School of Education

Critical Pedagogy and young Arabic EFL learners: The Pedagogical and Social Implications of taking a Critical Approach in the Classroom

Nadine Rachelle Nelson

17801986

This thesis is presented for the Degree of

Master of Philosophy

of

Curtin University

November 2019

DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262),

Approval Number # HRE2016-0005

Signature:

Date: 9th December, 2019

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate the suitability and practicality of conducting critical pedagogy lessons with young English as a Foreign Language (or EFL) learners, both in terms of learning outcomes and through the student's attitudes and perceptions of the lessons themselves. This case study conducted in an Abu Dhabi government school reports on a class of Grade 4 female Arabic students; a sample unique in this field of research. While most of the critical research looks at the theoretical aspects of critical pedagogy, much less has been done in the way of case studies investigating the implementation of critical approaches in EFL contexts. This study was conducted in order to add to existing critical research and comes from a practical perspective that might be helpful for other EFL educators.

Critical pedagogy has been argued as a fitting curriculum philosophy for EFL education, due to its transformative nature that can empower student thought and lead to student agency and change. Within an EFL context, the end goal is not only a development in critical consciousness for the student, but language acquisition and mastery through use of a foreign language in a meaningful way. While critical approaches have evolved in interpretation across the decades, the bedrock of critical pedagogy remains problem posing education through dialogic teaching. The teacher's role is to establish a safe learning environment that promotes student generated talk, where topics for discussion are always derived from the student's own lives and experiences. In this way, students are encouraged to think critically about their own perceptions and judgments, in order to reflect and gain new understandings about previously held constructs, be they social, gender or cultural. In the study reported in this thesis, the teacher researcher introduced critically orientated teaching material to promote discussion within small groups, allowing students to develop their English abilities. The teaching material was developed following Freire's Problem-Solving Model (1973) and draws from critical researchers such as Wallerstein (1983) and Safari and Rashidi (2011). The focus was on establishing critical dialogue that was grounded in the lives of the students and explored topics that the young students had experienced within the classroom.

Qualitative data collected included videotaped lessons, field notes taken at the point of the lessons, teacher journaling, post-observational notes, writing samples and focus group interviews with the students. It was these discussions and later reflections from the students about the lessons themselves that formed the body of this research.

Based on the analysis of the data, it was found that students made pedagogical and social gains as a result of implementing critical pedagogy in the classroom. Students were given opportunity to look at a problematised situation derived from personal experience, and to think flexibly, looking at causes and solutions from differing perspectives. Students were given opportunities to share their own accounts and listen to each other communicate using English. Students were than able to make clear connections moving from the discussion to the writing tasks, and were able to draw on the new vocabulary, and ideas generated from the discussion. In terms of social benefits for the students, analysis of the data suggested demonstrations of increased empathy, and awareness of each other, through the listening of personal accounts.

The findings of this study have implications for EFL pedagogy and future research. In terms of pedagogy, the findings provide greater insight into the important role that critical pedagogy can play not only for language acquisition, but also for improved writing outcomes. This study, while small scale and exploratory, serves to provide a practical guide for other EFL teachers curious about critical approaches in the classroom and uses a recommended framework that can be adapted to unique teaching situations and contexts. The results of this study make clear the need for further case studies and actual implementations of critical approaches across a wider variety of geographical contexts, including differing genders and ages of students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their care and support of me while completing this thesis.

I am very grateful to Dr Jill Aldridge and Dr Julian Chen; whose supervision of this thesis began five years ago in Abu Dhabi and traversed many emails and Skype calls in both Sydney and Brunei. Thank you for never giving up on me, even when I was feeling world-weary and incapable of completing my thesis.

Dr Jill, your patient reassurance and advice from beginning to end kept me writing, and Dr Julian, your diligence in your feedback and your own specialist skill within EFL research have extended my own ability as a researcher and writer.

I want to acknowledge the invaluable support of the Australian Government *Research Training Program* (RTP) scholarship that enabled me to undertake this study in the first place.

Thank you to my students of Fatima School, Abu Dhabi, where this research took place. You gave me the great gift of your conversation, your insight and you let me into your world.

Finally, to my husband Malcolm and my son Stanley, I am thankful for this big beautiful life that we get to have together. I can't wait to journey through it with you both, the places we will go and the adventures we will have as our little family. This thesis is dedicated to you both.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration i

Abstract ii

Acknowledgments iv

Table of Contents v

Chapter 1 1

Introduction 1

1.1 Overview 1

1.2 Background to the Study 1

1.3 Purpose of the Study 4

1.4 Significance of the Study 5

1.5 Organisation of the Thesis 6

Chapter 2 7

Literature Review 7

2.1 Introduction 7

2.2 Researcher Reflexivity 7

2.3 Critical Pedagogy 9

2.4 Freire's Problem Posing Model 14

2.5 Critical Pedagogy in EFL Fields 16

2.6 Four EFL Case Studies Using Critical Pedagogy Approaches 20

2.7 Principles for EFL Materials Development 24

Chapter 3 27

Research Methods 27

3.1 Introduction 27

3.2 Research Design 27
3.3 Research Questions 28
3.4 The Research Setting 29
3.5 Data Collection Procedure 32
3.6 Instruments 42
3.7 Data Analysis 46
3.8 Quality of Research Design 49
3.9 Ethical Considerations 51
3.10 Data Storage 53
Chapter 4 54
Results 54
4.1 Introduction 54
4.2 Student Pedagogical Growth 55
4.3 Fostering a supportive learning community 71
Chapter 5 81
Discussion 81
5.1 Introduction 81
5.2 Summary of Key Findings 82
5.3 Rashidi and Safari's Principles for Materials Development 84
5.4 Student Perceptions of the Critical Pedagogy Lesson 95
Chapter 6 101
Conclusion 101
6.1 Introduction 101
6.2 Aims and Methods 101
6.3 Summary of Key Findings 102

6.4 Research Limitations and Implications for Future Research 103
6.5 Concluding Statement 104
References 105
Appendix 1 116
'Research Involving Humans Ethics Clearance: Form A' 116
Appendix 2 119
Abu Dhabi Education Council Permission Form 119
Appendix 3 120
Student and Parent Information Sheet (with Arabic translation) 120
Appendix 4 122
Parent Letter of Consent (with Arabic translation) 122
Appendix 5 124
Student Letter of Consent (with Arabic translation) 124
Appendix 6 126
Student Journal Writing Samples 126

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This study is an exploration into the pedagogical and social benefits of adopting Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) as a critical pedagogy framework with young Arabic EFL learners. This framework utilizes a dialogic, problem solving methodology and follows a series of five phases. The term *pedagogical benefits* are understood in this study as pertaining to greater insights being made into the theory, method and philosophy of teaching young Arabic children. The use of the term *social benefits* can be understood as the conditions needed for students to form cooperative and interdependent relationships with each other. This research reports on the students' reactions to and attitudes towards the critical pedagogy lessons. This study was undertaken at a government primary school in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, with a class of female Grade 4 students.

1.2 Background to the Study

In 2006, the government of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced a school reform plan or 'new school model' that would begin with Kindergarten and Grade 1 students in 2010-2011 and would be rolled out in subsequent years to cover all grade levels. There were changes within the pedagogic, curricular and leadership arenas as a result, but one major change was the inclusion of English as the medium for instruction alongside the existing Arabic medium. The Director General of the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) stated at the time:

> This new approach to education focuses on creating bi-literate students, which means students will be able to understand, speak, read and write in both English and Arabic. While mathematics will be taught in the English language, Arabic language, history, and Islamic studies will be

> taught by native Arabic speakers. (ADEC, 2010, cited in Gallagher, 2011 p. 63)

The bilingual immersion model that was adopted was the *early side by side partial immersion model*, (Gallagher, 2011) where instruction in English began *early* in Kindergarten and took place *side by side* in that both an English teacher and an Arabic teacher were present in the same classroom. This model was *partial* in that some subjects would remain in Arabic and others use English as the medium.

Recruiting primary school teachers from countries such as the USA, Canada, South Africa, the UK, Australia and New Zealand also had impacts in terms of school staffing and inclusion of Western pedagogies and methods within the existing structures. The English Medium Teachers (or EMTs) were native English speakers, but largely monolingual. Many came from Western teaching environments, or 'Inner Circle' countries where English is the 'core' language spoken, (Liyanage, 2012), straight into EFL classrooms, with little formal training in teaching EFL students from a professional sense, or personal experience of being bilingual themselves (Gallagher, 2011; Sung & Pederson, 2012). The expectation in hiring of overseas inner-circle trained teachers was that EMTs would bring with them pedagogical practices that would be welcomed by the architects of the reforms, such as bringing more student-centred approaches that focused on communicative tasks, dialogic teaching or problem-based learning. Another initiative familiar to the EMTs was teaching of integrated subject areas allowing for more theme-based learning; perhaps other pedagogical agendas were therefore fulfilled by the hiring of Western-trained teachers that made up for any shortfall in specific language training.

With four years of teaching experience as a primary school teacher in Sydney, I arrived in Abu Dhabi in August 2012, and began work at Fatima School as an EMT. As a teacher with a belief that second language students must have ample opportunity to practise by speaking, in order to consolidate new vocabulary, my teaching practice was largely focused on finding ways to encourage student 'talk'. But apart from this central belief, and other observations I had gathered, I had no direct training that prepared me for teaching young EFL learners. In this respect I was typical of teachers who teach 'without

considering how it is introduced or promoted in certain ways depending on historical, political, socio-cultural and economic considerations in each country's particular context' (Sung & Pederson, 2012 p. 153).

This view can appear very confronting for the EFL teacher who too is trying to make their own overwhelming and often isolating adjustments to a new way of life, and perhaps is initially trying to transfer old but familiar methods of previous teaching as a survival strategy. This was my personal experience, and so I busied myself initially for the first two years, creating systems that had served me well in primary schools in Australia. I began my guided reading programmes using reading texts about snowmen and bugs that could talk, and so on.

Over time, it became apparent that despite my routines, and my organisation of materials, the students struggled to engage fully with the lesson or the reading, and so discussion around themes fell flat. A lack of vocabulary was of course an issue; however, the problem was much greater than this. Because students needed so much teacher input in introducing new concepts, the amount of my talk dominated the lesson, and the gap in the students' understanding was still apparent. Their reading of the text might be accurate, but robotic, and I could sense the disconnect for the students. Discussion was driven by my questioning, but the students had nothing to contribute beyond basic comprehension skills, and there was therefore never any sense that students were trying to communicate with me in any real sense.

It was only when I read Thomas Graman's account of teaching ESL to rural labourers in Colorado in the late 1970s (Graman, 1988) that I started to look at critical pedagogy to encourage authentic dialogue with my students. Graman wrote:

> The farm worker ESL class illustrated to me the motivational importance of tying student experience to the process of language. Students are more able to develop linguistically and intellectually when they analyse their own experiences and build their own words to describe and better understand these experiences. (p. 435)

It was Graman's study that motivated me to look at whether this critical pedagogy approach could be applied to a classroom environment of young Arabic EFL students, who also had their own lives and experiences worth understanding and sharing. This study is the fruition of this exploration.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the pedagogical and social benefits of using Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) as a critical approach with young Arabic learners. This study documented the phases of Freire's model and the specific teaching materials that were developed in order to conduct a series of small group discussions according to critical approaches. To this end, the following research questions are:

> What are the pedagogical, and social benefits of applying critical pedagogy as part of the literacy lesson with young Arabic learners in an EFL setting?
>
> How do young Arabic learners perceive the effectiveness of a critical pedagogy lesson?

This study was motivated by three key interests. In the first instance, given that such variance and ambiguity surround the interpretation and application of critical pedagogy within ESL and EFL teaching, this study offers a detailed account of how to plan a critical pedagogy series of lessons based on Freire's Problem Posing Model (Freire, 1973). This study also is underpinned by Rashidi and Safari's (2011) Principles for Material Development: a set of principles and guidelines grounded in a Freirean approach, but specifically intended for developing EFL materials. In this way, this study examines the delicate tightrope of accepting and applying the problem posing dialogic-based frameworks of Freire, while rejecting the later evolutions of critical theory that would see critical pedagogy as the remedy to purify and free classrooms from linguistic hegemony (Rashidi & Mozzafari, 2012).

In the second instance, this study examines the pedagogical benefits for young Arabic students, when participating in critical pedagogy lessons that are dialogic and problem-posing in nature. In problematising wider literature that suggests a rejection by some students of communication-based tasks and learning methodologies perceived as 'Western liberal pedagogies' (Liyanage, 2012), this study investigates how taking a dialogic and problem-posing approach affected these young EFL students pedagogically and socially.

In the third instance, this study is motivated by my own teaching need to examine whether using critical pedagogy practices stimulates young EFL learners to produce more oral communication in English. In the quest to refine my own teaching practice for the benefit of my students, this study has brought about my own praxis, in terms of reflecting on student motivation for learning in a foreign language, and how as an EFL teacher I can facilitate this with sensitivity and openness towards my students.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Although a significant body of research exists on the theoretical aspects of critical pedagogy, there is very little research related to the practical implications of critical pedagogy and EFL and, where such studies do exist, they sample older high school age and young adult learners (Shin & Crookes, 2005; Ko, 2013). Very few studies have examined critical pedagogy within an EFL context (Ko, 2013) and even fewer have looked at its receptivity with young EFL learners. To date, this study fills a unique gap in critical pedagogy research into young, female, Arabic speaking learners in an EFL classroom setting. This research also has significance as it examines the students' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of critical pedagogy in the classroom, as told in their own words.

This study has significance for the teacher who wants to introduce dialogic teaching and problem posing with young EFL learners but who has not tried a critical pedagogy approach due to the apparent lack of resources, and absence of any clear guidelines on grouping of students and lesson planning due to the ambiguous definition of critical pedagogy. It also has significance for the EFL teacher who is curious about using

experiences derived from the lives of their students as topics for discussion but has been unsure of where to start, and how to prepare suitable topics for discussion in a way that aligns with Freirean principles (Freire, 1973). It may additionally hold significance for the teacher who has kept critical pedagogy at a distance because of the inappropriate selection or 'preachiness' (emphasis my own) of codification used in past case studies.

This study has significance in that it is a context-responsive attempt to incorporate critical pedagogy within a standard-based, outcomes-driven packed curriculum in order to problematise the current situation. This study seeks to respond to the current phenomenon within education where many EFL teachers are hesitant to try critical approaches because they perceive their teaching practice and value to be more aligned to delivering high test scores and meeting parental expectations (Sung & Pederson, 2012). It is hoped that this study might provide an alternative voice to preconceptions of 'it can't be done'.

1.5 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is organised in the following manner. Chapter Two presents a review of research literature, beginning with a general overview of critical pedagogy, critical pedagogy in EFL and case studies internationally. This chapter also presents the main frameworks guiding this study, which are Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973), and Rashidi and Safari's Principles for EFL Materials Development (2011). Within this chapter, guidelines for good codification are presented according to Wallerstein's (1983) research. Chapter Three focuses on the research design and methodology, including the research site, the participants, the data collection process and data analysis. This chapter outlines the ethical issues and quality of the research. Chapter Four presents the research findings considering the research questions. It reports on the pedagogical and social benefits or outcomes of using critical pedagogy with young Arabic learners and explores the student's perceptions and attitudes towards the use of the critical pedagogy materials themselves. Chapter Five discusses the findings in light of the current wider literature and looks at the pedagogical and social implications for the EFL classroom. Chapter Six concludes this study and looks at the limitations and areas for future research.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is focused on presenting critical pedagogy frameworks and guiding principles used in wider literature that can practically assist EFL teachers with development and design of critical pedagogy lessons. The first section of this chapter begins with the researcher's reflexivity. The following sections look at Shor's (1992) Empowerment Values, which are helpful for understanding the tenets of critical pedagogy, and Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) which was used as a foundation of in this study.

This chapter also looks at critical pedagogy within EFL language learning, wider debates surrounding how critical pedagogy is defined and issues around codification and materials development. It takes a closer look at the various ways teachers and researchers interpret critical approaches in the classroom, using four separate case studies conducted in Taiwan, Korea, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong, and concludes with a section looking at appropriate codification guidelines and principles for critical pedagogy materials development for the EFL classroom.

2.2 Researcher Reflexivity

Reflexivity is the process of examining both oneself as a researcher and one's relationship with the research setting and participants (Hsiung 2010). This section provides a background and positionality of myself as teacher researcher. This is important given the various debates within EFL literature surrounding the unavoidable political dimension of being a native English-speaking teacher from, to borrow the term, an 'Inner Circle' country such as Australia, the US, Canada, New Zealand and the UK (Kachru, 1996; cited in Lin, 2012).

It is also important at this stage to clarify my personal stance on issues such as the selection of appropriate codification, as this has bearing on the direction I took in accordance with the frameworks used in this study. I understand that in this role, and having established student teacher relationships with the participants, one must examine one's conceptual baggage and look at the assumptions and preoccupations that cannot be avoided:

> A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate and the framing and communication of conclusions. (Maleterud, 2001, p.483)

It is apparent that there is a large body of research looking at the more theoretical and philosophical aspects of critical pedagogy, but rather less on the concrete practices of actual implementation in the classroom from a teacher's perspective (Ewald, 1999; Johnston, 1999; Rashidi & Safari, 2011). When referring to the existing literature in my search for guidelines and principles that might help me, the intensity and expectation surrounding the teacher's role if one claims to be a *Critical Pedagogist* (my emphasis added) was very intimidating and quite overwhelming.

So, it is crucial to clarify from the outset that I practice critical pedagogy to connect students with their learning in a more personal, and ultimately more meaningful way by the use of problem posing and dialoguing. I am not, however, a Critical Pedagogist, a term associated for me more with the critical theorist stance that would see the classroom as a place for activism against the world's injustices, where the realities of the students' lives do not determine the topics for discussion, but rather the teacher makes judgements for the codification, based on his or her own moral agendas. In this respect my views resonate with those of Johnston (1999), who refers to his own living educational theory that has 'risen organically through his own years of professional and intellectual development' (p.559) and who also resists the traditional Critical Pedagogist approaches

Like Johnston, I question the place of politics and challenging existing power imbalances in the classroom. I recognise that *schooling* is political and that power structures exist

within education; however, within the confines of the classroom, the teacher's role should be apolitical, and striving more for relationships with students that develop character based on moral guidance, rather than fuelling a climate of 'empowerment or disempowerment' (Gore, cited in Johnston, 1999, p. 560) within my students. I also see that 'power' is negotiated back and forth between students and teachers, so the concept that the students are powerless until empowered is difficult to understand or accept.

I am also concerned with the hijacking of critical pedagogy that has resulted in a codification that is teacher-selected and based on controversial subject matter chosen to provoke an emotional response, but which remains unrelated to the student's own experiences. My own living educational theory attests that exposing students, especially young students, to adult concepts and situations (e.g. workers' rights, gender inequalities, poverty, refugees) outside of the student's locus of control and experience is burdensome and disempowering for students, and ineffectual in terms of promoting robust discussion where students could otherwise contribute powerfully if they were able to draw from their own experiences. A grandiose selection of codification also removes any possibility of an actual moment of student decision-making that could improve their own experience of the classroom.

In summary, the stance I have taken is that this study reflects aspects of critical pedagogy in accordance with Freire's Problem Posing Model (Freire, 1973; Sugishita, 1995; Sharma, 2006) and Wallerstein's guidelines for good codification (Wallerstein, 1983; Sugishita, 1995). It also leans on principles and guidelines developed by educators such as Rashidi and Safari (2011) who have sought to provide EFL teachers with starting places for their own critical pedagogy in the classroom.

2.3 Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy begins with the life and work of Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator and pioneering figurehead of the movement whose work with adult illiterates confronted social inequalities and distributions of power within existing literacy programmes of his day. This laid the foundations for his method of work, known as *conscientization*, a key

concept underpinning critical pedagogy, defined as the process of acquiring a critical awareness of one's social reality (Freire, 1993; Sugishita, 1995; Lin, 2012). This is acquired through reflection and action and requires teachers and students to critically co-learn and co-teach (Sadeghi, 2009; Rashidi & Safari 2011). This action (or praxis) goes beyond mere dialogue and involves taking action that can impact the social reality, thereby requiring further reflection and action as the cycle continues.

Freire's celebrated book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) argued for a transformative education that took place through problem posing and dialogue. In problem-posing education, the teachers challenge the learner's existential situations by asking simple but stimulating and probing questions (Crawford, cited in Rashidi & Safari, 2011) that are derived from the student's own lives and experiences. It was not until 1983, however, that the term 'critical pedagogy' was introduced and used by Henry Giroux in *Theory and Resistance in Education* (Giroux, 1983; Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003).

Freirean approaches have gone on to influence many studies into post-colonialism, ethnicity, culture, adult education, and human development. Critical pedagogy scholars such as Apple (2010), Graman (1988), Giroux (1983), Kincheloe (2008), Wallerstein (1983), McLaren (1989), Shor (1992) and the particular influence of Canagarajah (2005), to name a few, have made important contributions and insights into the understanding and application of critical pedagogy, and continue to keep it as a well-established area of interest for educators and researchers.

In order to come to a full understanding of what critical pedagogy is in terms of its theoretical tenets, Shor (1992) identified eleven 'empowerment values', as follows:

- *Participatory*: Learning and teaching are to take place through interactive and cooperative practice. Its foundation lies in critical theory that assumes knowledge is in constant flux and is being constructed and reconstructed through social participation and experiences.
- *Affective*: This relates to the intentional fostering of a classroom climate that is a positive affective environment for learners. It is fostered through respecting

the voices, knowledge and differences of the students and in the grouping, using small groups rather than whole class organisation. A dominating, or authoritative teaching style is also to be avoided.

- *Problem Posing*: Freire (1973) wrote 'that if critical education was the process in which the educator permanently reconstructs the act of knowing, then it must be problem posing' (p. 153). This is the central concept to critical pedagogy, and it is in the problematising of the status quo, or norms of society that, as Shor (1992) attests, students can begin to 'express opinions and most importantly, generate their own language materials for learning and peer teaching' (p. 43). Problem-posing education uses several theories, of which the principal one is constructivism (Savery, 2006; Hmelo-Silver, cited in Mohammadi, 2017). Bloom's Higher Order Thinking Model (1956) was implemented in the treatment through authentic problem-based tasks, making use of students' cognitive and metacognitive skills to solve problems (Shin and Crookes, 2005). As a result, it can be concluded that authentic problem-based tasks increase language learners' higher-order cognitive involvement with the learning content and result in more effective vocabulary learning (Ansarian, Ali, Mehrnoush, & Shafiei, 2016). In contrast with the positivist who regards reality as an observable entity which is fixed in nature, problem posing seeks answers to problems as perceived by the language learners (Savery, 2006; Mohammadi, 2017). Research also shows a link between memory retention and recall of vocabulary, when taught within a problem-posing context. Laufner and Hilstijin (2001) also found that when cognitive involvement was increased in the language lesson, there was an increased depth of processing. The nature of problem posing is explained in further detail in Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973), found later in this chapter.
- *Situated*: The materials and activities used in the classroom are to be derived from the students' own experiences, conditions and culture. This is important, because it impacts on a student's connection with the topic, and the likelihood of a student being engaged enough to participate in the lesson, because they come with some prior knowledge, or experience that can be contributed. This

is particularly vital when working with students communicating in a second or foreign language and is grounded in Dewey's (1916) theory of dialectical schooling. Baker offers a concise summation of Dewey's theory:

> …the difficulties and problems which are subjects of inquiry in the school must be not integrally related with each other and the learning child's interests for the sake of desired continuity, they must also relate directly to the same basic difficulties and problems that arise in the experiences of men. (Baker, in Sugishita, 1995, p. 49)

- *Dialogic*: In taking a Freirean approach, it is the aspect of dialogue that can transform human possibilities and realities (Sugishita, 1995):

> Through dialogue, reflecting on what we know and don't know, we can then act critically to transform reality…What is dialogue in this moment of communication, knowing and social transformation? Dialogue seals the relationship between the cognitive subjects, the subjects who know and who try to know. (Freire, 1987, p.60)

Gupta and Lee (2015) wrote that dialogic teaching promoted students' exploration of ideas and a shared understanding that was not controlled or dominated by a single person. The teacher is no longer the authority, but a co-learner and co-teacher. Importantly, it is the dialoguing process that enables students to see each other as sources of information and knowledge, purely because a lived experience is shared with others. (McLaren, 1989 Auerbach, 1996; Shor, 1992; Shin and Crookes, 2005). This can transform the way students perceive themselves, their views and their shared history, and can lead to students having increased empathy and understanding for each other. Gupta and Lee (2015) saw dialogic teaching as a means to stimulate and extend

student thinking, by which the skills of narrating, exploring, justifying, arguing and questioning become the students' own.

- *Democratic and Critical Consciousness*: Students are to be encouraged to participate in class as members of a group. Freire saw this aspect of critical consciousness as a three-phase progression, moving from the *intransitive stage*, to the *semi-intransitive* to *critical conscientization*. In other words, one moves from being powerless to change society, to gaining a limited sense of power over one's existence (but lacking the ability to see the interconnectedness of power structures in economics, social and political spheres), to moving towards agency and change. This agency is seen as either subscribing to the same dominant myths, or choosing to examine them critically, pulling them apart and determining reality in a new way.
- *Multicultural*: The teacher and the students understand the complexity of the different cultures that are likely to exist in the classroom and, therefore, the topics derived from the students will be multicultural and multiethnic.
- *Interdisciplinary and Research-Oriented*: Both the teacher and the students can see themselves as researchers who are committed to transforming their surroundings for better learning and life, using and reflecting on their learning and teaching experiences.
- *Activist*: The teacher and the students empower themselves to take advantage of the possibilities. Activism is understood as 'praxis' which Freire (1970) defines as 'reflection and action in the world in order to transform it' (p. 36). This action is part of looking at a problematised situation and responding to it not only with intellect but with action. Activism is not defined here as acting in a negative way, but as acting with, not upon others.

All the above values empower; however, it is the value of *problem posing* based on the student's own experiences, together with *dialogue* with students, that activates the other values and provides more of a practical orientation of what a critical pedagogy lesson might look like. The following section takes a closer look at Freire's own development of his Problem Posing Model (1973) which was developed specifically as a language

teaching literacy programme and a rationale for implementing problem-posing and dialogic teaching with language minority students.

2.4 Freire's Problem Posing Model

Freire's *Problem Posing Model* (1973) had its origins in the work of Dewey's dialectical education theory (1916) and Piagetian socio-constructivist theory (1972). It presented a five-phase plan that would be an instructional guide for problem posing across disciplines. This model has been used in adult education programmes (Sharma, 2006), and has been used as the framework for this study with young EFL learners. The model follows five distinct phases:

Phase 1: Student Histories

Sugishita (1995) quotes Freire, who wrote that the goal of this first phase of the problem-posing process is to encourage educators to understand the student's perspectives while 'forming rewarding relationships and discovering often unsuspected exuberance and beauty in the people's [students] language' (p. 73). This first phase is very relational and is an informal study of the students through a series of encounters and informal interviews. This phase cannot be forced, insincere or rushed, as the encounters Freire describes are meant to reveal the 'longings, frustrations, disbeliefs, hopes and an impetus to participate' (Freire, 1973, p.49) of the students. For the teacher in the position of already building relationships with the students, this phase occurs naturally and provides a good foundation for Phase 2.

Phase 2: Selecting Generative Words

From these informal encounters with the students, generative words are selected from the students' own vocabulary. These words need to follow a set of criteria according to Freire. They must have phonemic richness, phonetic difficulty, a pragmatic tone and an emotional appeal that provoke interest in the students towards the conversation generated by that word. In this study, this phase has been slightly adapted, and leans more towards the selection of the generative *theme* (or investigations of situations such as bullying or language isolation) rather than a single word, or words. Shor (1992) recommended this

approach as particularly suitable for younger students, and others such as Rashidi & Safari (2011) took this further in their work with EFL learners.

Phase 3: Creating Codification

Codification is the visual representation (such as a photograph, slide, or poster) of a real-life situation in which students would normally engage, but which contains an underlying problem that has implications for the viewer. Freire (1973) defines codification as 'visual representations as coded situation problems containing elements to be decoded by the groups with the collaboration of the teacher' (p. 74). He developed this in his adult literacy programme, for which the model was developed, into a dialogic group meeting, where the codification was shown to the students along with the generative word from *Phase 2*. The teacher would then prompt and facilitate discussion around the codification. Once discussion was exhausted, the introduction of the generative word would then create a reality-based association for the students to be used later during *Phase 5* of the model.

Phase 4: Creating an agenda (scheduling)

Freire recommended that the teacher creates agendas for dialoguing. Not to be confused with rigid lesson plans and pre-determined questions, this 'agenda' was intended to be a post-lesson reflection on the points that emerged from the dialogue. Freire's intentions were that it be a co-investigation, representing the voices of all participants.

Phase 5: Discovery

This phase consolidates the linguistic aspect of the programme. Once a visual association has been made with the generative word, the teacher uses this word as the basis for more in-depth study such as phonetic make up and word families, chunking the word into syllables, and re-forming the word to make new words. Freire found that this phase was rapidly mastered by his adult students due to the problem posing and dialogic teaching occurring earlier in his model.

Chapter 3 revisits this model in accordance with how I aligned each phase to the planning of the critical pedagogy lessons. The following section looks at critical pedagogy within

EFL education historically, and the current contentions and debates surrounding the use of communicative tasks within EFL classrooms.

2.5 Critical Pedagogy in EFL Fields

In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, second language teaching was primarily concerned with the linguistic properties of the language, the grammar, the pronunciation and the lexicon. (Hinkel, 2005). By the 1980s, research was beginning to look at the constructs that identity, culture and personhood place on language learning, and that they are intertwined. Much more was therefore demanded of language teaching than just the linguistic objectives. However, Hinkel (2005) describes the study of identity, culture and critical perspectives as being 'late arrivals on the scene of language teaching and learning' (p. 891) and it was not until the 1980s and 1990s that new avenues of complexity in social identity, culture and power within language learning were explored within research (Pennycook, 1989; Peirce, 1989, Auerbach, 1996, Benesh, 1993, Canagarajah, cited in Hinkel, 2005).

Graman (1988) writes of his ESL experience of teaching turkey farmers and labourers in Colorado. He relates that his first teaching experience as a novice ESL teacher began before the prescribed curriculum had arrived. These initial experiences involved, unconsciously, a Freirean approach, in which getting to know the men and their lives opened discussion and provided a motivation for expression. Once the prescribed ESL curriculum arrived, he found that the repetition, substitution, and mechanical language drills removed language as a tool for communication and left the men unmotivated. Consequently, he returned to his initial methods, supported by Freire's belief that 'learning is self-generated rather than merely receptive' (Freire, 1970; Graman, 1988 p. 434).

Graman (1988) concluded that students were more likely to 'develop intellectually and linguistically when [they] analyze their own experiences, building their own words to better understand these experiences' (p. 443). As such, he viewed the classroom not as a place that prepares students for the real world but rather as a place where the classroom

must be the real world. This spontaneous interaction is supported by Thoms (2012) who saw that students can only acquire language through involvement and relationships formed when they take part in communicating. Language thus activated and internalised becomes part of the student's cognitive resources (Thoms, cited in Dormaleska, 2015).

In the 1990s, there was a shift away from modernist values, and voices were being raised from a diverse range of socially marginalised groups, questioning as Canagarajah (2005) states, the 'smug ethos of multiculturalism' (p. 932) emerging from the West. Feminism, queer theory and critical race theory were inspiring radical critiques about diversity, and this created a healthy climate for looking at second language education also with a critical lens. Today we see a duality within EFL literature as to how critical pedagogy is perceived and understood. For example, Canagarajah (2005) believes that on one hand critical pedagogy should escape definition and a dogmatic characterisation and that it should be given agency to be shaped continuously by culture, discourse and the subjects themselves but, on the other hand, critical pedagogy always comes with the loaded expectation for the practitioner to 'critically negotiate the machinations of economic and political structures, to examine the power of local settings like the classroom, and to develop resistance to larger political forces' (p.932).

Pennycook (1990) argued for critical pedagogy as a fitting ESL curriculum philosophy because it was by nature transformative and empowering for students. He saw that the central issue for ESL education was the lack of or 'divorce' (p. 304) from educational theory that addressed the social, political, historical and cultural implications of language teaching. Pennycook later wrote that class, gender and race were topics in which relations of power and inequality are often at their most obvious (Pennycook, 1999, cited in Canagarajah, 2005). His view was that critical pedagogy methods could be ideological and could be orientated in certain ways according to the values that were ascribed to them by the researcher. Rather than atheoretical and value-free descriptive approaches, critical pedagogy was a method that came with its own orientation to reality, informed by values that could offer certain selective perspectives. This view is subscribed to by critical theorists and presents researchers and teachers with the opportunity to nuance the methods

such as the selection of codification, in order to introduce controversial concepts to students that may never previously have been discussed in the classroom.

Additionally, this study is guided by Wallerstein's (1983) approach to codification as she based her work also on Freire's *Problem Posing Model* (1973). From her extensive research with EFL and ESL communities in the US and Brazil, she was able to delineate the qualities that 'good' codification must exhibit.

Good codification according to Wallerstein must:

- Represent an everyday problem situation that is easily recognisable to students and to which they have emotional connections
- Illustrate as many sides to the contradiction as possible, yet be simple enough for students to project their own experience
- Focus on one problem at a time while suggesting links to other themes in people's lives
- Not provide solutions to the problem but rather stimulate dialogue
- Not present a problem which is overwhelming to the student, such as one where the actions required to solve it are out of reach for the students. There should be capacity for small actions that address the problem, even if they do not solve it.

In more current EFL critical pedagogy literature, there is a tendency to begin with statements that represent the weight of the oppressed and marginalised, and that view the teaching of the English language as imperialistic and a continuation of oppression. Some such statements are gathered here: firstly, Sung and Pedersen (2012) 'Therefore critical practitioners firmly believe in the power of resistance however dire and seemingly powerless things are for the multitude of people at present' (p.158). Liyanage (2012) writes, 'It is elite, advantageous and valuable for those from nations trying to access its linguistic capital' (p. 138). 'The power of English is not to be underestimated, and yet the variations in local contexts means that it benefits some groups but not others'

(Canagarajah 1999, cited in Liyanage, 2012 p.137) and 'Critical pedagogy is fundamentally concerned with the centrality of politics and power in our understanding of how schools work' (p.560) (Johnston, 1999).

The nature of power is a recurrent theme represented within wider EFL research, namely the disempowered nature of the students and the role of the teacher to then empower their students (Kreisburg, 1992; Shor, 1996; Johnston, 1999; Canagarajah, 2005) Canagarajah states that the 'critical pedagogy student and teacher situates their learning in relevant social contexts and unravels the implications of power contained in any given activity' (p. 934). A leading proponent of critical pedagogy, Henry Giroux (1994) also speaks of power in that critical pedagogy talks about the power and process of education (Giroux 1994; Steven, cited in Rashidi & Safari, 2011).

Finally, there exists a bias from researchers within EFL education towards leaving critical pedagogy as theoretical concept, rather than trying to put boundaries around critical pedagogy through lesson planning, materials and other elements of practical organisation (Canagarajah 2005; Rashidi & Safari, 2011; Rashidi & Mozaffari, 2012). If critical pedagogy is defined in such a practice-orientated manner, it may be inferred that it is just another method or school for teaching a second or foreign language. Canagarajah (2005) goes further, and asks that critical pedagogy not be defined at all, as defining it is not only difficult but dangerous since theories may restrict the view from which the learning activity should be interpreted (Rashidi & Mozaffari, 2012).

As a consequence, a criticism often directed at critical pedagogy is that it is a critical educational theory rather than a pedagogy (Keesing-Styles, 2003; Rashidi & Safari, 2011). Ewald (1999) calls the desire to teach critically a 'thought provoking and inspiring challenge, but misleading because there is such a lack of practical guidance for EFL teachers in the classroom' (Ewald, 1999, p.275). Other researchers such as Baladi (2007), and Kim (2006) concur. This is indeed true: in looking to the literature for this study, there is but a handful of international case studies implementing critical pedagogy lessons or units of work in EFL classrooms. Of that handful, the majority of examples involve participants who are either student teachers, university students, or secondary-aged

students. Case studies involving young elementary-aged EFL learners are scarce, thus indicating the need for a study such as this.

The following section briefly outlines the methodology of four critical pedagogy EFL case studies with a special focus on the codification used and, where possible, the students' responses to critical approaches in the lesson.

2.6 Four EFL Case Studies Using Critical Pedagogy Approaches

The following four case studies illustrate the variations in the way's researchers approach their methodology towards conducting critical pedagogy in the classroom. The design of the codification, who determines the codification, and the themes discussed by the students all carry their unique qualities and are described here.

2.6.1 Taiwan

Mei-Yun Ko's (2013) study explored the introduction of critical literacy lessons in an English reading class to Taiwanese university students. The participant was a local teacher new to taking a critical approach in his teaching; however, he began to incorporate critical questioning and problem posing in his literature circles during reading instruction. The codification used in this study consisted of three selected texts (one well-known fable, one photograph from TIME magazine, and one magazine article) that during decodification and recodification brought up themes of multiple perspectives, making inferences or 'reading between the lines' and questioning gender roles in science and engineering. Challenges the teacher faced were that he felt the usual transmission mode of learning was still ingrained in the students and that active participation and involvement from the students was not forthcoming. Most students however responded well to the small group discussions, with students commenting that they believed their thinking had been expanded. Lin reports a challenge existing in the students' entrenched perception of the role of the teacher, and the confusion caused by a selection of communicative, dialogic-based approaches. This issue is also reported in Canagarajah's (2005) study, looking at Sri Lankan students and their receptivity to communicative dialogic learning activities.

2.6.2 Sri Lanka

Canagarajah's (2005) study is interesting due to its findings that the Sri Lankan students preferred not to be taught through dialogic communicative means, but rather through traditional teacher-directed instruction based on grammatical knowledge of the target language. He found, however, a dissonance between the initial eagerness and expectation at learning English and attitudes at the end: student attendance rates for sitting exams fell, there was disengagement in bookwork, and students struggled to make sense of the elements intended to scaffold the students learning (Canagarajah, 2005). Other studies in the region have echoed this phenomenon, where students have a preference for learning English using a *product* approach rather than pedagogies that favour *communicative* language teaching approaches. The grammar textbooks were welcomed, as was the explicit instruction and the exams. Other skills and activities were perceived as time wasters if exams were looming. Studies in Pakistan and Maldives have also revealed that both teachers and students preferred a firm focused method of instruction (Canagarajah, 2005; Liyanage 2012).

Rather than conclude that critical pedagogy should be rejected, Linayage (2012) offers the view that students were acting in full Freirean mode, in that they had a complete sense of their own agency, knowing the best and most effective way to benefit from the language classes, and making this known. The students were decisive about their materials, and critically appraised the methods and means by which they would be most successful in their exams. What Linayage (2012) suggests is a critical EFL pedagogy which is sensitive to the educational systems existing in the country, and one that invites the students themselves to work with the teacher in goal-setting and deciding on the methods of delivery that can best serve the needs and achievements of the students.

2.6.3 Hong Kong

Lin (2012) describes the challenges of learning EFL for Cantonese students as an uphill battle in many schools, with most teachers and students seeing English as a barrier to overcome, in order to complete their exams and improve future job prospects, rather than

a 'tool to explore their world, to create and recreate meanings, and to construct and express themselves'(p.73). Despite our 'post-colonial' times, English, spoken in a 'native-like' manner, free from grammatical error or accent, is still highly valued in benchmarking tests for entrance to professional roles. Lin calls for further critical work in deconstructing this deeply rooted colonialism, and the following case studies have endeavoured to answer this call.

Moorhouse's (2014) study explored critically applied linguistics and critical pedagogy with upper primary-aged students attending a government school in Hong Kong. His study was situated within a critical theory which sees the world as unjust and needing change (Crotty, cited in Moorhouse, 2014). Critical research is not value-free and is openly ideological, which explains Moorhouse's selection of codification. Moorhouse's participants were a small group of students aged 11-12 during his time working as a native English teacher (NET) in a government school in Hong Kong. His study used a pre- and post-intervention questionnaire format, and a series of small group dialogic sessions that focused on five teacher-selected themes in keeping with a critical theorist position. The themes were *Hong Kong Identity, Foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong, Mainland Chinese in Hong Kong, Poverty in Hong Kong* and a session to collect post intervention data. The sessions followed a model of the students brainstorming together in order to collect viewpoints for each theme. These would be shared, supplemented by YouTube clips, teacher-produced resources, and articles presenting a critical view of the issue. Students would then explore further, looking to see if views, feelings or assumptions had changed. Moorhouse (2014) believed that awareness and critical consciousness were raised overall, and reports being surprised at the students' prior knowledge of some of these topics, although stereotypical views were often presented. Moorhouse believed these had been lessened through the sessions and that, through reading articles on Mainland Chinese, the students were able to consider alternative and more empathetic perspectives. Moorhouse reports the difficulty of finding resources that were relevant to the topic and yet aimed at the English level of the students. He also found that the format still tended to be largely driven by the teachers questioning and facilitation and that generating full participation in discussion was a challenge.

2.6.4 Korea

In 2001, Shin and Crookes carried out a small-scale investigation into using critical pedagogy in an EFL classroom in Korea, integrating critical pedagogy into the existing curriculum and instructional structures. The participants were eleventh grade students, who were enrolled in an 'English Culture' class, which was very communicative in orientation, and where the teachers had more autonomy to choose how the learning was structured. As part of the mandated curriculum, students had to complete a course on the target culture (English culture) and Korean culture. Shin and Crookes' (2005) research had the goal of fostering students' exploratory thinking and developing critical perspectives on culture in general, and they therefore wrote the modules within a communicative design. They first spent time understanding the students' situational context and interviewing the teacher, in order to build a pedagogy situated in the student's conditions. The topics for discussion were derived from stereotypes and assumptions made about Korean culture. The lessons were delivered in a dialogic fashion, involving group discussion, poster-making and written reflection. Shin and Crookes's study reported on the students' ability to engage critically though dialogue, both in participation using their target language of English and in the critical awareness of the issues raised during the discussions. What Shin and Crookes found was an overall receptivity to dialogic teaching, and students being able to adapt to the new 'informal' methods of delivery (Shin & Crookes, 2005, p.119). At first, students were self-conscious, but then referred to feeling 'comfortable and free' in the class. Students also demonstrated proactive behaviour, moving the discussion along if necessary, asking questions of each other and openly disagreeing with each other (Shin & Crookes 2005, p.112). Shin and Crookes concluded that dialogic teaching embedded in the curriculum was possible, and that students were by no means resistant to using a critical approach. Rather, students were able to handle and generate critical dialogue, using English.

Taken together, the variety of interpretations of critical pedagogy from these four case studies alone, and the way critical pedagogy is negotiated in the classrooms, are specific to each individual case and context. Moorhouse's (2014) case study leans heavily on

taking a critical theorist stance, and this is seen in the selection of codification topics that run along the lines of class, gender and race inequalities. Ko's (2013) study, while promoting critical viewpoints taken from a variety of texts, instigated the topic selection on the merit of the resources and materials for teaching, rather than beginning with the interests and lives of the students. Shin and Crookes (2005) began with discovering the situational context of the students themselves, drawing on the students' own lives and experiences. As seen in Canagarajah's study (2005), while students were active in their own autonomy and decision making, the means of learning through communicative and dialogic-based tasks were rejected, with students preferring the traditional teacher-centred methods that had been in place and used successfully by the local teachers.

The following section now looks at the work of Rashidi and Safari (2011), who outlined the principles for development of teaching materials using Freirean approaches, while being sensitive to the needs of EFL learners.

2.7 Principles for EFL Materials Development

An area that does seem to unite critical pedagogues is a disenchantment with current teaching materials being imported from Inner Circle countries to EFL 'periphery' classrooms (Liyanage, 2012). This has been an area of intense critical appraisal with many educators questioning the content of the mainstream teaching materials (Rinvolucri, cited in Rashidi & Safari, 2011). Within critical pedagogy, therefore, there is a rejection of any published materials that originate from a Westernised perspective but, as a result, there is a lack of 'fully worked out' (Crookes, 2010) sample materials that could be used in the critical pedagogy classroom, along with any guides or frameworks that could be useful in planning.

In order to address the call for greater attention to development of materials for EFL teachers, Rashidi and Safari (2011) proposed eleven principles which they had gleaned from their understanding of critical pedagogical philosophies, and from a previous study by Richards (2001) into development of EFL materials. They organised these, as is the case in any materials development, by looking at the programme, teacher, learner, context

and pedagogical factors. However, Rashidi and Safari's work also remains sensitive to the learner's local context and engages in developing a sense of critical consciousness within the students. They reiterated the necessity for the dual outcomes of language development alongside *conscientization*. Rashidi and Safari's principles also remain open to each individual EFL context in a way that does not overly prescribe any step-by-step method, but which provides criteria that ensure accountability to the tenets of critical pedagogy.

Chapter Five of this thesis examines each individual principle in accordance with the findings of this study. However, they are listed here in Rashidi and Safari's (2011) own words. I have only taken the liberty of replacing ELT (English Language Teaching) with EFL (English as a Foreign Language).

- EFL materials should develop learners' communicative abilities to raise learners' critical consciousness of the world around them and their ability to act on it.
- If the materials have a joint goal, then EFL materials for critical pedagogy are expected to have two major outcomes: social development and language skill development on the part of the learner.
- The topics and themes included in the EFL materials should be generative and invoke considerable discussion and analysis.
- The source of the themes of the materials should be derived from the learner's life situations, needs and interests.
- EFL materials should take into account the intellectual advances of the learner in arranging the content.
- The way of teaching is via engaging students in the cycle of reflection and action by embracing dialogical problem posing practices.
- EFL materials base their content on source culture.
- EFL materials should take into account the teacher's role as co-learner and coordinator.

- In EFL materials it is expected that the teacher would not only bring to their class language knowledge but is also aware of the implications of the internationalization of English.
- EFL materials should take into account the learner's role as decision maker and subject of the act.
- In terms of evaluation [assessment] activities, it is expected that students develop their critical consciousness in line with their language mastery.

Rashidi and Safari's (2011) Principles for Materials Development, along with Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973), provide a helpful lens for looking at potential planning of critical pedagogy lessons, and guidance when making materials, particularly in the codification aspects. These principles can also provide the teacher with useful criteria in terms of pre- and post-lesson reflection.

In conclusion, the literature review of the contentions existing within EFL education and critical pedagogy necessitates further exploration and examination. Within wider research, an area that has not been addressed is the implementation and receptivity of critical pedagogy lessons with young, elementary-aged Arabic EFL learners. There have been no studies to date which seek to understand the student's perception of critical pedagogy lessons, as revealed in their own words. This study has been developed to fill this research gap while providing insight into the social and pedagogical benefits in using critical approaches in the EFL classroom.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This case study documents the design and implementation of critical pedagogy lessons with a classroom of Grade 4 Arabic learners using Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973). It explores the nature and content of student discussion during the literacy lesson when using a critical pedagogy framework, and reports on recurrent themes that might provide helpful insights for critical educators working with EFL learners who share similar linguistic or cultural backgrounds. The study reports on the students' perceptions of the use of critical pedagogy in their classroom and examines this from both student and teacher perspectives.

This chapter provides a detailed account of the research design, theoretical underpinnings and research objectives, and describes the participants, instruments and method of data analysis. It concludes with sections on trustworthiness, ethical considerations and data management.

3.2 Research Design

This research is a single case study, with my role in the research being a participant observer. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defines a case study as an 'in-depth description and analysis of a "bounded" system' (p. 38), or a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries, i.e. the researcher can fence in what is to be studied. Case study design is widely accepted as a research approach for evaluating complex educational innovations in specific contexts (Simons, 2009; Yin, 2003) and social and educational phenomena in general (Duff, 2014; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Simons, 2009). As in most qualitative case studies, it is socio-constructivist and socio-cultural in orientation. Duff (2014) describes this orientation as 'seeing reality and meaning as co-constructed thorough the

dynamic process of interacting with others and the wider social material and symbolic world'. (p.236)

Yin (2014) explains that a case study is the preferred method when the researcher is trying to address descriptive and explanatory questions and desires to produce a direct understanding of the people and events being studied. He states that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially where boundaries between the phenomenon and context might not be clearly evident (Yin, cited in Merriam 2016). Its strength lies in that it examines a real-life situation, occurring in real time and in the natural setting of the participants where direct observations can be made.

Case study research has a history of representing the voices and views of the stakeholders and participants themselves, and the use of qualitative methods which engage them in the process. Historically, a move has been made within educational research away from the evaluator or researcher being the sole judge of what was 'worthwhile' to be included in curriculum or policy change towards an acknowledgment of the perspectives of the participants of the research, disseminating their views to an audience (Simons, 2009).

A case study design benefits those who might be informed and guided by my research, such as other English language teachers who are curious about using critical pedagogy in their classroom. Through the voices of the participants, and well-documented observations, the reader is free to decide what is applicable to their own context and how transferable this study is (Henning, van Rensburg, & Smit, 2009). In looking at current research related to implementing critical pedagogy with young EFL learners, this study taps into another research dimension in order to critically test existing theories and is therefore justifiable in its stance as a single case study.

3.3 Research Questions

The focus of this study is to examine the pedagogical and social aspects of incorporating a critical pedagogy approach with young Arabic learners of EFL, in order to offer potential

pedagogical alternatives for EFL curriculum developers. It also seeks to understand the student's own perceptions of using a critical pedagogy framework in order to understand what motivated these young EFL students to voice their own stories and share experiences in a foreign language. To this end, two main research questions are raised:

1. What are the pedagogical, and social benefits of applying critical pedagogy as part of the literacy lesson with young Arabic learners in an EFL setting?

2. How do young Arabic learners perceive the effectiveness of a critical pedagogy lesson?

3.4 The Research Setting

The study took place in a Grade 4 class at Fatima School (pseudonym used to ensure school confidentiality), a female-only government primary school in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Fatima School is located within the older city centre of Abu Dhabi. While newer schools were being built on the mainland in outlying suburbs where the local Emirati population were now choosing to live, Fatima School sits firmly on two of the oldest and most historic streets in the city.

Fatima School is known for its diversity within the student population, which sets it apart from more suburban off-island schools, and the reason for which is that non-national families tend to live and work in the city where housing is much cheaper. Expatriate Arab families also need to pay school fees for places in government schools, which has a tangible impact on higher levels of parental involvement and the school.

Fatima School has been a part of the partial English immersion education reform that has been active in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi since 2009, typical of all other government schools in the Emirate. It means that students receive half their daily instructional learning in Arabic from Arabic native teachers, with the other half of daily instruction in English taught by internationally recruited native English speakers, also known as English Medium Teachers (or EMTs).

EMTs became responsible for teaching the subjects of English, Mathematics and Science using English as the target language of instruction. Students remain in the same classroom for the duration of all three 45-minute lessons, which meant the EMT had relative freedom to structure the time and organisation to best fit the class. As an EMT who had worked at Fatima School for four years prior to this study, I was able to settle into a new school, a new culture and implement classroom strategies that I felt worked well for my students and their emerging use and understanding of English.

Grouping students into ability groups for their English lesson was a regular practice of mine, as it meant literacy activities could be differentiated according to the needs of the students. This was a standard practice where I used a running record system of benchmarking students every term according to their decoding and comprehension ability during reading. I was then able to determine ability groups for the purposes of differentiating tasks within the literacy subject. For the purposes of this research, the grouping structures remained in place according to the established routines that the students were used to.

The class contained four literacy groups, with a range of five to seven students in each group. The study was carried out during the final term just before Ramadan.

3.4.1 The Participants

The participants for research were 24 Arabic female students attending Fatima School. They were all in Grade 4 and were either nine or ten years old at the time of the research. They had been my students for most of the year and, in the final few months before fasting for Ramadan, we embarked on this study together. The class comprised students from diverse family backgrounds within the Gulf Region who had settled into the UAE. Not only did I teach Emiratis (n =12), but students from Syria (n = 6), Saudi Arabia (n = 2), Yemen (n = 1), Jordan (n = 1), Egypt (n = 1) and Sudan (n = 1).

All students participating in this study spoke Gulf Arabic as their first language at home, with English being a foreign language (EFL) and this was confirmed by my questioning

of the students specifically. Depending on the student's years of enrolment in a government school (some beginning at Kindergarten which is when the child would be four), all participants had been exposed to English through the public schooling system from Grade 1.

It should be noted that in all cases of references to individual students, pseudonyms have been used to protect the student's identity. See Section 3.9 for more information regarding the ethical considerations made throughout the study.

The following section has been included to provide further context for the reader as to the language proficiency of the participants at the time of the research. It details the way the students were grouped together according to similarities in their verbal communication when using English and is an extra means of describing the participants in terms of language ability.

3.4.2 Language Proficiency

In order to screen the spoken language proficiency of the four groups at the outset of the research, the *Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)* performance indicators (TESOL, 2006) are presented in Table 3.3 below. There are normally five performance levels within the TESOL standards; however, only the first three levels suited the proficiency levels of the participants at the time of study. These are Emerging (Level 1), Developing (Level 2) and Expanding (Level 3) Levels. It is also important to note that within the class there were two groups that were identified as Level 1. They have been labelled Level 1A and Level 1B, with one group at Level 2 and one group at Level 3.

Table 3.3 outlines the levels, the acronym for the groups referred to throughout this research, and descriptors of each level. The discussion excerpts are included in the table to exemplify their spoken English ability against its corresponding level.

Table 3.1 *Descriptors of Language Proficiency (TESOL 2006)*

Level	Acronym	Descriptors	Sample Discussion Excerpt
Emergent (Level 1)	L1	English language users can understand and use.... • language to draw on simple and routine experiences to communicate with others. • high-frequency and some general academic vocabulary and expressions. • phrases or short sentences in oral or written communication • oral or written language, making errors that often impede the meaning of the communication.	*Miss like, Tolan she said she will read the story and she will say that she will do like Curly and like that.* *Yeah, and ladybird and you said that outside we will do it.*
Developing (Level 2)	L2	English language users can understand and use.... • language to communicate with others on familiar matters regularly encountered. • general and some specialized academic vocabulary and expressions. • expanded sentences in oral or written communication. • oral or written language, making errors that may impede the communication but retain much of its meaning.	*Miss maybe, maybe like little women, man come and say can you give me the money, then the man will say no.* *Miss Maybe this four is working with, maybe this four working together but Tasneem is only sit there.*
Expanding (Level 3)	L3	English language users can understand and use.... • language in both concrete and abstract situations and apply language to new experiences. • specialized and some technical academic vocabulary and expressions. • a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral and written communication. • oral or written language, making minimal errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication.	*Miss Nadine, I see girls taking counters and count and write in their books and do some design.* *I see Aisha making cube and Fatima and Hind looking at her, and Tasneem doing her work.*

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The following section details Freire's Problem Posing Model (Freire, 1973) to frame each phase of the critical pedagogy task design. The section provides specific details of each phase, including the selection of generative themes, the making of the codification and the delivery of the lesson itself with the small group. A schedule of the lesson planning is provided, as well as the four codification examples used in this study with accompanying notes describing the scenarios.

3.5.1 Freire's Problem Posing Model

The table below (Table 3.4) provides an overview of the five phases of Freire's Problem Posing Model (Freire, 1973) referred to earlier in the literature review, and how this study aligns itself at each phase. The column on the left describes the phases moving from 1 to 5 according to Freire's Problem Posing Model, while the column on the right looks at the design of the task used in this research, and how it correlates to the model.

3.5.1.1 Phase 1: Listening to student histories and language

Phase One began organically and started at the beginning of the academic year in September, allowing me until April of the following year to get to understand the students' histories and language in preparation for this research. Phase One was the culmination of months of being with the students as their classroom teacher and building those relationships over time. It would be these months that would gradually educate me about my own positioning of identity within the school, as a foreigner and a Western-trained teacher with my own set of ideologies that I needed to unpack and come to terms with. In the daily struggle of classroom life that had students exerting their own dominance and power within the four walls of a classroom in Abu Dhabi, and merely by being present alongside the students, future generative themes were directly drawn from the classroom and the students' own histories of that year. I also had a solid understanding of the language issues for the students and their proficiency of communicating in English with me. One very significant aspect is that, through spending a prolonged time engaging with the participants, I also had an ear for the speech rhythms and cadences of my students who could only communicate with me in their foreign language of English. In this sense, conducting this research as a teacher was invaluable.

Table 3.2 *Freire's Problem Posing Model and Current Study*

Freire's Problem Posing Model	Current Study Task Design Specifications
Phase 1	Phase 1
Listen to student histories and language for generative words	Listen to student histories and language through conversations with the students and prior experiences as their classroom teacher.
Phase 2	Phase 2
Select generative words based on phonemic richness and pragmatic tone	Pragmatic tone was achieved in the final selection of the generative themes. This meant that there was some problem posing aspect to the theme, and that the theme was grounded in student experience of being in the English classroom.
Phase 3	Phase 3
Create codification or visual representations of situational problems to be decoded by culture circles.	A series of four codification photographs were made using older students from another class. Each scene depicted some identifiable problem that could be read and interpreted.
Phase 4	Phase 4
Create an agenda, not a rigid schedule for the discussion.	An agenda for the critical pedagogy lessons was adhered to (in keeping with my usual literacy programme). However, once the critical pedagogy lesson began, there was no prescribed goal or outcome for the lesson. Rather, that time was set aside for dialogue and sharing between all participants.
Phase 5	Phase 5
Post literacy circle learning incorporating L2 language learning at a phoneme or theme level.	Post-discussion, students would then move to journal writing time with a suitable list of vocabulary that was generated around the topics of the codification. This vocabulary would be supplied by the students themselves, and the expectation was that students would write a simple story based on the codification. Ideally, the story would contain a resolution that reflected the students own problem-solving skills.

3.5.1.2 Phase 2: Selecting Generative Themes

Rashidi and Safari (2011) write, in relation to the development of critical pedagogy materials, that the themes of the materials should be derived from the learners' life situations, needs and interests, and that student motivation to participate in communicative tasks can be increased by tying the content of the materials to the students' situations (Freire, cited in Rashidi & Safari, 2011). It also needs to be noted that the word 'interests' in relation to critical pedagogy does not refer to the students' current hobbies or 'likes', but rather to problematic realities (for example, injustices in the classroom, friendship issues, language and communication barriers during English lessons) in the learners' lives. In trying to determine problematic realities on behalf of the students, I did not try and stray into territory of which I did not have a full and complete understanding, nor did I attempt to try and portray experiences outside my students' own lives. For example, the

generative themes did not come from my limited understanding of the student's home situations. Nor was I interested in selecting generative themes that might include cultural and religious practices (weddings, religious worship, religious celebrations). Any societal norms that might have registered as oppressive or unjust to my liberal, foreign thinking and background were also not for consideration, as these were not generated by my direct observation of the students.

In terms of abiding by governing principles for critical pedagogy materials, it was considered appropriate that the themes were derived purely from classroom interactions that I had witnessed as a teacher throughout the year. The scenarios mirrored aspects of student life experienced with me as a teacher, which had a problem posing element that was recognisable and accessible by all students. For this reason, the themes identified during Phase One and Phase Two were:

- Low-level bullying
- Student perceptions of good and bad behaviour
- Injustice, corruption of classroom systems
- Language barriers to learning

3.5.1.3 Phase 3: Creating the Codification

In this study, the word 'codification' is used frequently, meaning 'a representation of generative themes related to the learner's life situations in the audio and/or visual forms, e.g. a photograph, sketch, film, or a drawing' (Crawford, cited in Rashidi & Safari, 2011). The purpose of the codification is to create a discussion prompt to elicit conversation from the students. Freire (1973) states that these visual representations function as coded situation-problems containing elements to be decoded by the groups with the collaboration of the coordinator (p. 51).

The following images are the four codification photographs originating from four generative themes that were derived from classroom situations that had been experienced by the students and by the teacher during the year. With the help of four Grade 5 volunteer

'actors' we were able to stage and photograph four distinct scenarios that required the students to read and interpret the motivation of each actor with deepening levels of comprehension. It is important to note that the Grade 5 volunteers were not older sisters of any other the participants. The volunteers were my past students and were very familiar with the classroom environment and behaviour systems such as 'Star Student'. I would then direct the volunteers within each of the four scenes, including facial expressions and body language. The participants' own classroom was used in each photograph, which was an important decision in terms of recognition and familiarity for the participants. My main aim in the process of codification was to remove anything non-relatable that could cause a feeling of 'not experiencing' for even one student. The choice of setting was therefore important in that it needed to be accessible and recognisable to every participant. Assuming that my students went to the mall regularly or played at the park took too much for granted and, in learning about my students, I discovered that for some, the majority of their experiences were limited to school and home. Provided here are brief descriptions of the four codification photographs to aid understanding.

Figure 3.1 [1] Codification 1 'Mean Girls'

The codification *Mean Girls* (Figure 2) depicts four students. One student is reading, oblivious to the others, while two students on the right are whispering about her with their

[1] From left to right: Mahra, Aisha, Hind, Tasneem (pseudonyms provided)

body language staged in a way that suggests what they are saying is not kind. The girl in the middle of the photograph has observed the girls and is captured not knowing what to do. Often the discussion would look at more closely at this girl and the choices she would have to make. Topics instigated by this codification included bullying, friendship and student responsibility.

Figure 3.2 [2] Codification 2 'Work and Play'

The codification *Work and Play* (Figure 3) depicts a maths lesson where the student actors have been asked to make a pattern with coloured blocks and draw it in their books. This lesson was meaningful to the participants as they had completed the same lesson a few weeks previously. In this codification, three students are completing their workbook while one student has her book closed, and a pile of blocks on her desk, which she is connecting while the other students watch her. This codification enabled multiple perspectives of how student task completion and engagement are seen by the students. For example, was she 'playing' with the blocks or doing her own task set by the teacher? Discussion topics of 'good girl' and 'bad girl' were instigated by this codification.

[2] From left to right: Aisha, Mahra, Hind and Tasneem

Figure 3.3 [3] Codification 3 'Star Student'

The codification *Star Student* (Figure 4) was derived from our class behaviour system that had been in place for the year. Each week, I would elect two 'Star Students' who would have special responsibilities for that week. One of those responsibilities was to award student points, and they were given autonomy to select students carefully and make the awards, without needing to check with me constantly. The system worked best when grounded in honesty and transparency. It was a system that could be, and was exploited and corrupted, but it gave an opportunity for students to attempt self-autonomy in their classroom environment, knowing that the Star Student wielded as much power as they had probably ever experienced. In this codification, the Star Students in yellow caps are being whispered to by another student. The fourth student far left, observes this. Topics instigated by this codification included power, friendships, exclusion and definitions of fairness and injustice.

[3] From left to right: Hind, Aisha, Tasneem and Mahra

Figure 3.4 [4] Codification 4 'Language Barrier'

The codification *Language Barrier* (Figure 5) depicts a maths lesson familiar to the students. To the left, three students are busily cutting coupons out of a supermarket flyer. These students are on task, helping each other and contributing to the shared goal of completing their task. To the right, one student sits apart from the others, head down and silent. She is not doing anything observable and it is this that sets her apart from the others. This codification instigated discussion around friendship, communication, language barriers and awareness of others.

3.5.1.4 Phase 4: The Critical Pedagogy Lesson

It is important to note that the literacy session comprised reading, writing and grammar activities, and all students would form into their ability groups (L1A, L1B, L2, L3) and move to the activity that was on the class schedule for that group. These activities were routine and familiar, so that students did not need to interrupt me unnecessarily while I was with each small group. It enabled me to have a daily 25-minute session of uninterrupted time allowing for the critical pedagogy lesson. The schedule below details the groups and the codification focus for that lesson during Phase Four of this research. As seen, in Week 4, I conducted focus group interviews with the groups.

[4] From left to right: Aisha, Hind (standing), Mahra, Tasneem)

Table 3.3 *Critical Pedagogy Lesson Schedule*

Week		Codification used during the critical pedagogy lesson
Week 1	L1A	*Mean Girls* Codification
	L1B	*Star Student* Codification
	L2	*Work and Play* Codification
	L3	*Star Student* Codification
Week 2	L1A	*Language Barrier* Codification
	L1B	*Work and Play* Codification
	L2	*Language Barrier* Codification
	L3	*Work and Play* Codification
Week 3	L1A	*Work and Play* Codification
	L1B	*Language Barrier* Codification
	L2	*Star Student* Codification
	L3	*Language Barrier* Codification
Week 4	L1A	*Star Student* Codification and Interviews
	L1B	*Mean Girls* Codification and Interviews
	L2	*Mean Girls* Codification and Interviews
	L3	*Mean Girls* Codification and Interviews

Once the scheduled small group was seated with me, the critical pedagogy lesson would begin. In Freire's Problem Posing Model, this is described as Phase 4, where Freire encourages an agenda for the discussion, but not a rigid format. Ideally, there should be a flow of dialogue and sharing as a community of learners, with the teacher as facilitator for the discussion. Rashidi and Safari (2011) borrows Crawford's (1978) description of this phase as *decodification* where there is an exploration and interpretation of the learner's ideas about the problem being posed. Heaney states this phase is an 'analysis of the day to day experiences to unmask the previously unperceived realities' (Heaney, cited in Rashidi & Safari, 2011, p.251). How this was demonstrated in this particular study is outlined here.

Students were each given identical codification photographs to study and could retain the photograph during the session if needed. In order to open discussion, I would ask display questions that did not demand much from the students. The following sample questions follow Wallerstein's 'tools for dialogue' (Wallerstein, 1983, p.79; Sugishita, 1995).

- *What do you see in the photograph? (e.g. setting, objects, position of students in the setting)*
- *What is the problem?*

Once this level of orientation had taken place, motives, behaviour, feelings and the rights and wrongs of a situation could be examined. The student's perception of an event was discussed, and, in some instances, students were prompted to see the situation from a variety of viewpoints. The next level of questioning would always be around likening a situation to the student's own experience, or whether this had occurred to them personally, and how it affected the student.

- *How do you feel about it?*
- *Why is there a problem?*
- *What can you do?*

This is where decodification ceases, and where recodification begins. Recodification is the process where learners 'expand their perceptions of the phenomena to examine the former perception and to recodify the themes more critically' (Rashidi & Safari, 2011).

3.5.1.5 Phase 5: Post-Discussion Writing Tasks

Phase Five, as Freire intended when using his model in an ESL or EFL context, incorporates a language-learning aspect. In this study, students used the discussion and codification as a stimulus to then write a short story or retell of events. Students were provided with the codification from their recent discussion and a list of topic words that had been generated from the discussion (e.g. bully, friend, help, fair, playing). Beyond this initial support, students treated sustained writing as an independent activity. At the conclusion of each literacy session, students who were willing to read their writing to the class were invited to do so, and this became a popular inclusion. This aspect of the literacy lesson was already a well-integrated part of classroom routine, however, up to the time of the research the topics for the students writing had come either solely from student choice, or from guided reading discussions where the guided reading text was the stimulus for talk. Writing samples have been included as appendices and can be found in Appendices 6.

3.6 Instruments

Qualitative data was collected throughout this six-week study, and the figure below illustrates a visual representation of the five research phases as determined by Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973). Included are the instruments used for data collection at each phase.

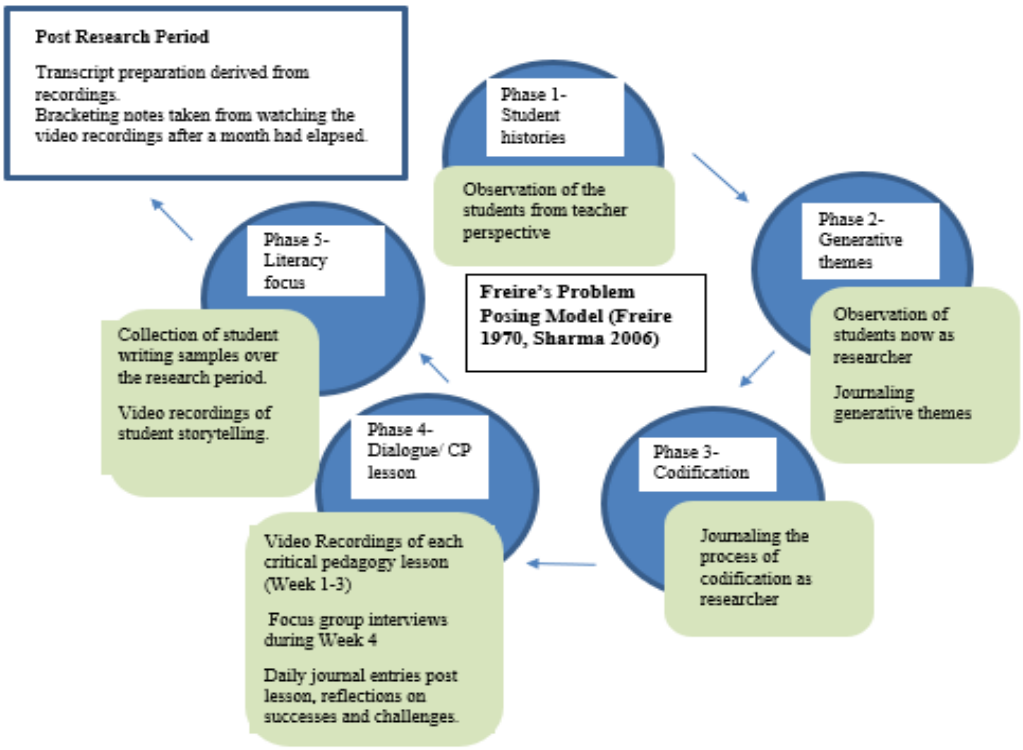

Figure 3.5 Freire's Problem Posing Model

Formal data collection began at Phase Two but was informed by developing rapport and better understanding of the setting throughout Phase One. I kept a researcher journal in order to document my thoughts surrounding possible generative themes and what approach my research would take. During Phase Two, the qualitative research approach in which we move in and out of roles from being a participant (teacher) to researcher and

vice versa (Merriam & Jossey-Bass, 2009) was particularly apt in this study, as I looked specifically for suitable generative themes with a researcher's perspective, considering the focuses of this study. I began a reflexive journal that was initially comprised of possible generative themes, as deemed relevant based on Phase One. This practice of keeping a journal was continued through the codification making of Phase Three, allowing me to reflect on the suitability and relevance of certain themes over others. This process was helpful in clarifying my approach while remaining aligned to critical pedagogy principles guiding the making of the materials (Rashidi & Safari, 2011).

Phase Four introduced a wider range of instruments once the critical pedagogy lessons began with the participants. During this phase, I used daily video observations to record each session, wrote daily lesson observation reflections straight after each session and, during the final week of field work, I conducted focus group semi-structured interviews.

3.6.1 Video Recorded Observations

Video recording each lesson was a key component, and necessary both for transcription purposes and for micro-analysis of the interaction's students had with one another, the teacher, and the way the lesson was conducted. Cultural historical researcher Marilyn Fleer writes:

> Being able to view the interactions repeatedly and at times to review them frame by frame was invaluable for doing microanalysis of children's interactions. Unlike adults, whose language abilities are well developed, children's interactions are marked by nonverbal signs and body language. (Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008, p. 110)

Each daily critical pedagogy lesson was recorded using a microphone and video recording software on my laptop. The Mac OS X application *Photobooth* was chosen because it was user-friendly, and easy to open and set up quickly. A research quality microphone was used to ensure that extraneous sound was minimised. During the recordings, at each new utterance, I would move the microphone close to the speaker. Facilitating discussion

effectively with the participants meant that there were turn-taking expectations, listening to others, and orientating the students to whose turn it was, normally by going around in a circle. However, in the instances where conversation flagged, or a student really wanted to share, these formalities were adjusted depending on the situation. Where I felt the conversation was being dominated by single voices, or where students had 'opted out' due to lack of confidence, my role was to bring everyone back into the discussion.

The camera on my laptop computer was angled to include all students in the frame and checked thoroughly before recording to ensure that all students were filmed correctly. Because I was working with small groups of students (n = 7 maximum in each group), this was achievable. I was also seated close and we formed a semicircle, where discussion could be heard, removing any formal dynamics that could influence freedom of discussion. Once the 25-minute session had concluded, or the discussion had reached an end, students were then directed on to their next literacy task.

3.6.2 Daily lesson reflections

A reflexive journal was kept for the duration of the research, and daily entries were written during Phase Four at the conclusion of each critical pedagogy lesson. These reflections were spontaneous, and the voice is that of the teacher documenting the successes and challenges that I felt. The notes included observations of students' reactions to critical pedagogy and critical evaluation of the lesson from my perspective as participant observer (Merriam & Jossey-Bass 2009).

3.6.3 Focus Group Interviews

Yin describes focus groups as gathered individuals who have previously had some common experience, or presumably share some common views (Yin, 2010). My rationale for selecting a focus group, as opposed to interviewing students individually, was primarily the age of the students. Alongside Yin's recommendation, I felt that a focus group was the best option when working with children, or groups of participants who might more readily express their thoughts in a group setting than they would individually.

This data collection method did require 'skilful facilitation in managing the dynamics of the group' (Petty, Thompson, & Stew, 2012), but I had the benefit of having a rapport with the participants already, and a full understanding of the personalities present within the group. This meant that I was able to ask for translation assistance from the group where students needed this support. This study also recognises that, when working with young students in small groups, there can still be dominant personalities who influence the others.

I developed a simple protocol for interviewing that generally followed the same format. I would pose the following open-ended questions to the students, allowing for student-directed conversation, while guiding back to the topic when necessary. All interviews were conducted in English, which meant I was reliant on the students to translate for each other where meaning was unclear. In those instances, I would rephrase or simplify the question. The protocol questions are clear and in child-friendly language that does not over-complicate, or cause confusion for the student.[5]

1. What do you like about teacher time?
2. Do you miss guided reading, or do you like using the photograph?6 Why?
3. What do you learn when we talk together?
4. Does talking about the photograph help your writing?

Each interview took roughly 25 minutes, sometimes longer depending on the student's engagement and participation. I was able to observe interactions within the focus group and this also formed part of my data set for further analysis.

3.6.4 Writing Samples

Phase Five is the consolidation phase of the model and incorporated a linguistic element that would provide opportunity for the participants to practice using new vocabulary and

[5] Question 2 asks the students to compare the critical pedagogy lesson to our previous routines of guided reading.
[6] 'Photograph' refers to the codification photograph

content into their writing. Eight writing samples have been included as appendices (Appendices 6) to illustrate how Phase Five was implemented in this particular research and provides additional context for the reader regarding the participants writing ability at the time of the research. A range of student ability is provided, with two samples being selected from each of the four levelled groups (L1A, L1B, L2, L3).

The first sample provided in each case is a sample of journal writing from a guided reading lesson and serves as a typical piece of writing consistent with the period before the research commenced. The second sample is a piece of writing taken during the research period, either in the third week, or fourth week of the research period. Spelling mistakes have been omitted for clarity of reading, but the content, flow and cohesion of the text remains unchanged.

At the conclusion of Phase Five, I used the following month to organise transcription of all video recordings made during Phase Four. These transcripts were later used in analysis. I also completed a second set of observational notes which involved a detailed watching and note-taking of the recordings. The delay of a month allowed me to re-examine the recordings with fresh eyes, examining student behaviours (both on and off task), expressions, disengagement with the lesson and connection with the lesson. The notetaking here was objective, with a focus on detail and studying the student's responses as a means of cross-examining any previous bias and assumptions from my own journal.

3.7 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Smith, 2015) was employed for data analysis. Smith (2015) defines interpretive thematic analysis as going 'beyond description, to decipher the (deeper) meanings in the data and interpret their importance' (p. 226).

The table provided gives an overview of how each research question was addressed by the data collection tools, and the strategy used in analysis of the data.

Table 3.4 *Data Collection Tools*

Research Questions	**Data Collection Tools**	**Data Analysis Strategy**
What are the pedagogical, and social benefits of applying critical pedagogy as part of the literacy lesson with young Arabic learners in an EFL setting?	Transcripts from video observations Teachers Reflexive Journal Daily Lesson Observational Notes Bracketing notes Video observations Focus Group interviews Lesson reflection notes	Thematic Analysis using Braun and Clarke's *Six Phases of Thematic Analysis* (2006): • Familiarisation • Coding • Searching for themes • Reviewing themes • Defining and Naming Themes • Writing the report
How do young Arabic learners perceive the effectiveness of a critical pedagogy lesson?	Focus Group interviews Bracketing notes Teachers Reflexive Journal	As above

The following table (Table 3.10) outlines the process of thematic analysis at each of the six phases used in this research: familiarisation of the data set, coding together similar data segments, searching for themes (including thematic mapping), reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report. It includes descriptions of how data were analysed in this research, according to each phase. It also outlines the criteria I used to validate my analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Smith (2015).

Table 3.5 *Six Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006, Smith, 2015)*

Phases	Phases Descriptor	Criteria (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Smith, 2015)
Familiarisation	This involves developing a general knowledge of the data set. • I read and reread the transcripts and field notes. The focus was to move beyond reading in a superficial way and begin analysis through asking questions that guided the process; videoed observations were reviewed again during this time, involving data screening.	• The transcripts were checked against original recordings to ensure all details were accounted for.
Coding	• Coding groups together in similar data segments is the initial step in identifying patterns in the data. With the research questions in mind, I systematically worked through the transcripts, field notes, journal entries and questionnaire capturing the patterns recurring across the data sources. • I coded the entire data set twice, to ensure thoroughness. To fill in any gaps with language miscommunication, I cross-referenced the transcripts to the videoed observation, to check for intonation and body language.	• Each data item was given attention during the coding process. • Time was equally spent coding transcripts and journal entries. • The researcher was active in the process, rather than themes 'emerging'
Searching for Themes	This is a step up into abstraction, moving from coding to searching for themes. • I drew a thematic map (figurative representations of the relationships between codes and potential themes) as a technique that helped develop individual themes and helped explore the relationship between themes.	• All relevant extracts for each theme was collated. • Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive. •
Reviewing Themes	Reviewing took place in two phases. • Firstly, I reviewed the themes against the coded data, to check if they 'worked' together. Was it a good fit, and had I done enough work in the first two phases? Did it address my research question and represent the content of my analysis and the research itself? • The second phase was to do a final review of the themes and data set as a whole to ensure that it worked with my research questions.	• Analysis and data match each other – the extracts illustrate the analytic claims. • Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over lightly.
Defining and Naming Themes	• Once I was confident I had a robust thematic map, I developed thematic definitions that captured the central organising concept of the theme. This also included the scope, coverage and boundary of each theme. Themes were given names, and 'essentially provide a road map' for writing up the results.	• Themes were cross-checked against each other and back to the original data set. • Themes are internally coherent, consistent and distinctive
Writing the Report	• The writing of the report followed expanding on my thematic definitions and contained two main elements of analytical commentary and excerpts of the data to illustrate.	• A good balance of analytic narrative and illustrative extracts are used • Analysis tells a well-organised and convincing story about the data and topic

3.8 Quality of Research Design

The criteria used in this study to establish the rigour of case-study design draws on recommendations informed by Duff (2014) Yin (2010) and Creswell (2009). In this section, I will also outline the tactics employed to address each of these criteria: Generalisability and Theory building (Section 3.7.1), Credibility (Section 3.7.2), Dependability (Section 3.7.3) and Transferability (Section 3.7.4).

3.8.1 Generalisability and Theory Building

Given the ongoing debate in wider literature on the significance and contribution of case studies towards making generalisations and being able to determine general principles (Duff, 2014), this study acknowledges the current contentions and seeks to apply recommendations made, acknowledging researchers (Duff, 2008, 2104; Eisenhart, 2009; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Yin, 2014) who refute common critiques of case study research and argue for 'theoretical generalisation'. Yin (2014) describes theoretical generalisation in relation to the case as, 'the opportunity to shed empirical light about some theoretical concepts or principles… that go beyond the setting for the specific case' (p.40). This study acknowledges the wider contributions of case studies in generating theory and critiquing, contesting and falsifying existing theory to which the case study does not conform. Given the contention around this type of research methodology, this study seeks to alleviate concerns by confronting any researcher bias and offering disconfirming evidence or problematic evidence (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Duff 2014).

3.8.2 Credibility

Qualitative credibility means that the 'researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures and is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants or the readers of the account' (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Creswell advises using multiple strategies to strengthen credibility, and I have accounted for the strategies used in this research below.

1. *Triangulation of multiple data sources for analytical purposes.* According to Bryman (2007), 'the validity of any research study depends on the trustworthiness of the representations that depict it. Relying on one method of data collection may bias the research or provide a different picture to the researcher of the phenomenon under investigation' (p. 272). The methods of collecting the data for this research were focus group interviews, videoed observations, keeping a reflexive journal, daily lesson observational notes and observational notes for the purpose of bracketing.
2. *Presentation of negative or discrepant information* that runs counter to the themes. In my analysis I have presented disconfirming evidence where possible. This enables all perspectives to be validated and represented in this research and enables the reader to be fully informed.
3. *Spending prolonged engagement in the field* allows for in-depth understanding and adds credibility to the research account. As the English teacher of the participants, I was able to spend the year leading up to my research in the classroom, which was the research setting. I also taught the guided reading programme that was used as the comparison communicative task.
4. When presenting themes, I have attempted to present and describe the students in detail and give more than one perspective from different accounts. My aim is to give students a voice and maintain the integrity and flow of the transcript. The analysis of the research aimed to examine patterns of interactions and describe attitudes over the course of the research.

3.8.3 Dependability

Qualitative dependability is a researcher's examination of the consistency and stability of their research. Yin (2003) recommends documenting procedures and processes as clearly as possible and advises setting up protocols for case studies. In this study I have described in detail the procedures and processes I undertook to ensure that my approaches are clearly understood. I have also adapted protocols established by related EFL researchers (Freire, 1973; Rashidi & Safari, 2011; Tulung, 2008) working in the field of critical pedagogy and

ESL. During analysis of qualitative data, I chose to implement a six-phase framework developed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006), in order to ensure that there was no drift in the definition of codes, nor shift in meaning during my research. Defining and naming themes was an essential part of this process and provided a road map for my writing.

3.8.4 Transferability

Slevin and Sines (2000) recommend criteria for transferability, in recognition that findings from qualitative research may be transferable to other sites and situations. This study was able to align with three of the five criteria, and these are outlined here:

- Providing rich and dense data. In order for others to make informed decisions about the level of transferability this study has to other contexts, this study included a substantial amount of information about the phenomenon and the research setting.
- Studying the leading edge of change. This aspect refers to the timespan of a study's findings, where changes in a particular field can leave findings 'out of date' beyond a particular timespan. One way around this was to recommend strategies which are useful and usable for the future. This study has adopted Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) and has tested its transferability with students' decades on, in another geographical context, with success.
- Use of a systematic approach. This study was very systematic in its approach as it was guided by Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) which formed the basis of the research design. Other principles also guided the study, such as Wallerstein's (1983) recommendations for codification, and Rashidi and Safari's (2011) Principles for Materials Development.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

I ensured that, throughout all stages, my research was carried out and reported in an ethical manner. Ethical considerations were taken into account at each stage, as outlined below,

and included: permissions (Section 3.8.1) informed consent (Section 3.8.2), confidentiality (Section 3.8.3).

3.9.1 Permissions

Prior to the research beginning, effort was made to seek permission from Curtin University of Technology and the Research Department at the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC). Ethics clearance for the research had to be sought and obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee. On receiving the 'Research Involving Humans Ethics Clearance: Form A' (See Appendix 1), I applied for clearance from the Abu Dhabi Education Council Research Department (See Appendix 2). Once this was obtained, permission was sought from my Principal, which was conditional on having ADEC clearance. Permissions were then sought from parents in the form of a newsletter with accompanying sign sheet. Students and parents needed to co-sign, to show that all parties involved understood the nature of the study. Permissions and all communication related to the research was translated into Arabic and went home in the students' communication folders. If I felt that students needed further help in understanding, or an opportunity to ask questions, I would arrange for a translator from the Arabic staff to assist. Every effort was made to ensure that communication was transparent for both the student participants and their parents, in order to minimise any possibility of coercion that students might have felt. It was made clear in the information letter sent to parents that participation was not linked to grades, specialised treatment or reward of any kind. Likewise, non-participation would incur no penalty.

3.9.2 Informed Consent

A Student and Parent letter was sent home to the parents of students. (Appendix 3). This information covered aspects such as the nature of the research, the method of recording the students, and what would be required of the students should they choose to participate in the research. The information letter also addressed privacy and confidentiality issues. The Student and Parent letter was translated into Arabic, as this was the spoken language at home. I followed this a few days later with a translated 'Letter of Consent' (Appendix

4 and Appendix 5) for all students to take home, given the general information that had been provided. Parents were given the option to state any conditions on the consent letter, and both student and parent signatures were required before I could consider a student a participant. At each point, I reminded the parents and students that participation was entirely voluntary, with the option also to withdraw their involvement in the data collection at any stage without any consequences or penalties.

3.9.3 Confidentiality

The personal identity of students has remained confidential by using pseudonyms for all participants in the study. Data from the research was not discussed or shared with any other parties outside the research project. All data remains confidential.

3.10 Data Storage

Data is stored as outlined in Section 3.6 of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Clear and accurate records of my research and data sources (including electronic data) are kept in safe and secure storage at the STEM Education Research Group, Curtin University, for a period of seven years as per Curtin University policy. Research data (both hard copy and electronic data) is retrievable, and safely maintained. Care has been taken to handle confidential information within the parameters agreed with the participants. The data storage provisions are outlined in the attached Research Data Management Plan and meet the Curtin Research Data and Primary Materials Policy.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

Following the description of research methods employed in this study in Chapter 3, this chapter is devoted to presenting the findings and analysis of two research questions:

1. What are the pedagogical, and social benefits of applying critical pedagogy as part of the literacy lesson with young Arabic learners in an EFL setting?

2. How do young Arabic learners perceive the effectiveness of a critical pedagogy lesson?

Following a systematic analysis and thorough examination of video-recorded lesson observations, researcher journal entries, focus group interviews and observation notes, two key thematic categories emerged from the triangulated data:

1. Student pedagogical growth

2. Fostering a supportive learning community

These themes convey the overarching benefits that were evidenced during student-led discussions and capture not only responses directly related to the scenarios presented by the codification, but also responses from focus group interviews, where the students were asked to talk about their own attitudes towards the use of the codification in the lesson. Teacher journal extracts also corroborate and offer insights into the teacher's own journey in using Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) to promote dialogic teaching within the EFL classroom. Each research question is addressed by its related themes and categorised by corresponding thematic patterns. Student verbatim drawn from focus group interviews, the video-recorded critical pedagogy lessons and journal entries are provided in order to

present a holistic understanding of the investigated phenomenon. Table 4.1 below summarises the data sources and thematic patterns.

Table 4.1 *Summary of key categories associated with thematic patterns*

Themes	Patterns	Data Sources
Student pedagogical growth	Critically examining a learning situation using multiple perspectives Preparedness for Writing • Metacognition • Motivation • Oral rehearsal of ideas • Background knowledge	Transcripts of critical pedagogy sessions Focus group interviews and transcripts Video recordings of each critical pedagogy lesson Teacher journal Researcher journal
Fostering a supportive learning community	Developing empathy Student Autonomy- Voice and Choice	

The following section examines the themes and patterns in greater detail, and presents evidence derived from Phase 4 (Section 3.5.1.4) of Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973). Students were presented an identical codification photograph to study and following Wallerstein's (1983) 'tools for dialogue', questions would then orientate the students to the events, motives, behaviour, feelings and rights and wrongs being portrayed within the codification. A deeper level of questioning would then take place where links to a student's own experience could be explored through discussion. Finally, a level of consolidation, or recodification would take place, where students could reframe the situation in a more positive light or suggest solutions to the problems being presented. This format was consistent throughout.

4.2 Student Pedagogical Growth

Analysis indicated that the implementation of critical pedagogy lessons following Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) gave young students two principle benefits. Firstly, it provided these students with an opportunity to critically examine a visual stimulus and

look at the situation flexibly, using a variety of logical responses, rather than presenting a single rigid consensus. As students became familiar with the meaning-making style of the session, where the codification was probed beyond superficial reasoning, they moved away from seeking the group consensus, and the one right answer, to being able to contribute their views from different perspectives, all with some logical reasoning behind them. Students delved more into problem-solving, not only in the sense of resolving the issues depicted in the codification, but in trying to determine the 'hidden' clues that could underpin the scenario itself.

Secondly, students made explicit connections between the discussion around the codification during Phase Four, and Phase Five where some written output was demanded. In this study, the students were expected to write a short independent narrative, using topics, themes and events from the codification as a stimulus. The following sections examine these two thematic patterns in detail.

4.2.1 Critically examining a learning situation using multiple perspectives

During the first week of the study, as students were still adjusting to the flow and format of the session, the use of codification in critical pedagogy lessons often provoked simplistic responses that appeared to reflect a superficial understanding of the scenarios. For example, when determining the actions and motivations of actors in the codification, the descriptors of 'good' and 'bad' students were often quickly allocated without much deeper processing. Student discussion around the behaviour that was displayed would then reinforce other students' opinions of the actors in the photograph, to the point where a consensus was reached quickly, without too much debate. To illustrate this point, students at Level 3 (or expanding level according to the TESOL 2006 framework) are discussing the [7]'Work or Play' codification (Figure 4.1) below where three actors appear to be attending to their bookwork and task, while one has a pile of blocks and a closed

[7] From left to right: Aisha, Mahra, Hind, Tasneem

book. In establishing the initial scene through the open question of 'what do you see', the topic of work is quickly elicited from the students.

Figure 4.1 'Work or Play' Critical Pedagogy Codification

One Level 3 (L3) student, Bayan, determines which of the students in the photograph is on task and who is, in her words, 'cheating'.

> Bayan: Tasneem is writing in her book. She don't like look for other what they are do. She is doing also Aisha, Aisha doing her work. Hind she is looking at Aisha, maybe she is finish Aisha, she put all the counters in her, she want to cheat her on her work. And she don't, like she maybe close her eyes don't see, she do her work with, she Mahra and Tasneem and Aisha are doing a work but Hind, she is cheating.[8] (Video-recorded learning episode 1, May, 2016)

The same conversation evidences students who quickly either agree with Bayan's account, or label other actors as 'not working', 'playing' or alternatively 'doing their work'. There is frustration from one student, Hadeel, who found the abstract nature of looking at a

[8] All grammatical mistakes in verbatim accounts of students' responses are kept intact to reflect the data originality/ authenticity, unless it interferes with comprehensibility. In this case, researcher's notes will be provided in brackets.

photograph for information difficult. ‘Miss, when are we going to write a story?’ comes at the beginning of the lesson (Observational Notes, May, 2016). Other L3 members struggled with the critical pedagogy lesson, because it took them into unfamiliar territory where they no longer were the ‘experts’ where the standard response of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ used to suffice. My journal entries with this group reflect this also:

> *They weren’t sure what the right response was, and so where I had this instant conversation with my lower groups, my more able girls weren’t sure. They asked if they were going to read a story and seem annoyed that it was another talk about a photo.* (Teacher journal entry, May, 2016)

Additionally, one student, Fatima, revealed this frustration at ‘not knowing’:

> Because Miss Nadine, when you read a book you get information and you learn a lot of words and when you see a photograph you are like ‘why that photograph?’ We see only, we don’t like maybe read something or you tell us question we don’t know maybe because when we, the last thing we in the photograph I didn’t know and some girls don’t know. (Focus group interview, May 2016)

Perhaps this unfamiliar feeling of not knowing the single ‘right’ answer, during a task that was purposely designed to be open-ended and open to interpretation, was the reason this group were the most rigid and quick in their summation of the codification. This group tended to go with majority rule and enjoyed presenting lists of right and wrong behaviour, becoming unsettled when they were prompted to think divergently.

However, as the same students became more familiar with the discussion format in critical pedagogy as the weeks followed, there was some observable evidence of students adopting flexibility in their thinking. I documented this pedagogical shift in my teacher journal:

> *My success seems to be a richer talking environment that occurs on the student's behalf, rather than me leading with a question and answer format. Talk remains on talks, sometimes repetition of comments made before but the girls are starting to look for new interpretations of events.* (Teacher Journal, May 2016)

Through the careful use of questioning that challenged any rigid stance, I was able to elicit other possibilities from the student's initial interpretation and, in some cases, the alternatives changed the status of the characters depicted in the codification. In this excerpt, students in L3 are discussing the 'Language Barrier' codification and trying to determine why one student is noticeably disengaged from the task.

Figure 4.2 [9] Language Barrier Codification

> Teacher: I want you to think about what could the reason be that she just sitting there not doing anything? Yeah?
>
> Hamda; Miss maybe she, her mom and dad, they are fighting and maybe split.

[9] From left to right: Aisha, Hind (standing) Mahra, Tasneem

Ghadeer: Miss maybe her best friend die.

Hadeel: Miss maybe she is cutting down.

Teacher: Did you hear Hadeel? Hadeel said maybe she is working but she is just

cutting under the table. She is still doing her work. That's a smart little way to think about it. I am thinking this another way. Girls when you come into my maths class what do you girls all know how to speak?

All of them: English

Teacher: Does everybody always know how to speak?

All: No.

(Video-recorded learning episode 2, May, 2016)

The teacher's questioning led to a fruitful discussion about awareness of others who might feel isolated due to their low English proficiency. Interestingly, the groups with the least proficiency in speaking English were the most open to looking at scenarios in a multiple of ways. In this transcript excerpt, the Level 1A (L1A) group is discussing the 'Work and Play' codification. This time, the teacher models an alternative reason as to why one student has the blocks, that the student has been given free time because of her hard work in class. Layan picks up on this and is able to see other alternatives as either 'good things' or 'bad things', which removes the good and bad status from the actor in the codification to the action itself.

> Tolan: Miss maybe she finish but she want to play but she don't say for the teacher.
>
> Teacher: Maybe. That's another thing. Do you know, did you think that maybe this girl, maybe she had finished her work?
>
> Shamsa: Maybe
>
> Teacher: Maybe
>
> Layan: Miss I said to you
>
> Teacher: Maybe she finished her work first and the teacher said, 'ok now you can have free time'.
>
> Layan: And when you see it only the bad thing you say that she close her book and but when you see the good things you say she go to the miss and she say to her 'I finish my work', she [the teacher] will say to her you finish your work you have free time. (Video-recorded learning episode 3, May, 2016)

Students were able to challenge the notion of what task engagement was and how it looked. Traditionally, open schoolbooks, sitting at the desk and being quiet were indicators of 'working', whereas a student doing another activity was off-task or playing. Data evidence pointed to students being able to reconceptualise the scenario to positively explain the students' blocks, or different task, closed book etc., in a way that challenged any superficial reasoning.

4.2.2 Preparedness for Writing

The results of this study found that the discussion of themes and content from the codification prepared the students to then proceed to the task of writing independently.

This is in keeping with Freire's Problem Posing Model (Freire, 1973) where during Phase Five, students engage in explicit learning of vocabulary derived from the codification discussion.

The pre-writing critical pedagogy discussion enabled the students orally to rehearse the characters' motivations, a plot structure, a complication of sorts and a way to resolve the issue. The benefits of the group discussion using critical pedagogy included introduction of new vocabulary, translation of vocabulary into the students' first language, hearing a cohesive storyline and listening to sentence structure.

During analysis of discussion transcripts and focus interview transcripts, the following thematic patterns emerged in relation to the students' preparedness for writing:

- Metacognition
- Motivation
- Oral rehearsal of ideas
- Background knowledge

4.2.2.1 Metacognition

Metacognitive knowledge is described as stored knowledge about one's own cognitive state, or about the nature of cognition in general, *meta* meaning going beyond, or moving to a higher conceptual level, with *cognition* referring to our ability to think or know. Larkin's (2009) study of metacognition reports how, when children understand that ability is not fixed and that learning involves failure and mistakes, they are more likely to think about how they have solved a task. Children exhibiting this style are likely to focus on task-oriented strategies and effort. They are able build a base of metacognitive knowledge about themselves in relation to tasks, which has the benefit of enabling them to transfer their learning from one situation to another. Glimpses of students being able to identify and describe the critical pedagogy lesson in reflective terms, as to how it challenged their thinking and knowledge, was evidenced in this study and described here.

The use of the codification as a stimulus for writing was described by the students as more complex than usual literacy tasks and required deeper cognitive processing in order to incorporate it into a story. Complex processes were required for the students to participate in the lesson, since the use of the critical pedagogy codification encouraged students to read the underlying meaning embedded in an image and be able to follow the same processes of comprehension as they would if they were reading a printed text. Students were required to look at the key message conveyed in the photograph. They were asked to think about the actors' motivations depicted, which called for critical thinking strategies. Students needed to make predictions about what was happening, and why. They needed to evaluate their response in the light of new information about the scenario. All these processes occurred from the starting point of a recognisable situation, activating prior knowledge.

A recurrent word used by students, when asked to describe the use of the critical pedagogy codification as a discussion basis and writing prompt, was 'big'. In the following excerpts, emergent students in L1A use the word 'big' to describe the process required of the students, which was communicating to each other in English in order to prepare for writing. Students mention doing a 'big work' or 'going big' and, in this sense, it speaks of the student's capacity to think and produce something of worth to them. Reem and Tolan, students in L1A and Level 1B (L1B) respectively, were able to articulate this during focus group interviews:

> Reem: Miss what is the good way we go big and we only know the word and we write the word or when we go big and write all story and all the people know. The only, good as the people all know me and I write stories so much like that. (L1A Focus group interview, June, 2016)

and

> Tolan: Miss I love, I do like, I love it because I can know another something and I, and I talk with the girls about this picture and we do a big work like this. (L1B Focus group interview, June, 2016)

Similarly, Elham spoke of her head being 'too big' in the following excerpt, in the context of her recognition of the growth she had made as a learner, and improvements she had made with her reading and writing: 'Miss I love it the reading and writing because my head is very, is too big. The girls say that this is one time, for sure' (L1B Focus Group Interview June 2016). This also resonates with my observation notes made later about this student, 'She persistently reaches for new ways to describe what she is seeing' (Video Observation notes, August 2016).

4.2.2.2 Motivation

Student motivation, or inner drive to respond towards a task plays an important role in student writing where the desire to write should spring from a real purpose or need (Winch & Johnson, 2004). The responsibility lies with the teacher to provide children with something authentic to write about, and not simply give a topic that has no real connection to the students. Winch and Johnson (2004) describe motivation as being the 'key factor for an effective writing classroom as well as other factors such as; writing for purpose, knowing there will be a time of sharing, that there will be opportunities for making choices' (p. 296). By using generative themes and presenting a problem that was within the students' means to solve based on prior experience, the students demonstrated motivation in a variety of ways. When looking at observation notes taken from the video recordings of this group, there is a noticeable awareness of students' body language moving from passive (at the beginning of the lesson) to being fully engaged (once the photograph has been given) in the task. I wrote in my observational notes, 'No other input is given, but I notice straight away that the body language changes. Girls [are] sitting forward and, while turn taking is happening, there is the expectation of talk, like someone will contribute as soon as one is finished.' (Observation Notes, August, 2016).

Reem talked about her motivation to be a capable writer and about making money from her writing. She was motivated to write lengthy books, and 'not small books'. When asked about the use of the critical pedagogy codification, she was able to connect the time spent thinking with the impact it had on building her confidence as a writer.

> Reem: Miss I like the picture. I see the picture and [have done it] because when we, when we become big, all the people know me, like I write so many book, when I write so many book is its big not small. I write so many book and when like all the people know me she [other people] give me money and all thing and I like. (L1B Focus group interview, June, 2016)

An example of an emergent L1 student (TESOL, 2006) motivated to communicate is seen here in the excerpt below, taken during the focus group interview. At first, Ahad's meaning is difficult to determine, and she is asked by her teacher to clarify. When she does, she uses circumlocution. Circumlocution is demonstrated by learners who use their known resources, either verbal (simple words) or nonverbal (body language, gesture) to compensate for cognitive and linguistic demands above their current repertoire. Other examples of this use of drama to bridge gaps in language were evidenced in two groups, both emergent speakers, who in both occurrences used the assistance of the other students in the group to act out the unknown vocabulary (1LA Video-recorded learning episode 4, May 2016; 1LB Video-recorded learning episode 5, May 2016). In the following excerpt, Ahad uses circumlocution to communicate the way she sees the actors in the codification and how she could manipulate them almost as dolls within her own imagination.

> Ahad: I like it the photo, like read it for all the class, you take the photograph and you, you like, you take the photograph, like a picture then tell them a story. Like these girls have a story, like these girls have a story. Like, their city have like a problem, we take from this girl a story, like a doll and we do it something, it is from her, the doll. Yeah, we need for, we read about this girl, read about this girl and like about.
>
> Teacher: So you've liked, ok, now I want to, I am trying to understand what you mean Ahad, so when we use the photographs?
>
> Ahad: Yeah, we take, we take this girl, we read about her, what is good in,

> Teacher: Yeah, yeah
>
> Ahad; I take this girl, you take, because she take or… [Ahad pretends to hold two imaginary figures and moves them about]
>
> L1A Focus group interview, June, 2016)

For Ahad, the photograph made abstract concepts more concrete and served as visual support for her to associate meaning-making with language processing as part of her own uptake of critical pedagogy in her writing. This 'dramatization' was also evidenced at other points with other lower ability students, who would use circumlocution as part of a language learning strategy.

4.2.2.3 Oral Rehearsal of ideas

Focus group interviews taken from L1A indicated that these students recognised the importance of and valued the opportunity to brainstorm together in order to generate more ideas before they wrote about their topic. This was a chance for students to rehearse ideas, to build on each other's ideas within a supportive small group setting. The following vignette from Level 2 (L2) examples this exchange of ideas:

> Mera: Miss maybe one day one girl her name Tasneem and three girls are working together and one girls don't do anything because she don't know to do her
>
> Teacher: So like a story, like a once upon a time, we could do it like that
>
> Aisha: Miss Nadine, the first, the first I would write hi my name is Aisha and I will write maybe one day a great five come to class miss Nadine there, then, then miss Nadine give him paper to write in. The she, miss Nadine said three was, four was like that, to get four together, four together. Then, then I get the one

> Eisha: Its these three girls
>
> Aisha: Aisha and Hind and Tasneem to, Aisha and Hind and this, she is still working together. Then you come and take why you don't work with, why you don't work with Tasneem, why you don't work with Tasneem, she said
>
> Mera: Miss or maybe say [unintelligible] what you are don't talking together. She don't understand and don't talking in the class like that
>
> Teacher: These are very nice ideas girls, ok
>
> Eisha: Miss Nadine that you said, maybe Tasneem, maybe Tasneem take the colour because she would colour the money, colour the money. Then the three girls say no, no, we will colour first. (Video-recorded learning episode 6, May, 2016)

In this excerpt, it is the level of oral rehearsal required during the critical pedagogy discussion that the girls see as preparing them for the demands of writing a story in English, not only in terms of consolidating their English vocabulary but also in developing their authorial voice, which makes for a good storyteller and writer. Notes taken post-observation in the L1B group also echo this aspect, 'The ideas flow quicker now for my [L1B] group in terms of storytelling. They can build in motivation and reasoning' (Observation notes, August, 2016) and corroborate my researcher journal notes, as in, for example, 'Ahad is now very adept at layering motivation to why girls don't like other girls. Can jump right in to this level quickly' (Teacher journal, May 2016). Transcript evidence showed repetition of locutions, and student and teacher uptakes where students took verbal cues from the small group members and would incorporate and rephrase them in their oral productions during the critical pedagogy discussion.

Not all students responded in positively, however. Frustration over 'talking about a photograph' was felt by one higher achieving student who found the dialogic and

problem-posing nature of the lesson tedious, and who wanted to focus on the skill development of reading aloud with the teacher, a routine she had missed since the critical pedagogy intervention:

> Because Miss Nadine when you read a book you get information and you learn a lot of words and when you see a photograph you are like 'why that photograph'? You tell us question we don't know maybe because when we, the last thing we [discussed] in the photograph I didn't know, and some girls don't know. (Focus Group transcript, June 2016)

4.2.2.4 Background Knowledge

A child's rich store of experiences should form the basis of their own writing (McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000). Young learners cannot write from a vacuum of little input, neither is a 'one shot lesson' going to suffice. For children really to write with motivation and confidence, the topic must be experienced either by the individual, or collectively as a shared experience. This can be facilitated by the teacher in many ways, such as a class excursion, visitors to the school, or building student knowledge through literature. In this study, the recall of background knowledge was derived from careful selection of the generative themes during Phase One and Phase Two. McCarrier et al. (2000) recommend not only drawing from a child's experiences but allowing significant talk before the writing begins to expand language in important ways, having new models of language from peers, the teacher and from literature. Our own critical pedagogy discourse based on the experiences of the students was evident as a major feature of Phase Four of Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) and served as pre-writing support as well as an opportunity for the students to practise the foreign language of English.

The codification scenario being depicted was broad enough for it to illicit a high number of responses where the exact situation had been experienced personally. Because there were various actors portraying different roles in the scenario, the students had a variety of examples they could identify with, therefore provoking their own experiences. Some

codifications generated more controversy than others, and these tended to generate more participation amongst all participants.

The codification 'Star Student' was particularly effective in this way, as this positive behaviour system had a daily impact on students. While generally successful in terms of giving class autonomy and responsibility, each student had also been on the receiving end of student corruption through the system. In this excerpt, both Elham and Habiba articulate their experiences of the injustice. In this excerpt we are discussing the allocation of points by the Star Students, and instances when students have been given fewer points than they felt was fair.

> Elham: Miss, me a Star Student and there was me and Shamsa. Shamsa is take to, is taken point and me bought the point. Not Shamsa is take it the point and bought the point only. I want to do take it the point and point again.
>
> Teacher: But did you ever had girls come to you saying 'Elham give me a point, give me a point' like this?
>
> Elham: No.
>
> Teacher: No? Ok. Did that happen to you? Has that happened to you Habiba?
>
> Habiba: Miss, Dana is Star of the Week, I quiet and Star of the Week, she, she take, take points, I quiet.
>
> Teacher: How did you feel? How did you feel?
>
> Habiba: Not happy.
>
> (Video-recorded learning episode 6, May, 2016)

Following this discussion, we then were able to link this experience to writing. The way the writing was presented also evolved over the duration of the study. A popular idea was for students to team up and write a role-play based on the codification, with students taking different roles. (Appendices 6)

> Elham: Miss can me and Habiba writing one story?
>
> Teacher: Maybe for this time yes, you can share your ideas, that's ok
>
> Ahad: No like is she was, like this have a paper, the two write same the story doing together, two girls [Habiba and Elham writing a role play based on the codification which had also become popular as well as a narrative piece].
>
> (Video-recorded learning episode 6, May, 2016)

In this instance, teacher journal notes here refer to a discussion about the personal experience of one student whose lost books were the cause of great anxiety for her. This student produced writing of a richer complexity than she had done when writing about events that were superficial (buying an ice-cream) or fantasy (being a princess).

> *So a few months back, Tolan wrote about the time she had lost her books, and I had made a big deal about it at the time. She wrote exactly what I had said, and how it made her panic about finding her lost books. It [her writing] was a real success because she had moved away from the usual topics of going to the mall, going to eat ice cream, being a princess. I had simply recounted an event that has meaning for her and it made some great writing.* (Teacher journal, May, 2016)

For Tolan it was not a pleasant recollection, but it was authentic, and, for some students, it marked a new path of giving permission for and valuing writing about their own experiences. (Appendices 6).

In summary, the critical pedagogy lesson using Freire's Problem Posing Model supported students' preparedness for writing because it activated the students' prior knowledge and experiences, through the problem-posing aspect of the codification. Students were able to rehearse language connected to the codification and have the support of listening to modelled sentences and vocabulary in a small group setting. The critical pedagogy discussion provided an open-ended space to brainstorm ideas and deepen the students' understanding.

4.3 Fostering a supportive learning community

Research into classroom climate and social hierarchies suggests that classroom environments which actively promote egalitarian social structures where students have more social ties to others in the class, even if just in acquaintance relationships, are far more productive for learning outcomes than rigid hierarchal structures where each student has fewer social connections and where a few students dominate the classroom (Cappella, Kim, Neal, & Jackson, 2013). A teacher can shift the social climate of the classroom by developing classroom activities that encourage students to mix together outside their fixed friendships. The critical pedagogy sessions allowed for this as students met together in groups that were not necessarily friendship groups, and where the teacher's facilitation provided a means for students to listen and share with each other. Both served this purpose; however, from analysing the transcripts, teacher journal, and video observations of the critical pedagogy session, the following pedagogical benefits conducive to a healthier social climate are delineated:

- Developing Empathy
- Student Autonomy- Voice and Choice

4.3.1 Developing Empathy

Stern and Cassidy (2018) define empathy as the 'capacity to comprehend the minds of others, to feel emotions outside our own and to respond with kindness, concern and care to others suffering' (p.1). Studies show that the pivotal role of loving parenting and the

levels of secure attachment that the child has with their primary caregiver are the greatest indicators of empathic development in young children. In other words, a securely attached child will already demonstrate these traits of caring for others, while children with low empathy due to insecure attachments will possibly be associated with poor peer relationships, hostility and bullying during their early and middle schooling years (Findlay, Giradi, & Coplan, 2006; Mayberry & Espelage, 2007; Miller & Eisenberg, cited in Stern & Cassidy, 2018.

In keeping with research theory, my students in Grade 4 were shifting their social focus from parents to their peers, with parental attachment continuing to influence everyday interactions in relation to their prosocial behaviour and ability to empathise (Booth-LaForce & Kerns 2009; Kerns & Brumariu, 2016; Scheider, Atkinson, & Tardif, cited in Stern & Cassidy, 2018). During the school-age years, particularly for girls, prosocial qualities such as empathy can increase, and learning activities that can continue to foster these traits are valuable and worthwhile. (Stern & Cassidy, 2018).

With the understanding that perhaps I could not 'teach' empathy, as it was already inherent to varying degrees within each student, I could nevertheless capitalise on the critical pedagogy approach to observe and document levels of empathy occurring within the classroom. The critical pedagogy lesson and discussion was also useful in providing a means to develop these attributes in the students.

It is apparent from analysis of video observations, focus group interviews, observational notes and journal entries that the critical pedagogy sessions provided an insight into the way students were able to relate to the problems posed in the codification and identify with a character or actor from the codification. The following excerpt details discussion derived from the 'Mean Girls' critical pedagogy codification:

> Teacher: Yeah. Can I ask you girls a question? Do you know, have you ever felt like, which girl have you felt like before?
>
> Reem: I've been like that.

> Teacher: You've been like this girl. Where you know girls have talked about you maybe?
>
> Reem: Yeah
>
> Teacher: Which one are you Rawdha sometimes? If you have to point you can.
>
> Rawdha: This, because in the home my sister or my brother, he or she say for me you… [uses L1]
>
> Farah: Stupid.
>
> Rawdha: My dad she said you, you not say for, you don't say for anything for him only some read and not listen for him, only a read. I am doing like this.
>
> (L1B Video-recorded learning episode 1, May 2016)

When viewing the video observation of this excerpt, I note the behaviour of the other students. The others in the group are somewhat engaged, but more eager to share rather than really listen to Rawdha's personal account. There is a shift in focus when Sheikha shares. Translation is used heavily, and all of the girls listened intently as Sheikha talked about being hit by her younger brother who was autistic. 'Aisha translated on her (Sheikha's) behalf, body language of students leaning in, and quiet as Sheikha spoke.' (Observation Notes, August, 2016) This was a significant moment for Sheikha in making a contribution to the discussion, and the girls sensed this rare occasion and assisted. The girls, used to Rawdha sharing with greater frequency, did not have the same concentration for what was being said; however, I believe the age of the students, and novelty of the discussion format had a bearing on this.

Another account exemplified here is taken from Level 2 students, using the 'Language Barrier' codification. Here students are discussing experiences and difficulties in learning English as a second language. Adeem shares her relative's experience of coming from Ajman, a neighbouring emirate where there was no bilingual reform occurring and all lessons were in the Arabic medium. She talks about her aunt struggling not knowing English, and how it was the same for Adeem when she came to Abu Dhabi in Grade 1. Adeem had a positive experience learning English with her teacher and could recall her high test scores.

> Adeem: Miss Nadine my [uses L1]
>
> Mera: Her baby aunt [cousin].
>
> Adeem: Ok. She said I don't love the English because she from Ajman, and Ajman don't do the math and science only Arabic, like this when I, like [unintelligible]…
>
> Teacher: Anyway, keep telling me the story.
>
> Adeem: Ok. Only because she don't know English. She said I don't love English. I said for her no problem, me too, when I go Grade 1, I don't know English and we do a quiz and I get 100 of 100 with Miss Jennifer.
>
> (L2 Focus group interview, June 2016)

Empathising with students who struggled in class with their English learning was a recurrent topic, and a perspective that I, as their teacher, would try and elicit from the conversation especially during discussion around the 'Language Barrier' codification (Figure 2), as the students did not tend to raise this perspective themselves, and would offer other reasons for why a student was isolated.

Figure 4.3 Language Barrier

Observational notes taken from the L3 video recording for this lesson report:

> I question students on what a good girl is. I ask, 'does this mean a naughty girl is a girl that does not do her work?' The girls mention Shouk. Shouk is in Grade 5, and I need to deflect by saying 'I have not taught Shouk in a long time'. It is interesting how quickly they [the students] determine who a 'bad' girl is. I question them deeper by asking about the girls in other classes who come from other Emirates, or from Saudi [Arabia] where no English program exists. Is she a bad girl based on the criteria of finishing her work? All say no. But then Hadiel argues that she didn't know much English in the beginning, and she worked hard at home, so everyone should be able to be 'excellent'. Aysha recounts her studying English at home to catch up. Then Tolan gives strategies for getting help that the students can access in class such as Table Captains, and Star Students. (L3 Observational notes, August, 2016)

What is evident is that the dialectic discussion described above gave space for students to draw upon their personal experience or background knowledge, in order to react either positively or negatively to the situation being depicted in the codification. It gave

opportunities for the students to think with fresh eyes about others, to question the instant judgements that they made and perhaps to continue to show understanding and empathy towards other students, and therefore foster a more supportive learning environment.

4.3.2 Student autonomy: 'Choice' and 'Voice'

It is suggested that supporting student autonomy (or student exercise of choice or volition) improves student wellbeing and fosters greater engagement in learning. Autonomous learning has long been associated with curiosity and persistence, and students who feel they have a voice and choice in their daily school experience remain in school for longer (Porter, 2014).

The critical pedagogy lesson enabled me, as teacher-researcher, to further scaffold and emphasise with the student's aspects such as respecting students' different voices, valuing creative thinking, fostering conceptual understanding and attending to students' questions. Choice was also a feature of the discussions, because of the open-ended nature of the conversation, and an acceptance of a variety of answers and solutions. However, I discovered that the critical pedagogy lessons not only supported student autonomy through 'choice', but through student 'voice' in decision-making which connected to the students' real-life experiences. This finding mirrors Canagarajah's (2005) postulation about the purpose of critical pedagogy within English language teaching as being a 'practice orientated stance where critical pedagogy is not a set of ideas but a way of doing teaching and learning. It is a practice motivated by a distinct attitude toward classrooms and society' (p.932).

In addition, in keeping with Rashidi and Safari s (2011) Principles for EFL Materials Development, it is important to recognise that the materials pursue the 'joint goal of language development and navigating recognisable issues that needed solving' (p. 254). To be true to critical pedagogy was to try to move students from a superficial understanding of topics to a more transformative understanding of their realities, which involves decision-making on how issues could be solved to provide a fair and equitable result for everyone.

The most crucial understanding evident across all examples was that the students had experienced the situations to some degree, and therefore had personal experience of frustration or isolation. They had some measure of 'voice' or solution already partially formed that they could bring to the discussion. The solutions were broad in their approaches, depending on the levels of empathy students had for the situation, from the punitive 'I would tell the teacher' and, 'I would say "do your work"' (L2 Video-recorded learning episode 1, May 2016), to the restorative, where girls would help each other, make amends and say sorry to each other. For example, in this excerpt from L1A students are discussing the 'Work or Play' codification and thinking about being placed in the role of teacher.

> Farah: Miss we have to, Miss look this girl do with herself and this girl with herself and this girl do with herself and this girl play. That's not correct because the girls have to be [uses L1] and she have to share with them, because she have all the blocks. Why?
>
> Teacher: Oh she has got all the blocks on her table. Interesting. What would you do Habiba if you were the teacher?
>
> Saemah: I say, I say the girl [other students in the group] is help the girl that- [uses L1]
>
> Shamsa; Shapes. Blocks
>
> Habiba: Blocks.
>
> (L1A Video-recorded learning episode 1, May 2016)

For this reason, this study does not entirely corroborate other studies that have found the process of teaching for transformation as a slow and gradual process (Shin & Crookes, 2005; Ko, 2013) and this is primarily related to the selection of generative themes embedded in student experience and the use of the codification in the form of a

photograph. In other words, the visual stimulus provided a vividly concrete prompt that established a meaningful link between the critical pedagogy concepts and the student's language making. Without these visuals, it would have been harder to trigger these problem-solving viewpoints and stimulate more proactive discussion.

In this excerpt, L3 students are discussing the 'Star Student' codification and the behaviour system used in the classroom, where two chosen Star Students sit at the teacher's desk and give student points for on-task behaviour. Having reached the end of the year, the students were ready to voice the ways they would improve this practice of delegating responsibility.

> Teacher: The question is if you were going to tell me what to do again for next year with a new class, what advice would you give me?
>
> Hadeel: Miss maybe you don't let the star student put points. They just help and, like they don't do this points and things like that. Everything but they don't put dojo points. And if they want to put dojo points, miss you have to ask them 'are you sure?' And then you can go see if they are doing that.
>
> Teacher: Ok. So not give them so much responsibility for points.
>
> Aysha: Yeah. But points miss, it's better for you to put points but [because] the Star Students only give the ones they like.
>
> Teacher: See the problem for, ok, that is a really good answer. Who would like to go next? Yeah Ghadeer is your turn, then this way.
>
> Ghadeer: Ok. Miss like if we have Star Students like we need, ok, give Star Students like chose one but don't let them put class dojo because then when we come, they are, when they are not seeing the girls [they]

> just put, put points and she is not, she is not seeing the girls what she is doing and she is put, put [the points]. So I don't like this, it's not good.
>
> Teacher: Ok. Ok.
>
> (L3 in-class learning episode, video observation, June 2016).

Students were able to articulate their frustration and offer constructive and realistic strategies in order to improve the classroom system. This conversation later became a very fruitful debate over how many star students were needed, the roles they served and my role as the teacher. The students listened carefully to each other, reasoned logically and thought of multiple options for solving the problem as it applied to our class.

For some students, having a voice was not dependant on waiting until the end of the discussion. In this excerpt, students in L1B are also discussing the 'Star Student' codification. Midway, Tolan voices her opinion, demonstrating her outrage at the situation.

> Teacher: So she is feeling this is wrong, this is not fair. Ok here is my next question. Has this ever happened to you where you saw this happen with star students and how did you feel?
>
> Tolan M: Miss if I am there, I would say for the girls that is wrong. You don't do like this because that is a wrong something. (L1B Video-recorded learning episode 1, May 2016)

Later in the same lesson, Tolan wanted to use her time to write classroom rules about the point system and how the Star Students should behave in their position of responsibility. She felt the injustice deeply, having experienced it and having talked about it, and she wanted to change things for the better. For Tolan, and for others like her, the critical pedagogy discussion gave an opportunity to challenge the status quo and voice opinions pertaining to the classroom.

In summary, the critical pedagogy lessons provided an opportunity for students to make decisions that fostered a more supportive classroom environment. Through the use of the codification and critical pedagogy discussion, and the prior experiences of the students (who had felt frustration that classroom systems did not function as they should have), the dialectic discussion provided an outlet for promoting creative thinking and problem-solving skills.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The focus of this study was to examine the pedagogical and social cohesion benefits of incorporating a critical pedagogy approach with young Arabic learners of EFL. This study also sought to understand the students' own perceptions towards critical pedagogy, how the lessons impacted them, and to what extent this was the case.

To reiterate, this study addressed two main research questions:

1. What are the pedagogical and social benefits of applying critical pedagogy as part of the literacy lesson with young Arabic learners in an EFL setting?

2. How do young Arabic learners perceive the effectiveness of a critical pedagogy lesson?

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section provides a summary of the key findings for Research Questions 1 and 2. The second section discusses Research Question 1 using Rashidi and Safari's Principles for EFL Materials Development (2011) as a framework. It reviews the findings relating to the pedagogical and social benefits of using critical pedagogy, as evaluated by each of Rashidi and Safari's principles.

The third section of this chapter looks at Research Question 2, and summarises the findings related to student perceptions and attitudes towards the use of critical pedagogy in the classroom. This section compares and contrasts other similar critical pedagogy case studies with a focus on the students' responses.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

Analysis indicated that the implementation of critical pedagogy lessons following Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) promoted pedagogical development in critical thinking skills, and in preparation for further literacy tasks, in this case, creative writing. Findings indicate that students could look at a problematised situation and think flexibly about the causes and resolution of the problem, using a variety of logical responses rather than presenting a single rigid consensus. This adjustment took a little time, but as students became familiar with the meaning-making style of the session, where the codification was probed beyond superficial reasoning, they were less inclined to settle for one single reason, but listened to each other with greater depth, and took risks in responses that could encompass more possibilities. Students delved more into problem solving, not only in the sense of resolving the issues depicted in the codification, but in attempting to determine the 'hidden' clues that underpinned the scenario itself. This speaks to Freirean principles that ask that EFL materials move the students to make advances intellectually, moving from the concrete to the abstract, the less complex to the more complex.

Findings also indicated that students were able to make explicit connections between the discussion around the codification and their writing tasks. The pre-writing critical pedagogy discussion enabled the students to orally rehearse the characters' motivations, a plot structure, a complication of sorts and a means of resolving the issue. The benefits of the group discussion using critical pedagogy included the introduction of new vocabulary, translation of vocabulary into the students first language, hearing a cohesive storyline and listening to sentence structure. The use of critical approaches in this way is informed by social and interpersonal processes (Winch et al., 2014) that allow students to practise (or experiment with) all aspects of the target language needed for writing, for example, verbally brainstorming ideas and vocabulary related to the codification, before attempting writing. This also is considered important in terms of 'building the field' (p. 289), which refers to the level of motivating input required by the students before they can proceed and write with substance. Within this main theme of being prepared for writing, four sub-themes of metacognition, motivation, oral rehearsal of ideas, and use of

background or prior experience were evidenced and examined closely. This dual aspect of developing critical thinking, while building skills useful for language mastery and further literacy tasks, is in keeping with Freirean principles that see both goals as necessary within EFL.

Analysis indicated that the implementation of critical pedagogy lessons following Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) promoted a greater level of social cohesion, through opportunities for displaying empathy towards each other. By taking a critical approach that invited students to share their own lives and experiences, students were able to form social ties with a wider range of students than their fixed friendship groups. This has benefits to learning, as egalitarian classroom structures promote a heathier classroom climate than rigid hierarchies (Cappella et al., 2013). This also leads us back to the necessity of selecting generative themes as the basis for critical pedagogy. Because the discussion originated from the students' situational experiences, the students could contribute dialogically on aspects of their own lives that were worthy of discussion, and potentially engender change. As I facilitated the critical pedagogy discussions, the students had the opportunity to see me as a co-learner as well as a participant observer, because the voice of expertise was not the teacher; it had been renegotiated back to the students.

Taking a critical approach offered an opportunity for students to make educated decisions, providing 'voice' and 'choice': voice to vocalise issues within the classroom that needed remedying, and choice over what was said and shared during the critical pedagogy lessons. This enabled students to participate actively as decision-makers and creators of change in the classroom. This study evidenced the emerging of decision-making, and useful solutions towards classroom systems needing change. Student voice and choice were, however, evidenced by the students from the outset, and creating the classroom climate required where students are expected to speak, be opinionated and to share views is necessary before embarking on any critical approach. The shift that students need to make from passive recipients to active participants is something that is very pertinent and

not to be underestimated. If the prevailing climate before taking any critical approach is one of passivity, there is much groundwork to do in changing this climate.

Findings from this study evidenced a majority preference for the critical pedagogy lessons, with students responding to carefully selected codification that came not only from the source culture, as is recommended (Rashidi & Safari, 2011), but on a micro level, from their own classroom. Students were able to describe the lessons in terms of 'thinking big', and 'doing a big work', and this later had a positive impact on their confidence with their writing. Students were able to link the discussion aspects directly to their writing and were able to acknowledge the ways in which the codification helped to stimulate ideas, enabling them to write stories of which they were proud. Two students voiced a preference for returning to previous routines of reading aloud together, as had been our practice prior to the study. One student also found the nature of the discussion and multiple perspectives frustrating, showing her agency as a learner who was able to identify her own learning needs. Although students with concerns were a minority within this study, they must be acknowledged as significant, given the wider literature (Canagarajah, 2005; Liyanage, 2012) that points to a rejection of communicative tasks in favour of explicit textbook-focused learning of English.

5.3 Rashidi and Safari's Principles for Materials Development

The most useful way to present the findings from this study is to utilise Rashidi and Safari's (2011) Principles for EFL Materials Development as a means to evaluate the effectiveness of this study, in terms of the pedagogical and social benefits that have been reported in Chapter 4. Using these principles also highlights any ways in which this study may have not quite met expectations as outlined by the principles, and the reasons for this. Each principle presented is followed by a discussion section supported by evidence from this study, and reference to wider literature. Implications and comments relating to each principle are provided here also.

5.3.1 EFL materials should develop learners' communicative abilities to raise learners' critical consciousness of the world around them and their ability to act on it.

This principle is important because it sums up precisely the value of critical pedagogy for learners of a second or foreign language. It encapsulates Thomas Graman's (1988) research findings where he noted that the desire to talk about real issues prompted illiterate farm labourers to speak, using their broken and fledgling English, propelled by an urgency to communicate from the heart. One must ask about what might come first. The increase in language skills and communication? Or the increased awareness of the world and the need to make it known? Critical L2 pedagogy must pursue a 'joint goal' of reading the world while reading the word (Edelsky and Johnson, cited in Rashidi & Safari, 2011, p.254). I see it less as a joint goal, but rather that they are mutually inclusive. Results from this study support Graman's (1988) findings that the use and proficiency of English increased purely because young learners have something they need to share and contribute to the collective understanding. The motivation to speak, derived from critical consciousness of the 'world' around them, was stronger than the fear of looking foolish, or not having a sufficiently wide vocabulary. Evidenced in this study were the repeated utterances of students trying to form functioning sentences, at times resorting to code switching, translating, and circumlocution. Swain's (2001) Comprehensible Output Hypothesis also found that language development is achieved when the tasks 'push' the students to use their linguistic toolkit (Swain, cited in Domalewska, 2015) as mentioned in the examples above. Students also had a teacher available to rephrase, simplify and recast phrases, which then strengthened communication, also recommended by Tulung (2008) as being important for language modelling purposes. Regarding this principle, Rashidi and Safari speak of raising student critical consciousness about the world. This is an area where the interpretation of the word 'world' plays a significant role, and one that can alter the effectiveness of the dialogic aspects of the critical pedagogy lesson. It is my assertion, as evidenced in this study, that the 'world' must be the student's world, which is of course situational to the age and culture of each individual EFL class. In order for students to be motivated to speak using a foreign language, they must have something

they can bring from their own experience or background knowledge, aside from school, teachers and textbooks. Otherwise, there is the danger of imposing another type of teacher-driven indoctrination, where the 'world' and all its gross injustice is unpacked and left with students who have no realistic means of addressing such issues. By taking a critical theorist approach without real consideration of the students' needs and experiences, my belief is that the richness of student-generated conversation is sacrificed, because the subject matter is too nebulous for the students to work with.

5.3.2 If the materials have a joint goal, then EFL materials for critical pedagogy are expected to have two major outcomes: social development and language skill development on the part of the learner.

Linked to the first principle, this principle introduces the key element of some social development involving reflection and action, or praxis. Critical pedagogists would agree that the ultimate outcome of critical pedagogy is that the learner experiences some element of empowering, or challenging the status quo, while improving their mastery of a foreign language. Traditional English teaching materials imported from Western publishers contain predetermined outcomes, and objectives that have been set before even being used in the classroom. Within a Freirean framework, however, the control and agency are handed over in part to the learner, and nothing more than the holistic outcome of social development is really required in the critical pedagogy lesson. Therefore, good EFL materials need to include action-provoking themes that can be problematised, while providing the environment for challenging linguistic content. When looking at the findings of this study according to social development, there was evidence of discussion promoting opportunities for empathic understanding of others (Section 4.3.1), and an outlet to complain about existing systems in the classroom, while providing thoughtful solutions to these voiced problems. The students, overall, were able to quickly identify issues that did not function well (reward systems, behaviour systems), and would either give a personal account of injustice experienced or would recommend a solution to the problem. In this sense, this study does not align with others where case studies have evidenced a longer time needed for students to suggest social changes for the better (Shin

& Crookes, 2005; Ko, 2013). I would suggest that again, it is the nature of the generative themes and resulting codification that remains most crucial to the success of the critical pedagogy lesson. Because the codification used in this study presented scenarios that were easily recognisable and were easily accessible to all students, in that all had experienced each of the codification scenarios to some degree, there was a high level of prior knowledge and in some cases already partly formed solutions.

5.3.3 The topics and themes included in the EFL materials should be generative and invoke considerable discussion and analysis.

This aspect embodies the nature of the critical pedagogy programme with the EFL learner and has been reiterated throughout this study. It is of fundamental importance to a Freirean approach that time and consideration is spent listening, observing and appreciating the 'longings, frustrations, hopes and impetus to participate' of the students themselves (Freire, 1973, p. 49), as outlined in Phase 1 of his Problem Posing Model (Freire, 1973). My well-established relationship as the classroom teacher contributed in a significant way to this aspect: I was able to take the common frustrations experienced during the year, those that were often voiced to me by the students, and problematise them through the codification. While Rashidi and Safari (2011) offer possible themes that look at the relationship between the target language of English and the L1 culture, for this study I was aware that the needs of the class were more interpersonal and related to the culture existing within the classroom rather than outside the classroom. Evidence collected during the course of the study suggests that discussion was considerable, both in terms of duration and individual participation, due to the theme selection, and there was a resonance with the problematised scenarios in all the small groups. From analysis, there is evidence of multiple perspectives and interpretations, thereby extending the discussion. Wallerstein (1983) recommends selecting themes that can illustrate as many sides to the contradiction as possible while remaining simple enough for students to project their own experiences, and choosing a problematic situation that occurs frequently, to which there is some emotional connection for the student. This study supports this recommendation and found that, through the choice of scenarios that were open to a variety of interpretations (such

as the 'Work or Play' codification, and 'Language Barrier' codification), the discussion could be extended easily by introducing a possible alternative to what had already been discussed. This study found a gradual increase in the ability in the students to think flexibly and to bring new possibilities to the discussion. After experiencing some initial frustration at having all answers viewed as valid, the students began to think differently, enjoying the process of trying to see all sides to a complex issue. In terms of helping students to develop problem-solving and reasoning skills, this was an important pedagogical benefit.

5.3.4 The source of the themes of the materials should be derived from the learner's life situations, needs and interests.

Freire believed that any literacy programme must start with the learners' real-life experiences and this has been operationalised throughout this study, following the framework that Freire used in his own literacy programmes (Freire, 1973; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Lin, 2012). Shin and Crookes (2005) wrote about the situational life of the learners being the primary content of the curriculum. It is useful at this point to look at the struggles of trying to ensure this during Phase Two of Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) and included here are journal notes taken by me as the teacher researcher during this time:

> What do my students care about? I know what I would like them to care about, but this comes from my own adult world that would put my own agenda on them. Critical pedagogy is about connecting to real lives and the experiences of my students. My students aren't adults yet. They won't articulate the struggle of making ends meet. It is hard to connect images [codification] with issues that matter, without getting moralistic and preachy…I had thought of having an underpaid Amah image, or a cleaner picking up the students' rubbish on the playground but feel like this then turns critical pedagogy into another cultural agenda of 'fixing' things… How does raising questions about a student's poorly paid nanny lead to the students wrestling with language? The fact is, it is a

> foreign and uncomfortable issue for me personally, but it is my issue to unpack, not theirs. So, what. Given that I have taught here for so long, what do I actually know about my students and their motivations? (Teacher's journal entry, May 2016)

Later in my journal I was able to isolate four generative themes that were derived not only from the students, but from a more micro level: the students' lives as experienced together in the English classroom. As an EFL teacher and emergent researcher, looking at this micro level of the classroom for the codification process was the most logical place to start, and aligned with Wallerstein's (1983) recommendations for good codification. Taking this approach had a surprising benefit for me in my role as teacher, in that the ensuing discussions would answer questions where I had felt frustration during the year at classroom systems that were not working, or how the students treated each other. It made me realise that within a critical pedagogy approach we were all involved in reflection and action, and that this was an opportunity to sit alongside my students and learn about their inner world.

5.3.5 EFL materials should take into account the intellectual advances of the learner in arranging the content.

The intellectual advancement of the learner is specified in this principle, and Rashidi and Safari (2011) state it is necessary for the learner in order that they can perceive the world and take action within their locus of control. The dual pursuit of language acquisition has been mentioned earlier, but in this principle we see the need for EFL materials that push learners intellectually 'from the lesser to greater complexity, from the familiar to the less familiar, and from the concrete to the more abstract' (Roberts, cited in Rashidi & Safari, 2011, p. 255). In part, this was evidenced by a few students describing their thinking as 'big', or 'doing a big work'. These students were beginning to display metacognition and could reflect on their thinking during the critical pedagogy lessons. This was due to the increased complexity in the questioning during the discussion, as students were moved on from superficial responses to examining critically their motivations, outcomes, alternatives and comparisons to themselves.

Rashidi and Safari state that where there is no predetermined syllabus for critical pedagogy (due to each learning situation being different from another), the observable learning objectives then become the critical or higher-order thinking skills that students can acquire through the teaching of critical pedagogy. Research attests to problem-based learning activities providing opportunities to use cognitive and metacognitive skills (Shin & Crookes, 2005; Saber & Shafiei, 2016), and the EFL teacher can therefore track students' progress in these areas through observing the quality and quantity of student responses.

5.3.6 The way of teaching is via engaging students in the cycle of reflection and action by embracing dialogical problem posing practices.

Research shows that dialogic teaching approaches bring significant improvements in student performance in relation to oral language production (Gupta & Lee, 2015). This is echoed in further research (Bygate, Skenan & Swain, 2001; Crookes & Gass, 1993; Ellis, cited in Tulung, 2008) that views communicative tasks as vital in providing the conditions and processes needed for second language learning. Evidence also exists linking oral language to word recognition aspects of reading. Cain and Oakhill (2007) recommend that 'not only are oral language skills linked to code related skills that help word reading develop, but they [oral language skills] also provided a foundation for the development of the more advanced language skills needed for comprehension' (cited in Gupta & Lee, 2015, p. 11). For the EFL learner, the adoption of a more dialogic-based teaching approach is recommended, with benefits for the learner seen not only in increased language production, but also in reading and comprehension and, as found in this study, writing outcomes (Section 4.2.2).

The critical pedagogy lesson was unique, compared to conventional lesson sequences for the teaching of writing, in that the discussion surrounding the generative themes was instigated by the students, included all students and allowed students to co-construct stories together. A more conventional approach would have involved greater input from the teacher and explicit modelling of text types and features of the text. The conventional approach is also important when teaching young EFL learners while they internalise

content knowledge; however, the critical pedagogy lessons gave an opportunity for the students to construct understanding for themselves in accordance with socio-constructivist theory (Savery, 2006; Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Mohammadi, 2017).

Ultimately, this 'social and interpersonal process' (Halliday, cited in Winch, Johnston, March, Ljungdahl, & Holliday, 2004) then fed into their writing. In classroom pedagogy terms, this is also called 'building the field' (Halliday, in Winch et al., p.289), the premise being that it is difficult, if not impossible, for a child to sit down and write lucidly and fluently on a topic without some form of motivating input.

Further studies into language output while using critical pedagogy approaches would be beneficial, such as studies making comparisons between critical pedagogy approaches and other small group dialogic-based activities, such as guided reading or shared reading. In terms of writing outcomes, using a critical pedagogy approach increased motivation for writing by inviting personal experiences shared by the students. By orally rehearsing new vocabulary, students were better prepared for their writing, as evidenced by informal interviews (Section 4.2.2.3).

5.3.7 EFL materials base their content on source culture.

Rashidi and Safari's view is that the source culture of the students should be the starting place for any teaching materials that might be used in the critical pedagogy lessons during the decodification and recodification phase. Rather than a situation where the EFL teacher is collecting generative themes from the classroom context, but then suddenly shows YouTube videos featuring overseas countries relating to that theme, the teacher should make efforts to look for codification materials based within the source culture, such as photographs, movies or articles. It is important to bring in the source culture, because it contributes to learners being able to focus on the positive and negative factors existing within their own locality, and therefore facilitates changes that in turn impact on local culture (Akbari, 2008).

The use of staged photographs as the codification resource was a simple and effective start especially for someone new to critical dialogic teaching. By using photographs, and with the assistance of other students as the 'actors', I was able to recreate familiar situations for my young learners, even to the point of using the familiar English classroom, familiar objects and familiar books so that there was no barrier to anyone in their understanding of the scenarios. This approach is highly recommended as a good starting place for any teacher new to critical pedagogy, especially those who might also have the task of reshaping the classroom culture from being passive to participatory.

5.3.8 EFL materials should take into account the teacher's role as co-learner and coordinator.

This principle looks at the role of the teacher, and how, within a critical pedagogy approach, the teacher would take on the role of being a 'problem poser, asking questions that can stimulate the students to reflect more on the aspects of their lives that might seem unchangeable' (Degener, 2001, p.257; Rashidi & Safari, 2011). The teacher's role in helping the students identify with each other was evidenced in this study, with the result that the students had opportunities to show empathy towards each other. There were moments when a few students shared personal accounts that were very difficult, and my role was to demonstrate my own empathy for that student, while allowing the other students to do the same. The critical pedagogy discussions also provided a means to question the students' quick judgements of each other, and this opened up new ways of seeing and appreciating different views in the class, and ultimately contributed to a stronger classroom cohesiveness.

5.3.9 In EFL materials it is expected that teacher would not only bring to their class language knowledge but is also aware of the implications of the internationalization of English.

Fredricks (2007) calls for teachers to use a critical lens in EFL teaching programmes to understand the advantages and disadvantages specific to using English as an international language. Pennycook (1995) takes it even further with his assertion that the English

teacher must be sensitive to the 'implications of the spread of English for the reproduction and production of global inequalities, as well as be a political agent engaged in a project of critical pedagogy…' (Pennycook, 1995; Cox & Assis-Peterson, cited in Rashidi & Safari, 2011). Canagarajah (2005) calls for an EFL pedagogy that does not reject identities of the local students, and Lin (2012) calls for a pedagogy sensitive to the systems that were in place from the beginning, the indigenous methods that had their own merits, and methods to which students responded. As such, there are many voices, many appeals made regarding best practice, and one must carefully evaluate according to one's own beliefs and teaching philosophy.

Being a pragmatist, employed specifically to use my training and skills to teach English in a foreign context, my own critical lens always refers to what works best. What is the most productive method for getting reluctant students to speak up in class, to voice their thoughts, or tell their story? More importantly, what are the opportunities for positive change that can be worked out within the classroom, by the students? Critical pedagogy has shaped my practice and philosophy as an EFL teacher in believing (and also witnessing) the pedagogical benefits that a critical pedagogy orientation can bring to any classroom situation. I am not a critical theorist, as mentioned in earlier chapters, but I see that motivation for learning is higher when the content is familiar and recognisable, and where prior knowledge can be exhibited.

5.3.10 EFL materials should take into account the learner's role as decision maker and subject of the act.

Rashidi and Safari (2011) wrote that 'EFL critical pedagogy materials should *refuse* the passivity role of the learners in which they are passive recipients of a teacher's knowledge to memorise and master' (p. 257). Instead, it is the learners themselves who should drive the learning process and act on realities. This study evidenced an initial reluctance of students to move away from seeing the teacher as the sole provider of information and answers, and an authority figure but, over the duration of the study, all students found their 'voice' in decision-making, and 'choice' over being able to hear and respond to a wider range of answers. Most students were able to make this shift demonstrating more

learner autonomy and agency relatively quickly, when compared to other case studies (Moorhouse, 2014; Lin, 2012) which found it took longer to make the adjustment. I would like to hypothesise that the age of the students made the move from 'passive to active' comparatively short, but then one needs to take into account other aspects that were situational to my classroom. There were already systems in place for the year that pushed the students to take responsibility for their learning, and also systems that rewarded independent thinking and behaviour. As far as possible, I tried to create a classroom culture of student autonomy and decision making before the study began, and the students were therefore ready to participate with sharing their own opinions on personal matters and situations from the outset.

5.3.11 In terms of evaluative activities, it is expected that students develop their critical consciousness in line with their language mastery.

This principle looks at the types of evaluative activities or assessments that can be carried out as part of the critical pedagogy programme. Formative (or ongoing) assessment through careful observation is equally important, but there are meaningful summative assessment data that can also be collected and used in reporting on language outcomes. Rashidi and Safari (2011) identifies the 'dual' aspects of the programme as being evidence of critical consciousness in the students alongside development of linguistic competence (p. 257). He gives the example of an evaluative activity where students are given a picture of an unperceived problem that is taken as an everyday norm. The students could then reflect and either present through discussion or write about their perceptions. In this study, evaluative activities were evidenced best by the journal writing completed by the students once the critical pedagogy discussion had concluded. In this way, work samples can be collected and assessed looking at both critical consciousness and the students' developing mastery of writing in English, with the forms and functions needed for this. Of course, this needs to be positioned within a balanced literacy programme that involves the explicit modelling and teaching of writing genres, but I see critical pedagogy fitting in seamlessly because it brings the motivation and the content for writing, derived from the students themselves. In this respect, findings from this study bring into question

Ewald's (1999) statement that 'critical awareness is not what administrators perceive as the mission for most EFL programs' (p.276), because critical pedagogy is not the single pursuit of critical awareness or consciousness. It pursues student development in the spoken application of a foreign language; it pursues critical thinking skills; it pursues multi-levelled comprehension, and it pursues the development of student writing outcomes, such as motivation for writing, activating prior knowledge, and orally rehearsing ideas (Section 4.2).

This is an area which requires further exploration, particularly looking into the types of evaluative activities within a critical pedagogy approach, and the tools teachers would use for assessment. As an EFL teacher, I understand the tracking of performance with language, as demonstrated through increased mastery of spoken or written English. I have used rubrics and criteria for giving grades according to syllabus standards. However, there is no clear understanding of assigning 'grades' for critical consciousness, and I would welcome research that could provide practical examples and methods of doing so.

5.4 Student Perceptions of the Critical Pedagogy Lesson

This chapter discusses student perceptions of this study's critical pedagogy lessons in light of wider research also looking at student perceptions. It makes comparisons between this study and other EFL case studies and looks for possible commonalities and differences as voiced by the students themselves that can be used to build a stronger justification for the implementation of critical pedagogy with EFL learners. This section specifically addresses the findings for Research Question 2:

> *How do young Arabic learners perceive the effectiveness of a critical pedagogy lesson?*

From the evidence gathered and analysed from this study, most students were positively receptive to critical approaches and enjoyed the dialogic and problem posing nature of the lesson. This is looked at more closely in Section 5.4.2 where critical pedagogy has been found to positively shape student perceptions about themselves. However, it is important

to highlight the conditions that can best prepare students for critical approaches. Section 5.4.1 looks at the classroom environment before the critical pedagogy study took place, and touches on the cultural shift needed before students can fully engage with a communicative approach. This section also looks at student agency, and the student's own role in determining how they learn English best.

To recap, during Week 4 of the study, all students (n = 24) participated in focus group interviews for each small group, which were video recorded and later transcribed. All transcriptions were later analysed thematically, looking for patterns and themes that existed across all focus group interviews. The format of the interviews was informal in structure, but with the overarching aim of determining the students' attitudes regarding the series of critical pedagogy lessons. In later analysis of other case studies, qualitative data such as student interviews is referred to here, offering personal accounts and justifications for student thinking.

5.4.1 Student Perception about Critical Approaches

From reviewing critical research conducted in different geographical locations, it is interesting to see the congruent ways in which students perceive critical approaches despite their age, geographic location and cultural background. However, there are some notable differences in students' perceptions towards critical approaches in the classroom based on their need for better educational opportunities. This invites a wider discussion surrounding the nature of student agency and authentic student empowerment where the student feels they can make choices for their own educational benefit. In this section, this debate is examined closely and, in so doing, I turn a critical lens on myself an EFL teacher and on this study in order to seek clarity and answers.

The first aspect worthy of discussion is the fostering of a dialogic learning environment leading up to adopting critical approaches with students. The Grade 4 students in Fatima School had experienced EMTs bringing in communicative collaborative teaching pedagogies throughout their schooling, and the expectation of sharing one's own opinion was not therefore an issue; rather, the need to communicate in a foreign language posed

the challenge. In this respect, the students in this study were already used to a 'transactional' style of learning, due to the Abu Dhabi government's decision to adopt Western communicative 'process'-orientated teaching methods (Canagarajah, 2005).

In comparison with case studies from government schools in Hong Kong (where the culture in the classroom has always been teacher-centric and passive from the students) (Moorhouse, 2014; Lin, 2012), the time needed for student adjustment into a more dialogic problem-solving environment was much less. Moorhouse (2014) refers to primary education in Hong Kong being dominated by three 'T's, 'teacher centred, textbook orientated and test centred' (Moorhouse, 2014, p.80) This is echoed in Lin's (2012) research which followed a practicum teacher, 'Tracey', who tried to implement a very simple critical approach in a lesson with high school aged students. The students were unaccustomed to even simple task-focused discussion with each other, due to classwork comprising mostly of textbook exercises and mechanical answer-checking, and so her lesson quickly 'descended into chaos' (Lin, 2012, p.75). Project work was never carried out because it did not contribute to the student's overall grade. Academic achievement and an actual means to improve one's situation were the real value for the student. Lin voiced this dilemma, relating back to the practicum teacher, 'Should the teacher press on with her progressive liberal pedagogies, or should she give up and revert back to the traditional teaching approaches which the students were apparently more used to? (Lin, 2012, p. 77).

This was the same dilemma that I encountered during this study, where one study was vocal in her frustration over the continual 'talking about a photograph' (Section 4.1.2.3). For her, the learning had lost direction and meaning.

Two young students who struggled in their reading also voiced that they missed the usual practice of guided reading and saw the need for regular reading aloud together as being necessary for them to improve as readers. Anxiety over losing vocabulary input was also noted in Ko's study (2013). In terms of looking at student agency, this was an encouraging sign, in that young learners can be vocal and articulate their learning needs clearly.

Shin and Crookes's (2005) study of critical approaches with Korean high school students revealed a high degree of student agency to be upfront and honest in their feedback. This ranged from a comment from one student, 'I don't like your teaching style. I don't think that this year was the right time [being their exam year] for doing this kind of thing' (p. 122), to students responding to the dialogic teaching style as 'opportunities to listen to the thoughts of their peers and broaden their understanding' (p. 122). Student agency was demonstrated also by openly disagreeing with each other, making the decision to move the lesson along if it had halted, and being proactive in email correspondence with the teacher.

The research looking at Sri Lankan student perceptions is the most detailed in terms of discovering student agency, which was a rejection of communicative based tasks in favour of the 'product' approach that focused on exam preparation. 'The teaching of English is a deductive and explicit activity and preferred to be so in the Sri Lankan cultural context' (Liyanage, 2012, p.141). Canagarajah (2005) invites us to not be so dismissive of product-based approaches, nor to stereotype students preferring these approaches as passive and conforming. He alerts us to understand critical thinking in all its forms: silence, taciturnity and refusal, as evidenced in Sri Lankan studies, are all expressions of student critique (p. 937).

This dilemma opens up lines of thinking that are very useful as we critique ourselves as EFL practitioners. In order to summarise, given the variances in student perceptions and responses towards process-orientated pedagogies, I return to this study and its findings with the following important points. Student perception of the critical pedagogy lessons was positive overall, acknowledging the three students who exhibited their own student agency in being able to name the issues that they felt were an impediment to their learning, and to vocalise this dissent freely. The learning environment before introducing critical approaches was conducive to dialogic problem posing approaches, because students were used to small group work and collaborative tasks that carried the expectation of sharing in class. The consistent aligning of Freire's framework that followed each phase systematically, particularly Phase 1 and Phase 2 which studied the students' histories and

experiences, also contributed to a smoother transition into critical approaches once Phase 4 began.

The following section looks at positive student responses to the critical pedagogy lessons and addresses the causes and ways in which this case study aligned with wider literature.

5.4.2 Student Responsiveness to Empathy

The findings from this study earlier identified critical approaches as providing opportunities for the students to demonstrate empathy towards each other through the sharing of stories, personal experiences and situations that students found challenging. Within the safe space of a small group, facilitated by a teacher, students were more inclined to use the codification as an anchor for wider experiences that they felt had relevance. The demonstration in this study of empathy and care through listening attentively, assisting with translation so that a personal experience was shared and understanding the challenges students face with language, all helped to contribute to a stronger learning environment (Capella et al., 2013).

Student responsiveness to care was demonstrated by Lin (2012). The earlier account of practicum teacher 'Tracey' did not end with her disastrous lesson; instead Tracey offered to stay and help students after school to complete their projects. This was preceded by her sharing her own honest story of learning English as a foreign language, and the challenges she had faced as an EFL learner. The students listened intently and later responded positively when she helped them realise the benefits of critical approaches, and how these could help them achieve their goals (Lin, 2012, p. 77). This active listening and responsiveness to honestly sharing life stories was evidenced in this study, with students eager to both hear and share.

In 2007, Lin and Mann piloted an EFL rap programme that involved local hip hop artists working with local Hong Kong high school students in a series of afterschool hip hop rap workshops (Lin, 2012). The students' feedback was very positive, as it provided a fun, meaningful context to learning English. A strong bond also formed between the artists

and the students, as students had high respect for the both the artists and their talents. Because care was taken in a critical approach that was grounded in the students' likes and interests, and because care was taken to organise a later performance that showcased the students' new-found skills, the students reported gains in their English acquisition though learning useful phonics skills, and increased confidence in themselves through performing their own songs (Lin, 2012, p.78). Increased confidence was also found in this study, particularly in the area of writing, where some lower achieving students were able to identify themselves as stronger writers using carefully selected codification and participating in discussion that prepared them for writing to a greater degree. Students responded to the codification because it was grounded in student experience. One student, Reem, refers to her desire to become a writer in the future;

> Miss I like the picture. I see the picture [codification] and do it because when we, when we become big, we will become all the people know me, like I write so many books, when I write so many books its big not small. I write so many books and when like all the people know me she give me money and all thing and I like. (Focus Group Interview, June 2016)

Taking a critical approach in the EFL classroom reaches towards the utopian possibilities outlined by Liyanage (2012), who saw a respectful collaboration between students and teachers, where students are invited to critically examine lesson planning and teaching units 'with the objective to recognise and include the students own learning goals, motivations and experiences that would get them there' (Liyanage, 2012, p.142).

In summary, this study corroborates other studies in this field, where critical approaches have opened up new pathways of caring to which students have responded positively. In this study this was evidenced by opportunities for empathy towards others. In other case studies, the teacher, or the selection of the critical approach was the act of caring. The result was increased confidence in the students towards their abilities and new-found skills.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of the aims and methods of this study, highlighting the significance of this research. A summary of the key findings to the two research questions is also provided. Next, the implications for this research and suggestions for further studies are outlined, along with the limitations of this study. The chapter ends with a final concluding statement.

6.2 Aims and Methods

This study explored the pedagogical and social effectiveness of adopting Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) in order to teach a series of dialogic, problem posing lessons with young Arabic English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This research reported on the students' attitudes towards the critical pedagogy lessons, and the way these impacted other literacy areas. The aim of the study was to present another perspective and dimension to the ongoing debates surrounding the suitability and implementation of critical approaches within the EFL teaching field.

This case study was undertaken at a government primary school in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, with a class of female Grade 4 students. It should be noted that case studies reporting on critical pedagogy involving young students are still under-researched, especially in the context of government classrooms in the UAE. This research therefore provides useful empirical evidence about the process of implementing critical pedagogy given this unique context, but also serves to provide a useful guide for EFL educators who are looking for a practical perspective. This study also serves to answer a call within the research community looking for practical examples of how to implement critical approaches with young learners.

For the purpose of investigating critical pedagogy and its implications with young Arabic learners, this case study was designed according to Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) and closely followed each of the five phases as outlined by this framework. Qualitative data were gathered from video-recorded critical pedagogy lessons, semi-structured focus group interviews and detailed field notes in the form of daily lesson notes, teacher journaling and notes taken from reviewing the video recordings. The data was triangulated and analysed thematically, following a framework outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Findings were discussed using Rashidi and Safari's Principles for EFL Materials Development (2011) as a benchmark to evaluate the efficacy and impact of the critical approaches, and to determine how closely aligned this study was with Freirean approaches. Research rigour was ensured by triangulation of multiple data sources, researcher reflexivity and the teacher's journal. Vivid and in-depth documentation provided transferability to like-minded teacher educators and researchers who work in a similar context and find the implications applicable.

6.3 Summary of Key Findings

The key findings as outlined in this study suggest that the implementation of Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) provided two principle pedagogical benefits. The first gave students the opportunity to look at a problematised scenario, while prompting students to think about a variety of logical answers, rather than a single response. Students were able to contribute a variety of views that were all considered and listened to. Problem solving was evidenced through students determining 'hidden' clues that could contribute to solving the problem being depicted. The second pedagogical benefit was that the critical pedagogy discussions during Phase Four served to prepare the students for their journal writing. Four patterns were identified from the findings from this study, these being: Metacognition, motivation, oral rehearsing of ideas and integrating background knowledge drawn from the student's own experiences.

Key findings also suggest that the implementation of Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973) provided the social benefits of fostering a supportive learning community. The

critical pedagogy discussions gave the students opportunities to develop the prosocial trait of empathy for each other, by active listening and sharing experiences in a safe environment. Using a critical framework like Freire's (1973), also gave room for increase student autonomy in the classroom, allowing for students to exercise their own choice or volition. This benefited the classroom socially in that students were able to advocate for better classroom systems, with the goal of improving the learning environment.

6.4 Research Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Despite the positive response and outcomes of this study, there were limitations that were evident and should be noted here.

This study was limited by the length of the research, which was a period of six weeks for Phase 3 and Phase 4 of Freire's Problem Posing Model. Fortunately, due to the relationship I had established as the classroom teacher prior to the research period, the requirements of Phase 1 and Phase 2 were inherently known. However, it is recommended that any future research allows enough time and attention for these first phases, especially if the researcher is not the classroom teacher. To avoid any teacher effect, or teacher coercion, a possible solution might be to collaborate with a teaching colleague during Phase One, Phase Two and Phase Three of Freire's Problem Posing Model (1973). During Phase Four, the teacher colleague could then conduct the sessions with the class.

A limitation in this study is also the lack of Arabic translation for the reader, in the instances when the participants were communicating to each other in their first language. Akbari (2008) stated, 'an individual's L1 is part of his identity and a force which has played a crucial role in the formation of his identity' (p.130). As such, any restriction of the learners' L1, especially in our multilingual world, is disempowering (Canagarajah, 2005; Rashidi, 2011). While the critical pedagogy lessons themselves were open for expression in both languages and is evidenced by the inclusion of the occurrences, the lack of translation for each occurrence of Arabic is a significant limitation brought on by time restrictions and the researcher taking up a new teaching position in another country.

An implication for future research would be the welcome investigation of a quantitative study that involved comparisons being made between the linguistic output of students from a critical pedagogy discussion, compared to discussion about a text, for example from a guided reading group. A recommendation would also suggest further longitudinal studies, and/or increasing the variation by choosing participants or classes from different grade levels, genders, or other ESL/EFL contexts.

6.5 Concluding Statement

The focus of this study was to examine the pedagogical, and social cohesion benefits of incorporating a critical pedagogy approach with young Arabic learners of EFL. Strict adherence to a Freirean framework (Freire, 1973), using principles such those of Rashidi and Safari (2011) and Wallerstein (1983), is recommended in order to maximise pedagogical and social benefits for the students. This study also sought to understand the students' own perceptions towards critical pedagogy, how the lessons affected them, and to what extent. This study has provided evidence to justify that taking critical approaches with young Arabic EFL learners is not only pedagogically feasible and well received by the students, but also contributes to the research community by providing a successful example of the introduction of critical pedagogy to young Arabic EFL learners.

REFERENCES

Akbari, R. (2008). Transforming lives: introducing critical pedagogy into ELT classrooms. *ELT Journal*, *62*(3), doi:10.1093/elt/ccn025

Apple, M. W., Ball, S. J., & Gandin, L. A. (Eds.). (2010). *The Routledge International handbook of the sociology of education*. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Ansarian, L., Ali, A. A., Mehrnoush, A. S., & Shafiei, E. (2016). The impact of problem-based learning on Iranian EFL learners' speaking proficiency. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *7*(3), 84-94. Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/docview/2188087512?accountid=10382

Auerbach, E., B. Barahona, J. Midy, F. Vaquerano & A. Zambrano (1996). *From the community to the community: A guidebook for participatory literacy training*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum

Baladi, N. (2007). *Critical pedagogy in the ELT industry: can a socially responsible curriculum find its place in a corporate culture?* (Unpublished master's thesis, McGill University, Montreal, Canada.) Retrieved April 19, 2010, from http://digitool.library.mcgill.ca/thesisfile18457.pdf

Benesch, S. (1993). ESL, ideology, and politics of pragmatism. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(2), 705–717.

Bloom, B. S.; Engelhart, M. D.; Furst, E. J.; Hill, W. H.; Krathwohl, D. R. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals*. Handbook I: Cognitive domain. New York: David McKay Company.

Booth-LaForce, C. & Kerns, K. A. (2009). Child-parent attachment relationships, Peer relationships, and peer-group functioning. In K.H. Rubin, W.M. Bukowski, B.

Laursen (Eds.), *Handbook of peer interactions, relationships, and groups* (pp. 490-507). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners.* London: Sage.

Bryman, A. (2007). Barriers to Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *1*(1), 8–22.

Bygate, M., Skehan, P., & Swain, M. (Eds.). (2001). Researching pedagogic tasks: Second language learning, teaching and testing. London: Pearson Education Limited.

Canagarajah, S. (1999). *Resisting linguistic imperialism in English teaching.* London: Oxford University Press.

Canagarajah, S. (2005). Critical pedagogy in L2 learning and teaching. In E. Hinkel (ed.), *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cappella, E., Kim, H. Y., Neal, J. W., & Jackson, D. R. (2013). Classroom peer relationships and behavioral engagement in elementary school: The role of social network equity. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *52*(3–4), 367–379.

Crawford, L. M. (1978). *Paulo Freire's philosophy: derivation of curricular principles and their application to second language curriculum design.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations. (AAT 7911991)

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clarke, V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J., & Miller, D. (2000). Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry. *Theory Into Practice, 39*(3), 124-130. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/1477543

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. (2011). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crookes, G. (2010). The practicality and relevance of second language critical pedagogy. *Language Teaching, 43*(3), 333–348. http://doi.org.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/10.1017/S0261444809990292

Crookes, G., & Gass, S. (Eds.). (1993). *Tasks in a pedagogical context: Integrating theory and practice.* Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Darder, A., Baltodano, M., & Torres, R.D. (2003). Critical Pedagogy: An introduction. *The critical pedagogy reader* (pp.1–21). New York, NY: Routledge Falmer.

Degener, S.C. (2001). Making sense of critical pedagogy in adult literacy education. *The annual review of adult learning and literacy*, *2*, 26–62.

Dormaleska, D. (2015). Classroom Discourse Analysis in EFL Elementary Lessons. *International Journal of Languages, Literature and Linguistics*, *1*(1), 6-9.

Duff, P. (2008). Case study research in applied linguistics. New York, NY: Erlbaum/Taylor & Francis.

Duff, P. (2014). Case Study Research on Language Learning and Use. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *34*, 233–255. Cambridge University Press.

Eisenhart, M. (2009). Generalization from qualitative inquiry. In K. Ercikan & W.-M. Roth (Eds.), *Generalizing from educational research* (pp. 51–66). New York, NY: Routledge.

Ewald, J. (1999). A plea for published reports on the application of a critical pedagogy to "language study proper". *TESOL Quarterly*, Sum, *33*(2), 275–279.

Findlay, L.C., Girardi, A., & Coplan R. J. (2006) Links between empathy, social behavior, and social understanding in early childhood. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 21 (3) 347-359.

Fredricks, L. (2007). A rationale for critical pedagogy in EFL: the case of Tajikistan [Electronic version]. *The Reading Matrix, 7* (2), 22–28.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). New York, NY: Continuum.

Freire, P. (1973). *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York, NY: Seabury Press.

Freire, P. & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. London: Routledge.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2011). Case study. In N. K. Denzin &Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.) (pp. 301–316). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gallagher, K. (2011). 'Bilingual education in the UAE: factors, variables and critical questions', *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, *4*(1), 62–79.

Giroux, H.A. (1983). *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition.* South Hadley, Massachusetts: Bergin.

Graman, T. (1988). Education for Humanization: Applying Paulo Freire's Pedagogy to Learning a Second Language. *Harvard Educational Review*, Nov 1988, *58*, (4) ProQuest

Gupta, A., & Lee, G.-L. (2015). Dialogic Teaching Approach with English Language Learners to Enhance Oral Language Skills in the Content Areas. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, *2*(5), 10–17. Henning, E., van Rensburg, W., & Smit, B. (2009). *Finding your way in qualitative research.* Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Hinkel, E. (Ed.). (2005). *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Hmelo-silver, C. (2004). Problem-based learning: What and how do students learn? *Educational Psychology Review*, *16*(3), 235-266. doi:http://dx.doi.org.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/10.1023/B:EDPR.0000034022.16470

Johnston, B. (1999) Putting Critical Pedagogy in its Place. *TESOL Quarterly*, 1999, *33*(3), 557–565.

Keesing-Styles, L. (2003). The relationship between critical pedagogy and assessment in teacher education. *Radical Pedagogy*, *5*(1). Retrieved June 5, 2010, from http://radicalpedagogy.icaap.org/content/issue5_1/03_keesing-styles.html

Kerns, K.A., Brumariu, L.E., (2016) Attachment in middle childhood. In

J. Cassidy, P.R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (3rd ed., pp. 349-365). , New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Kim, J. (2006). *Implementing critical pedagogy in an English as a second language (ESL) writing classroom* (Order No. 3233441). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (304983896). Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/docview/304983896?accountid=10382

Kincheloe, J. (2008). *Critical pedagogy primer.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing

Ko, M. (2013). A case study of an EFL teacher's critical literacy teaching in a reading class in Taiwan, *Language Teaching Research*, *17*(1) 91–108.

Kachru, B. (1996). The paradigms of marginality. *World Englishes*, 15(3), 241–255.

Kreisberg, S. (1992). *Transforming power: Domination, empowerment, and education.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press

Larkin, S. (2009). *Metacognition in young children*. (e-book) Retrieved from http://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Laufer, B. & Hulstijn, J. (2001). Incidental vocabulary acquisition in a second language: the construct of task-induced involvement, *Applied Linguistics*, *22*(1) March 2001, 1–26, https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/22.1.1

Lin, A. (2012). Critical Practice in English Language Education in Hong Kong: Challenges and Possibilities. In Sung & Pedersen (eds.), *Critical ELT Practices in Asia* (pp.137–151), Brill Sense Publishers.

Liyanage, I. (2012) Critical Pedagogy in ESL/EFL Teaching in South Asia: Practices and Challenges with Examples from Sri Lanka. In Sung & Pedersen (eds.), *Critical ELT Practices in Asia* (pp.137–151), Brill Sense Publishers.

Malterud, K. (2001). Qualitative research: standards, challenges, and guidelines. *The Lancet*, 11 August 2001, *358*(9280), 483–488

Mayberry, M.L. & Espelage, D.L. (2007) Associations among empathy, social competence, & reactive/proactive aggression subtypes. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 36, 787-798.

McCarrier, A., Pinnell, G. S., & Fountas, I. C. (2000). *Interactive Writing: How Language & Literacy Come Together, K-2*. Heinemann, 361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801-3912.

McLaren, P. (1989). *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the foundation of education*. New York, NY: Longman.

Merriam, S.B. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Merriam S.B. & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mohammadi, F.S. (2017). The effect of authentic problem-based vocabulary tasks on vocabulary learning of EFL learners. *International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies*, 2017, *5*(3), 35–40.

Moorhouse, B. (2014). Using Critical Pedagogy with Young EFL learners in a Hong Kong Primary School. *International Journal of Bilingual and Multicultural teachers of English*, No.2 (Dec 2014), 80-90.

Pennycook, A. (1989). The concept of "method", interested knowledge, and the politics of language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 23(4), 589–618.

Pennycook, A. (1990). Critical pedagogy and second language education. *System*. *18* (3), 303–314.

Pennycook, A. (1998). *English and the discourses of imperialism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Petty, N.J., Thompson, O., & Stew, G. (2012) *Ready for a Paradigm Shift? Introducing qualitative research methodologies and methods*. Eastbourne, UK: Elselvier.

Peirce, B. N. (1989). Towards a pedagogy of possibility in teaching of English internationally. *TESOL Quarterly,* 23(3), 401–420.

Porter, L. (2014). *A comprehensive guide to classroom management*. 205–213. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

Rashidi, N. & Safari, F. (2011). A model for EFL materials development within the framework of critical pedagogy, *English Language Teaching*, *4*(2) 250-259

Rashidi, N. & Mozaffari, F. (2012). Education in hope: On the practice of critical pedagogy in Iranian postgraduate and undergraduate EFL classrooms. *The Journal of Linguistic and Intercultural Education*, 2012, *5*, 125–133,135,135A,136–155,218–219.

Sadeghi, S. (2009). Critical pedagogy in an EFL teaching context: An ignis fatuus or an alternative approach? In L.J. Zhang, R. Rubdy, & L. Alsagoff, (Eds.), *Englishes and Literatures-in-English in a Globalized World*. Proceedings of the 13th International Conference on English in Southeast Asia (pp. 362–375). Singapore: National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University.

Savery, J. R. (2006). Overview of Problem-based Learning: Definitions and Distinctions. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning, 1(*1*).*

Schneider, B.H., Atkinson, L., & Tardif, C., (2001) Child–parent attachment and children's peer relations: A quantitative review. *Developmental Psychology*, 37, 86-100

Sharma, M. (2001). Freire's adult education model: An underutilized model in alcohol and drug education? *Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education, 47*(1), 1. Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/docview/217437698?accountid=10382

Shin, H. & Crookes, G. (2005) Exploring the Possibilities for EFL Critical Pedagogy in Korea: A Two-Part Case Study, *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies,* 2:2, 113-136, DOI: 10.1207/s15427595cils0202_3

Shor, I. (1996). *When students have power: Negotiating authority in a critical pedagogy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Simons, H. (2009). Evolution and concept of case study research. *Case study research in practice* (pp. 12–28). London: Sage.

Slevin, E., & Sines, D. (2000). Enhancing the truthfulness, consistency and transferability of a qualitative study: Utilising a manifold of approaches. *Nurse Researcher (through 2013), 7*(2), 79. Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/docview/200819635?accountid=10382

Smith, J. A. (2015). Qualitative psychology: a practical guide to research methods (3rd ed. pp 222–248). London: Sage.

Smith, J. (1993). *After the demise of empiricism: The problem of judging social and educational inquiry*. New York, NY: Ablex.

Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of the case study research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stern, J., & Cassidy, J. (2018). Empathy from infancy to adolescence: An attachment perspective on the development of individual differences. *Developmental Review*, *47*, 1–22.

Sugishita, J. L. (1995). *Critical problem posing with language minority students: An ethnographic study of empowerment pedagogy* (Order No. 1377278). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (304303801). Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/docview/304303801?accountid=10382

Pederson, R., & Sung, K. (Eds.). (2012). *Critical ELT practices in Asia*. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

TESOL. (2006). PreK–12 English Language Proficiency Standards: Augmentation of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium English Language Proficiency Standards. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Thoms, J. (2012). Classroom discourse in foreign language classrooms: A review of the literature, *Foreign Language Annals*, vol. 45, pp. 8-27

Tulung, G. (2008). *Communicative Task generated oral discourse in a second language: A case study of peer interaction and non-native teacher talk in an EFL classroom*. (e-book). Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/docview/304305838?accountid=10382

Wallerstein, N. (1983). Language and Culture Conflict: Problem Posing in the ESL classroom. Massachusetts: Addison Wesley.

Winch, G., Johnston, R., March, P., Ljungdahl, L., & Holliday, M. (2014). *Literacy: reading, writing and children's literature* (5th ed.) Victoria, Australia: Oxford University Press.

Yin, R., (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage

Yin, R. (2010). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*, (e-book). Retrieved from http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/curtin/detail.action?docID=593773

Every reasonable effort has been made to acknowledge the owners of copyright material. I would be pleased to hear from any copyright owner who has been omitted or incorrectly acknowledged.

Appendix 1

‘RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMANS ETHICS CLEARANCE: FORM A’

Office of Research and Development

GPO Box U1987
Perth Western Australia 6845

Telephone +61 8 9266 7863
Facsimile +61 8 9266 3793
Web research.curtin.edu.au

23-May-2016

Name: Nadine Nelson

Department/School: Curtin University

Email:nadine.nelson@student.curtin.edu.au

Dear Nadine Nelson

Ethics Approval number: HRE2016-0005

Thank you for submitting your application to the Human Research Ethics Office for the project **Application 5567- Critical Pedagogy and the young EFL learner: Investigating lexical diversity and oral language development in primary school science classes in the UAE**.

Your application was reviewed through the Curtin University low risk ethics review process.

The review outcome is: **Approved**.

Your proposal meets the requirements described in National Health and Medical Research Council’s (NHMRC) *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).*

Approval is granted for a period of one year from **23-May-2016** to **22-May-2017**. Continuation of approval will be granted on an annual basis following submission of an annual report.

Personnel authorised to work on this project:

Name	Role
Nelson, Nadine	Student
Aldridge, Jill	CI

Standard conditions of approval

1. Research must be conducted according to the approved proposal
2. Report in a timely manner anything that might warrant review of ethical approval of the project
   - including: proposed changes to the approved proposal or conduct of the study unanticipated
   - problems that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project
   - major deviations from the approved proposal and/or regulatory guidelines

   serious adverse events

3. Amendments to the proposal must be approved by the Human Research Ethics Office before they are implemented (except where an amendment is undertaken to eliminate an immediate risk to participants)
4. An annual progress report must be submitted to the Human Research Ethics Office on or before the anniversary of approval and a completion report submitted on completion of the project
5. Personnel working on this project must be adequately qualified by education, training and experience for their role, or supervised
6. Personnel must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest, including any financial or other interest or affiliation, that bears on this project
7. Changes to personnel working on this project must be reported to the Human Research Ethics Office
8. Data and primary materials must be retained and stored in accordance with the Western Australian University Sector Disposal Authority (WAUSDA) and the Curtin University Research Data and Primary Materials policy
9. Where practicable, results of the research should be made available to the research participants in a timely and clear manner
10. Unless prohibited by contractual obligations, results of the research should be disseminated in a manner that will allow public scrutiny; the Human Research Ethics Office must be informed of any constraints on publication
11. Ethics approval is dependent upon ongoing compliance of the research with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, applicable legal requirements, and with Curtin University policies, procedures and governance requirements
12. The Human Research Ethics Office may conduct audits on a portion of approved projects.

Special Conditions of Approval

None

This letter constitutes ethical approval only. This project may not proceed until you have met all of the Curtin University research governance requirements.

Should you have any queries regarding consideration of your project, please contact the Ethics Support Officer for your faculty or the Ethics Office at hrec@curtin.edu.au or on 9266 2784.

Yours sincerely

Dr Catherine Gangell
Manager, Research Integrity

Appendix 2

ABU DHABI EDUCATION COUNCIL PERMISSION FORM

مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم
Abu Dhabi Education Council
Education first التعليم أولاً

Date: 3rd May 2016		التاريخ: 3 مايو 2016
Ref:		الرقم:
To: Public Schools Principals,		السادة/ مديري المدارس الحكومية
Subject: Letter of Permission		الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة باحثين
Dear Principals,		تحية طيبة وبعد،،،
The Abu Dhabi Education Council would like to express its gratitude for your generous efforts & sincere cooperation in serving our dear students.		يطيبُ لمجلس أبوظبي للتعليم أن يتوجه لكم بخالص الشكر والتقدير لجهودكم الكريمة والتعاون الصادق لخدمة أبنائنا الطلبة.
You are kindly requested to allow the researcher/ Nadine Rachelle Nelson, to complete her research on: **Critical Pedagogy and the young EFL learner: Investigating lexical diversity and oral language development in primary school science classes in the UAE**		ونود إعلامكم بموافقة مجلس أبو ظبي للتعليم على موضوع الدراسة التي سيجريها الباحث/**نادين راكل نلسون**، بعنوان: **Critical Pedagogy and the young EFL learner: Investigating lexical diversity and oral language development in primary school science classes in the UAE**
Please indicate your approval of this permission by facilitating her meetings with the sample groups at your respected schools.		لذا، يرجى التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحثة ومساعدتها على إجراء الدراسة المشار إليها.
For further information: please contact **Mr Helmy Seada** on 02/6150140		للاستفسار: يرجى الاتصال بالسيد/ **حلمي سعدة** على الهاتف 02/6150140
Thank you for your cooperation.		شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم
Sincerely yours,		وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام والتقدير،،،

محمد سالم محمد الظاهري
المدير التنفيذي لقطاع العمليات المدرسية

School Operations
Abu Dhabi Education Council

صندوق بريد:٣٦٠٠٥، أبوظبي - إ.ع.م، هاتف: ٠٠٠٠ ٦١٥ ٢ ٩٧١+، فاكس: ٠٥٠٠ ٦١٥ ٢ ٩٧١+، البريد الإلكتروني: info@adec.ac.ae
P.O.Box. 36005, Abu Dhabi - U.A.E., Tel: +971 2 615 0000, Fax: +971 2 615 0500, Email: info@adec.ac.ae

Appendix 3

STUDENT AND PARENT INFORMATION SHEET (WITH ARABIC TRANSLATION)

Curtin University
School of Education

Student and Parent Information Sheet

How does Critical Pedagogy help my learning?

My name is Nadine Nelson. I am your Grade 4 teacher, but I am also a student of Curtin University in Perth, Australia. I would like your help with some research I am doing about how children in the UAE can learn English better.

Purpose of the Research
I am interested in how using classroom conversation might improve your writing work and improve your speaking in English.

Your Task
During Daily Five English, you might remember that there is always a 'teacher time'. This term, in your small groups you will use a photograph in class as a way to start a conversation. Rather than the teacher doing most of the talking, you will have more time to talk about the photograph. What do you think about what is happening? How can we solve the problem? Then you will write a story about the photograph.

Some students might be asked to share more, but this will always be a friendly chat with other students to help. Everything needed for the research will happen during normal class time, with a few lunchtimes needed. I will also collect your writing, but these will be given back to you at the end. If you want to be a part of the research, I will be video recording the small groups, so you have to be ok with being recorded on video. The videos will just be for me to help write my research, no one else will see them and at the end of the research, they will be deleted.

Permission
Taking part is your choice. You do not have to take part if you don't want to. If you change your mind and you can ask to stop at any time. Your parents will need to sign a form for you to take part. If you do not wish to take part, please let me know. You can still participate in all the same activities; it just means that I will not collect your information. Choosing to participate or not participate in the research will not affect your English grades in any way at all.

Privacy
All of your answers will be private and will only be used for this research. You do not have to write your name on any paper. You will be given a number instead so that your teacher won't be able to tell what your answers were. This study is not to judge you or your work. It is about looking at different ways to help students learn, especially by using conversation.

Thank you for your help with this important study

Curtin University
School of Education

Curtin University

رسالة معلومات عن البحث لولي الأمر والطالبة

كيف التدريس النقدي تساعدني في التعليم الخاص بي؟

اسمي نادين نيلسون. أنا معلمة الصف 4، ولكن أنا أيضا طالبة من جامعة كيرتن في بيرث، أستراليا. وأود أن تساعدوني مع بعض البحوث التي أقوم بها حول كيفية يتعلم الأطفال في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة اللغة الإنجليزية بشكل أفضل.

الغرض من البحث
أنا مهتمة في كيفية استخدام مهارة المحادثة في الفصول الدراسية لتحسين مهارة الكتابة والمحادثة باللغة الإنجليزية.

مهمتك
خلال الأركان الخمس اليومية للغة الإنجليزية، هناك دائما وقت لمجموعة من الطالبات للجلوس مع المعلمة. في هذا الوقت سوف نستخدم صورة باعتبارها وسيلة لبدء محادثة. بدلا من المعلم القيام بالكلام، سيكون هناك المزيد من الوقت للحديث عن الصورة. سيتم مناقشة ما رأي الطالبة فيما يحدث؟ كيف يمكننا حل هذه المشكلة؟ ثم سوف تكتب قصة عن الصورة.

وقد يطلب من بعض الطلاب المشاركة أكثر، ولكن هذا لن يكون دائما سيكون هناك محادثة ودية مع طلاب آخرين للمساعدة. كل شيء سوف يحدث أثناء وقت الدراسة العادية، مع عدد قليل من فسحة الطالبات أن احتجت. على ولي الأمر التوقيع للموافقة على مشاركتك في البحث. إذا كنت تريد أن تكون جزءا من البحث، وسوف يتم تسجيل فيديو للطالبات المشاركات، لذلك عليك أن تكوني مرتاحة لتسجيل بالفيديو. وأشرطة الفيديو ستكون فقط للمساعدة في كتابة بحثي، وليس لأحد آخ. وفي نهاية البحث، سيتم حذفها.

تصريح
المشاركة هو اختيارك. إذا لم تود المشاركة فلا بأس في ذلك. إذا غيرت رأيك ويمكنك أن تطلبي التوقف عن المشاركة في أي وقت. سوف يحتاج الآباء إلى التوقيع على استمارة الموافقة لتتمكني من المشاركة. إذا كنت لا ترغب في المشاركة، اسمحوا لي أن أعرف. لا يزال بإمكانك المشاركة في جميع الأنشطة نفسها. ولكن لن نستخدم المعلومات الخاصة بك في البحث. اختيار المشاركة أو عدم المشاركة في البحث لن يؤثر على درجات اللغة الإنجليزية في أي طريقة على الإطلاق.

خصوصية
وكل إجاباتك ستكون خاصة وسوف تستخدم فقط لهذا البحث. تستطيع أن لا تكتبي اسمك على أي ورقة. وسيتم إعطاؤك رقم بدلا من الاسم بحيث لا تكون المعلمة قادرة على معرفة ما كانت إجاباتك. هذه الدراسة ليست للحكم عليك أو على عملك. فهو فقط لإيجاد طرق مختلفة لمساعدة الطلاب على تعلم، وخاصة باستخدام المحادثة.

شكرا لكم على مساعدتكم مع هذه الدراسة الهامة

Appendix 4

PARENT LETTER OF CONSENT (WITH ARABIC TRANSLATION)

Curtin University

Curtin University is a trademark of Curtin University of Technology.
CRICOS Provider Code 00301J (WA), 02637B (NSW)

Faculty of Humanities. School of Education
GPO BOX U1987 Perth, WA 6845

Letter of Consent

Critical Pedagogy and the young EFL learner: Investigating lexical diversity and oral language development in primary school science classes in the UAE

I hereby give my consent to Nadine Nelson, a researcher/student in the Faculty of Humanities, School of Education at Curtin University to record and document my daughter's participation activities.

I therefore give permission for the use of this data, and other information which I have agreed may be obtained or requested, in the writing up of this study, subject to the following conditions:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

My daughter's participation in this study is voluntary, and I understand that she may withdraw from the study at any time.

SIGNATURES

Name of Participant ..... Class .....

Parent of Participant ..... Date .....

Researcher..... Date .....

Curtin University

Curtin University is a trademark of Curtin University of Technology.
CRICOS Provider Code 00301J (WA), 02637B (NSW)

Faculty of Humanities. School of Education
GPO BOX U1987 Perth, WA 6845

رسالة موافقة

الأساليب النقدية لطلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية :دراسة تنوع المفردات وتطوير اللغة الشفوية في دروس العلوم في المدارس الابتدائية في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة

أعطي بهذا موافقتي إلى نادين نيلسون، وهو باحث / طالب في كلية العلوم الإنسانية، كلية التربية في جامعة كورتين لتسجيل وتوثيق الأنشطة المشاركة لإبنتي.

لذا أعطي الإذن لاستخدام هذه البيانات، وغيرها من المعلومات التي وافقت عليها ويمكن الحصول على هذه الدراسة، وفقا للشروط التالية:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

مشاركة ابنتي في هذه الدراسة تطوعية، وأنا أفهم أنها قد تنسحب من الدراسة في أي وقت.

التوقيعات

أسم المشاركة: ..... الصف: .....

أسم ولي أمر الطالبة: ..... التاريخ .....

الباحث: ..... التاريخ .....

Appendix 5

STUDENT LETTER OF CONSENT (WITH ARABIC TRANSLATION)

Curtin University
School of Education

Curtin University

Participant Consent Form -Students

How does Critical Pedagogy help my learning?

- ✓ I understand the reason for this research.
- ✓ I have been given a chance to ask questions about the research.
- ✓ I understand that to take part in this study, my teacher will need to video tape the small group discussions that I am in, during Daily Five English. I might be asked further questions about what I think about the lessons.
- ✓ I understand that my journal writing will be collected and looked at for the research.
- ✓ I understand that I can withdraw from this research at any time without anyone being upset with me.
- ✓ All my answers will be kept private.

I agree to take part in the research about Critical Pedagogy.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Curtin University
School of Education

Curtin University

مشاركة طالبة في البحث

كيف التدريس النقدي تساعدني في التعليم الخاص بي؟

- ✓ أفهم السبب وراء هذا البحث.
- ✓ تم إعطائي الفرصة لأسأل حول موضوع البحث.
- ✓ وأنا أفهم أن للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة، معلمتي في حاجة الى شريط فيديو لمناقشاتنا في المجموعة الصغيرة أنني في أثناء الأركان الخمس لمادة اللغة الإنجليزية. وقد يطلب المزيد من الأسئلة حول ما أفكر فيه.
- ✓ أنا أفهم أنه سيتم جمع كتاباتي لاستخدامها في البحث.
- ✓ أنا أفهم أنه يمكنني الانسحاب في أي وقت خلال إجراء البحث.
- ✓ جميع إجاباتي ستكون سرية ولن يطلع عليها أحد غيري.

أوافق المشاركة في إجراء البحث حول التدريس النقدي:

الاسم:

التوقيع:

التاريخ:

Appendix 6

STUDENT JOURNAL WRITING SAMPLES

L3 Student 1 Guided Reading Prompt: Inventions and Innovations!
One day Fatima goes to Sara's houses. Then Fatima think of an idea. Fatima said, 'Let's make a robot that can give us anything we told them'. Then Sara and Fatima starting making the robot. Then they finish the robot and told him give my some ice cream.

L3 Student 1 Critical Pedagogy Lesson: 'Means Girls' Codification
One day there were four girls in the classroom. The first girls name was Mohra. The second girls name was Aisha. The third girls name was Tasneem. The fourth girls name was Hind. Mohra was really kind. She do not bother any girls and Aisha is really sad. Because there two girls talking about her friend. The girls name is Tasneem and Hind they are really bad. You can see them in Grade 5. And you can tell them why they do that?

L3 Student 2 Guided Reading Prompt: Winter in the UAE
There are two sisters. There names are Amna and Khulood. One day there are sleep together. The next day they wake up in the night. They see the window. Then Khulood say 'It is winter now! Then Amna said "Yes! Its winter. Khuloud said 'We want to go down.' Amna said 'Wait, we have to dress jacket, boots, hat, gloves.' We go out. Then my mum come and shout 'Go in'. After they go in. We will see movie and we will eat nachos and cheese and drink coffee.

L3 Student 2 Critical Pedagogy Lesson: 'Work and Play' Codification
One day there were four girls. Her name are Mira, and Maitha and Muzon and Aishsa. They have a test but Maitha and Muzon don't know the test so they play. And Mira is cheating from Aisha. And Aisha is doing her work because she know the test. Then Miss Nadine see the three girls are playing so Miss Nadine shout 'Why you are playing? Then Miss Nadine give Mira and Maitha and Muzon three [10]Red Apples. And she give Aisha a Green Apple.

L2 Student 3 Guided Reading Prompt: Inventions and Innovations!
I like inventions. I want to invention a book when I said close, it close. When I said open, its open. I said I want maybe the Little Red Hen story. It's come when I click one finger.

L2 Student 3 Critical Pedagogy Lesson: 'Work and Play' Codification
One day Mohrah and Aisah and Hind and Tasneem. They are doing math lesson. They open math books. Then they all do her work except Aisha. Tasneem do her work very nice. Then Hind looking at Aisha. Tasneem is very nice and good and

[10] Referring to the school wide behavior system in place at the time of the research. Red Apple certificates were punitive and sent home with students to parents, whereas Green Apple certificates were celebrated in school assemblies.

Aisha and Hind is bad. Then Tasneem is really quiet and working hard. And Hind wanted to cheat from Aisha. Then they all do her work. They work hard.

L1 Student 4 Guided Reading Prompt: Camels
One day there a camel. He is so good camel. He is sleeping in the desert and drinking water in the desert so he like to sleep there in the desert and he take food there.

L1 Student 4 Critical Pedagogy Lesson: 'Work and Play' Codification
One day there were four girls names Alaa, Mira, Aisha, Mohra. She go to school. Miss Nadine say do your homework but Alaa not do here homework. Miss Nadine say 'Do your math'. The four girls do her homework but Alaa, she play. The three girls say for Alaa, 'Why you not?' but Alaa say 'I do not want to'. Miss Nadine say 'Girls, now Daily Five English'. The girls do Daily Five English. The girls run, but Alaa not run, Alaa play the ball. Then we go in. Miss Nadine check the book for math. The girls go home. Miss Nadine see the Alaa no do homework. On the next day Miss Nadine come school. Girls come. Miss Nadine say why you not do homework Alaa? Alaa say not have rule. Miss Nadine say and why you not go Daily Five English? 'Because I not love rule'. And she take the girls to class.

L1 Student 5 Guided Reading Prompt: A Ball Called Sam (a story about friendship)
Ok I see hotel Dubai and we go to the hotel and sleep and Alaa gave me gift and I happy and Alaa I happy and sleep and watch TV.

L1 Student 5 Critical Pedagogy Lesson 'Mean Girls' codification
One day I go to school and my teacher gave me some paper is have a picture a [of] girls. Two girls laugh about girl and the girl sad and some girl she seem sad and she want to go sit with them and she sat. Then the girls start laughing than the girl said for him 'Stop do that, we all friend and all good friend'.

L1 Student 6 Guided Reading Prompt: Camels
One day I go to the zoo and I see all the animals after I go to eat. After my daddy said 'let's go to see the camel' and the day after go to the camel and my dad said 'Sit up the camel'. After I sit.

L1 Student 6 Critical Pedagogy Lesson 'Mean Girls' codification
The Sometimes Friend
One day there was some girls there four girl and that girl is sometimes love girls and sometime not love the girl. The two girl talk about that girl. The two girl said that girl 'This girl she cant read because she is crazy' and the girl back sad. I like this girl because I see her read good and after the Aisha girl she said come read with me.

L1 Student 7 Guided Reading Prompt: Camels
Animal is camel and he lives and is camel is drink water and is eat food plant and is camel is ran.

L1 Student 7 Critical Pedagogy Lesson 'Language Barrier' codification
One day I see Aisha she cutting the paper and Hind is cutting the paper and Fatima she look at the paper and aid Fatima in the Aisha cutting this and cutting Tasneem she do nothing and is not finish and the three girls is finish and Tasneem is not listening the teacher and Aisha and Hind and Fatima is listening the teacher.

L1 Student 8 Guided Reading Prompt: Camels
One day I see my sister doing something. She said I will go to the zoo. I shout and said 'I want, I want!' Said my sister, 'What do you want?' 'I want to go with you. My sister said 'Ok, but there is lion and big lion. When we go I see a small animal and big animal but the big from them is the camel. I said 'WOW!" I see the mum and the baby and I do picture with here. After that I go home then I sleep.

L1 Student 8 Critical Pedagogy Lesson
One Happy Girl
One day one girl, her name Tasneem. Tasneem is a angry girl. She afraid, don't help the girls and she are naughty. But in one day she see in the Taboor [Assembly] one girl go to take a big Green Apple and she now a sixty green apple and her name Sara. And the girls clap for her and she cry. Then on the other year come Tasneem get a sixty-five Green Apple and then she said I will be a good girl.