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Subject : An Advanced Course in Foreign

Educational Linguistics

Title of lecture:

Critical Pedagogy in Classroom Discourse

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Historical Perspective

Critical Pedagogy: A philosophy of education and social movement that combines education with critical theory. Attempts to help students question and challenge domination and its beliefs and practices. It is a theory and practices of helping students achieve critical consciousness.

Critical Theory: An approach aims to critique society, social structures and systems of power and in doing so, to foster egalitarian social change. Critical theory describes the philosophy of Frankfort school which based on the critical method of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud.

Classroom Discourse: the language (both oral and written) used by teachers and students in classroom for the purpose of interaction.

The classroom is a unique discursive space for the enactment of critical pedagogy. In some ways, all classroom discourse is critical due to its inherent political nature and the daily negotiation of power by teachers and students.

Historically critical pedagogy is rooted in schools of thought that emphasize individuality and self-reflection in contrast to societal, sociocultural, ideological, economic, and social progress forces. Contemporary critical theory still incorporates the concept of false consciousness, which suggests that institutional processes and material mislead people and that values and norms internalize individuals, causing them to act and behave according to societal expectations, influenced by Orthodox Marxism and the Frankfurt School(Agger 1991).

The problem of domination which is a complex concept that explains how social structures mediate power relations highlighting the reproduction of social struggles, inequities, and power differences is reflecting some of the main aspects of critical pedagogy classrooms(Morrow and Brown 1994). Giroux and McLaren (1989) emphasize the need for teachers and students to understand classroom pedagogical practices as ideological production, reflecting discursive formations andpower-knowledge relations in schools and society. According to Livingstone (1987), critical theory in classrooms is a critical pedagogy of practice that involves intellectuals engaging in social change to transform the political into the pedagogical and vice versa.

The " pedagogical more political " movement advocates for redefining historical memory, critique, and radical utopianism as elements of political discourse that emphasize pedagogical processes such as knowledge construction and deconstruction, dialogue centered on emancipatory interests, and active learning through radical ethical practices.

Freire (1970) advocates for a more profound detailed definition of schooling for the inclusion of the broader category of education that critically examining the production of subjects and subjectivities outside of school settings. This involves <u>developing a radical critical teaching approach that examines how different public settings shape the ideological and material conditions that contribute to sites of domination and struggle</u>.

Theoretically, critical pedagogy in classroom discourse embodies the practice of engaging students in the social construction of knowledge, which founds its pillars on power relations.

In utilizing critical pedagogy in the classroom(**Practically**):

1-Teachers must evaluate their own practices (actions) in the knowledge construction process, and why the main knowledge is legitimized by the dominant culture.

2-Moreover, emancipation(liberation) of knowledge, as proposed by Habermas 1981, enables educators to integrate practical and technical knowledge, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of power dynamics and social relationships.

3-Finally, participants in critical pedagogy classrooms are encouraged to engage in collective action, based on the principles of social justice, equality, and empowerment (McLaren 2009).

An example of the theory's application in classrooms <u>teaching English as a foreign language</u> aims to dismantle/separate power structures and false consciousness, examining the role of English as a foreign language which embodies political ideological assumptions in international classrooms Pennycook(1989, 2006), (Canagarajah 1999) argue that the political imposition of

English as a foreign language interferes with the vitality of local multilingualism due to the hegemonic status of English. They discuss the negative impacts of linguistic influence and

provide two examples of struggles for local communities when English is the enforced foreign language.

- The first example is the dependency and subjection of the Third World, and
- Industrial consumption culture values capitalist cultures and governments, sustaining global power. English's international growth coincides with Western cultural standards of international commerce and technical standardization.

Peirce (1989) argues that language, including English, is a source of struggle for meaning, access, and power. Regarding these assumptions of subjugation(enslavement) of the third world, industrial consumerism. Critical pedagogy practitioners use English to engage participants in larger ideological discourses, promoting agency and knowledge beyond the structural aspects of language learning, focusing on how language influences immediate reality and communities.

In literacy studies, the discourse of critical pedagogy embodies the emancipatory force that challenges the idea of literacy as not being politically neutral, observing that with literacy comes perspectives and interpretations that are ultimately political(Gee 2008). Calling educators to open spaces for marginalized students to voice their struggles in political, social, and economic spheres by using literacy as a skill to prepare individuals to "read the word" and "read the world" (in Freirean terms).

According to Freire (1985), literacy alone does not empower persons living under oppressive conditions, but it requires a critical understanding of the social context and action to change it. Auerbach (1995) defines critical literacies as the "rhetoric of strengths" focusing on cultural sensitivity, variety, and parental empowerment. She views this in social terms, emphasizing the importance of observing power dynamics among education stakeholders, including families, schools, programs, and institutions. Street (1990) asserts that the failure of literacy campaigns is due to the non-consideration of powerful aspects of literacy practices by influential figures like teachers, administrators, and politicians.

Core Issues and Key Findings

The practicality of critical pedagogy, while regarded highly theoretical, has raised a number of empirical research-based questions as educators have sought to incorporate its principles into classroom discourse. Critical pedagogy offers benefits like increased student engagement, empowerment, and critique of cultural norms. However, researchers highlight shortcomings in the model, such as students' intolerance to idealized notions, teachers' limited understanding of the implementation of "critical" in their curricula, lack of support for adopting critical perspectives, and practitioners' doubts about its empowering consequence in students' lives.

To use critical pedagogy, practitioners attempt to reconstruct their classrooms as a three pronged discourse structure. Structurally, these three aspects include:

1-A curriculum that needs to be founded upon students' interests, cultural needs, and community empowerment.

2-In terms of the dynamics of interaction, the teacher/educator in the classroom usually focuses on participation and,

3- Skills in dialogue in a rational articulation of one's context with others who are differently situated (Young 1997).

Participatory and dialogical skills include constructing dialogues with peers, questioning common behavior, explaining one's perception of reality, providing evidence, advancing arguments from diverse perspectives, drawing on curriculum experience, and listening to diverse voices in various discourses. In essence, this is the ability to critique, reflecting the critical agency of participants (Habermas 1981).

Meeting Different Voices: Teaching English for Cultural Awareness.

The search for the **use and implementation of critical pedagogy** in international language courses represent the structural and dynamic rearrangements that the teachers and educators undergone to teach critically. In this regard, Sadegui (2008) chose an Iranian classroom to implement critical pedagogy through adopting locally and situated forbidden topics or taboos, as well as engaging students through discussion, he suggests that critical consciousness does not necessarily urge critical action, but it gives participants of the prevalent discourse the chance to

resist or change. Ghahremani-Ghajar and Mirhosseini (2005) found that students frequently use English to express discontent and viewpoints, with 82% of journals being critical or creative in the last quarter. Critical pedagogy in English language classrooms faces challenges, including questions about its integration into a curriculum based on survival and cultural status.

Empowering Through Literacy: Practices and Limitations.

The social change perspective in literacy studies aligns with the multiple-literacies approaches and focuses on institutional power, cultural struggles, and social changes. Auerbach (1995) argues that literacy acquisition is influenced by institutional and structural factors, and it cannot contribute to empowerment or economic problem resolution unless it is linked to a critical analysis of social contexts and actions to improve inequitable conditions.

Critical theory studies emphasize the importance of literacy processes, connecting oral and written "words" to understanding and criticizing controlling institutions. This approach is crucial in family literacy programs, critical pedagogy practice includes the parents' control over the program's goals, issues, themes, and research agenda, dialogue as a key to the pedagogical process focusing on critical social issues and social action. Critical literacy studies aim to increase marginalized groups' social involvement and discourse patterns by analyzing power systems and identifying hierarchies.

Rocha-Schmid (2010) investigates a family literacy program in London. She engages immigrant parents in a discourse of empowerment, also acknowledges that parents displayed their own deep awareness of the topics and issues addressed and debated; allowing them to discuss school culture and position themselves within a different cultural system.

Researchers highlight the limitations of critical pedagogy in literacy programs, arguing that it is insufficient for justice and social action, suggesting collaboration with cross-societal structures and scrutinizing teachers' discourse patterns through the lenses of power and control. Schoorman and Zainuddin (2008) argue that immigrant learners' participation in schools and mainstream social discourse challenges their critical view. Ellsworth's (1989) questions "What diversity do

we silence in the name of 'liberatory' pedagogy" adding "to be critical of what, from what position, to what end?" seems to be a constructive and productive approach to take.

Implications for Education

Educational linguistics offers educators the potential for better understanding language use from the perspective of traditional grammar (what is usually taught in schools) and functional grammar. Critical theories and pedagogy, in turn, provide a useful framework for uncovering power relationships between standard forms and many other forms that are used by individuals, families, schools, and work places, in order to examine the combined form and function and its impact on interaction and learning. Further research includes the need for practitioners to:

1- study how critical pedagogy influences critical thinking,

2- ethnographic studies that examine the impact of critical pedagogy in different cultures,

3- and conversational and discourse analyses as necessary tools for better understanding the "critical" in critical pedagogy classrooms.

Resources

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