientious about their role in promoting freedom of expression in the classroom and making their students social agents, they have not achieved that. If teachers themselves feel they are "slaves" in the educational system, we cannot expect them to teach to liberate their 'oppressed' students. In the Arab world critical pedagogy needs to engage in more than changing the teacher-student relationship (Freire, 1996; Izadinia, 2009; Kanpol, 1994; Kumaravavidelu, 1999). It should go beyond this equation to include the entire chain of command that is involved in the educational system, i.e., the policy maker-administrator-teacher-student relationship. The *culture of silence* that Freire (1996) refers to in which the dominant culture silences the oppressed through marginalizing or undermining any voice that challenges their authority applies as much to teachers as to students. Thus, teachers should "strive not only for educational advancement but also for personal transformation" (Izadinia, 2009, p.11) and therefore become transformative and critically minded intellectuals.

Future Actions

In the future, we intend to include all the Emirates and major cities of the UAE in a plan for a longer period of teacher preparation and initiation into critical pedagogy. We also intend to follow this by a series of classroom observations to see if and how teachers will incorporate any elements of critical pedagogies into their daily

teaching practices. In addition, future research in the UAE and the Gulf needs to investigate the learners' reactions to critical pedagogy and whether it can have any effect on the overall quality of their educational experiences and possibly their language proficiencies.

References

Abdel-Jawad, H. & Abu-Radwan, A. (2011). The status of English in institutions of higher education in Oman: Sultan Qaboos University as model. In A. Al-Issa and L. S. Dahan (Eds.), *Global English and Arabic: Issues of language, culture and identity*, (pp. 123-151). Oxford: Peter Lang.

Alrabai, F. (2016). Factors underlying low achievement of Saudi EFL learners. *International Journal of English Linguistics 6*(3), 21-37.

Al-Suwaidi, J. (2010). Education and human resources development in the Gulf: challenges of the twenty-first century. In The ECSSR (Ed.), *Education and the Arab World: challenges of the next millennium* (pp. 331-333). Abu Dhabi: The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research.

Akkary, R.K. (2014). Facing the challenges of educational reform in the Arab World. *JEduc Change 15*(2), 179-202.

Auerbach, E. R. (1995). The politics of the ESL classroom: issues of power in pedagogical choices. In J. Tollefson (Ed.), *Power and inequality in language education* (pp. 9-33). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Badry, F. & Willoughby, J. (2016). *Higher education revolutions in the Gulf*. New York: Routledge.

Banks, J. (2002). *Cultural diversity and education: foundations, curriculum, and teaching*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Benson, P. (1997). The philosophy and politics of learner autonomy. In P. Benson and P. Voller (Eds.), *Autonomy and independence in language learning* (pp. 18-34). London: Longman.

Bruthiaux, P. (2003). Squaring the circles*: Issues in modeling English worldwide.*International Journal of Applied Linguistics 13*(2), 159-178.

Bye, T. (2011). *On Location*. Dubai, UAE: McGraw-Hill.

Canagarajah, S. A. (1993). Critical ethnography of a Sri Lankan classroom: Ambiguities in student opposition to reproduction through ESOL. *TESOL Quarterly 27*(4), 601-626.

Cho, S. (2013). *Critical pedagogy and social change: Critical analysis on the language of possibility*. New York: Routledge.

Clarke, M. & Otaky, D. (2006). Reflection 'on' and 'in' teacher education in the United Arab Emirates. *International Journal of Educational Development 26*, 111-122.

Crawford, L. (1978). *Paul Freire's philosophy: Derivation of curricular principles and their application to second language curriculum design*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota.

Crystal, D. (2000). The future of English. Where unity and diversity meet. Retrieved from: http://www.davidcrystal.com/DC_articles/English37.pdf

Darder, A., Marta B., and Rodolfo D. T. (2009). *The critical pedagogy reader*. New York: Routledge Falmer.

Dogancay-Aktuna, S, & Hardman, J. (Eds.). (2008) *Global English teaching and teacher education: Praxis and possibility*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL, Inc..

Education system and curriculum in Dubai and UAE schools (2016-2017). Retrieved from: http://www.dubaifaqs.com/education-dubai.php

Ellsworth, E. (1989). Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review 59*(3), 297-325.

Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Translated by M.B. Ramos. New York: Continuum.

Freire, P. (1992). *Pedagogy of hope: Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Bloomsbury.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.

Giroux, H. A. (1983). *Theory and resistance in education: A pedagogy for the opposition*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

Giroux, H. A. (1988a). *Schooling and the struggle for public life: critical pedagogy in the modern age*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Giroux, H. A. (1988b). *Teachers as intellectuals: Toward a critical pedagogy of learning*. Granby, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

Giroux, H. A. (1994). *Disturbing pleasures: Learning popular culture*. New York: Routledge.

Giroux, H. (2009). Teacher education and democratic schooling. In A. Darder, M. Baltodano and D. T. Torres (Eds.) *The Critical pedagogy reader* (pp. 438-459). New York: Roultledge.

Giroux, H. A. (2011). *On Critical pedagogy*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Hall, D. (2011). Debate: Innovative teaching to enhance critical thinking and communication skills in healthcare professionals. *The Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice 9*(3), Article 7.

Heaney, T.(1995). Issues in Freirean Pedagogy. Thresholds in Education/ http://nlu.nl.edu/ace/Resources/Documents/FreireIssues.html.

Holliday, A. (2005). *The struggle to teach English as an international language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Holland, D. C. and Quinn, N. (1987). *Cultural models in language and thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Izadinia, M. (2009) Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction. In P. Wachob (Ed.), *Power in the EFL classroom: Critical pedagogy in the Middle East* (pp. 7-15). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.

Izadinia, M. (2009). Transformative L2 teacher development (TLTD): A tentative proposal. In P. Wachob (Ed.), *Power in the EFL classroom: critical pedagogy in the Middle East* (pp. 263-282).Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.

Jenkins, J. (2006). The spread of English as international language: A testing time for testers. *ELT Journal*, *60*(1), 42-50.

Jenkins, J, (2007). *English as a lingua franca: attitude and identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, J. (2014). *Global Englishes: a resources book for students 3*. London: Routledge.

Johnston, B. (1999). Putting critical pedagogy in its place: A personal account. *TESOL Quarterly 33*(3), 557-565.

Kachru, B. (1982). *The other tongue: English across cultures*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Kachru, B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: the English language in the outer circle. In Q. Randolph, H. G. Widdowson, and Y. Cantù (Eds.), *English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures* (pp. 11-30). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the British Council.

Kachru, Y. & Larry E. S. (2008). *Cultures, contexts and world Englishes*. New York: Routledge.

Kachru, Y. & Nelson, C. (2006).*World Englishes in Asian contexts* (Vol. 1). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Kandiah, T. (1998).Why new Englishes? In J. Foley (Ed.), *English in new cultural contexts: reflections from Singapore,* (pp. 1-40). Singapore: Oxford University Press.

Kanpol, B. (1994). *Critical pedagogy: An introduction*. Bergin & Garvey. http://opus.ipfw.edu/educat_facpubs/30

Kanpol, B. (1997). *Issues and trends in critical pedagogy*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Kemmis, S. and McTaggert, R. (1988). *The action research planner*. Waurn Ponds, Victoria, Australia: Deakin University.

Kirkpatrick, A. (2007). *World Englishes: Implications for international communication and English language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kirkpatrick, A. (2012). *The Routledge handbook of world Englishes*. London: Routledge.

Kirkpatrick, R. (2017) (Ed.), *English language education policy in the Middle East and North Africa*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Kubota, R. (2009). Critical multiculturalism and second language education. In B. Norton and K. Toohey (Eds.), *Critical pedagogies and language learning* (pp. 30-52). Cambridge: Cambridge Applied Linguistics.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (1999). Critical classroom discourse analysis. *TESOL Quarterly 33*(3), 453-484.

Lang, H. & Evans, D. (2006). *Models, strategies, and methods for effective teaching*. Boston: Pearson.

Mauranen,A. (2012). *Exploring ELF: Academic English shaped by non-native speakers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McLaren, P. (1989). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education.* New York: Longman.

McLaren, P. (2009). Critical pedagogy: A look at the major concepts. In A. Darder, M. Baltodano, and R. D. Torres (Eds.), *The Critical pedagogy reader* (pp. 61-83). New York: Routledge.

Mcloughlin, D. & Mynard J. (2009). An analysis of higher order thinking in online discussions. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International 46*(2), 147-60.

Mahboob, A. (2013). Englishes of the Middle East: A focus on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In R. Akbari, & C. Coombe (Eds.), *Middle East handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 14-27), Dubai: TESOL Arabia Publications.

Nasser, R. N. & Abouchedid, K. (2007). The academic 'Patras' of the Arab World: Creating a climate of academic apartheid. *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies 4*(1).

Nelson, C. L. (2011). *Intelligibility in World Englishes: Theory and application.* New York: Routledge.

Norton, B. & Toohey, K. (2009). *Critical pedagogies and language learning.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pennycook, A. (1994). *The cultural politics of English as an international language.* London: Longman.

Pennycook A. (2009): Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows. *Applied Linguistics 30*(2), 305-307.

Pennycook A. (2007a).*Global Englishes and transcultural flows.* London: Routledge.

Pennycook, A. (2007b). The myth of English as an international language. In S. Makoni & A. Pennycook (Eds.), *Disinvesting and reconstituting languages* (pp. 90-115). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Pennycook, A. (2001). *Critical applied linguistics: A critical introduction.* New York: Routledge.

Phillipson, R. (2009). *Linguistic imperialism continued.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Raddawi, R. (2011). Teaching critical thinking skills to Arab university students. In C. Gitsaki (Ed.), *Teaching and learning in the Arab World* (pp. 71-91). London: Peter Lang Publishing.

Raddawi, R. (2015) (Ed.). *Intercultural communication with Arabs: Studies in educational, professional and societal contexts,* New York, Singapore: Springer

Raddawi, R. & Troudi, S. (2012).Three Elements of Critical Pedagogy in ELT. *Achieving excellence through life skills education,* 73-82. Proceedings of the 18th International TESOL Arabia Conference Dubai: TESOL Arabia Publications.

Randall, M. and Samimi, M. (2010).The status of English in Dubai. *English Today*, *26*(1), 43-50.

Romanowski, M. H. & Nasser, R. (2012).Critical thinking and Qatar's education for a new era: negotiating possibilities. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy, 4*(1), 118-134.

Salame, R. (2011). Higher education commitment to sustainability in the Arab states. In Granados Sanchez, Jesús & Escrigas, Cristina & Ferrer, Didac & Barcelo, Miquel & Cruz, Yazmin. (Eds). *Higher education's commitment to sustainability: From understanding to action.* GUNi Series on the social commitment of universities, 4, 69-74.Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Samovar, L. P. R. & McDaniel, E. (2012). *Intercultural communication: A reader* (13th edition). Boston: Cengage Learning.

Sharifian, F. (2009). *English as an international language: Perspectives and pedagogical issues.* Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Shor, I. (1992). *Critical teaching and everyday life.* Boston: South End Press.

Sleeter, C. E. & Gran, C.A. (2008). *Making choices for multicultural education: Five approaches to RACE, CLASS.* John Wiley & Sons.

Smith, E. (2011). Teaching critical reflection. *Teaching in higher education 16*(2), 211-223.

Toohey, K. and Waterstone, B. (2009). Negotiating expertise in an action research community. In B. Norton and K. Toohey (Eds.), *Critical pedagogies and language learning* (pp. 291-310). UK: Cambridge Applied Linguistics.

Troudi, S. (2005).Critical content and cultural knowledge for TESOL teachers. *Teacher Development 9*(1), 115-129.

Troudi, S. & Alwan, F. (2010). Teachers' feelings during curriculum change in the United Arab Emirates: Opening Pandora's Box. *Teacher Development 14*(1), 107-121.

UNESCO (2005). *Literacy and adult education in the Arab World*. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.

Wachob, P. (2009) (Ed.). *Power in the EFL classroom: critical pedagogy in the Middle East*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.

Zuber S. O. (1996). *Action learning and action research: Song lines through interviews*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

APPENDIX 1

EFL Teachers Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to inquire about schools' and teachers' background and ways to introduce Critical Pedagogy in the curriculum

1. Information about the school

  a) Private
  b) Public

  a) Primary
  b) Secondary
  c) Both

  Number of students in the school
  _____

  Average number of students per class
  _____

2. Teacher's gender
  a) M
  b) F

3. Years of teaching experience
  _____

4. Have you ever heard the term critical pedagogy?
  a) Yes
  b) No

  If yes describe briefly what you know about it in 2 lines
  _____
  _____

  If no how do you wish to be informed about it? Through (circle that applies) :

  a) Readings
  b) Workshops
  c) Lectures
  d) Courses
  e) If other, please state

  _____

5. Do you contribute to the preparation of your course(s) syllabus?
   a) Yes
   b) No

   If yes how?
   _____

6.Do you contribute in the course teaching material?

   a) Yes
   b) No
   If yes, state how in 2 lines

   _____

   _____

   If no, who is in charge?

   a) Ministry
   b) Principal
   c) Supervisor
   d) Other, please state

   _____

7.Do the students have a say in the teaching material?
        a) Yes
           How?
           _____
        b) No

8. Do you accept criticism from students?
        Yes
        Such as?
        _____

        No
        Why?
        _____

9. What is your most frequent teaching methodology?
        a) Traditional by rote (memorizing) method
        b) Experiential
        c) Lecture format
        d) Collaborative
        e) Problem-solving
        f) Others, what?
           _____

10. How much time do you allot for interaction with students in class?
   a) 5 mn
   b) 15mn
   c) most of the class

11. How would you define diversity in the classroom in no more than 2   lines?

_____

_____

12. Did you wish to integrate CP in the curriculum such as critical thinking, more interaction with students, change of roles, change of methodology, democracy in class, (this could be an interview question)

APPENDIX 2

EFL Teachers interview questions

1) What do you think of the textbook especially that it is new?
2) Do you have leeway in adding material to the set curriculum?
3) If yes, tell me about your role in the "hidden curriculum"? How do you fill the gap(s) if any whether it is related to content in general, culture or skills.
4) Do you tackle culturally sensitive issues in the classroom? Do you let the students talk about their personal lives and problems? How much time do you allot for students' talk in class?
5) Do you relate classroom discussion to the outside world by tackling global issues for example…..? If yes how? If no why?

About the Authors

Rana Raddawi, PhD, is a Faculty member in the Department of Modern Languages at DePaul University, Chicago. She holds a PhD in Translation Studies from Sorbonne University in Paris, France. She is the editor of the book *Intercultural Communication with Arabs* (2015). Her research interests relate to cross-cultural studies, TESOL, translation, and critical pedagogy. She was a keynote speaker at several international conferences in the US and Middle East. She is a member on the Editorial Board of *Arab World English Journal* (AWEJ) and *International Journal of Bilingual & Multilingual Teachers of English*.

Salah Troudi a faculty member at the Graduate School of Education of the University of Exeter where he is the director the Doctorate in TESOL in Dubai and the supervisory coordinator of the PhD in TESOL. His teaching and research interests include language teacher education, critical issues in language education, language policy, curriculum development and evaluation, and classroom-based research. He has published articles in several language education journals and edited a number of books.