Training students for democratic citizenship in the foreign language classroom : critical language awareness as a relevant context

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Abstract

This study explores the role of Critical Language Awareness (CLA) in fostering democratic citizenship in the EFL classroom. Drawing on Paulo Freire's pedagogy of liberation and Norman Fairclough's theory of discourse, it argues that language education should go beyond grammar and vocabulary to address social, cultural, and political dimensions of communication. Through the integration of authentic materials and critical activities such as discourse analysis, debates, and reflection, the classroom becomes a space for civic engagement and identity formation. The study identifies both the benefits, enhanced critical thinking, agency, and global awareness, and the challenges, including curriculum constraints and teacher preparedness. It concludes with practical suggestions for curriculum reform, teacher training, and inclusive material design.

***Keywords**: Critical Language Awareness, Democratic Citizenship, Discourse Analysis, EFL Teaching, Language Education,*

Résumé

Cette étude examine le rôle de la Conscience Linguistique Critique (CLC) dans la promotion de la citoyenneté démocratique en classe d'anglais langue étrangère. S'appuyant sur la pédagogie de la libération de Paulo Freire et la théorie du discours de Norman Fairclough, elle soutient que l'enseignement des langues doit dépasser la grammaire et le vocabulaire pour inclure les dimensions sociales, culturelles et politiques de la communication. A travers

l'intégration des matériaux authentiques et des activités critiques telles que l'analyse de discours, les débats et la réflexion, la classe devient un espace d'engagement civique et de construction identitaire. L'étude met en lumière les bénéfices qui sont pensée critique, agentivité et conscience globale, ainsi que les défis liés aux programmes rigides et à la formation des enseignants. Elle se termine par des recommandations concrètes en matière de réforme curriculaire, de formation pédagogique et de conception de supports inclusifs.

***Mots-clés**: Conscience linguistique critique, Citoyenneté démocratique, Analyse du discours, Enseignement de l'anglais langue étrangère, Enseignement des langues*

Introduction

In today's more interconnected world-facing and politically fractured world, the foreign language class is no longer just a place of learning grammar and vocabulary and communicative routines. It is also a place where citizens are socialized to embrace the values, skills, and dispositions necessary to participate well in democratic societies. Current threats such as fake news, hate speech, cultural intolerance and lack of active citizenship have placed particular stress on education systems to produce not simply competent speakers of a foreign language but also critical and responsible citizens in the world. This re-orientation serves to emphasize how the teaching of languages can be employed as a mechanism for nurturing democracy, tolerance and social justic.

Yet foreign language education all too often remains at risk of being considered in depoliticized and technocratic terms, the purview of linguist-form and functional communication. Students regularly conduct superficial cultural comparisons, but are not typically prompted to consider how language reflects, reinforces and subverts power relations in society. This

impoverished view of language education ignores the possibility that language learning (and how it is taught) offers an unplumbed resource in bridging a divide between second languages and the civic needs students meet in their lives. What this study seeks to highlight, then, is the lack of utilization of language classrooms as a site for fostering democratic citizenship through critical engagement with language. Norman Fairclough (1992) Critical Language Awareness, based on Paulo Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy, is one such means to fill this void. CLA raises the awareness that language is not just a neutral means of communication, but a practice which builds and reproduces ideologies, identities and inequality. By inviting students to interrogate texts, discourses, and communicative practices, CLA trains them to situate themselves in relation to power dynamics inscribed into language use. This is what makes CLA particularly pertinent to language teaching as part of civic and democratic education in general.

The relevance of the present study is two-fold. At the theoretical level, it is in line with demands for foreign language teaching to move beyond, so-called functional communication and towards critical and civic purposes as voiced by applied linguistics and critical pedagogy. And at the societal level, it is useful as a framework for giving students opportunities to become skeptical of manipulation, skilled in dialogue with other cultures and active participants in democracy. On the instrumental level, it provides teachers, curriculum developers and policy makers with practical 'how-to' information on how to import Critical Pedagogy into language teaching without doing harm to linguistic goals.

Informed by these challenges, the research keeps in mind the following overarching question: How can Critical Language Awareness serve as a school based pedagogical

framework to prepare students for democratic citizenship in the FL classroom? To address this, the study also explores three subsidiary questions: (1) What are the theoretical and pedagogical congruences between democratic citizenship education and foreign language instruction? (2) In what specific ways can CLA be applied in EFL classroom? (3) What are the pros and cons of using CLA to develop students' critical and civic competencies? To meet these objectives, the research takes a theoretical and conceptual approach based on critical pedagogy and applied linguistics. Based on Freire's original work (1970), Fairclough's theory of CLA (1992) and other relevant works in critical discourse analysis and democratic education, this research synthesizes these insights into a educational model to facilitate the integration of CLA within language teaching. It also shows, in terms of certain classroom practices and curricular materials, how such integration can support both language learning and democratic engagement.

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1. Critical Pedagogy and Language Education

Critical Pedagogy is a theory of education that views teaching and learning as inherently political acts. The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire is widely recognized as the pioneer of this approach, particularly through his influential work Pedagogy of the Oppressed (P. Freira, 1970), in which he advocates for an "education for liberation." Freire challenged the traditional "banking model" of education, in which students are seen as passive recipients of knowledge. Instead, he proposed a dialogic and participatory model where students and teachers co-construct knowledge through reflection and action, what he termed praxis. Freire's philosophy emphasizes that education

must enable learners to become critically aware of their social realities, question oppressive structures, and actively participate in the transformation of their communities. He asserts that "education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system or it becomes the practice of freedom" (P. Freire, Ibid, p. 34).

This emancipatory view of education is deeply relevant to the training of students for democratic citizenship. It aligns with the goal of equipping learners not only with knowledge but also with the ability to question, engage, and act in the public sphere. In the context of foreign language education, Freire's ideas encourage the use of the classroom as a space where learners can reflect critically on language, culture, and identity, not merely to reproduce dominant discourses, but to challenge them. Moreover, Freire's emphasis on dialogue as a tool for critical consciousness has clear implications for language learning. Language is not just a medium for communication; it is a tool for liberation when used reflectively and critically. This makes Critical Pedagogy a foundational lens through which to view language education as a vehicle for democratic engagement.

1.2. Critical language awareness (CLA)

Building on the critical pedagogical tradition, Critical Language Awareness (CLA) emerged in the early 1990s as a response to the need for learners to understand the ideological dimensions of language. British linguist Norman Fairclough was instrumental in the development of CLA, particularly through his book Critical Language Awareness (N. Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough argued that language is not a neutral medium; it is deeply embedded in systems of power and ideology. The way

we use and interpret language reflects, and reinforces, social structures, including inequalities. Fairclough defines CLA as an educational approach aimed at helping students analyze how language contributes to the maintenance or transformation of social power relations. This involves teaching learners to examine how meanings are constructed in discourse, how authority is conveyed through language, and how linguistic choices can include or exclude social groups. As Fairclough (Op cit, p. 7) notes, CLA is concerned with "the promotion of critical awareness of language, as part of language education and in the development of citizenship."

This theoretical perspective is congruent with the present study, which seeks to prepare students for democratic citizenship through foreign language education. CLA encourages learners to become critical readers, listeners, and speakers, capable of interrogating the texts and discourses they encounter both inside and outside the classroom. It promotes not just linguistic proficiency but discursive competence, which is essential for democratic participation in a world increasingly shaped by media, policy, and transnational communication. Integrating CLA into foreign language pedagogy, educators can support students in recognizing how language reflects social hierarchies, negotiates identities, and frames worldviews. This kind of awareness empowers learners to act ethically and responsibly in democratic societies, making CLA a valuable theoretical and pedagogical resource in civic education.

2. The Foreign Language Classroom as a Space for Democratic Learning

2.1 From language learning to language education

Traditionally, foreign language teaching has been associated with the acquisition of grammatical rules, vocabulary, pronunciation, and communicative routines. However, a growing body of scholarship argues for a shift from narrow language learning objectives to a broader understanding of language education, an approach that integrates social, cultural, and political dimensions of language use. According to M. Byram (1997), language education should aim not only to develop linguistic competence but also to foster intercultural communicative competence, which includes knowledge of other cultures, skills of interpretation and discovery, and critical cultural awareness. He argues that language learners should be educated to act as "intercultural speakers" who can mediate between their own and other cultural contexts. Byram emphasizes that critical reflection on both foreign and native cultures is essential to fostering tolerant and democratic attitudes.

However, while Byram's model remains influential, some scholars have pointed out its limitations. For instance, Alison Phipps and M. Gonzalez (2004) acknowledge the importance of intercultural communicative competence but caution that it may fall short of promoting deeper critical engagement with issues of power, identity, and inequality. They argue that language education must move beyond cultural comparison and polite exchange to question how cultural norms are shaped, whose voices are heard, and whose are silenced. From their perspective, the classroom should not only teach students how to "function" in another language and

culture but also how to critique the discourses that shape intercultural relations. Echoing this view, C. Kramsch (1993) calls attention to the symbolic power of language and the importance of developing what she terms "symbolic competence." She stresses that language is not simply a neutral tool for communication but a carrier of ideologies and cultural assumptions. Kramsch proposes that learners be trained to interpret the implicit meanings, power relations, and social positions embedded in discourse.

Such an approach enables students to understand the ideological dimensions of language and to use it ethically and critically in social interactions. Likewise, R. Kubota and A. Lin (2009) suggest that language education must be reconceived through a critical lens that exposes learners to how language practices are implicated in broader systems of power, such as colonialism, racism, and nationalism. They advocate for pedagogies that challenge linguistic hierarchies and promote social justice in language classrooms. According to Kubota and Lin, a purely instrumental view of language learning is insufficient in the 21st century, where linguistic choices are inseparable from political and ethical considerations. Nonetheless, some scholars express concern about incorporating political or ideological content into the language classroom. A. Waters (2009), for instance, warns that excessive emphasis on ideological critique may lead to the politicization of language teaching, potentially alienating students or diverting attention from core linguistic competencies. He argues for a balanced approach that preserves the linguistic aims of language education while sensitively integrating critical perspectives.

Despite such cautionary views, there is increasing consensus that language education cannot remain neutral in a

world marked by inequality, migration, and conflict. As E. Shohamy (2006) observes, language policies and practices are inherently political acts that reflect and shape national identities, inclusion, and exclusion. Therefore, the classroom becomes a strategic site for exploring how language is implicated in civic life and how learners can engage with these issues critically and constructively. The literature reflects a lively debate between those who advocate for an expanded, critical model of language education and those who caution against straying too far from communicative objectives. However, most scholars agree on the need to integrate cultural, ethical, and civic dimensions into language education, especially in the context of global democratic challenges.

From this perspective, foreign language education should not be limited to facilitating cross-cultural understanding or enabling transactional communication. Rather, it must aim to equip learners with the critical tools needed to examine how language constructs social realities, conveys ideologies, and positions individuals within power structures. The intercultural competence model provides a valuable foundation, but it must be complemented by approaches that prioritize critical reflection, civic responsibility, and democratic engagement. Therefore, this study takes the position that foreign language classrooms must evolve into spaces of critical inquiry, where students not only learn to speak a new language but also to think democratically, question assumptions, and participate meaningfully in society.

2.2. Language as Social Practice

The view of language as a social practice has transformed the way language education is theorized and implemented, highlighting how language is intimately tied to

identity, ideology, and the negotiation of social power. This perspective departs from traditional structural or functional models of language that treat it as a neutral code for transmitting information. Instead, it understands language as a socially situated activity, one that shapes and is shaped by the social, cultural, and political contexts in which it operates. According to N. Fairclough (1989), language both reflects and constitutes social realities. Through discourse, spoken or written language in use, individuals reproduce or challenge existing power relations, ideologies, and norms. Fairclough emphasizes that everyday texts are never neutral; they are "ideologically invested" and serve to position people within specific social roles and hierarchies. The implications of this view are profound for education. If language constructs social meanings and reinforces or resists power structures, then language classrooms must be sites where students critically engage with discourse, not simply learn how to use language "correctly." As J. Paul Gee (2014) points out, learning a language means adopting particular ways of being, thinking, and interacting, what he terms "Discourses".

These include the values, beliefs, and identities that come with language use in specific contexts. Gee argues that education must prepare learners not only to master grammar and vocabulary, but to navigate and question the social practices and power structures embedded in language use. H. Janks (2010) also advances this view through her work on critical literacy, which she sees as essential to understanding how texts position readers and produce meaning. She identifies four interdependent dimensions, access, diversity, power, and design, that must be addressed to fully appreciate the ideological function of language. Janks asserts that teaching students to read texts critically involves asking whose interests

are served, whose voices are represented or silenced, and how different interpretations might challenge dominant meanings. For example, a political speech, an advertisement, or a news report is not simply informative but persuasive, manipulative, or ideological. In such texts, vocabulary choices, syntactic structures, and rhetorical strategies subtly reflect and reinforce power dynamics. As Teun A. van Dijk (1993) explains, elite groups control discourse in institutions such as politics, media, and education, which in turn helps maintain their dominance. He argues that critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a necessary tool for uncovering these hidden mechanisms of control and for fostering democratic awareness.

Some voices in the field caution against overemphasizing the political dimensions of language. S. Bax (2003) argues that applied linguistics has become overly politicized, warning that this may alienate teachers and learners more interested in practical language skills. He proposes a more context-sensitive approach, where political critique is balanced with learners' immediate communicative needs. Despite such reservations, the prevailing view among critical language educators is that understanding language as social practice is essential to the development of democratic citizenship. As B. Norton (2000) emphasizes, language learning is always linked to identity construction and the right to speak. Norton argues that language learners are positioned differently in power relations, depending on race, gender, class, and nationality, and that empowering students to understand these dynamics is central to equitable education.

The literature reviewed presents a compelling case for viewing language as a site of ideological struggle, where meanings are contested and identities negotiated. Scholars such as Fairclough, Gee, and Janks have advanced the field by

emphasizing how language is implicated in broader social processes and power structures. While there is some concern, notably from Stephen Bax, about the politicization of language teaching, the dominant trend supports a critical and reflective approach that prepares learners to navigate real-world discourses with awareness and agency. This study adopts the position that teaching language as social practice is not only pedagogically sound but also ethically necessary in a democratic society. Foreign language education should empower learners to understand how language constructs social meaning, influences perception, and contributes to inclusion or exclusion. By integrating this perspective into classroom practices, educators can help learners become not just fluent speakers, but also critical citizens capable of using language to engage, question, and act in the world around them.

3.: Curriculum and materials selection and critical language awareness

A growing consensus suggests that materials used in foreign language teaching should extend beyond traditional grammar and textbook content to include authentic texts, such as media articles, political speeches, social media posts, and multimodal sources, that illustrate the ideological dimensions of language use. N. Fairclough (Op.cit) emphasized that materials should enable learners to see how language reproduces, reinforces, or challenges certain ideologies and struggles for power and dominance. This aligns with J.M. Cots (2006)'s adaptation of Fairclough's model, advocating for classroom activities where teachers and students critically analyze text selection choices and collaboratively interrogate

discourses embedded in materials. Supporting this, N. Mohamed (2024) underlines the value of using students' home languages and multilingual texts to activate sociocultural awareness, helping learners compare patterns of meaning across linguistic and cultural contexts and question normative grammar or vocabulary practices. The inclusion of translingual pedagogies enhances critical awareness and supports identity and agency.

Several themes are commonly recommended to provoke critical discussion and reflection. One is gender roles. Analyses of textbook images and language reveal persistent stereotypes. For example, M. Deprez (2010) recommends selecting materials that give voice to marginalized populations, expose dominant systems of meaning, and provoke students to consider how language can be used for social action. Some researchers warn of overload or resistance. For instance, overly political materials may overwhelm students still mastering foundational language skills. S. Bax (2003) cautions that applied linguistics should not become overly politicized at the expense of communicative competence, but he does not rule out a balanced approach integrating critical themes where appropriate.

The literature makes clear that curriculum materials intended to support CLA must be authentic, context-rich, and thematically relevant. Fairclough and Cots promote activities grounded in critical discourse analysis, while Mohamed and Resor advocate for multilingual and thematic content that promotes sociocultural and critical awareness. Topics such as migration, gender, and media bias offer fertile ground for learners to interrogate language choices and social meaning. My position is that carefully curated, thematic, authentic materials are essential for implementing CLA in the foreign

language classroom. Such materials should strike a balance between linguistic accessibility and critical complexity, enabling learners to build both language proficiency and democratic citizenship skills, including critical thinking, ethical awareness, and civic engagement.

Effective implementation of Critical Language Awareness (CLA) in foreign language teaching relies on classroom activities that promote critical engagement with language, identity, and civic issues rather than mere linguistic form. Critical reading and discourse analysis are foundational strategies. As M. A. Ricklefs (2022) illustrates, educators applying critical discourse analysis (CDA) in their classrooms detected underlying ideological messages and biases in student–student interactions, showing how CDA helped discover underlying ideologies manifested in the children's words. Similarly, action research in Saudi universities demonstrates that when learners use cultural texts and CDA tools, they develop balanced intercultural awareness and interpret cultural diversity in nuanced ways. Reflection on language and identity is also vital. N. Mohamed (Ibid) recommends activities that encourage students to create language portraits reflecting on their linguistic repertoires and ideologies. This fosters sociocultural metacognition and critical multilingual awareness. However, alternative perspectives caution that politically charged activities may overwhelm learners or distract from language acquisition. S. Bax (Ibid) warns against over-politicization in applied linguistics that might alienate students focused on communicative competence, though less discussed in the specific CLA literature.

The literature suggests classroom activities that integrate critical reading with CDA, role-plays on civic themes,

reflective exercises on language and identity, and comparisons across linguistic and cultural contexts are effective CLA strategies. Critical reading and discourse analysis help unearth power relations in texts, role-plays cultivate civic agency, reflection connects language use to identity and ideology, and cross-cultural comparison highlights variation and privilege. This study adopts the view that a combination of these activities, scaffolded appropriately, can cultivate both language proficiency and democratic citizenship competencies. By engaging students with authentic materials and prompting critical reflection and enactment, educators foster not only communicative ability but also critical consciousness and democratic actions.

The success of CLA-related classroom initiatives depends heavily on how teachers position themselves, not as authoritative transmitters but as facilitators and co-learners, and on addressing their professional development needs. Building on Paulo Freire's notion of problem-posing education, teachers adopting CLA must convey an instructor-facilitator role, engaging learners in dialogue rather than passive reception. Freire argues that authentic education "is not carried on by 'A' for 'B' … but rather by 'A' with 'B'". This dialogic stance aligns with CLA's emphasis on collaborative analysis and critical inquiry. M. A. Ricklefs (Ibid) demonstrates how teachers using CDA in a participatory classroom observed ideological patterns and facilitated discussions that helped learners interpret their own and peers' discourses critically. In such contexts, teachers serve as guides rather than directors. However, adopting this expanded role involves challenges. Teachers may lack training in CDA or in mediating politically sensitive topics.

A facilitator/co-learner role empowers teachers to co-create knowledge with students and foster a classroom culture

of inquiry and respect. Yet many educators may feel unprepared for this shift without targeted training. Effective implementation of CLA thus requires institutional support for professional development, critical literacy, and culturally responsive pedagogies. This study positions that teachers must be supported as facilitators of CLA, not only to guide critical reading and discussion but also to reflect on their own language ideologies. Training must address how to manage sensitive discussions, apply CDA tools, and foster inclusive and democratic classroom dynamics.

4. Benefits and challenges of integrating Critical Language Awareness (CLA) into foreign language education

An important body of scholarship highlights multiple clear benefits of integrating Critical Language Awareness (CLA) into foreign language education, enhancing learners' critical thinking, agency, intercultural competence, and civic readiness. Enhancing critical thinking, agency, and global awareness. As described in a student-teacher education context, CLA "empowers learners by enabling them to critically analyze and challenge oppressive language practices," helping them become "active participants in shaping language use and advocating for social justice" (Studocu, summarizing widely cited CLA benefits). Similarly, studies on bilingual education reveal that exposure to multiple languages enhances cognitive flexibility, metalinguistic awareness, and sharpened critical thinking skills, attributes central to CLA's aims. As H. Rucker (2023) shows, bilingual education encourages critical thinking skills and offers improved problem-solving and executive function through multilingual tasks. As argued by the European School Education Platform, promoting language awareness in

schools underpins inclusive education and democratic citizenship by valuing all students' linguistic diversity as a resource, students learn to reflect critically on norms, values, and power structures tied to language (the Council recommendation of 2019 core to inclusive education policy).

Despite its promise, implementing CLA in real-world classrooms involves substantial hurdles, including teacher readiness, and balancing critical content with language goals. On teachers' preparedness and resistance, J. Cummins (2023) suggests in his discussion of Critical Multilingual Language Awareness (CMLA), CLA demands that teachers become language activists and knowledge generators, yet many lack preparation for such roles and require targeted professional development to thrive in these facilitator positions. Without support, teachers may resist shifting from traditional instructor roles to dialogic facilitators. Moreover, balancing language learning objectives with critical content is another issue in the implementation of CLA. In other words, incorporating political or ideological themes can cause tension. Indeed, critics argue that overly politicized content may distract from linguistic progress. For instance, S. Bax (Op.cit) cautions that applied linguistics should not become over-politicized, potentially alienating students more concerned with communicative competence than ideological critique.

The literature underscores that CLA can significantly enrich language education, enhancing learners' critical thinking, agency, global awareness, and capacity for democratic participation. Its emphasis on social inclusion and linguistic justice aligns with contemporary needs for equity and civic engagement. However, institutional barriers (curriculum rigidity), teacher readiness, and concerns about balancing linguistic and critical aims pose serious implementation

challenges. From my standpoint, while recognizing these challenges, the benefits of CLA far outweigh the risks. Strategic curriculum design, teacher training, and thoughtful scaffolding can mitigate constraints. Ultimately, embedding CLA into language education empowers students as critical, responsible citizens, not just proficient language users, making this pedagogical shift both necessary and achievable.

5. Concluding Remarks and Suggestions

This study has argued that the foreign language classroom is not only a linguistic space but also a fertile ground for cultivating democratic citizenship through the integration of Critical Language Awareness (CLA). Rooted in the theoretical contributions of Paulo Freire's pedagogy of liberation and Norman Fairclough's conceptualization of CLA, the research has demonstrated that language learning, when critically approached, can become a powerful means of fostering students' critical thinking, social responsibility, and civic engagement. The literature has shown that CLA enables learners to interrogate the ideological underpinnings of language, identify power dynamics in discourse, and become active participants in their communities. Through meaningful classroom activities such as critical discourse analysis, debates, and intercultural comparisons, students learn not only how language functions, but also how it shapes and reflects the world around them.

This alignment between linguistic competence and democratic education is essential in preparing learners to navigate and contribute to increasingly complex global societies. However, implementing CLA is not without its challenges. Teachers may face resistance due to traditional

curriculum structures, lack of training, or institutional expectations that prioritize standardized testing over critical engagement. Moreover, educators themselves may need support to shift from knowledge transmitters to facilitators of inquiry and dialogue. Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative effort among educators, curriculum designers, policymakers, and teacher trainers. In sum, equipping students with critical language awareness is not only a linguistic imperative but also a democratic one. By embedding democratic citizenship into foreign language education, we empower learners to become informed, reflective, and responsible global citizens.

In light of these findings, the following suggestions are proposed. Foreign language curricula should be revised to incorporate CLA objectives, including the development of materials that address issues such as migration, media literacy, identity, and social justice. Also, ongoing professional development should equip EFL teachers with both the theoretical foundations and practical tools necessary for implementing CLA in diverse classroom contexts. In addition, textbooks and teaching resources should include authentic texts and multimodal materials that reflect real-world issues, ideologies, and diverse voices. Moreover, pedagogical approaches should prioritize active learning, reflection, and critical inquiry, allowing students to co-construct knowledge and express their own perspectives. It also sounds important that ministries of education and institutional leaders recognize the importance of critical language pedagogy in fostering democratic values and provide structural and institutional support for its implementation.

Conclusion

This research aimed to explore the potential of the FL classroom as a promising site for promoting democratic citizenship via an CLA approach. The first issue they addressed was the continued tendency within many educational systems to treat foreign language learning as a technocratic process of mastering grammar, vocabulary and phrases for functional communication but failing to address the wider social, cultural and ideological aspects of language. With a more narrow focus, the transformative capacity of the language classroom for fostering critical, reflective and social- ly engaged learners who can contribute to democratic life is left largely unexercised. This chapter will focus on exploring the ways in which CLA, as developed by Norman Fairclough (1992), built upon Paulo Freire's (1970) pedagogy of liberation, might be introduced into language education to educate learners as democratic citizens. Theoretical framework Critical pedagogy views education as a practice of freedom, and critical discourse analysis positions language as a social practice and it is thoroughly intertwined with power relations. Taken in tandem, these views thus make the point that language teaching is never ideologically innocent, but can be taken to have implications for identity, participation and civil life.

The literature review and conceptual discussion of the present study enabled the procession of several central arguments. They include that language, for instance, should be regarded not only as a vehicle for communication but also as a way of expressing ideologies, negotiating identities, and struggling for power relations. They argue that the foreign language classroom offers a unique and accessible space in which learners can work with authentic materials from various

media discourses to political speeches, or narratives about migration or gender, or ecology – and learn how to read and interpret those texts instrumentally in order to understand and critically analyze how they shape and reflect society. Besides, intercultural communicative competence is not enough, and the ability to reflect critically about what exactly becomes of discourses of what to be included/excluded, empowered/marginalized is essential. Moreover, the central study point from the reviewed literature along the lines of the theory choice was about the benefits of carrying CLA in the classroom on the side and the challenges. Learners who have been subjected to CLA-based pedagogies exhibit developed critical thinking, driven curiosity, intercultural competence, and a sense of civic responsibility. However, the disadvantages, too, remain: structural rigidity, lack of teacher training, inability to enforce curriculum focus on examination results, institutional avoidance of political content, and balancing of language goals with the social and political ones.

There are a few lessons we can extract from an assessment based on this process. First, the nature of foreign language education should be reconceptualized as inherently political and socially situated, rather than neutral or purely instrumental. Secondly, teacher themselves deserve support as both language teachers and co-learners and facilitators of students questioning the embedded nature of ideologies within the language. Thirdly, authentic materials and CDA need to be integrated into curriculum as a systematic part of the program in order to link courses with real life ideas that are related to students' reality. Based on these findings, the research recommends that curriculum change is needed to institutionalize CLA in language education and for language policy to promote language education as part of a democratic

citizen building project. Meanwhile, in teacher education programs, modules on critical pedagogy, discourse analysis and classroom strategies for promoting critical dialogue also need to be incorporated. In harmony with this, creating inclusive and authentic resources, focusing on current societal issues such as migration, gender equality, environmental justice and media is crucial for effective engagement. Lastly, none of the above reforms is likely to be successful if educational authorities are not fırmly behind them and if their recognition and institutional backing do not work towards the legitimation and consolidation of democratic citizenship education as an integral dimension of language teaching.

In the future, several interesting research directions could be considered. Classroom-based research is necessary to measure the effect of CLA methods on learners' civic engagement and language development. Comparative studies of CLA in diverse cultural and institutional settings would also clarify the way that CLA can be transferred to other sociopolitical contexts. Moreover, longitudinal research might track the impact of CLA-inspired pedagogy on students' attitudes, civic engagement and critical language learning skills to effects that extend beyond classroom walls. The study thus reconfirms the fact that teaching languages cannot be separated from issues of ideology, governance and democracy. Through the adoption of CLA, educators can transcend a narrow view of LCE as linguistic proficiency to empower learners to be critical thinkers, responsible communicators and engaged members of democratic societies - locally and globally. The challenge, and the opportunity, is to reconsider not just how we teach languages, but why we do so, and the sort of citizens we wish to help educate.

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