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**An Evaluation of The Dialogic Tasks of
The First-Year Secondary School
Textbook “At the Crossroads” From the
Perspective of Critical Pedagogy**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a
Master Degree in English Didactics**

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Dedication

In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

I dedicate this modest work:

To my great dad and wonderful mom

To my sisters and brothers

To my husband and kids

To my friends

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Mrs. **Kouira Loubna**, for her judicious guidance and continuous support.

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Abstract

The present study evaluates the effectiveness of the dialogic tasks in the first-year Algerian secondary school textbook “At the Crossroads” from the perspective of critical pedagogy. A checklist consisting of twelve questions was designed and used in the analysis of the textbook “At the Crossroads”. This analysis has revealed that the textbook under study does not foster adequately even critical thinking and learners’ autonomy, which are shared goals of critical pedagogy and the competency-based approach. Moreover, the relationship between the dialogic tasks of the textbook with real life problems of the students is not well articulated. Furthermore, the crucial issues of cross-cultural awareness and dialogism in the textbook tasks are weakly addressed. These results of the checklist-based analysis have been compared to the views of a sample of fifty secondary school teachers in the district of Jijel chosen on the basis of convenience through the use of a questionnaire designed for this purpose. The analysis of the results of the teachers’ questionnaire has confirmed ,at least partly, the results of the checklist-based analysis in that the dialogic tasks in the first year secondary school textbook “ At the Crossroads’ have been judged to be discrepant with the aims , the principles, and the standards of critical pedagogy even with regard to those aspects that form the focus of the competency-based approach, namely critical thinking and learners’ autonomy. Moreover, the level of dialogicity of the tasks, their relevance to students’ lives, and the development of a cross – cultural awareness have been found to be weakly addressed in the textbook from the vintage point of the teachers who participated in the study.

List of Abbreviations

CBA: Competency Based Approach

CP: Critical Pedagogy

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

MKO: More Knowledgeable Other

O.N.P.S: Office National de Publication Scolaires

PHD: Doctor of philosophy

TV: Television

SE1: Secondary Education, Year One

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General Introduction

- 1. The Statement of the Problem**
- 2. Aim of the Study**
- 3. Hypothesis**
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General Introduction

1. The Statement of the Problem

Critical pedagogy is an approach to education based on the assumption that all educational systems are political in nature and that these systems have hidden agendas geared towards preserving the political and social status quo so as to serve those who wield power within society (Freire,1970). Consequently, these systems usually end up reproducing and, sometimes, even, aggravating the inequalities between social classes that they have been supposed to erase in the first place. The promotion of the ideas and values of the privileged groups within society at the expense of the ideas and values of the less fortunate groups and classes through an archaic pedagogical model that fosters intellectual passivity and inertia among learners is the mechanism whereby the designers of these educational systems deny the less powerful accession to the types of knowledge and skills that susceptible to improve their conditions (Akbari,2011).As a radical reaction to these practices, the proponents of critical pedagogy propose a practical framework of measures aimed at assigning the teacher the role of a transformative intellectual capable of not only raising his students’ awareness to the social and political injustices in which they live ,but also of providing these students with the necessary empowering savoir-faire that would entitle them to reconstruct a more just society.

English language teaching has embraced this approach emanating from the field of education since almost three decades (Canagarajh,2005 as cited by Akbari 2011) .As far as English language teaching is concerned , the introduction of critical pedagogy aims at enabling foreign language teachers to equip their learners with a critical attitude towards the existing equalities in the social milieu in which they live and to foster in them the competencies that would enable them to expose the language ideologies through which those inequalities are circulated and to assume a more active role in reversing those inequalities for the benefit of the social groups and classes to which they belong. In order to achieve this aim, the proponents of this approach argue in favor of articulating language teaching around the following principles: conscientization, codification, generative themes, problem-posing educational /method, dialogical method, praxis and humanization.

The revolutionary history of Algeria as well as its shift in recent decades to liberal economy renders this country both highly sensitive and extremely prone to the dangers of social inequality decried and resisted by critical pedagogy. In this regard, the teaching of English as a foreign language in the Algerian context has been marked, on one hand, by many shifts in teaching methodology aimed at keeping pace with the methodological innovations taking place in the developed countries. On the other hand, the Algerian educational policy makers have, since the early seventies, strived to implement locally designed textbooks which are supposed to be both more reflective of the Algerian culture and reality and more responsive to the students’ needs. The introduction of the competency-based approach in the design and implementation of English as a foreign language textbook in the secondary school since 2002 has been expected to meet those goals. Notwithstanding the aspirations of those who engineered this innovation, the students’ weak performance in foreign languages, in general, and in English as a foreign language, in particular, in recent years provides evidence that the syllabi and the textbooks currently in use are not yielding the expected results. Thus, these syllabi and textbooks need well-reflected reforms.

In the light of this, and given that the text book plays a pivotal role in the Algerian English language teaching context ,in general, and in the secondary school ,in particular, the present study aims at evaluating the effectiveness of the problem-solving tasks in the first-year Algerian secondary school textbook “At the Crossroads” from the perspective of critical pedagogy. Hence, the present study attempts to address the following major question:

How effective are the dialogic tasks in the first-year Algerian secondary school textbook “At the Crossroads” from the perspective of critical pedagogy?

2. Aim of the Study

The present study aims at gauging the level of effectiveness of the dialogic tasks in the first-year Algerian secondary school textbook “At the Crossroads” from the perspective of critical pedagogy. Given its relevance to the Algerian, context, the far-reaching goal of this evaluation is to raise awareness to the necessity to adopt the principle of this pedagogy so as to reconstruct a more prosperous, democratic and egalitarian society that lives in peace and harmony with the other nations.

3. Hypothesis

The dialogic tasks in the first-year secondary school textbook ‘*At the Crossroads*’ are discrepant with the aims and the principles of critical pedagogy.

4. Means of Research

In order to achieve the aims of this study, a checklist based on the principles of critical pedagogy was designed and used to evaluate the effectiveness of the dialogic tasks of the textbook in question. In addition, a teachers’ questionnaire was designed and administered to a sample of fifty secondary school teachers so as to cross-examine the views of these practitioners with the results of the analysis based on the checklist in view of reaching a more comprehensive and objective evaluation.

5. Structure of the Dissertation

The present dissertation is divided into two major parts: a theoretical part and a practical part. The theoretical part consists of two chapters. Chapter one presents the theoretical basis and the principles of critical pedagogy with specific reference to its applications in the domain of English language teaching. Chapter two provides information about textbook evaluation and discusses its importance to the teaching learning process. As regards the practical part, it consists of one chapter, chapter three, which is devoted to the presentation and analysis of the data generated by the checklist and the teachers’ questionnaire.

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Chapter One

Theory and Principles of Critical Pedagogy

Introduction

1.1. Definition of Critical Pedagogy

1.2. Traditional Pedagogy vs Critical Pedagogy

1.3. Principles of Critical Pedagogy

1.3.1. Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals

1.3.2. The Role of Teachers in Critical Pedagogy

1.3.3. Conscientization

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1.3.5. Generative Themes

1.3.6. Problem Posing Education / Method

1.3.7. The Role and Importance of Dialogism

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Conclusion

Chapter One

Theory and Principles of Critical Pedagogy

Introduction

Critical pedagogy is a modern, post-method approach to education that has attracted an ever-increasing interest among researchers in education, in general, and English language teaching, in particular. The present chapter presents the theoretical basis of this innovative pedagogy and examines its principles with a specific focus on their applications to the field of English language teaching.

1.1. Definition of Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy has been proposed by Freire (1973) as an alternative approach to traditional education aimed specifically at raising students’ awareness to the existing inequalities in their social milieu and endowing them the necessary savoir faire that would enable them to improve their conditions. This will help them know the relations between their own problems, experiences and the social context in which they occur. The student could then have a degree of consciousness. This is an important first step of praxis; this is the ability that enables to take action against oppression while at the same time stresses the importance of the liberation of education. Praxis as Freire quotes in his book *Pedagogy of the oppressed* “p. 68 - there is no true word that is not praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world”. Furthermore, understanding the world leads, at a high level, to social transformation. To attain their goals, critical educators are particularly concerned with re-establishing the traditional student/teacher relationship, where the teacher is the active agent and the student is the passive recipient. Instead, the classroom is seen as a place where new knowledge is shared in the experiences of the student and teacher alike and is produced through meaningful dialogue. Critical pedagogy then is a teaching approach which attempts to help students question and challenge domination. In other words, it is a theory and practice of helping students achieve critical consciousness. Critical pedagogic educator Ira Shor defines “critical pedagogy as Habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning,

root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse”. Shor I. (2014).

On this basis the teacher’s role is to lead students to critically question whatever is given to them. So that they would become critical thinkers who would bring about positive change to their lives and the lives of the people around them.

According to Kincheloe (2005), Critical Pedagogy (CP) is concerned with transforming relations of power which are oppressive and which lead to the oppression of people. It tries to humanize and empower learners. This theory According to Aliakbari (2011) is based on the notion of a society of justice in which people have political, economic, and cultural control of their lives. Critical Pedagogues have the firm conviction that these goals are obtained only through encouraging critical thinking and thus enabling students to transform their life conditions, which is actually the starting point for critical pedagogy. Freire’s theory tries to transform oppressed people and to save them from being objects of education to subjects of their own autonomy and emancipation. In this view, students should act in a way that enables them to transform their societies which is best achieved through fostering their critical thinking. Thanks to problem posing education and questioning the problematic issues in students’ lives, they learn to think critically and develop critical consciousness which helps them improve their life conditions and take necessary actions to build a society of justice. Thus, it can be said that CP challenges any form of domination, oppression and subordination.

1.2. Traditional Pedagogy versus Critical Pedagogy

Freire (1970) refers to the traditional education as banking education. In this kind of education, teachers deposit knowledge into students’ mind and students receive knowledge as passive recipients. Freire (1970) rejected the banking system education and considered it ineffective. Thus, he proposed the “problem posing education” in which the teacher evokes problems that are relevant to the contradictions and inequalities in students’ lives. This type of education is geared towards equipping students with a principled modus operandi that would enable them to act positively on the reality of their social milieu to improve it (Aliakbari, 2011). The ultimate goal of this pedagogy is the establishment of an egalitarian modus Vivendi in

human societies through articulating a strong connection between learning and social change (Giroux,1985). Freire ‘s revolutionary ideas in the field of education (1970) are based on setting a clear distinction between the tradition banking concept of education aimed at maintaining the societal status quo and problem posing education aimed at freeing human society from the chains of inequalities set and maintained by those in power. The banking concept of education preserves the status of teacher as the sole holders of knowledge, as the latter are supposed to know everything while the students know nothing. Teachers deposit knowledge in students and never ask them to question that knowledge. The teacher thinks, the students don’t. The teacher chooses the content, while students accept it as it is. The unique source of authority are teachers and students should obey and passively accept the imparted knowledge. All that students are supposed to do within the realm of this type of education is to receive, memorize, and repeat. Definitely, from the perspective of the tenets of this pedagogy, relating school’s knowledge to the current problems and injustices in society is a tremendous risk to be by all means avoided.

Problem posing education, on the other hand, is suggested as an alternative to the banking model. Freire (1970) proposed a problem posing education which is susceptible to lead to the development of a critical consciousness among learners. This consciousness raising education involves uncovering of reality, spreading of consciousness and encouraging intervention in reality. This consciousness based on the realities of learners and their life situations, therefore, allows students to take the necessary actions to improve their life conditions (Freire, 1970). In this regard, Sara Nixon-Ponder in her book *Adult Literacy Education* (1995) thinks the development of this type of consciousness involves five steps of problem posing: describing the content of discussion, defining the problem, personalizing the problem, discussing the problem, and discussing the alternatives of the problem. Throughout these five steps, students feel that they are closely equal to their teachers in terms of authority. They exercise freedom and, together with the teacher, control the educational process. To Freire (1970), both students and the teacher should share responsibilities and authority on an equal basis: the teacher exposes the reality of the world, while the students critically reflect on this reality. Consequently, these learners are smoothly lead "...to see the world not as a static reality, but as reality in process, in transformation" (Freire, 1970, p.71).

1.3. Principles of Critical Pedagogy

we could cite the principles of Critical Pedagogy through reading the book of Monchinski, *Critical Pedagogy and the Everyday Classroom*, (2008). Good teaching for the author should lead to the liberation of people. And to transform their current situation to better ones. Becoming transformative, needs first the acquisition of the necessary strategies and skills that help become social critics who are able to make decisions that positively affect their lives.

CP when put into practice requires the use of authentic materials to achieve the expected results like TV, commercials, videos, movie, smart phones. Authentic materials help students to establish a link between the acquired knowledge and the problems existing in society to take part in finding solutions to these problems.

1.3.1. Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals

Dewey (1963) believes that, learning through problem solving and practical application leads students to take a more active role in determining their experiences and positions within society. According to Giroux (1985), teachers should create appropriate conditions in order to enable students to become cultural producers who can rewrite their experiences and perceptions. Freire (1998), asserted that the role of teachers lies in encouraging learners to develop critical consciousness that helps them evaluate their living situations. He goes on to say that “teaching that does not emerge from the experience of learning cannot be learned by anyone” (p. 30). Teachers, then have a fundamental role in Critical Pedagogy since they spend most of their time with students and have the greatest impact on them. He proposed that a critical educator should involve student in selecting the program and devising the curriculum. He further suggests that teachers are supposed to reflect their roles as transformative intellectuals in the classroom to get his/her classroom involved in dialogic interaction.

Giroux, (1992) stated that by enabling students to reflect on their own knowledge, will enable them to transform their lives. Freire (1970) maintains that teachers’ acceptance to share equal authority with learners should stem from a willingness from the part of the latter to also assume the status of learners. That is, teachers are learners and learners are teachers. Therefore, within this framework, learners are not passive recipients of knowledge, but rather become active and creative participants in the teaching/learning enterprise.

1.3.2. The Role of Teachers in Critical Pedagogy

Based on what has been said earlier, Critical Pedagogy assigns to teachers the role of transformative intellectuals. Through problem posing education, the latter foster in their learners a critical consciousness that would lead them eventually to form a more just and egalitarian vision of the world. In their conversation on education and social change, Horton and Freire (1990) concluded that literacy is the ability to read the world and to take effective acts to change it. Thus, the teachers’ role within this pedagogy is to provide learners with authentic opportunities to tackle relevant problems so as to be able to extend the resulting consciousness and savoir faire to the social milieu in which they live.

1.3.3. Conscientization

The first and most important principle in critical pedagogy is conscientization. Llyod (1972) maintains that conscientization is the development of critical consciousness through a process of reflection and action. Furthermore, Gina (1978) defines conscientization as the method whereby change is sought and achieved. Conscientization is “the process in which men [and women], not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and their capacity to transform that reality” (Freire, 1973b, p. 51). In this regard, Liu (2012) stated that Freire’s methodology aimed at enabling learners to read the word so as to be able to read the world provides a firm stepping stone towards the development of critical consciousness as it gives a starting point and opens up a new space for thinking.

Boyce (1996) reports that critical consciousness is central for Freire because the focus of CP is on the development of critical consciousness. Freire (1973) distinguished three stages or levels of consciousness namely, intransitive, semi transitive, and critical consciousness. In the lowest level or intransitive, the individuals accept their lives as they are and the change that might happen in their lives seem to be the result of magic or miracles. The next level or stage of consciousness is semi transitive consciousness, students in this kind of consciousness are aware of their problems however, they cannot make any connection with outside world and they consider their problems as something normal or accidental. Actions that are taken with this kind of consciousness are often shortsighted. The third level is critical consciousness or critical transitivity which is the highest level of consciousness. People with this kind of consciousness view their problems as structural problems. They can make connections between their problems

and the social context in which these problems are embedded. To gain this sort of consciousness, as Heaney (1995) argued that learners must reject passivity and practice dialogue. He also believed that critical consciousness is the result of collective struggle and praxis not individual or intellectual effort.” (As cited in Aliakbari 2011, p. 81).

1.3.4. Codification

Codification means gathering information in order to form an idea about something or someone. According to Divya Madhavan (2016) the purpose of codification is to find a way to cut through the ambiguities of language and take perception to a different level, in order to bring it back into the realm of discourse from a fresh perspective. Codification might create dialogue and analysis that is more independent to when we nail ideas into words, because words demand a shared vocabulary or rather an unquestioned agreement on what they mean.

1.3.5. Generative Themes

Simandan (2009) considered Generative themes as topics of great interest to learners that can easily generate class discussion. Generative themes are topics of great interest to learners. These themes can easily generate class discussion. Generative words are words used to introduce new syllables. The lesson is centered on one theme, while the teacher and the students make new words from combinations of syllables using new and previously taught syllables. Students then write personal thoughts about the newly generated words and share them with the rest of the class.

In his Pedagogy of the oppressed, Freire made a direct connection between men and reality. He goes on saying:

the concept of generative themes is neither an arbitrary intervention nor a working hypothesis to be proved.... although an attitude of critical doubt is legitimate, it does appear possible to verify the reality of the generative theme..... through critical reflection on the men -world relationship and on the relationship between men. the generative theme cannot be found in men divorced from reality, nor yet in reality divorced from men It can only be apprehended in the men – world relationship .to investigate the generative theme is to investigate man’s thinking about reality and men’s action upon reality. (Freire 1970, pp. 86 – 87)

1.3.6. Problem Posing Education

problem posing education opposes the concept of the banking system of education. In the latter students are viewed as passive individuals who are dependent on others. The banking system in its philosophy relates to Vygotsky’s Mko (more knowledgeable one). Teachers in this model are viewed as depositors who make deposits into empty students, just as people deposit money in their bank accounts. Monchinski, (2008) matches this conception of education with the assumptions of behaviorist learning theories. Problem posing education; however, encourages critical learning. Learners are put in a problematic situation that require critical thinking.

1.3.7. The Role and Importance of Dialogism

Applying Critical pedagogy successfully in teaching, depends on the role teachers play. Teachers should know how to use dialogues as means to reduce learners’ frustration and to get them enjoy a mutual authority with their teachers. This concept was stated by Aliakbari (2011) who states that CP (Critical Pedagogy) requires teachers who are confident and humble at the same time. He further suggests that dialogue is essential to the implementation of critical pedagogy in the everyday classroom.

Traditionally, the talk inside the classroom was directed from teacher to students. This one-way direction resembles to Freire’s banking system education in which “a culture of silence” as named by Akbari (2011) dominates. Dialogue; however, implies mutuality between teachers and students. Monchinski (2008) believed that dialogues reflect a horizontal relationship between teachers and students.

Freire (1970) stressed the importance of dialogue stating that, “without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education” (p. 93). He further suggests that “time spent on dialogue should not be considered wasted time” (Freire 1970 p. 93).

Freire goes even further to accuse leaders who impose their opinions of being oppressive: “leaders who do not act dialogically, but insist on imposing their decisions, do not organize the people, they manipulate them. They do not liberate, nor are they liberated: they oppress.” (Freire 1970, p.127)

1.3.8. Praxis

Praxis is defined as “the self-creative activity through which we make the world. The requirements of praxis theory are both relevant to the world and nurtured by actions in it, and an action component in its own theorizing process that grows out of practical and political grounding” (Baker, 1990, cited in Aliakbari, 2011, p. 82).

Through praxis, people can gain critical awareness and act upon it. For Freire it is both reflection and action, he states that “Critical consciousness is brought about not through intellectual effort alone but through praxis_ through the authentic union of action and reflection” (Freire, 1970, p.48).

In a language classroom, various strategies and activities can be proposed to develop learners’ action and reflection within their praxis. Brown (2004), for instance, proposed “reflective analysis journals”. On their part, Terrell and Lindsey (2009) proposed to engage students in writing their autobiographies. which is a way to develop students’ self-reflections. When writing their autobiographies, students need to reflect on the different stages of their lives and talk about their experiences. The above stated activities aim at developing learners’ self-reflection. Learners’ action on the other hand needs to be encouraged by educators. Gail Furman (2012) considered role-play as a good means to put learners in action, he states that:

One method to develop the capacity for action is role-playing, in which students practice the principles of good listening, dialogue, and cross-cultural communication; to enhance this experience, role play episodes can be video-taped and analyzed collaboratively with other students. (Furman 2012, p. 208).

Conclusion

Critical pedagogy is an innovative approach to pedagogy that has been proposed to replace the traditional banking model of education accused of reproducing social injustices through preserving the social status quo topics. This revolutionary approach aims at fostering in learners a critical consciousness that would enable them to act upon their reality to render it more just and egalitarian. Dialogic tasks allow whereby teachers and students share equal authority to discuss and solve authentic social problems that constitute the means whereby this pedagogy implements change. As far as English language teaching is concerned, this pedagogy seeks to foster among learners a cross-cultural awareness through discussing differences between first language and target language cultures. This type of awareness is supposed to enable learners to assume the roles of transformative intellectuals capable of improving their conditions and the conditions of those who live with them in an increasingly global world endangered by all sorts of inequalities and injustices.

Chapter Two

Textbook Evaluation

Introduction

2.1. Textbook Evaluation: Some Definitions

2.2. The Role of Textbooks In EFL Classrooms

2.3. The Purpose of Textbook Evaluation

2.4. Type of Evaluation

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2.4.4. Predictive vs Retrospective Evaluation

2.5. Elements of Evaluation

2.6. Approaches to Textbook Evaluation

2.6.1. Impressionistic Approach

2.6.2. In-depth Approach

2.6.3. The Checklist as An Evaluative Tool

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Chapter Two

Textbook Evaluation

Introduction

In English language teaching classrooms, the textbook plays a central role in the design, teaching and evaluations of lessons. As these textbooks need regular revision and evaluation to improve their quality, several approaches have developed to meet this need. The present chapter reviews the literature related to textbook evaluation so as to provide the necessary background for the design and implementation of the textbook under study.

2.1. Textbook Evaluation: Some definitions

Hutchinson and Torres (1994) define textbooks as " an almost universal element of [English language] teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in [various] countries...No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook. " (p. 315).

Byram (2000) suggests that textbooks are” one particular resource amongst an increasingly wide and diverse range of teaching materials. They are bound collections of textual and visual material, designed for teaching and learning a particular subject and following particular methodological and didactical principles” (p. 626). That is to say, textbooks are one important means among a variety of materials that learners and teachers may rely on to facilitate language teaching and learning.

Sheldon (1988) points that textbooks not only "represent the visible heart of any [English Language Teaching] ELT program"(p. 237) but also offer considerable advantages for both the student and the teacher when they are being used in teaching EFL/ESL. She also claims that “Coursebooks are perceived by many to be the route map of many ELT programmes” (1988, p. 238). That is to say, textbooks organize learning and provide instructions to help teachers in planning their courses. Haycroft (1998) suggests that the main advantage of using textbooks is that they are “*psychologically essential*” for students whose progress and achievement can be measured concretely while using these teaching materials” (cited in Suryana 2008). Angeliki

(2011) suggest that “Most teachers consider course books to be valuable aids that offer useful material and support. Also, learners need course books to guide them towards the hard process of learning. A course book reinforces the teacher’s work and offers material for further learning and revision. In brief, a course book provides teachers and learners with a structure of teaching and learning” (2011, p. 3). In other words, textbooks are considered as a support not only for students but for teachers as well.

2.2. The Role of Textbooks in EFL Classrooms

Hutchinson and Torres (1994) that "The textbook is an almost universal element of [English language] teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in [various] countries...No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook. " (p. 315). Cunningsworth (1995), considers textbook as a source that simplifies and reinforces teaching since it provides various tasks that help learners engage in the learning process as it helps less trained teachers gain more experience in their job. According to Tomlinson (2003), textbooks help to ‘re-skill’, rather than ‘de-skill’ teachers. This is because textbooks give teachers instructions on how to carry out the lessons. They also help teachers save time on lesson preparation and materials production, as some textbooks provide photocopiable activity sheets and pictures to introduce new language material to who are inexperienced or occasionally unsure of their knowledge of the language, the course book can provide useful guidance and support. Richards and Rodgers’ (2001 p.3), suggest that the role of the textbook may change according to the methodology on which it is based. For instance, in a functional /communicative methodology, the most important role of the textbook is to put students in real situation where they interact, negotiate and express their own views.

2.3. The Purpose of Textbook Evaluation

Hutchinson (1987) defines materials evaluation as:

“materials evaluation plays such an important role in language teaching that its potential for influencing the way teachers operate is considerable. Materials evaluation can and should be a two-way process which enables teachers not just to select a textbook, but also, to develop their awareness of their own teaching” / learning situation (pp. 37 /38).

According to Cunningsworth (1995, p. 14) the main reason behind evaluation is to point out the strengths and weaknesses in the textbook. Thus, the strong points can be adopted while the weak points can be dispensed with. Tylor (1950) states that major goal behind the evaluation has to do with objectives “... the process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are actually being realized” (p. 69).

Baiche (2008) states:

“In its broad sense, evaluation is also extended to many other factors that are linked to administrations, schools and environment, etc. This why evaluation should represent an ongoing process through which all pedagogical staff and policy makers get continually informed about teaching practices, materials and learning concerns in order to bring modification if need be. (p. 130)

Finally, Hutchinson and Torres (1994) consider textbooks as important means which play a pivotal role in innovation. All in all, textbook evaluation is a necessary process that reinforces the positive aspects in the material, and helps adapt and improve the negative ones.

2.4. Types of Evaluation

Researchers distinguish between three different types of evaluation depending on the purpose of the evaluation and the stage on which it occurs.

2.4.1. Formative Evaluation

According to Rea-Dickens and Germaine (1992) ‘formative evaluation is a continuous process in which the evaluator diagnoses the strengths and the weaknesses of the programme during the learning and teaching process. This helps in making future planning’ (p. 26).

Richards (2001), argues that Formative evaluation is an approach that is based on evaluating a textbook at a planning stage. It is an ongoing process that is conducted during the implementation of the programme. It seeks to determine whether the programme is appropriate or not and what problems need to be solved. This helps the evaluator to make modifications and adjustments before its final adaptation. He suggests that some questions need consideration:

An Evaluation of The Dialogic Tasks in “At the Crossroads”

1. Are teachers using the appropriate methodology?
2. Are there any difficulties that teachers or students encounter during the course?
3. Are the students motivated enough to enjoy the programme, if not, what can be done to improve their motivation?
4. Are students getting sufficient practice work?
5. Is the pacing of material adequate?
6. How well is the textbook being received?

2.4.2. Summative Evaluation

summative evaluations are carried out after an innovation has been running for some time, or at the end of a project. It focuses on the overall outcomes, i.e., end product of an innovation. (Rea- Dickens and Germaine 1992 “p.24). In other words, this evaluation is used to measure whether or not a programme achieved its desired aims or goals in a final stage.

The goal behind summative assessment is to evaluate students’ learning at the end of an instructional unit to see to see whether the underlined objectives are achieved or not. Furthermore, it is an approach that is based on evaluating a textbook after it has been adopted. This approach to evaluation seeks to measure the extent to which the goals have been achieved. In this regard Richards (2001) provided the following checklist:

1. How effective was the course? Did it achieve its aims?
2. What did the students learn?
3. Did the materials work well?
4. Were the objectives adequate or do they need to be revised?
5. Was the amount of time spent on each unit sufficient?
6. How appropriate were the teaching methods?

2.4.3. Illuminative Evaluation

Parlett and Hamilton (1987) state that illuminative evaluation seeks to make both the teacher and ELT practitioners more familiar with what is happening during the classes (as cited in Rea-Dickens and Germaine, 1992.p. 26). Illuminative evaluation is much more concerned with the implementation of the programme in the classroom. The teacher is the monitor of this evaluation. It is based more on the process rather than on the product (Richards, 2001, p.289). The teacher uses several techniques in illuminative evaluation such as, classroom observation, learner journals, an interview, etc. This helps in the development of the teacher himself.

In order to conduct illuminative evaluation Richards (2001) offers the following checklist:

1. How do students carry out group work tasks? Do all students participate equally in them?
2. What kind of decisions do teachers take while teaching?
3. How do teachers use lesson plans when teaching?
4. What type of teacher/students interaction patterns typically occur in classes?

2.4.4. Predictive vs. Retrospective Evaluation

Ellis (1997) proposes that textbook evaluation can be of two types, namely predictive and retrospective evaluation.

Predictive evaluation takes place before using the teaching material in classroom, in order to estimate the degree of the suitability of this teaching materials to the needs of a particular group of learners. He suggested that this kind of evaluation can be conducted relying on previous evaluations accomplished by expert reviewers like ELT journal in which the criteria for evaluating course book are published. In addition to that, teachers can design their own checklists (Ellis 1997, p. 36).

Retrospective evaluation seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the teaching materials that have already been used by the teachers and learners. The purpose of such kind of evaluation is to find out effectiveness of a particular material and the attitudes of teachers and learners towards this teaching material (Ellis, 1997, p. 37).

2.5. Elements of Evaluation

According to Richards, (2001), two types of participants are involved in evaluation: insiders and outsiders. They comprise teachers, students, and anyone concerned with the improvement and application of the programme, i.e., those who are part of the teaching context and can provide input for the target situation”. (p. 294). For instance, formative evaluation is often conducted by teachers who observe the development of courses in order to examine the extent to which the materials are effective and successful during the teaching process. On the other hand, summative evaluation is more related to students who are supposed to provide feedback about what have been learnt at the end of the programme, and what they need to be changed for attaining language proficiency (Richards, 2001, p. 296).

As far as outsider participants are concerned, Richards (2001: 294) states that the outsiders are those who are not directly involved in the implementation of the programme like as consultants, inspectors, administrations whose role is to help teachers to perceive what happens in classroom and ,thus, serve as an eyewitness to the teaching procedures capable of providing “an objective view about the aspects of the program” (Richards, 2001, p.294).

2.6. Approaches to Textbook Evaluation

Without evaluation, teachers are hardly capable to determine whether textbooks are suitable for their own classrooms. Therefore, different approaches have been developed to achieve this crucial goal.

2.6.1. Impressionistic Approach

According to Ellis (1997), evaluation is predictive in nature. The impressionistic method may be integrated in the first stage of a cyclical evaluation process. Cunningsworth (1995, p. 2) maintains that the impressionistic approach is characterized by its receptive nature in that all what is worthy of consideration and interesting is showcased. In this regard, Cunningsworth (1995) states that the impressionistic approach likens this approach to a general introduction to a course book. As its name implies, the impressionistic approach intends to form a general impression of a course book fairly quickly. In addition, this approach generally provides an overview of the course book’s possibilities, strengths and weaknesses.

2.6.2. In-depth Approach

In-depth approach is the approach which helps teachers touch the most important points in the material for evaluation.

According to McGrath (2002), the in-depth evaluation needs to address the following points:

1. The aims and content of the book;
2. What they require learners to do;
3. What they require the teacher to do;
4. Their function as a classroom resource;
5. Learner needs and interests;
6. Learner approaches to language learning;
7. The teaching – learning approach in the teacher’s own classroom (McGrath, 2002: pp. 54 – 55).

Cunningsworth (1995) maintains that the in-depth approach is an active approach in its nature. It evaluates the textbook profoundly. It is focused specifically on the items that have to do with the students’ needs. All this is carried to find out how suitable the textbook is and whether to keep using it or not (p. 2).

2.6.3. The Checklist as An Evaluative Tool

The checklist is another valuable means used in evaluation. Luis Miguel (2017) states:

“Harmer (1991) was convinced that using checklists could be beneficial in understanding whether a textbook is able to address the needs of learners. McGrath (2003) explained that a checklist is a good tool to generate different opinions about a textbook. One of the most significant advantages of using a checklist is that it represents a systematic direction to confirm related elements that are considered for evaluation (McGrath, 2002). Checklists and evaluation elements could be customized based on needs to offer sufficient flexibility during the evaluation stage” (Luis Miguel 2017 p. 156).

One major advantage of using the checklist approach is that it can provide a systematic way to ensure all relevant items which are clear and concise to be considered for evaluation (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 2). It is also a convenient and flexible method as evaluators have freedom to add or drop different evaluation items according to individual and situational needs (Williams (1983), p. 253).

Conclusion

The present chapter has reviewed the literature related to textbook evaluation in view of providing insights for the design and implementation of the evaluation of the textbook under study. This review has guided the selection of the checklist as an effective tool for evaluating the dialogic tasks in the textbook and informed the design of the questions that formed this checklist.

Chapter Three

“At the Crossroads” Textbook Evaluation

Introduction

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Chapter Three

“At the Crossroads” Textbook Evaluation

Introduction

In order to evaluate the degree of effectiveness of the dialogic tasks in the textbook ‘At the Crossroads’ from the perspective of critical pedagogy, a checklist was designed and implemented. To cross check the findings generated by this analysis, a teachers’ questionnaire was designed and administered to a sample of secondary school teachers who have had experience in using the textbook in question.

This chapter presents the results generated by the two research instruments and compares them with one another so as to get a more objective and comprehensive answer to the research question of the study.

3.1. The Checklist

3.1.1. General Information About the Textbook ‘*At the Crossroads*’

‘At the Crossroads’ is an English language textbook which has been designed for first year secondary school students aged between fifteen and sixteen. This textbook was designed on the basis of the new English language studies syllabus for first year Secondary Education (SE1) designed by the Ministry of Education in January 2005:

- Name of the Textbook: “*At the Crossroads*”;
- Intended learners’ level: SE1 (Secondary Education, Year One);
- General Editor: B. RICHE;
- Editorial Adviser: S.A. ARAB;
- Authors: H. AMEZIANE;
H. HAMI;
K. LOUADJ;
- Publisher: The National Authority for School Publication (O.N.P.S);
- Year/ Place of Publication: 2008-2009 Algiers. Algeria;
- Number of pages: 175.

3.1.2. The Structure of the Textbook

As maintained by its authors, the overall aim of the textbook is to consolidate and extend the competencies acquired at the middle school level. These competencies are interaction, interpretation of oral and written texts, and production (Riche et al., 2005, pp. 3 – 4).

‘At the Crossroads’ starts with an introduction and two pages entitled respectively: ‘To the Teachers’ and ‘To the Learners’. Concerning the content, ‘At the Crossroads’ consists of five didactic units: ‘*Getting Trough*’, ‘*Once Upon a Time*’, ‘*Our Finding Show*’, ‘*Eureka*’, and ‘*Back to Nature*’. Each unit is subdivided into four sequences and three sections. The four sequences are entitled subsequently: ‘**Listening and Speaking**’, ‘**Reading and Writing**’, ‘**Developing Skills**’, and ‘**Consolidation and extension**’. The three sections are as follow: ‘**Stop and Consider**’, ‘**Project Workshop**’, and ‘**Check your Progress**’.

Unit	Titles of the units	Number of pages
1	Getting Through	32
2	Once Upon a time	30
3	Our finding Show	30
4	Eureka	30
5	Back to Nature	30
Total		152

Table 3.1. Units and Numbers of Pages in ‘At the Crossroads’

The four sequences and the three sections are defined subsequently:

a) Sequence 1: Listening and Speaking

This sequence aims at developing the listening and speaking skills. It includes plenty of activities which in turn enable the learners to comprehend and produce using the English language. In this sequence, there are five rubrics.

An Evaluation of The Dialogic Tasks in “At the Crossroads”

- **Anticipate:** in this rubric, the instructor aims at raising attention and adjusting the learners to expect and predict what will come next in the listening and speaking sequence.

- **Listen and check:** The aim behind this task is to teach the learners to recognize and sequence the main ideas in spoken interaction, and to follow the line of what is being said by concentrating and recognizing the key words (Riche et al., 2005, p. 28).

- **Say it clear:** Learners revise the intonation pattern. For example, in requests and be aware of the comparative of superlative of adverbs (Riche et al., 2005, p. 32).

- **Your turn:** As the name refers, it's the learner's turn to practise and consolidate the speaking skill with reference to functions.

- **Say it in writing:** Learners use the knowledge that is learned in the previous tasks in terms of notions and functions in order to produce, for instance, an argumentative paragraph.

b) Sequence 2: Reading and Writing (Aimour, 2011, p. 45)

- **Anticipate:** This rubric encourages the learners to make predictions and expectations of what will come later.

- **Read and Check:** It seeks to determine the extent to which the learners comprehend the reading tasks.

- **Discover the Language:** This rubric consists of a set of activities in which the learners practise structures that they have come across in the texts.

- **Write it Out:** This rubric includes writing tasks. It enables the learners to perform a written task by drawing upon what they have learned in the Discover the Language rubric.

c) Sequence 3: Developing Skills

As the title indicates, this sequence aims to develop the learner's four primary skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. It consists of a variety of activities in which all the skills are present (Aimour, 2011, p. 45).

- **Stop and Consider Section:** Aimour (2011) states that It invites the learners to follow the rules in the Reminder and apply them when doing various activities (Aimour,2011, p. 45). Thus, this section constitutes a grammar review, i.e., a language file/desk. Here the learners are required to stop momentarily the ‘hectic’ tempo of skill building of the sequences in order to consider aspects of language, with which they have come across earlier in the units. In *Stop and Consider* section, grammar is taught deductively. That is, the learners are invited to look at rules supplied in the *Reminders*, and apply those rules in various exercises (Riche et al., 2005, p. 8).

d) Sequence 4: Consolidation and Extension

- **Write it Out:** It contains a body of activities to make the learners consolidate the four primary skills with more emphasis on writing (teacher’s book, p. 45).
- **Work it Out:** It comprises activities in which the learners face difficulties related to learning English (e.g. pronunciation) and everyday life (e.g. telephoning problems).
- **Project Workshop:** As its name indicates, it’s the learners’ project in which they are expected to apply all what is acquired throughout the unit (teacher’s book, p. 46).
- **Check your Progress:** In this section, the learners will check where they stand in terms of the acquisition of functions and related language forms and strategies covered in the unit (teacher’s book, p. 67).

3.1.3. Description of the Checklist

On the basis of a review of the literature related to the theory and practice of critical pedagogy in English language teaching, a checklist was designed and implemented to the analysis of the textbook “At the Crossroads”. The effectiveness of the dialogic tasks from the perspective of critical pedagogy in the textbook under study has been operationalized in terms of twelve questions, see Appendix 2.

3.1.4. The Results

1. Do Problem- Solving Tasks in The Textbook Foster Learners’ Critical Thinking?

Fostering learners’ critical thinking is an aim shared by the competency-based approach and critical pedagogy. However, our analysis of the tasks in the textbook under study has revealed that this aspect is not well articulated. Although some tasks aim at developing this aspect do exist, these tasks remain relatively scarce. Task 4 on page 17 in unit one, for instance, seeks to elicit learners’ opinions about two opposing point of views. In order to live up to this challenge, learners need to think deeply and critically so as to justify their answers.

4 Do you agree with Interviewee A or Interviewee B? Justify your position.

A: Hello, I’m doing a survey on e-mail and snail-mail. May I ask you a few questions?

B: Please do.

A: Do you send your messages by e-mail or by snail mail, I mean by ordinary letters?

B: Well, I prefer sending my messages by e-mail to sending them by snail mail.

A: Why?

B: First because e-mail is cheaper and faster. In addition, ordinary letters are less convenient than e-mail.

A: Can you please explain why writing letters is less convenient?

D: You know, in order to send a letter, you need to go to the post office, buy stamps, stick them on the envelope, and so forth... . I can save myself all the trouble by using e-mail.

A: And what about your friend here? Yes, you sir.

C: Personally, I prefer to write ordinary letters. E-mails are less personal than letters. Anyone can read them. Besides, letters are more interesting than e-mails because we don’t have to write short messages only.

A: You mean e-mail messages, don’t you?

C: Yes, that’s right. Moreover, when we communicate by e-mail, we can’t write messages which take a long time to read and I am not the type of person who writes brief messages.

A: Really?

C: Yes, my friend. I want my readers to know exactly what I mean and how I feel. Do you see what I mean?

A: I certainly do. You definitely prefer to send your messages by snail-mail rather than send them by e-mail. Thank you for giving me so much of your time. Bye!

Figure 3.1: A Sample Argumentative Task in “At the Crossroads” (Unit 1, p. 17)

2. Do Problem Solving Tasks in The Textbook Require Learners to Find Solutions to Real Life Problems And, Thus, Extend Their Existing Understanding to The World?

Task 2 p. 28 in developing skills sequence aims at matching a required skill to a real-life situation. Although the textbook under study do comprise some tasks that require learners to establish a link between their learning of English and real-life situations, these tasks deal only superficially with the issues under discussion. Hence, these tasks do not appear to contribute concretely to the development of clear understanding of the outside world in which these students live. For example, Task 2 on page 28 in the developing skills sequence aims at matching messages with real life situations. In this task, learners are asked to imagine themselves a secretary in Stratford School of English where they are required to write a reply to a letter of enquiry. The follow up task asks learners to write similar replies, but to potential situations in their everyday life. However, in spite of these apparent attempts to relate classroom tasks to real life situations, topics like formulating replies to phone enquiries lack the intellectual depth which is susceptible to develop an adequate level of awareness of real-life problems among students.

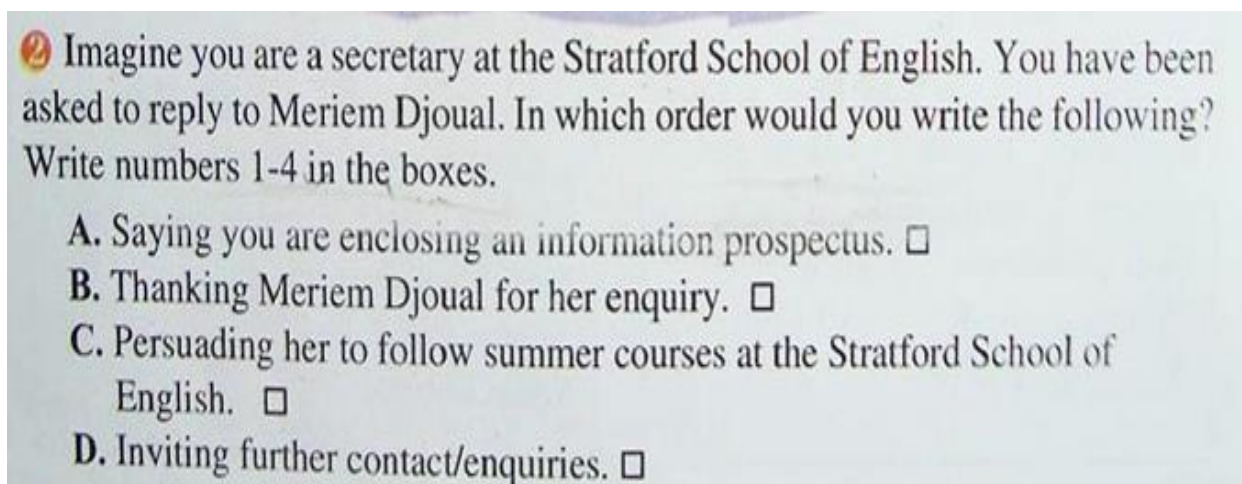


Figure 3.2: A Sample of Dialogic Task Relating Language Learning to Real Life Use

3. Do Problem Solving Tasks in The Textbook Encourage Learners to Analyze, Criticize, And Discuss Real Life Situation?

What has been said about the issue raised in question two also holds true for this question; although some tasks in the textbook require students to discuss real life situations, these tasks are too scarce and too shallow to allow the emergence of social consciousness among students. The tasks in the textbook are generally simple and do not really stimulate learners to analyze and discuss problematic real-life situations.

1 Guess the order in which you must do actions A-E below in order to find your way in London. Put numbers 1-5 in boxes A-E.

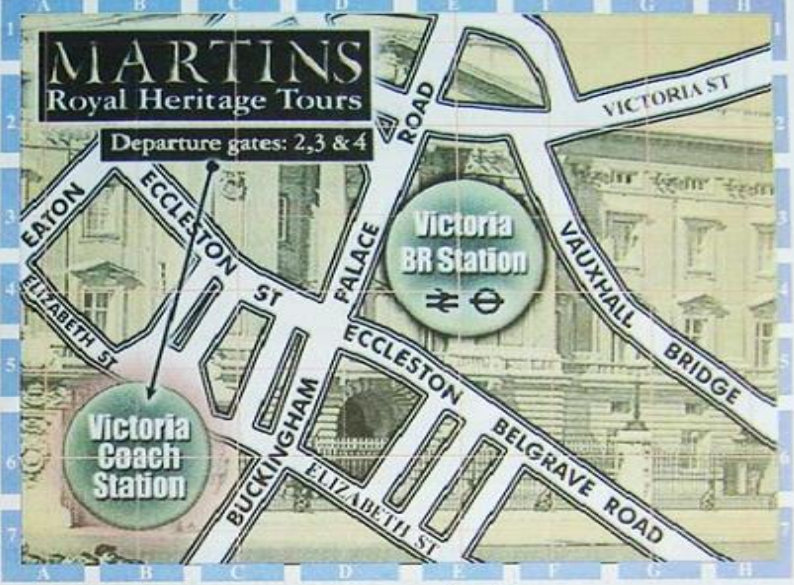
A I have to read the key.

B I have to use the index to locate the area where I want to go.

C I have to situate my position on the map.

D I have to see which direction I should go by looking at the compass rose.

E I have to look at the scale of miles to see its approximate distance.



Scale of miles | 1 mile

Index
Victoria Coach Station.... B6
Victoria BR Station E3

Legend:
P Car Parking
Buses
Underground
British Rail

2 Now, read the dialogue below and check your answers to exercise 1 above.

A: Can you show me the way to Victoria Coach Station, please?
B: Yes, of course. Let's see the street map. We are here in Vauxhall Bridge Street. You said you wanted to go to Victoria Coach Station, didn't you?
A: Yes, that's right.
B: Well, let's have a look at the index first. Victoria Coach Station is in area B6. So go along this road and turn left into Buckingham Palace Road. Then go straight ahead. It's the third turning on the right.
A: Is it far from here?
B: Let's look at the scale of miles. No, it isn't. It's about two miles away.

3 Pair work: Situate yourself on the map above (e.g F4, F5, etc.). Then ask for and give directions either to Victoria Coach Station or Victoria Railway Station. Help yourself with the tactics summary on the next page.

Figure 3.3: Task 1, 2, 3 p. 66.

4. Do Dialogues Included in The Textbook Engage Learners in Problem Solving Tasks?

The instruction in **work it out** from **Consolidation and Extension** sequence p. 37 is as follows:

- a) There is a problem to solve in dialogues 1-5 below. Identify the problems. Then complete the dialogues with replies a-e on the right.

- b) Pair work: Imagine you have one of the phone problems above. Act out a dialogue about it (books closed).

The above instructions show clearly that pupils have some problems to solve in form of dialogues. Yet the topics are restricted to some telephoning issues, while more socially relevant topics and issues like poverty, discrimination, corruption, and oppression are totally neglected.

WORK IT OUT

① There is a problem to solve in dialogues 1-5 below. Identify the problems. Then complete the dialogues with replies a - e on the right.

A: Hello, can I speak to Nora Jones, please?
 B: What number do you want?
 A: 873291. ① a. No, I can't. It's a bad line.
 B: _____
 A: I'm sorry.

A: Hello, is that Hind Benmouloud?
 B: Could you speak up, please? I can't hear you very well.
 A: Can you hear me now? ② b. My line was engaged.
 B: _____
 A: Don't worry. I'll call you back.
 B: Sorry, what did you say? I didn't catch that...

A: Good morning. I'm Djamila.
 B: Jane here.
 A: Hello Jane. I tried to call you at about nine o'clock, but I couldn't get through.
 B: What was the problem? ③ c. Sorry, you've got the wrong number.
 A: _____

A: Can I speak to Mr Jones, please?
 B: I'm afraid he's not in the office. He won't be back till next week. ④
 A: Sorry, I don't understand _____
 B: He won't be back till next week. He's not here.
 A: Oh, thank you.
 B: Try his mobile phone. d. Oh, I see. Our phones were out of order all morning.
 A: Sorry?
 B: I say he has a mobile phone.

A: Hello, James. I tried to call you earlier, but I couldn't get through.
 B: What time did you call?
 A: Just after ten. ⑤ e. My English is not very good.
 B: _____

② Pair work: Imagine you have one of the phone problems above. Act out a dialogue about it (books closed).

Figure 3.4: A Sample Phone Problem Tasks in “At the Crossroads” (p. 37).

5. Do Tasks in The Textbook Foster Learner’s Autonomy?

Fostering learner’s autonomy is also a shared goal between critical pedagogy and the competency-based approach. This principle is well reflected in the different units and sequences of the textbook. In this regard, unit 5 sequence 4 is a good case in point. Indeed, the task in **Figure 3.5** clearly aims at fostering learners’ autonomy through giving them the freedom to express the resolutions that fit their interests and ideals. Moreover, the attempt to relate the realization of the resolution to the Algerian context is noteworthy. Notwithstanding, equipping learners with an adequate level of critical thinking skills and awareness about the real challenges of their social conditions is clearly far beyond the scope of the pedagogy of the textbook under study.

2 Study the contents in the dustbin. Then classify them according to the categories in the table below.

Recyclable	Reusable	Reducible
empty juice boxes		food cans
old aluminium spoons		sacks
lettuce leaves		tomato paste tins
plastic sandwich bags		plastic yoghurt bottles
plastic shopping		used empty tooth paste tubes
empty soda cans		empty milk cartons
old copybooks		newspapers
old vests / shoes		old books
glass soda bottles		

3 Now, classify the recyclables according to the material they are made of.

Plastics	Paper	Metal	Any other

4 Go back to the text on the previous page and pick ou two advantages for making an effort to recycle rubbish. Then complete the following resolution:
I'm not a litter lout and I consider that it's worth making the effort of recycling my rubbish. I will no longer throw _____ because _____ I can _____ ...

5 Now consider the reusables. How are you going to help reuse them? Choose alternatives from the checklist below. Justify the decision(s) you will take.

- reuse them myself. How?
- give them to charities like the Algerian Red Crescent
- distribute them to the needy
- Any other alternative.

6 Now, suppose you were a Friend of the Earth. What solutions would you suggest to solve the problem of household and industrial wastes? Write a short paragraph starting like this: *If I were a Friend of the Earth, _____ ...*

Figure 3.5: Sample Task Reflecting the Principle of Learners’ Autonomy

6. Do the Materials Lead Learners to Ask Questions About Their Identity and Their Social Lives?

stimulate learners’ reflections about who they are and whether they behave the same as the ones depicted on the picture, some native speakers in a British context reading newspapers during a metro ride. Question E, for instance, asks whether people in our country do the same as those in the picture. However, neither the discussed themes nor the intellectual level of the discussions allow students to delve deeply into the problematic issues that are really at the cross road between the mother tongue culture and the target language culture and ,hence, are susceptible to endow learners with the right of cross-cultural awareness that would enable them to alter positively their social milieu.



Figure 3.6: Picture p. 79.

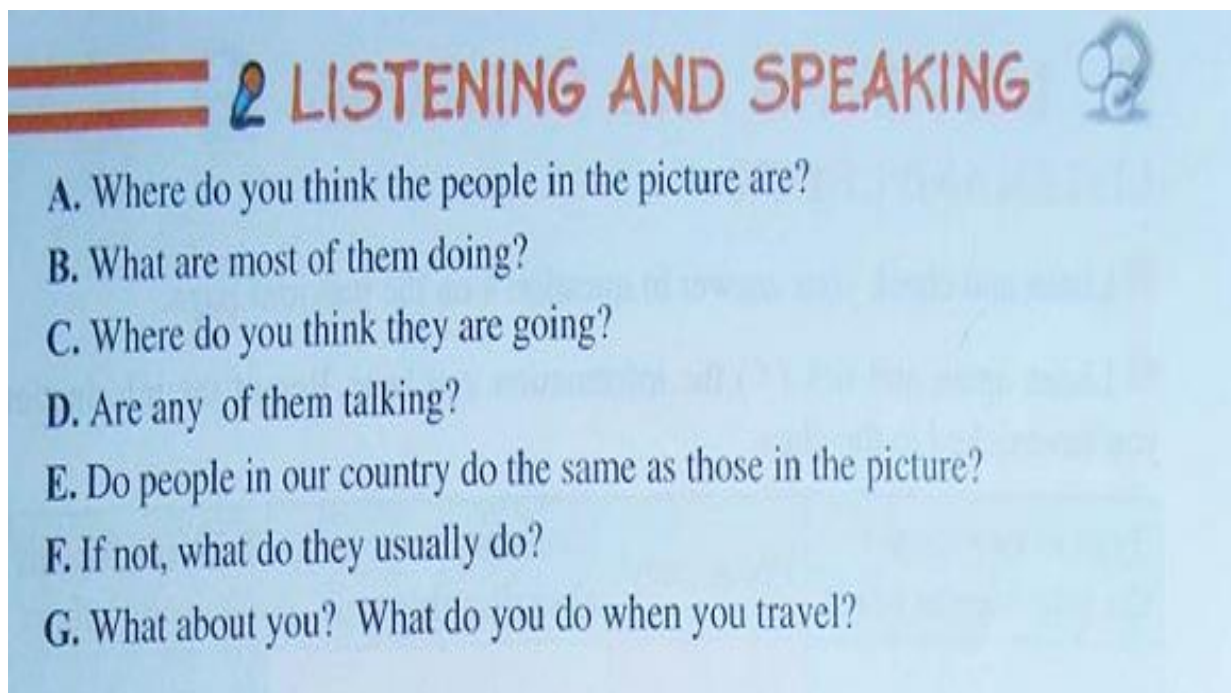


Figure 3.7: A Sample of Cross-Cultural Awareness Task In “At the Crossroads” (Listening and Speaking p. 80).

7. Do Dialogues Included in The Textbook Promote Peer Interaction and Group Work?

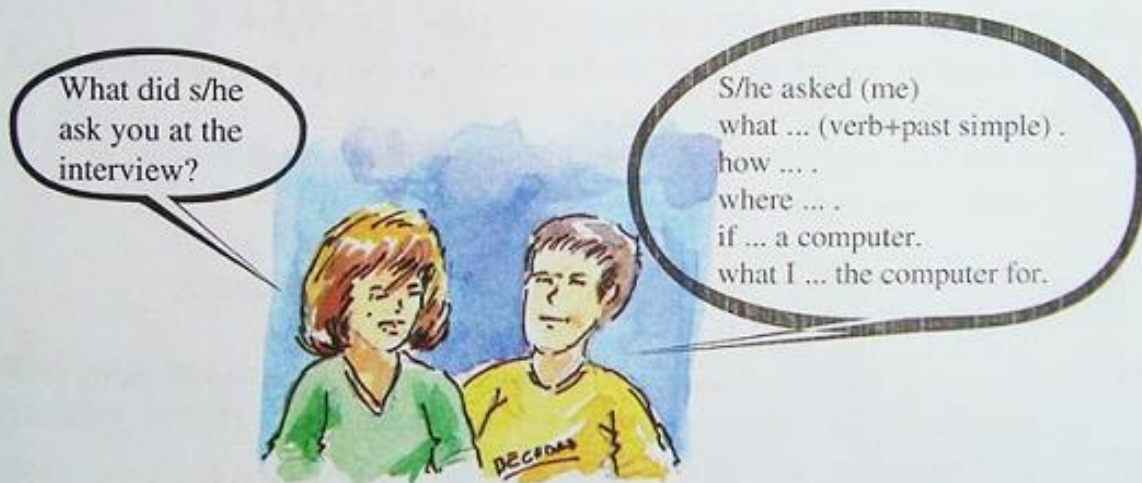
Although group interaction is showcased by the proponents of critical pedagogy as being the sole medium of conscientization, the dialogues in the textbook seem to promote pair work rather than group interaction. Learners are more often than not asked to complete a dialogue each with his/her partner. Compared to third year textbook “New Prospect”, tasks in “At the Crossroads” do not really promote learners’ group work and interaction.

DISCOVER THE LANGUAGE

① Pair work: Imagine you are one of the 60 informants interviewed about computer use. Take turns to interview each other.



② Pair work: Act out a dialogue reporting the questions that the interviewer has asked. Use the cues below.



③ Imagine the same questions are asked to one of your classmates. With your partner, ask and answer questions as in the example below. Pay close attention to your pronunciation of **him** and **her**.

A: What question(s) did the reporter ask him /**ɪ**m/ /her /**ɜː**/ ?

B: She asked him/her what she used the computer for.

Figure 3.8: A Sample Pair Work Task in “At The Crossroads” Textbook (Sequence 3, p. 84)

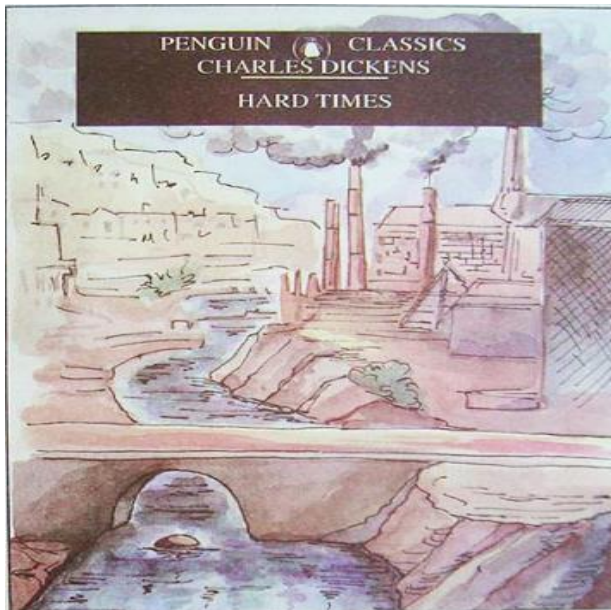
8. Do Themes in The Material Present Both the Learners’ First Language Culture and Target Language Cultures?

At first glance, the textbook gives the impression that the target culture, the learners’ own culture, and even other cultures are represented in different forms. For example, and, as far as the target culture is concerned, in the developing skills sequence on page 57, learners are given the chance to take a look at Charles Dickens book cover and to read an adapted text from this book. On page 78, pupils are asked to look at some British and American newspaper titles and to find Algerian newspapers which have similar titles. Concerning learners’ own culture, page 110 illustrate it through a picture from the past depicting a group of women washing clothes by hand in a countryside. Some characters in the dialogues of the textbook carry Algerian names such as: Rachid, Karim, Bashir, etc. while others have foreign names representing foreign culture such as Kenneth, Mr. Johnson, etc.

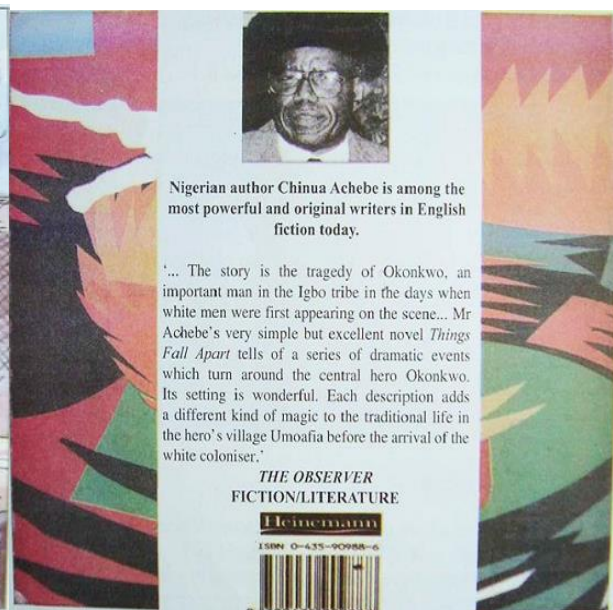
The textbook goes as far as encompassing aspects of African cultures as well. Nigerian life and culture, for example, are presented through the masterpiece of Chinua Achebe “Things Fall Apart”.

Yet, despite the luring impression of representing different cultures, the cross-cultural dimension articulated on the contradictory and problematic issues advocated by the proponents of critical pedagogy as the fertile environment in which transformative education thrives is remarkably neglected. Indeed, rather than acting as an impetus for maturing transformative intellectuals, one dares to say that the cultural representations in the textbook under study are rather infantilizing the students at a critical period of their intellectual growth.

An Evaluation of The Dialogic Tasks in “At the Crossroads”



Task two p. 57



Task one p. 52

2 Look at the British and American newspaper titles below. Which Algerian newspapers have similar titles?

Task two p. 78



Anticipate p. 110

Figure 3.9: Sample Representations of Mother Tongue and Target Language Cultures In “At the Crossroads”

9. Are the Tasks in The Textbook Related to Real-Life Situations?

Again, although the textbook in question demonstrates clear attempts to relate pedagogic tasks to students’ real-life situations, the number, the level, and the quality of these attempts are far less than satisfactory from the standpoint of critical pedagogy. For instance, in Stop and Consider section, there are few types of communicative activities in which the learners have the opportunity to be creative and express their own attitudes, feelings, emotions and opinions independently. For example, Task 4 on page 22 is a pair work activity that aims at encouraging learners to communicate through taking turns to interview each other.

④ Pair work: Take turns to interview each other using the questionnaire form below. Tick (✓) the answers given by your partner.

Example: A: Hello, I’m doing a survey about students’ regular activities. Can you help me?
B: Yes, of course.
A: Well, my first question is. _____.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What time do you get up?
early in the morning late in the morning around 7 in the morning any other

2. How do you go to school?
on foot by bus by bicycle by train either by bus or taxi

3. How often do you eat in the school canteen?
always often sometimes rarely never any other

4. How often do you revise your lessons ?
everyday more than twice a week less than once a week any other

5. How long do you study in the morning?
from 8 to 12 from 8:30 to 11 from 9 to 11 any other

6. How long are you staying in Secondary School?
Until: next year the *Baccalauréat* exam the summer holidays any other

Figure 3.10: A Sample Dialogic Task 4 P. 22

10. Do the Tasks Develop Learners’ Social Skills?

Very few tasks in the textbook aim at developing learners’ social skills. Though we may consider them very few and old fashioned. In the second sequence of the first unit which is Reading and Writing, and on page 20 “anticipate” learners are exposed to some techniques that facilitate the use of computers and the procedures of creating an Email account. Phone Tactics Summary on page 25 also aims at developing learners’ social skills. These skills would be of a great value and help in their social life when talking about past generation but the digital generation of today master such skills with no need to have them in their first-year secondary school textbook. Furthermore, engaging learners in cooperative learning is itself an environment in which social skills are acquired or improved due to interaction between learners. The tasks that require learners to work collaboratively in At the Crossroad textbook are not enough in compared to the second and third-year textbooks.

11. Do Problem-Solving Tasks in The Textbook Lead Learners to Problem Posing and Questioning?

Some tasks in the textbook are designed so as to stimulate learners to pose questions about relevant issues in the outside world. For example, task 6 on page 159 in unit 5 sequence 4. Yet, these tasks are remarkably very few.

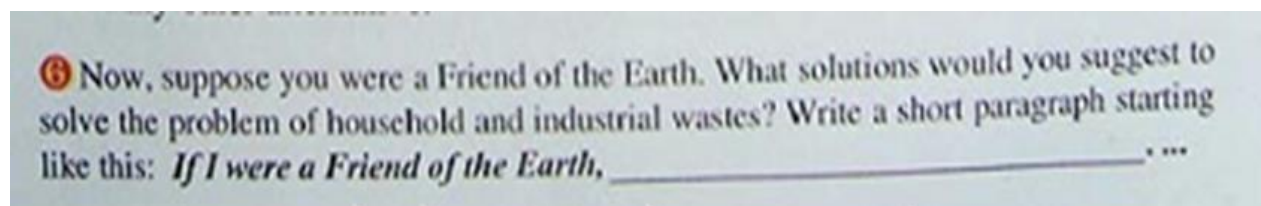


Figure3. 11: A Sample Problem-Solving Task Aims at Fostering Learners’ Problem Posing Skills (Unit 5 Sequence 4 Task 6 P. 159)

12. Do Problem-Solving Tasks in The Textbook Take Generally the Form of Dialogues?

Few problem-solving tasks in the textbook take the form of dialogue. Moreover, even those tasks that are seemingly related to real problems in students’ lives do often require students to tackle issues and to solve problems that are far beyond the intellectual capacities of both the teacher and the students. Task 3 on page 157 (unit five sequence 4) stands as a typical example.

3 A problem to solve
 Energy specialists predict that Algeria will run out of oil in about 40 years.
A. Work in groups to suggest solutions to the problem.
 Analyse the information in the table below. Then draw a map of your country indicating on it possible sites of power stations for the six types of renewable energy in the table above.

Energy	Places	Advantages / drawbacks
Solar	deserts – areas with a lot of sun	clean but intermittent (= not permanent)
Wind	coasts – mountains – plains	clean but intermittent and noisy
Ocean	bays – marshes – beaches	clean but expensive and destructive to environment
Biomass	urban dumps - big farms	trash-consuming but air-polluting and expensive
Geothermal	places with a lot of water	clean but too demanding in terms of water
Hydroelectric	areas with high mountain ranges and rivers	the cleanest but also the most expensive

B. Look at the advantages and drawbacks in the table above, and choose the most viable energy project: The most viable ... is ...
C. Make the best use of all the information above and connectors (if/ because/ owing to/as a result...) to write a memo following the outline below.
 State the problem ⇒ imagine the possible solutions ⇒ assess them ⇒ select the best one ⇒ tell the reader about your proposal.

Figure 3.12: A Sample of Task 3 p. 157 (Unit 5 sequence 4)

All in all, our analysis of the dialogic tasks in “At the Crossroads” by means of the checklist developed for this purpose on the basis of our review of the literature related to critical pedagogy has yielded results that are worthy of consideration. First and foremost, and as far as aspects like fostering critical thinking and learner’s autonomy which are shared between critical pedagogy and the competency-based approach are concerned, our analysis has revealed that although the textbook encompasses some tasks that are clearly aimed at fostering these aspects, the number of these tasks remain too small and their themes too superficial to enable learners to reach the level of consciousness set by the proponents of critical pedagogy. Second, the relationship between the dialogic tasks of the textbook with real life problems of the students is also alarmingly weak from the vintage point of critical pedagogy. Third, in spite of some attempts to instigate learners to compare between some aspects of their culture and the target language cultures, these attempts are remarkably scarce and superficial ,and, therefore, too weak to endow learners with a cross-cultural perspective that would enable them to act positively upon their lives and the lives of those with whom they live. Fourth, dialogism, promoted by the proponents of critical pedagogy as being a determining factor in educating transformative intellectuals, is also not well articulated in the textbook in question.

3.2. The Teachers’ Questionnaire

In order to verify and to corroborate the findings of the analysis undertaken by means of the checklist, a teacher’s questionnaire was designed and administered to a sample of secondary school teachers in the district of the Wilaya of Jijel. The questionnaire attempted to gauge the extent to which the dialogic tasks in the first-year Algerian secondary school textbook “At the Crossroads” comply with the principles of Critical pedagogy.

3.2.1. The Sample

The questionnaire was administered in the period between the second and the seventeenth of May 2019 to a sample of fifty secondary school teachers of English. This sample was chosen on the basis of convenience from eight secondary schools in the district of Jijel. The questionnaire was handed directly by the researcher herself to the participants, which has allowed the achievement of a return rate of 100 %.

3.2.2. Description of The Teachers’ Questionnaire

The teachers’ questionnaire consists only of closed, five level lickert scale items. The items thus designed so as to enable the respondents to specify not only their level of agreement/disagreement but also the intensity of their feelings vis-à-vis the different items.

The questionnaire consists of two major sections consisting of ten questions each. The first section entitled ‘Problem Solving Tasks and Critical Thinking’ aimed specifically at gauging the teachers’ perceptions of the level of dialogicity of the tasks in the textbook under study as well as the effectiveness of these tasks in fostering learners’ critical thinking and autonomy. As for the second section entitled ‘Problem Solving Tasks and Learners’ Outside World’, it aims at probing the teachers’ evaluation of the strength of the relationship between the problem-solving tasks in the textbook and the students’ real-life problems.

3.2.3. Results and Data Analysis

The administration of the teachers’ questionnaire has generated the following results.

3.2.3.1. Section I: Problem Solving Tasks and Critical Thinking:

1. The Problem-Solving Tasks in The Textbook Foster Learners’ Critical Thinking

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	1	9	18	20	2	50
%	2	18	36	40	4	100

Table 3.2: The Effectiveness of The Problem-Solving Tasks in Fostering Learners’ Critical Thinking

The answers generated by the first question revealed that **40 %** of the informants believe that the problem-solving tasks included in the textbook do foster learners’ critical thinking. Yet, **36 %** of them hold a neutral view, while **18 %** of them disagree with the proposition that the problem-solving tasks in “At the Crossroad” textbook foster learners’ critical thinking. It should be noted that **2 %** of the respondents strongly disagree with the proposition.

The observed high level of satisfaction or neutrality in response to the proposition in question demonstrates that the respondents are completely unaware about both the importance of the issue and the standards that should be met in its implementation; this should set off alarm among all the shareholders in the language education policy making process because this situation bears evidence to suggest that teachers do not have the required level of awareness, let alone savoir-faire, that would enable them to lead the movement towards the necessary change so as to meet the ever-growing vital societal challenges.

2. The Problem-Solving Tasks in The Textbook Require Learners to Find Solutions to Real Life Problems And, Thus, Extend Their Existing Understanding to The World

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	0	7	12	30	1	50
%	0	14	24	60	2	100

Table 3.3: The Relationship Between the Dialogic Tasks in The Textbook and Real-Life Problems

As opposed to the results of our checklist-based analysis, the results generated by the second question show that most of the respondents (**60 %**) agree with the fact that the problem-solving tasks in the textbook require learners to find solutions to real life problems and thus, extend their understanding to the world. This clearly indicates that most of respondents have wrongly understood real life problems as those related to daily activities and ordinary skills such as making a phone call, writing a reply to an Email, making requests with the right intonation.

3. The Problem-Solving Tasks in The Textbook Encourage Learners to Analyze, Criticize, And Discuss Real Life Situations

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	1	31	9	8	1	50
%	2	62	18	16	2	100

Table 3.4: The Critical Skills Required in The Textbook Tasks

Surprisingly enough and as opposed to the positive attitude illustrated in the previous question, the majority of the respondents (**62 %**) indicated that the problem-solving tasks in the textbook do not encourage learners to analyze, criticize, and discuss real life situations. This attitude is in complete harmony with the results of our checklist-based analysis which demonstrated that learners are rarely asked to give their opinions and/or to justify their choices or even to criticize aspects related to their social lives.

4. The Problem-Solving Tasks Included in The Textbook Aim at Enabling Learners to Carry Out Critical Interventions in The Real World in Which They Live

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	1	12	10	25	2	50
%	2	24	20	50	4	100

Table 3.5: The Relationship Between the Textbook Tasks and Reflexive Social Change

Surprisingly again and contrary to the results of checklist-based analysis, half of the informants agreed with this proposition, while the rest have been divided over this issue; **20 %** of the respondents adopted a neutral position, while only **24 %** of them disagreed.

5. Dialogues Included in The Textbook Engage Learners in Problem Solving Tasks

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	1	10	18	16	5	50
%	2	20	36	32	10	100

Table 3.6: The Problem-Solving Orientation in The Textbook Tasks

The results showed that **36 %** of the respondents hold a neutral view, **20 %** disagreed, while only **10 %** of them strongly agreed with the proposition. The observed great deal of division over this important issue should also be a source of concern over the respondents’ awareness and knowledge about these defining characteristics in modern language pedagogy.

6. The Problem-Solving Tasks in The Textbook Take Generally the Form of Dialogues

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	2	26	5	15	2	50
%	4	52	10	30	4	100

Table 3.7: The Dialogic Form of The Textbook Tasks

More than half of the respondents did not agree that the problem-solving tasks in the textbook take generally the form of dialogues, which is consistent with the results of the checklist-based analysis.

7. The Problem-Solving Tasks in The Textbook Lead Learners to Problem Posing and Questioning

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	1	31	16	1	1	50
%	2	62	32	2	2	100

Table 3.8: The Level of Problem Posing and Questioning in The Textbook Tasks

The obtained results showed that the majority of the respondents (**62 %**) consider that the problem-solving tasks in the textbook do not lead learners to problem posing and questioning. These results are also consistent with those yielded by our checklist-based analysis.

8. During Problem Solving Debates, Learners Enjoy Equal Authority with The Teacher Over the Issues Being Discussed

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	1	8	8	26	6	50
%	2	16	18	52	12	100

Table 3.9: The Nature of The Teacher-Student Relationship in The Dialogic Tasks of The Textbook

The results show that **52 %** of the informants agree with the proposition that learners enjoy equal authority with the teacher over the issues being discussed during problem solving debates. The results also show that the rest of the respondents were highly divided over this issue: **12 %** of them strongly agree, **16 %** disagree, and **18 %** adopted a neutral view. This is also contradictory with the results of the checklist-based analysis.

9. The Dialogic Tasks in The Textbook Foster Learners’ Autonomy

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	1	13	16	20	0	50
%	2	26	32	40	0	100

Table 3.10: The Effectiveness of The Textbook Dialogic Tasks in Fostering Learners’ Autonomy

The results generated by this question reveal that **40 %** of the respondents agree with the proposition in question. The rest of the respondents were highly divided over this issue: **32 %** of adopted a neutral stance, while **26 %** disagreed. As far as this issue is concerned, and as has been indicated in the checklist-based analysis, the textbook is designed following the principles of the competency-based approach which has fostering learners’ autonomy as a major objective; this explains the relatively high level of approval of the proposition in question among the respondents. However, the method and the level of learner’s autonomy targeted by the textbook tasks are obviously defective from the standpoint of critical pedagogy.

10. The Dialogic Tasks in The Textbook Aim at Enabling Learners to Assert Themselves as Active Social Members Capable of Bringing About Positive Change to Both Their Lives and The Lives of Those Who Live with Them

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	5	22	7	15	1	50
%	10	44	14	30	2	100

Table 3.11: The Textbook Dialogic Tasks Potential in Fostering Students’ Capacity to Accomplish Positive Change.

The results generated by this question reveal that a majority of the respondents (**55 %**) disagree with the proposition advanced in this item. These results are entirely consistent with the results of the checklist-based analysis.

3.2.3.2. Section II: Problem Solving Tasks and Learners’ Outside World

11. The Materials Lead Learners to Ask Questions About Their Identity and Their Social Lives

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	17	20	10	2	1	50
%	34	40	20	4	2	100

Table 3.12: The Textbook Dialogic Tasks in Fostering A Critical Attitude Towards Students’ Lives and Identities

The obtained results showed that **40 %** of the respondents disagreed with the proposition, whereas **34 %** of them strongly disagreed. The respondents’ high level of rejection of this proposition confirms perfectly the results of the checklist-based analysis concerning this issue.

12. The Tasks in The Textbook Help Learners Become Reflective Social Members Who Are Able to Bring About Positive Change

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	12	26	5	6	1	50
%	24	52	10	12	2	100

Table 3.13: The Textbook Dialogic Tasks Potential in Training Students as Reflexive and Active Social Members

The results generated by this item reveal that the majority of the respondents (**76 %**) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposition in question. This is also in line with the findings of the checklist-based analysis which clearly demonstrated that the tasks in the textbook are far too weak to live up to the ideal of helping learners become reflective social members who are able to bring about positive change.

13. The Lexis Used in The Textbook Material is Relevant to Learners’ Real-Life Situations

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	1	8	14	26	1	50
%	2	16	28	52	2	100

Table 3.14: The Relationship Between the Lexis in The Textbook Dialogic Tasks and The Students’ Social Lives

A slight majority of the respondents (**52 %**) considered the lexis in textbook dialogic tasks to be relevant to learners’ real-life situations. This is another proof that the respondents lack the level of awareness and expertise that would enable them to provide an objective assessment of the adequacy of the different aspects of the textbook dialogic tasks to training students as transformative intellectuals.

14. The Problem-Solving Tasks in The Textbook Are Relevant to Learners’ Needs, Interests and Real-Life Situations

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	1	19	16	14	0	50
%	2	38	32	28	0	100

Table 3.15: The Relevance of The Textbook Dialogic Tasks to Students’ Lives

As far as learners’ real-life conditions are concerned, a great deal of division was observed among the respondents. **38 %** of the respondents disagreed with the proposition in question, while **32 %** of them adopted neutral position. The checklist-based analysis, however, has revealed that the themes in question are not only irrelevant, but are mostly obsolete due to the fact that the textbook under study is relatively old.

15. The Tasks Are Adjusted to Learners’ Current Levels So as To Enable Them to Use Their Background Knowledge to Solve Relevant Social Problems

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	1	29	9	11	0	50
%	2	58	18	22	0	100

Table 3.16: The Level of Adjustment of The Textbook Dialogic Tasks to The Students’ Levels

The results generated by this question item showed that a slight majority of the respondents (58 %) disagreed with the proposition.

16. Dialogues Included in The Textbook Promote Peer Interaction and Group Work

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	0	5	12	27	6	50
%	0	10	24	54	12	100

Table 3.17: The Level of Interactivity of The Dialogic Tasks in The Textbook.

As far as question item sixteen is concerned, a slight majority of the respondents (54 %) think that dialogues included in the textbook promote peer interaction and group work .It should be noted here that some of the respondents have deliberately changed with their blue pens the word ‘peer’ in the question item into ‘pair’. This behavior can be explained by the fact that the dialogic tasks often require students to work in pairs rather than in small groups.

17. The Themes Presented in The Tasks are Based on The Target Language Culture Only

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	8	27	7	8	0	50
%	16	54	14	16	0	100

Table 3.18: The Textbook Dialogic Tasks Bias Towards the Target Language Culture

A slight majority of the respondents (54 %) disagreed with the proposition in question. However, the checklist-based analysis has revealed that, although both learners’ culture and the target culture are presented in the themes of the textbook tasks, this presentation is mostly shallow and superficial.

18. The Themes Presented in The Tasks Are Based on The Learners’ First Language Culture Only

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	8	29	7	5	1	50
%	16	58	14	10	2	100

Table 3.19: The Textbook Dialogic Tasks Bias Towards Learners’ First Language Culture

The results show that a slight majority (58 %) of the respondents believe that the themes presented in the tasks are not biased towards learners’ first language. However, in spite of the attempt to represent both cultures in the textbook, these representations remain too weak and superficial to develop the level of cross-cultural awareness advocated by the proponents of critical pedagogy as being a condition for enabling learners to act positively upon their social problems.

19. The Themes Present Both the Learners’ First Language Culture and Target Language Cultures

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	0	7	4	31	8	50
%	0	14	8	62	16	100

Table 3.20: The Balance Between the Presentation of The First and Target Language Cultures.

The results show that a majority of the respondents (**62 %**) consider that the themes in the textbook represent equally both the learners’ first culture and the target one. However, the comment made about the responses to the previous question item is also valid for this item: fostering an adequate level of cross-cultural awareness from the vintage point of critical pedagogy requires more serious themes and a far more in-depth treatment than that provided by the textbook under study.

20. The Tasks Develop Learners’ Social Skills In Tandem With Their Linguistic Skills

	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Number	0	5	10	27	8	50
%	0	10	20	54	16	100

Table 3.21: The symbiosis between the linguistic skills and the social skills in the dialogic tasks of the textbook.

The results show that a slight majority of the respondents (**54 %**) agreed with the proposition in question. Yet, the veracity of this proposition is obviously questionable due to all the shortcomings that have been mentioned so far.

3.2.4. Overall Discussion of the Results of the Teachers’ Questionnaire

The analysis of the results of the first section of the teachers’ questionnaire revealed that teachers’ responses corroborated, at least partly, some findings of the checklist-based analysis. For example, the respondents demonstrated a relatively high approval of the propositions concerning two objectives shared between the competency-based approach and critical pedagogy, namely fostering learners’ critical thinking and autonomy. However, the respondents, surprisingly, demonstrated a great deal of division and, sometimes, a contradictory attitude towards some aspects that are tightly related to the aforementioned objectives. For example, a majority of the respondents agreed that the problem-solving tasks in the textbook do not encourage learners to analyze, criticize, and discuss real life situations. These contradictory attitudes demonstrate that the respondents have approved some propositions simply because these propositions bear resemblance to the objectives of the competency-based approach which they know on the basis of their training that they form the core principles of the competency-based approach that the textbook is supposed to reflect. The great deal of division about most of the issues evoked in this section provides evidence to corroborate the results of the checklist-based analysis: most of the aspects of dialogic tasks in textbook under study - like the themes, the level of dialogicity, the relevance to learners’ lives, etc. - are too weak to live up to the standards required by critical pedagogy.

The results of section II in the teachers’ questionnaire showed that the respondents have confirmed, at least partly, the checklist-based analysis finding that the dialogic tasks in the textbook do not prepare learners to address social problems relevant to their lives. On the other hand, the respondents demonstrated a great deal of division over some issues like the relevance of the themes and the lexis in the textbook dialogic tasks to students’ lives. This division is another proof that these aspects are weakly, if at all, articulated in the textbook. As far as the issues of sharing equal authority and the balance in representing the local and target culture are concerned, the teachers’ responses demonstrate again that their views have been influenced by the discourse promoting the competency-based approach rather than on an objective evaluation of the aspects in question as reflected in the textbook.

3.2.5. Pedagogical Recommendations

In the light of the findings, the present study suggests some recommendations concerning the design of the textbook as well as teachers’ training.

As far as the textbook under study is concerned, it needs careful and deep revision in terms of its objectives, activities, and themes. First and foremost, that textbook should aim through a dialogue-based pedagogy at educating learners to become reflective social members who are able to bring about positive change in their lives and in the lives of the people around them. Moreover, the themes should be updated so as to meet learners’ current interests and needs as well as the rapid developments in technology. Furthermore, the textbook should integrate both learners’ first culture and the target language culture in a more serious and balanced way so as to foster in learners a cross-cultural competence that would enable them to ‘think globally and act locally’.

Innovating the textbook is necessary, but definitely not enough. The most important agent in pedagogic change is the teacher. In order to be effective in training learner as transformative intellectuals that would influence positively their lives and the lives of those who live with them, the teachers should benefit from high-quality pre-service and in-service training so to be able to grasp the principles of critical pedagogy ,to deepen their knowledge of both the first and target language cultures ,and ,most importantly, to be able to implement successfully the principles of this highly challenging and socially rewarding pedagogy.

Conclusion

The checklist-based analysis of the dialogic tasks in the textbook under study has demonstrated that the different aspects of these tasks are too weak to live up to the challenging standards set by the proponents of critical pedagogy. Unfortunately, this applies even to the aspects which are shared by both the competency-based approach and critical pedagogy, namely critical thinking and learners' autonomy. Moreover, in spite of the shy attempts to integrate aspects of both the first and target language cultures, these attempts are superficial and not articulated enough to lead to the development of a cross-cultural awareness among learners. The findings of the checklist-based analysis have, at least, been partially confirmed by the results of the teachers' questionnaire. However, the teachers' positive evaluations of some aspects of the textbook like autonomy and critical thinking have been motivated by the discourse on the competency-based approach rather than by an objective evaluation of those aspects as they are really reflected in the textbook.

Endowing learners with a critical attitude and a cross-cultural awareness that would enable them 'to think globally and act locally' to reverse the status quo and improve their lives and the lives of their communities require the adoption of the principles of critical pedagogy in teaching the English language and culture in the Algerian context. These principles should be reflected in the design of the textbooks, but more importantly, in the pre-service and in-service training of teachers so as to enable them to implement successfully those urgently need changes.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Critical pedagogy is a modern, post method approach to language teaching that aims at raising learners’ awareness of the social inequalities that are prevalent in their society and empower them so as they assume their roles as transformative intellectuals capable of improving their social conditions. The apparent failure of the competency-based language teaching methodology to yield the expected results opens the way for a science-based reform. In this regard, critical pedagogy appears to hold special promise.

In the light of this, the present study aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the dialogic tasks in the first-year Algerian secondary school textbook “At the Crossroads” from the perspective of critical pedagogy. A checklist and a teacher’ questionnaire have been designed on the basis of a review of the literature related to critical pedagogy and have been used to achieve the aims of this evaluation.

The checklist operationalized the effectiveness of the dialogic tasks from the perspective of critical pedagogy in terms of twelve questions. These questions guided the analysis of the textbook “At the Crossroads”. This analysis has yielded some important findings which can be summarized in four points:-the textbook does not foster adequately even critical thinking and learners’ autonomy, which are shared goals of critical pedagogy and the competency based approach; the relationship between the dialogic tasks of the textbook with real life problems of the students is not well articulated; cross-cultural awareness is weakly addressed ;the level of dialogism in the textbook tasks is also alarmingly weak. To cross-examine these findings with the views of the teachers who have had experience in implementing the textbooks tasks, a teachers’ questionnaire was designed and administered in the period between the second and the seventeenth of May 2019 to a sample of fifty secondary school teachers of English chosen on the basis of convenience from eight secondary schools in the district of Jijel.

The analysis of the results of the teachers’ questionnaire has confirmed, at least partly, the results of the checklist-based analysis. This analysis has found that the dialogic tasks in the first-year secondary school textbook “At the Crossroads’ to be discrepant with the aims, the principles, and the standards of critical pedagogy even with regard to those aspects that form the focus of the competency-based approach, namely critical thinking and learners’ autonomy.

Moreover, the level of dialogicity of the tasks, their relevance to students’ lives, and the development of a cross – cultural awareness have been found to be weakly addressed in the textbook from the vintage point of the teachers. It is worth noting, however, that the teachers’ positive rating of some aspects of the textbook like autonomy and critical thinking have been motivated by the discourse on the competency-based approach rather than by an objective evaluation of those aspects as they are really reflected in the textbook.

In order to be able to breed new generations of transformative intellectuals who are holders of a cross – cultural awareness that would enable them “to think globally and act locally” to improve the social conditions in which they live, critical pedagogy appears to offer the most suitable solutions to the teaching of language and culture in the Algerian English as a foreign language classroom. If our context of English language teaching is to live up to the social challenges of the twenty first century, the principles of this innovative approach should find their way to the textbooks and the teachers’ training programmes.

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Appendice 1

The Teachers’ Questionnaire

Dear colleagues,

The following questionnaire explores the degree of compliance of «Problem Solving Tasks» in «At the Crossroads» with the major principals of critical pedagogy. This questionnaire has been designed from the practical part of a master thesis in English didactics. The success of this research endeavor depends entirely on your sincerity in responding to the different items. Be ensured that there are no right or wrong answers and that your identity will remain, under all circumstances, anonymous.

Please tick (X) :

- “SD” if you **Strongly Disagree**
- “D” if you **Disagree**
- “N” for **Neutral**
- “A” if you **Agree**
- “SA” if you **Strongly Agree**

Sections’ Titles		SD	D	N	A	SA
I. Problem Solving Tasks and Critical Thinking	1. The problem-solving tasks in the textbook raise learners’ critical thinking					
	2. The problem-solving tasks in the textbook help learners find solutions to problems and extend their existing understanding to the world					
	3. Problem-solving tasks in the textbook lead learners to analyze, criticize, and discuss					
	4. Problem-solving tasks included in the textbook aim at raising critical consciousness and critical intervention in the real world					
	5. Dialogues included in the textbook engage learners in problem solving tasks					
	6. Problem-solving tasks in the textbook are generally in forms of dialogues					
	7. Problem-solving tasks in the textbook lead learners to problem posing and questioning					
	8. The tasks are designed to encourage learners talk at the expense of teachers’ one					
	9. Tasks in the textbook limits teachers’ authority and get learners more independent					
	10. The tasks are at the level of learners so that they can use their background knowledge to solve the existing problems					

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Sections' Titles		SD	D	N	A	SA
II. Problem Solving Tasks and Learners' outside World	11. The materials lead learners to ask questions about their identity and their social lives					
	12. Tasks in the textbook help learners become reflective social members that are able to make positive change					
	13. The words are to be used in the learners' real world					
	14. The problem-solving tasks in the textbook meet with learners' needs, interests and real-life situations					
	15. The Tasks Are Adjusted to Learners' Current Levels So as To Enable Them to Use Their Background Knowledge to Solve Relevant Social Problems					
	16. Dialogues included in the textbook promote peer interaction and groupwork					
	17. The themes presented in the tasks are based on the target culture only					
	18. The themes presented in the tasks are based on the learners' culture only					
	19. The themes presented on both the learners' culture and target one					
	20. The tasks develop learners' social skills together with their linguistic skills					

Thank you again for your time

Appendice 2

THE CHECKLIST

1. Do problem- solving tasks in the textbook foster learners’ critical thinking?
2. Do problem solving tasks in the textbook require learners to find solutions to real life problems and, thus, extend their existing understanding to the world?
3. Do problem solving tasks in the textbook encourage learners to analyze, criticize, and discuss real life situation?
4. Do dialogues included in the textbook engage learners in problem solving tasks?
5. Do tasks in the textbook foster learner’s autonomy?
6. Do The materials lead learners to ask questions about their identity and their social lives?
7. Do dialogues included in the textbook promote peer interaction and group work?
8. Do themes in the material present both the learners’ first language culture and target language cultures?
9. Are the tasks in the textbook related to real-life situations?
10. Do the tasks develop learners’ social skills?
11. Do problem-solving tasks in the textbook lead learners to problem posing and questioning?
12. Do problem-solving tasks in the textbook take generally the form of dialogues?

Résumé

La présente étude évalue l'efficacité des exercices dialogiques dans le livre de première année de l'enseignement secondaire algérien “At the Crossroads” du point de vue de la pédagogie critique. Une liste de contrôle composée de douze questions a été conçue et utilisée dans l'analyse du livre “At the Crossroads”. Cette analyse a révélé que le livre sous l'étude n'encourage pas suffisamment la pensée critique et l'autonomie des apprenants, qui sont des objectifs communs de la pédagogie critique et de l'approche par compétences. De plus, la relation entre les exercices dialogiques du livre et les problèmes réels des élèves n'est pas bien articulée. En outre, les questions cruciales de la prise de conscience interculturelle et du dialogue dans les livres scolaires sont peu abordées. Ces résultats de l'analyse fondée sur des listes de contrôle ont été comparés aux vues d'un échantillon de cinquante enseignants du secondaire dans la région de Jijel, choisis pour des raisons de commodité à l'aide d'un questionnaire conçu à cet effet. L'analyse des résultats du questionnaire à l'intention des enseignants a confirmé, au moins en partie, les résultats de l'analyse fondée sur une liste de contrôle, en ce sens que les exercices dialogiques du livre de première année secondaire “At the Crossroads” ont été jugés incompatibles avec les objectifs, les principes et les normes de la pédagogie critique, même en ce qui concerne les aspects qui sont au centre de l'approche par compétences, à savoir la pensée critique et l'autonomie des apprenants. En outre, le niveau de dialogicité des exercices, leur pertinence pour la vie des élèves et le développement d'une conscience interculturelle ont été jugés faiblement abordés dans le livre du point de vue des enseignants qui ont participé à l'étude.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تقييم فعالية تمارين الحوار والوضعية المشكلة في الكتاب المدرسي الجزائري سنة أولى ثانوي « At The Crossroads » من وجهة نظر علم التربية او البيداغوجيا النقدية. اعتمدت هذه الدراسة على قائمة مرجعية (checklist) مكونة من اثني عشر سؤالاً تم من خلالها تحليل الكتاب المدرسي. وقد كشف التحليل ان الكتاب لا يعزز بشكل كاف التفكير النقدي وكذلك لا ينمي مهارات التعلم الذاتي للتلميذ، والتي هي من اساسيات التربية النقدية وبيداغوجيا الكفاءات على حد سواء.

يظهر تحليل الكتاب أيضا ذلك التباين الشاسع بين التمارين المبنية على الحوار والحياة اليومية للمتعلمين، ومن جهة أخرى يكشف قصورا في التعامل مع المواضيع التي تتناول ثقافة الاخر وغياب الوعي الحضاري.

وقد توافقت نتائج التحليل الى حد ما مع نتائج الاستبيان الموجه لمجموعة مكونة من خمسين أستاذا من أساتذة التعليم الثانوي بمقاطعة جيجل. الذين أكدوا بدورهم ان التمارين التي يعتمد عليها الكتاب المدرسي لا تعزز التفكير النقدي للتلاميذ ولا تتماشى مع المبادئ البناءة للتربية النقدية.