



**Graduate School of Education**

**Critical Language Awareness in Modern Times**

**Educators' Views and Related Issues:**

**An Exploratory Study**

Submitted By

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To

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Hayam", written in a cursive style.

Signature: .....

## **Abstract**

Critical Language awareness (CLA) is inseparably relevant to fields of life and knowledge, and cannot be viewed solely without reference to various aspects of education, language learning, pedagogical strategies, culture, social backgrounds, political dimensions of global hegemony, and issues of identity and being. This thesis is an attempt to explore and rethink teachers' conception of critical language awareness feasibility and dimensions within the contextual social encounters with learners in the language classroom, and interrelated matters of practice and application. The study aims at considering criticality implications in language education in the light of these compelling factors, and rethinking associated issues of importance. The background context is one of the private universities in Kuwait. The interpretive paradigm was the best means that fits the exploratory nature and rich data aim. The participants were purposefully selected according to convenience and suitability for semi-structured interviews that were conducted after getting their consent. The data was thematically analyzed and recurrent patterns were coded. The emerging themes indicated a relation between the findings and literature as the instructors, though have not heard about CLA previously, indicated knowledge of critical pedagogies, practices and limitations to criticality due to socioeconomic globalized world that indicated language imperialism and power relations. The study suggests recommendations and further research in an attempt of exploring and establishing insightful vision of ideologies framed within the educational process that could have positive effects on education.

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### **Dedication**

I dedicate this PhD to my mother, my father and my husband; I lost things I cannot regain when I lost you. You did not survive to see me working on it, but you have always supported me to go the extra mile. I love you and I know you can feel me as I feel you; I know you are proud of me.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

BERA	British Educational Research Association
CBE	College of Basic Education
CLA	Critical Language Awareness
ELT	English Language Teaching
EPP	English Preparatory Program
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEI	Higher Educational Institutions
KAL	Knowledge about Language
KU	Kuwait University
LMS	Learning Management System
PAAET	The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training
SAT	Scholastic Assessment Test
UG	Under Graduate

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the study, relate it to issues of concern and provide an outline of its parts. It starts with an overview of the investigated problem and the reasons it was chosen, followed by a rationale of the study, its significance and relevant background information with the anticipated contribution to knowledge, and the research questions. The chapter is concluded with the organization of the thesis.

#### **1.1 Introduction**

As language teachers, we form the joint between language components and life. It may be expected that instructors (The term will be used interchangeably with teachers as this is their title in universities) could be free in explaining interpretations, filling knowledge gaps and initiating critical discussions that raise issues of controversy or concern in a process that conveys the effective purpose of language; however, criticality can be difficult to attain on real grounds. Instead of using language to empower opinions of students through critical discussions of discourse and texts about the different world issues, instructors may find themselves limited to surface levels of meanings, language structure teaching and assessment preparations. It is important to investigate the issue of how teachers perceive CLA as an approach of viewing language with notions of depth and associations of sociocultural context in mind. In order to further understand CLA, there is need to understand the empowerment it casts and the orientation it provides to mutual classroom communication which is shaped by many determining factors of ideology,

background, personal experiences and identity interpretation, (Coates, 2012 & Blackledge, 2012).

Discussion about texts would also be a form of social interaction through which different interpretations can take place according to ideologies and own perceptions, Fairclough (1989). Criticality then, is mostly needed for interpretation and realization since “No text is innocent” (Kumaravadivelu, 1999, p.460). The main focus of this study is critical language awareness and how instructors see the importance of it, teach it and deal with it in their classrooms. This implies the relation between language awareness and different relevant inseparable issues such as concepts of critical pedagogy, linguistic imperialism, and globalization. These issues emerge from the need to be critical in times of changing powers and ideologies. The study is interpretive in nature and depends on qualitative methodology that seeks explorative value. Semi-structured interviews of colleagues best fit the intended purpose and the needed data. The data was analyzed thematically using depiction of codes and repeated patterns.

## **1.2 Nature of the Problem**

Critical language awareness (CLA) is an umbrella concept that could be easily associated in the field of language teaching with socioeconomic changes and other concepts such as linguistic domination and sociocultural issues of power and inequality simply because of the power of language as a medium of communication. The key principles of criticality such as, analyzing, synthesizing, ideology constructions and meaning negotiations might be difficult to attain or achieve because of anticipated hindering factors. Thus, The present study attempts to investigate instructors’ views of CLA and how to perform and deal

with it. The concern for taking the approach of critical language awareness and adopting a critical ideology in the classroom has started to be common over the past few decades. It became a popular topic that investigates language correlation with the society, develops awareness of language functions and raises questions of power relations, differences, and sociocultural impacts in order to get the real meaning behind written texts and spoken conversations. Therefore, investigating the ways critical language awareness is taught in the classroom is important to enable better chances for students to understand and become more interactive with issues around them locally and globally.

Criticality is a cause and a product at the same time. The simultaneous interrelated socioeconomic and sociopolitical factors involved with teaching and learning bring about criticality as an important topic that should be investigated as a social practice. It is not criticality for the sake of criticism, but for the sake of developing societies and becoming active agents in them (Linker, 2014; Ten Dam & Volman 2004). The social factor of language allows for a manifestation of meanings and understandings that may encourage criticality.

The teacher/learner socialization might highlight the form of criticality that occurs in that educational context because it measures the depth of meaning negotiation in spoken or written discourses. Tsui (2017) referred to the process of learning as a sociocultural encounter in which “Learners are not just passive recipients of language input and teachers are not just providers of input” (p.191). Similarly, Fairclough (1989) identified discourse as “social practice” (p.22), where negotiations of meanings in social encounters take place.

### **1.3 Rationale for the Study**

Education, being the fundamental building block of nations' formulation and sustainability, shows growing or diminishing powers of societies through undergoing critical awareness of language and social changes. It is important to investigate educators' perception of CLA and its relations with almost everything that touches on life, and to attempt knowledge of difficulties, dilemmas, issues of legitimacy and management implications that teachers face in their classrooms. Such findings may lead to more empowered learners who could not only improve the language knowledge, but also act upon that knowledge and turn it into an executive power that enables them to be autonomous and critically aware of meanings and implications.

The main reason why I thought of conducting this research is my personal experience in teaching and the testimonies I developed over the past decade through which I witnessed changes in the educational processes. The present study is based on my long experience in the field of teaching English as a second language in different contexts and for different levels, my passion for the teaching profession, and the changing conditions this profession has been exposed to in the past few decades. The study context is Kuwait, but it could be extended to other contexts that might be exposed to the same contributing factors that affect criticality teaching and the teaching profession as a whole. The purpose of this study stems from the need to explore the status of criticality teaching in language classes through the eyes of those who are first hand involved in the teaching process. That exploration aims eventually at improving the teaching conditions in regard to the new trends of education that control the performance of language teachers. My interest in the subject has developed

since I started teaching English and communication in private universities in Kuwait more than a decade ago. Over these years, I taught a wide range of language skills and reading texts to which most of the students did not really relate or reflect critically. It was somewhat difficult to take teaching to a higher level than the surface one of vocabulary, grammar rules and common concepts. The reasons were many but not definite or inclusive; thus, exploring what others in the same context do or say was intriguing and promising.

A big body of research has discussed learner autonomy, hands-on modernized teaching methods and the benefits of student-centered approaches of learning for students as an investable change to accommodate for changes in times and market needs, (Blidi, 2017). I discuss in this research how the educational practices match up with critical language awareness in light of a new shape of “knowledge-based” technological world that is governed by new global rules, and imposed by fast-paced commodities (Fairclough 1999, p.71). CLA is fundamental to teacher/earner autonomy and self-directed learning, which is largely discussed from cognitive and socio-cognitive perspectives. The relation between these factors should be augmented with CLA since it provides the social aspect that grounds education.

Emphasizing on learner autonomy and theoretical insights, Elsen and St. John (2007) declare that learners are critical and autonomous when they construct knowledge and relate it to their personal experiences using a “network of relations” (p. 19). The language use awareness and conscious positioning in the classroom are interdependent and were discussed by Clark and Ivanic (1999) “as helping learners to develop more consciousness and control over the

way they use language” (p. 64).

Teaching students to question and analyze is the foundation of critical thinking. Nevertheless, it seems that there is little time for thinking because class time is jammed with instructional procedures and assessments. It is hard to determine the criticality levels and nature among students, but there is always a tendency towards appreciating and encouraging the use of critical thinking skills regardless of the difficulty of making it come true.

As a response to demands of change, many workshops and conventions are employed in professional development programs within educational contexts to train teachers on new methods and practices that could improve learners' criticality, sense of investigation and “dynamic” teaching skills, (Creemers, Kyriakides, & Antoniou 2013, p.8). Competency of teachers enormously depends on foundational notions of criticality and potential difficulties associated with it and how they are able to work with it based on functional action plan that could be created according to the needs or changes that face both learners or teachers.

The inability to function according to these action plans, due to focus on structures of the language or necessitating curriculum needs, may hinder criticality and the potential critical investigative spirit. Such condition may demotivate raised consciousness and decrease comprehensive analysis of communicative situations that may be negotiated in the social context of the classroom. Thus, the limited chances to be critical might decrease the value of teachers who become tools of delivering molded structures rather than being igniting facilitators of inquisition and criticality.



Ultimately, Lack of criticality in education and in language learning may result in exploitation and manipulation of minds according to whomever has the upper hand and the dominating power. In such “disconnected from life” processes that are far from real life experiences and world issues, injustices in various fields of the society may occur and identities of students, future citizens, may be altered and forced to abide by the dominating powers (Freire, 2005, p. 33). In a corporate world, those who have authority over common people can manipulate discourse. People could be controlled through politicians, journalists, media and advertising agencies, or anyone who has access to be heard. CLA teaching can then raise awareness against exploitation and lack of consciousness.

Critical view to meaning implications and constructive analysis pave for a “democratic society” with voiced citizens, (Fairclough 1995, p. 222). By developing criticality, people are emancipated and liberated to form their own identities in a global world; meanwhile develop literacy skills. Manipulation and exploitation could easily, as we can witness in many fields of our modern daily lives, gradually penetrate minds if a critical attitude towards language contexts is not fundamentally adopted.

The critical discourse that takes place in the classroom is a perfect factor that mirrors micro aspects of criticality in the classroom and macro aspects of it in the social and cultural backgrounds. Critical classroom discourse analysis might disclose issues of power, identity, culture, and values, which are sensitive and difficult to incorporate or approach. Teachers and learners involve in negotiations within complex communicative situations on daily basis, and reaching a balance of instruction between intended learning objectives and

criticality could be a difficult equilibrium due to interrelated factors that are discussed later in this chapter and in chapter three. In his ecological perspective of learning Van Lier (2000) pointed out that the interaction between learners and the environment creates meaningful understandings and allows for mutual communication. What learners receive from the surrounding environment affects their interpretations. Criticality is not separate from knowledge because it may be built on what learners already know. Valuing learner own knowledge and understanding is important to enact criticality (Metz, 2018).

Many researches investigated the possibilities of enacting critical practices and pedagogies, (Janks, 1999; Ali, 2011; Ghadiri & Tavakoli, 2017) and there should be more research to explore teachers' stand from criticality and how they estimate its viability and feasibility. Using a language is not limited to being able to employ its functions and utilize structures and mechanics; but to construct autonomy that is the foundation of democracy.

#### **1.4 Research Aims and Questions**

I aim by conducting this research to find the extents of criticality application and practice from instructors' point of view as teachers deal with the demands and expectations of a challenging profession in a rapidly changing and demanding world that imposes new sets of challenging rules (Beck & Young, 2005; Barrett & Meaghan, 2006). The teaching profession seems to be under many pressures. Neoliberalism is an in-line concept that corresponds to changes in education "as a political and economic ideology" (Lucal, 2015, p. 5), and "power" is shaped within new trends of modernity and interdependency (Coussy 2005, p.177).

It is important to investigate and explore the teachers' perception of criticality establishment in the classroom, the feasibility of creating criticality and the development of deliberate attention to critical performance. Instructors' opinions are important because knowing them determines how they work and behave. Knowing instructors' opinions is important in acknowledging their work behavior. Furthermore, the distinction between the deeply personal beliefs that embody social reality and deep assumptions of teacher, and the profession knowledge they acquire is important because assumptions shape and affect knowledge (Pajares,1992). The multidimensionality of the different factors affecting knowledge could affect practice and performance. Due to all the contributing elements in such a complicated process as education, research is needed for more insight on teachers' empowerment or disempowerment in the classroom, and whether it occurs intentionally or unintentionally.

Having this exploratory intention in mind, I find that applying an interpretive research and seeking qualitative data of substantial richness could serve the purpose of discovering the feasibility of criticality in the social contexts where instructors and students meet daily under such world view changes that control all aspects of life in the modern times. The research main questions that the study aim at are:

1. How do instructors perceive themselves as agents of teaching in regard to critical language awareness?
2. How could instructors (teachers) in private colleges in Kuwait see/work with the factors involved in criticality?

3. What are the limitations/incentives of critical approaches in their teaching context? How do they perceive these limitations?

### **1.5 Anticipated Significance of the Study and Knowledge Contribution**

Language awareness is relevant to adopting critical positions in education that reflect a part of the critical pedagogy stand since it formulates a foundation of critical thinking that enables learners to become active participants in their own learning and meanwhile, enhances social realization which ultimately gives them voice to become more liberated citizens. There is a need to be critical and to problematize the givens and critically question implications and associations. This need has intensified in an age in which the world has become a small village due to globalization, modernity, and hegemonic powers of language, facilitated access to media, and wide-ranged transportation and free trade.

As indicated by Case, Ndura and Righettini (2005), a “Critical perspective” could enlighten learners and improve their understanding of themselves and world issues (p. 379). Additionally, criticality could provide a more interesting teaching/learning experience, which would enhance the educational and academic process, and would, as a whole, produce more aware and responsible citizens who could help in creating better world in which people are aware of their rights as well as their obligations. Furthermore, and specifically important for the focus of this study, allow teachers to enjoy their teaching.

The investigation of instructors’ views about CLA would hopefully provide insight on two levels; personal and academic. On the personal level, it could allow for self-exploration and estimation of communicative and teaching practices. On the academic level, it could provide assessment of learning

pedagogies that may need to be improved, structured or diminished. On all levels, such insights could empower the educational process and aid in providing the most suitable practices and professional development opportunities that suit the context of study and the current times. That could lead to instructor/student academic, social and cultural performance enhancement.

### **1.6 Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis is organized into seven chapters. Chapter one introduces the problem being researched and provides background information of the rationale for the study, the research questions and aims, the anticipated significance and contribution to knowledge the study hopes to establish. Chapter two introduces the context of the study in terms of the educational background of the participants and the teaching situation for both teachers and students drawing on description of relevant social, educational or economic issues that interrelate with the subject of the study.

Chapter three introduces the literature review and draws on the theoretical framework of the relevant issues to the study in more depth to illuminate the research with regard to the focus emergent issues that are of relevance to CLA and contributing factors of criticality such as globalization, critical pedagogy, micro and macro relations, and interconnected sociocultural and socioeconomic factors.

Chapter four introduces ontological and epistemological assumptions in relation to research methodology, justification for the interpretive methodology and the process of sampling, data collection, ethical considerations, data analysis, issues of credibility, and limitations.

Chapter five analyzes the qualitative data presented with interpretation and explanation based on its richness and participants' extracts. Chapter six then presents summary of the main findings and discussions with regard to literature review and pedagogical assumptions of emerging issues.

Chapter seven presents implications of emerging themes in relation to theory and pedagogy, recommendations for further research in relation to theory and pedagogy, and my personal journey during the process of the study.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Context of the Study**

The current chapter introduces the context of the study, participants and relevant issues to critical language awareness in the language classes of private universities in Kuwait.

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Language education in Kuwait is an important aspect of education. English language is presented as a second language subject that all students have to study from the elementary stage to high school in public schools. In his study about the position of Kuwait in Kachru's (1985) Circles of English as placed in the expanding circle because English is taught for the purpose of communication; Al Mutairi (2020) explained "the State of Kuwait puts a great emphasis and unique importance on English Language Education at all school levels", (p. 87).

Due to the importance of English as a dominant language that potentially opens the gates of success and status in business and academic life, different methods of teaching the language are presented from drill-and-practice to interactive communication and reciprocal teaching in which student-centered approaches and group work activities are practiced. Al-Darwish (2017) noted, "By a process of experiment and adjustment, Kuwait, like many nations, has developed its own blend of communicative, audio-lingual, and grammar-translation techniques to teach English" (p. 40).

In private schools, English is the medium of instruction and most subjects are taught in English besides Arabic and Islamic Studies, which are mandatory

in all types of schools, and they are bounded by the State curriculum and assessments. More emphasis on the language proficiency and mastery is imposed on teaching methods and accuracy of pronunciation and language fluency. This is an affecting factor in the recruitment policy of teachers and employees in these schools because, unlike public schools, teachers in private schools are mostly native speakers of the language, which assumingly gives higher status to the institution. The same case applies to private universities and colleges. Most of the instructors are native speakers of English from different parts of the world, while some are from Arab nationalities, especially Egyptians and Jordanians, who hold master or PhD degrees from Arab or international universities.

Kuwait includes public and private Higher Education Institution (HEI). There are four state-funded institutions; Kuwait University (KU), which offers majors in sciences and humanities at different levels through undergraduate till doctorate degrees. There is also The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), which was established to provide the technical training needed for supporting the flourishing development of economy and trade. Moreover, there are two Higher Institutions for Music and Theatre Arts. The language of instruction in these public institutions is Arabic, and English is used for specific purposes accordingly; i.e., scientific fields such as needed language for medicine and engineering, or for fields of business and English literature. On the other hand, there are twelve private universities and colleges that are accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education. These private institutions, as well as the public ones, offer different colleges and major degrees that respond to the needs of the local and the international market, and aim at providing a skillful



workforce that fulfills different fields of occupations. They are more liberated and independent institutions, which adopt strategies that follow different affiliations and internship programs from international universities in USA, Australia, Canada, and Netherlands. These private institutions offer wide range of programs and courses in sciences and humanities. None of these private institutions offers doctorate level degrees, but some offer Master and MBA programs.

Most of these private educational institutions have common features of providing extracurricular activities and easy-access facilities to students, enabling the utmost service in both academic and social life. They provide digital libraries with facilitating subscriptions to online databases in all fields of research, vast and welcoming campuses, technological and speech applications labs, well-equipped classrooms, cultural and social activity halls, different sports fields and sports centers. Use of English is encouraged not just as a language of instruction in classrooms, but also as the language of social communication outside classrooms. It is even mentioned in the policy of some of these institutions that English is the language of communication and instruction and using Arabic is not allowed. This might be regarded as a positive asset because it enhances students' exposition to the language, albeit the same factor might be considered a drawback that alienates some students who are not proficient enough in the language use and might feel discouraged or intimidated which would threaten self-confidence and identity expression.

## **2.2 Educational background**

Due to the importance and status of higher education in the present world and its role in building societies and empowering citizens, more attention is

posed on the improvements and changes that could be applied in order to elevate the quality of learning/teaching and education. The intended improvements aim at developing and expanding the inputs and outputs of Kuwaiti graduates who could fit in a global world, and implement new technological advanced requirements of jobs that serve the global economy. In accordance to the change of higher education focus, funds and programs, a major change was that of language instruction from Arabic to English as the language of modern sciences and as the language of power and status.

The language of instruction in Kuwait private universities is English. Thus, certain language proficiency level is required and it is usually 900 in Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) score, or 2.3 Grade Point Average (GPA). The students usually sit for an admission test that determines their language proficiency level if they do not have a SAT score. All the private universities offer mandatory English language courses of two or three levels that the students have to pass in order to get their degree no matter what their majors are. These English courses cover the basic four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Language units or departments in the private universities usually focus on standard grammar rules instruction and academic writing of different types of essays and reports. There are also reading comprehension passages and listening activities such as conversation analysis and speaking activities such as presentations.

The private educational institutions of Kuwait seek international accreditation and institutional partnership from different organizations around the world according to specialized majors and fields of knowledge. The accreditation

processes take a lot of dedication and hard work, and intensified academic roles and obligations such as preparing for the institution self-study to check if the accreditation requirements are met and preparing for the accreditation campus visit. These tasks require extra time and dedication from employees in general, and the instructors in writing the needed reports for the several accreditation stages, which adds up to the load of teaching and the relevant tasks. The accredited institutions get extra credit for integrity and quality; thus, become a desired destination for more and more students who join these prestigious and elite institutions. The accreditation gets renewed every four or five years in an ongoing quality check process that guarantees authenticity and validity continuation. Assumably, The graduates of private universities are more likely to get better job offers and opportunities not only for the quality of education they receive, but also for the language proficiency which is desired in many working places and higher-ranked positions in both private and public sectors.

### **2.3 Socio-economic background**

Kuwait is a small rich country with a population that is mostly formed of expats who work in all different fields in public and private sectors. The country depends mostly on one source of income which is oil industry, and that forms a risk for the country in facing any global economy deficits. The government is trying to diversify the national income through improving conditions for different businesses. One of the growing businesses in Kuwait is the privatization of education, which could serve in empowering the economy and transforming it into a solid one based on different fields of knowledge, and would also improve educational programs. The private for-profit institutions, schools and universities, started providing more chances for more students to receive

distinguished learning opportunities. The private universities are also expected to provide an environment for educational research and quality teaching standards that serve modern trends in technology employment in the different fields of science and education.

In the coming sections, I will focus on the context of study, which is one of the private universities in Kuwait. I will discuss the English Language Teaching in this university, its policies, curriculum and objectives, the population, and the students in relevance to issues of concern to the focus of the study.

#### **2.4 English Language Teaching (ELT) Situation in English Courses**

The present research study takes place in one of Kuwait's private higher education institutions. The Liberal Arts department in the University offers two English Language programs; the English Preparatory Program (EPP) and the Undergraduate Program (UG). The students get directly to the UG courses without having the EPP if they already have a 900 SAT score or they pass the admission placement test. If they have neither of these, they have to study EPP courses that have grammar and writing core and not very much different from basic public high schools English level. Although these courses seem to be language and sentence-skills focused, they are considered very important to the majority of students who come from public schools and need to strengthen their English language background in order to be able to study and write reports in their specific majors. The duration of the EPP courses is 9 months divided on two parts in which they study comprehension texts with vocabulary focus, and explicit grammar rules. The students write paragraphs and not complete essays, so they do not study essay structure or the rules of academic writing in terms of unity, organization and coherence. The assessments of these two parts are two

major exams: the midterm and the final exam. The students either pass or fail these two exams and the percentage they get does not interfere with their graduation GPA. If they fail the EPP, they have to repeat it, and they move automatically to the UG courses when they pass.

The UG English courses are mandatory and the students study them along with their major courses in business and engineering, and they have to finish them in order to graduate. There are three courses in the UG stage with a minimum of 60% passing grade, which is a D. The three courses are divided into two language and writing courses, and one communication course. The two writing and language courses aim at strengthening the academic writing and reading skills that allow students to function effectively at university level through integrating the four language skills with summarizing, analyzing, paraphrasing and referencing. The curriculum of both courses revolves around reading and analyzing texts to interpret and infer conclusions. The curriculum also provides knowledge of basic five-paragraph academic essay structure with knowledge of prewriting techniques and outlining, methods of writing organization, and types of writing; expository, argumentative, or descriptive. In addition to writing and mechanics, the curriculum is designed to integrate students' language and writing knowledge with research skills through practicing evaluation of ideas and sources and provision of demonstrating visual presentations that support their arguments.

These two writing and language courses are prerequisite for studying the third UG English course, which is mainly concerned with communication with both theoretical and practical aspects. They study the rhetorical conventions of

ethos (appealing to the trustworthiness of the speaker), pathos (appealing to the emotions of the audience), and logos (appealing to the rationale and sense of right and wrong). They do effective research to provide informative and persuasive speeches based on the communication theories they learn: modes of communication, verbal and non-verbal communication, group communication, forms of listening and non-listening, culture components, ethnocentrism and culture relativism. Students provide visual aids with their presentations to enhance communication and public speaking skills, and to overcome public speaking apprehension. The textbooks for all the courses in EPP and UG are from American publishing companies, with slightly modified versions to suit the Arab context.

#### **2.4.1 The Instructors' Background**

The language instructors are recruited through several stages. The candidates come from different nationalities all over the world. They should be master degree or PhD holders in order to apply for the job of a faculty member. Their majors should be relevant to teacher education or language arts. After passing interviews successfully, they go through the stage of presenting real life class modeling to check for the required standards of teaching skills proficiency, class management and overall performance. If they get accepted, they would usually be provided with all the necessary information they need to know about the organization they are joining, and the country as a whole if they are new to it, and of course they would be provided with suitable nearby accommodation if they were overseas contract. The case is easier with local residents and applicants because they would easily fit in. The instructors would be provided with complete organizational and community culture in order to help them get

acquainted with their boundaries and communication style, plus the technical information they need to accomplish the job. The instructors have their glass offices or cubicles through which they are continuously monitored visually or through the surveillance cameras, which are at best intentions installed for general security and safety.

They are also continuously informed, verbally or through official emails, that they have to keep a very groomed and elegant formal dress code at all times during working hours that usually extend for ten or twelve hours including an hour break. During the hour break, which is limited by a choice of one of two hours by mid-day, instructors could have their lunch in the equipped lounge or in a nearby location on campus facilities. Instructors are asked to be available during the working hours either in their classes or their offices, and to shorten or eliminate social encounters with each other. Usually, that happens naturally because of teaching hours, workload and paper work that need to be steadily accomplished. They allocate their office hours, which are usually from six to ten hours according to the number of classes they teach, and should always be available to students during them. They should share their detailed calendar afterwards, including their hour break, with their supervisors, team leaders and dean.

They get evaluated every semester based on two uninformed visitations that supposedly measure their expertise in teaching and class handling on regular basis. The team leaders or the deans usually perform the visitations and write down some comments that they do not share with the instructor until the end of the semester. Towards the end of the semester, the instructors get individually

summoned to unannounced meetings in which they are given a report of their performance to sign. Discussions about the ratings in the report are not usually encouraged and are usually pointless since no change would be applied to what the preset reports include. The students also evaluate the instructors by the end of each semester, and sometimes the instructors get to know the rates through the team leader or the dean, but at some other times they do not.

The professional development provided for the instructors is usually interdepartmental and it could have different forms. Sometimes, instructors are asked to propose work-relevant useful topics to share with their colleagues during the weekly meeting through holding workshops. Sometimes they are given a set of major topics that they could break down into subtopics and create visual presentations to share with colleagues. It is very rare for language instructors to visit conferences as guests or speakers, and it is also very rare that any of them writes an academic paper or publishes a study. The focus is mostly on teaching and the teaching loads.

As part of the professional development program, the administration holds annual teacher award competition that is divided into two parts, the academic distinguished performance and the institution participation accomplishment. The instructors are obliged to participate even if they are not interested, and in order to do that they fill long-detailed forms and write short essays. The standards of the winners are determined by the higher and middle management and are unquestionable as indicated in the conditions of the competition. The instructors would still have the chance to be promoted to senior instructors after spending a certain number of years in the organization and after compiling a portfolio that



includes detailed information with samples of their academic history and accomplishments. There is not much to say about CLA in these accomplishment competitions or in the instructor evaluations, but the most announced appreciated attributes are being helpful, cooperative, available, and having an initiative spirit. Acquiring these qualities within the study context is mainly related to being actively and positively engaged with both students and the administration in creating lively teaching/learning environment at all times, regardless of any accelerating responsibilities and teaching loads.

#### **2.4.2 The Students' Background**

Most of the students in the university are from public schools and they chose this private university because it accepts, as the case with private universities in Kuwait, students with a 2.3 GPA and above. As a part of the university's philosophy, they help students with different learning capacities with all means to improve their skills and integrate different learning styles to bring out their potential success and achievement and "accommodate their dominant learning styles and multiple intelligences" (AlRabah, Wu, & ALOtaibi, 2018, p. 45).

The university also has a good reputation of providing many accommodating facilities such as two multi-story building parking lots, vast campus with beautifully designed activity courts and artificial-lakes surrounded with different cafes and restaurants. The instructors are very helpful and welcoming. The majority of the students are Kuwaiti, but there is a minority of Arab students from other nationalities such as Egyptians and Jordanians. The classes are mostly segregated into male and female classes, but sometimes due to time and number of students, there are some mix-gendered classes. Most of the students come from privileged backgrounds where they do not have to have part-time

jobs to support themselves and they are fully supported by their families, and the student allowance they get from the government. This could be an affecting factor in criticality perception and readiness of students to develop critical stands because they may take their learning for granted with no much effort needed. Meanwhile, having almost problem-free type of life might not give a chance for critical view to world issues, or interpretive analysis of texts.

Some students find these English courses hard and crippling because they mostly come from public schools in which the language of instruction is Arabic, with no real exposition to English communication of college required standards. The classes are homogeneous and there is no separation between students from different language instruction backgrounds or performance levels. This factor is very significant to the study because critical language awareness could be in this case, a far-fetched goal that instructors attempt hard to reach due to the discrepancy in students' language proficiency.

#### **2.4.3 The Instructor/Student Relation**

Some of the information the instructors receive in the induction week when they are first hired, besides social and cultural considerations, is how they should be very sensitive toward students; in other words, to appeal to the social, mental and academic needs of their students as much as situations require. That applies to all new instructors, whether from European cultures or Arab ones. They should cater for all the academic difficulties and contain all the potential problems that may hinder their students' advancement. On the other hand, although students tend to be mostly respectful, they are dependent on the instructors, and that might lead to blame them if the student got a low grade or missed a submission.

In language classes, the students mostly prefer direct straightforward instruction, and they generally refrain from critical discussions or ambiguous ideas. Regardless of the tendency to direct explicit instruction preference, the students might enjoy critical questions that could touch on some of their life experiences and cultural environment.

Due to the rapid technological advancements, instructors use facilitating tools and presentational aids in creating a more interesting learning environment. They use videos and online incorporating activities that students can involve in as individuals or in groups. Nevertheless, due to the same technological advancements, students excessively use their phones and get distracted from their work.

Instructors put effort in creating engaging classes that should not “bore” the students as indicated in meetings and regulations generated by the administration. Regardless of the students’ attitude in the classroom, the instructors should be active and engaging the whole time even if the students showed a very passive attitude toward work and discussions. The administration may blame the instructors if students do not show an enthusiastic attitude because the students would never be blamed for such a passive behavior and no discussion of their responsible role in being interactive would be accepted.

The instructors try to appeal to all the learning styles of their students in order to motivate them to actively participate and engage in the material presented, and to make this material accessible to all levels of students. They use verbal and nonverbal communication means in order to enhance communication. They always show a welcoming and friendly attitude in and out

of their classes. They socialize with students whenever they meet them on campus, and when they come to visit instructors in their offices. The instructors provide comprehensive individualized feedback to support students' learning.

Generally, it is not common for students to receive punitive procedures for academic or behavioral misconduct, and the instructors are mostly required to handle such cases wisely. This could create a pressuring environment especially if students are behaving passively. Students are mostly free to express resentment and dislike, while instructors are required directly or indirectly to disregard such cases.

#### **2.4.4 Assessment in EPP and UG courses**

The assessments may change according to the nature of the course, but generally speaking, there are two major assessments in EPP, which are the midterm and the final exams. They include specific questions about grammar rules and mechanics. There are no questions about writing skills; however, there is a part in which students are asked to write a paragraph using the vocabulary they have been taught. There is also a reading comprehension passage with some questions that are mostly multiple choice or closed questions. The students usually get extensive revisions and mock exams to prepare for assessments.

The assessments of the UG courses are divided into three main categories:

1. Experiential learning activities, which are in-class quizzes or exams.
2. Course Project work divided on steps that range between individual assignments or group work.

3. Two major exams, midterm and final, that include theoretical and application questions.

The EPP instructors do not moderate the courses and they do not interfere with the assessment forms or test creation, as they are only responsible for teaching. They are allocated 20 hours of teaching per week. The Head of Department and the Team Leaders create the exams and the assessment forms such as topics of writing and grammar questions.

The UG instructors have course moderators and they are responsible for creating the course folders that include all the assessment forms and course material. The moderators discuss the questions and the topics with the instructors before they present them for the dean's approval. The course moderators are also instructors, and they are allocated 15 hours of teaching per week. The moderators have to get higher management and middle management approval for all assessments and teaching materials before they apply them. Mostly, they are asked to make amendments to the assessments and the teaching material to suit, according to the management view, the level of the students.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The previous sections were background information about the educational and socioeconomic background in the study context in regard to teaching situation, the instructors' and students' background and relation. An overview of the offered English courses and the assessments was also provided in order to later explain controlling aspects that are involved in critical language awareness and how it is perceived or applied in the classroom.

## Chapter Three

### Literature Review and Theoretical Background

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents background and overview of CLA literature in relation to critical theory, pedagogy, methods of language learning, contextual CLA applications, neoliberal forces and globalization.

#### 3.2 Views on Criticality “The Frankfurt School”

Critical language awareness is associated with criticality and critical pedagogy as much as it does with emancipation in teaching and learning. The two concepts are not to be set apart as criticality requires and entails liberation at the same level. This is associated with comprehension of differences and aiming at questioning and interpreting them. With regard to criticality as a concept and a practice that seeks difference, we need to relate to criticality and the critical theory that emerged in the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany, and was moved later to the United States. The focus of the thinkers of the institute was on philosophical critical thinking and emancipatory critique of modern capitalist trends with their effect on social life.

Social thinkers such as Habermas (1984) and Honneth (2017) attributed to the critical theory with much attention to criticality and social changes and differences. They also questioned the domination of certain ideologies and powers such as capitalism, modernity, and exploitation of people. Criticality implications questioned the norms and practices of society and the taken for granted shared views. Such a view could assume criticality in education as social institutions and pedagogies of teaching.

It is the role of criticality to question the givens and perform a profound interpretation of discourse and social connections and also perform a visualization of realities and differences based on emancipated ideology. The societal environment in this case cannot be dismissed as an affecting factor of understanding and critically analyzing notions and discourses; the same idea of criticality emancipates minds and interpretations from dogmas and eventually calls for transformation of pedagogies and practices. Clark and Ivanic (1997) indicated “Critical Language Awareness (CLA) means explicit discussion of issues of power and ideology underlying language use” (p. 8). Ivanic (2004) used the same Vygotskian frame of discourse involvement that included different frames of the language use from a personal perspective to a social interactive one.

CLA is language awareness with the critical dimension added. The interchanging connection between language as a communicative mode and the social background, with all the rich dimensions within, is a very strong bond that needs a critical view and estimation of the different ontological depths of language associations. Perceptions of language as a communicative mode have changed from a communicative mode grounding itself in educational settings and grammar teaching, to a sociocultural medium that bears ideological and epistemological dimensions. The complexity of the social dimension is what adds criticality to language analysis and sensitivity to all the background factors that could interfere with meaning making. With this concept in mind, criticality rises as an issue of emancipation as critical language awareness is coined with emancipation and liberation; emancipation from own ideas and dogmas on one hand, and emancipation from any factors that may impede criticality.

Hornberger and McKay (2010) related critical language approaches to encompassing sociolinguistic domains such as globalization, ideology and identity. Educational and academic contexts best echo these fundamental changes in perceptions as being the first social contexts people get exposed to. In the same line, Giroux (2011) noted education as a cause and a result of changes that touch on almost every aspect of our lives.

### **3.3 Dimensional Aspects of Critical Language Awareness**

Critical Language awareness is related to the critical perspectives that embody poststructuralist and postmodernist ideologies and the reflexive transformation of praxis which call for envisioned action to survive the neoliberal trends (Kubota & Miller, 2017). Criticality is also associated with literacy and power issues that involve “questions of domination and subordination” (Janks 2010, p. 12).

Research bodies and relevant studies aimed at explaining the multidimensional aspects of CLA, which grounded societal and pragmatic relations. The interrelated aspects of CLA could be viewed as follows:

1. It problematizes the given meanings in texts and discourses highlighting dominant forces in social practices that are incorporated in social relations whether on micro levels in the classroom or macro levels in the world.
2. The problematization of language practices shows dominance of imposed power values, which are thus naturalized.
3. It shows how power relations determine curriculums and texts.
4. CLA seeks to explain the relations between naturalized ideologies



and power relations. (Taylor, Despaigne & Faez, 2017, p. 3).

CLA enables interpretation of meaning that is based on social experiences and reflections. This should enable learners and teachers to engage in empowering conversations through which criticality and questioning could occur. In the same realm, Giroux (2011) emphasized the role of culture as a domineering power that forces certain pedagogies and empowers or depowers discourse. This is mediated through culture and context; therefore, criticality is conditioned to cultural practices and reflexive life experiences. Teachers would consider critical pedagogy wishful thinking of the future in a utopian sense because it is the pillar of transformation in the society; a hope that bears insight to a world that beholds justice.

The above notions are in line with Freire's (1970) views of a just and equal world in which everyone is granted the same rights in an emancipated society; therefore, the need to adopt critical views and awareness of the language deepens in order to eliminate injustice and oppression, giving way to transform the world, as much as possible, into a better one.

Another aspect of imminent importance to CLA is the need to have a closer look at the concept of critical pedagogy and its emergence in education to ponder how social scientists and researchers viewed it. Critical pedagogy "seeks to understand and critique" the practices within schools and the sociopolitical dimensions on wider scale" (Pennycook, 1999, p. 33). The learning process could have completely different dimensions if teachers have a focus on critical pedagogy strategies and implicit techniques that encourage critical thinking and awareness of language implications rather than pedantic language

education. Fenner (2017) discussed how criticality aids self-exploration and enhances social insight through reflective and communicative approaches provoking critical thinking through missing “meta-level of language learning” (p.211). Learning is a dynamic process in which criticality and awareness pave for enlightenment on both the personal level as identity exploration, and the social level as intercultural awareness.

However, the different levels of English language proficiency in classes, such as the case with the study context, may create injustice and affect social interaction between learners and each other on one side, and learners and teachers on the other. This tension may affect the educational process and impede language knowledge causing unequal power of language use as put by Fairclough (1989).

### **3.3.1 Knowledge about Language**

A relevant emerging concept to CLA is Knowledge about language (KAL), which is interested in the issues of language structural aspects as well as the sociocultural ones. Knowledge about language engages language explicit instruction, which is structure-focused, with the different perspectives, and social dimensions language can suggest (Cots, 2017). This emphasizes the previously mentioned point about the importance of realizing language awareness feasibility and application.

Additionally, critical engagement in particular social situations with society reflects, to a great extent, the exposition to critical pedagogies and discourses in social encounters that take place in classrooms. These social-educational contexts should be the grounds of recognition of, and differentiation between,

valid truths and socially, politically or economically imposed ones. The educational contexts in which language is the base of communication, foster and gradually develop the relation between learners and teachers in ways that may shape how the world is seen and interpreted according to which forces are controlling it and under which pedagogies the language use is approached. Similarly, Van Lier (1998) and Verschik (2017) considered language learning a social practice that involves analysis and conscious awareness rather than mechanical structure practice. Knowledge about language and being aware of its implications is based on how the language is perceived, used, practiced and analyzed through interactional social channels and language learning methods.

### **3.3.2 Explicit and Implicit Language Learning**

Explicit and implicit teaching methods involve knowledge about language use and critical awareness as they affect learners' autonomy as well as teachers' adjacent language delivery. Teachers may find it difficult to teach the language implicitly, and might have to incarcerate drives of criticality in order to stick to the plan or adhere to enacted policies. In such conditions, the learning takes different directions and the results might be quite surprising as to whom language proficiency belongs and what language proficiency is in the first place. In line with this idea, Krashen (1982) argued that adult students who have grammar-based knowledge of the language might feel short of establishing a productive conversation as their language knowledge may not be as strong and present as their structure knowledge. In that case, the technicality of language does not make up for the sub-consciously acquired language. The practice-and-drill methods of learning language were effective at the expense of the insight of the language itself and what it implies.

In his article on implicit and explicit learning of the language, Ellis (2017) demonstrated how both approaches to language learning were adopted by many researchers who tried at different times to settle for which is more appropriate or valuable to language learning. He linked them to different relevant strands such as applied linguistics, psychology and brain science that are involved in the learning process and contribute to how the mind and the senses absorb a language due to different factors that range from cognitive abilities to psychological state and response to stimuli. Critical literacy requires analysis of meanings, and at the same time, constructs. Janks (2010) encouraged “engagement” with “estrangement” strategies in critical literacy teaching, as “we both engage with and distance ourselves from texts” (p. 96). According to Janks (2012), critical literacy is a need in a world that faces conflicts and injustices, and it is not to be compensated by the legendary dreams “where everyone has access to education, health care, food and a dignified life” (p. 150).

Critical language awareness, which is closer to implicit approaches, enables learners to read between the lines and interpret underlying meanings. Meanwhile, explicit approaches are needed in order to provide a background for a focused input. The dilemma relies more in how educators can provide a balance that encourages autonomous fluency and insightful conceptualizations about life and the complicated social issues. If we accept that balance concept, as mentioned in the introduction, critical language awareness becomes a reflection of the culture it happens in and embodies, and any form of discussion could be relatively critical.

### **3.3.3 Critical Theory**

Critical theory is generally about questioning, problematizing and evaluating issues from different perspectives in hope to provide better understandings and better opportunities to change unfortunate social realities. Critical theory does not just aim at understanding, but it “is a form of social criticism” (Thompson 2017, p. 1). The critical stance focuses on the social aspect of enquiry and the reflexive interpretive relationship between the inquirers according to their epistemic stand in the society. On the other hand, another perspective of criticality focuses on practical problem-solving political view (Bohman 2019).

Social reality emancipation and Ideology critique displayed in the ideas of Hegel and Marx formed a critical theory that transformed the paradox of criticality and own judgment that Kant set, into social freedom (Ng 2015). Within that conceptualization of criticality, the social dimension and mutual interaction that occur in reality would be suitably manifested in educational settings as social institutions. That is not far from Foucault (1980) concepts as he draws upon criticality in discourse and what lead to the choices of the discourse and strengthen it.

Every aspect that touches on human life is critical, and thus we need to be open to criticality and to include it in practices in education mainly. Janks (2010) supported her view about the multifaceted critical literacy that no matter what changes it undergoes according to the different technologies or times still holds its social change quality. She further explains the difference between Politics and politics, as Macro and micro relations. Politics that deal with world major issues, but politics as micro relations of every day challenges we encounter and they shape our identities and social construction. This might be why instructors

might refrain from criticality, as it can be associated with major sensitive and dogmatic political issues.

Meanwhile, Pennycook (2001) suggested two approaches of critical thought: the first deals with social relations though objective; modernist-emancipatory position, and the second is the subjective one that rejects objectivity and adopts a postmodern-problematizing position of inequality and power inquisition.

### **3.3.4 Critical Pedagogy**

Questioning world issues and developing critical consciousness are resonated features of critical pedagogy that underpin knowledge, and result in participatory approaches that reflect democratic expression and autonomous learning environment. Problem posing is a crucial pillar of criticality; it is what ignites enquiry and selective observation; thus, creates reciprocal negotiation of meaning between learners and teachers so as to enable for addressing the needs and complying for the changes in a process of self-actualization geared towards democracy.

Giroux (2011) drew a bond between social, economic and political issues of the society to critical pedagogy and the need to adopt criticality in educational policies, especially higher education since this is the time in which students could evaluate and critique ethical issues. The plight of consumerist and capitalist societies tragically affect education and he calls for sense of awareness of education as the most effective tool of enlightening minds and liberating them from dominations of power relations, indifferences and normalization. Higher education institutions would need to adopt a critical stance policy in which everyone involved in the academic life should participate.

Criticality in all different fields of knowledge would result in new views and insights. In language learning, the field of the present study, criticality would incorporate analyzing texts and discourse to form these views and insights that incorporate changing social dimensions. In his chapter about the discourses of globalization, Fairclough (2006) indicated that epistemological dimensions of discourse are conceptual and linked with social change. The discussion of ideology and change is also presented in Fairclough (2013), in which he advocated how critical ideology is associated with “the power as hegemony” that indicates a change within the sociocultural weave of societies more than mere domination of them (p. 28).

Fairclough (2013) further explained the ideology of texts as incorporated within power relations that start with the instilling of identities through bringing meaning into discourse or written texts. He advocated that educational institutions, among social structures, are “speech communities” in which discourse and actions take different meanings according to relationships and identities. Thus, interactions in different contexts are grounded in social structures (p. 38). The educational institution or context constitutes social formation as it is constituted based on the different relations that affect it such as the economic conditions. It is also noted that institutions or contexts may liberate or constrain the action as it provides a frame to be followed; meanwhile, no action is to be taken outside that frame. Thus, impede critical applications. An interpretive ethnographic study conducted by Boxler (2003) indicated the importance of realizing the limitations of criticality in regard to contexts, which accords with Tarlau’s (2014) view of critical pedagogy probable inability to

“make the connection between radical educational practices and concrete examples of social change” (p. 372). Similarly, Clark, Fairclough, Ivanič and Martin-Jones (1990) argued that critical awareness of language practices is not very successful because they do not address conceptual differences, or the validity of social domains that are controlled by power relations.

On micro and macro levels, critical pedagogy deals with two strands. First, it offers social interconnectedness with change and evolutionary ideas allowing for critique of social issues and resistance of solid or unjust cases. The second strand touches on criticality in the classroom, which offers educational practices that reflect radical thinking and critical language awareness. A key idea worth mentioning here is “change”; hence, the academic criticality is responsive to the social criticality calling for emancipation and transformation. I question here the feasibility of being liberal, emancipated and able to change within the social context that we as educators and instructors deal with; the classroom.

### **3.3.5 Learner Autonomy**

Critical pedagogy is linked with the discussion of learner autonomy and learners’ conscious awareness of self and social surrounding. The framework of critical pedagogy is the critical view of life and social interactions in different aspects, as well as the critical applications of language learning and practices. Thus, Learner autonomy here has two dimensions to consider; the autonomous learning practices the learner adopts, and the realization of this autonomy within social interaction, which might indicate the dependence on the teacher’s role in creating an autonomous learner/teacher atmosphere. Learner autonomy and “awareness and reflection” are closely connected concepts, as autonomy requires awareness and reflection of constructed meanings (Lamb, 2017, p.



175). The learner autonomy is not only concerned with the language patterns and usage, but also with the sociolinguistic aspects of the language; thus, enhancing the notion of social interaction and critical language interpretation. An attribution to learner autonomy is Vitkosky's (1997) zone of proximal development as a pedagogical theory that stresses the social interaction in and out of the classroom.

### **3.4 Applications of CLA in Curriculum and Classroom**

Within the realm of criticality, a consideration of education as a major vehicle for social change is of great importance. Educational applications of critical practices and methods, such as critical literacy, could perform immense social and cultural changes, as well as personal and identity transformations.

Janks (2013) related critical literacy to notions of power, equity and social identity formation through which students would become citizens with developing social responsibility toward the world and the environment, as well as to allow for embracing differences. She noted the redesign cycle for critical literacy, which could be applied in classrooms and in the curriculum, and students would "problematize the word- the word in the world-" (p. 227). Similarly, Luke (2018) necessitated criticality and the significant role of teachers in responding to world issues and constant changes in economic, industrial and social aspects. Criticality is needed to combat the difficulty of preserving an ideological standpoint in modern times, which represents an epistemological dilemma to discern false from true in order to avoid manipulation and exploitation.

Due to the fast-paced technological advancements in the recent decades, new critical educational methods and incorporation of new curriculum and class practices are becoming imminent strategies to compete with the challenges of globalization era. Kellner (2003) supported, “reconstructing education to meet the challenges of a global and technological society” (p. 51). Janks (2013) also showed the prevalence of mobile phones, I-pads and technologically advanced devices that could facilitate learning and empower critical literacy through not only incorporating them into the curriculum, but also to allow students to “be able to customize them and use them for their own purposes” (p. 237). The procedures then may help students be in control of their learning and have access to preferred choices of texts to decontextualize. This would not be difficult to apply since higher education institutions use Learning Management Systems (LMS) to keep live communication with their students.

With the technological advancements that are overtaking communication in the world now, the mode of writing could be taken an extra mile into producing multimodal texts in which technological sources could be used to create audio-visual representations to create meaning through the combined use of word, sound and image, which could lead to decreasing the power of the text, and create a “leveling of power” (Kress 2003, p. 6).

#### **3.4.1 Challenging Encounters to CLA**

Although the practice of criticality is considered socially empowering, transforming and emancipatory, it is faced with some anticipated encounters that could either hinder or discourage its application in the classroom or in the curriculum. Critical discourse analysis or critical literacy shows how political issues are hidden agendas in texts and discourse (Gee 2008).

Nevertheless, criticality and critical pedagogies are critiqued for the “shortcomings of the theoretical and ideological model” (Sarroub & Quadros 2015, p. 254). Applying criticality may include repulsion and resistance from students’ side, or inability to deal with criticality in the classroom from teachers’ side. Some dynamics might hinder criticality as large numbers of classes, lack of time, lack of language proficiency, inappropriateness of social and cultural issues and lack of institutional support.

According to Kress (2003), criticality itself could be critical since words alone would lose their authoritative power because they would be only one mode among many visual and audio modes, and in this case “writing is *partial* in relation to the message overall” (p. 11). I believe that present communication in its different modes could indicate a lost or gained meaning for message delivery and representation, which accords with Janks (2012) notion of critique as not being the “end-point; transformative and ethical re-construction and social action are” (p. 153).

### **3.5 The Teaching Craft and CLA**

The main aim of this research is to consider the views of teachers towards the feasibility and importance of critical language awareness, as they are the frontline, if we may say, that holds social connection with their students. Therefore, it is important to discuss the teaching craft and its influential effect with its meticulous complications and sensitive management. The responsiveness to change might be a major feature that CLA teaching requires. Nevertheless, attempting criticality in language teaching might not be easy to apply due to either intrinsic or extrinsic factors which can impede criticality and turn it into a “banking” process in which communication becomes a “depositing”

transaction where students act passively as receivers of knowledge, Freire (2000).

The mainstream ideology in language teaching ignores the social background of the language. It is the professional knowledge of teachers that mainly works on the social element of language, and attempts a deeper insight and sensitivity towards teaching the language in a sociocultural context. Kuhlee and Winch (2017) drew on the types of teaching that range between the craft worker, the executive technician, and the professional technician. The teaching skill is basically a social one that incorporates zealous performance, and also unconditional patience indulged in wisdom and spirit. Being crafty and active, theoretical and well trained, or professional and technical, requires “enabling teachers to work effectively in a different way” (p. 233). Additionally, Hoban (2005) pointed the complexity of being a teacher in modern times due to the required diverse and all-encompassing qualities teachers must have. The teaching role is one that forms a base in the society, and if there were anticipated changes in socioeconomic or sociopolitical issues, teachers would have the biggest role in performing them.

While professionalism requires certain levels of performance that meet the objectives and learning standards, it could take more to be critical while attempting this due to issues of culture, time constraints, and the need to adhere to the plan put forth. Teachers’ competency bears commitment and motivation, as well as discreet and evaluative perspectives in order to possess flexibility and reflexivity to emergent issues and considerations. It might be a hard task in the light of all the previously discussed changes in worldviews of education and its relevance to altering predominant factors.

### **3.5.1 Identity Issues**

An understanding of critical approach is even clearer when we consider the concept of identity and personal experience. Criticality requires profound reflection on one's own experiences. Similarly, Giroux (2008) valued identity identification through "connecting what goes on in classrooms to their everyday lives" (as cited in Tarlau, 2014, p. 385). Self-reflection and critique of one's own experiences enrich critical awareness of language and social surroundings.

Criticality and identity positioning are of prime importance in challenging present times in order for people to place themselves "within this dialectic between the global and the local" (Fairclough 1999, p. 76). This highlights the associated idea of rapid social and cultural changes that call for criticality and language awareness. The changes that entail education are not just among people but also within people due to the emergence of new combinations of language, new meanings and interconnected associations, which affect lives and social behavior. Within the process of coping with the changes and negotiating meanings in order to understand others, a self-changing process also takes place to rediscover one's self. It is criticality that enables this self-empowerment and allows for identity exploration.

### **3.5.2 Ideological Formations and Discursive Formations**

Criticality is linked to the concept of personal formations and perceptions. In order for a person to have a clear understanding of discourse, there must be a great ability to interpret the cultural and socioeconomic implications. Perception refers to the differences in ideology and discourse that people have when they interact in different institutions and situations according to different boundaries. Discourse shapes relations as much as they shape it as "discourse makes people, as well as people make discourse" (Fairclough 2013, p 41). The

ideological background is part of the social interaction that takes place, and the interaction would hold different perspectives if that background is considered. That would apply to the context of the classroom interaction and the mutually negotiated criticality applications. Two example studies that investigated CLA and the role of criticality in developing learner and teacher experience in an attempt to enforce the role of criticality in language teaching are for Lindahl (2013) and Monareng (2009). Their findings indicated the importance of incorporating CLA for empowering learning/teaching experiences. The changes of perceptions are pinned in, as much as associated and echoed, wider scales of changing ideologies in changing times.

### **3.6 CLA in Digital Times**

The rapid technological advancements posed a crucial need to perform criticality in viewing and judging concepts offered in language learning and educational fields. Language use has changed consequently because of the media complexities and the changes in identities due to wide exposure to other cultures. Darvin and Norton (2017) investigated the relations between language learning and media use in the present complicated world, posing more focus on other relevant integrating issues such as learners “multiple identities” and power relations that stem from authority of speech (p. 44).

There is an inseparable relation between language learning, critical pedagogy and identity formation. Learners receive information differently in the classroom context, due to the use of digital forms such as videos and presentations, and they are also users of digital means, such as mobile phones, which carry different discourse implications. Educational systems are deeply affected by cultural changes and new ideologies especially with the use of

internet and social media and the new uses of language; DeVriese (2013) implied the high rate of internet usage in the Gulf “The six Gulf countries enjoy the highest rates of internet penetration in the Arab World’ p. 120).

Constant and easy Internet access through the abundant availability of smart phones facilitated connections between different people from different cultures and backgrounds. Meanwhile, this easy access provided endless sources of knowledge that carry versatile and unlimited meanings, interpretations and connections. This would result in an element of a global identity. Teachers, as well as students, are then left with a revolution of exposure that empowers or depowers people.

### **3.7 CLA In Kuwait**

Despite the vital role of English in Kuwait, English language teaching is facing problems that might refer to different reasons, which were discussed in some papers hoping that they would find solutions to improve the language teaching policies. Tryzna and AlSharoufi (2017) touched on the “shortcomings found in creating an effective pedagogical system” (p. 77). They indicated the important role of English in modern institutions and the necessity to work on solutions to help students improve their English in order to improve their opportunities in the future, and improve the educational standards in Kuwait as a whole. They also suggested, “language dualism as practiced in the United Arab Emirates” (p. 70), as a practical solution that could improve language teaching, along with teacher training programs that could prepare teachers with advanced academic and technical methodologies that would help teachers to adopt advanced teaching strategies, and at the same time preserve the Kuwaiti identity and cultural heritage.

Nonetheless, There seems to be a lack of critical language awareness and language proficiency in the preparation of schoolteachers who end up teaching the students who join colleges with a very poor level of language competency and critical awareness. The study of AlMusawi, BinAli and AlQallaf (2019) discussed the results of a report issued by the Kuwaiti government about the English teaching and curriculum in College of Basic Education (CBE) that indicated problems such as “substantial quality deficit” in the performance of teachers, and the dissatisfaction with the “rote teaching” that does not offer chances for criticality or innovative discussion (p. 129).

In a conservative culture such as Kuwait, adopting and fostering a critical view of teaching could be critical, especially in language classes. English as a language carries its cultures within its use and ideology, and these might be contradictory to the political, social, and religious traditions of the Kuwaiti culture. The English textbooks in schools are especially designed to include appropriate material monitored by the administration of education to reflect the Kuwaiti cultural norms, history and traditions in all fields of life, and there are no sensitive or controversial issues that are assumed to present any different ideologies than what the students are experiencing in their real life, or that contradict with the conservative culture of Kuwait (AlMuteri, 2020). Therefore, the students might find critical thinking about issues, if they could depict any, a strange component in studying a language.

Many of the studies about English in Kuwait, such as (Rizwan 2016, Hasanen, AlKandari & AlSharoufi 2014, Malallah 2000) focused on issues related to language identity, the linguistic aspect of introducing the language at



certain school levels, the level of proficiency and the motivation of students in using the language and the overall contributing development in advancing the educational economy of the country in a globalized world. Alfelaig (2016) indicated that students might resist the use of technology, which could be through new ways of teaching, due to cultural boundaries, crowded classes, shyness, the poor language proficiency level, and the fear of change.

### **3.8 Neoliberal Forces**

The neoliberal digitalized present times call for more criticality in order to identify power issues and control; furthermore, develop new capacities that pertain learning and improve pedagogies (Darvin & Norton, 2017). The role of language is connected to social change which is deeply rooted in changes in education as Hill and Kumar (2012) indicated that the new global system works for the capitalist class because it serves the business agenda for education that produces labor for capitalist enterprises and profit making.

In the same line, Giroux (2011) pointed that profit making in the present corporate world is prioritized over personal agency due to neoliberal forces and global capitalism. This neoliberal force casts a challenge to learners because it assumes a critical awareness of language use and world issues interpretation. Nevertheless, Davidson, AlHamly, Coombe, Troudi, and Gunn (2015) reported “With globalization, technological advancements and ease of transportation, along with the invasion of the age of knowledge, students can no more be perceived as passive recipients” (p.73). According to Findlow (2006), language in educational contexts is not merely a communicative medium, but there are economic, social, and political aspects that are always implicitly involved in communication and ideological perceptions. We cannot undermine learners’

critical thinking abilities, or their pedagogic constructs according to what constitutes an ontological value beyond the classroom. Kumaravadivelu (2008) indicated the “imperative need” to assist language learners to develop their abilities in being critical language learners” (p. 46). Developing critical abilities is necessitated by the new systems that are affecting the world. Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck (2005) also indicated “Globalization phenomena compel us to seek a better integration of sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and social theory” (p. 198).

### **3.8.1 Globalization and Glocalization**

Globalization has different dimensions that collaborate in social, economic and cultural changes due to interference in all these vital aspects of life. Ashiabi (2014) reported, “Globalization, a multidimensional construct, can be conceptualized as both a process and an outcome” (p.86). The dominating power of globalization shapes and prioritizes affective policies. Furthermore, it stratifies power relations and languages. English as a dominant language in a global world eventually imposes certain ideologies and “language-in-education policies” (Sutton, 2005, p. 106).

On the other hand, Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk (2011) supported the symmetrical relevance between the global and the local, in educational settings, which advocates the importance of how they complement each other while keeping their unique features. Waters (2001), in line with the same thoughts about the local effects of globalization and the inevitable dominance of ideologies over others argued it “is not merely or even mainly about such grand, center-stage activities as corporate mega-mergers and world political forums but about the autonomization of local lifeworlds” (p. 5).

### **3.8.2 Language Awareness and Globalization Cultural Issues**

With the wide spread of transportations means, means of communication, and the contemporary changes in all the fields of our lives, globalization has become a prominent term that associates “change” with it. As coined together, globalization in its neoliberal sense refers to a series of economic, cultural and political changes typically viewed as increasing interdependence, integration, and interaction between people and organizations throughout the world (Reynolds & Griffith, 2002). In the same line, Christensen and Kowalczyk (2017) advocated globalization “continuing expansion” of all life aspects (p. 1).

However, changes were not all guaranteed as useful and positive ones. With modernity and open boundaries, came lack of privacy and originality. With free trade and flourishing markets, came marketization and everything-is-for-sale culture. In other words, changes in lives could easily turn into changes of identity.

Education, as one of the major aspects of life, got greatly affected by globalization due to the ongoing changes in technology, transportation and social life. Suárez-Orozco and Todorova (2007) pointed out “Education faces new challenges in a world more globally connected yet ever more unequal, divided, and asymmetrical” (p.3). Although preserving the national identity is a somewhat difficult task, it is the goal of Kuwait’s Education Strategy to incorporate modern changes “current age requirement of freedom of thought and response to the dynamics of change without conflict with the cultural identity of the society” (AlNakib, 2015, p .9).

Ashiabi (2014) reported in his research on the three dimensional structures of social globalization that affect Kuwaiti young adults that, “Kuwait has been penetrated by forces of social globalization in the three domains of information flows, personal contact, and cultural proximity” (p.86). On the other hand, this did not perform a threat to the Kuwaiti identity since “there is the persistence of a strong sense of Kuwaiti national identity” (Wheeler, 2000, p. 433). Conversely, Hasanen, Al-Kandari, & Al-Sharoufi (2014) conducted a study on Kuwaiti university students about the influence of watching American TV programs and local kuwaiti programs, which showed the effect of globalization on their identity formation and how they embrace westernized cultures, which might be a threat to local identity (p. 542).

Globalization is multidimensional and its effects have accelerated in recent decades, due in part to “tremendous technological advances” (Robinson, 2007, p.127), While Friedman (2000) described globalization from a purely economic perspective based on “more competitive and attractive to foreign investment” economy (as cited in Fairclough, 2006, p. 8). Fairclough (2006) nonetheless argued that powerful laws and rules that change everything in social life govern “globalist” strategies. These different dimensions could all apply to Kuwait since it is a rich country in terms of economical income while this income is based on one source. According to AlFadhli, Corall, and Cox (2016), “The economy of Kuwait does not fit easily into the traditional global economic classification of being either a developed or developing economy, but rather it falls somewhere in between the two” (p. 373).

Globalization has necessitated the need to be more critical and observant as to which is more important and which to prioritize because the changes the world is undergoing are crucial to the educational process and most importantly; language use and power.

### **3.8.3 Globalization and the Power of English**

The spread of English in the new cosmopolitan world marginalized other languages, and the corporate ideologies require criticality in identifying agendas of those who grant access and power; this can be best done through curriculum and education informed by criticality, (Luke, Luke & Graham, 2007). Language can be viewed at the heart of sociocultural interlaced dimensions. Language reflects the dominance and status of the social ranks and simultaneously, social contexts reflect the power they own and the status they gain through language. In his book about language and power, Fairclough (1989) explained the theoretical perspective of the relation between power and language use simply because language reflects the power and status of its users. The educational policies indicated the use of English as the medium of instruction in “the wider region as other countries such as Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain have also opted for the same approach” (Troudi & Jendli, 2011, p. 24).

Since power is one of the aspects that language represents, it might not be distributed equally because it may grant status to some users and deprive others from it. This is clearly shown in the dominant use of English and Intensification of its importance as the dominant language of instruction and the gate to better work and life opportunities. The role of English and its teaching is intensified in the current global position in the modern world, and that is relevant not only to education, but also to cultural and political issues of our time. Gee

(1994) suggested “English teachers stand at the very heart of the most crucial educational, cultural, and political issues of our time” (p. 190).

Harper (2011) additionally stated the facilitation English offers in helping “people access global markets and the world's ever-increasing circulation of information” (p.516). The domination and hegemony of the English language have called for cautioned pedagogies in order to be alert to all the associations that come along with it. Thus, a huge responsibility is thrown at teachers to keep that cautious balance between language learning criticality and wise awareness. Since the 1990s, an increasing number of studies have adopted a critical ethnographic approach and have tried to relate the microanalysis of classroom discourse to the macro levels of sociopolitical and ideological processes at language policy levels by drawing on social theory (Akbari, 2008).

Since English is socially and academically the language of power and access to prestigious jobs and social ranks, private educational institutions value the use of English and this may provoke interest as to which values are prevailing, which hidden messages in texts need to be analyzed and which principles count as supreme. This could strongly affect identities if not being critically aware to content and ideological emphasis.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

Literature discussed the many relevant and effective factors that determine the meaning of CLA, its applications in curriculum or classroom interaction, and the contributions it has in teaching methods, learner autonomy, the teaching styles and identity formation that result from social interaction and response to

language uses in different contexts. There is also a strong relation between CLA and media in a globalized world with neoliberal trends and power structure formations. The present research study aim is to investigate CLA in the study context from the perspective of college language instructors in the light of all the contributing factors that might affect their teaching and performance. The ultimate goal of the study is to improve the language teaching/learning experience.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Methodology**

#### **4.1 Introduction:**

This chapter aims at explaining the research paradigm informing the study. It provides the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the research methodology, a justification for the suitability of the used method followed by data collection and analysis. An account of the study context is provided with a description of the participants. Finally, an account of the ethical standards and trustworthiness issues, and the ensured procedures taken into consideration in order to preserve the utmost credibility of the data and the participants is described.

#### **4.2 Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions**

Ontology is the study of being (Crotty, 1998) and it is concerned with the reality of things. Ontology (the nature of the world and what we can know about it) is based on social construction of views, experiences and different perceptions of people toward the social issues around them and how they describe it (Higgs & Trede, 2009). The nature of the carried out social research is interpretive and seeks constructing views about a social phenomenon in order to further interpret its reality and occurrence. It also depends on how teachers view or form consciousness about this phenomenon and construct meanings about it. The ontological stance of the research is relativist in nature because it is based on mental constructions of the participants lived experiences (Guba & Lincon, 1994, p. 108).

The research study, being interpretive in nature, underpins the theoretical perspective of eliciting data from lived experiences through in-depth interviews



and analytical approach. The research does not offer truths that can be tested and validated, but it offers instead an attempt to understand through constructionist epistemology. According to Howell (2013), the purpose and objective of a study determine the methods of collecting data. The objective of the study's interpretive nature informed the methodology, and the best-suited method was conducting interviews since the knowledge of the instructors' views is obtained through subjective interpretation.

This guided the research ontological perspective to be concerned with the interpreted views about critical language awareness, and epistemological stance as the interaction between teachers and students in the same context. The ontological perspective of interpretive studies then, as explained in previous paragraphs, is based on subjective views that are not fixed in meaning and are not imposed as natural reality (Romm 2002, p. 15).

The epistemological stance is based on the qualitative nature of this research. It is an interpretivist approach to knowledge, which means the nature of knowledge is affected by our subjective interpretations. According to Neuman (2011), knowledge is achieved through an "interpretivist approach that best fits social contexts" (p. 93). Interpretivism takes place within social and dialogical constructionist view of generating assumed reality. There are no absolute truths about realities as interpretations are perceived, and this might be the core of the present study; attempting insight into an academic issue for the sake of attaining potential knowledge. Wellington (2000) indicated subjectivity as in doing research and the search for "personal Knowledge" as an aim for research itself (p.17). The method of research is interviews, which is a form of dialogue that the participants engage in to reveal their knowledge of themselves.

### **4.3 Research Methodology**

The chosen qualitative methodology for this research is most suitable for its purpose to explore and understand the meanings, attempts and handling of CLA. Specific numbers and truths are not required as much as approaching knowledge about experiences is. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005) the method should be indicated by the research nature and questions. This research is an investigation of constructed opinions and lived experiences; therefore, the information and knowledge that we seek to know are not to be measured or compared to fixed meanings. The outcome of these investigations could help in knowing about the elements that interfere with and affect the educational process. Exploring the limitations and boundaries that may be imposed on the learning practice and may hinder interaction draws on the importance of evaluating critical language awareness and practice. Being able to evaluate teachers' knowledge about critical language awareness and practice is a key in constructing views of effective education and the qualities it has in regard to the different factors that control the educational process. In line with this investigation, a discussion of practices and values in the classroom is also pursued with teachers in order to promote education and advance criticality.

#### **4.3.1 Why Qualitative Approach**

Qualitative research has exploratory and descriptive nature that enables the researcher to explore and attempt to understand social issues through description and observation of the lived experiences of the participants, which is totally the desired purpose of the research. The exploratory nature of qualitative research helps to know more about the social issues that do not have fixed meanings. It allows for better understanding of the meanings constructed from the described experiences of participants. According to Creswell (2009), The

qualitative approach is “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem’ (p. 4).

Qualitative approach enables researchers explore and form an understanding of social issues with all the political, economic and cultural factors involved in them. Exploring an issue with as many as possible from these dimensions may provide a clearer view and enlightened knowledge. The exploratory nature of the qualitative approach is helpful when “little is known about important factors in the researcher’s problem” (Morse 1991, p. 120). Creswell (2013), Hatch (2002), Marshall and Rossman (2011), and Merriam (2009) pointed out the qualities of qualitative research as being adopted in natural settings in which direct communication with the participants occur. The researcher in the qualitative research has reflexive relations with the data and the participants as being part of what the research topic is attempting to explore.

Adopting a qualitative approach for representing human experience is compelling and rewarding, especially that the views of the participants are constructed through lived experiences that form a direct link between their practice and reality. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) view qualitative research as a quilt making process that has multiple images adapting to the different life aspects. They also viewed the researcher as the quilt maker who assembles the pieces together to try to make the big picture of them. They noted that there is no one method of qualitative research and that is why it is “difficult to define clearly” (p. 6). Qualitative research aims at collecting the parts in order to see the whole picture of the world in which meanings are not fixed, but they change according to history and context and multiple dimensional perceptions that are constantly changing and interacting. Qualitative research was then considered

the most convenient approach to this study, since the purpose of study determines the approach to the researched issue and the proposed impacts of it. Thus, consequently guide the research and the analysis of the firsthand data (Meyer, 2001). There are no fixed truths for the exploration and the investigated issue; the researcher and the participants should be open for that and seek the knowledge more than the results (Kleining and Witt, 2000). In this regard, the research might be considered heuristic because it represents a process of being informed, and a way of knowing in a mutual interaction between the participants and the researcher in which both would have an insight that is driven by self-exploration and self-awareness. Meanwhile, this self-exploration is not necessarily for seeking truths as much as it is after deepening knowledge of phenomenon (Moustakas, 1990).

In the process of investigation, the researcher and the participants are both involved in the research in a mutual interactive human experience, which could be perceived from different angles. The role of the researcher as a participant in the research allows for an authentic interpretation that might match to a great extent that of the participants, and help in creating a common ground that establishes clearer understandings and may facilitate the analysis of the data. The researcher cannot be detached from the experience. It might seem that we research what we want to know and we are driven by our own inclinations.

Pitard (2017) discussed the positionality of the researcher and indicated the vital role of reflexive involvement of the researcher to the issue being investigated. My role in the research was not different from the roles of the participants, so in the process of the interviews and observing body language personal documents, I was also researching myself and my own understanding

and perspective of critical language awareness and its implications on my educational practice. Being aware of the setting, context and participants' behavior, was somewhat problematic as I share the same conditions. It might be difficult to be completely objective, but "subjectivity and interaction are assumed" (Merriam 2009, p. 127), and the intentional or unintentional influence of the researcher required me more attention. According to Jaye (2002), "positioning requires a high degree of reflexivity on the part of the researcher" (p. 560).

However, it could be risky to achieve criticality in judgment and in the interactive socially constructed views of researcher and participants since we need to keep distance away from the researcher issue in order to be critical. The ideological multilayered dispositions of the researcher and participants might interfere with criticality since each would have different views and opinionated drives "being committed does not excuse you from arguing rationally or producing evidence for your statements" (Fairclough, 1989. P.5).

Although some of the views might be consciously adopted before this study, it does not deny the valuable insights they might offer. The emerging data would offer exploratory knowledge of the investigated issue as it "seeks new insights into phenomena and sheds light on ambiguous situations" (Mayer, 2015). The shared experience of the participants and the researcher in the study context embodies the grounds on which we can build strong and valid proposals for better teaching. Qualitative Exploratory inquiry through investigating lived experiences has been mentioned in literature as authentic, and as a source of different potential viewpoints that could offer dimensional insights of the

research problem as seen from the perspective of those who lived it (Churchman, 1968; Corbin and Strauss, 2015).

#### **4.3.2 Why Interviews**

Holding interviews is a valuable tool for collecting data in interpretive research. Interviews offer open chances to provide deeper understanding of the investigated social phenomenon and maintain the exchanging of mutual views. Interviews have the unique feature of thinking aloud (Leighton, 2017).

Providing verbal responses grants depth and meaning. The spontaneous interaction in interviews gives the researcher and the participants a secured feeling of self-projection strengthened by mutual discussion about the research topic. According to Kvale (1996), interviewing is an ancient form of obtaining knowledge that is literally an *inter view* or interchange of knowledge between people. He described the qualitative research interview as “ a construction site for knowledge” (p. 14). He, though, called for careful planning for interviews and questions in order to benefit mostly of the data, and to make the interview experience a liberating one. Interviews allow for the visual interaction too and not only the vocal one. In this respect, the researcher would also be able to monitor the nonverbal behavior and cues, which might be indicative to some in-depth and open conversation.

I hoped to gain deeper understanding of the issue through holding semi-structured interviews with the participants. A set of questions that were prepared and shared with my supervisor to the interviews was used. The set included core questions, but the interviews were not rigid or fixed on them as some

questions were prompted during the interviews themselves according to the course of the conversation.

Interviews as a powerful research tool best fits the purpose of this research because they are exploratory in nature; thus they are “heuristic and seek to know and understand rather than collect facts and numbers” (Oppenheim 1992, p. 67). Conducting interviews seemed like the most suitable tool of data collection for another factor, which is the ease in establishing the familiarity with the participants in order “to share in their perception of the world” (Richards, 2003, p. 50). Bonding with the participants was an easy task since we share many similar social and academic aspects and views. Nevertheless, Kvale (2006) saw interviews as a “specific hierarchical and instrumental form of conversation” in which the interviewer has the upper hand in determining the direction of the conversation (p. 485). I was on the lookout for affecting the opinions or responses of the interviewees.

Another means I considered assisting in collecting data along with interviews is observing the participants’ body language during the interviews. These observations were mainly for teachers’ reactions in general with no specific search in mind, but according to Richards (2003), “simply developing your eye for detail and your awareness for what is happening in your own context can generate insights that are professionally valuable” (p. 110). Thus, keeping eyes and heart open for surrounding atmosphere was sufficiently rewarding to try to know more. Similarly, Bourdieu (1999) pointed out that “reality” is clearer when it is observed in its site” (p. 181). Additionally, Marshall and Rossman (2006) argued that qualitative researchers should “pay close attention to their participants’ reactions” (p. 5).

Similarly, Angrosino (2008) indicated the importance of observational methods “to note body language and other gestural cues that lend meaning to the words of the persons being interviewed” (p. 161). Sanger (1996) called attention to observation as an important way of seeing things in the world around us because “one of the most basic ways of collecting data is by counting how many times something occurs” (p. 52). Naturalistic research features the natural setting and social cultural interactions of participants and researcher as the source of data. (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Bogdan & Biklen 1992). Being a member of the same organization who is involved in the same practices and in close contact with the participants’ behaviors and activities, I assume I developed a clear understanding of the conditions and surroundings. Adler and Adler (1987) indicated how observing the “everyday activities of participants can improve understanding of them” (p. 12). Likewise, Brown (2014) indicated that qualitative methods involve the researcher and allow for “observing dynamic and sequential growth/change” over time, (p. 91). Hence, being attentive to the participants’ body language during the interviews added more meaning to the power of their words, and allowed for deeper interpretation of their responses.

But as in such type of interpretive research, the process is more important than the destination because the journey of exploration of meanings, even if not fixed, is enlightening in itself. Yet, creating the balance between the data credibility and own perspective can be daunting. The researcher in such kind of research views the data through “filters” that represent the lens from which she sees the data, and this lens is determined by the “personal involvement as a participant observer” (Saldana 2009, p. 7). Although “no one can observe



everything”, seeing the common feature of reluctance among participants was not hard to miss especially that it is a shared experience (Merriam, 2009, p.120).

#### **4.4 Data Collection**

As explained in the previous section, the interviews were conducted in friendly settings. The venue where interviews were held would definitely have an effect on the interviewing process (Field & Morse, 1989).

Since the participants are work colleagues, interviews were more of discussions. Moreover, the participants and I share common personal stories of challenging social conditions as expats who live and work in a different country than our homeland and are exposed to different cultural stances and conditions. Nevertheless, I was very careful not to interfere with the views or the opinions of the participants and not to direct them to what they should say to avoid bias and prejudgments. My role as an interviewer was just to help prompt the discussion and encourage the participants to speak their views.

Given the participants shared educational and social background, creating a safe environment for the interviews was not a difficult task. The interviews were held mostly in cafes near the campus for convenience and ease of arrangement during the lunch break time, or at home where more comfort would be provided. The questions were created based on the readings of critical language awareness and my understanding of the topic.

After each interview, the participants expressed their enjoyment in discussing the issue and how interesting it was, especially that most of the interviews took place in a nearby café that represented a getaway from the stress of life and work. The participants expressed their interest in the experience and how it voiced their ideas, and how they enjoyed talking about

them. Some of them revealed their satisfaction about the knowledge they gained from the interviews and how it helped them to see some things differently.

A change of plans happened because of the occurrence of COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing, partial lockdown then complete curfew were obstacles that interfered with the interviewing process. Thus, three interviews were conducted over the phone as video calls, but were also fruitful and enlightening. Another interference occurred due to the same reason, the pandemic, but it was the emotional disturbance that plagued both the participants and myself to the extent that two participants withdrew from the study. More effort was exerted in facing fears and making the interviews work despite the aforementioned circumstances. All the interviews were conducted in English although some of the participants are Arabic speakers in order to ensure the same interpretation, connotation and insinuation of meanings.

The participants were prompted to start the discussion and were encouraged to continue through some questions to keep the conversation going. The encouraging questions were not fixed for all the participants, but changed according to the situation, and the direction of conversation (see appendix D for the list of prompting questions). The interviews provided quality information based on background experience of the participants and the researcher. The verbal and nonverbal varied responses provided a wide range of information that build up the anticipated contribution in the research inquiry. The open-ended questions allow for personal experiences, limitless possibilities of interpretations and situation-analysis, opinions, feelings, and experiences.

#### **4.4.1 Sampling and the Participants in the Study**

Sampling has different types according to the research design. Qualitative research sampling tends to have smaller numbers in order to reach higher levels of depth. Suri (2011) indicated how different purposeful sampling strategies might be particularly suited to constructing multi-perspectival, emancipatory, participatory and deconstructive interpretations.

Tuckett (2004) also indicated “purposeful/theoretical sampling attempts to select research participants according to criteria determined by the research purpose but also as guided by the unfolding theorizing” (p.9). Sampling in qualitative research usually relies on small numbers with the aim of studying in depth and detail (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990).

The participants of the study were purposefully selected to provide in-depth and quality information as “Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of inquiry”, (Patton, 2001, p. 273). They were expected to provide illuminating answers to enrich data based on their long experience in the context, and resourceful rich educational background (Cohen et al. 2018). In addition to their expected rich contribution, they were approached in terms of availability and accessibility as they had timings that worked with my schedule, and they were easy to approach. It was important to find suitable mutual times to meet, discuss the topic, and hold interviews.

I chose two from the EPP courses and seven from the UG courses. They were willing to participate and answer some questions about their academic and professional background, and they have the following criteria:

- They come from different backgrounds and different parts of the world. Some are Arabs, (Four Egyptians and three Jordanian), one is Polish, and one is Turkish.

- They all have Masters degree in either language studies or English Literature. Three of them are pursuing their doctorate in TESOL, and one already holds a PhD in discourse analysis and linguistics.

- They all have a very rich academic background and long experiences in tertiary level teaching in different parts of the world, and in Kuwait. One of them has taught different stages from elementary to college students. Three of them were engaged in adult teaching and gave English courses to adult students in language institutes or development programs in the Ministry of Manpower and the Ministry of Communication in Kuwait and in Egypt.

- All of them taught students from different contexts and backgrounds. They have all received training courses and professional development opportunities that ranged from workshops, training sessions, international programs and competitions, to conference attendance as speakers and attendants. They also have different character traits. The following table presents a general academic and professional background about each participant:

Table 1 Academic And Professional Background about Participants

Pseudo names	Gender and Nationality	Education	Teaching Stage	General Background
Marim	Female Egyptian	Pursues PhD in TESOL	UG Previous experience in adult teaching in Kuwait	Cheerful and energetic
Manal	Female Egyptian	Holds PhD in discourse analysis and linguistics	EPP Previous experience in adult teaching in Egypt and Kuwait	Keen and discreet
Rose	Female Egyptian	Pursues PhD in TESOL	UG Previous experience in adult teaching in Egypt	Serious, meticulous and observant
Sondos	Female Jordanian	Masters	UG Taught several stages	Very serious, precise and meticulous
Hanan	Female Jordanian	Masters	UG Taught several stages	Precise and sociable
Janet	Female Turkish	Masters	UG Taught elementary to college students	Cheerful and confident
Iris	Female Polish	Masters	EPP Taught several stages	Humble and discreet
Mustafa	Male Egyptian	Pursues PhD in TESOL	UG Taught several stages	Humble, imaginative and keen
Ali	Male Jordanian	Masters	UG Taught several stages	Serious and keen

Providing general background about the participants' body language is helpful in interpreting their responses. Knapp, Hall and Horgan (2014) discuss the basic perspectives of nonverbal communication, and the effects of physical characteristics, gestures, posture, and vocal tone on human communication.

Such integration between what is said and seen in the interviews would result in deeper interpretation and construction of meaning. After conducting the interviews, moving to the stage of data analysis depended on the observation of the data thickness, value, and repetition (see appendix A for a sample interview).

#### **4.4.2 Benefits for Participants**

The research study did not offer any financial benefits for the participants, but it definitely offered them human and intellectual experience and an opportunity to engage in a self-exploration process, which may not be a recurrent event in instructors' busy life. The interviews might help them to formulate ideas and practices, evaluate and judge performance. Allowing them to express themselves and reflect on their practice is beneficial and insightful because although most probably as instructors they self-reflect, they would still explore areas in which they can change or add. It is also a different self-reflection because it would be more of self-revelation. It was a pleasant experience that held joy I personally participated in as a volunteering participant in studies for other researchers. Most of the participants expressed their contentment with the research topic and discussion.

#### **4.5 Ethical Considerations**

The ethical considerations are highly important when conducting research. Ethics in research is a highly esteemed concept that respects the participants and protects them from any harm that could happen during the research process and that should be the priority to the researcher; "While truth is good, respect for human dignity is better" (Cavan 1977, p. 810). Given the interpretive nature of the conducted research, the utmost considerations were taken to

ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and the research measures. According to Cohen et al (2018), the following Confidentiality measures were accounted before and after the participation of the research respondents:

- They were fully informed about the research topic through verbal explanation and a consent form.
- They were informed of the ethical considerations and measures to safeguard their participation and preserve their anonymity.
- They were informed that the data collected will be confidential and will only be used in pseudonyms for research purposes. Thus, their real identities would never be revealed and their privacy is highly protected.
- They were asked to suggest the suitable time and place of the interviews according to their liking and convenience.
- They were told that they have the right to accept or reject to participate, and that they can withdraw from the study at any time.
- They were informed that the specific details, if any, would be subject to scrutiny and will be discussed only with the supervisor of the research to estimate its importance and validity to the research.
- They were told the collected data will be kept in confidential files and will be terminated after the research is done.

Additionally, It was highly stressed that the information provided by the participants will not be reported in any form that can be identified publicly. The research findings did not include the real names of the participants as I used pseudonyms, and there was no direct reference to the names of organizations involved in the research context for confidential purposes. The guidelines of the

British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) indicate informing the participants about the study goals and nature before beginning the research. Thus, the participants were asked to sign a voluntary consent form prior to data collection and interviews (see appendix E). Moreover, Ethical Research Certificate was approved and signed by the chair of the Ethics Committee at the Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter before conducting the interviews (see appendix F). The Certificate provided brief information about the research topic, questions, context, methods, participants, potential issues, or relevant considerations.

Ethical Principles in educational research are of utmost importance because of the sensitive issues that might be explored, or sensitive position of the researcher, the researched and the participants as well. Additionally, social sciences research issues of human beings, and the welfare of them should always be the priority.

#### **4.6 Reflexivity in the Qualitative Approach**

The role of the researcher in research is not limited to collecting data and analyzing it, but involves her subjective position. Post-structuralism and postmodernism (Derrida, 1976 p. 301; Foucault, 1980 p. 62) viewed researchers as part of the research itself and as active agents in it as they bring life experiences and beliefs, and play the biggest role in identifying the data and interpreting it. Similarly, Berger (2015) advocated, “reflexivity is the self appraisal in research” (p. 220). The researcher is part of what he/she researches and the research journey is basically a part of quest for truths or knowledge they seek.

Reflexivity in social research is the involvement of the researcher in the



research context and topic and the awareness that he/she has of this relation. The researcher is connected to the research process, participants, setting and results in a subjective manner (Davis, 1999). I was both reflective and reflexive in the study context and process as I was involved in the research as part of it, and at the same time critical about the topic that I chose in the first place. Wellington (2000) explained that being reflexive is different than being reflective as “ being reflexive is an important part of being reflective, but they are not the same” (p. 43). He argued that being reflexive in research is necessary for deeper interpretation, but it should be limited to helpful positioning in research to avoid bias. The concept of reflexivity is connected in literature to positionality and subjective involvement in research; “Subjectivity” in doing research for “personal Knowledge” is an aim of research itself (2000: 17). Similarly, Creswell (2013) supported research that is guided by subjectivity and own philosophies and views because they are the factors that determine the research topic and the methodologies adopted in carrying it out. In the same realm, Ratner (2002) indicated that the researcher should develop his/her position identification of hindrance or impedance to understanding of data.

On the other hand, attention should be paid to the importance of determining the position of a researcher in a research and the reflexivity amount and type. Cromby and Nightingale (1999) explained the difference between personal reflexivity as the one that determines our values, assumptions and experiences, and epistemological reflexivity through which we choose a certain methodological approach that may affect the research quality. Similarly, Gee (1999) noted that we tend to see the world from where we stand and we

visualize it according to our experiences; this is not the truth necessarily but it certainly holds credibility in research (p. 77).

The concept of reflexivity then poses the important reciprocal relation between criticality and reality in which “ontological assumptions about reality are made of things, and epistemological assumptions are how we construct understandings in different situations” (Gee 1999, p.82). These concepts are in the heart of qualitative methods as they “generally inform constructive knowledge” (Crabtree & Miller 1999 p.10). The conducted interviews in the present study represented a form of “Knowing” for both the participants and myself. As a feature of qualitative research, a reciprocal relation was established through the common grounds I had with the participants; Walford (2001) implied, “all research is researching yourself” (p. 98). Engaging in reading the data and trying to get an interpretive analysis, I got to view things differently and make an estimation of them; Charmaz (2006) indicated, “we learn through studying our data.” (p. 46). Within the same line of thoughts, being familiar with the topic, the context and reading the literature on the topic may influence the direction of the data Boyatzis (1998).

Trying to balance between analysis and interpretation in the process of checking the data can be a difficult task as to which to rely on more: analysis or interpretation, or attempting a “perfect balance” between both (Wolcott 1994, p. 36). Managing the interpretation of the data through linking it to theory is one of the ways that could help in providing a link that we can relate to literature. Another way of interpreting the data is to do that through connecting to personal experience that adds depth to the data, and either way depends on the

researcher and the topic chosen for study (1994: p.44).

#### **4.7 Approaching the Data**

After the interviews were conducted, the talks were transcribed verbatim and the transcription was done manually. I found that writing the data by hand, before creating a stored soft copy, would help in sensing the data and would allow for deeper interpretation. Dealing with the qualitative data was challenging and I was perplexed by the talks I exchanged with the participants. As bewildering dealing with the data was, it was a joy to go through each and every detail in maneuver reading that took a lot of time and emotions. Actually seeing the words on paper, and not just hearing them, was my favorite method of trying to get an understanding of between-the-lines concepts and meaning negotiation. The biggest question that I faced during this stage was which method (s) to adopt in handling and analyzing the data, and whether to adopt a print or an electronic method.

The print option was the closer one since I preferred to work with what I know best, and to avoid dealing with a software (among many) that needs extra time to master. Working with MS Word was the best option as it was already a feasible program that I know a lot about. Ruona (2005) explained that using MS Word is a very helpful tool in analyzing the qualitative data and explained the four steps needed for that. The first stage is the data preparation in which transcription, whether print or electronic is done. The second stage is the familiarization, in which reading many times and taking notes occur. The third stage is the coding in which the data are simplified and reduced to discover and contextualize themes. The final stage is generating meaning in which

researchers are engaging to the data, grounded “but not anchored” in them, and attempting to theorize them (p. 262).

Literature introduced different approaches to data. Crabtree and Miller (1999) described the interpretation process of qualitative data analysis as a dance or “a complex and dynamic craft” (pp. 128), while Wolcott (1994) indicated that “using the data is more mystifying than collecting data” (p.1), and he proposed three ways to deal with the data; to stay close to what was said and let the data “speak for themselves” rendering facts, then to analyze them and get “key factors and relationships”, and finally to make sense of the data through interpretive analysis (p.10). Approaching qualitative data requires more careful analysis and openness for overlapping interpretations of the same problem. Hatch (2002) described data analysis as being “like teaching” in which there is always room for more to do (p. 152). It is difficult to know where to stop the analysis. Similarly, Wellington (2000) indicated, “ knowing where and when to stop is a far more difficult problem than knowing where to start” (p. 34).

As part of the interviews, I took notes of the reactions and body language of the participants. The topic we discussed was very interesting to them, and that made them very expressive not only with words, but with body language that also said a lot. Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2010) indicated, “Although the voice of the interviewee is central in all interviews, nonverbal communication also can be important for attaining a deeper shared meaning,” (p. 699). Reading the nonverbal communication during our dialogical conversations was helpful in analyzing the data as it conformed with what the participants shared, and added more depth to the interpretation of their views. The following table provides more

details about the relation I found between the participants' verbal and nonverbal messages.

Table 2 Nonverbal Communication Analysis of Participants

	Iris	Manal	Janet	Rose	Sondos	Mariam	Mustafa	Ali	Hanan
Facial Expression	Confused	Excited	Excited	Serious	Serious	Passionate	Passionate	Serious	Excited
Body Language	Quiet No gestures	Loud/ Confident	Upright posture/ Hand gestures	Stiff posture/ /No gestures	Stiff posture/ /No gestures	Loud/ Hand gestures/ Direct eye contact/ Tone	Loud/ Tone	Loud/ Tone	Loud/ Hand gesture

*Note: Figure 4 is a two-factor matrix that explains the key information of observations. Matrix adapted from Miles and Huberman (1984, pp. 95-121).*

The participants showed different reactions to my questions, but they were mostly cheerful and thoughtful. Two of the participants were very passionate and enthusiastic during the interviews; Mariam and Mustafa. Mariam was very welcoming to the questions, she showed zealous reactions and passionate interaction with everything I said, and she extended her descriptions to provide rich data I can build on and interpret. Mustafa did the same although our interview was over the phone, but I could sense his enthusiastic responses and passionate answers. He also extended his answers with many examples and responded to my conversation prompts as much as he could to provide rich data to interpret. Both Mariam and Mustafa seemed very satisfied with their performance and with their power to create criticality in their classes.

Ali and Hanan were also interviewed over the phone, they were serious and direct and did not talk elaborately, but they provided sufficient information to the

questions. I would say that this is how their personalities are; they tend to be direct and straight to the point without involving passion or feelings.

Sondos had the same personality, and even though we had a face-to-face interview, she was also very direct and straightforward, she gave answers to all my questions but did not elaborate or give live examples to enrich her answers. This is also due to her very strict personality. Her face reactions and bodily language showed strictness and rigidity, and she was the least of my participants who showed care for criticality although she adopts a communicative approach with her students that is based on discussion, but she does not provide any critical speculations to her students.

Janet, Manal and Iris, were very cheerful during the interviews and very interactive. They had the most laughs and hums during talking. The three of them wished they could apply more criticality in their teaching, but they seemed very adapted with the system with no regrets or negative feelings toward their limitations even though they were very aware of the ramifications of these limitations on their performance in the classroom. They also did not show much care to the lost criticality in their classes because they were satisfied with their performance and the achieved objectives of the curriculum.

Rose was the most serious among the participants in terms of sensing the seriousness of the lack of criticality in her classes. She extended the discussion and elaborated on the reasons why critical language awareness application is very limited, if even present, in classes; she elaborated on the answers and showed a despondent impression and a very tense body movement that showed resentment and dissatisfaction. She was completely unhappy about the realities that she faces and at the same time, having to adapt to the overall

system somehow in an attempt to make the best out of the situation and meet the course expectation and curriculum requirements.

There are multiple possibilities of understanding in qualitative researchers as there is no one method to interpret things, and “no qualitative analysis is ever complete” (Hatch 2002, p. 149). Richards (2003) indicated that good analysis starts with good listening to be able to identify unseen features. Transcription of spoken data requires care and dedication in order to spot the features that would form thick data (p.185).

Data analysis starts with four stages as Richards (2003) stresses:

- Generally identifying the important features
- Narrowing down the general interpretations
- Focusing on the most important feature of interpretation
- Putting these interpretations into words

Paying attention to sequences, patterns and developing an approach to the data and creating micro and macro relations between data and the world are important to produce good reading of the data and better interpretation of the situation. Brown (2014) additionally drew attention to “negative case analysis” in which he suggested to keep a skeptical spirit towards the data and the research process in order to see the weaknesses in it that contradicts interpretations before they are spotted by other researchers or cause to weaken the research.

#### **4.8 The Analysis Process**

The main aim was to look for the maximized interpretations without being judgmental or prejudiced. The familiarity with the data was used in trying to develop more interpretations and significance of participants’ views (Ratner, 2002). The data analysis was performed after transcribing, and based on good

reading several times to attempt getting all what could be gained in meaning. During the reading process, literature was reviewed in order to guide the analysis.

There is no one single approach to analyze qualitative data. The way it is done should “fit for purpose” as there are many interpretations to be made of qualitative data depending on the purpose of the researcher, whether it is describing, summarizing, generating or explaining, and also how the data would be reported as “individual accounts or amalgamating the individual accounts into emerging social accounts” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 461).

The data was categorized in a notebook (open coded) using colorful markers to arrange relations between the categories (Axial coding) and then, identified central explored category that integrated all data (selective coding), (Williams and Moser, 2019). Strauss & Corbin (1998) indicated that breaking down the data improves the data analysis. Saldana (2009) pointed a thematic coding process based on analysis that I found more convenient to adopt in relation to my perspective towards the data and the emerging themes; “Focused Coding categorizes coded data based on thematic or conceptual similarity.” (p. 151).

#### **4.8.1 First Phase**

After listening many times to the interviews and transcribing the data, overview reading was focused on the social sense of the dialogues in the interviews (Foucault 2003). Based on that, rereading of each participant interview data was performed and accounts were taken for each of them to allow for “unique pattern” before conducting general themes or categories



(Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 540), (see appendix A).

#### **4.8.2 Second Phase**

This stage involved a close reading of the accounts to compare between them and to look for any similarities, contradictions, and repetitive occurrences. Based on these accounts, I wrote a summary of each account and then one block summary for the accounts to make a comprehensible unit of information (see appendix C) in other words, reducing or “narrowing down the data in order to organize it, sort it out and reflect on it in order to explain it” (LeCompte & Preissle 1993, p. 237). In the process, the data were coded into themes and categories that reflect the contextualization of the constructed meanings the interviewees built during the dialogues. Codes in qualitative research mean: “word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana 2011, p. 3). The themes were given codes and then the codes were sorted to see patterns and repetitions in order to generate meaning. An example of this would be the participants’ repetitive pattern of limited authority and adaptation to their surrounding conditions. MS Word program, which offers a lot of operational features such as converting text to table, highlighting, sequential numbering, and replacing and finding, was used to facilitate the process.

Ruona (2005) encouraged the closeness to the data and the exact words of the participants, and also stressed how our personalities and cultural aspects with all the elements they hold affect our interpretation of the data. She stated, “the primary charge during qualitative research is to capture, understand, and represent participants’ perceptions and meanings *through and in* their own

words” in order to keep focus on the participants and what they say (p. 234). It is the role of the researcher to interpret the data even though some technical tools may be used to do so.

#### **4.8.3 Third Phase**

This stage involved organizing the data in tables which is a visual tool that makes the data clearer to see and easier to interpret. Miles and Huberman (1984) advocated six types of matrix display, which is a form of table, with different cell setting to label the data as a key tool to help in analyzing and displaying qualitative data (as cited in Brown 2014, p. 96). Such a method would help in making data more adjacent. Qualitative Coding is “a procedure that disaggregates the data, breaks it down into manageable segments, and identifies or names those segments” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 32). Some of the steps that Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested to generate meanings and code the data are:

- Counting frequencies of occurrence such as ideas and themes.
- Noting patterns and themes.
- Using informed intuition to reach a conclusion.
- Clustering data into categories, types or behaviors.
- Using figurative and connotative language.
- Moving away from the blurring of ideas.
- Identifying and noting relations and finding intervening ones that may change or create new themes.
- Building logical chain of causality and making inferences.
- Making conceptual/theoretical coherence moving from metaphors

to constructs, to theories to explain the phenomena. (as cited in Cohen et al. 2007, p. 470). The previous steps were all applied when I approached the data. (see sample data analysis in appendix B)

#### **4.9 Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research**

Validity and credibility in qualitative research refer to the importance of honesty, richness and “Trustworthiness” of data that make research worthwhile and could be trusted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The issue with validity in qualitative research is that it usually handles issues and phenomena that try to make sense of the world and that are relevant to human experiences and prejudices, which makes it almost impossible for two people to have exactly the same perception of social issues. Furthermore, the researcher cannot be completely objective about the research topic as he/she is involved in the research process beginning with choosing the topic to analyzing the data and making an interpretation of it. Additionally, the relationship that develops between the researcher and the participant should be able to get honest and deep data that can produce “valid interpretations” (King 2004, p. 11).

Since this study adopts a framework of qualitative methodology that is built on social and personal constructivism, it does not hold a fixed reality. That is due to the change that social realities are subject to. Moreover, the meanings and interpretations that are gained through the data do not have to prove truth as much as they hold “dependability”; “Reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor and quality in qualitative paradigm” (Golafshani, 2003, p.604).

Creswell and Miller (2000) suggested that qualitative researchers view the

research through their own lens, which is their own attitude and perspective towards the research topic and durability, and how they can use the lens of the participants as another lens to establish credibility in their research. In addition, a third lens of outside reviewers could be used to add credibility (p. 125). Conversely, Hammersley (1992) and Silverman (2014) argued that these are not sufficient grounds for validity and reliability as the participants do not have interpretation of the phenomenon as the researcher who already knows more about the setting, and that researchers depend on interviews that discuss ideas in people's heads.

According to Stenbacka (2001), "the concept of reliability is even misleading in qualitative research. If a qualitative study is discussed with reliability as a criterion, the consequence is rather that the study is no good" (p. 552). Le Compte and Goetz (1982) point out that Ethnographic research occurs in natural settings and often is undertaken to record processes of change, and there is no chance of repeating the same findings because of the unique nature of the constant change of the human nature and contexts.

It is also noted that reliability for qualitative research holds its own qualities of naturalistic attributes in which "middle ground" between validity (credibility) and generalizability (transferability) is sought based on an agenda of constructivist and relativist conceptions (Lazaraton, 2003, p.8).

The researcher's involvement in the research process is inevitable as a reflexive process that adds to the validity of the research because it displays a life experience similar to that being investigated. Nevertheless, the data collection methods and tools should reflect the popular indicators proposed by

Lincoln and Guba (1985) as such: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. A discussion of the four indicators is presented in the sections below.

#### **4.9.1 Credibility**

In qualitative research, since reality is a multiple set of mental constructions, to demonstrate “truth value” researchers must show that their reconstructions in the form of findings and interpretations are credible to those being researched “credibility becomes the salient test of reality” (Davis, 1992, p. 605). In other words, credibility is ensuring that the data analysis is true to the reality of participants and accords with their view, as the aim was originally to see the issue with their eyes. The participants showed their willingness to share their experiences, which would suggest having similar life experiences. Trustworthiness was also provided through establishing bonds with the participants as to put them at ease and develop connections with them. They were offered to allocate the time and the location that fits their convenience and liking to conduct the interviews to ensure putting them at ease. The data was discussed with them during and after the interviews. Their body language was observed during the interviews and it accorded with the information they provided (Korstjens & Moser 2018). The existing literature about CLA contributing factors was in common with what the interviewees understood and said.

#### **4.9.2 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the concept of applying the same research and findings in other contexts. It is not definite to prove that qualitative data results are applicable to other contexts, but it could be done to a great extent through

providing a thorough description of the research context and processes. Explaining the entire research process in detail can develop the readers' confidence about the results; however, it's possible that a second research may come up with different set of conclusions because of its own unique background (Andrade, 2009).

In order to achieve the utmost conditions for transferability, elaborated description of the context, research procedures and methods and assumptions were provided to enhance the thickness of data, and therefore, make the research eligible for application in similar contexts.

Interpretation of the data analysis, though based on personal views of the participants, proved similarity with research in literature, and support was provided to acknowledge the emerging themes.

#### **4.9.3 Dependability**

Dependability in qualitative research is focused on proving reliability through demonstrating the research steps comprehensive application. Being authentic and accurate allows for transferability and application of same research steps. Nevertheless, it would not be possible to have the same results due to the changing context and perceptions, which are features of naturalistic inquiry.

Dependability is also obtained through providing detailed description of the data collection through the semi-structured interviews, data interpretation, coding and the thematic categorization, which allowed for providing clarity and accuracy of methodology.

Observing the body language of the participants during the interviews provided another form of data assurance, as analysis of the nonverbal behavior

conformed with the data interpretation and assisted in providing more arguments to develop.

#### **4.9.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the objective or neutral stand the researcher should adopt when conducting the research to avoid biased results that are based on his/her conceptions or dispositions. Controlling biased interpretations in qualitative research would continue to be an issue, as the researcher is the conductor of data collection, analysis and interpretation. Since the researcher is part of the research and explores him/herself in the process of the research too as explained in a previous section (4.5), it would take effort and consciousness to control the bias and detach from the data. Moss (1994) argued that objectivity in “hermeneutic research and bracketing preconceptions is critical to proponents of qualitative research (p.9), while Shenton (2004) indicated the importance of recording the data analysis stages, critically reflecting on the data, acknowledging the weaknesses, and checking the data findings relation to applied methods. Miles and Huberman (1994) pointed out the key to confirmability in qualitative research, which is realizing researcher’s own involvement and reflexivity in research. (as cited in Shenton, 2004).

In order to provide confirmability in the present study, the data methods and analysis were described in detail, the weaknesses of methods were acknowledged, and the researcher’s role was identified and admitted. Furthermore, academic integrity and experience of the researcher enabled neutral analysis, and depended on the data source and not personal experience.

#### **4.10 Limitations and Challenges**

Although the utmost effort was exerted to ensure consistent structure and academic benefit, some limitations should be counted within the study processes.

First, it might be difficult to provide definite validity of the findings as It is a small-scale study that includes a limited number, and that might decrease the value of the academic significance of the emerging themes because of the difficulty to “be extended to wider populations” (Ochieng, 2009, p.17). Nevertheless, the goal of interpretive research is to reach an understanding of a certain issue and that is the means itself to knowledge, more than actually getting to a specific end because there is no set or fixed end.

Another concern might be the difficulty of being objective toward the data and their interpretation because the researcher is simply a part of this world, and the interpretation of the data is part of his/her understanding. However, the researcher, though part of the same context, has enough experience to keep the originality of the participants’ accounts because they include the authentic meaning that the researcher should expose (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

Regardless of having controversial views about how the data are collected and approached in qualitative studies, they would always be considered a representation of the world that is best expressed through human experience.

#### **4.11 Summary and conclusion**

The chapter outlined the adopted methodology for the study. It illustrated and justified the qualitative approach and the different phases that were carried out in order to ensure ethical considerations, and to perform sampling, data collection and data analysis procedures, along with explanations of the participants’ body language interpretation. A discussion of the limitations also



included the reasons that might weaken the study, but a defense of them was also presented as the knowledge obtained from natural settings always holds its charm. The study aims at constructing interpretations from and with the participants to ground the truth in social context.

## Chapter 5

### Data Analysis and Findings

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the data analysis for the interviews about CLA practice from the views of instructors. The chapter is divided into three parts that include the three major themes found in the data analysis. Excerpts from the interviews are presented in relation to the emerging themes and reference to associated issues where appropriate. The following table presents a summary of themes and categories.

Table 3 Summary of Themes and Categories

Themes	Categories	Aspects of Discussion
CLA teaching methods	Implicit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video analysis</li> <li>• Interactive critical discussions</li> </ul>	All instructors use interactive and implicit methods in teaching, but not all use CLA teaching as an approach to discussions
	Explicit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct grammar teaching within conversational mode</li> </ul>	
Readiness and reactions to criticality issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Globalization and media</li> <li>• Language imperialism</li> <li>• Ideology imposition</li> </ul>	They are all aware of issues related to critical language awareness and the limitations of criticality application in the classroom
Limitations to criticality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sociocultural aspects</li> <li>• Administrative limitations</li> <li>• Educational system barriers</li> </ul>	They mostly comply with the limitations and adapt their teaching to these limitations and the expected final results of the courses they teach. Teachers' role

The research questions of the study focused on the views and perspectives of the language instructors about CLA, and the factors that might be involved in its teaching.

The participants did not identify critical language awareness as a term until we had these “discussions”, which certainly had a positive impact on them as all of them vented their inner voices and expressed their teaching styles, feelings and limitations. The following sections present the themes and the stemming categories.

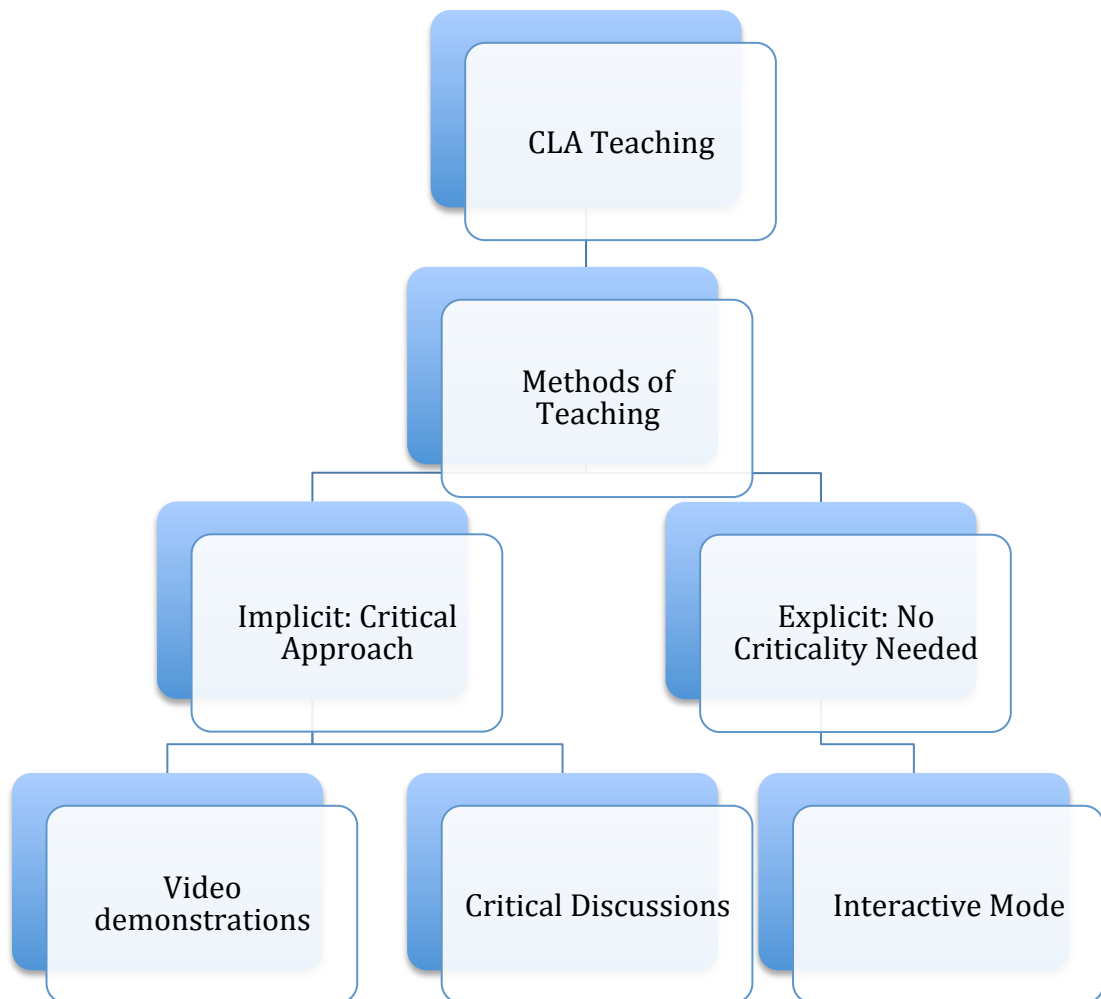
## **5.2 Criticality In The Classroom: CLA Teaching**

The first research question attempted to explore teachers’ understanding of critical language awareness and its applications in classes through their teaching methods and communication styles that indicate the meaning making and criticality in their classrooms.

When they were asked about their practices in the classroom and their preferred teaching style, most of them declared their fondness of the interactive teaching style regardless of the fact that it may or may not allow for some criticality. They also indicated that they care for fostering a communicative mode in the classroom, and this would require a direct teaching method so they could engage the majority of students. Teachers make communication channels with their students and it is never about the rules of the language only (da Silva & da Rocha, 2017). The aim of my question was to investigate if their teaching styles reflect critical language awareness, beyond the concept and between the lines to expand meanings, or the direct teaching that aims at concepts attainment and language practice.

The first related theme was critical language awareness teaching for instructors, and the related categories were methods of communication and teaching styles.

Figure 1. Underlying Themes of Research Question 1



*Note: Figure 1 explains the theme of Critical Language Awareness Teaching Application according to instructors.*

### 5.2.1. Implicit Teaching Styles and Meaning Making

The participants explained different methods that imply the tendency towards using criticality and CLA teaching in their interaction with the students to allow them to express themselves and critically reflect on the discussed topics to attempt meaning interpretation. Most of the participants encouraged using criticality in their teaching approaches through using implicit and indirect methods that raise issues of discussion. They use video demonstrations, which could lead to spontaneous discussions, or enhance students' critical sense.

### 5.2.1.1 Video Demonstrations

Iris mentioned her method of communication with students as one that seeks a simple form of CLA teaching:

First, I expose my students to videos and audios of different kinds, sometimes games, but basically it is required from them to critically communicate a lot and to be outspoken even

She explained how showing a video of the taught topic is the best method to pave the way for the ideas she wants to discuss and involve the students in a critical deductive process.

She also explained how she encourages her students to get the meanings of words in reading texts indirectly through context clues although:

Sometimes it is difficult with big words like “procrastination” I have to give them the definition, what it means and to give them a lot of examples from my life, from their life that is how they get to arrive at the meaning

Mariam, another participant, explained how she uses videos as class starters to get her students involved in the topics of concern:

I bring a video to show them; sometimes the students would wonder why I am showing them the video

Using life experience and negotiating meanings through context clues and real life discussions help students to get beyond the texts and relate concepts to life, which is the core of CLA in terms of social interaction with world issues, and reflection on personal experiences. Warschauer and Meskill (2000) indicate that using technology and mediated tools in the language teaching can help students improve their understandings of social and world issues. This might encourage criticality as it calls for self-reflection and decentralized approaches to discussion.

### **5.2.1.2 Interactive Discussions and Activities**

In response to a question about their preferred teaching methods, Hanan and Ali showed how attending for students' needs is their first priority; they both stressed the ability to perform different activities in the classroom that get the students in an interactive mode and appeal to their different learning styles.

Hanan said:

Classroom discussions, debates, and oral presentations in addition to some on-line competitive games that motivate the students and double the level of their engagement I would say that differentiation is one of my favorite learning strategies as it prerequisites utilizing various approaches, instructions, activities, class formation to meet students' preferences and expectations.

Ali expressed the same opinion, but with more depth and interpretation of students' needs that might affect their teaching. He aims more for helping them to understand their performance, and self reflect on their weaknesses. He explained:

From in-class interaction with students I can identify the different types of students; give them needed background information to help get them on track to progress with others and most importantly acquaint them with the reasons underlying their weaknesses. Just like a doctor tending to his patients. They need to know from him what exactly is wrong with them. If classroom time is not enough, then I can do what I need to do in special Writing-Center sessions

He also emphasized how he varies his teaching styles with the level of students' competence and their different needs of learning and interacting to be able to engage in lively discussions, he further mentions:

I communicate with students in class in many different ways inasmuch as it takes to help the students relinquish their restraining fears and learning inhibitions and open up to enjoy the in-progress learning experience. We discuss and watch different material and relate it to surroundings.

Ali believes that the level of language that students use show how successful their instructor is, and he relates their discussion power to his abilities in “clearing the air “ in the classroom, by which he means getting rid of all the psychological barriers that may hinder effective communication. In order to do that, he explains how he opens room for discussion that may touch on hot issues of interest to students and get them to analyze topics and reflect on them, he explains:

Sometimes, the teacher may need to turn to a subject different from that being discussed just to help the student talk about something that seems more interesting to them by way of helping the student relax and stop being too self-conscious to partake in the discussion, give them fair chances to talk about issues that may excite their interest and fire their imagination, I sometimes try to use hot topical issues and public areas of common interest to trigger students' abilities to talk and express themselves and their attitudes towards these issues. For example, I would have the students suggest ways and means to solve the traffic problem or talk about the disadvantages of addiction to using cellphones or social media in very brief way.

Mustafa is another participant who responded zealously to the questions about teaching styles and classroom practices, and whether they allow for criticality in discussion of texts or concepts. He tends to use implicit questions about critical issues in general such as power relations, ulterior motives and implications of changing meanings. His tendency to CLA teaching controls his teaching style, and it shows through his meaning negotiations and critical analysis that he usually tries to illicit from student responses. He explained that he always uses his passion for classic literature and he somehow employs it in the classroom. He always finds a way to create this relation between what he teaches, and real life situations or issues:

I always use the communicative approach and I teach everything through it. I never explain a rule as a rule unless I relate it to a context in life. I give students the chance to analyze, discuss and express themselves

He further explains and gives many examples of how he uses this critical view in the classroom to inspect criticality, and here is one of his examples:

What do you think is the meaning of ‘the large jaw’, the story behind this idiom is two kings were corrupt and greedy, there were a king on the throne of England with a large jaw and a queen with a plane face., if the students were aware of the political background, they may have known the meaning of the discourse. In Tale of two cities, an antithesis is made at the very beginning of the novel to show the great disparity of the classes and the mind gap between the French and the British societies. If the students were aware of the political issues and the social issues they would get the “multi layers” of words

Another interesting example is his implicit discussion of social and political issues that may urge students to think deeply of surrounding conditions and make their own connections, he explains:

In hard times, Dickens used agonizing and depressing language to describe the suffering of the working class (the hands), which is the miserable condition of the factory workers, the children who do not see the sun at all because they go to work before the sun rises, and when they go back home after work, it is also dark so they don not see the sun for a week. Another example is the miserable language and agonizing “Oliver Twist” to shed light on the suffering and agony of children working in factories. If the reader is aware of the social conditions at that time about the industrial revolution, he would better understand the language. And in “tale of two cities”, if the reader understands the political background of the French revolution at that time, it would be much easier to understand the antithesis that the writer started with. So in order to understand the language of a text, you also have to understand the historical and social context involved in it.

Mustafa explained how he uses criticality in teaching almost everything and how he adopts a “deductive approach” that is based on generating meanings



from context through grounding them in history or current events. One of his examples in teaching grammar is the following:

If I teach conditional I teach it through a reading passage , let's say a passage about the murder of Regan in 1985, I ask the students to read it well and I write these three sentences on the board and ask them to complete them: - if someone tries to murder someone else ----  
---(they would think of the future)

if I were the president of a certain country -----(they would think of a hypothetical case) If John Hinckley had not been a crazy person -----  
(they would think of a true in the past case)

this is how we teach grammar, never write a rule and explain it. Give the case, the example then derive the rule from it.

Mariam, another participant, who was so passionate during the interview, has a different method of CLA teaching, which is noting to her students that she is after criticality and not after the content of lessons specifically. She stated that throughout her teaching experience, she has always been against direct teaching no matter what the concept she teaches is. She believes the most important principles in teaching are, showing students “why” she is teaching them something, and the “need to know something”:

I do not like to focus on the content because a student with the least academic level would get it haphazardly or spontaneously. why are we teaching them reading? To provide correct answers for the text details or the aim? In real life , do they read for these purposes? Even for us, when we read , we read because we want to know something, so we never approach information unless we need it , it is related to our needs. You read because you want to do something with that reading and the knowledge you get from it and to start questioning yourself. This concept applies to everything, not just to reading, to writing and language applications, the need to know what is behind the concept and its importance.

She also stated that she cares more for the discussions and issues related to what she teaches more than the specific topics themselves, she states strongly that:

I do not like to focus on the content because a student with the least academic level would get it haphazardly or spontaneously.

She still makes herself clear to students and she makes sure that she is not misunderstood, so she is very careful with her intonation to eliminate miscommunication and to foster effective meaning making which is necessary for productive communication in the classroom, she further explains her encouragement to students discussions and reflections on issues being discussed:

For me it is very rewarding, because it is a feedback for me, and getting them involved in their learning. We are human beings, we are not teaching desks or seats they are human beings and they have rights to express themselves otherwise we re going to lose them. It is the power of education.

Mariam's case is interesting because, she makes her critical purpose obvious to students. She strongly calls them to be critical about meanings and language choices, and she defines the purpose of criticality in order to engage them in their learning experience and meaning making. For her, being critical is being direct in telling students that they have to be critical and alert to any issue they study. She encourages students to practice self-questioning and estimation of own evaluations.

### **5.2.2 Explicit Teaching Methods: No Criticality Needed**

Some instructors were not interested in the critical approach to language teaching and explained that even if it was favored, they would still apply it to a minimum degree, and would have interactive classes in a sense but not necessarily critical.

Janet does not usually favor implicit teaching or the multiple meanings that can bear different possibilities because it might be confusing to the students, so she explains:

For the concepts that we are teaching yes we have fixed meanings but the language we use in the classroom may have different meanings. What ever we say have to be according with our body language so we have to be very clear

Similarly, Sondos encouraged the same concept of direct teaching for the same reason, which is not distracting the students or confusing them, although she applies cooperative teaching methods:

I usually use these methods in the classroom: the task-based instruction, cooperative learning, direct method

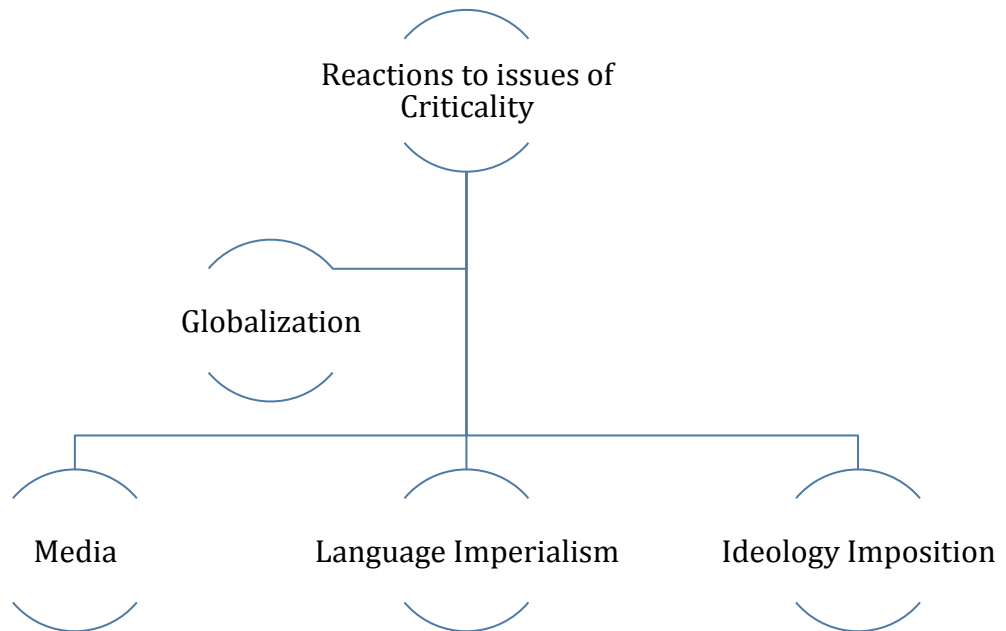
The instructors favored direct teaching, which they tried to make interesting and engaging. They made the best out of what they have according to the “reality” of their classes and they did not want to risk the stability of their teaching plan with disruptive unneeded discussions that they assumed distracting to their students. Day (1998) noted three selves of the teacher that intervene and simultaneously act with the reading and the teaching “which were being managed simultaneously in the ‘actual’, ‘transitional’ and ‘ideal’ worlds of each teacher. We called these selves ‘educative’, ‘ideological’ and ‘personal’ (p. 258). Janet and Sondos would then represent the actual self as they adopt practical characters that use the available surrounding context and acclimatize themselves with it. In doing limited critical and more general group activities, they fulfill the requirements of the queuing tasks, and achieve higher academic standards with their students.

### **5.3 Reactions to Issues of CLA**

The second research question aimed at understanding some of the factors and principles of CLA and whether instructors perceived the presence of these factors in the classroom. How would students ask questions if they don't understand a text, and if they don't ask questions how would they learn. True learning involves criticality and question posing. Critical theory is a paradigm that is originated to attain justice and equity and seek a better world. In academic settings, critical pedagogy brings about change and action, and one of the tools to do that is CLA, or the focus on teaching the language with the social dimension added to it. The interaction in the language classroom is challenging to both teacher and learner as it allows for exploration of ideologies in a loop of meaning negotiation (Palma, 2014).

The teachers were asked to answer a few prompting questions about CLA teaching issues that might be raised in the classroom and what they might suggest or imply. They were also asked about their views of some related topics such as the language use and what it indicates. Other factors were raised during the discussion with the participants such as globalization and modernity, and the critical stances that result from such topics. Some of the teachers viewed critical language awareness issues as being critically aware of the social and cultural implications of the society they teach in, and some understood it as being aware of the class tensions that may affect their communication with their students. They also related criticality to the use and effects of media as a gate to critical awareness and globalization. The underlying themes that were related to the answer of the second question are displayed in the following figure:

Figure 2. Underlying Themes of Research Question 2



*Note: Figure 2 explains the issues of criticality and how instructors deal with them.*

### 5.3.1 Globalization and Media

In response to a question about how global issues could be discussed in the classroom, the participants showed an understanding of how globalization and global issues are affecting education in present times. Block and Cameron (2002) believed “Education, too, is increasingly affected by the advent of new technologies and media” (p. 5). The same concept is stated by Luke, Luke and Graham (2007) indicated how “New technologies have also brought about changes in approaches to teaching” (p.21).

The instructors understood how the world is a small village in which information travels fast especially with the recent technological advancements. They related globalization in their teaching context to the ease of information access the students have and to media use. This major change that Internet use brought to life and education in global times could help students be more critical

as they assumed, and it could also help them improve their language use, and connections making which is a major aspect of social media. “At the very heart of social media is the ability to generate connections” (Churcher, Downs and Tewksbury 2014, p. 34). But they also indicated how this ease does not guarantee more knowledge.

Iris explained that it could be the “outside issues” that interest them:

Media has many effects on their understanding, media that could be what you use in the classroom, videos or audios, or social media platforms that have contributed to the understanding of the language and the language use

She related globalization to the use of media whether the one used in the classroom that could include critical videos that call for analysis, or the social media platforms that could help students to be critical and observant of meaning and word implications, and also helpful in making connections with global issues.

Mariam indicated that media use made students smarter and more critical as she adds:

Students in these times are smart due to media and the fast transformation of events and news.

Mustafa agreed and indicated how criticality is achieved through fast transportation of information and the ease of access to news and events around the world, which are provided through the use of media:

The world is becoming smaller and smaller and we know more about everything in spark of a moment and because of that we develop critical aspects as teachers or students

Manal added that exposure to social media provided some kind of “global sense” and language use, or knowledge that could help in being critical and aware of language use although it is not done purposefully for critical

understanding or “educational reasons” as she mentioned. Nevertheless, being engaged in media communication platforms could be helpful in developing a critical spirit and communication. She said:

It raises their awareness, students are exposed to media and they might absorb the language from media, but they are not doing it for the sake of education. It is done unconsciously through exposition to media, social media platforms. This exposition to the language through twitter, Facebook, Instagram make them get the meaning, but they do not seek for it or look for it and for the sake of being educated or being aware of the different layers of meaning.

Manal believed that it is a kind of accidental critical language awareness that becomes more beneficial in communication and language use than actual realization of global issues and ideological impositions. Wei and Hindman (2011) asserted that idea, “In comparison to access, the quality and quantity of Internet use is a more critical source of digital inequality as the Internet becomes increasingly widespread” (p. 229).

Media access does not necessarily provide media use in a sense that could be critical or even beneficial. It could be misleading and deceiving since it might, if misused, encourage consumerist behavior if it is market-driven, or indoctrinate people through hidden agendas and manipulation. This would call for CLA teaching and criticality in order to assist students with needed knowledge about world issues, and to empower them with tools of change and action.

The responses of the participants revealed that they are aware of the effects of media, whether the internet-mediated videos they use to assist with their teaching, or the social media platforms which have necessitated the use of language and the meaning making of global issues. The responses also showed how the participants are aware how media use could affect their teaching

contexts and help their students become socially, linguistically and globally aware.

### **5.3.2 Linguistic Imperialism**

CLA involves interpretation and realization of language use and dominance. All the participants were aware of linguistic imperialism, ideology impositions and meaning making that are relevant to the texts they discuss with students. They noted that English is the dominant language for several reasons that varied from one to the other and they will be discussed in their quotes. It is worth noting that instructors are directed to use English all the time while on campus. Some instructors use English because they are not speakers of Arabic, and they also encourage their students to communicate with other students in English during class time.

Iris explained that, besides the fact that she uses English all the time, she knows that it is the dominant language everywhere in the world, along with the “Western” ideology it brings. She further explains:

Well, English is the first example, it is everywhere, I don't know how it happened, maybe because of this expansion that they had in the past, but this is what it is, English is ... the world is English speaking even though statistically English is not the most common language. It brings a kind of Western ideology, imposing certain stereotypes that we have in the west world. we relate the meaning to the connotation of a western culture. That is what this language brings with it. How we perceive issues, the information that we get here is filtered in a way, the information that we get is not necessarily what is going on, we get a reflection, critical language awareness is involved in the fact that we are exposed to the English language

She believed that the domination of the language fosters manipulation of ideas, and if the students are not critical or aware enough of word meanings and social implications, they can easily be manipulated. She also believed that she



actually manipulates the students during discussions because she imposes her point of view about issues and concepts that she brings from her culture. Thus, it is her own personality and background that controls the discussion.

If they are less aware they would be manipulated, they would be tricked into, falling into, or believing certain way of thinking, certain stereotypes, certain lifestyles. I think personally I am imposing certain message on them, like for example, we had, I am not discussing if its good or bad, but we had a unit about recycling, so I was promoting this , was saying that this is what we should do so was in a way imposing this on them here form my observation it is not that common, the idea of recycling . In the west it is more popular so I was convincing them that this is a good approach.

Mustafa emphasized the domination of English through giving the following examples:

English is the most dominant language, it is the international language that everyone speaks, for example: Platter the president of FIFA speaks English although he is Swiss, so does the WHO president. They speak English to be internationally understood.

Janet also believed in the domination of English and she also uses it the whole time. She believed in its dominance because of different reasons that belong to the new job sector demands, and the need to fit in that global system. She further explained:

This new job sectors like coding, it is only in English. So, if this is computerized systems, music, art, they are all basing whatever they have in the foundation of English. If you want to do research, you have to go for English, can you find all the books and articles you have read in Arabic? Impossible, I cannot find them in my language as well, so we all have to go for English because it is the language of science.

She added that she is not concerned about this dominance because we can still keep our own identities in a global world, and she used these concepts in

her classroom rendering these positive views of language domination to her students trying to help them to be critical and aware in meaning making:

If we think of it is double sided, what if this dominant language is working miracles, what if everybody used their own language in the classes. But you know what, we will be like couple of steps backwards, having the colors, having the culture, having the social norms, everything of your own is good, but still, we are talking about globalization, about scientific improvements, and with all that we have to talk that one dominant language for the rest of the world.

Rose agreed with Janet on the same reasons of English language imperialism in addition to standardized tests, which are necessary for study purposes or job applications, and this necessarily promotes for language domination:

English is promoted here in the Gulf because it is a need for any future job, and most of the standardized tests in English. We are promoting the domination of it. English also imposes certain cultures and ideologies

English as an international dominant language is used in the classrooms and the instructors are all aware of its dominance and its power: therefore, they are aware of their power since they are the agents of this language in the classroom. They conceptualized the importance of the language as they stress its use and dominance for future life aspects and careers. They are well aware that their students need English, as it is the language of globalization that would facilitate job and career opportunities, and so gain status. There was no mention of the accent or English varieties, but needless to say, UK, and most specifically US Englishes are the most highly respected accents and their mastery adds great status in personal, professional and academic aspects. This high value could be considered another form of dominance. In other words, using English

serves the purpose it is needed for. As Canajarah (1999) put it, “the intention is not to *reject* English, but to *reconstitute* it in more inclusive, ethical, and democratic terms” (p. 2).

### **5.3.3 Ideology Impositions**

A notion that is not separate from linguistic imperialism is ideology imposition. Languages come within bodies of culture, traditions practices and norms. A domination of a language would probably ensue the domination of everything that is connected to it. The study focused on the views of English language instructors; thus “ideology imposition” in this sense focuses on the imposition of the global ideologies that come with English. Through exploring the opinions of instructors on language imperialism, they also revealed a conceptualization of the ideologies that may be imposed as a result. The participants related the two categories and expanded on explaining the relation.

Mariam had a more elaborate view on English language domination and she explained how this domination expresses power and control, and the need to develop criticality in order to understand these imposed ideologies:

Immigration, prestigious universities or jobs, power of TOEFL and IELTS in controlling peoples hopes and dreams of studying and immigrating., it is all about English. Accountability, it is related to how powerful those countries. Why is English a must language to study. It is the power and dominance of the economic and political power of the countries that indicate some ideology prevalence. Unfortunately we can not fight that, because our opportunities are linked to them this is why we need to be critical to be able to identify these ideologies and find our won powers and to preserve our identities during the process. Teachers, most importantly, should be critical because they are their tools to make their agenda come to life. It is easier for students to study in Arabic not in English.

Mustafa, further stressed the importance of developing criticality in analyzing language use in the classroom and he stressed that:

In order to understand the text here well, you have to be aware of the ideology behind it. The class is much more interesting when you discuss the background of the text and I feel free to discuss with no boundaries imposed on me.

Yet, similar to Janet, he is not concerned about this dominance as being an absolute threat to identities or a source of ideology imposition; he explained:

I do not think that the domination of English creates domination of ideology too, saying anything in English does not make it credible or taken for granted; for example the tweets of Trump are being severely criticized although he supposedly represents the strongest English speaking country of the world.

He stressed CLA teaching in the classroom in order to understand the ideology behind texts, if students were aware of the power of the text, then no ideologies or powers would be imposed on them because they would know what is directed and why it is directed:

Trump always uses that kind of bitter language about China and WHO to indicate that they were on the side of china. In order to understand that language, it is important to understand the political background, his language is always full of hate and aggression and this is due to the strained relation between the states and china, Trump uses the imperative form of speech "Ask China" clarifies the political aspect of the aggressive language he uses.

Some instructors did not relate ideology imposition to linguistic imperialism and their perception of the two was the same. Hanan, had a different view of language dominance. Although she quite believes in the dominance of the English language in the modern world, she focused on the dominance in regard to her classroom, she said:

I do not think that in the context I am teaching in, there is a chance for English to dominate. Students mostly do not use English to avoid being mocked at, or the internal anxiety of making mistakes in front of their counterparts made it hard to convince them to communicate with each other in English.

She did not elaborate on whether she uses English or Arabic mostly in the classroom, nor did she mention discussing the underlying ideologies in the texts she teaches, which might suggest that she does not stress CLA teaching and she focuses on the content she should teach and the preset plan.

Ali also viewed language domination from a different angle; he related the success of students in using the language to their academic competence, which is an indication that using the English language is the dominant feature of academic success. He explained:

Language use, undoubtedly, reveals the true level of competence of each and every student, particularly those with high-frequency participation in classroom discussions.

On the other hand, Manal empowers her classes with the use of Arabic although she also believes in the power of English and the ideologies it imposes. She believes that using Arabic, their mother tongue, may encourage CLA teaching and learning, as it will provide the students with confidence, which can foster criticality. She explained:

Sometimes it is necessary to switch back to the use of mother tongue, because students get bored and you want to get their attention out of better understanding, better communication with them, you do not want to have a monotonous class and it is kind of refreshment in class and give them kind of confidence. And of course this fosters the relationship between the students and their teachers.

She also emphasized the power of English:

English is becoming the standard language of communication and of course this is affecting the students and the educational settings and it is domineering the field. You cannot do anything to change this and you would be against globalization, again, this is all modernity.

Her use of Arabic at some points to avoid the domination of English indicates the same idea of Kumaravadivelu (2003) that stressed the ineffective domination as it is used as a “language of communicational necessity than as a symbol of cultural identity” (p. 539).

Most instructors work with the principles of criticality in general in their classrooms with different degrees within contextual elaboration. They are aware of the need to allow for, accept and incorporate CLA teaching through analysis and synthesis of topics and word meanings to manage the global changes and all the implications that ensue them. Nevertheless, some of them did not show their knowledge of ideology imposition, which could be a result of their unfamiliarity with CLA teaching.

#### **5.4 Limitations to CLA and Implications**

The previous sections discussed the instructors’ awareness of CLA teaching and how they interact with concepts of criticality in the classroom, as they were also aware of the effects and implications of global issues on CLA and language teaching. Nevertheless, CLA teaching is not an easy mission because of interconnected social and cultural dimensions that the instructors discussed during the interviews, and would be explained in the coming sections.

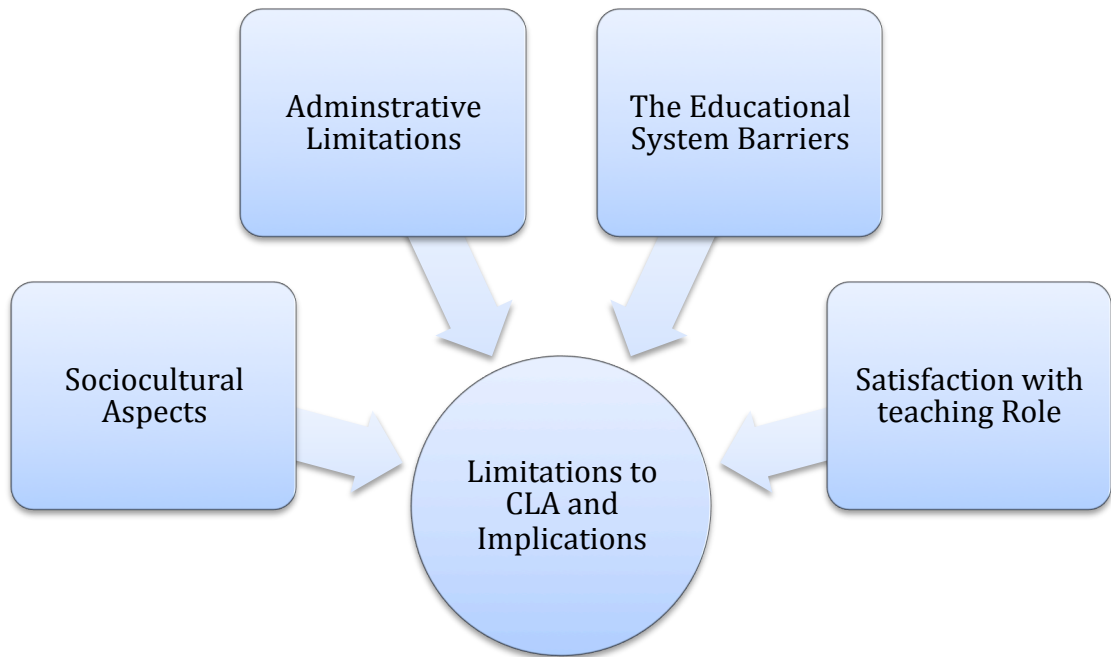
The third research question aimed at attempting to understand the views of instructors towards the limitations of applying or teaching critical language awareness. To provide an answer to this question, the participants were asked a few prompting questions about the limitations that hinder them from using criticality and teaching critical language awareness. Through the interviews, the participants gave several answers that indicated some issues that could cripple criticality and obstruct teaching CLA. These limitations ranged between issues

that touch on marketization of education, the unequal chances of students who come from private and public schools, sociocultural factors, curriculum restrictions, and administrative tasks.

Most of the participants explained how teaching critical language awareness is a difficult task because of all these considerations. They expressed how these limitations are creating some dissatisfaction with their profession because they feel helpless and crippled. The instructors indicated that the limitations of criticality and critical language awareness are mainly connected to sociocultural aspects they have to consider, curriculum and administrative tasks that could result in a sense of confinement and dissatisfaction, and the different implications of marketization of education.

It is worth mentioning that some of the participants were affected by the limitations that create lack of critical discussions in the classroom, some knew the limitations and adapted to them, and a few did not feel that these limitations are affecting them negatively because despite difficulties, they still find a way to enjoy teaching critically “Although teaching can be difficult and challenging, it is imperative that teachers find ways to bring wonder, joy, and passion into the classroom” (Terry & Irving 2010, p. 123).

Figure 3. Underlying Themes of Research Question 3



*Note: Figure 3 explains the limitations that prevent instructors from applying criticality in their classrooms.*

#### **5.4.1 Sociocultural Aspect**

The first theme that constituted a barrier to CLA teaching for the instructors was social and cultural aspects that are relevant to the context and the environment they teach in. The instructors knew the conservative nature of the Gulf region, and at the same time, the students might not be motivated to critically think of issues that may not be of interest to their society and surrounding environment. Furthermore, the instructors considered social aspects that are relevant to the way students act and react in academic contexts, and the general behavior of students in the society.

Iris expressed how it is hard to use implicit techniques and criticality although she favors them, and how it would be better to let the students understand the language of texts on their own through the background they have,



But it is not always possible especially with the mixed abilities groups that we have. A lot of times I have to be straighter. If students are exposed to different contexts in their lives, it does affect their understanding of what you're saying or it affects their understanding of what they read, if they have some knowledge about what they read, if it rings a bell, if something similar happened in their lives, they will be more prone to understand, not knowing about the culture may cause culture clash.

She implied that the students are not supported with enough background experiences or life expertise to enable them to think critically of issues that are happening outside their sphere. It is hard to construct perceptions when there is no relation between the communicators. She also explained how having social awareness of the cultural practices and norms that form the identities of the students may limit the discussion and the critical view that she wants to build,

I have to be careful when I choose the material I use, like for example, if I use a video I have to watch it first to make sure there is nothing inappropriate, culturally inappropriate or socially inappropriate. In my country, it would be okay to show pictures of people at the beach, here I don't know if I could so I refrain from using such things.

She realized that she could not disembodify her language teaching from the cultural context she teaches in, and that would make some of the issues not suitable for discussions as they may have inappropriate insinuations that could easily be misunderstood. Similarly, Manal responded quickly to the questions about the limitations to CLA teaching and she explained that it is mostly important to consider the social and cultural issues in class such as the sensitivity of some concepts and the different meanings they may bear:

I am not free. I am confined by certain boundaries and, so when it comes to explain words that are multilayered you have to be very conscious which context to explain it in, also the culture and social sensitivity and conservative, so here you have to be aware of language use and criticality also these factors are affecting criticality, you cannot add more depth level or go behind cultural settings, socially it is not accepted. For example, I have the word sex in the

textbook and I had to avoid teaching it because it might refer to other meanings than gender, so you are being conscious of language use in the context you are teaching in, these contexts restrict your language criticality in the classroom.

Manal also extended her explanation of social barriers and discussed how students' social issues in regard to their behavior in academic contexts could interfere with her performance and CLA teaching. Some of the instructors focused their critical awareness on being aware and able to deal with taboos or sensitive words and sociocultural issues. While critical issues could relate to political or environmental issues that could affect the Kuwaiti people such as potential scarcity of water, weakened infrastructure and mono-economic resources, heightened similar issues are almost never an open case for discussion. The competency of students' analytical and linguistic skills in academic contexts could limit discussions or attempting different interpretations beyond the direct meanings of discourse or texts:

Their perception of meanings like the language they have, for example some of them do not have language efficiency, some have lack of concentration, some are slower than others, some get language more than others, it could be psychological, social, not feeling comfortable in class, having issues with their peers in class, the mental levels could also affect the discussions we have.

Similarly, Janet understood the major criticality barriers were relevant to the social and the cultural boundaries and the social sensitivity of students' academic performance that she has to consider, she explained:

When I say critical language awareness I am not just learning or I am not just teaching, I have to look at the issue critically and it means I have to take the social dimension into consideration for sure. There are certain issues, which are totally no no in this region, why would I use these topics and make my students uncomfortable or embarrassed in the classroom.

Hanan responded to the limitations of CLA teaching applications with a reference to social aspects and national cultural grounds that strongly control the class, and students who resist the use of English:

In the Kuwaiti context, cultural, social, and religious factors are the most common critical dimensions. I consider the students' sensitivity towards certain topics that have some pejorative religious, cultural, or even social references.

Likewise, Rose stressed the impact of the unequal chances students have in language education, and the random mixture of students in classes that make the critical approach to language teaching very hard to achieve. The nature of the social background of students differ, and the different social classes that exist in the same classroom create a cultural dilemma, she explained:

if you pay attention to the society we are in now, we have different social classes in the class and different dimensions of the cultural awareness, you can see the difference in mentality, some speak the language and know a lot about the culture while others are just using it as means of communication while still preserving their own culture. Sometimes this causes mental collisions in the classroom. Being aware of the social dimensions in the class allows you to apply the best practices or the best ways of making students have the most experience of the language that you are teaching. You cannot just take any text taken from a different society and apply in the class, this will detach them, on the other side, you can get opposing reactions from the students.

Rose could see the link between culture and what it represents. Cultures come in packages with language, traditions and norms, which constitute identities; Lazaraton (2003) argued "An emergent postmodern view of culture sees culture as a socially constructed practice, in which language and culture are mutually constitutive" (p. 216). She also explained how the limitation can turn into a positive factor in the classroom if the instructor adapted to the nature

of that society and found the right tone to play, but the issue here is reaching the target of “lesson objectives” more than exploring what is beyond the lesson:

You cannot just control a culture. The culture forces itself on the instructor, you cannot change it you need to adapt to it and understand it if you want to be an effective instructor and reach your objective in the best way, you have to first understand the culture you deal with. If you do so, you will not think that this language awareness is a limitation for you, you will find different ways to adapt and reach your objective. It is not a barrier.

The sociocultural considerations were important to Rose on different levels. She also discussed the gender of students and the emotional dimensions that have to be considered because they affect the flow of critical discussions and can limit it:

The emotional responses of the students and these are directly connected to their cultures and their experiences which are derived from their social backgrounds, for example if I discuss something in class, some students who travelled abroad may get it in different way than those who have not traveled. The body language is also a factor here and they do not have a clue about this, also sometimes the gender affects my meaning making , females relate to things and males relate to other things and you have to vary your teaching methods in order for both to make meaning of the concepts being taught.

Mariam responded to my question about the limitations she faces in creating a critical environment in the classroom with a rhetorical one because the students are not used in their society to use a critical language, she explained:

How many use the language to talk about their rights, their wants, to express experiences, to question?

She stressed the importance of using the right language, and not the language that is used in educational texts only. She also discussed the difficulty of establishing a critical environment in a classroom she assumed is not prepared for that kind of thinking:

I believe there is a strong relation between CLA and social dimensions because society dictates people what to do. If you are among people who do not encourage reflection, criticality, this kind of liberal thoughts, neither the students nor the teachers would be able to express this kind of thought. they are not used to it. Let's say that a teacher and her students are on the same page, and they want to reach an agreement. It is hard for them to reach an agreement, even if any of these students are out there in this environment, they will be suppressed. But if you are in a society that fosters criticality, then it will be encouraged.

Although Rose seemed to have various adaptation approaches in the classroom to achieve the utmost goals of teaching, she expressed how dissatisfied she is with what she is doing because the cultural background of students is not flexible and the students are not knowledgeable about world issues:

It is limiting... It is limiting, I suffer as a teacher to make meaning of what they are being taught because it is not related to their culture. Culture here makes very important element that affects everything.

The participants responded to the questions about the limitations of applying CLA in the classroom with some more details that involved their roles as instructors. They explained, besides the poor level of language use of many students, that the lack of background knowledge and inability to relate to world events created some kind of resistance to being critical in analyzing texts.

Mustafa provided a similar answer about the relation between CLA teaching limitations and the social background of the students, and he explained why he sometimes finds criticality difficult to apply:

A student who knows about what is happening in the world can always make the link. Some students know absolutely nothing. The epicenter of the information is knowledge, the student who does not *know*, can easily be lost and misguided. Most of the students do not know what goes on in the world outside their culture

Hanan did not think that critical language awareness could be easily applied in the classroom because of the different levels of students. She also thought that a critical approach to teaching language would estrange and alienate some low competent students

Students' level of proficiency decides which method of discussion is more effective to be implemented in the classroom. That is to say, with students of higher levels of proficiency, explicit methods of learning would be frustrating, not challenging, and boring. On the other hand, using implicit methods with low achievers will cause them to lose interest in the classroom as they feel that it is beyond their cognitive capacities.

Ali agreed with her, as he also thought that CLA is hard to achieve in the classroom because the majority of students do not have a high level of language proficiency, which would distance them:

Students exhibit different competence levels with language acquisition. Therefore, we should address students with simple, easy-to-understand language and try hard not to flex their language muscles in class, with a view to winning all various students over to help them enjoy the experience of participating and learning interaction.

He also extended his explanation with what he considered a fact about using CLA in the classroom:

Our students are not so qualified to do that because of little exposure to the language and a low-level competence. Those will usually slow down class progress and get in the way of healthy, normal learning pace.

Janet thought that critical language awareness is not easy to approach as there is "not much to do about that" because the students are not socially ready for critical discussions. As Mariam has referred to earlier, they do not know how to converse or discuss because they are not used to that. They are used to be

given direct instructions that accomplish the task soon, and there would not be a need for the “hassle” of criticality, she explained:

I don't know... they do not know the concept of discussion in the class, when I ask them, let's discuss. They do not know how to put words together, what they know is just school way, ask and explain. What we are doing is one size fits all, but it doesn't fit, free size. By a simple look, you would understand that one size does not fit all. It's impossible. We have to prepare them for discussion.

All the instructors were well aware of the social dimensions, whether of students' limited social abilities in academic contexts or the sensitivity of the conservative cultural background that might hinder the CLA approach. It might be definite that the instructors would like to assist their students to develop more critical skills in analyzing texts and discourse for many reasons that might be relevant to their sense of accomplishment and job satisfaction, or the elevation of students' performance. Some of them did expressed their willingness to gear criticality albeit crippling limitations.

#### **5.4.2 Administrative Limitations**

Some more reasons to critical language awareness or criticality in the classroom were connected to other roles and duties the instructors were assigned in addition to teaching, and some administrative limitations they have to adhere to without much space for negotiation.

In response to a question about other factors that could affect their CLA teaching, Iris said:

I don't know, maybe curriculum in a way, or the syllabi, the course settings, I have to have some results at the end of the week or the end of the course so that is also kind of an obstacle, but I have to follow, this is not something I can discuss.

Manal expressed how she would prefer a critical approach to language teaching, but:

you know what? I personally prefer the communicative method and implicit teaching approaches, throughout my years of experience, I realized that not all students like this approach so sometimes you have to teach explicitly, some students are very traditional and they are expecting you to give the information and this is how they learn and earn grades.

Rose explained how she has to adhere to administrative limitations saying:

I can suggest change in the curriculum but cannot guarantee application because it goes through a lot of channels and routine management approvals. Which means I do not have the right to do that

Adhering to the curriculum and the predesigned course work, achieving the learning outcomes and having passing students with high scores, are all targets that occupy the instructors at the most. Janet measured her success in the classroom with their ability to use the language as it the only indicator that she achieved the learning outcomes in the course syllabus. She explained that teaching grammar for example does not require any critical teaching, but direct language and explanation. This is the total opposite of what Mustafa and Mariam explained earlier about teaching criticality no matter what the topic was. Janet expresses how mechanical, yet successful, her job is; She said:

We are given a pack and we just have to unload that pack for students

When she was asked if there is anything she can do about that, she quickly responded with a smile:

Not much to do about that!



Rose agreed that using critical approaches to language teaching is mostly favored, but this is not what she could always do for compulsory reasons such as the level of motivation the students have which forces her to guarantee a direct level of teaching so that she can stick to the plan to be able to have adequate results at the end of semester, she explained:

The motivation of the students is a key issue here. If they are motivated I will use this motivation to make them reach the point, they will do their best and try their maximum effort to see what I mean and they will try to reach the goal, but if the students are just there to be there then you will have to use the directed language approach to guarantee that they got the message and that I achieved my objectives of the lesson. I have to use the explicit because students don't have high level of English, they are not even motivated to learn and they are mostly there just to finish the course and get done with it. I am reluctant to use explicit methods; it is boring, just lecturing

Normally, critical approach to language teaching might engage students and elevate their motivation, but different factors could interfere with that concept such as students' intimidation of language use and customization of life conditions.

Mariam, who is always in favor of "why" we do things, adopted the same idea of informing the students that they need criticality more than we do. She explained:

Students should also know that, that they need it, we do not want a monotonous lesson that is well set according to objectives and the curriculum. It is not about this and it should not be about this. It is not just a reading task, there should be a meaning construction beyond the text

Unlike most participants, she did not believe that achieving criticality is difficult in the language teaching as instructors should have a say in everything they do:

The level of language, the cultural issues, the differences of cultures are all in the textbook that does not represent meaning use or

making to students. The literal meaning is not the target, it is the overall context of a text, we should go beyond. Teachers should design their own material. Students preferences, needs, are also a factor, gender, age, all of these are factors that contribute to criticality.

Mariam strongly defended the conscious responsibility instructors should have:

Otherwise, our mission will be a transmitter and not influencers, just transmitting knowledge from one generation to the other without adding anything new to it

She also agreed to Janet's idea of how students reject criticality at some point because they are not used to it, or too lazy to be critical, as Rose indicated, and she also added a point that is related to assessment and how it does not reflect real achievement, but also has to be followed as part of the plan. She explained:

No matter what you try to tell them or teach them critically, they are fixed and they reject it or do not absorb it. There is an important point here, the assessment at the end does not really qualify their real abilities but it follows the teaching methodology and the syllabus, there are not any questions in the assessments that target criticality.

#### **5.4.3 Educational System Barriers**

Some of the responses that the participants provided for the questions about the limitations of using critical language awareness were relevant to issues in the educational system. Issues such as students' attitude, class sizes and workload were stumbling stones in their work in the classroom and outside it. The participants were very conscious about the issues that crippled their critical language awareness and limited, not only their attempts of using criticality, but also their teaching in general.

Rose indicated clearly and strongly what the obstacles that face her and affect her performance are as follows;

Most of the educational organizations now are business organizations and they are just after graduating students, they post commercials on social media and they market for themselves, and having the best results without focusing on the internal part of education itself, which is better for the students, even the distribution of the students in classes which has absolutely no criteria. It is a business and marketization of education is one of the factors that affect criticality because it hinders it for the sake of making profit and keeping the business going. They would lose money if education were critical.

Iris explained another issue that has to do with the different educational backgrounds the students come from, which could be an issue when trying to apply criticality:

The ones (who can easily communicate in English) who went to good schools or private schools. Some of them who come from government schools who do not have enough exposure to English it is a bit more difficult for them and they try to communicate with me in Arabic but there is no communication at all, sometimes I need a translator.

While Manal stressed other student numbers and facilities issues she believed are crucial in performing critical language awareness in class:

of course you can't do with a large number of students , it only works with small groups of 20 students maximum, but you can not be critical with large classes, no communicative approach in this case, it will be lecture based. So in this case you have many variables: the number of students, the facilities that you use for example, computer, projector, so all of these are not fixed variables and you have to consider everything, the atmosphere, the surrounding environment,

Being liked and loved by students in order to gain respect is an aspect of the educational systems these days. That could pose questions about the credibility of the instructor if not loved or liked by students for reasons that might not be relevant to academic performance. Ali and Mustafa explained that the important factor that should be present in class in order to be able to perform CLA is the

ability to gain students' love and respect to get them engaged in an enjoyable discussion, and make them motivated for learning; Ali put it as:

A very important thing that all teachers need to keep in mind as they discharge their teaching responsibilities is the fact that students will always love and enjoy their learning experience if they have developed respect and attachment to their teacher. Students must love their teachers to react positively to the learning experience and be willingly careful not to miss a class.

Mariam agreed with Rose's opinion about the market-like educational organizations that set profit as a goal and ultimately affected the "shape" of learning, and she also discussed the issue of having students who come from different educational backgrounds but they are in the same class with the same learning objectives. She explained:

Unfortunately in our educational regimes, it became just a goal, we deal with students who come from educational systems that for them language is equal to grammar and vocabulary, and even the teacher, if you have a different perspective, you suffer.

My daughter goes to an international school, no homework or worksheets, it is just about expression and projects. Compared to a public school, it is all about suppression, we teach those students, they come to us. So it is the society that creates criticality, it is either make it or break it.

She further explained the limited freedom that instructors work with now in a predesigned system that restrains their abilities and pressures them to find a way, or adapt. She put it as:

Pre-settled things do not work with languages. There should be flexibility and reflection. If it is not given to us as teachers, it should be taken by force. There is a message after all, we should do something. I feel privileged being an English instructor despite the *factory-like mills* we are working in now, we should take it by force and do something. The assessments are designed to help them with the grade and not with criticality.

It was clear from the instructors' discussions that the educational system

with its profit-based aims is not helping them in improving critical language awareness teaching in their classrooms. Stumbling stones as limitations of the content-based syllabus, the paper work, the non-critical assessments, the tendency to win students as clients and the rigid preset programs make critical language teaching a very difficult task. Instructors might fall into the dilemma of equalizing between theory and practice. This gap between the two sources of knowledge could be bridged with what Kumaravadivelu (2003) suggested as relating concepts to life experiences “should be the depth of critical thinking rather than the breadth of content knowledge” (p. 20). Criticality, in the form of CLA, should be the main concern in the classroom, and not the content of the topics that are in the syllabus. Most of the participants acknowledged the importance of CLA teaching and stressed its superiority to the content, but the driving force of teaching is accomplishing the goals according to the preset plan.

#### **5.4.4 Satisfaction with Teaching Role**

The discussions of the instructors during the interviews revealed, as indicated previously, their need to speak about their profession and the limitations they face. The discussion about limitations and what they could do about them brought attention to their satisfaction with their roles. They had different attitudes toward how they deal with, or accept them.

Regardless of the difficulty to create CLA approach in the classroom, Mariam showed self-empowering abilities with clear sense of agency and direction. She insisted on CLA stance because it satisfies her teaching passion:

It drives my soul; I cannot just teach as a robot, I have to put my soul in my teaching. I cant just follow rules and notes and that is the end of it. I try to reach the equilibrium of my enjoyment of teaching

and the adopted philosophies of the organization I work at. I have to be conscious about what I am doing. I don't take things for granted, I stick to the curriculum plan but I do it my way, all the teachers can break this, no matter how suppressed and controlled. No body can force you, but you can still do it your own way, job satisfaction is very important.

Mustafa, with his unique teaching method of relating whatever he teaches to stories and literature, expressed how using a language is a way to put meanings into words, he does not use sophisticated language so as not to put off his students, and he sets a conversational mode in his class for students to debate ideas and negotiate meanings in a form of CLA teaching. He explained;

I start with a story and hold something called "the trial", and I ask the students to decide if the hero is a protagonist or an antagonist, this trial is a way through which they can express themselves, you make them more interested in learning and they would wait for your class. To emphasize the proper usage of syntactic structure, when they are speaking, you disregard their mistakes, and you recap what they said, you fix it indirectly.

Like Mariam, he smiled at the idea of criticality and assured:

I decide the critical aspect and no one decides it for me.

He also indicated his feelings towards his role in the profession:

There is a lot to do, I am satisfied with how I teach, but I am not satisfied with anything else!

Sondos likewise declared her satisfaction with what she is doing, although different, because she meets the requirements of the course and the curriculum. She does not worry much about criticality and she does not see the need to have it:

As a teacher of English as a foreign language, I mostly teach language in the direct method as non-native speakers need to distinguish the use & usage of the grammatical structures, as well as, they need to be correct when they choose their vocabulary.

Hanan was satisfied “to some extent” with whatever she is doing and she tries to make the best out her class time to make it a motivating educational experience to all the students. They represent a different meaning of job satisfaction, which creates a diversity of views about job satisfaction, and this could be interpreted as one of the concepts at the heart of qualitative inquiry; there is no one definite way of seeing things. Everything stems from human experience and would always be perceived differently from multiple dimensions.

Ali, following the same path, believes that CLA can be achieved even if at a low level:

Complete satisfaction may never be attainable. However, it is always possible to improvise and work out ways to ensure sound progress of classroom activities that may enrich students' learning experience and egg the students on to enjoy the process of language acquisition.

Some of the instructors expressed their zeal if CLA teaching is applied, as they would wish:

Rose indicated that “you would open discussions, among themselves and you would broaden the scope of the topic, create flavor and enjoyment to learning”, Iris also expressed her joy “I don’t feel as a teacher, we are discussing things at the same level, same stand sort of speak, it is more pleasant definitely”

The lfs were very frustrating, but the hope that the instructors showed and the zealous passion for teaching still inhabited their academic identity. They are not happy, but they are not desperate. We cannot say that they are satisfied, but they are doing the best they can, and making the best of what they have.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The chapter demonstrated the underlying themes that were present in the data. The data revealed the major themes of the teaching of critical language awareness, working with critical language awareness and the limitations of criticality in the classroom. The themes revealed some categories that were expressed by the participants during their discussions. The themes will be discussed with reference to a theoretical framework and literature in the following chapter.



## **Chapter Six**

### **Discussion**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The thematic analysis of the data showed that the concept of critical language awareness is fairly well identified by the participants of the study. The interviews with them revealed their knowledge of many factors related to CLA, their attempts to work with it in their classrooms, and the limitations and obstacles that impede the application of its teaching. The themes that emerged from the data were all related to their practice and to criticality in language teaching. From these themes, a number of concepts were of most importance to this research focus, and they will be further discussed in the following sections. Globalization, language imperialism, ideology imposition, power relations were some core issues relevant to the themes, and they were also evident in literature and theory. The findings confirmed that only two of the nine participants were positive about their critical language awareness implementation in the classroom, while the other seven participants were not sure about their capability of CLA teaching due to sociocultural aspects and the educational system barriers. For the globalization theme, the participants identified global effects on education. For the theme of language imperialism, the recurrent categories were connected to language dominance and potential ideology imposition if CLA is not used in the classroom. For the theme of criticality awareness, the categories were indicative of instructors' awareness of the need to teach CLA and also the limitations to its use. It was also evident from the data that the instructors were not generally satisfied with their roles. This chapter provides a discussion of the emerging themes and their relevance

to the theoretical perspectives they are pinned in. Themes were found through the application of some techniques such as careful reading, interpreting data through open coding to compare similarities, noting of repetitions across data, and relating them to existing literature and socioeconomic conditions (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

## **6.2 Globalization**

Globalization has an on impact cultures, identities and sociopolitical boundaries. However, not all agree on how deeply it is affecting the different fields of life; Block and Cameron (2002) indicated “there is debate on how far it represents an achieved reality” (p. 2), but they explained that “Most sociologists and social theorists take a view that falls between the two extremes” of a completely-run world by capitalist forces and a world that is not so globally oriented, (2002: p.3).

All the participants agreed on the fact that we are living in an era of globalization that is shaping our lives. Globalization and the driving economy shape a forceful impact on education. New methods and ideologies are forming and it becomes hard at a point to determine which is the driving force of the other, the escalating globalized economy or the educational institutions that are trying to fulfill the expectations of the work market that should satisfy the needs of the corporate economy. The case is no different in the Arab world as educational institutions are trying to prepare their students for global competitions (Hatimi, 2018). Language teachers have an important role to help their students to be more linguistically aware and more critical “because of the forces of globalization that are currently shaping the globe flows of interested knowledge and cultural capital” (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 27).

The following sections include a closer look at globalization and the different aspects it entails in relation to language teaching, and its relation to the study context.

### **6.2.1 Globalization and Language Teaching**

There is a great relation between globalization and language teaching in specific because language is the medium of communication, and it relates issues of power and dominance since it can impose specific life trends and ideologies. Teaching and learning of English, the most used language around the world and the language of teaching in the study context, might raise issues of control over the learners and a change in life styles and beliefs that naturally come with the language. Troudi and AlHafidh (2017) argued about the tension of global and local that are trying to “reach a state of equilibrium between global forces and local knowledge” (p. 109). The global trends are being localized in order to equip the local with global powers, which is In line with the sense of glocalization (Robertson 1995). In the study context, as explained in chapter 3, a wave of private schools and universities swarmed the educational system in order to improve the mono-sourced economy and prepare learners for jobs that fit into the new modernized and challenging world. Hill (2007) explained the changes in education throughout the globe in order to fulfill the capital needs of neoliberalism. The “plans for education” he advocated aim at providing a workforce that suits a capitalist world, and at the same time enables the educational institutions to make profitable business (p. 204).

With a specific focus on the Gulf countries, Al-Ruwaihi (2017) pointed out that privatization of higher education, which has started to be common in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), turned it into an attracting business with the

goal of making the highest revenue, and that has negatively affected the quality of education and student performance. Strong present factors of neoliberal forces are changing the world; thus, education as a major contribution to life, is inevitably changing. One major factor is marketization and how it is changing global discourse with new “business” tendencies (Mauntner, 2015). The changing form of the world would definitely affect education, especially higher level because of the impact of work force and market needs. Natale and Doran (2012), warned against the ethical dilemma that results in epidemic effects of marketization “education considered in such a context reduces students to a revenue stream and colleges to businesses; this is the contemporary face of education” (p. 187). Similarly, Filippakou (2016) urged higher education authorities to “question itself and its relations to policy” (p. 3). Most students as the study showed from the perspectives of the instructors, language teachers, were not ready for a critical synthesis that could define hidden agendas in texts or discourse, and they did not have adequate linguistic abilities to negotiate ideologies or identify them, or were “intimidated by the idea of studying their special field in English” (Troudi, 2009, p. 208) even if encouraged by their teachers.

Students strive to fit into the new global economy, as they join private universities to obtain degrees that could help them with their careers, but at the same time, they are striving with their limited synthesis abilities and the lack of preparation for such challenging education. This investment in education has certainly allowed for vast varieties to learn and advance, but many of the students do not seem to benefit or use these opportunities because they have not been prepared to develop a critical eye, or to question the givens as the

participants in the study indicated.

The role of teachers would be of crucial importance as they are the center of language teaching and they play the most important role within their discussions to voice, direct, critique and clarify. Yet, the mission to empower their students would be difficult as to balance the language dominance and their students' cultural limitations. In this regard, Akbari (2008), pointed out "if people are supposed to become empowered and their voices recognized and respected, then the first step needs to be a respect for who they are and the values they represent" (p. 280). Similar findings were cited in a study conducted by Ateyat and Gasaymeh (2015) to check the faculty members' perceptions about globalization and its effect on higher education. The faculty welcomed globalization and its positive impact on education, but also suggested more caution of ideological associations linked to it.

Another aspect of globalization and language teaching is relevant to media use and effect. The participants conveyed their use of Media in the form of videos or websites that facilitate the interpretation of texts and concepts they teach. Most of the media used in classes are directed to critical purposes such as showing examples and initiating critical discussions, in a form of critical analysis of discourse. On the other hand, the students have easy access to media, news and social media platforms which all perform a tremendous effect on perceiving, using and analyzing the language. They are faced with limitless possibilities of interpretations, and the role of teachers should be assisting and engaging so as to refine meanings and stimulate CLA. Most of the participants in the study try to assist their students through discussions and audiovisual aids,

but as indicated earlier in chapter 5, they yield to the conditions of their teaching environments that force structured plans. Kessler (2018) pointed out the importance of different media and technological tools that guide language teaching in recent years, and “can also inform our language teaching practices” (p. 207). Similarly, kumaravadivelu (2008) pointed out the effect of globalization on language in relation to media use as “virtual communities” that are very much influenced by globalization since everyone has easy access to information and different world views with their real images and not the polished one. Such comparisons might fuel CLA if regularly handled and incorporated in teaching.

### **6.2.2 Culture and Globalization**

Another issue that is relevant to the instructors’ awareness of globalization as a main factor in their CLA teaching is the relation between globalization and culture. The instructors did not find it easy to discuss issues of sociopolitical sensitivity and they always mind the cultural barrier. Although it is a globalized world in which there is ease of communication and access to information, it is still very uncommon to freely discuss or approach all topics without any consideration regardless of how known they are (kumaravadivelu 2012). All the participants showed awareness of their teaching cultural context that shaped their interaction as well as their students. On the other hand, this could impede the critical discussions within language teaching.

In his book about cultural globalization and language education, Kumaravadivelu (2008) discussed three main aspects of globalization; its relevance to history, culture and language education. He explicitly explained how globalization has very powerful economic and cultural effects throughout history, especially now with the power of the “internet” (36). These concepts

matched the findings of the study, because the participants expressed how they valued the critical language awareness and the criticality application in their classrooms. They were aware of the strong impacts that globalization casts over sociocultural aspects of life, and the need to work with these elements in classes so they would help their students be empowered and aware of these global changes that students may be indirectly facing through the continuous exposition to media and the new trends of life.

### **6.2.3 The Market of Education**

With new trends of education that strive to provide the needs of new professions and demands of a globalized world, educational policies keep adjusting their programs and courses to serve the economy and the dominant structures of power. Language teaching is mainly focused on English as a dominant language that empowers economical transactions in different fields of commerce. The new trends also necessitated a critical view of language teaching that is not only needed by students, but also by instructors in order to analyze, synthesize and develop transformative methods of critical teaching that can produce competent performances in a global world.

Globalization, with the rise in transportation and trade, empowered corporate economy that has changed the world into a big market dominated by huge industrial bodies such as international companies, banks and organizations all around the globe. This corporate investment is empowered by a remarkable rise in digital services that facilitated communication, mobility and information access. The change entailed all nations of different economical standards for fitting purposes, and as a result of all the previous changes, cultural changes were inevitable due to the exact reasons of globalization. Luke, Luke and

Graham (2007) explained that “connectivity” through globalization, having a “global” consciousness, “acting local, thinking global” are vantage points that are meant and experienced differently for people in differently situated localities” (p. 6).

The relation between globalization and the new market-consuming era that we are living in now is interchangeable, and it is hard to define a separating line between them. Globalization has transformed long established conceptions of solid values in economy, society, education and different life aspects. Giroux (2011) pointed out the “need for a new political and pedagogical language for addressing the changing contexts” in a new world mainly based on capitalist principles (p. 135). Within the same realm, although differentiating between marketization which has short term job attainment focus and marketing which would enhance learning and achievement on the long run, Judson and Taylor (2014) indicated that marketization focus on education is the “fulcrum which forges a higher level of student satisfaction and lower level of student intellectual development” (p.54). Educational standards of achievement are becoming unrealistic due to prioritizing consumerist standards. Natale and Doran (2012) have described marketization of education as being “epidemic” causing an “ethical dilemma” because it focuses attention on modeled education directed for certain jobs and degrees, (p. 187). Globalization and the changes it brought to the world necessitated a shift in all the aspects that we deal with everyday; hence, a language change in education, which is our focus in this study, is inevitable.

Due to these new trends, higher education institutions have undergone many changes in the courses they offer, the language of teaching and the



educational system. Tremblay, Roseveare and Lalancette (2012) indicated, “Higher education institutions have not only become more diverse in type, ownership and educational offerings, they have also diversified their missions, targeting specific groups of students” (p. 21). Hill (2007) pointed out the wide-ranged changes entailing education as a result of neoliberal forces, “throughout the globe” to fit the needs of the “capitalist class” (p. 204). Similarly, Morey (2001) indicated more driving forces for education changes represented in “Emerging technologies and changing market mechanisms are stimulating new opportunities for for-profit education and training organizations” (p. 301).

The results of a study that was conducted to investigate the effect of commodification of education on higher education institutions were similar to the results of the present study as the participants indicated their dissatisfaction with the impact of market-like context; Lawrence and Sharma (2002) found that the market-based applications to education jeopardized the essence of education as a social institution. The participants of the present study showed their knowledge of how the institutions they work in are commercialized and prioritize profit policies that affect their work and teaching through overloading them and enforcing preset plans that cripple their autonomy, and at the same time, impede CLA teaching. Similarly, Nind and Lewthwaite (2018) showed the negative effect of marketization on higher education research plans through turning the pedagogical discourse into a “dis-course of metrics and consumerism” (p. 402).

That is relevant to Freire’s (1970) banking model in which he noted the commodity of education and the treatment of students as clients who should be

treated with the utmost care and be provided with all facilitating strategies that guarantees success and false high grades with no real effort exerted to earn them. This facilitation of providing knowledge would naturally lead students to be unmotivated and irresponsible, he highlighted this type of education as “an act of depositing in which the students are depositories and the teacher is the depositor” (p. 72).

This view is in accordance with what the participants mentioned about feeling that they work in “factory-like mills” as one of the participants indicated. The participants were aware of the fact that they are working in corporate institutions that care more for the profit and based on that, they shape their work and their teaching to fit the context. CLA teaching in such environment does not provide an extensive chance of critical discussion of texts and alteration of social injustices, or realization of oppressions and inequalities in the world.

On the other hand, it is argued that the process of marketization might not be too harmful for education, as it would open more chances to provide needed categories and allow empowering competition. Barnett (2011) defended the “indefensible”, and stated “markets and higher education can happily co-exist” (p. 45). He argued how the notions of a market and customer stance may actually help students hold themselves accountable for their own learning. The status of a language is determined by its dominance and variety of use in the world. English has gained that status especially with all the popularity it gained in a world that is motivated by international commerce supremacy. However, the students within the context of the study did not show an enthusiastic attitude toward critical analysis of language use as most participants indicated.

### **6.3 Linguistic Imperialism**

All the participants in the study used English in and out of the classroom as the medium of communication, even the Arab instructors. Only one of the participants mentioned that she sometimes used Arabic, the first language, to break the monotony of the class. English within the context of the study would fall in the expanded circle of Kachru's (1985) three concentric circles of English use in which language use is based on internationalization that "seek to benefit from the affordances associated with English as the global academic language" (Stelma & Fay, 2019, p.10). Thus, English is associated with ideologies of western nature more than a language of communication. Although using English in a language classroom would be normally expected as teachers teach it, it was not an indication of students' language proficiency.

A study conducted by Coluzzi (2012) to investigate the expanding use of English in relation to globalization, concluded with asserting the strong effect of English culture and products on local cultures. Kumaravadivelu (2012) argued that the dominance of teaching English as a global language is associated with the dominance of its culture, and that affects local languages and identities. Nevertheless, we could say there is growing awareness and determined safeguarding of own language and traditions. Public educational institutions offer strong Arabic education that maintains the value of the Arabic language, and the common nature of the overall culture is conservative and rooted in Arabic traditions and norms.

English language domination and globalization are two concepts that are closely connected as they pose dependence on each other. Habash and Troudi (2015) viewed global English as a "buzz-word in ELT and English language

education circles” (p. 59). Interchangeable connections stem from the wide use of English all over the world, and the global power that it has. In accordance with the previous notion, May (2017) and Curry and Lillis (2018) indicated the dominance of English as a global language of research and instruction. Such special rank called for more attention to its teaching to help students get better job opportunities. Similarly, Troudi (2009) explained in that regard how “English has already gained the status of the official language of instruction” (p. 203).

The research study findings revealed that all the English instructors that were interviewed were aware of the dominance of the language due to the different economic and social reasons. The students needed to learn the language (though it is not their major degree) to empower their careers and to be more socially accepted. Since Kuwait is a melting pot, people of different backgrounds and cultures live in it, but almost everyone used English (or at least a form of it!) to socially communicate. Yet, the prevailing of English because of economical reasons and the need to cope with the new changes posed some kind of pressure on students because not all of them have the same capability or competence as the instructors revealed. So the use of English would become a barrier more than being a passage.

The interviewed instructors explained that many of the students are not able to use the language fluently, cannot express themselves and are not able to be linguistically critical because they either fail to understand meanings or express opinions. Despite the tendency to maintain a level of criticality in their language teaching, most instructors were still driven by the students’ language competency to be very clear and direct in teaching and in assessments. They

used critical discussions sparingly and did not rely on them as a routine in their classes. The main goal for them was to finish the lessons, have good class average, write the reports, complete the paper work, and follow the syllabus plan that paradoxically assumes a critical stance in students' performance.

### **6.3.1 Ideology Imposition**

Ideologies are embedded in language and transmitted in communication. Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouk (2005) view language as “ideological object” (p. 199) that forms a “multitude of activities” (Phillipson, 1997, p.239). Although there is strong cultural and linguistic awareness of the first language value in different public, educational, and media contexts of the study, the threat to own culture and ideologies is powerful (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 2007). Similarly, Kumaravadivelu (2012) pointed the imposition of Western ideology through “propagating western knowledge” (p.7).

Language domination along with culture effects and the need to be aware in order to identify ideologies and their implications were issues that got attention in literature. Troudi and Jendli (2011) explained how their study “challenges established discourses that have been reinforcing English as a language of science and academia while relegating Arabic to a language of heritage and religion” (p. 23). Such ideologies could impact teaching and learning. In the present study, some of the instructors who were interviewed, Hanan for example, identified the problem that some of the students have, which is to be “mocked” if they used English in their communication. Some of the students come from families who do not use English at all, either because they are very religious, or conservative. That case also would create a gap in the classroom discussions as the instructors identified.

The findings indicated that the instructors were aware of ideology imposition and knew that the books they teach and the culture that is within what they teach could have impacts on students if they were not able to teach CLA. Kumaravadivelu (2008) indicated in his discussion of globalization that there is “No doubt global cultural flows have resulted in an extraordinary spread of Western consumption patterns” (p. 44). These patterns or dogmas would indicate those in power and dominance because they get to control and shape the dominated through their prevalence in different fields. In the present study, the participants indicated the relatively ease and facilitation students enjoy in their lives, which would negatively affect their performance in academic settings.

### **6.3.2 Power Relations**

Power is about authority and control. The perplexity of micro and macro relations as discussed previously in chapter 3 showed that whomever is in control dominates, and since English has the upper hand in all the aspects of modern life, it gets to control and dominate. Janks (2010) indicated that “domination” is related to power (p. 35), and compared the concept of power as domination that may hold negative effects, to the positive effect of power that Foucault addressed. She explained that as “Foucault sees power as strong because it produces effects” (p. 50). Moreover, Troudi and AlHafidh (2017) critically question the power of English in the Gulf region.

Following O'Reilly and Reed (2011) discussion of three discourses that control organizational agency in modernism, the written or spoken discourses represent social activities and socio-cultural practices that impose advantaged power of discourse. Discourses show power of advantaged societies; therefore, implementing criticality is of crucial importance to cope with the changes of

power. Lukes (2005) noted that the definition of power is not so clear because it changes according to context and effect, he claimed that power exists when “abilities to bring about significant effects, specifically by furthering their own interests and/or affecting the interests of others,” (p. 65). English is effective and domineering in social, political and cultural contexts, so we can surely declare it powerful. Likewise, Louber and Troudi (2019) problematize the prevalence of English in the Gulf and the unavoidable global trends. The production of language occurs in communication contexts and it associates language use with power as the perspective of English as international language assumes its power in text and discourse and “actions and attitudes” (Rojo 2017, p.78).

This prevalence of English within the context of the study might be problematic for some of the students who are not privileged with a rich linguistic background as some of the instructors indicated. Their limited usage of English may rip them the chances of CLA and impede their effective participation in the classroom, as well as limited knowledge and usage of English may cause them less fortunate career opportunities. Moreover, These students affect the overall atmosphere of the class and hinder critical approaches to language as this would exclude and alienate them.

Selvi and Yazan (2017) indicated “Across the GCC region, English plays a prominent role in the educational realms, with different points of onset in the educational curricula” (p. 73). This idea is suitable to explain why applying communicative methods does not usually succeed in fostering criticality because it might not suit in the context, so some students tune out and lose the

motive for achievement which cause them a sense of incompetence because of the inability to use the language critically. Besides problematizing the criticality issue here, which will be discussed in the next section, another issue arises; the unequal powers that privilege students over each other. A dilemma then faces the instructor in trying to keep the balance of an almost impossible equilibrium, the fair chances and the constructive criticality. In the current study, the instructors were aware of the marginalization that occurs because of the different language proficiency levels that bar the use of criticality in the class empowering some students and depowering some others. Phillipson (2015) similarly indicated the power of English in creating a prominent status that controls societies and creates its own powerful sides.

When one side casts power and control over others, inequalities and injustices would surely arise even at minor levels such as not having the same opportunities to express opinions and communicate views fluently as others, or to be deprived of understanding concepts and negotiating them due to poor language competency. The instructors conveyed how students varying language proficiency was a barrier to having any form of CLA. Such discrepancy would make the main goal of the instructor is to help the students understand concepts that they would be tested in to guarantee the success in assessments and the course preset plan. The idea of assessment is, as one of the participants revealed, to avoid critical questions that may require criticality and contemplation of critical language awareness. The main concern is to help students get the highest grades, and it is hard to achieve that with any form of critical questions. Conversely, Troudi (2018) argued for the importance of a



critical approach to language testing to enrich the teaching learning experiences.

#### **6.4 Criticality in the Classroom**

Most of the instructors implied that they tend to use a critical approach in their language teaching. The least they use is an interactive communicative method that might initiate CLA to encourage their students to be critical, and to go beyond the literal meanings of words. The instructors implied that they are aware of the fact that words do not have fixed meanings, so they do their best to help their students also be more critical in the process of meaning making, and in being critical to what they read or interpret; Briscoe, Arriaza and Henze (2009) indicated the value of critical language enforcements for students' practice. Nevertheless, interactive communication and activities, whether group or individual ones, do not necessarily mean a critical stand to teaching language, but it is more of content-based instruction that facilitates comprehension of the topics and at the same time, makes their learning experience interesting, which is the goal of the instructors as they have expressed.

Most of the participants tend to use somewhat implicit methods of teaching to provide a level of criticality in their language classrooms, and to foster meaning negotiation in an attempt to assist their students to construct their own understandings of the presented concepts through engaging stimulating cognitive mind mapping activities and communicative constructions. Conversely, in a study about the effectiveness of explicit or implicit methods in teaching grammar, Nazari (2012) investigated the effect of either methods on learners' learning and producing language abilities, learners showed more linguistic abilities and organized speech when explicit language teaching methods were

used. This might indicate that explicit teaching is necessary to help learners with how to put the ideas together to form comprehensible linguistic outputs. The instructors in the present study used explicit methods, but they also valued implicit methods (even if they find them impractical or inapplicable), and They hoped that implicit approaches would empower the learning of their students and help them to develop their CLA. Taylor, Despagne and Faez (2017) indicated that there is a common understanding between language teachers that language teaching is not mainly about the grammar of the language, but the meaning in context and its relation to sources of power, which is at the core of CLA practice.

Language teachers face a challenge in teaching the language because it is the core in which all learning is based, and it is their role in major to help the students construct their own meanings and ideas. Teaching English, especially as a second language, such as the case with this study and the participants, casts a major role on instructors to help students construct their own meanings out of the texts or the concepts they read or discuss. Some of them, as mentioned previously in chapter 5 tend to be critical at the surface level, and encourage discussions that search for different interpretations of texts or speech. On the other hand, some of them adopt a critical language teaching approach that would ignite an inquisitive spirit to question the injustices and inequalities in the world. Yet, these discussions, critical as they are, do not go beyond the social or cultural boundaries that the instructors are aware of. There are no set rules for critical language awareness or a critical approach to teaching language, nor there is complete freedom of going critical in the classroom, but there is always a way to do it as one of the participants indicated

previously, especially if it is “a way of thinking, living, and doing” (Pessoa & de Urzêda Freitas, 2012, p.22).

Part of language teaching with a critical stance is connected to instructor’s own beliefs and values. I have seen from the interviews with the participants the common tendency to criticality in the classroom through communicative approaches and allowing room for critical discussions and implications of the discussed topics. Nevertheless, only two of the nine participants insisted on adopting a CLA stance in all the concepts they teach. They “snatched” criticality and enforced it as they have mentioned. Their critical stance is not a teaching style, but a way of doing. In order for instructors to work for their passion and potential, and to reward their students and themselves, they need to become critical intellectuals that treat the knowledge as a relevant part to their learners experiences that is deeply rooted in their cognition, and not as an external body of knowledge that they deliver to them. In this sense, CLA is a necessary component of learning/teaching that makes the educational experience worthwhile.

According to Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993), critical teachers are “creators” of cognitive situations that are life-like (p. 301). They are not just driven by critical teaching methods, but criticality is inherent in their personalities and they project eager passion in teaching. If teachers are deprived of their freewill and autonomy, how would that affect their agency and self fulfillment? This concept is in line with the results of Noormohammadi’s (2014) investigation on the effect of English teacher self-reflection on autonomy. The more positive the reflection is, the more autonomy and self-satisfaction teachers would develop.

So this might explain why some instructors who do not adopt critical approaches are still satisfied with their work and performance because they know their capabilities, which are not diminished because of personal incompetence, but hindered by forceful surroundings. In this case, adapting to these difficult surroundings might be the accomplishment itself.

#### **6.4.1 Teaching CLA within Critical Pedagogy**

Critical pedagogy in literature is the visualization of teaching and instruction that can be identified as “supported classroom analysis and rejection of oppression, injustice, inequality, silencing of marginalized voices, and authoritarian social structures” (Ellsworth, 1989, p.300). The two concepts of critical pedagogy, as referred to within this study, and CLA are closely related, as “CLA needs to be located within critical pedagogy” (Wallace, 1999, p.98). Stemming from the critical theory paradigm, which is about change and action, critical pedagogy is one of the tools of criticality in academic settings, and CLA is an aspect of criticality that embodies sociopolitical and socioeconomic ideologies. These ideologies are reflected in the language classroom as a miniature of life encounters, which would require cognitive and conscious awareness of English as a global language with its functions and multiple meanings. The participants, as explained in chapter five, attempt to encourage and develop learners’ willingness for critical discussions that might touch on world issues and ignite criticality. Wallace (1997) indicated a form of understanding critical pedagogy and CLA on two levels of critical and conscious awareness of critiquing ideologies. Moreover, A form of critical pedagogy in the study context is the instructors’ engagement in their own learning process in the classroom. They attempt to relate new views of meanings to concepts they

teach as they modify and change their methods to reach a common ground with their students and to see concepts from their students' perspective in order to help them improve their understanding and enhance their critical abilities.

In order to maximize learning opportunities, Kumaravadivelu (1994) offered a postmethod framework of language teaching that includes strategic macro-strategies, which are general pedagogic plans for language teaching, and micro-strategies, which are the specific plans instructors can generate in order to fit their needs to the specific-situation environments they teach in, and incorporate a social aspect within their teaching plans. The participants provided answers that included all these general strategies on which they depended to create their own critical stances based on relating language properties to sociocultural issues. For example, as some of the participants indicated, Mustafa would teach "conditional if" through posing an enquiry about life issues, and Mariam would target world issues and ask for opinions. The other participants would appreciate CLA teaching whenever applicable through the communicative mode they build with their students; meanwhile, adhere to the preset plans in order to comply with the organizational requirements.

In his discussions of critical moments in teaching, Pennycook (2004) stressed the critical instances that happen in social contexts where language is not structured, more than in classroom contexts. In the same line of thought, Troudi (2009) summoned teachers' consciousness for the need to develop self-critique and "offer educational alternatives that suit the students' real educational needs" (p. 213). Some of the instructors in the study acknowledged their role in identifying their responsibility of creating a critical stance in the classroom, but they also revealed that it is not easy to achieve because of the

inability of some students to get involved in these discussions, sociocultural considerations and administrative loads.

However, the discussions and meaning negotiation that take place in the classroom, and the shift of focus or change of concentration from one concept or idea to the other can be considered an element of critical pedagogy that modifies itself according to context of the classroom and understanding of students. This modification to appeal to the different needs in a classroom indicates the freedom of interpretation, which is the core of criticality that refrains from “oppressive ways of knowing and oppressive knowledges” (Ellsworth 1989, p.322).

Teachers developed change of process in continuous attempts to provide the best practice that fits their teaching contexts and students’ learning needs. They incorporated interactive communications and at the same time, maintained the standards of assessment and the line of procedures within their work context. In the process, they self-reflect and contentiously adjust and evaluate. Phillips and Cody (2020) explained how “teachers often question themselves, their pedagogic ability and, therefore, their effectiveness as teachers” (p. 216).

#### **6.4.2 Teachers’ consciousness**

Teachers should not only be transmitters of knowledge, but transformers of minds and souls; therefore, there is need to actually perform their roles “beyond the borders of the classroom” (Kumaravadivelu 2003, p. 14). The participants in the study were socially conscious and their answers revealed their understanding of the social and cultural implications that shape their teaching and their communication with their students. They acknowledged their responsibility in creating “conditions in which learners engage in meaningful

problem-posing/solving activities” and motivating them to engage actively even if not critically (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, p. 29). This is done against a top-down approach to education and product-based curriculum.

The participants also conveyed their responsibility in being considerate to students’ social and academic abilities, and at the same time trying to be critical in text analysis. Additionally, The participants showed sensitivity and awareness to the surrounding environment and the nature of their students, which indicated a self-reflection that enabled them to suitably adapt to motivating or demotivating factors that interfere with their teaching.

A study based on teacher training reported by Gibbs and Coffey (2004) to measure the effectiveness of surface or deep approaches to teaching at university, reported positive results in both teachers and students in regard to teachers’ student-focused skills. Another study conducted by Trigwell, Prosser and Waterhouse (1999) investigated the relation between constructive conceptual teaching methods and better achievement of students at university level. This drive for criticality was not an easy task, and at most times as the data analysis showed, it was hard to accomplish. Nevertheless, they were aware that criticality and critical language awareness are necessary for better and more effective learning.

Interpretive research holds social and cultural perspectives that encompass all fields of human interaction embodying all the complications, fears, worries and interpretation that any experience might hold. It adopts an inductive approach that anticipates theory from emerging data. Thus, while this research study aimed at investigating the participants’ knowledge of CLA, it disclosed a lot about their academic identity and how they feel toward it. Within

their teaching process, the participants either yielded to the limitations that stumbled critical reading approaches, or struggled to go beyond texts and get their students to read “against the text” with an outer perspective, and build a subjective view of it (Janks, 1997, p. 331).

The participants also tried to manage their class interaction and modify, change or bargain their “selves” in order to manage their classrooms and “maintain a dominating teaching role” (Day, 1998, p. 258). Within the process of reading and interacting towards meanings, teachers try to find their position and locate themselves in the classroom and find the meanings that could be accepted. Teachers in the present study tried to use the right critical language in communicating instruction and establishing rapport to engage in a social whole with students in order to create social change, if they can (Briscoe, Arriaza & Henze 2009). They demonstrated a knowledgeable will of tuning in critical discussions if applicable, using multimedia channels to ignite critical responses as Iris and Mariam said, or real-life situations and sociopolitical responses as Mustafa declared.

CLA could be achieved if instructors are ready for it, so it is important for them to be aware, regardless of the pressures, that they should be keen on adopting a critical stance in their language teaching. Two of the participants indicated that they are determined to “create” criticality in discussing language choices regardless of any limiting conditions. It was clear that fostering a CLA stance could liberate both instructors and learners even if not at a high level of questioning, and it could at the least cases create a sense of intriguing that could elevate the whole learning experience. Both instructors did not indicate



that this tendency to criticality is based on professional training, but it is related to their passion of teaching and fondness of critical discussions. They practice criticality and awareness in their classrooms and in the contexts they teach in to help students problematize and develop critical language awareness.

Wondering about the state of the teacher self, If teachers settle for the safety zone of teaching in order to maintain the preset standards and rigid rules coming from a top down management afar, they would mainly care about the process of teaching, the syllabus plan, the assessments, the tools, the designated rules and such details that keep repeating everyday in a gradual dehumanization of the learning process. The ability and the realization of themselves as risk takers and not truth holders enable teachers to become in a state of sharing authority and power in a teaching/learning educational environment that is sociable and connected to their students. When teacher-self and student-self are in a social context of humanized interaction that allows for exchanging teacher/learner human experience, “teaching can become otherwise than teaching when it is not repressive and directed to the self- same” (Säfström, 2003, p. 29). In line with this, Freire (2014) noted “The dream of humanization” that would enable overcome the solid realities we encounter (p. 124).

### **6.5 Administrative Limitations**

The changes that occurred in the Higher Education sector in the past few decades are dramatic. There is a common expectation that assumes teachers to know it all; that is, having the ability to deal with the teaching load and the administrative load. Teaching becomes, more of a battlefield in which the goal would be to finish the day peacefully.

In his book about language teaching, Kumaravadivelu (2003) explained that the role of the teacher is much more effective and influencing than the theatrical role of administrators because his/her role has much more profound consequences than any of the other roles in an educational institution. Ironically enough, the role of teachers does not receive the same credit or definition. They are always expected to transmit knowledge from one generation to another with one preset goal that is measured by grades, to make sure that students absorbed the content of taught topics. The case is no different with college classrooms, in which instructors are expected to deliver information, assure comprehension, help students get the highest scores through predetermined plans set for them regardless of the specific nature of each classroom.

With education turning into a changing “competitive” corporate entity in which mutual benefits and business conditions apply, becoming critical and contemplative would diminish (Hall, 2018, p.35). The market conditions expect the educational institutions to make profit, and the learners are expecting to be granted minimum effort grades.

One of the features of the market education is the intensive work load of teaching and administrative tasks that are allotted for teachers who do not have a say in any of the details imposed by higher and middle management. Due to the stratified hierarchical layers of management, tasks and duties become complicated and a lot of needless paper work branch out and perform a huge time and effort-consuming load resulting in lessened quality teaching improvement. Gradually, educators lose control over their teaching and planning and lose their self-authority to “the university management” (Teichier, 2008, p. 42).

In a generally oppressive academic culture, it is hard to invest in criticality and nurture independence. A recent study conducted in Kuwait conveyed the tendency of oppression in educational settings. Al-Shammari, Testerman and Halimi (2020) highlighted the “centralized system” that controls decision-making, alienates teachers’ and deprives autonomy (p. 213). The case is not much different in higher education institutions, if not worse because of the prolonged work hours, stratified teaching tasks and intensified responsibilities assigned to instructors. The participants in the study showed how they have busy teaching loads and crippling related tasks.

## **6.6 Themes in Relation to Theory**

Discussing the themes in light of the literature gives them a wider scope and provides better understanding of the theories they are pinned in. critical language awareness requires critical interpretation of meanings and encompassing social and political issues.

### **6.6.1 Echoes of Postmodernism and Poststructuralism**

The two approaches contributed to the interpretation of the participants’ experiences and discussions. They mostly question their performance and to the best of their knowledge, communicate the uncertainty of meanings or ideas in an attempt to help their students develop critical skills and form their view of the world. Poststructuralism embodies ontological and epistemological assumptions that involve social and cultural aspects, which are closely related to human interaction and behavior, as well as emphasizing the power relations of dominance, marginalization and massive socioeconomic and sociocultural changes. These changes are definitely evident in education as the focus of concern. The two concepts hold a social perspective that rejects domination and

questions truths, while poststructuralism is more focused on questioning academic theories, Bloland (1995) argued “Postmodernism’s primary significance is its power to account for and reflect vast changes in our society, cultures, polity, and economy as we move from a production to a consumption society” (p. 521).

Agger (1991) associated poststructuralism, postmodernism and critical theory with social and contemporary societies. Similarly, Giddens (1990) viewed postmodernity as “new social and political agenda” (p.46). Morgan (2007) related poststructuralism to postmodernism as both are pinned in social backgrounds, “Poststructuralism is similarly postmodern in its attentiveness to the dynamics and disjunctures of social categories” (p. 951). Both concepts touch on sociocultural factors and the relevance to language and identity because the interpretation of language and multiple meanings in texts involve identity, which is a social formation.

Within the same realm, Green and Reid (2008) indicated the vast scope of postmodernism as “cultural-ideological and political-economic shifts” (p. 18). Relatively, with a wider perspective of it, poststructuralism can be understood as “a theory of social meaning and power” (Weedon, 1987, p. 27).

Bamgbose (2020) linked the social underpinning of poststructuralism to the postmethod planning of the language teaching in regard to modern trends of empowering criticality to attempt upgrading of social conditions and local development. Peters and Burbules (2004) highlighted the effective roles of both concepts on education. Poststructuralism does not support the fixed truths or concrete realities, but that our realities depend upon constructed meanings in social contexts. The social contexts change communication and response.

Poststructuralists believe that universal truths are unknowable, not known and not fixed as meanings keep changing. An apple 50 years ago referred to a fruit, and now it holds a whole different world of fascinating technology. Meanings of texts, shows or given messages differ according to the intention of their producers or gatekeepers, and definitely, the recipients of these messages.

The meaning is controlled by different elements that could change according to physical or psychological effects. So, a world of continuous changes and conversions cannot have fixed meanings. Among theories, poststructuralism is the theory that encourages questioning meanings and rebelling against dominations and raising awareness to power relations. Within the same line, Postmodernism is a concern of education too, in which critical awareness and inquisitive search for meanings is encouraged by teachers. The participants in the study were all aware of the need to address their students' learning styles, but they did not have enough power or liberty to encourage criticality on the expense of the desired grades. This raises a question of a paradoxical fact; although applications such as critical discussions and active communicative teaching are applied in classes, there is not much room for CLA, despite all good intentions, because of centralized preset rules instructors have to follow and the limitations they explained (see chapter 5).

As poststructuralism and postmodernism would be representing the new powers that control the world, Sarup (1993) indicated, "postmodernism is being talked and written about everywhere in contemporary Western societies" (p. 129). New shapes of thinking, believing and ideologies are emerging and thus, necessitate criticality and language choice awareness. Postmodernism is deeply connected to education and language learning. The technological

advancements transformed the values of knowledge and how and why it is acquired, and education has turned into a race field that tries to cope with rapid changes. Criticality and CLA, in particular to the study topic, is not a choice then, it is a need. New technologies are controlling production and work force calling for new forms of education, and the technologically advanced countries will own the power of control, as “knowledge will be the major component in the world-wide competition for power” (1993: p. 133).

Mclaren and McLaren (1995) call the dominating ideologies of times we are witnessing now “predatory”, which I found a perfect label for the racing changes in a all the aspects of life, causing a drastic change and power hunt geared by global capitalist interests competing for power; “It is a culture of universalism compressed into local time” (p. 2). The corporate atmosphere in the study context prevails and controls the instructors’ work, dominates academia, and continuously devours the overly exerted efforts in keeping up with racing demands.

Nevertheless, in their discussion of criticality in foreign language teaching, Shang and Troudi (2020) noted another dimension of postmodernism that is inherent in social conditions, “postmodernism considers individual identity as a continual self-social construction influenced by ability and willingness rather than by external and ideological imposition, such as history and power” (p. 96). Strong social and cultural models governed the participants in the study. They maintained the construction of their social and academic identity within their willingness to empower their students with all the means they could afford, either through critical stances or developmental assessments and practices that meet the requirements of the courses they teach.

### **6.6.2 The Divide Between Theory and Practice**

The title of this section refers mainly to the dilemma that instructors face in their profession, which could be targeted easily through comparing their high hopes of teaching with what they actually do in reality. Kumaravadivelu (2001) referred to it as the “theory/practice dichotomy” in which teachers have to give up their own personal theories in order to cope with the “job”. The practical limitations that face teachers in reality would make application of what they think is right (CLA teaching in this case) difficult and bound by prioritizing the regulations and plans set for them. There would be this dichotomy between what they believe in doing, would like to do, and what actually happens in reality.

The new liberal world enjoys ease of communication and transportation of information through different channels that should, supposedly, facilitate learning and assume criticality to be a given fact. Nevertheless, this is not the case within the context of the study and with the participants. La Velle (2019) indicated the gap between practice of learning/teaching and theory “essential elements of professionalization has been described, discussed and debated over the last three decades” (p. 369). In a study about the gap between teachers’ practice and research, Shaharabani & Yarden (2019) emphasized “Teachers’ concerns about the links between their complex world and educational theory” (p. 11).

Although teachers might be aware of the complications of their status and academic knowledge, their concern might be focused on the strategies of teaching, issues in their teaching context. The instructors in the present study were mainly concerned with keeping up with the requirements of their tasks and

duties, than the actual knowledge that should be presented and negotiated with their students, although the instructors completely understand, and even try, to functionalize criticality in their teaching. Teachers' personal theories of education could contradict with the actual classroom applications and this could be one of the main reasons for the lack of a critical pedagogy, which might result in less critical analysis of texts and discourse, and less CLA practice or application.

In accordance with the same idea of the dichotomy between theory and practice, Breunig (2005) indicated the "lack of congruence between the pedagogical theories that are espoused and the actual classroom practices that are employed" (p. 106). She stressed the importance of developing experiential learning based on reflective personal experience that cultivates a reflexive socially constructed praxis.

In order to develop and employ a critical practice, both teachers and students need to inquire about the effect of ideas, texts or the entity of things. Noteworthy here, inquiry, analysis and synthesis of knowledge are not common practice in the classroom for the different reasons discussed earlier in the chapter. Nevertheless, the participants in the present study tried to dedicate effort to manage criticality and work with it through relating the texts or rules of discussion to personal experiences and social or political issues that could be communicated in this context of teaching. The teachers in the study indicated how students are not always motivated to be critical about language choices, inferred ideologies or potential meanings. The motivation of the students to engage with a reflective attitude is crucial because without their motivation, CLA



teaching is hard to apply and would be meaningless in essence. Thus, teachers continuously try to empower and encourage their students to construct opinions and meanings (Seifert 2004), and include more real life concerns and experiences to add meanings and “purposes” for their interaction with students, (Akbari, 2008, p. 280). Language makes more meaning through the sociopolitical and cultural aspects it has, and through its communicative interactive features.

Since the term “communicative” was highlighted by many instructors as the type of teaching they adopt and that it allows for critical classroom discussions and gives a space for students to construct and negotiate meanings, we would assume that this level of criticality is sufficient enough in such a sensitive educational context. Nevertheless, there was doubt about the value of the communicative approach in showing credibility; Legutke and Thomas (1991), Nunan (1987), and Thornbury (1996) revealed that the so-called communicative classrooms they examined were not communicative (as cited in Kumaravadivelu 2006, p. 62). The communicative approach does not guarantee criticality or even a level of communication that allows for a critical discussion. The instructors of the study knew it is a very limited use of criticality, if any, and they adapted to the status quo since most of them agreed on the need to fulfill the course requirements, which would necessitate a smooth performance for grades purposes. The instructors implied their use of CLA teaching and concept negotiations whenever possible through the responses they illicit from students for the questions that require analysis in the texts they teach, but they also implied the little responses they usually get, which do not go far beyond clear meanings. In other words, they embraced the common concept of CLA teaching

within the limitations of the organizational requirements.

It would be of crucial importance for instructors to bridge that gap between the hoped for critical language class, which would constitute a unique teacher/learner experience, and the real day-to-day class that drains away the enthusiasm of the educational experience. Bridging the gap between theory and practice is not an easy task, but professional development that culturally and socially fits the purpose of integrating the contextual background, the collective benefit of teachers and students, and research that investigates the self development and behavior could help in improving the learning and teaching process, (Korthagen, 2010).

## **6.7 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the major themes that emerged from the data and their implications on teaching and learning experiences in regard to context and theory. The views of the instructors showed a great sense of critical language awareness and its applications in their teaching, which is affected by global trends in education. The majority identified the importance of CLA teaching. Yet, they also implied the difficulty of doing so due to several sociocultural and academic limitations that cripple criticality and autonomy. This paradox could create a gap between the hope for a more enjoyable teaching experience and the imposed reality of conditions beyond their abilities.

## Chapter 7

### Implications and Conclusions

#### 7.1 Summary of the Main Findings

The research questions of the study focused on the views of the language instructors about criticality and the factors that might be involved in its application or limitation. The findings indicated constructive views about CLA teaching through interactive approach. The findings also showed the factors that contribute to criticality, and the limitations that face CLA teaching.

The following sections will discuss the summary of findings regarding each question, the theoretical and pedagogical implications of the present study, suggestions for further research and finally ends with the personal reflection on the PhD journey.

##### 7.1.1 Instructors Perceiving Themselves

It is worth mentioning that the participants did not hear of the term *critical language awareness* before we had these “discussions”, which they had a positive impact on them as all of them vented their inner voices and expressed their teaching styles, feelings and limitations. The responses revealed a number of themes that showed the participants’ familiarity with the concepts of criticality and critical analysis of texts. It can be concluded from the results that they mostly adopt a communicative interactive approach of teaching through which they urge the students to construct meanings and relate them to their own experiences or link them to critical issues in their local context or the world. It can also be deduced from the data analysis that taking critical discussions to a higher level of criticality, if any, is a difficult task because of several sociocultural and academic limitations, which were well identified by the instructors.

### **7.1.2 Instructors Handling CLA**

They know how to handle issues related to criticality, in the sense of realizing that there are many factors that changed their performance and roles, such as globalization and the entailing neoliberal forces of linguistic imperialism and the corporate economy that set marketization principles to all aspects of life, including education. Since language teaching is at the heart of education, the impacts of globalization and marketization might be mostly effective in these contexts. Teachers are well aware that neoliberal trends require more linguistically competent graduates for the jobs and majors needed for the work market, and the English language is associated with that rise of corporate principles. Thus, English is the dominant language of education, and language is not just a communication tool, but it comes with what it represents from traditions and ideologies. It announces its power in the language classrooms where the ideologies should be discussed and meanings should be constructed and related to local and global issues in order to voice the marginalized and the neglected in the world.

### **7.1.3 Instructors Facing Limitations**

Though the instructors show their understanding of these concepts, most of them identify the limitations to the regular teaching of CLA. For example, Janet said “there isn’t much to do about that”, Rose indicated that “students are not willing to put effort”, and Manal noted the difficulty of teaching criticality in classes with big capacity. Hanan noted the resistance some students have against being critical towards language choices either because of coming from conservative backgrounds that do not value the use of English, or because of the L1 preference in social occasions as it is seen as the language that represents their identity. In a sensitive culture such as that of the Gulf,

sociocultural and sociopolitical considerations could hinder criticality, but the most prominent limitation that was mentioned by all of them was the authoritarian hierarchal administrative constraints that force them to prioritize the execution of the syllabus and the preset plans for the courses they teach. They mostly adapt with the confining academic environment that greatly limit CLA teaching. The corporate marketization of education, as discussed previously in chapter 6, has contributed into turning educational institutions such as private universities into for-profit institutions in which education is treated as a taken for granted commodity where the students are customers that should be satisfied.

These conditions are limiting to CLA teaching and might affect students' motivation negatively either in classes or in assessments. Moreover, they are randomly placed in classes of varied competences because students come from private or public schools, which creates a discrepancy in language use and interpretation. This creates anti-critical class environment and does not give fair or equal chances in responding to interactive activities and discussions. Furthermore, the multiple and complicated hierarchal levels of administration complicate communication between the decision makers and the instructors who end up filling more forms, completing more mechanical paper work and adhering to unchangeable or negotiated decisions they did not participate in making and may not suit the actual classroom performance.

## **7.2 Implications**

The main contribution of the present study focused on the views and the knowledge of the instructors of language in private colleges in Kuwait about CLA teaching, but the results could be drawn-out to more contexts because of what the results have shown in accordance with the literature about the issues that

affect critical language awareness teaching, and its relevance to world wide trends.

### **7.2.1 Theoretical Implications**

The present study investigated the views of teachers who involve in one-on-one relations with students. The ultimate aim is to provide a new dimension of knowledge to enhance performance of both teachers and students. The results of the present study revealed instructors' good knowledge of CLA issues in their teaching and how they handle them. It demonstrated their implicit teaching styles (see sections 5.2.1, 5.2.1.1 & 5.2.1.2) in which they use different methods and applications to appeal to different student abilities. The results showed the instructors' reactions to factors that contribute to CLA associated issues such as globalization and technological advancements (see section 5.3.1). Furthermore, the instructors showed their awareness of linguistic imperialism in regard to the importance of helping their students to be aware of, and ready for hidden agendas and manipulation, which would result in raising awareness of affective social issues (see sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3). Moreover, the results of the study highlighted the limitations to CLA teaching; for example, sociocultural aspects such as social awareness (see section 5.4.1), and administrative limitations such as teaching overload, lack of autonomy and crowded classes (see sections 5.4.2 and 5.4.3). The findings discussed the instructors' satisfaction with their roles, and how they manage the challenges they face (see section 5.4.4). Identifying the different themes incorporated in CLA from the perspective of the instructors would definitely aid to develop the practices of teaching and learning, and the teachers' self fulfillment.

In addition, the study adopted an interpretive approach that best fits the perspective of the researcher in regard to the aim of the research, which is exploring a human view about an issue of concern. It sought deeper and richer data, as far as possible, that could help in giving a more holistic image of whatever contributing aspects to the subject under investigation. The study offered a contribution to knowledge through the attempt to know and the process of knowing. In such a case, questioning the issue is perhaps enough to add to its credibility, and might motivate other researchers to highlight it and further explore it.

The study is assumed to offer contributions to knowledge as it provided a wide-scaled vision about critical issues in education, language in specific, and relevant aspects through the investigation of instructors' CLA views. It showed accordance with literature that investigated significant related issues to education and language teaching (see chapter six). Languages are not limited to alphabet, rules and fixed meanings, but they include a wide range of cultural, social and political factors that shape perception of meaning and connotations. Since the classroom is the miniature of the social world, we cannot separate it from the social interactions that take place everyday, or from the changing socioeconomic factors that affect these social interactions.

These factors are not easy to know unless learners are deeply exposed to the language use. This exposure is not an easy task and requires long time and dedication. Furthermore, it might be the main reason of not mastering a language. Language proficiency and CLA require a complicated process of interpretation that combines the syntax with relational social associations. Additionally, the study showed that the combination of knowledge necessary to

master a language is a difficult mutual task for most students and may hinder them, and their teachers as well, to have a successful class communication.

Moreover, the study revealed that the participants are aware of their own roles and the contextual conditions they are teaching and living in. This conscious awareness is itself a critical stance of their roles that would enable them to keep developing year after year during their practice. Waghid (2008) explained, "To develop a critical consciousness involves seeking to know oneself, others and the world" (p. 746). Norton and Toohey (2011), indicated that positioning self in imposed contexts is a challenging factor that has the same, if not more, effect than socioeconomic factors on performance and agency. All the participants in the study matched their performance to the surrounding context regardless of their own beliefs and preferred styles. Although they valued the critical approach of language teaching and implicit methods, they mostly adapted to the surrounding academic and organizational limitations, and tailored their teaching to their students and context requirements. For example, Rose, Janet, Ali, Hanan, and Manal indicated the value of CLA teaching; nevertheless, they also indicated how difficult that could be and the importance of managing the situation in the best ways to serve student needs as mainly required by the administration. In her self-positioned study, Lampert (1985) explained how "alternative solutions" in theory, which teachers try to apply in order to solve their teaching problems, are not necessarily the right ones (p.181). Teaching holds a more or less an individualistic approach that creates this dichotomy between theory and actual practice.



Knowing their context and their students, the instructors adjusted their performance, which is limited to a great extent, to the needs and the nature of their students and the workplace although these conditions rendered them to be operators of knowledge and crippled their tendency to CLA applications in opposition to their academic identity. Though pressured and loaded with work, some instructors refused to completely surrender to the controlling environment, and created their own ways of including criticality in their classes (see chapter five). The two instructors who do that revealed their criticality as human beings who could not settle for plain classes and they announced how they find joy in doing that although it does not necessarily provide them with satisfaction. It could be assumed that if teachers want to teach critically, they have to develop a sense of criticality that includes exploring own pedagogies and values, Crookes (2013). That might explain why some instructors are satisfied with what they do and they do not mind being plain in their performance as long as their students get good grades that meet the required standards.

Finally, more studies on CLA applications, teaching and contributing factors are needed to explore wider aspects on bigger scales. This current study highlighted the factors that provide, affect and impede criticality, and offered an insight into socioeconomic associations.

### **7.2.2 Pedagogical Implications**

These implications focus on practice and applications that would help in improving the level of critical language awareness applications to empower the teacher/learner context.

The participants' complaints about the lack of motivation and its negative effect on their teaching might be partly rendered to the negativity of student

responses. Thus the current study draws attention to the need to focus on college students as active agents in their own learning, which might help in improving their performance through identifying their responsibility and acknowledging the serious involvement in their own work.

Moreover, the study findings pointed out the role of unmotivated students in diminishing CLA, which could be rendered to the corporate nature of education in private universities and the involvement of socioeconomic factors. As discussed in the literature review and in the discussion chapters, the students may tend to take their education and professors for granted. The students are treated as customers or clients who expect the best service. In such an environment, it might be difficult for instructors to maintain a positive critical spirit in their teaching, and they might lose the zeal for creating inquisitive atmospheres. The main concern they would have in this case, is to use their class time in adhering to the required plans.

It is almost rare in the context of the study that students initiate a critical discussion through a question or a comment; I would say that the most repeated questions posed in the classroom are ones such as “when will you post the grades? Is it graded? May I go to the bathroom? Clear answers are expected in response though. Students remain in jugs and vessels to be filled by teachers’ input. However, engaging students in critical activities to encourage CLA teaching, such as analysis and synthesis of texts, could motivate critical inquisition and promote active participation.

The study also called for attention to the damaging effects of turning education into a commodity, not just as decreasing of its value but also through

affecting the essence of it. The study findings are not limited to the context of the Gulf. They could be extended to wider scales as many similar notions in literature, as discussed in chapter 6 (see sections 6.2.1 & 6.2.2) indicated global trends. In their discussion of the education system in ideological and global contexts, Hill and Kumar (2012), explained the criticality of the current times that hold new meanings for concepts as equality, which is retreating, whether in developed or developing countries for the sake of neoliberal principles, and shaping educational policies to suit the global capital world, hence destroying the very basic concepts of education because of “capitalization and commodification of humanity” (p. 1).

Moreover, marketization and the student-as-consumer model affected the academic behavior of students and decreased the critical thinking abilities causing low performance. It could be noticed too from the responses of the participants that the students are not generally performing well. Arum and Roksa (2011) indicated that students do not put much effort in their academic work. Students develop a sense of false achievement that is caused by their high grades that do not often reflect their real academic and critical abilities. This would be a result of commodification of education that prioritizes revenue, which might decrease the student responsibility in serious work (see section 6.2.3).

How could CLA be fostered in such anti-critical environment then? Pennycook (2001) pointed out that criticality links micro and macro relations. Classroom issues such as critical analysis of spoken or written discourse, interactive communication, discursive class practices and activities, self and others reflections, are inherently linked to world issues, such as injustices,

equalities and power access caused by or resulting in global trends and linguistic or ideological dominations. If teachers are more aware of CLA, or are given the space to dwell in a critical educational environment that fosters a skeptic tendency towards givens, hold more authority in the educational process and are not taken for granted, the teaching/learning environment would more likely produce both more satisfied teachers and more prepared students.

Uncritical teaching practices could impede authentic assessments. The instructors are asked to provide students with the needed information to pass the assessments with the highest scores. They design activities that mock the assessments to guarantee that the students would not have any hard time thinking about question answers, which could be distracting or misleading. Instructors need to provide more critical assignments and refuse to give ready and easy answers for their students. They could assign projects of several steps that require research, self-critique, reflection and personal input instead of regular assignments that test regular information. They could adopt a continuous class policy of integrating depth and breadth; in other words, giving profound analysis of discussed topics and relating them to current and world issues.

Another implication that was evident in the study is the change that the academic identity undergoes. It was evident in the study how the instructors were maneuvering their criticality in their teaching. Most of them realize the importance of it and wish they could have more freedom or could apply more changes, but they tend to adapt and change in order to keep their jobs regardless of what they know or like to do. The controlling corporate environment has led to a common feeling of disempowerment and lack of

autonomy among instructors. In the best-case scenario, they would develop a sense of adaptation and compliance, but they would always feel bound with the imposed preset plans, in which they do not have the authority to change or edit. They go through complicated hierarchal procedures and administrative loads. Policy makers need to read and know more about the academic and emotional conditions the instructors go through, struggling to keep the balance between theory and application. More supporting policies should be issued to improve the status of teachers through providing them with agency and autonomy. Lighter loads of teaching should be considered in order to provide energy to debate, analyze, engage with students and give proper feedback. Smaller numbers of students should be assigned to classes in order to improve the quality of conversing, giving feedback and assigning projects. Policy makers should also consider not assigning any tedious administrative tasks that drain time and power because they take from the teaching energy. Finally, teachers should own their involvement in the educational process, make their own decisions at work, get command of their teaching, be respected when suggesting and enjoying the feeling that they are transformers and not transmitters.

The participants in the study showed paradoxical feelings of frustration and contentment driven by their passion for teaching and the profession gratification. The feeling that there is no control over what they do developed a sense of compliance that might destroy their academic identity and change them to service providers (Furedi 2011). The situation in the context of the study might be of more sensitivity due to the nature of lifestyle in the Gulf and the expectation of the provision of services, so if education is considered a service,

instructors might be expected to present the service as well.

Nevertheless, the participants in the study advocated the have-to-make-it-work principle, and showed how committed they are to their profession. Griffiths (2012) pointed out that one of the joys of teaching comes from the pedagogical relationship between the teacher and the student, in which the teacher enjoys the feeling of happiness when their students manage to grasp something, but the joy can be elevated if this understanding turns into the ability to adopt critical insight as this would create a shared educational experience that makes a good life.

The present research showed the relation between education as a commodity and lack of criticality, but more research is needed to specifically address the issue and offer more insight.

### **7.3 Recommendations**

Although the participants in the study were limited in performing to the utmost of their critical abilities, there would be hope to improve in developing their skills in general, and their satisfaction through having hope to be happier at their work and through getting help to become even more effective. One of the elements to be considered here is the provision of right professional programs that could help them. Professional training programs always have the spark that ignites creativity and renewal. Providing professional training on new methods or trends would definitely, not only provide instructors with new knowledge that elevates performance, but also instill self-fulfillment and value. Breaking the monotony of constrained and demanding teaching by socializing with other instructors from same, or different contexts would add other dimensions that

liberate teachers from a sense of confinement in a never ending loop of top-bottom dictated tasks and crippling teaching. The self-fulfillment will eventually echo on students, and at the community at large.

Within the context of Kuwait, Alshamari et al (2020) noted the importance of developing teacher learning communities in order to help teachers increase the value of their professional development plans through voicing their interests and taking their opinions in consideration. The participants in the present study indicated that they mostly have routine internal workshops in which they alternatively exchange information about their expertise and new ideas. These workshops, though being productive and informative, are hurdled within a swarm of paper work and teaching loads that they lose value and interest because they are added to the piles of assigned tasks.

A complex profession such as teaching requires multidimensional dynamic human beings who can think on different levels and respond accordingly. The participants in the study displayed a great deal of flexibility and ambient compliance to their surroundings. Nevertheless, they did not show much happiness about that, but teachers do comfort themselves in a self-empowering process with clear sense of self-made agency and direction. They do control their own performance in class through providing the suitable material and resources that match the needs of their students.

Another recommendation could be about teaching materials. The course books that are used for teaching English as a second language are safely designed to be free from critical issues, yet, there would still be a need for a

critical pedagogy in the learning/teaching process because there would always be critical issues of marginalized people in any society such as sick or old people. It is the role of language teachers to be the aid to this transformation in concepts through critically touching on these sociopolitical issues. It is recommended that they should always voice their anxieties and suggestions, and policy makers should always listen.

#### **7.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

The studies about CLA discussed its sociocultural and sociopolitical humanistic underpinnings, nature, implications, causes, effects and need. The main concern was showing the need to develop a critical pedagogy that allows for critical language teaching in order to help students to empower their conscious learning and become aware of involved ideologies in the texts or discourses they learn. That would expectedly lead to reflective social and political understanding of world's complex issues of injustice and unequal powers. Any form of learning such as that model would mean a much better world.

Some other papers about CLA investigated the teaching styles and pedagogical applications and activities in relation to criticality and the applications that teachers might be using during teaching. Nevertheless, more papers should investigate CLA from the views of instructors themselves by means of asking and not watching or measuring their performance through their students. More studies that adopt that perception could help improving the conditions for teachers and make them feel more contented, which would reflect on the students and the whole educational process.



Therefore, There is a need to foster humanistic criticality and empower teachers to unveil hidden agendas. The balance between an education that necessitates certain majors to fulfill the work market needs, and an education that aims at fostering human values and principles should be created, and it would definitely start with language classes.

There is a need for more research on the effect of viewing education as a profitable business that aims for more student enrollment in order to make profit. It could be concluded from the participants, those who strive for criticality and those who comply with the students' immediate needs, that they are bound by higher authorities and decision makers who may not have the slightest idea of what actually goes on in classes.

The present study focused on the views of instructors about CLA, and emerging themes such as globalization and neoliberal trends in education proved to have an effect on the teaching/learning process. If more research is dedicated to that specific point, it may call for a change in the present educational policies, especially if done on how policymakers could negatively affect the esteemed academic competence on the long run, which defeats the purpose of improving educational policies and allowing all students to get a higher degree. Such focused research may help establish more confidence in the academic identity of teachers.

The commodification of education through turning it into a profitable business that instilled consumerism practices has also caused changes in the academic identity in order to cope with the demands of the corporate institutions they work for. The concept of consumerism in education does not only apply to

students and how they perceive education as a good that can be sold and bought without much effort to attain a degree, but the concept has also involved teachers in Academia. According to Page (2020), and Gillies (2011), academics also promote themselves in the market of education and care for their positions, not for academic purposes as much as for self-branding that ultimately would increase chances for growth and advancement in their career.

The participants in the study showed agreement to follow the preset plans despite their dislike and resentment. That might indicate that instructors are always under the pressure of trying to win the privilege of maintaining their jobs, and in order to do that they have to keep developing skills and methods to ensure they would be “liked”.

The insecure compliant participants in the study showed care in keeping their job demands and caring for the needs of their students. They need to be liked and accepted by their students who get to measure their performance. The educational practice would turn to be a competition that those who are mostly liked and favored by their demanding students, as well as the administration, would survive the contest and would be able to sustain their jobs. More research is needed to focus on these drastic changes that entail the educational process core and the academic identity. Harris (2006) warned against the neoliberal modes of governance and called for the need to identify and challenge their destructive effects on the academic identity and our sense of the world.

It would also be a contribution to educational contexts to elaborate on research in professional development purposes, practicality and benefit. The participants in the study attended several professional development workshops and programs that mainly focused on the improvement of teaching styles

through employment of new skills and tools.

Finally, the lack of criticality threats that encounter the teacher/learner relationship and process is beyond the scope of this small-scale study. While the views of the participants revealed their knowledge and treatment of CLA, they also revealed a conceptualization of global trends' effects, local sociocultural implications and identity coping associations.

More research is needed to deeply explore all the elements that contribute to decreasing criticality in language classes, not just in Kuwait, but also in the entire region.

### **7.5 Personal reflection on the journey**

When I was first thinking of a suitable topic to research, I was going through a very hard part of my life on all levels. Facing oppressive work environment did not make it any easier, and reading about CLA was seeing all what was roaming in my mind and heart on paper. Researching the views of instructors, I thought, would enable them to be heard and voiced whether they teach criticality or not. The identity of the researcher is part of the research process, starting from choosing the topic of the research until the interpretation of the data, and the topic of the research is very close to all the conditions I have lived and still do.

Being a participant myself of the social, cultural and teaching context of the research, I am undoubtedly positioned in the heart of that study. Attempting to understand the views of the participants about CLA has been attempting to explore my view too. Unconsciously, I share part of my views with the participants and I totally interchanged feelings of frustration, yet motivation, with them. I tried hard during the interviews and data analysis to keep my "voice"

away from interfering with the participants' views. Nevertheless, I felt everything said and maybe not said. Making interpretations out of data was not difficult because "I lived it all"; I knew every word said and every sigh made. Whether consciously or unconsciously, I was subjectively involved in the research context and processes. I struggled during the data analysis to somewhat remotely analyze and interpret themes and categories emerging from the data.

As a researcher, I was aware of the subjective involvement in the research and this helped in creating a better understanding of the data and making deeper meaning out of them. Being able as a researcher to develop relationships with the participants in a reflexive process during the research, and to engage with them in discussion interviews based on mutual knowledge of context and shared experiences enabled better interpretation of the data, which outdid the danger of being biased.

My own personal experience was of great help in being involved in all the aspects the participants discussed, and it also facilitated interpreting their body language that I observed during the interviews. They are the same people who occupy the neighboring offices, whom I meet in hallways and elevators, and who exchange little stories and chats about what we all go through.

During the beginning of applying for Exeter, I faced the most dreadful event that devastated my life and reshaped it for good; the loss of my husband. Giving up on doing anything in my life was the easiest solution, and broken as I was, I could not settle for it. I decided to start the studying therapy that made me feel I could still find a hope to live for. During the years that followed, I faced severe physical, social, emotional and financial obstacles that are hard to

explain and could have easily forced me to give up, but I still could not. I do not know what the power driving me is, but all what I know is that I have to keep going ... for me, for my children, and for all who I lost.

## Appendix A

### Original Transcript of an Interview

Mariam 5

-What do you think is more important to use in the classroom, directed explicit language or implicit language?

- first of all, I would like to stress that throughout my teaching experience I was always against this directed philosophy. Let me give me an example, if I am teaching reading, I like to start by discussing the topic, analyzing it, talk to students schemata, for example if the text is about impression, I bring a video to show them, sometimes the students would wonder why I am showing them the video and it is something extra, but I brought them once a video about Suzan Boyed, the Arab got talent contestant, and they were happy with the video itself and it was about the first impressions. I believe it is always good to tell the students why you are doing something. It is not about you are convinced with what you are doing, you have to convince others and they have to understand or else they will be demotivated. After showing them the video, I asked do you know why I showed it to you? And I explained and prepared the reason and I do not like to focus on the content because a student with the least academic level would get it haphazardly or spontaneously. But if they focus ore they would get the benefit of what lies behind the text. Plus, why are we teaching them reading? To provide correct answers for the text details or the aim? In real life , do they read for these purposes? Even for us, when we read , we read because we want to know something, if I wan to know something, so we never approach information unless we need it , it is related to our needs. Students should also know that, that they need it, we do not want a monotonous lesson that is well set according to objectives and the curriculum. It is not about this and it should not be about this. It is not just a reading task, there should be a meaning construction beyond the text. You read because you want to do something with that reading and the knowledge you get from it and to start questioning yourself. This concept applies to everything, not just to reading, to writing and language applications, the need to know what is behind the concept and its importance. Read, write, listen for a reason beyond answering questions. Otherwise , our mission will be transmitters and not influencers, just transmitting knowledge form one generation to the other without adding anything new to it. Plus it drives my soul, I cannot just teach as a robot, I have to put my soul in my teaching. I cant just follow rules and notes and that is the end of it. No life in the lesson and the students will not get anything out of it and will not be able to use the language either because as language teachers we teach them for the class, for the test, to pass and then they forget all about it after that. How many use the language to talk about their rights, their wants, to express experiences, to question? I have a habit , 5 minutes before class ends, I write on the board, what did you like about the lesson? What did you learn? For me it is very rewarding, because it is a feedback for me, and getting them involved in their learning. We are human beings, we are not teaching desks or seats they are human beings and they have rights to express themselves otherwise we re going to lose them. It is the power of education.

-How would you define language use and meaning making?

For me, language is use. Initially language is there since the beginning of life for people to communicate with each other. People who have problems in speaking try to find ways (bryel and sign language method) to communicate each other, it is the only function of language for people to use it and convey meaning to each other. If you have the language and you are not able to use it, you do not have the function, so meaning is not created.

-so language use and meaning making are as you say intimately related?

-yes, two faces of the same coin. By the way, the use of the language doesn't have to be well designed or prestigious sentences. In my country, Egypt, in Luxor and Aswan, there are people who are illiterate, they don't even know how to read and write in their mother tongue, yet, they are very fluent, not syntax form.. structure and mechanics, but they bargain, buy, sell, communicate, send and receive the message and make meaning, so that is it. And this is the kind of message we should send to our students, that with practice and more exposure to the language, there would come the meaning, the accuracy, and the well defined sentences.

- do you think words have fixed meanings?

No, it depends on the context. I read once a grammar book and the whole idea of the book was based on the idea of decontextualizing words. If you use the word alone, how many meanings it could convey? And if you use it with another word, what would it mean and how many meanings you would get. If you change the context the meaning changes, even with fillers like uhhhh, hmhhh, even the intonation of the word changes meaning. To whom are you saying the words, in which culture so it is taken on different levels, and the more levels you approach, the more meaning you make.

- so, this indicates that the language use and meaning making are so relevant as words do not have fixed meanings.

- I recall something, if you ask me a question and I say yes or yeah, the intonation changes. Misunderstandings and miscommunications happen because of meanings that are wrongly gotten. unfortunately in our educational regimes, it became just a goal, we del with students who come from educational systems that for them language is equal to grammar and vocabulary, and even the teacher if you have a different perspective, she suffers

- yeah, `I suffer, I suffer

No matter what you try to tell them or teach them critically, they are fixed and they reject it or do not absorb it. But there is always hope, I believe in this. Students are smart and your intention as a teacher to benefit them they will trust you if you are honest with them. And being transparent, they will trust you.

- I try as much as possible to do that but for them it is just a matter of grades and they do not well respond to criticality.
- they are not used to it. Let's say that a teacher and her students are on the same page, and they want to reach an agreement. it is hard for them to reach an agreement, our educational systems worship grades, and the curriculum.
- the curriculum is bounding and you are so tied to do go off limits and explore with students.
- there is an important point here, the assessment at the end does not really qualify their real abilities but it follows the teaching methodology and the syllabus, there are not any questions in the assessments that targets criticality. The assessments are designed to help them with the grade and not with criticality.
- in what ways do you communicate with your students in the classroom?
- for me, even if I teach one group. I like to be transparent and clear from the beginning, I talk and speak my mind. It is a preparatory program, which is supposed to prepare them for using the language, not just memorizing, I try even if it is a hard task, I have to be conscious about what I am doing. I don't take things for granted, I stick to the curriculum plan but I do it my way, how to function the language for the courses they will take later, how to teach them to read for sake of understanding and using, people here, citizens of the country use English in natural contexts such as restaurants and shops, so it is very important for students to learn how to use the language in natural settings. And also people here are from different cultures. I always talk about value of being critical, and reflect on themselves and on me. I ask all the time for their feedback. I try to reach the equilibrium of my enjoyment of teaching and the adopted philosophies of the organization I work at. What students say, their voice is meaningful, and important. Even ask them for their needs. Sometimes you find students who are perfectly matching you.

Do you think there is a relation between CLA and social dimensions?

- I do believe there is a strong relation because society dictate people what to do. If you are among people who do not encourage reflection, criticality, this kind of liberal thoughts, neither the students nor the teachers would be able to express this kind of thoughts. Even if any of these students are out there in this environment, they will be suppressed. But if you are in a society that fosters criticality, then it will be encouraged. My daughter goes to an international school, no homework or worksheets, it is just about expression and projects. Compared to a public school, it is all about suppression, we teach those students, they come to us. So it is the society that creates criticality, it is either make it or break it.
- I don't know if you read pedagogy of the oppressed that discusses oppression in the different elements of the society



- great, no offense in the far east, check the type of students in china and the states.
- I finished 2 masters, one in which all the assessment were tests, and one in which all the assessments were open book assignments. There are those families who allow discussion and others who consider this blasphemy and rudeness.
- what you are saying also suggests that this oppression affects teaching in the classroom, there are always those red lines and taboos.
- all the teachers can break this, no matter how suppressed and controlled. No body can force you , but you can still do it your own way, job satisfaction is very important.

Do you think that some languages are more important than others

-of course, immigration, prestigious universities or jobs , power of TOFEI and ILTES in controlling peoples hopes and dreams of studying and immigrating., it is all about English. Accountability, it is related to how powerful those countries. Why is English a must language to study. It is the power and dominance of the economic and political power of the countries that indicate some ideology prevalence. Unfortunately we can not fight that, because our opportunities are linked to them this is why we need to be critical to be able to identify these ideologies and find our won powers and to preserve our identities during the process. Teachers, most importantly, should be critical because they are their tools to make their agenda come to life. It is easier for students to study in Arabic not in English .

your strategies in the classroom?

Even if I am teaching grammar, I tend to be critical, if I am using tenses , present for example, I question the context of present and I discuss life with them life experiences like creating a study plan, problem solving and criticality skills.

Even teaching vocabulary, they ask us to give words and ask students to out them in sentences... what is this? vocabulary should not be taught like that .

- it should be the other way around, give them a context and try to make them guess. (I relate: my students got angry when we are doing reading and I ask them to figure out the meanings from context clues, they refuse, they just want instruction 1, 2, 3) language is about exposure. Use phones, use dictionaries. It is by common sense, not the rules.

I do believe that teachers should have a say, the level of language, the cultural issues, the differences of cultures are all in the text book that does not represent meaning use or making to students. The literal meaning is not the target, it is the overall context of a text, we should go beyond. Teachers should design their own material. Students preferences , needs, are also a factor, gender , age , all

of these are factors that contribute to criticality. Pre-settled things do not work with languages. There should be flexibility and reflection. If it is not given to us as teachers, it should be taken by force. There is a message after all, we should do something. I feel privileged being an English instructor despite the factory-like mills we are working in now, we should take it by force and do something.

## Appendix B

### Sample Interview Coding

ID: Mariam – 5

Code	ID	Turn#	Data	Notes
	5	1.	-What do you think is more important to use in the classroom, directed explicit language or implicit language?	
1000	5	2.	throughout my teaching experience I was always against this directed philosophy	
1020	5	3.	I like to start by discussing the topic, analyzing it, talk to students schemata,	
1020	5	4.	if I am teaching reading, for example if the text is about impression, I bring <b>a video to show them</b> , sometimes the students would wonder why I am showing them the video	Initiating criticality
1030	5	5.	<b>it is always good to tell the students why you are doing something.</b> It is not about you are convinced with what you are doing, you have to convince others and they have to understand or else they will be demotivated.	
1030	5	6.	<b>I do not like to focus on the content</b> because a student with the least academic level would get it haphazardly or spontaneously.	
1030	5	7.	why are we teaching them reading? To provide correct answers for the text details or the aim? In real life , do they read for these purposes? Even for us, when we read , we read because we want to know something, if I wan to know something, so <b>we never approach information unless we need it , it is related to our needs.</b>	
1400	5	8.	Students should also know that, that they need it, we do not want a monotonous lesson that is well set according to objectives and the curriculum. It is not about this and it	Assigning responsibility in knowing

Code	ID	Turn#	Data	Notes
			should not be about this. It is not just a reading task, <b>there should be a meaning construction beyond the text</b>	
1000	5	9.	You read because you want to do something with that reading and the knowledge you get from it and to start questioning yourself. This concept applies to everything, not just to reading, to writing and language applications, the need to know what is behind the concept and its importance.	Encouragement by assigning responsibility in understanding
1410	5	10.	Otherwise, <b>our mission will be a transmitter and not influencers</b> , just transmitting knowledge from one generation to the other without adding anything new to it	awareness
1420	5	11.	Read, write, listen for a reason beyond answering questions.. Plus it drives my soul, I cannot just teach as a robot, I have to put my soul in my teaching. I cant just follow rules and notes and that is the end of it.	
1300	5	12.	How many use the language to talk about their rights, their wants, to express experiences, to question?	They can't use the language well enough
1000	5	13.	For me it is very rewarding, because it is a feedback for me, and getting them involved in their learning. We are human beings, we are not teaching desks or seats they are human beings and they have rights to express themselves otherwise we re going to lose them. It is the power of education.	Critical thinking, not criticality
	5	14.	- first of all, I would like to stress that. Let me give you an example, and it is something extra, but I brought them once a video about Suzan Boyed, the Arab got talent contestant, and they were happy with the video itself and it was about the first impressions. I believe After showing them the video, <b>I asked do you know why I showed it to you?</b> And I explained and prepared the reason and But if	Using of media in classes to engage the students.  Critical approach in teaching, always indicating the <i>why</i>  Techniques of criticality Or, approaches to criticality

Code	ID	Turn#	Data	Notes
			they focus ore they would get the benefit of what lies behind the text. Plus,. No life in the lesson and the students will not get anything out of it and will not be able to use the language either because as language teachers we teach them for the class, for the test, to pass and then they forget all about it after that. I have a habit , 5 minutes before class ends, I write on the board, what did you like about the lesson? What did you learn?	The language power Self reflection
	5	15.	-How would you define language use and meaning making?	
	5	16.	For me, language is use. Initially language is there since the beginning of life for people to communicate with each other. People who have problems in speaking try to find ways (bryel and sign language method) to communicate each other,	Meaning making is relevant to communication as a language function
1010	5	17.	it is the only function of language for people to use it and convey meaning to each other. If you have the language and you are not able to use it, you do not have the function, so meaning is not created.	
	5	18.	-so language use and meaning making are as you say intimately related?	
1030	5	19.	-yes, language use and meaning making are two faces of the same coin. By the way, the use of the language doesn't have to be well-designed or prestigious sentences. In my country, Egypt, in Luxor and Aswan, there are people who are <b>illiterate</b> , they don't even know how to read and write in their mother tongue, yet, they are very fluent, not syntax form.. Structure and mechanics, but <b>they bargain, buy, sell, communicate, send and receive the message and make meaning</b> , so that is it. And this is the kind of message we should	Communication and meaning making Putting the language in function

Code	ID	Turn#	Data	Notes
			send to our students that with practice and more exposure to the language, there would come the meaning, the accuracy, and the well-defined sentences.	
	5	20.	- do you think words have fixed meanings?	
	5	21.	No, And if you use it with another word, what would it mean and how many meanings you would get.	Infinite meanings of words according to context
1010	5	22.	If you change the context the meaning changes, even with fillers like uhhhh, hmhhh, even the intonation of the word changes meaning. To whom are you saying the words, in which culture so it is taken on different levels, and the more levels you approach, the more meaning you make.	
1010	5	23.	it depends on the context. I read once a grammar book and the whole idea of the book was based on the idea of decontextualizing words. If you use the word alone, how many meanings it could convey?	
	5	24.	- so, this indicates that the language use and meaning making are so relevant as words do not have fixed meanings.	
1010	5	25.	- I recall something, if you ask me a question and I say yes or yeah, the intonation changes. Misunderstandings and miscommunications happen because of meanings that are wrongly gotten.	Awareness initiation
1210	5	26.	i Unfortunately n our educational regimes, it became just a goal, we deal with students who come from educational systems that for them language is equal to grammar and vocabulary, and even the teacher if you have a different perspective, she suffers	Marketization
	5	27.	- yeah, `I suffer, I suffer	
1421	5	28.	No matter what you try to tell them or teach them critically, they are	

Code	ID	Turn#	Data	Notes
			fixed and they reject it or do not absorb it.	
1500	5	29.	But there is always hope, I believe in this. Students in these times are smart due to media and the fast transformation of events and news. and your intention as a teacher to benefit them they will trust you if you are honest with them. And being transparent , they will trust you.	Restrictions and limitations
	5	30.	- I try as much as possible to do that but for them it is just a matter of grades and they do not well respond to criticality.	
1310	5	31.	- they are not used to it. Let's say that a teacher and her students are on the same page, and they want to reach an agreement. it is hard for them to reach an agreement	
1411	5	32.	, our educational systems worship grades, and the curriculum.	
	5	33.		
1411	5	34.	- the curriculum is bounding and you are so tied to do go off limits and explore with students.	
1411	5	35.	- there is an important point here, the assessment at the end does not really qualify their real abilities but it follows the teaching methodology and the syllabus, there are not any questions in the assessments that targets criticality.	Assessments are not the good tools to measure the students' abilities
1230		36.	The assessments are designed to help them with the grade and not with criticality.	
	5	37.	- in what ways do you communicate with your students in the classroom?	
	5	38.	- for me, even if I teach one group. I like to be transparent and clear from the beginning, I talk and speak my mind. It is a preparatory program which is supposed to prepare them for using the language, not just memorizing, I try even if it is a hard task, how to function the language for the	Adaptation How assessments reflect criticality. If it is test based there is no room for critical thinking. Assessments in this case kill criticality

Code	ID	Turn#	Data	Notes
			courses they will take later, how to teach them to read for sake of understanding and using, And also people here are from different cultures. I always talk about value of being critical, and reflect on themselves and on me. I ask all the time for their feedback. What students say, their voice is meaningful, and important. Even ask them for their needs. Sometimes you find students who are perfectly matching you.	
1420	5	39.	I try to reach the equilibrium of my enjoyment of teaching and the adopted philosophies of the organization I work at.	
1000	5	40.	people here, citizens of the country use English in natural contexts such as restaurants and shops, so it is very important for students to learn how to use the language in natural settings.	
1420	5	41.	I have to be conscious about what I am doing. I don't take things for granted, I stick to the curriculum plan but I do it my way,	Manipulating the curriculum and forcing criticality
	5	42.	Do you think there is a relation between CLA and social dimensions?	
1210	5	43.	- My daughter goes to an international school, no homework or worksheets, it is just about expression and projects. Compared to a public school, it is all about suppression, we teach those students, they come to us. So it is the society that creates criticality, it is either make it or break it.	
1340	5	44.	Even if any of these students are out there in this environment, they will be suppressed. But if you are in a society that fosters criticality, then it will be encouraged.	
1300	5	45.	I do believe there is a strong relation between CLA and social dimensions because society dictates people what to do. If you	



Code	ID	Turn#	Data	Notes
			are among people who do not encourage reflection, criticality, this kind of liberal thoughts, neither the students nor the teachers would be able to express this kind of thoughts.	
	5	46.	-I don't know if you read pedagogy of the oppressed that discusses oppression in the different elements of the society	
1320	5	47.	- great, no offense in the far east, check the type of students in china and the states.	
1320	5	48.	- I finished 2 masters, one in which all the assessment were tests, and one in which all the assessments were open book assignments. There are those families who allow discussion and others who consider this blasphemy and rudeness.	If we continue teaching for the exam, there is no chance for criticality
	5	49.	- what you are saying also suggests that this oppression affects teaching in the classroom, there are always those red lines and taboos.	
1420	5	50.	- all the teachers can break this, no matter how suppressed and controlled. No body can force you , but you can still do it your own way, <b>job satisfaction</b> is very important.	The use of criticality in the classroom helps teachers to be satisfied and fulfilled in their classrooms? For most I guess, yes. Because they feel that they own themselves. I guess teachers need to be liberated before their students!
	5	51.		
	5	52.	Do you think that some languages are more important than others	
1100	5	53.	-of course, immigration, prestigious universities or jobs , <b>power of TOFEI and ILTES</b> in controlling peoples hopes and dreams of studying and immigrating., it is all about English. Accountability, it is	Language imperialism

Code	ID	Turn#	Data	Notes
			related to how powerful those countries. Why is English a must language to study.	
1110	5	54.	It is the power and dominance of the economic and political power of the countries that indicate some ideology prevalence. Unfortunately we can not fight that, because our opportunities are linked to them this is why we need to be critical to be able to identify these ideologies and find our own powers and to preserve our identities during the process. Teachers, most importantly, should be critical because they are their tools to make their agenda come to life. It is easier for students to study in Arabic not in English .	In a world that is globally open, we need to keep our identities and know our powers
	5	55.	your strategies in the classroom?	
1010	5	56.	Even if I am teaching grammar, I tend to be critical, if I am using tenses , present for example, I question the context of present and I discuss life with them life experiences like creating a study plan, problem solving and criticality skills.	Critical strategies in the room, real life experiences relations
1030	5	57.	Even teaching vocabulary, they ask us to give words and ask students to put them in sentences... what is this? vocabulary should not be taught like that .	
1030	5	58.	- it should be the other way around, give them a context and try to make them guess. () language is about exposure. Use phones, use dictionaries. It is by common sense, not the rules.	I relate: my students got angry when we are doing reading and I ask them to figure out the meanings from context clues, they refuse, they just want instruction 1, 2, 3
1400	5	59.	I do believe that teachers should have a say, the level of language, the cultural issues, the differences of cultures are all in the text book that does not represent meaning	

Code	ID	Turn#	Data	Notes
			use or making to students. The literal meaning is not the target, it is the overall context of a text, we should go beyond. Teachers should design their own material. Students preferences , needs, are also a factor, gender , age , all of these are factors that contribute to criticality.	Critical stance
1200	5	60.	Pre-settled things do not work with languages. There should be flexibility and reflection. If it is not given to us as teachers, it should be taken by force. There is a message after all, we should do something. I feel privileged being an English instructor despite the factory-like mills we are working in now, we should take it by force and do something.	Marketization Coping but hoping

## **Appendix C**

### **Axial Coding**

#### **Thematic Categorization Codes**

##### 1000 Critical Awareness Teaching

1010 Body language/Communicative Approaches/Multiple Meanings

1020 Videos/ Discussions

1030 Real Life Examples/ Critical Concepts Discussion

##### 1100 Language Imperialism

1110 Ideological Imposition

##### 1200 Marketization of Education

1210 Unequal Chances

1220 Packed Classes

1230 Business-Like Organizations

##### 1300 Restrictions To Criticality

1310 Students Limited Linguistic Abilities

1320 Context

1330 Social Aspects

1340 Cultural Aspects

##### 1400 Awareness of Awareness

1410 Limitations to Awareness

1411 Curriculum/Administrative Needs

1421 Students' Resistance

1420 Job Satisfaction/ sense of Contentment

1430 The Need to Be Aware

##### 1500 Globalization/ Modernity

1510 Media

CODE	ID	Turn#	DATA	NOTES
	1	1.	I am an English teacher. I have been an English teacher for the past 15 years of my life. Most of my experience is with primary school teaching. In the last 5 years, I started working here in EPP. I have a bachelor's degree in the English language and literature and a master's degree in teaching.	Long experience. Different contexts
	1	2.	<i>Q. Do you think that words have fixed meanings? In general?</i>	
1000	1	3.	If you consider the multiple meanings they have, in a way they are fixed but sometimes <b>it depends on the context</b> in which words are used then the <b>meaning can be altered</b> .	Cultural and social awareness. Language criticality awareness. They use that knowledge in teaching
	1	4.	Me: so if the meaning changes because of the context, what does that say?	
	1	5.	A. so in this way, they are not fixed.	
	1	6.	<i>Q. In what ways do you communicate with your students in class, and which strategies do you apply and what do you think is most suitable for them ?</i>	
1010	1	7.	A. As a reading and writing instructor, my main tool of communication would be the text either the one they read or the one they write for me. But of course we focus on the <b>communicative approach</b> so we make our	Critical approach of teaching Focus on reading texts Implicit teaching
1020	1	8.	students communicate with us orally in the listening tasks. First, <b>I expose my students to video and audios</b> of different kinds, sometimes games, but basically it is required from them to communicate a lot and to be outspoken even.	
	1	9.	<i>Q. So you do communicate in English , the students speak in Arabic but you don not speak Arabic.</i>	
1100	1	10.	A. yes, but <b>English is the main tool</b> so they have to use it in communication.	Language imperialism
	1	11.	<i>Q. So you find them mostly capable of communicating in English clearly?</i>	
1200	1	12.	A. most of them yes, especially those who had a previous background. The	Marketization of education-unequal chances -communication obstacles
1210	1	13.	<b>ones who went to good schools or private schools</b> . Some of them who come from government schools who do not have enough exposure to English it is a bit more difficult for them and they try to communicate with me in Arabic but there is no communication at all, sometimes I need a translator. So most of them are capable to understand simple and more complicated sentences.	
	1	14.	<i>Q. do you think that the strategies you follow are more explicit or implicit in explanation.</i>	
1020	1	15.	A. it depends on the item I have to teach sometimes it is easy for the students, for example with vocabulary, sometimes it is easy to get the meaning from the context and usually this is what the book provides ( <b>she means in the exercises part</b> ) and the students are kind of forced to get the meaning, they do it in their own way. Sometimes it is difficult with big words like " <b>procrastination</b> " I have to give them the definition, what it	Interactive relation with students Real life examples

			means and to give them a lot of examples from my life, from their life that is how they get to arrive at the meaning.	
	1	16.	Q. (reassuring her answer) so you get examples from your life or their life to the present situation that you explain.	
1020	1	17.	A. (extending the answer she had) so we use a real life situation that explains the meaning.	Real life examples
	1	18.	Q. what do you think the elements that could affect the critical meanings of words or the meanings behind words? The deep meanings of texts, what do you think are the elements that contribute to their understanding?	
1400	1	19.	A. hhhhhuh, if, like, there is a new word they don't understand, it is important for them to understand the context. Or have the prior knowledge, what language they have acquired until this point and what level they are.	Critical language awareness is clear to instructors. They try to apply it. If recurrence indicates that students are not so much encouraged to using critical thinking
1300	1	20.	Uhhhhh, what else? Uhhh social background as well because it is not just the school that teaches them the language it is the everyday background knowledge that they have.	
1340	1	21.	I don't know, maybe it is the social background as well. Like if they have, again, some knowledge of this area, it will help them understand. For example, civil war, if they know it, if it rings a bell, it will happen in their background or in the history of their country, they will be more prone to understand.	
	1	22.	Q. So, are there any other factors that affect their language use? Or language interpretation? Factors that do not have to be in the classroom, in the world around them factors that affect or somehow changes their interpretation of words (like globalization or media?)	
1320	1	23.	A. Yes they are exposed to much more information outside of the classroom. What we do in the classroom is kind of restricted to what we have in the book, in the curriculum, so sometimes it is not considering	Restrictions and limitations The mention of the curriculum here is not to show the administrative obligations as much as it is used to stress the narrow context.
1500	1	24.	those outside issues. So, yes globalization, media of any kind, they are the ones they understand,	Globalization
	1	25.	Q. But, if we discuss this further, do you think that media and the use of social media has affected in general the understanding of words or meanings, any specific examples of words that have changes meanings over the years, latest years for example that made some changes to them?	
	1	26.	A. hmmm, im just thinking of an example word but I just cant get anything. I don't know.	
1340	1	27.	If you think of these factors, you mentioned the social effects in the social backgrounds of students, and if students are exposed to different contexts in their lives, it does affect their understanding of what your saying or it affects their understanding of what they read,	
1510	1	28.	so, media has any effect on their understanding, media that could be what you use in the classroom, videos or audios, or social media platforms that have contributed to the	Media use and effectiveness

			understanding of the language and the language use.	
1340	1	29.	A. okay, for example, the fact that we have social media made the world a small place, right? We can contact anyone from any country, from any social background, so this exposes them to different understandings of the same words. For example, we had a word in the quiz this semester, the word was dependent/independent , it was actually interesting to see how they understand these words, how students from this region and understand this word, so the sentence said more or less something like : she is ____ because she takes care of her family, and the options were like dependent/independent/ and sociable and 90% of the students chose “dependent” so because in that culture if someone works if someone takes care of children on their own they call it dependent, whereas we, the creators of the exam say independent. I can do it on my own it means I don’t depend on anyone else. So this was really interesting to know, so I don’t know if this is what you .... Like social media or the context that we give them in a quiz, that was taken form our world from our perspective, but for them they , most of them did not take it as independent. Clash of cultures maybe here, but in a way , maybe open their mind because when I was explaining it after the quiz I was telling them that it was a mistake, or maybe not a mistake, but we are teaching them different things, maybe social relationships, different relationships or statuses, so hopefully they have a different view of what independence is.	The instructor is aware of the factors that determine the use of criticality in the classroom. Having to explain meanings of words that are understood differently because of cultural differences
	1	30.	Q. yeah, you’re right. If I may to ask you, which methods do you use and you think they are more productive? The implicit or the explicit? And what limitations you might have in both?	
1320	1	31.	A. huuuuuh, I can only say it depends on the context of what I am teaching and how difficult it is. Like if it is something that my students are aware of, or have been exposed to before I can leave it up to them so I can rely on the context that they have and this would bring in understanding. If it is something completely new or strange to their culture or background or their understanding of the world then I would be more clear in my explanation I would be more straight forward giving them like straight definitions.	
	1	32.	Q. okay, which of them do you enjoy more?	
1310	1	33.	A. Implicit, letting them understand the language on their own through the background that they have, it would be best but it is not always possible especially with the mixed abilities groups that we have. A lot of times I have to be more straight	The big number of students is an obstacle to criticality.
	1	34.	( I interrupt to assure what she says: yeah you are right that is an obstacle to many teachers including me ☺☺☺ , but you do enjoy more the free discussions , the critical discussions, ummm, because as you said they open minds , and they are more liberating if we may say	
1420	1	35.	A. I don’t feel as a teacher, we are discussing things at the same level , same stand sort of speak, it is more pleasant definitely	
	1	36.	Q. so you feel that you are more limited or completely free, how do you feel	
	1	37.	A. I am limited by students abilities	
	1	38.	Q. this is the only limitation that you have	
1411	1	39.	A. maybe , I don’t know, maybe curriculum in a way, or the syllabi, the course settings, I have to have some results at the end of the week or the end of the course so that is also	Limited power to change or discuss

			kind of an obstacle, but I have to follow, <b>this is not something I can discuss.</b>	
	1	40.	A. ( I <b>reassure what she said:</b> so you basically talked about two limitations here, the students abilities which can limit your discussions because you would be afraid that some students would be left behind, and the second limitation is the curriculum, managing the time and finishing the syllabi, by the end of the semester.	
1330	1	41.	A. Maybe also, culture as well because I have to be careful when I choose the material I use, like for example, if I use a video I have to watch it first to make sure there is nothing inappropriate, culturally inappropriate or socially inappropriate. <b>Social awareness</b>	Having to sensor material before using it in class
	1	42.	Q. I <b>assure:</b> you are aware of the limitations that might be cultural, or social or political , culture sensitivity.	My assurance is kind of sharing the same feelings and contributing to the data
1340	1	43.	In my country, it would be okay to show pictures of people at the beach , here I don't know if I could so I refrain from using such things.	
	1	44.	Q. <i>Do you think that some languages have dominance over others?</i>	
	1	45.	A. yes	
	1	46.	Q. Okay ☺☺☺	
1100	1	47.	A. well, <b>English is the first example, it is everywhere, I don't know how it happened,</b> maybe because of this <b>expansion</b> that they had in the past, but this is what it is, English is ... the world is English speaking <b>even though statistically English is not the most common language</b> , I think Arabic, Chinese, Spanish ... English is the third or the fourth	Language dominance
	1	48.	Q. yeah, this is very interesting how dominant English is but what do you think this dominance implies in the academic field or generally	
1100	1	49.	A. Western, <b>imposing certain stereotypes</b> that we have in the west world. Like tis independence example, this is what we unconsciously did actually, we related the meaning to the connotation of a western culture. That is what this language brings with it. How we perceive even some recent issues, the war that we have in this region, but <b>the information that we get here is filtered in a way</b> , the information that we get is not necessarily what is going on. We get a reflection	Language dominance . imposing ideas and the need to be critical
	1	50.	Q. <i>so do you think that critical language awareness is involved somehow in this? In all what we have discussed?</i>	
1400	1	51.	A. <b>Nothing else is involved</b> ☺☺☺	Strongly believes in it
	1	52.	Q. <i>In what ways if you can put them in points</i>	
1110	1	53.	A. hhhhhuuuuuuu, how <b>critical language awareness is involved in the fact that we are exposed to the English language</b>	The ideological imposition
	1	54.	Q. <i>and in the fact that we are teaching the language in the language that has a social context like in the classroom , so what do you think that critical language awareness can do here if the students are more aware or less aware of the criticality of the language</i>	
1100	1	55.	A. you mean if they are <b>less aware they would be manipulated, they</b> would be tricked into , falling into, or believing certain way of thinking ,certain stereotypes, certain lifestyles. We are teaching here, like from the course that I am teaching each class we have critical thinking, after each	Criticality in the classroom might be a kind of manipulation from her side? Imposing her culture



			<p>class there is a question in which every student has to reflect on the text say what they think, what is implied in the text, what are the , what is the background idea, what is between the lines, so maybe so this is in a way helping them to be more critical and language aware but I don't know if tis what we can actually teach, if we can teach critical language awareness , we can teach them critical thinking because this is actually what we are doing. , but with critical language awareness, I think personally I am imposing certain message on them , like for example, we had, I am not discussing if its good or bad, but we had a unit about recycling , so I was promoting this , was saying that this is what we should do so was in a way imposing this on them here form my observation it is not that common (recycling) the idea of recycling . in the west its more popular so I was convincing them that this is a good approach. <b>In a way I was manipulating them.</b> That is why I am not discussing if it is good or bad but technically it is something good</p>	<p>and her ideas? This means the need to criticality so that each would know how to keep identity</p>
	1	56.	<p>Q.so do you think that students are critically aware of the language</p>	
1100	1	57.	<p>A. very few of them, very few, because if they are aware, like outside the classroom, because if it is not... that is why I don't know if we can teach it because I don't know, it is something with the personality, <b>so they come to the class with certain viewpoint certain ideas, and if they have self confident that they are not easily manipulated, then I know that this person is aware of the language,</b> but I am not sure if I can teach it because in my note, manipulating the student when I am trying to teach that language awareness , my note already manipulated the student, so this is the case</p>	<p>Cultural factor is important. They are aware of their local culture. Not much about the world. It needs improvement</p>
	1	58.	<p>Q. <i>Anything you would like to add?</i></p>	
	1	59.	<p>A. just a comment , that this is a very interesting topic, <b>I was not aware of critical language awareness before our first conversation but I am glad that you made me think of it</b></p>	

## Appendix D

### Interviews Prompting Questions

1. What are your teaching strategies in the classroom? Why do you believe they are the best?
2. What do you think is more important to use in the classroom, implicit or explicit methods?
3. How do you define "language use" and "meaning making" in the context of your classroom in regard to the factors that determine them?
4. In what ways do you communicate with your students in the classroom?
5. What are the social, cultural and critical dimensions that may affect your language use in the classroom?
6. Do you think English, and all the ideologies that come with it generally or specifically dominate the context you are teaching it?
7. Can you specify some of the activities or practices that you use in the classroom?
8. Are you satisfied with the overall language use and ideology discussions that you have with your students? If not, why and what can you do to improve it?
9. Is there anything you would like to add?

## Appendix E

### Consent Form

Participant Identification Number:

#### CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Critical Language Awareness. Educators' Views and Related Issues

Name of Researcher: Hayam Mohamed

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated..... (version no.....) for the above project. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without my legal rights being affected.

3. I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study, may be looked at by members of the research team, individuals from the University of Exeter, where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.

4. I understand that taking part involves [anonymised] /interview transcripts/photographs/audio recordings/] to be used for the purposes of inclusion in an archive for a period of up to 2 years

5. I agree to take part in the above project.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of researcher taking consent	Date	Signature

## Appendix F

### Ethics Form



Ref (for office use only)

D1920-029 (05-20)

#### COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

All staff and students within SSIS should use this form; those in Egenis, the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, Law, Politics, the Strategy & Security Institute, and Sociology, Philosophy, Anthropology should return it to [ssis-ethics@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:ssis-ethics@exeter.ac.uk). Staff and students in the **Graduate School of Education** should use [ssis-gseethics@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:ssis-gseethics@exeter.ac.uk).

Before completing this form please read the **Guidance document** which can be found at <http://intranet.exeter.ac.uk/socialsciences/ethics/>

Applicant details		
Name	Hayam Mohamed	
Department	Graduate School of Education	
UoE email address	Hm395@exeter.ac.uk	
Duration for which permission is required		
Please check the meeting dates and decision information online before completing this form; your start date should be at least one month after the Committee meeting date at which your application will be considered. You should request approval for the entire period of your research activity. Students should use the anticipated date of completion of their course as the end date of their work. Please note that <u>retrospective ethical approval will never be given.</u>		
Start date: 25/12/2019	End date: 20/09/2022	Date submitted: 18/05/2020
Students only		

#### SYNOPSIS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The main focus of this study is critical language awareness and how educators see the importance of it. This implies the relation between language awareness and different relevant inseparable issues such as concepts of critical pedagogy, language hegemony, and globalization. These issues emerge from the need to be critical in times of changing powers and ideologies. The question of this research is how instructors view critical awareness and how much it affects their performance in class. The answer to this question should provide an insight into the practices of educators which could illuminate the vision they have of their own teaching and performance, and ultimately affect the educational process that is sensitive to any contributing factor.

#### PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the study are purposely selected for two main reasons: expected academic knowledge and expertise to provide in-depth data and rich information. The second reason is suitability in terms of convenience and availability. In other words, the participants whom I can meet with and both of us can find common available times. Furthermore, the participants who share the same context. They would be selected from the same university, or from different universities according to

availability and feasibility of meeting with them. Furthermore, they are also chosen based on acquaintances.

The intended participants come from different backgrounds and different parts of the world. Some are Arabs and some are European. They all have Masters degree in either language studies or English Literature. Some of them are perusing their doctorate in TESOL. They all have a very rich academic background and long experiences in tertiary level teaching in different parts of the world, and in Kuwait. All of them have taught students from different contexts and backgrounds. They have all received training courses and professional development opportunities that ranged from workshops, training sessions, international programs, competitions, to conference attendance as a speakers and as listeners.

### **THE VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION**

The participants are recruited through direct informing of the research topic and nature. They are asked if they are willing to participate in having the semi-structured interviews.

There are no vulnerable adults among the participants as none is special needs or in a critical position. There are no children or young adults involved in the study.

None of the participants is/has been involved in any criminal activity and there are no sensitive issues with the participants.

The participants are completely free and willing to take part in the research study and they are told that they have the right to withdraw at any point during the study.

### **THE INFORMED NATURE OF PARTICIPATION**

There is no harm or risk connected to either the participants or the researcher. The safety of both is not endangered by any means. The research study does not take place in a dangerous place and does not impose any kind of harm.

### **DATA PROTECTION AND STORAGE**

The data will be collected and stored through a recording application, and then they will be transferred to audio files that are stored on the laptop. The laptop is secured with a password that only the researcher knows. The data will be kept for the period of the research study only and will then be terminated.

The participants will have pseudo names and their identity will be secured and concealed. No sensitive data about age or ethnicity will be directed to the participants.

### **USER ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK**

The participants are orally informed about the research study topic and purpose, and then they will be receiving an information sheet that details the research information. They willingly accept to participate with data through semi-structured interviews.

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