

# Appraising Iranian L2 Classroom Discourse Contents From the Critical Pedagogy Perspective

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## Abstract

Critical pedagogy (CP) empowers L2 learners to have a voice in the classroom and in the society. This study was an attempt to investigate whether the current classroom discourse in Iran can endow the L2 learners with a critical awareness to actively transform their learning processes and creatively engage in collaborative dialogues to construct new knowledge. To this end, the discourse contents of 10 L2 classrooms in Shahrekord, Iran, were randomly observed, recorded, and examined to explore whether the turn-taking architecture was designed in a dialogical way to empower the L2 learners with critical awareness to transform their roles of passive learners into critical thinkers and coparticipants. Chi-squares were, then, run on the transcribed and coded data related to the occurrence and distribution of the initiation, elicitation, and follow-up moves, and a complementary interpretive approach was adopted to the analysis of classroom interactional episodes. The results indicated that the teachers were the initiators of most exchanges in the classrooms, and their initiations were mostly in the form of display (i.e., product) questions. The teachers predetermined the contents of the L2 learners' turns, leaving no space for the L2 learners to have their own voices. Therefore, the L2 learners' roles were restricted to giving preselected, short answers. The teachers did not use their follow-up moves to encourage critical talk, dialogue, or collaboration among the L2 learners in class. It is finally argued that a critical, transformative approach to L2 pedagogy and classroom discourse desilences the L2 learners and empowers them to constantly reflect upon their knowledge-construction and learning experiences.

**Keywords:** Critical pedagogy; Classroom discourse; Dialogical method; Turn content

## 1. Introduction

There has always been an attempt to improve the pedagogical practices in any educational system, hence to increase learning. As the need to learn English as an international language has increased, language practitioners, teachers, and those in educational authority have been involved in presenting better ways of learning and teaching English. Critical pedagogy (CP), as a postmodernist educational movement, claims to bring about not only a better learning environment but also a better world (Norton & Toohey, 2004; Popkewitz & Fendler, 1999). CP deals with the problem of the culture of silence and creates equal opportunities for L2 learners in the classroom to speak their minds (Fairly, 2009; Shore, 1992). Accordingly, schools have been expected to act as springboards to give students their voice and to create critical social beings (Izadinia, 2009). Therefore, knowledge is no more perceived as correct information and facts passively received from books and teachers, and then learnt by heart, but it renders itself as dynamic understanding and meaning constructed collaboratively in critical discussions and dialogical interactions among students (Cazden & Beck, 2003).

CP has opened up new horizons in the world of education as the prerequisite for a better world (Norton & Toohey, 2004; Popkewitz & Fendler, 1999). It is cherished and nourished by some key concepts, including conscientization, praxis, learner autonomy, identity, problem-posing method, and dialogical method. CP has its origin in critical theory which itself deals with matters of knowledge, autonomy, reflectivity, power, social change, social inequities, transformation, production, reproduction, and representation of reality, culture, hegemony, ideology, and the like in and through pedagogical discourses (Boyce, 1996; Giroux, 1998; Giroux & McLaren, 1994; Gur-Ze'ev, 1998; McLaren, 1989; Popkewitz & Fendler, 1999).

CP tries to provide chances for L2 learners to be able to think, challenge, take risks, and make a change both in the classroom and in the society (Giroux, 1988). Educational institutions should end up with the unequal power relations that exist on the teacher-student relationship and to employ a critical dialogical method to soften this relationship using a process of serious negotiation of ideas which prepares a chance for the participants to speak their minds and develop their ideologies (Fernandez-Balboa & Marchall, 1994).

Thus, dialogues are important in the process of critical and active language learning due to the nature of human beings and human development. Human beings are naturally inquisitive and tend to ask questions about the environment to learn and to solve problems. Dialogues are, therefore, the habit of human beings to reflect on the meaning of their knowledge and experience (Freire, 1972; Lankshear, 1993). Through critical dialogues, teachers move away from the conventional position of power and authority and become colearners and facilitators, and students become

some experts themselves and they initiate dialogues from their own knowledge while reflecting and thinking critically on the subject matter (Kincheloe, 2004; Missingham, 2007; Shore, 1992). CP, thus, challenges the predominant traditional antidialogical banking model of education (Freire, 1972) in which teachers are considered as the sole knowers and authorities in the classroom with the responsibility to deliver the predetermined facts and unchallengeable knowledge to the students who have to meekly listen without any question (Freire, 1972; Okazaki, 2005).

Such traditional education does not allow or encourage students to begin self-learning, practice creativity, use dialogue, or question the facts (Freire, 1972; Richards, 2001). This traditional lecturing teaching, criticized severely later on by CP, has been in practice and domination in schools and colleges for generations (Richards, 2001). Therefore, the present study aimed to examine the contents of L2 classroom discourses in Iran to probe whether they make the L2 learners collaborate with each other meaningfully leading to raising critical dialogues and discussions among them, or, on the contrary, they may deprive the students of such worthwhile opportunities.

## **2. Literature Review**

The quality of classroom discourse has been the subject of many studies and discussions on schooling and educational transformations since 1960s (Cazden & Beck, 2003) when critical transformative pedagogy was introduced by Freire, a Brazilian educationalist. To transform the society and to create productive and critical social beings for a better world, CP starts from schools and classrooms. As a result, schools have been charged with creating critical social students and expected to act as springboards to give students their own voices (Izadinia, 2009).

The CP literature reflects much enthusiasm for terms and concepts such as conscientization, problem-posing method, praxis, learner autonomy, or identity, and favors dialogic method and open communication among the students and teachers (Freire, 1972; Izadinia, 2009; Shore, 1992). According to Shore (1992), critical empowering pedagogy is a dialogue pedagogy in which mutual discussions play the major role because it is, on the one hand, structured and directed by the teachers, and encourages students' creativity and participation, on the other. Critical teachers should transfer some of their authority to the students through more balanced, open, and dialogic discussion, instead of transferring their own knowledge and facts (Shore, 1992) to make them active social beings because this power transition will give the students their right and equal opportunities to have a voice, and thus, will gradually decrease authority and increase equality not only in education but also in the society.

L2 education has recently put increased emphasis on the ability to communicate, and, to achieve this important goal, classroom interactions should focus less on facts and procedures to be learned by heart and more on strategies for learning

and doing. It shows that classroom discourse now counts as much more important than ever, and that it is an essential social process by which students create knowledge and meaning to achieve their communicative goals (Cazden & Beck, 2003). As Bakhtin (1981) puts it, knowledge does not exist in the mind of one individual but is always constructed by the participants engaging in critical dialogue and verbal communication. Therefore, those that welcome dialogues will develop knowledge. Knowledge is not considered as correct information and facts passively received from books and teachers and learnt by heart, but it means dynamic understanding, meaning, and knowledge constructed collaboratively in negotiations among students and teachers (Cazden & Beck, 2003).

Critical empowering education, as defined by Shore (1992), is a critical-democratic and empowered student-centered pedagogy for self and social change. It believes that the self and the society create each other; therefore, it helps L2 learners to be active and cooperative as well as social beings by developing skills, academic knowledge, habits of inquiry, and change. Dialogue transforms the teacher's authority and puts limitation on his or her voice and calls the learners to participate in the process to show their voice. It will help them to think more and learn better. Teachers use this level of knowledge as the starting point and presents successively deeper levels of input (Shore, 1992).

This dialogic discourse structure can be created by posing and discussing real-life problems to raise students' critical consciousness (Freire, 1972). In critical dialogical interactions, L2 learners are expected to initiate the conversation and ask critical questions in joint discussion through collaboration. Here, the teacher plays the role of a coordinator, takes a seat back, controls the learners' discussion, and allows them for joint knowledge and meaning construction through debates and interactions (Woods, 2006). Foster and Ohta (2005) define coconstruction as:

The joint creation of an utterance, whether one person completes what another has begun, or whether various people chime in to create an utterance. Coconstructions are seen as allowing learners to participate in forming utterances that they cannot complete individually building language skills in the process. (p. 420)

In a critical dialogical discourse, L2 learners are allowed to question the context and the process of dialogue and even to reject them (Shore, 1992). Teachers do not make students say and repeat sentences that do not have any real relations with their real lives. L2 learners are never made to repeat grammatically correct but contextually meaningless sentences. The teacher uses L2 learners' knowledge as the starting point and successively presents deeper levels of knowledge (Shore, 1992).

CP provides a persuasive critique of conventional education in institutions such as schools and universities where students are taught traditionally (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003; Freire, 1972; Shore, 1978) and helps L2 practitioners to evaluate and improve the status quo. Bowers and Flinders (1990) argue that “the language processes of the class can be understood as an ecology of power that advantages some groups of students over others” (p. 26), and nowhere is this more apparent than in the L2 classroom. All teachers are empowered by their presumed expertise, and students are essentially disempowered by their lack of expertise in the subject matter being studied and also the ability to communicate in the L2. Therefore, this difference makes a significant power difference between L2 teachers and their students (Reagon & Osborn, 2002). Craig (1995) questions the traditional assumption that the role of an L2 teacher, viewed as an authoritative expert, is to own more of the base knowledge and to intactly transmit this knowledge to the learners.

In such an educational system, good teachers are those who talk more about the subject matter, and good students are those who keep quiet and agree with the teacher. Teachers usually teach the way they were taught themselves; students also expect teachers to lecture didactically and tell them what to do all the time. The emerging classroom discourse in such contexts does not allow (or encourage) students to begin self-learning, practice creativity, use dialogue, or question the facts. Students are regarded as zero in knowledge, and the teacher is in front of the classroom lectures and specifies exactly what students sitting in rows should memorize (Freire, 1972; Richards, 2001).

Research shows that employing the CP’s principles of dialogue learning, problem posing, critical and reflective thinking, and participatory approaches into the classroom practice helps to promote language awareness (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Crookes & Lehner, 1998; Shin, 2004). Missingham (2007), for example, challenging conventional lecture- and tutorial-based approaches (typical of banking version of education), attempted over four years to bring participatory and dialogical approaches to learning and teaching into a university postgraduate class on international community development and found beneficial results. In this regard, Woods (2006) also found a high quality of work in peer or group student collaboration while teaching undergraduate classes. She showed that such group discussions encouraged quiet students to contribute more to the debate, facilitated creativity in thinking, and raised discussions with more extended, elaborate, and wide-ranging issues than those in conventional or teacher-to-students interaction routines. Okazaki (2005) engaged some ESL students in social issues and observed that the problem-posing process served to maintain dialogues and raised students’ critical awareness in the language-teaching classrooms.

Canagarajah (1999), using a critical study of Sri Lankan classrooms, revealed profitable results by exploiting the students' own linguistic and cultural recourses. Morgan (1997, 1998) in his critical works in Toronto showed that critical practice in ESL could emerge from community concerns and problems immediate to the students' lives (Morgan, 1998). Auerbach (1995) showed how participatory pedagogy would have beneficial results in bringing teachers and students together on collaborative projects.

Reagon and Osborn (2002) argue that many students try to learn a second or foreign language at some point in their education, but few of them are likely to develop a minimal level of competence in the target language. So, L2 education unsuccessfulness is a great challenge that most L2 educators encounter in public schools. Undoubtedly, one of the important systems in every country is its educational system in which everyone grows from childhood to adolescence. As Woods (2006) puts it, schooling is considered as an important right which should be available to all children and funded by public taxes or government. Furthermore, the kind of education in which learners are growing up and its role is of great importance. The educational system can help them to know the things better, but it may also have opposite effects (Shore, 1992). A typical aim of education is to increase knowledge and understanding which constitute the curriculum and also to increase knowledge and understanding of the students. Therefore, one important point in every education is what kind of knowledge is being constructed in classroom settings (Edwards & Mercer, 1987). Therefore, the present study is an attempt to investigate the classroom discourse from critical perspectives to explore to what extent CP's dialogic method has been welcomed in principle and practice. Therefore, the following research question is posed:

1. Are the turn contents of the current speech exchanges in the public EFL classrooms in Iran dialogical in essence and helpful to improve the learners' language awareness and reflection?

### **3. Method**

#### ***3.1 Setting and Participants***

Ten EFL classrooms in the public high schools in Shahrekord, Iran, were randomly observed. Each classroom contained about 25 EFL students whose age ranged from 15 to 18, and all were the native speakers of Persian. In short, the study consisted of 10 EFL teachers who were officially employed by the Ministry of Education. In addition, based on the information obtained through informal interviews with the EFL teachers, eight teachers held B.A. in English Literature, English Translation, and TEFL, and two others had M.A. in TEFL. All the EFL teachers were

the native speakers of Persian, and their years of experience in teaching English in public schools ranged from 16 to 22.

### 3.2 Procedure

Ten observations of the 10 EFL classrooms in public high schools were conducted by the researchers. Each class session took about 60 min long, covering some classroom activities such as checking assignments, teaching grammatical points, reading comprehension, teaching phonetics, vocabulary items, and conversations. The researchers carried out the observations sitting back in the classrooms from the beginning to the end of each session, observing, taking notes, audio-recording the discourse, and tried not to have any interruption and interference in the classroom processes and procedures to preserve the qualities of a real context. So, all that happened in the classrooms, that is, any spoken exchanges among the teacher and students were audio-recorded for later transcription and coding.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

The present study elicited genuine data from the participants' endeavors in interactions. Therefore, all the recorded speech exchanges between the teachers and the students or among the students themselves were transcribed and then coded. The semantic contents or functions of the participants' turns were specified by counting the number of occurrence of each move (e.g., question, directing, informing, etc.). Some chi-squares were also run to know whether or not there was a significant difference between the number of occurrence of each move's functions.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The semantic contents (or functions) of each turn taken by or given to the teachers and the students in the EFL classrooms were examined, and the number of incidence and frequency percentages were computed for them. Table 1 indicates the number of the elicited initiation move functions in the EFL classrooms:

Table 1. *Frequency and Percentage of Initiation Move's Functions*

Functions	Observed Frequency	Percentage of the Functions	Expected Frequency	Residual
Questions (Q)	199	44.5%	89.4	109.6
Directing (D)	99	22.1%	89.4	9.6
Nominating (N)	88	19.6%	89.4	-1.4
Student Initiations (SI)	51	11.4%	89.4	-38.4
Informing (In.)	10	2.2%	89.4	-79.4
Total	447			

Table 2 indicates that all the functions were not used equally by the participants in the classrooms. In other words, there was a significant difference

among the number of initiation move's functions utilized by the students and the teachers ( $\chi^2 = 222.430$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ):

Table 2. *Results of the Chi-Square Test for Initiation Move's Functions*

Functions of Initiation Move	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
	222.430*	4	.000

\*0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 89.4.

Tables 1 and 2 also show that about half of all the initiation moves were in the form of questions or elicitations (44.5%). Besides questions, there were other types of initiations in these classrooms. The teachers used 99 initiations, about one fourth of all the initiations (22.1%) to direct or command the students to do some activities. Besides, 19.6% of the initiations functioned by the teachers to nominate the students explicitly by their names, and 2.2% of the initiations used by the teachers to give information. What is interesting is that only 11.4% of all the initiations in the classrooms were used by the students to open an exchange.

Because of the large number of questions in these classrooms (i.e., 44.5% of all the initiations), it was important to examine the types of elicitations or questions by the teachers. Furthermore, the way of eliciting verbal contributions from students is crucial because it provides the opportunity for them to formulate their ideas and to express their thought and can help the students to become critical thinkers (Blosser, 1990; McGrew, 2005; Woods, 2006).

Table 3 shows that out of the 199 questions by the teachers in the initiation move, 175 were product (or display) questions, 23 managerial, and only 1 question functioned as an open (or process) question. In other words, out of a total of 447 initiations in the classrooms, 175 (39.1%) were product questions by the teachers which required limited and short answers on the part of the students and to which the teachers knew the answers in advance. The results show the preference of the teachers for product questions over process questions:

Table 3. *Different Types of Elicitation*

Elicitations	Observed Frequency	Percentage of the Functions	Expected Frequency	Residual
Close Questions (CQ)	175	88%	66.3	108.7
Managerial Questions (MQ)	23	11.5%	66.3	-43.3
Open Questions (OQ)	1	.5%	66.3	-65.3
Total	199			

The chi-square test computed for the types of elicitations (or questions) supports this interpretation. Table 4 reveals that different types of questions were not



used equally by the questioners ( $\chi^2 = 270.673$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Simply put, product questions initiated by the teachers were significantly most frequent in the classroom speech-exchanges:

Table 4. Results of the Chi-Square Test for Elicitation Types

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Different Types of Elicitations	270.673*	2	.000

\*0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 66.3.

To become familiar with the nature of the contents of the turns, presented in Tables 1 and 3, some recorded episodes are also elaborated:

### Episode 1

(*Italicized parts indicate the words or sentences written in the textbooks.*)

- (1) (MQ) T: Ok, which page? Which part?
- (2) (SR) SS: Reading Comprehension.
- (3) T: Reading comprehension *The Holy Prophet*.
- (4) (N) Sepideh,
- (5) (D) Start.
- (6) S1: *God has sent many prophets for the guidance of mankind. . . .*
- (7) (CQ) T: *Has sent*, which tense does it have?
- (8) S1: Present perfect
- (9) T: Yes, present perfect, go on.
- (10) S1: *They all taught us to be good and to do good.*
- (11) (CQ) T: What does *preach* mean?
- (12) S1: NR
- (13) T: *Teach*, go on.
- (14) S1: [She reads and translates the remaining part.]
- (15) (CQ) T: Who was our prophet?
- (16) S1: Mohammad was our prophet.
- (17) (CQ) T: Do Muslims worship God?
- (18) S1: Yes, they worship God.
- (19) T: Yes, they worship God. Thanks, sit down.

The teacher initiates the episode by asking the managerial question of *Which page? Which part?*, which itself is followed by the students' response of *Reading comprehension*. In lines 4 and 5, the teacher nominates Sepideh and directs her to read the passage. She reads one sentence. From now on, the teacher interrupts her many times bombarding her with many product questions in lines 7, 11, 15, and 17 about the reading passage without asking even one process meaning-making question to which the teacher does not know the answer and which leads to dialogue and discussion.

Episode 2 shows that the teachers also use other initiations such as directing, nominating, and informing:

### Episode 2

- (1) (In.) T: We said before that, *that* is used to relate two clauses together, for example in the first question,
- (2) (CQ) Should *The birds are flying South* be used before *that* or after *that*?
- (3) SS: After *that*.
- (4) T: Yes, because the clause coming after *that* is a complete sentence.
- (5) (CQ) Ok, what should be used before *that*?
- (6) SS: *I think*.
- (7) T: Good. Use *I* before the verb in parentheses, then *that* and the sentence given. *I think (that) the birds are flying south*.
- (8) (N) Number 2, Zahra.
- (9) S2: *They fly to warmer places*. We should say: *I guess that they fly to warmer places*.
- (10) (N) T: Fatemeh, number 3.
- (11) S2: *We must leave now*. *I think that we must leave now*.
- (12) T: Thanks.
- (13) (D) Now go to page 101, vocabularies. Repeat after me. [She reads the words out loud.]
- (14) SS: [They repeat chorally.]
- (15) (D) T: Now, everybody, read the words silently and then you can ask your questions if you have any.
- (16) SS: [They read silently.]

The teacher initiates the interaction first by giving information on *that* and then asks a product (i.e., close) question in this regard and in feedback move, she explains the reason and again asks another product question in line 5 which is responded by all the students. The teacher gives some complementary explanations in the follow-up move in line 7. The following two teacher-initiations are in the form of calling the students' names to respond to the teacher in lines 8 and 10. In line 13, the teacher directs the students to look at page 101 and to repeat after her chorally. In the last initiation by the teacher, in line 15, the teacher again directs them to read the vocabularies silently and then to ask their questions. Therefore, as it is clear in the episode, all the teacher's initiations are in the form of giving information, asking product questions, nominating the students, and directing them to do some activities. No process (i.e., open) meaning-making question was asked. Though there were interactional exchanges among the teachers and the students, no real, critical negotiated interactions occurred in the classes.

As Table 1 shows, although most initiations were done by the teacher, 51 moves (i.e., 11.4%) of all the initiations were done by the students. At first sight, it seems hopeful and shows that the students dared to initiate some exchanges, but a

careful examination of the participants' interaction (e.g., Episode 3) revealed that these initiations were not critical meaningful ones leading to critical awareness, discussions, and learning. No student initiations were made to criticize the status quo to transform their learning processes.

### Episode 3

- (1) T: Well, page 116, vocabulary. Who is ready?
- (2) SS: [Some hands up.]
- (3) T: [Points to two of them.]
- (4) S1 & S2: [They stand up.]
- (5) T: Ok, Shiva, ask Maryam some words.
- (6) (SI) S1: *Mankind?*
- (7) S2: [Gives a definition.]
- (8) (SI) S1: *Honesty?*
- (9) S2: [Gives a definition.]
- (10) T: Enough, sit down.
- (11) (SI) S3: Teacher, what is the difference between *close* and *cloth*?
- (12) (TR) T: [She writes on the board] /kloʊz/ ≠ open, /klɒθ/ = *Material worn*. Pay attention to /z/ and /θ/. Okay, thank you.

In Episode 3, the teacher asks two volunteers to have an exchange. Therefore, some students raise their hands, and the teacher selects two of them. It shows that the students are not free to initiate the exchange unless the teacher allows them to do so. Another type of student initiation is also seen in lines 6 and 8 in which Shiva is asking Maryam some vocabulary definitions from the list the teacher specifies. Here again, the students' initiations emerge from the teacher's will and not from the students' will. Only in line 11, student 3 asks her own question which leads to the teacher's brief answer and not any discussion and negotiations among the students, and suddenly the exchange ends with the teacher's expression of *Okay, thank you*.

In such a rigid discourse, the students' turns seem to be mostly direct verbal replies to the teachers' initiations. Another characteristic of the students' replies is that they are limited to only one turn. It also seems that once the student answers the question assigned by the teacher or when she could not provide any replies, the teacher immediately shifted the turn to herself giving feedback or beginning another exchange with another student. The teachers, therefore, confined the role of the student as one who answered only one simple question.

The nature and structure of the feedback (or follow-up) move is very important in the process of teaching and learning (Woods, 2006; Xie, 2009). According to Wells (1993), when the teacher's feedback move is used to encourage students' talk and contributions and not just to evaluate their responses, then it creates an opportunity for the students to reflect on their own knowledge and, thus, to learn. Therefore, it is worthwhile to probe the kind of feedback given by the teachers in these

EFL classes and also to explore whether different follow-up move's functions were used with similar frequencies.

Table 5 represents the functions of the feedback moves which occurred in the classrooms along with their number of occurrences. Table 6 also represents the results of the chi-square test used, implying that all the different functions were not used similarly ( $\chi^2 = 166.248$ ,  $df = 7$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ):

Table 5. *Frequency and Percentage of Follow-Up Move's Functions*

Functions	Observed Frequency	Percentage of Functions	Expected Frequency	Residual
Repetition (Rpt.)	109	29%	46.9	62.1
Correction (C)	77	20.5%	46.9	30.1
Expansion (E)	60	16%	46.9	13.1
Acceptance (Ac.)	44	11.7%	46.9	-2.9
Teacher Answer (A)	30	8%	46.9	-16.9
Praise (P)	25	6.6%	46.9	-21.9
Criticism (Cr.)	20	5.3%	46.9	-26.9
Reallocation (Re.)	10	2.6%	46.9	-36.9
Total	375			

Table 6. *Results of the Chi-Square Test for Follow-Up Move's Functions*

Functions of Follow-Up Move	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
	166.248*	7	.000

\*0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 46.9.

The results also show that many of the follow-up moves were used by the teacher to repeat the students' linguistic replies (29%). In other words, about one third of the follow-up moves fall in the repetition function. Besides, the teacher used 20.5% of all the third moves to correct the students' replies and about 16% to expand, modify, or add to the students' replies. Out of a total of 375 follow-up moves, 44 were used to accept the students' replies, 25 to praise them, and 20 to criticize them. The results show that sometimes when the students could not provide the answer in response move, the teachers gave the response themselves in the follow-up turn. Out of all the feedback moves, 8% fall in this category. No feedback move was given by the students, and all of them were given by the teacher and were mostly repetitive of the students' linguistic response. This is indicated in the following episode:

#### Episode 4

- (1) (D) T: You, read.  
 (2) (R) S1: *This may have been the reason for Edison' poor performance* (she has mispronunciation).  
 (3) (C) T: [She interrupts her and corrects her mispronunciation].  
 (4) (R) S1: [She reads the first paragraph.]

- (5) (P) T: That's enough, good.  
 (6) (DQ) Now give definition for *sign*.  
 (7) (R) S1: *Something that shows what is happening*.  
 (8) (Ac.) T: Yes,  
 (9) (Rp.) *something that shows what is happening*.  
 (10) (DQ) *Community*?  
 (11) (R) S1: *A group of people having the same job or religion*.  
 (12) (P) T: Good,  
 (13) (Rpt.) *A group of people having the same job or religion*. Sit down.  
 (14) (N) Bahar, page 97,  
 (15) (D) Read and answer.  
 (16) (R) S2: *Are these radios made in Japan? Yes, they made* (The teacher interrupts her.).  
 (17) (Re.) T: No, no, Sara.  
 (18) S3: *Yes, they are made* (The teacher interrupts her.)  
 (19) (P) T: Yes, good.  
 (20) (E) Because it is itself passive, you should move its parts and not add something else.  
 (21) (Rpt.) *Yes, they are made in Japan*.  
 (22) (DQ) Which one is the object?  
 (23) (R) S2: *The radios*.  
 (24) (Rpt.) T: Yes, *the radios* is the object.  
 (25) (P) Thanks, sit down.

In Episode 4, the teacher initiates the exchange by directing a student to read. The student begins reading, but she has some pronunciation problems, which makes her to be interrupted by the teacher in line 2. So, the teacher corrects her in the follow-up move in line 3. In line 5, the teacher praises her performance by telling *Good* and asks her to give a definition for the word *sign*. The student's answer is followed by the teacher's feedback through which she repeats the student's answer (line 7). Again, the teacher asks another word (i.e., *community*) and then repeats the student's answer in the follow-up move and makes her to sit down (line 13), and accordingly, calls another student to read and answer the question on page 97, in line 14. The selected student reads the question, but she is giving an incorrect answer. The teacher does not give the student any time to give her complete response, to self-select herself, or even to try other alternatives, and thus, interrupts her immediately and reallocates the question to Sara to answer (line 17). While Sara is giving the correct answer, the teacher interrupts her by her follow-up move and accepts her by saying *Yes* and gives some extra explanations and comments on it (line 20). In other words, the teacher uses the follow-up turns to expand, complete, or modify the student's response. After that, the teacher begins another exchange by asking about the object of the sentence (line 22). In the last lines (lines 24 & 25), the teacher repeats the student's response in the follow-up move and thanks her correct response and asks her to sit down.

It was evidenced that the teachers mostly used their power and turns to give feedback on the students' answers. Even the students were accustomed to receive feedback, and sometimes they could not go further until they got the feedback. The teachers did not give anything new to the students but to repeat their own responses. They themselves corrected the students' wrong responses and did not give any opportunity to the students to self-select themselves or to other students to correct them through dialogical interaction. Similarly, the teachers used their feedback turns to reject the answers which they perceived as incorrect, irrelevant, or insufficient and used their follow-up turns to reallocate the questions for someone else to answer. Examples of such reallocations can be found in Episode 4, line 17.

The study revealed that rights over the semantic content of communication (what may be spoken about in each turn) tended to be controlled by the teachers within these EFL classrooms. The teachers continued to guide the interaction towards a predefined end mostly by the use of display or product questions based on their own predetermined target outcomes. Furthermore, when the students dared to ask questions, they tended to be requests relating to matters of classroom organization rather than to the content of lessons (e.g., *May I answer?* and *Which page?*). The teachers rarely asked process reasoning questions (or open questions) which could have created an opportunity for the students to have a voice in an act of negotiation and dialogue (Nunan, 2004; Wen, 2009). In such a restrictive discourse, the students' roles were limited to give short and brief replies. If the students could not provide the reply, the teachers rarely gave them time to reflect on their utterances or rarely gave time to other students to provide the correct reply through joint construction and collaboration (Foster & Ohta, 2005). They, instead, preferred to provide the correct replies themselves immediately in their follow-up turns. Most of the times, when the students were able to respond correctly, the teachers repeated the students' replies or they modified it based on their own ideas.

Therefore, the study yielded the undesirable results which many researchers have found over the long time. In the studies by many researchers (e.g., Barners, 1976; Lin, 1996), it was found that the majority of the questions asked by teachers were factual display questions rather than encouraging reasoning elicitations. Recent studies (e.g., Hardman, Smith, & Wall, 2003; Tsui, Marton, Mok, & Ng, 2004) also showed the predominance of display questions by teachers leading to the conclusion that things have not changed much over the years.

No signs of emergent negotiation for meaning could be seen among the exchanges. Classroom participants were not allowed to participate in forming utterances that they could not complete individually. In other words, they did not collaboratively construct and create meaning and knowledge. They did not have any opportunity to self-correct or even other-correct others' utterances in the act of critical

negotiation and participation. They even did not encourage each other to continue talking by using utterances showing their interest and collaboration.

On the whole, it was found that authoritative discourse was evident. The large number of initiations by the teachers and their control over the content of all the turns showed their authority. Therefore, it seems that the current L2 education follows some version of the traditional banking model (Freire, 1972) in which the students should accept what the authorities say and this gradually makes them become silent and passive participants. As Darder et al. (2003) put it, those in power implement and reinforce their own norms and values on a daily basis in a way that learners are socialized to adhere to them even though they are in contradict with their own beliefs and interests. Consequently, they lose their critical awareness, or the ability to reflect on their own surroundings, and hence become mere recipients of the authorities' values. Although some researchers (e.g., Jackson, 2002) believe that students' passive speech role is attributable to their limited language resources or anxiety, it can largely be due to an absence of opportunities for interactions to help them develop linguistically or cognitively (Xie, 2009). This lack of success in offering opportunities for symmetrical interactive exchanges originates not only in L2 teachers' practices, but also in social, political, cultural, historical, and economic context of L2 education, which should be examined critically (Reagon & Osborn, 2002). Another reason behind the dominant teacher-led classroom discourse may be due to adherence to the traditional educational values and principles. In many teaching contexts, L2 teachers seem to be obliged to follow some version of traditional banking model of education and they are dictated to transmit some top-down book-oriented knowledge to the students, and students can do nothing but to follow. One reason, according to Ruiz and Fernandez-Balboa (2005), can be due to the type of transmission-based pedagogy in which the teachers themselves had grown up and been educated as students and so they revert back to such pedagogy while teaching. Freire (1972) claims that such education produces power relations that dominate society in school and block the opportunities for dialogue in schools. In other words, the current L2 classrooms suffer from the hidden narration sickness of traditional pedagogy diagnosed by Freire (1972), which is mainly distinguished by teacher talk or the narrative character of teachers.

## 5. Conclusion

The results showed that the investigated EFL classrooms were not beneficial to critical language learning and transformation because the large amount of the teachers' control over the students' content of their utterances limited the students' criticality and, thus, their joint knowledge construction. No signs of emergent negotiation for meaning were evidenced among the exchanges. Classroom participants were not allowed to participate in forming utterances that they could not

complete individually. In other words, they did not collaborate to create meaning and knowledge. The learners did not have any opportunities to self-correct or even other-correct in the act of negotiation and participation. They even did not encourage each other to continue talking by using utterances showing their interests and collaboration. Such an anti-dialogical approach is by no means beneficial to the development of language learners' effective critical awareness and thinking. Therefore, if a fair share of classroom discourse burden is not planned to be given to the learners, the whole educational system might fall into the trap of silencing the students by impeding the positive process of CP's dialogues. In sum, it seems inevitable to move toward critical empowering pedagogy to de-silence the students and to encourage them to speak their minds.

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