

Scaffolding EFL Teachers' Black Box: Towards a Theoretical Framework of EFL Teachers' Reading Knowledge

Salah Troudi(1)

⁽¹⁾University of Exeter
s.troudi@exeter.ac.uk

Emna Maazoun Zayani(2)

⁽²⁾University of Sfax
emnamaazoun@gmail.com

Abstract— This paper presents an instructional framework for EFL teachers' knowledge about reading instruction. Grounded in theories of EFL instruction, mainstream, critical literacies and EFL theories of teachers' knowledge base, the proposed framework provides several dimensions that illustrate the core knowledge base system of an EFL teacher while teaching reading. This framework is meant to boost the understanding of the components of the knowledge that they should acquire. This paper focuses on the idea that EFL teachers are "lifelong learners by nature" (Troudi, 2009: 64). Therefore, it is meant to inform EFL teachers' pre-service training, in-service practice, and post-service - reflection.

Keywords: EFL teachers' knowledge base, critical thinking, reading, instruction, mentoring

I. INTRODUCTION

EFL teacher's knowledge has received plenty of attention in research since it is a latent construct and arises a lot of questions about its nature, components, complexity, and ways of development which is addressed by Darling-Hammond (2006) as "the black box of the teacher education program"(p.303). In this paper, we address EFL teachers' knowledge as a black box since it is latent and important. In addition, this paper focuses on two different lacunas. First, it sheds light on the link between EFL teachers' knowledge and reading instruction which lacks research especially in relation to crafting frameworks about reading instruction and teachers' knowledge base. Additionally, research has suggested that both pre-service and in-service teachers might lack adequate knowledge for effective instruction (Batugal, 2019 and Khanjani, et al, 2016). Second, it examines the academic divorce referred to by Pennycook (1990) when he claims "a major lacuna in second language education is its divorce from broader issues in educational theory"(p. 303). In spite of the continuous attempts to find out solutions to this issue (Meyers, et al 2010 and Yulianto, 2015), much more research should be done.

Therefore, this paper will address this lacuna in an attempt to find a theoretical solution to bridge the gap between mainstream theories of reading in EFL and critical literacy. Therefore, this paper will review the main literature on models of teacher knowledge and reading instruction and put forward a framework that illustrates EFL teachers' instructional knowledge in teaching reading.

II. Teacher Knowledge

It is important to understand the construct of general teacher knowledge. Ryle (1949) and Polanyi (1966) have proposed a knowledge conception which had a positive impact on understanding teacher knowledge. As a result

some researchers have coined some concepts related to teacher knowledge such as 1) Schon's (1983) concept of knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action, 2) Elbaz's (1983) "practical knowledge", 3) Clandinin and Connelly's (1991) "personal knowledge", 4) Leinhardt's (1988) Situated knowledge and 5) Shulman's (1987) content knowledge. Although many researchers have investigated the general knowledge base of teachers (Grossman, 1990 and Cochran-Smith et al, 2008), just a few studies have focused on EFL teacher knowledge (Borg, 2006, 2010, Day & Conklin, 1992 and, Wright, 2010). Foreign language teaching is a complex process compared to other subject matter instruction since "the target language is both the medium of instruction and the object of learning" (Faez, 2011: 32). Focusing on EFL teachers' knowledge base can help us form an understanding of what contributes to their pedagogical decisions and reflections on their actions.

III. What constitutes an EFL teacher's knowledge base?

EFL teachers need to have a specific knowledge base that enables them to teach confidently. The debate in the literature continues to focus on the nature of this knowledge, its components, characteristics, and distinctiveness in shaping the EFL teachers. The debate is not about what a language teacher should know but rather about what is considered as core knowledge (Troudi, 2005). For instance and not in a chronological order, Pineda (2002) conceptualizes teachers' knowledge base as the basic skills required for teaching and the implementation of pedagogical strategies. Another understanding of teachers' knowledge base is presented by Kaur Yuen and Kaur (2011) who claim that this basic knowledge should include content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, Shulman (1987) conceived of teachers' knowledge base as a basic knowledge that is needed for effective teaching. Shulman argues for a framework that links content, pedagogy, curriculum, and context. In his framework, Shulman (1987:8) makes differentiates between two broad dimensions of teachers' professional knowledge base. First, general dimensions of teacher knowledge which include four categories: 1) knowledge of educational ends, 2) knowledge of educational contexts, 3) general pedagogical knowledge and 4) knowledge of learners. Second, content- specific dimensions of teacher knowledge which include three types of content knowledge which are 1) subject matter knowledge, 2) pedagogical content knowledge and, 3) curricular knowledge. Apart from Shulman's understanding of teachers' knowledge, Fenstermacher (1994) distinguishes between formal knowledge and practical knowledge. Formal knowledge is derived from research about effective teaching, whereas practical knowledge is the result of teachers' practical reflection.

Another framework proposed by Day (1993) includes four knowledge domains: 1) content knowledge which includes knowledge about syntax, phonology, semantics, pragmatics,

and cultural aspects, 2) pedagogic knowledge includes classroom management, lesson planning, etc., 3) pedagogic-content knowledge includes special knowledge of the teaching of FL such as grammar and language skills and 4) support knowledge includes language teachers' approaches to FL teaching and learning. Also, Freeman and Johnson (1998) call for a re-conceptualization of the construct of FL teachers' knowledge base. They suggest that the core of knowledge base must be the teaching itself, since "this knowledge-base should include forms of knowledge representation that document teacher learning within the social, cultural, and institutional contexts in which it occurs" (Freeman and Johnson, 1998: 397). Their framework is made up of three interrelated domains: 1) the teacher as a learner of language teaching, 2) schools and schooling as historical and socio-cultural contexts for teacher learning and 3) the teacher's pedagogical thinking about teaching. This framework foregrounds the role of the FL teacher in action and practice. However, it has been criticized by Tarone and Allwright (2005) as lacking a key element which is the foreign language learner. They hypothesize that the FL teachers' knowledge base should comprise an understanding of the learners "who they are, why they learn, what they need to learn and what motivates them, among other aspects" (Fandino, 2013: 87). Moreover, Richards (2008) extends the conceptualization of the EFL teachers' knowledge base not only as a simple translation of knowledge and theories but also through engaging in particular contextually-based activities. Hence, focusing on EFL teachers' knowledge base models is a sine qua non in this paper to understand the related literature and to build on it.

IV. Models of the knowledge base for EFL teachers

Several models in the literature show the way teachers, in general, use their knowledge base to support their actions. For example, Shulman's (1986, 1987) model for pedagogical reasoning and action shows the link between teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practice. Besides, Calderhead (1988) proposes a model that is based on teachers' professional learning. This cyclic model combines six components which are respectively: comprehension, instruction, evaluation, reflection, new comprehension, and transformation. This model allows us to study teachers' knowledge in depth through linking action, theory, conceptions, and meta-cognition to inform researchers and practitioners about knowledge base development and scaffolding.

Additionally, Wallace (1991) has proposed a model that contains suggestions about future EFL teachers' preparation. Wallace's (1991) model contains three models of teachers' knowledge. They are presented as follows: the craft model which is based on imitating experts, the applied science model which is based on applying scholars' theories, and the reflective model which is based on the ongoing construction

of knowledge and practice. This reflective model is composed of three steps. First, the pre-training stage, which has to do with the preliminary teachers' schemata when they are still learners. Second, the professional development stage, which denotes both the theoretical knowledge about research on second and foreign language teaching and the experiential knowledge of teaching action and reflection. Third, the professional competence stage is the recurrent training of professional development which helps teachers make instructional decisions in an informed way.

Another model suggested by Lee (2002) highlights the role of pedagogical reasoning in shaping reflection on FL instruction. Lee's model contains five processes: preparation, representation, selection, adaptation, and tailoring. The above models of EFL teachers' knowledge show the increasing concern with the reflective approaches to teacher knowledge and practice. In other words, the concern has shifted from ways to train teachers through intensive professional development cycles to providing them with an alternative for informed reflections (Ohata, 2007). In spite of the efforts to find out models that frame the so-called knowledge base system of the EFL teacher, we perceive that these models are still lacking precision in the sense that they are models about teaching a foreign language in general but do not account for any specific skill. Therefore, we argue that there is a clear need for a model of specific language skills for EFL teachers' knowledge base.

This model is needed in research and instructional practice since teachers may use different types of instructional knowledge to teach different skills. A strong rationale for this model is that some studies have shown deficiencies in teachers' knowledge about literacy development and reading instruction (McCombes-Tolis & Feinn, 2008; Washburn, Joshi, & Binks-Cantrell, 2011). Also, there is still a lack of conceptual knowledge of teachers' knowledge base in reading instruction (Joshi, Binks, Hougen, et al., 2009). This paper will, therefore, attempt to develop a model that links EFL teachers' knowledge base and reading instruction. This model should contribute to rethinking a range of assumptions related to teachers' education, their knowledge base, linking theory to practice, and possible solutions to empower teaching.

V. EFL Teacher Knowledge base of Reading Instruction

Having such knowledge of literacy is an essential prerequisite for teaching practice (McCombes-Tolis & Feinn 2008; Moats, 1999; Piasta et al., 2009). Therefore, without specific knowledge of reading, EFL teachers will "misinterpret assessments, choose inappropriate examples of words for instruction, provide unintentionally confusing instruction, or give inappropriate feedback to children's errors" (Spear-Swearling et al., 2005: 267-268). This specific knowledge has been argued to be part of teachers' subject matter knowledge which is an important component of teachers' professional knowledge (Callahan, et al 2009

and Grossman, Schoenfeld, & Lee, 2005).

VI. What is the teachers' subject matter knowledge?

Subject matter knowledge refers to EFL knowledge of language nature and use. The focus in research in this area has been on teachers' linguistic background, either native or non-native speakers of the language that they are teaching. There is a consensus among some such as (Cowan, 2008 and Medgyes, 2001) over the idea that non-native English speaking teachers are more successful than native speakers in providing insights into the learning process. Thus, native speakers' failure dates back to their conscious knowledge of the grammatical rules. Ellis (2004) claims that this difference may be the result of monolingualism versus bilingualism rather than the dichotomy between native versus non-native. Also, focusing on the explicit knowledge of how language is used and taught in terms of grammar, lexis, skills, accuracy, and fluency needs explicit instruction. This type of instruction necessitates a high degree of empathy for language learners (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Barratt & Kontra, 2000). To develop such teaching skills, explicit instruction should be the focus of teachers' education programs (Faez, 2008).

VII. Models of EFL reading instruction

Coady (1979) developed a model in which the reader's background knowledge interacts with conceptual abilities and processing strategies. In Coady's model, conceptual ability refers to general intellectual capacity and processing strategies include syntactic information (deep and surface), lexical meaning and contextual meaning (Coady, 1979; Carrell and Eisterhold, 1988).

Similar to Coady's psycholinguistic model, Bernhardt's second language constructivist model (1986) emphasizes prior knowledge, word recognition phonemic/graphemic features, syntactic feature recognition, and intratextual perceptions (Davis, 1994). His main contribution stems from the addition of the metacognition element (Barnett, 1989) or thoughts about one's own cognitive processes. His metacognition takes place when the reader starts thinking about the text that he/she is reading. In Barnett's (1989:47) words the "reader recognizes words and syntactic features, brings prior knowledge to the text links the elements together, and thinks about how the reading process is working (metacognition)". As a reaction to the interactive visions of the reading process that integrate top-down processes in comprehension (Bernhardt, 1986- Coady, 1979), Eskey's (1986; 1988) vision of the interactive model stresses the need for "holding in the bottom" (p 97). He proposes a mixture of bottom-up decoding and information provided by top-down analysis.

Investigating the role of background knowledge in language comprehension can be explained and formalized in the so-called schema theory (Anderson and Pearson,

1988). Proponents of schemata theory (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1988) claim that the text is meaningless in and of itself. Instead, it orients readers and listeners on how to retrieve and construct meaning based on their background knowledge. If a reader encounters an inconsistency in Bottom-up text information and top-down predictions, a new schema will be activated and new interpretations will arise. Thus, the role of schemata seems to be basic in understanding the text and reading it. However, some barriers prevent learners from comprehending a given text such as the lack of an appropriate schema and the specific cultural background knowledge to deal with the text.

Alderson and Urquhart (1988:169) examined the effects of an ESL student's background discipline on reading comprehension. They have proposed that "if readers bring their background knowledge to the comprehension process, and this knowledge is bound to vary from reader to reader, then there can be no single text-bound comprehension, but rather a host of comprehensions". Numerous studies have demonstrated the positive effect of relevant cultural information on reading comprehension (Levine and Haus, 1985; Markham and Latham, 1987). As a result, Barnett (1989) highlights the importance of teaching cultural content. Also, researchers call for providing an organizational scheme for an L2 reading so that students become able to "activate appropriate background knowledge or schema" (Omaggio/Hadley 2001:140).

VIII. Models of teacher's knowledge base in reading instruction

Different models in the literature explain teachers' knowledge in reading instruction. For example, Snow et al (2005) has emphasized a sequential model that distinguishes five basic levels of knowledge sophistication in teaching English as a first language: 1) the declarative knowledge (knowing what), 2) the situated-procedural knowledge (knowing how, but strategic), 3) the stable-procedural knowledge (knowing how, but routinized), 4) the expert-adaptive knowledge (knowing how, when, with whom and in which conditions), and 5) reflective knowledge (knowing all the previous steps. These five categories of teacher knowledge in reading instruction aid teacher- in -training as well as a teacher- in-service education to develop their teaching skills. Teachers of a foreign language should integrate certain knowledge in their knowledge base system in teaching the reading skill. These components are fluency, vocabulary, grammatical complexities, background knowledge, and metacognitive awareness and strategies.

1) Fluency

Fluency is an important element for language learning in the foreign language classroom in general and reading, in particular, Rasinski (2014) and Segalowitz (2000). Thus, focusing on teaching practice that promotes fluency is a basic

condition of a well-established curriculum (Grabe, 2010). It has been suggested in the literature that teachers should rely on textbooks such as those of (Anderson, 2013, Spargo, 2001) to promote reading fluency.

2) Vocabulary

Vocabulary plays a pivotal role in reading comprehension instruction (Huang & Liou, 2007). These researchers concluded that vocabulary knowledge impacts the reading comprehension process. EFL teachers should have a clear knowledge about the introduction of vocabulary in reading instruction.

3) Grammatical complexities

Dealing with grammar is a complex subject matter in foreign language classrooms. Gascoigne (2005) defines "grammatical competence" as encompassing knowledge of syntax, vocabulary, morphology, and mechanics. Thus, Zarei (2013) highlighted the importance of both morphology and syntax in shaping linguistic competence which is fundamental in enhancing reading comprehension. Therefore, EFL teachers' knowledge should contain a pedagogical focus on affixes, suffixes, and word strategy.

4) Background knowledge

Background knowledge is fundamental in reading comprehension in foreign language contexts. EFL teachers should be equipped with the necessary instructional knowledge that makes them enhance their learners' schemata and to overcome certain problems. One of the problems that learners can encounter in applying their background knowledge to reading in the target language stems from the mismatch in the schemata that they use in dealing with reading in the target language (Drucker, 2003). Learners need to develop a meta-discourse awareness to have a better understanding of the text and the reader's intentions.

5) Metacognitive awareness and strategies

Empowering EFL learners with the necessary reading strategies and metacognitive skills requires a great amount of instructional awareness on the part of the EFL teacher. Therefore, Keshavarz & Assar (2011) point to the specificities of metacognition in reading instruction: comprehension monitoring, planning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. Comprehension could be enhanced through different types of strategies such as think-aloud protocol through focusing as it has been suggested by Baumann, Jones, and Seifert (1993). We perceive that metacognition should include some critical thinking strategies. Learners should read between lines to unveil any possible bias, hidden agendas or propaganda techniques. It is the role of the EFL teacher to support

learners to read critically through moving from literal comprehension to interpretive comprehension as suggested by (Roe & Smith 2012). By the same token, Mc Millan & Gentile (1988) suggested that introducing multicultural literature to be questioned and compared will contribute to building critical reading skills among EFL learners.

IX. Critical Literacy studies in English Language Learning Contexts

Critical literacy has been considered a fertile arena of research in different educational contexts in many English-speaking countries (Pandya & Avila, 2014 and Simpson & Comber, 2001). Research on critical literacy in English learning became more focused especially with the introduction of some concepts such as "critical reading", "critical writing" and "critical language awareness" (Koon, 2001)

The overemphasis on language learning has contributed to the limited engagement with critical literacy. However, Crooks and Lehner (1998), claim that universities prevent teachers from introducing critical literacy in their classes and therefore consider it as part of their roles. As Crookes and Lehner (1998: 320) put it, "ESL/EFL teachers commonly see themselves as contributing to general welfare simply by helping people to communicate". On the other hand, Pennycook (1997) identified the de-emphasis on critical literacy to the omnipresence of the so-called "discourse of neutrality" (Pennycook, 1997: 256) which is echoed in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Here instructors' effectiveness is linked to successful reading achievement in the classroom (Fisher & Adler, 1999, p. 3).

There are two major dimensions in what (Chall, 1983:7) labeled the "teacher factor" concerning effective instruction. They are respectively, 1) establishing the learning environment and 2) implementing effective instructional strategies. Essential to critical pedagogy, is the need to empower teachers as "professionals who are able and willing to reflect upon the ideological principles that inform their practice, who connect pedagogical theory and practice to wider social issues, and who work together to share ideas, exercise power over the conditions of their labor, and embody in their teaching a vision of a better and more humane life" (Giroux and McLaren, 1989: p. xxiii).

The role of teachers in enhancing critical literacy in their FLL classrooms becomes increasingly important. Therefore, many studies have focused on teachers' perspectives in dealing with critical literacy. Teachers appreciate the role of critical literacy as a reflection tool with colleagues to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of the political landscape (DeMulder, Stribling, & Day, 2013). Thus, exposure to critical pedagogies inspires teachers to share their professional experience with colleagues in workplaces and academic conferences (Sangster, Stone, & Anderson, 2013). Teachers are likely to change in their philosophies regarding language learning after the exposure to critical

literacy. This change may be articulated in their pedagogy from a focus on language forms to the comprehension of meaning, from teacher-centered lecture to student-centered dialogue (Ko, 2013), from personal to social action (Ko & Wang, 2009), and from decoding of printed texts to real meaning-making (Tan et al., 2010).

In addition to teachers' concern about the applicability of critical literacy, many factors intervene to prevent them from achieving their goals. First, teachers' assumptions may threaten the implementation of critical literacy. For example, there is a widespread belief among teachers that younger students are less academically- proficient students who cannot be engaged in critical literacy activities (Karaka, 2016). This assumption is likely to prevent most ELL students from the engagement in critical literacy practices (Curdts Christiansen, 2010; Park, 2011). However, evidence shows that both young learners (Vasquez, 2004) and low-achieving students (Lee & Runyan, 2011) can become critical if they get teachers' support. Second, the use of discreet point tests in the literacy curriculum undermines the role of critical literacy (Tan et al., 2010). Third, teachers, instructional foci may be a factor in the absence of critical literacy in FL classrooms. For example, teachers pay due attention to English linguistic proficiency (Tan & Guo, 2009). As far as meaning is concerned, reading the lines substitutes reading between the lines to dig deep into the underlying implications (Curdts Christiansen, 2010). Fourth, teachers might misjudge the implications of resources and culture in implementing critical literacy (Ko, 2010; Kuo, 2009).

Reviewing teachers' perspectives reveal a high degree of awareness and responsibility towards an education driven by critical literacy. Teachers become sensitive to the exertion of more control in the classroom (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2014) and the choice of the topics of discussion in the classroom (Bender-Slack and Young 2010). However, some teachers can be passive and reluctant in initiating changes in practice (Sangster et al., 2013) because they do believe that introducing students to critical thought would raise critical questions about the educational system that institutions strive to establish and implement.

X. Models of teaching critical literacy

It is important to understand the existing models of critical literacy in reading instruction before embarking on any new theory or framework. The literature presents different models of teaching critical literacy. Luke and Freebody's (1997) four resources model includes 1) code breaking, 2) making meaning, 3) using text which refers to, and 4) analyzing text. Through teaching critical literacy, students are taught to read the text critically. This will raise their awareness that there are many readings and interpretations of the single text, which in itself shows that no text is neutral. Lehr (1982) describes another model of teaching critical literacy that integrates reading and Writing.

This framework consists of four stages: 1) involvement, developing a personal interest in the text, 2) perception, contemplating and noticing the details in the text that elicited that response, 3) interpretation, drawing meanings from the text, and 4) evaluation, making judgments about the texts. Furthermore, Barnes' (1979) comes up with another model which covers : 1) cognitive memory questions that elicit recall of facts or yes-no answers;(2) convergent questions that ask students to explain, express in another mode, state relationships, compare and contrast, or solve a problem; (3) divergent questions that ask students to infer, reconstruct, predict, hypothesize, solve a problem, or invent or design; and (4) evaluation questions that require students to judge, value, defend, or justify a choice or solution. For Janks (2000, 2010) critical language awareness is at the heart of critical literacy. Her synthesis model of critical literacy is based on the realisation that there are different conceptualizations of the relationship between language and power. She suggests that there is an interdependence between different orientations to critical literacy and these will lead to pedagogies that fundamentally revolve around issues of dominion, access, diversity and design. Another model of teaching critical literacy has been suggested by McLaughlin & Allen (2002a) which comprises explaining, demonstrating, guiding, practicing, and reflecting.

Abednia's (2013) framework contains four stages: 1) familiarizing learners with critical literacy, 2) Negotiating Readings, 3) asking critical questions, discussing questions collaboratively, and 4) writing reflective journals. Kuo (2013) investigate critical literacy in the EFL classroom by using multiple perspectives through learning tasks and focusing on students' responses to the tasks which are based on critical perspectives. This study shows that these tasks have led students to assume more social agency in their thinking and practice. By the same token, in Indonesia, Gustine (2013) focused on designing and implementing a critical- based approach in the context of EFL secondary school. Her approach is based on Lewinson's (2008) framework which consists of (1) disrupting the commonplace, (2) considering multiple viewpoints, (3) focusing on socio-political issues and (4) taking actions.

XI. The presentation of the proposed framework

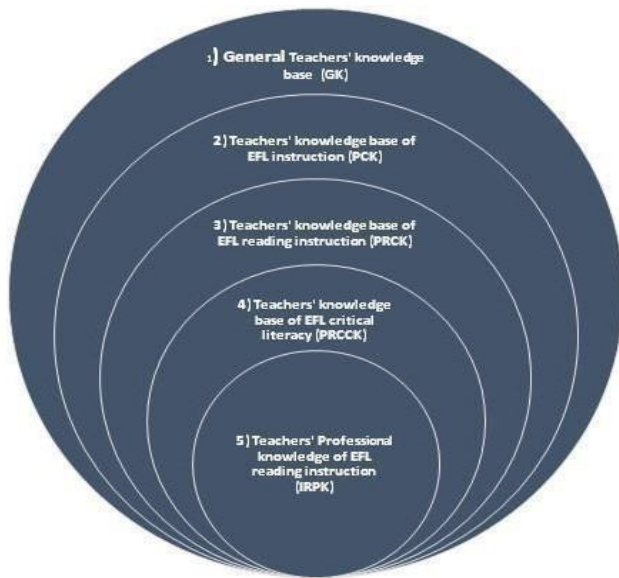


Fig1: EFL Teachers' Reading Professional knowledge about Reading Instruction (The black box)

The components of EFL Teachers' Reading Professional knowledge

GK: General Knowledge

PCK: Pedagogical Knowledge+ Content Knowledge

PRCK: Pedagogical Reading Content Knowledge

PRCK: Pedagogical Reading Content Critical Knowledge

IRPK: Instructional Reading Pedagogical Knowledge

This framework focuses on the EFL core knowledge about teaching reading. It is made up of five phases and conceptualizes EFL teachers' knowledge from the general to the specific. It is as follows respectively: 1) general teacher's knowledge base, 2) teachers' knowledge base of EFL instruction, 3) teachers' knowledge base of EFL reading instruction, 4) teachers' knowledge base of EFL critical literacy, and finally, 5) teachers' professional knowledge of EFL reading instruction. It is worth mentioning that the three last phases in this framework are newly coined by the authors and therefore they add value to the research arena of EFL teacher instructional knowledge base.

These five knowledge types are presented in a scaffold so that each phase is a condition to the next one which results in a logical connection between the phases. This ordering informs mentors in the way they should approach their mentees.

This framework bridges the gap between mainstream literacy and critical approaches to literacy. It introduces critical pedagogy as a component of EFL teachers' knowledge base. We argue that it is difficult for teachers to achieve a degree of professional knowledge if critical literacy is not an element of reading instruction pedagogy.

The framework operationalization:

1) General teachers' knowledge base

It includes the knowledge that makes teachers different from

other people. In other words, the knowledge that enables teachers to teach. For example, Almasi (2003) provides a tripartite classification of general teachers' knowledge: 1) declarative knowledge (knowing what to teach), 2) procedural knowledge (knowing how to teach it), 3) and conditional knowledge (knowing why, when, and under what circumstances to teach it).

2) Teachers' knowledge base of EFL instruction

It includes the pedagogical knowledge that teachers should have in teaching English as a foreign language. It includes basic approaches and pedagogies of EFL instruction.

3) Teachers' knowledge base of EFL reading instruction

It includes the knowledge that teachers should have in teaching EFL reading. This very specific type of knowledge includes some important elements such as fluency, vocabulary, grammatical complexities, background knowledge, and metacognitive awareness and strategies.

4) Teachers' knowledge base of EFL critical literacy

It includes knowledge related to EFL critical literacy. In this framework, McLaughlin & Allen's (2002a) model of critical literacy is a good fit. It comprises explaining, demonstrating, guiding, practicing, and reflecting.

5) Teachers' professional knowledge of EFL reading instruction

After applying the above-stated model of critical literacy, teachers become able to link features of reading with the components of critical literacy. This newly constructed knowledge represents the professional knowledge base for teachers in EFL reading instruction

XII. The contribution of this framework to teachers' pedagogical preparation

Berkeley et al (2011) argued that there is a lack of research in both pre-service and in-service teachers' knowledge of reading. This lack represents an impetus to develop a theoretical framework that focuses on these two professional phases among EFL teachers (Baker, 2003). Teaching reading should be supported by effective teacher preparation programs. However, such programs often focus on the pedagogical and technical preparation of future teachers. Research reported a lack of conceptual knowledge of the language of those who are in charge of preparing future teachers of reading (Joshi, Binks, Hougen, et al., 2009). Moreover, some studies such as Joshi, Binks, Hougen, Dahlgren, et al., (2009) demonstrated that in many cases teacher educators lack up-to-date theoretical and pedagogical knowledge needed to work with pre-service teachers. This framework could also contribute to developing the standards for EFL teachers' reading knowledge assessment programs. Reutz et al. (201: 206) assert, "reliable and valid tests of teacher knowledge about reading and writing instruction would

assist literacy educators in determining what is most important to teach in teacher education programs and in literacy courses”.

This framework will enhance teachers’ understanding of the reading components such as fluency, comprehension, background knowledge (Foorman et al., 2006; Mehta et al. 2005; Vellutino, Tunmer, Jaccard, & Chen, 2007), and the stages of reading development (Ehri & Snowling, 2004). Also, it will help in increasing teachers’ awareness of teaching these reading components (Torgesen, 2005). This framework is in line with the Peter Effect (Applegate & Applegate, 2004) which focuses on the idea that teachers could not teach what they do not know. In other words, EFL teachers should be highly knowledgeable about the different components of the teaching process to meet their learners’ expectations and needs.

This framework will serve as an effective mentoring tool for EFL pre-service teachers. It will inform mentors to practice about the necessary components of EFL teachers’ knowledge in approaching the reading skill. Malderez and Bodoczky (1999, p.4) suggested five different roles for a mentor: 1) a model for inspiration and demonstration, 2) an acculturator, 3) a sponsor, 4) a supporter, and 5) an educator. All these roles are at the heart of teachers’ practical knowledge of EFL teachers’ education. Thus, mentors work on their mentees’ professional development through “advising on effective practices, making the theory- practice link overt, and evaluating and reporting upon their practicum performance” (Sinclair, 1997, p. 309).

Besides, this framework will serve as a guide for mentors’ professional knowledge. Mentors are expected to be highly knowledgeable about pedagogical and practical knowledge (Suhirman, 2018). Tickle (2000) claim that professional knowledge should center around teaching skills, pedagogical knowledge, curriculum and assessment to be more successful.

This framework will contribute to continuous professional development since “teachers are lifelong learners by nature” and all that “they need is a supportive environment that recognizes their learning needs” (Troudi, 2009: 64). To do so, teachers should be more autonomous and able to take decisions rather than being coerced and manipulated.

Also, our proposed model’s phases could be integrated into the teachers’ knowledge measurement questionnaires to evaluate their knowledge about EFL teachers’ readiness to teach reading or as Buckingham, Wheldall, and Beaman- Wheldall (2013) call teachers’ preparedness. In this respect, our model will add value to research on the evaluation of EFL teachers’ instructional knowledge about reading instruction.

Conclusion

Recently, research on reading instruction arena witnessed a Quest for improving EFL teachers’ quality through focusing on their knowledge base system. Focusing on

their knowledge base is a priority since it is related to their instructional reading practice. We have proposed a theoretical framework that highlights EFL teachers Knowledge layers about reading instruction by linking mainstream and critical literacy approaches. Our framework comes as a response to many recent researchers’ calls to be more focused on approaching EFL reading teachers’ knowledge Cochran-Smith et al. (2015) and Myrberg et al. (2018). Moreover, since ‘Knowledge is power’, our proposed framework will contribute to empowering EFL reading teachers by suggesting they think creatively of the most suitable pedagogical tools to achieve better educational outcomes by moving away from seeking the one-size-fits-all recipe. EFL teachers’ effectiveness is the offspring of their autonomy and effective agency in their classrooms to teach learners how to “read the word and the world” Freire (1972) and to be aware of the eyes of “Big Brothers” Orwell (1984). On the whole, EFL teachers’ knowledge could be forged by teaching experience and instructional practice, however, delving into its intricate components and understanding its nature needs a good theoretical framework since ‘There is nothing more practical than a good theory,’ Lewin (1952, p. 169).

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