Critical Pedagogy in TESL/TEFL: How Far Can We Go?

Mateus Yumarnamto

Department of Literacy, Culture and Language Education, School of Education

Indiana University, Bloomington

yumarnamto@gmail.com

Abstract

In this post-method era, perspectives and stances gain momentum as postmodernist' educators highlight teachers' agency in transforming the students and the society. In this framework, this paper discusses two approaches in teaching English as a second or foreign language (TESL/TEFL). The first perspective is critical pedagogy and the second is pragmatic pedagogy. By discussing the two important perspectives, this paper aims at understanding the path for better practices, both in research and teaching in TESL/TEFL. More importantly, it also discusses its relevance to teaching English in Indonesian.

Keywords: critical pedagogy, pragmatic pedagogy, TESL, TEFL

Introduction

Critical pedagogy as initiated by Freire (1970) emphasizes sociocultural and political dimensions of education. Influenced by Marxists' idea of class-struggle, a classroom is seen as a space of power relations that reflect the sociocultural and political conditions of the larger society. In this perspective, power is exercised everywhere resulting in the division of the society with the oppressed in one side and the oppressor in the other side. Therefore, the duty of a teacher is to empower the learners—to make them aware of the unequal power relations that affect their lives so that they can take action to challenge and to transform the society. Criticizing pragmatic pedagogy, critical pedagogues claim that their practice is 'transformative' as opposed to 'transmissive' (Richard-Amato, 2010, p. 95). In short, the main goal of critical pedagogy is a social change and justice, not the accumulation of knowledge in learners.

The point of departure of critical pedagogy perspectives is the 'failure' of liberal/pragmatic education that focuses on the freedom and unlimited creativity of individuals. Following the idea of postmodernists and poststructuralists, critical pedagogues criticize the positivisms of science and technology—as the legacy of the enlightenment—in failing to solve social problems. Promoting radical changes both in the curriculum and in the classroom practices, critical pedagogues celebrate differences and being critical to the dominant discourse (Gee, 1989) and they reject the grand narratives as described by Lyotard in Giroux (1988, p. 7).

Aronovits and Giroux (1991) describe postmodernism in the sense of criticism to modernism which is conceptualized as the heir of European enlightenment. While modernism emphasizes positivism in science and continual progress technology, postmodernisms questions all the legacies of positivism and technology that have occupied Western societies. All the advancement in science and technology, however, could not solve human problems as poverty,

injustice, and oppression in society persist. In this conception, postmodernism is perceived as "a combination of reactionary and progressive possibilities" (Aronovits and Giroux 1991: p. 59). Highlighting the oppressive and normative forms of modernism, postmodernism is critical to the grand project of enlightenment: reason and sciences could solve all problems of modern humanity. In this postmodernism framework, critical pedagogy gains the attribute 'critical' because it tends to be critical to the dominant power and the dominant discourse in the local and global society.

In language education, critical pedagogy with its postmodernists' perspectives has brought about changes in viewing literacy, language, and language education. Canagarajah (2006) adopts postmodernism in viewing texts. A text is not an object; it is situated. The creation of texts and their interpretation are situated in the settings of social contexts and local practices. Canagarajah in this way identifies the shifting views from modernism to postmodernism. Thus, the shift is the movement from autonomous to situated, individual to social, cognitive to material, formal to ideological, and spatial to historical (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 212-213). A similar shift has also been emphasized in viewing the term 'literacy'. In positivists' views, literacy—the ability to read and to write—is considered autonomous, objective, and it is a technology that shapes human cognition (Ong 2001, Goody 2001). On the other hand, postmodernists' understand literacy as situated and subjective and it is culturally bound in social practices.

Consequently, the application of critical pedagogy in language education, including in TESL/TEFL, embraces the postmodernists' and poststructuralists' views. Pennycook (1999) suggests two forms of critical pedagogy embodied in TESL: (1) in the area of research and (2) in the area of practice. In the area of research, critical pedagogy in TESL/TEFL has covered the

exploration of the nature of English, the nature of learners, and the nature of teachers. Dealing with the subject matter of TESL/TEFL, researchers have explored and discussed the nature of English and Englishes (Kachru, 1997a; 1997b; Pennycook, 1999). English is viewed as not only belonging to the inner circle countries: the US, Britain, and Australia. It belongs to the wider world including the outer circles and the expanding circle that include countries such as Singapore, Japan, Korea, and Indonesia. There are Englishes which are used for different purposes with different accents—apart from the culture of the inner circle countries with their native speakers and their native cultures.

In dealing with learners, TESL/TEFL researchers have raised their interests in learners' identities such as in racial identities (Ibrahim, 1999) and sexual identities (Nelson, 1999). Ibrahim (1999) explores African immigrants and refugees in Canada. Their racial identity as black played an important role in the way they learn English and the way other people see them as EFL learners. Nelson (1999) also explores learners' identity and raises the issues of gay-friendly approaches in TESL/TEFL.

In dealing with teachers, researchers have also raised the issues of teachers' identity in terms of racial, sexual, and cultural such as in Simon Maeda (2004) and Soreide (2006). Simon-Maeda (2004) describes nine English female teachers in Japan, a country with a strong male-dominated society. Although the study does not directly provide an intersection between gender and English language teaching, it gives a glimpse of revelation on EFL female teachers' lives and their struggle for life trajectory and career development. Soreide (2006) describes Norwegian female teachers' identity construction in terms of positioning and negotiation. It does not directly link gender with English language teaching but the narratives of the female teachers could shed lights on how female teachers' identities are acted out in narratives.

While at the level of research critical pedagogues in TESL/TEFL have a large share of discourse in the last two decades, at the level of classroom practices the idea of critical pedagogy have not gained a strong hold. There are some doubts about its effectiveness to achieve the goals of TESL/TEFL and there is skepticism in the grand goal set up by critical pedagogues. The goal of solving social problems in any societies in the world by means of empowering the students and 'indoctrinating' them to embrace certain perspectives can be too much for the teachers. The stain of Marxism in viewing the society as situated in social opposition of the oppressed and the oppressor could hinder teachers in many parts of the outer circle, including Indonesia, to embrace the principles and to practice them in the classroom. In other contexts, critical pedagogy in the classroom is often contained in terms of "teaching with attitude" as suggested by Pennycook (1999, p. 340)—which, in my opinion, is nothing new in pedagogy. Even, the idea of critical pedagogy itself is diverse and in many cases it inherits the postmodernists' contradictory ideas. While it promotes inclusion, it also tends to estrange others. While it promotes empowerment, it can also fall to the trap of disempowering others.

In this paper, I would like to discuss the discourses of critical pedagogy in TESL/TEFL. More importantly, I would like to view the idea critically by contrasting it with the views of neo-pragmatic pedagogy—which I call pragmatic education that inherits their thoughts from the positivists and naturalists' views and Deweyan pedagogy. By exploring the topic, I would like to suggest how far the approaches can coexist and be synthesized for a better approach in TESL/TEFL. And finally, I also intend to highlight the relevance of the two approach discussion to Indonesian context.

Critical Pedagogy in TESL/TEFL

In reviewing the critical pedagogy to TESL, I present the account mostly based on Pennycook (1999) introduction to critical approaches published in TESL Quarterly Vol. 33, No. 3, Autumn, 1999. This volume of publication is dedicated to this perspective and approach. Indeed, there are diverse approaches thriving in the field of critical pedagogy. These diverse approaches have a common thread that could qualify the approaches as 'critical'. The common thread is the political positioning by which a teacher or a researcher must take a stance. Pennycook suggests that educators should take certain stances.

> … critical approaches to TESL must necessarily take up certain positions and stances: The view of language or of language learning cannot be an autonomous one that backs away from connecting language to broader political concerns; the understanding of education must see pedagogy as a question of cultural politics; and the focus on politics must be accountable to broader political and ethical visions that put inequality, oppression, and compassion to the fore. (Pennycook, 1999: 340)

In the quotation, Pennycook suggests the nature of language education that cannot be neutral as pragmatists often claim. The positions and stance of TESL/TEFL teachers should be in the side of the oppressed. In regards to TESL/TEFL, the positioning and stances of educators and researchers can be seen at least in four areas: (1) the nature of English (the target language), (2) the nature of methods, (3) the nature of learners, and (4) the nature of teachers.

The first front which is highlighted by critical pedagogy is the nature of English and the ownership of the language. As a result of colonialism, English has been used in different countries with different cultures, both as a second or as the first language around the globe.

Kachru (1990, 1997) describes the users of English in terms of circles: the inner circles, the outer circle, and the expanding circle. As a result, we have Englishes with different owners that should be respected. The main consequence of this awareness is that the old paradigm—to have native-like competence in the target language is not relevant anymore. The general goal of TESL/TEFL, then, is having the ability to use the target language for international communication—not the native-like performance. Further, the need to use the language using the norms of the native culture is also irrelevant. It is more important to embrace the local culture and to communicate it to the wider world. Thus, English pedagogy should consider the local culture and local contexts. Then, the goal of language learning is aimed at the competence to communicate the local culture and identities—not to embrace the native speakers' culture.

The second dimension of critical pedagogy is their view on materials and methods applied in the classrooms. The materials and syllabi offered to the students should reflect the critical pedagogues' agenda of empowering the students and promoting justice. Thus, they should consider gender, racial, and cultural issues. In this way, teachers should develop critical reflection on the curriculum as suggested by Reagan and Osborn (2002). Upon the reflection, they should engage in social activism by means of "curricular nullification" (p. 84)—adding and subtracting the current curriculum to achieve the goal of social justice. Related to the methods used in the classroom, there are no prescribed methods or techniques. Generally, critical pedagogues incline to the post methods idea of language teaching (Kumaravadivelu 1994; 2001). In short, the methods applied should support the idea of critically opening the social awareness of the students. Any methods can be justified as far as they can serve this goal. In Pennycook's words the methods are "more than arranging the chairs in a circle and discussing social issues" (Pennycook, 1999, p. 338). It is more of blending the curricular objectives with the social justice

agenda in the contexts where English is taught. In Indonesia, for example, the growing intolerance in regards to religions, race and gender should be addressed by teachers even though there is no such agenda found in the curriculum.

The third dimension of English language pedagogy in TESL/TEFL is the nature of the learners. Critical pedagogues view language learners from the point of view of postmodernists/poststructuralists' stance in which marginalized students should be empowered and those belongs to the mainstream should open to differences by "placing greater emphasis on inclusivity" (Pennycook 1999, p. 337). In the context of United States, English learners are of immigrants' origins and they often fall behind in other areas at school. These English learners are often labeled as 'problems' and they need special treatments. In the contexts of Indonesia, the social classes might bring about problem to learners as the social gap might be wide at certain schools. In both contexts teachers are called to act to empower the learners. Thus, learners are central and they should take roles both in learning the target language and in engaging with social problems. Empowering students, then, does not only develop critical thinking but also develop social awareness on the part of the students.

The last dimension of critical pedagogy is their view on teachers. As suggested by Pennycook (1999), critical approaches can be summarized in terms of teaching with attitude—the attitude of standing for social justice and equality. Teachers, then, should bring these social dimensions in the classroom by problematizing the accepted norms related to culture, gender, and race. In this way, teachers might become 'provocateur' and 'subversive'—an agency that is expected to enlighten the learners for social awareness and social transformation. Consequently, language teachers should develop reflective ability by understanding their own identity and their own beliefs and values—in line with critical pedagogues' ideas. Problematizing the racial factor,

critical approach raises the issues of native speaker (NS) teachers and non-native speaker (NNS) teachers such as discussed in Liu's (1999) nonnative-English-speaking professional, in Pavlenko's (2003) reimagining teacher identities in TESL, in Norton's (1997) language identity and the ownership of English and in Golombek and Jordan's (2005) intelligibility and identity.

All in all, embracing critical views on different aspects of language pedagogy serves two simultaneous goals. Critical pedagogy in TESL/TEFL aims at English communicative abilities and the abilities to apply the competence to develop critical awareness of the world as suggested by Crookes and Lehner (1998). In their work they suggest that critical pedagogy could develop simultaneously the critical awareness and the communicative abilities of the students.

> … critical pedagogy in ESL/EFL, then, takes as joint goals the simultaneous development of English communicative abilities and the ability to apply them to developing a critical awareness of the world and the ability to act on it to improve matters. (Crookes and Lehner, 1998, p. 320)

Embedding and mixing curricular objectives with the agenda of social justice and social transformation might be too much for teachers but they should be ready when the contexts and the local society call them to act. To implement this agenda, Crookes and Lehner (1998) adopt 10 of 20 principles of critical pedagogy in EFL/ESL education proposed by Crawford (1978). The ten principles are:

1. The purpose of education is to develop critical thinking by presenting students' situation to them as a problem so that they can perceive, reflect, and act on it.

2. The curriculum content derives from the life situation of the learners as expressed in the themes of their reality.

3. Dialogue forms the content of the educational situation.

4. The organization of curriculum recognizes the class as a social entity and resource.

5. The learners produce their own learning materials.

6. The task of planning is, first, to organize generative themes, and second, to organize

    subject matter as it relates to those themes.

7. The teacher participates as a learner among learners.

8. Teachers contribute their ideas, experiences, opinions, and perceptions to the

    dialogical process.

9. The teacher's function is one of posing problems.

10. The students possess the right and power to make decisions."

<div align="right">(Graham and Lehner 1998, p. 320)</div>

Those ten principles are derived from the critical pedagogy as suggested by Freire (1970) in the most referred book in the field, "The pedagogy of the Oppressed." Indeed, the relevance of the philosophy is very high in countries where democracy is undermined or where democracy is skewed for the legitimacy of an oppressive regime. Although in the level of classroom practices the critical pedagogy is still rare, current TESL research, however, postmodernism and poststructuralism are the two major backdrops of the application of critical pedagogy. So, instead of following the rigid principles, critical pedagogy can appear in many different forms and approaches—reflecting different contexts of TESL/TEFL in the outer and expanding circle.

<div align="center">**Pragmatic Pedagogy in TESL/TEFL**</div>

In the U.S., Dewey can be considered the father of pragmatic pedagogy. Since 90s Deweyan approach on pedagogy has raised new interests as it finds new ground in the discourse against postmodernism perspectives—which is considered nihilistic by many educators. Rosenthal (1993) highlights the relevance of Dewey's ideas to address contemporary educational

problems. Garrison (1994/95) introduces the new scholarship around Deweyan tradition and Biesta (1994/95) interprets Deweyan pedagogy as communicative action. In the field of language education, especially in English for Academic Purposes (EAP), pragmatic pedagogy along with critical pedagogy suggests what is called critical pragmatic pedagogy (Harwood and Hadley, 2004).

Dewey's original idea (1916) on education lies on two concepts of maintaining and developing a democratic society. Two criteria for democratic society in Dewey's conception is first, the number of shared interests existing in the groups of the society and second, the degree of fullness and freedom to interact. The former refers to the significance of common interest because common interest could bring a unity and at the same time could accumulate the individuals' efforts to achieve common goals. The more the society shared the common interest the more likely the society will be united and the individual efforts of the members will do better for the society because they are based on the shared interest. Lack of shared interests in society is more likely to make it fall apart. The latter refers to Dewey's conception that the advancement of a society depends on interactions. By encountering with other groups, there will be learning taking place so that the advancement and progress can be maintained. Closure and resistance to outside encounters will make a society static—no progress taking place. This degree of freedom to interact both inside the group and outside the group will bring about learning and changes for the betterment and progress of the society.

The idea of Dewey's democratic society is shared by critical pedagogues and at the same time, the very same idea is criticized. The main difference of conception between Dewey's democratic society and the one of critical pedagogues is that Dewey suggests the maintenance of order and modern achievements and he conceptualizes progress as an evolution. On the other

hand, critical pedagogues see critically the current democratic society that inherits the oppressive culture of modernism and capitalism (Freire, 1970). While Freire's pedagogy is more problematizing the norms, Deweyan pedagogy is more transactional—transforming the current society's norms and at the same time reflecting on them for a gradual social transformation as a result of dialogues with other discourses.

In TESL/TEFL, the pragmatic pedagogy has shaped the field prior to the emergence of postmethod movement and the emergence of critical pedagogy. Originally, the pragmatic pedagogy, including in the field of language education, is viewed as a tool—a tool to maintain and develop a democratic society. For individuals, pragmatic pedagogy is also a tool to achieve individuals' goal, economically and politically. Thus learning English for learners outside the inner circles can also mean to have the cultural capital and to join the grand discourse. In the case of Singapore embracing English as one of the national languages in the city sate, for example, it can be considered as an act of survival—not an act of conforming to the linguistic imperialism.

In short, learning English to access economic capitals, science, and technology is a representation of pragmatic education in TESL/TEFL. In this way, pragmatic pedagogy sees English education in Kachru's outer circles and expanding circles (1997) not as a result of linguistic colonialism but as opening the door for more opportunities or "the art of possibilities" as described by Allison (1996, p. 87) when he borrows Bismarck's concept of politics. In terms of postmodernism jargons, this is an act of struggle for resources by mastering the dominant discourse and acquiring social and cultural capital needed to survive and thrive.

Dealing with the subject matter, in this case English, pragmatic pedagogues put the emphasis on English as used to access resources or as a tool for individual and societal

advancement. Indeed, this pragmatists' view is political—far from neutral depiction as often labeled to it by critical pedagogues. While critical pedagogues use the opposite duality in many aspects of their tenets such as the oppressor and the oppressed, the inner circles and the outer circles, pragmaticists reject the idea of opposing duality that shows unequal power struggles and the political dimension. On the contrary, pragmatic educators see different groups in society as equal and they pursue interactions with different groups in and outside the society for the purpose of advancement as suggested by Dewey (1916). In short, from the point of view of pragmaticists, English should be freed from the burden of history and should be viewed as a communicative tool for access and equality and for the advancement of individuals and the society.

For materials and methods used in the classroom, pragmaticists are in line with the postmethod movement. The question is not what the best method is but what works in the classroom and what is needed by the students to achieve their personal and social goals. Far from eclecticism that tends to be scientifically ungrounded and justified, pragmaticists search for the best practices. In this case, current practices of pragmatic pedagogy embrace Vygotskyan views of social construction as the basis for learning—which is in line with Dewey's experiential learning or learning by doing which put equal emphasis on individual as well as social.

Consequently, pragmatists consider language learners as individuals with their freedom and their own motives. Language learners might have different goals in learning English. Therefore, TESL/TEFL should provide different goals for learners. Sharing similar properties with social construction of learning, pragmatists suggest that language learners need interactions to develop their competence. In Dewey's creed, learners should be seen from their individuality as part of the social beings. In his own words Dewey (1897) claims that "the individual who is to

be educated is a social individual, and that society is an organic union of individuals. If we

eliminate the social factor from the child we are left only with an abstraction; if we eliminate the

individual factor from the society, we are left only with an inert and lifeless mass." (Dewey,

1897, p. 6).

From the basis of viewing the language learners, the teacher can be understood as the one

who promotes and facilitates the advancement of the learners. Thus, current pedagogical tenets

that put the teacher as a facilitator for learning are in line with the pragmaticists' ideas. In its

original view, Dewey suggests that the role of the teacher is a member of the community.

… the teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in

the child, but is there as a member of the community to select the influences which

shall affect the child and to assist him in properly responding to these influences.

(Dewey 1897, p. 9)

In the above quotation it is clear that Dewey's conception on the teacher's role is more

than a facilitator. In many ways a teacher is a filter that acts as a gate keeper of influences.

Depending on the age of the students, the filter and the gate might vary in size and intensity.

Definitely, this is a political activity inherent in pragmatic pedagogy in which a teacher cannot be

a true neutral gate or filter considering his/or her own background and perspectives.

Discussion

Critical pedagogues criticize pragmatic perspectives as lacking in political stances and

tend to be neutral—avoiding critical ideas on society's problems. Although the critic does not

depict the reality that pragmaticists' agenda is also political, it is echoed and generally is taken

for granted as part of pragmaticists' perspective. This critic is shared by Pennycook when he

highlights the nature of individuals as seen by liberal humanists as he writes the following:

The liberal humanist view of individuals as completely independent, free,

creative entities is rightly rejected from a critical standpoint: Thought,

movement, and speech are always constrained in multiple ways. Yet an all-

encompassing view of people as nothing but ideological dupes or discursive

ventriloquists (i.e., everything they say, do, or think is predetermined by

ideologies or discourses) is surely overdeterministic, leaving no possibilities

for change or individual agency. (Pennycook 1999, p. 335)

Other critics on the pragmatic pedagogy are mostly based on the view that pragmatism as

the manifestation of liberal education is the heir of modernism that cannot solve modern societal

problems and that it has stuck in the celebration of individualism. This common criticism does

not precisely reflect the nature of pragmatic education as suggested by Dewey (1916). In

Dewey's conception, individual and social are part and parcel and they cannot be separated in

human beings. Thus, the lack of social concerns as commonly accepted characteristics of the

pragmatic education might not be accurate as many pragmatists embrace the idea of social

construction and sociocultural perspectives.

On the other hand, the critics on critical pedagogy by pragmaticists in TESL/TEFL are

difficult to find. There are not many articles directly challenges critical pedagogy applied in

TESL/TEFL. Critical pedagogy with its backdrops of postmodernism and poststructuralism

occupy pedagogical discourses including TESL/TEFL with the widely accepted concepts of

multiculturalism, inclusiveness, and equality—which are also embraced by pragmatist pedagogy.

Aside of the idea of the oppressed and the oppressor, the critical pedagogy principles applied in

TESL/TEFLT share many of the characteristics of neo-pragmatists. Thus, critical pedagogy as

suggested by Pennycook (1999) is very different from the original application suggested by

Freire (1970). It is understandable, then, that there are not many articles directly challenged the critical pedagogy in TESL/TEFL since it has adopted and incorporated the other's perspectives in their practices.

One of the rare articles that give critical view on critical pedagogy is Johnston's (1999) "Putting critical pedagogy in its place: a personal account." In the article, Johnston criticizes the tendency of seeing the language classroom in terms of power relations. The nature of education is not only empowerment—in which the teacher poses social problems and challenges the oppressive norms in society. On the contrary, following the pragmatic educators, classroom is viewed as a place where social interactions take place and where the teacher and the students offer and transact values. This view is related to Johnston second objection on critical pedagogy, the view of education as primarily politics. Indeed, politics with the power struggles for dominants are everywhere in the society. However, putting too much politics in the classroom might not serve the students' interests, but serve the teachers' interests and agenda. The third Johnston's reluctance is the positioning of critical pedagogy in relation to the postmodernism. According to Johnston (1999, p. 561), the adoption of postmodernists' perspective in critical pedagogy might bring about "fragmentation and a descent into relativism of all kinds (political and social as well as cultural)" (Johnston 1999, p. 561). Johnston's last reservation to fully embrace critical pedagogy is related to a more personal issue, the language used by many of critical pedagogues. From Johnston's point view, the jargon and language tend to exclude and create otherness. In short, it promotes inclusivity but at the same times it can estrange others.

Johnston's views on critical pedagogy in many ways reflect the views of pragmaticists in which the balance between individual freedom and social perspectives are the emphasis and education is regarded as reflecting current organic life of the society in which values are shares

among the members. This view is in contrast with the perspectives of critical pedagogy that see classroom as a place for empowering the learners by raising the sociopolitical awareness— which, in many cases of various democratic societies, is not of the students' interests.

Weighing all the different perspectives in this issue, it turns out that pragmatic pedagogy and critical pedagogy, besides the unresolved opposing views, share similarities. The idea of social awareness, social interactions, and political dimension in education are shared by both camps. While pragmaticists view social awareness as a chance to interact and grow as an organism, critical pedagogues see it as a chance to act and to take stance for a rapid social change. While pragmaticists realize the political dimensions of teaching as sharing transactional values, critical pedagogues view it as power relation that needs an overt political stance in the part of the teacher. Thus, this understanding and continuing dialogue from the two camps could bring a productive and sustainable progress in TESL/TEFL.

Lesson Learned: Relevance for Teaching English in Indonesia

What can we learn from the two approaches? At least there are two significances of the discussion in Indonesian context. First, teaching English in Indonesia are both a means of opening the doors of opportunities as well as empowering learners and society. This two sided goal could be served by both approaches. From the pragmatists' perspectives, the capitalization of English is self-explanatory as English is used in many sectors and in regional communication in Asia. From the perspective of critical pedagogy, this goal might be problematized as the capitalization has also contributed to the people's alienation and to the unequal distribution of resources. Raising these issues might bring awareness and ideas of solving societal problems within its contexts. In this way the goal of learning English can be achieved without sacrificing social engagement and social movement for better society.

Second, the challenges of building democratic society can also brought about as a hidden curriculum of teaching English. The idea of democracy itself is continuously under attack in Indonesia. Both approaches can offer different ways of seeing learners, teachers, and English as a subject matter at public school as well as a means of building democratic society. Understanding both approaches could lead teachers to understand their roles and their agency to contribute to solving problems—not only the one directly related to the acquisition of English as foreign language but also to one that might be relevant to learners' well-being as students and members of the society.

Conclusion

Contrasting and discussing two major camps in TESL could shed lights on the mixed practices in the field. The critical pedagogy that aims at problematizing the widely accepted norms and at critically raising the awareness of the oppressive dominant power in the society, might not lead to productive gain in TESL when it is strictly follow its original agenda—social revolution. On the other hand, the pragmatic perspectives which view education as instrumental for individual and social advancement might not adequate considering the socio-political problems inherent in education and educational institutions. Thus, the reconciliation of both views might be plausible in shedding new direction in TESL/TEFL.

To conclude the discussion of this issue, I would like to highlight the nature of language learners—who are considered equally as individual and social beings by pragmaticists and are much of social beings by critical pedagogues. Therefore, critical education will be more productive when it does not weigh on social dimension only, but also on individuals. In Seitz' (2002) words we can realize that "critical teaching will be meaningful to students only if it also serves their individual motivations to succeed." (Seitz 2002, p. 504)

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