

## **Localities in critical literacy practice: A critical review of the frameworks**

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### **Abstract**

A large number of frameworks and models have been created to help translate the highly philosophical theory of critical literacy into practice. How these frameworks have been translated into classroom practice is an area much unexplored. The present study critically reviewed the frameworks of critical literacy applied in the classroom practices of language arts and language education within the last twenty years. Adapting the classification put forward by Luke and Woods (2009), the review divides the frameworks into critical pedagogy, textual, and practical approaches. The application of the frameworks identified in this review defies the rigid divisions between critical and textual approaches because text still plays an important role. The additional category of practical approaches is created to refer to frameworks that combine the critical and textual approaches and include more key tenets of critical literacy with a stronger focus on classroom practices. The more recent frameworks are increasingly embracing more key tenets of critical literacy, but the tenet of localities still has no place in these frameworks. Nonetheless, a small number of classroom practices have carefully included localities in the design and enactment of critical literacy.

Negli anni, sono stati creati un numero rilevante di framework e modelli per aiutare a tradurre in pratica la teoria - altamente filosofica - dell'alfabetizzazione critica. Il modo in cui questi modelli sono stati tradotti nella pratica didattica in classe è un'area poco esplorata. Il presente studio ha rivisto criticamente tali quadri applicati nelle classi delle arti linguistiche e dell'educazione linguistica degli ultimi vent'anni. Adattando la classificazione

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proposta da Luke e Woods (2009), questa revisione critica divide i modelli in: pedagogia critica, approcci testuali e pratici. L'applicazione dei modelli individuati nella presente rassegna sfida le rigide divisioni tra approcci critici e testuali, poiché il testo svolge ancora un ruolo importante. La categoria aggiuntiva di approcci pratici è creata per fare riferimento a quadri che combinano gli approcci critici e testuali e includono principi maggiormente centrali dell'alfabetizzazione critica con una più attenzione alle pratiche in classe. I più recenti framework stanno abbracciando sempre più principi chiave dell'alfabetizzazione critica, ma il principio delle località non ha ancora posto in questi modelli. Tuttavia, un piccolo numero di pratiche in classe ha incluso attentamente le località nella progettazione e nell'attuazione dell'alfabetizzazione critica.

**Keywords:** classroom practice; critical literacy; framework; localities

**Parole chiave:** pratica in classe; alfabetizzazione critica; località; quadri e modelli

## 1. Introduction

Some scholars argued that the idea of critical literacy has been put forward as early as the 1920s by the Frankfurt School of Critical Society Theory (Vasquez, 2017; Wood et al., 2006) and came to be popular through the ground-breaking work of Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970/1993/2005), but critical literacy practices in general school contexts only flourished later in the 1990s (Luke, 2000). Since its flourishing, critical literacy has been practiced or taught in classrooms in a variety of ways, true to the contention of Vasquez et al. (2019), that «‘critical literacy’ should look, feel, and sound different in different contexts» (p. 300). Different social and economic conditions of schools and the communities in the surrounding will lead to different methods and approaches to teaching or practicing critical literacy. This situation may, however, cause problems for teachers who are not really confident in using their liberty at choosing their own approach or method to critical literacy. As noted by Lewison et al. (2002), teachers’ «initial efforts toward implementing a critical literacy curriculum are often shadowed by hesitations and uncertainties of what critical literacy looks like in classrooms and what is appropriate for elementary classrooms in terms of materials, texts, and discussions» (p. 390). This challenge has been primarily addressed by the growing number of frameworks and approaches to critical literacy. Previous reviews on critical literacy practices primarily focused on the kinds of activities done in the classroom, such as that of Behrman (2006) in the context of secondary education across various subjects. Some reviews were done in the specific context of English language teaching (Bacon, 2017; Fajardo, 2015) and teacher education (Hendrix-Soto & Wetzel, 2018). There are also reviews that take the perspectives of the teachers, such as one by Paul (2018) focusing on US teachers of any disciplines. Despite this wealth of studies, none has particularly reviewed the frameworks that guide the classroom practices of critical literacy, leaving a gap to be filled in by the current review.

## 2. Critical literacy practices and previous reviews of the practices

Historically, according to Shor (1999), the practices of critical literacy have been shaped and informed by various theories, depending on the contexts and purposes. For instance, in the contextual use of critical literacy as «an approach to pedagogy and language use... as a social practice in itself and as a tool for the study of other social practices» (Shor, 1999, p. 11), the work of Dewey, Freire, and Vygotsky is highly influential, so too the work of other more contemporary critical educational theorists. Yoon and Sharif (2015) even claimed that the practices of critical literacy can be traced back to the era of Greek philosophers, such as Socrates and Aristotle. In their development, the practices have been shaped by various theoretical lenses, such as power, language (critical discourse analysis, systemic functional linguistics), identity, and multimodality. In the specific context of school practices of critical literacy, Luke and Woods (2009) argued that the practices are drawn upon three major foundational works, namely Freirean pedagogy, British cultural studies, and poststructuralism. In an almost similar note, working with American K-12 teachers and teacher educators, Paul (2018) identified at least three underlying theories that inform the teachers’ critical literacy practices, including culturally relevant pedagogy, postmodernism/post-structuralism, and critical theory. While there is no single definition of critical literacy, five key tenets of its practice can be synthesized from the existing theories. The first key tenet is the importance of developing a critical perspective in students (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004; Vasquez, 2017;

Vasquez et al., 2019). In text-based practices, students' critical perspective can be developed by introducing students to texts with multiple and alternative perspectives (Behrman, 2006; Lewison et al., 2002), encouraging them to question the dominant ideas and voices as well as voices silenced in the text, and raising their awareness of «the language and idea systems that are brought into play when a text is used» (Freebody & Luke, 1990, p. 13). Once students are aware of the different perspectives and relationship between power and language, they can be encouraged to take a critical stance towards the social norms in their communities, which leads to the second tenet. The second tenet is concerned with transferring the critical perspective and awareness of the multiple perspectives and power operation in text to real life situations, more particularly to the «sociopolitical systems through which we live our lives» (Vasquez et al., 2019, p. 307). Critical literacy practices are ideally designed to encourage students to transfer the questioning of power operation in text to that in real life situations. In the words of Lewison et al. (2002), teachers are expected to guide students «to step outside of the personal to interrogate how socio-political systems and power relationships shape perceptions, responses, and actions» (p. 383). This understanding and awareness is the building block for encouraging students to take a critical stance towards the social justice issues in their lives. The third tenet is encouraging transformative political/social actions, which is made possible if students have developed a critical perspective and the ability to take a critical stance. This tenet is also frequently claimed to be the final and ultimate goal of critical literacy (Jones, 2006; Lewison et al., 2002). In fact, Lewison et al. (2002) contended that «this dimension is often perceived as the definition of critical literacy» (p. 383, original stressing). This contention can be traced back to the strong influence of Freirean Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1970/1993/2005) on critical literacy that promotes literacies as a means of social action. Social action is the ultimate and admittedly most difficult dimension to apply in critical literacy practices (Lewison et al., 2002; Luke, 2012; Luke & Sefton-Green, 2018; Vasquez, 2017). Nevertheless, as Janks (2012) has suggested social action may be done in the “small” world of students but with a possibility to have repercussion at the global level. It may involve a small action for the local community of students, such as at the classroom level, school level, or the surrounding neighborhood. The fourth tenet is a tenet shared by many scholars of critical literacy, namely an emphasis on the instrumental role of text. In critical literacy, text is viewed as a social practice that is not neutral (Janks, 2018). Text is also viewed as a social construction that is expansive in meaning—the world we are living in can also be read as text (Vasquez et al., 2019). The importance of text in critical literacy practices also lies in its transformative affordances (Janks, 2012; Luke & Woods, 2009), opening up opportunities to transform the social injustices (Janks, 2014). As Luke (1995) contends, «human subjects use texts to make sense of their world and to construct social action» (p. 13); in other words, through text students can do transformative or social action. In line with the development of information and communication technology, what constitutes text in critical literacy has also evolved to include various media and modalities. In fact, Luke's (2012, p. 5) definition of critical literacy specifically addresses this development, «the term critical literacy refers to use of the technologies of print and other media of communication to analyze, critique and transform the norms, rule systems and practices governing the social fields of everyday life». It is important for critical literacy practices to include texts in various modes to keep up with the development of information and communication technology. The fifth tenet centers on the term localities, referring to the careful consideration of local contexts and students' background and lived experiences in the practices of critical literacy. Comber (2006) early on proposed a quite similar concept of spatial dimension of power. She argued

that teachers can use the local space, students' consciousness of the space, and the social happenings in the local community as valuable resources for practicing critical literacy. This tenet has not received much attention from critical literacy scholars and practitioners. On the other hand, many researchers agree that critical literacy practices have to be localized in students' immediate contexts. The localization can range from the topic raised, text selected and used, and social action taken. This importance is captured in the argument of Vasquez et al. (2019) that in its practice, «'critical literacy' should look, feel, and sound different in different contexts» (p. 300). This argument means that, as McLaughlin and DeVogd (2004) advised, teachers should not simply apply critical literacy practices from other teachers' classroom into their own without adapting the practices to their local contexts. Instead, critical literacy should be defined by individual educators themselves, in accordance with their own contexts and experiences (Vasquez et al., 2013). The practices must «be contingent on localized context and the material resources, including human, that exist in these contexts» (Alford & Jetnikoff, 2016, p. 111). Implied in these arguments on localities is an argument that only when students find that the topic or issue raised in the critical literacy practice is localized, that is relevant to their life and their immediate context, will they be encouraged to take action. Through the practice of critical literacy, teachers are expected to be able to encourage students to take transformative or social action by creating an awareness of and cultivating a critical stance towards the power operations in text and the social systems governing their lives. It is then worth investigating whether or not classroom practices of critical literacy have strived to achieve the ultimate goal of encouraging students to be an agent of change in their community and the challenges in achieving this goal. In light with the development of various frameworks and models of critical literacy, the present review explores frameworks or models of critical literacy adopted by recent classroom practices and examines how the frameworks have helped teachers navigate the key tenets of critical literacy to achieve empowerment and emancipation through literate practices.

### 3. Methods

The frameworks critically reviewed here are limited to those applied in the language classrooms enacting critical literacy reported in journal articles in a span of 20 years (1990-2019). The review began with searching for literature on the classroom practices of critical literacy from such databases as EBSCOHost, Eric, JSTOR, and Google Scholar, consolidated by manual search in journals on literacy and pedagogy. The criteria of inclusion were studies reporting classroom practice of critical literacy in language subject and which used a certain approach or framework of critical literacy, and studies reported in English. The review excluded studies that did not report a classroom practice of critical literacy, that reported a classroom practice but without any definite framework or approach, and that was in other subjects than language. A total of 23 out of the 75 articles generated for this search were included in the review. The studies reviewed were also not limited to a specific country or language to allow for better understandings of the various critical literacy practices in the context of language arts and education. Some of the classroom practices of critical literacy reviewed are reported directly by the teachers who acted as researchers themselves, and some others are reported by researchers who observed teachers' classroom and/or collaborated with the teachers. Participants in the studies reviewed represented a wide range of ages, starting from pre-school children, kindergarten children, primary school students,

middle/secondary school students, up to pre-service teachers and adult learners. The contexts of instruction also varied, from English or other languages as first language to ESL (English as a Second Language), EFL (English as a Foreign Language), ELT (English Language Teaching), and EAL/D (English as an Additional Language/Dialect). The analysis first followed the step-by-step procedures of thematic analysis, namely «carefully read[ing] and reread[ing] the data, looking for key words, trends, themes, or ideas in the data that will help outline the analysis» (Guest et al., 2012, p. 6). The themes were generated by looking at the specific critical literacy framework or approach used, the classroom activities carried out, the kinds of participants involved (age, gender, level of schooling or grade), and the relevant context (country, language). Once the frameworks and approaches were identified, each of the frameworks was critically reviewed based on its key ideas and characteristics, advantages, and limitations in the practice. To help with the categorization of the frameworks, Luke and Woods' (2009) classification was adapted.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

There are various ways in which teachers enact critical literacy; however, in general Luke and Woods (2009) distinguished two main approaches to practicing critical literacy, namely the critical pedagogy and text analysis approaches. Based on the classification put forward by Luke and Woods (2009), the review found at least three models or frameworks of critical literacy practices under the category of critical pedagogy approaches and text analysis approaches, respectively. A new category is added to the classification to include frameworks and models that are more practical, more easily transferrable to classroom activities. The classification of the approaches to critical literacy practices identified in this review are illustrated in Figure 1.

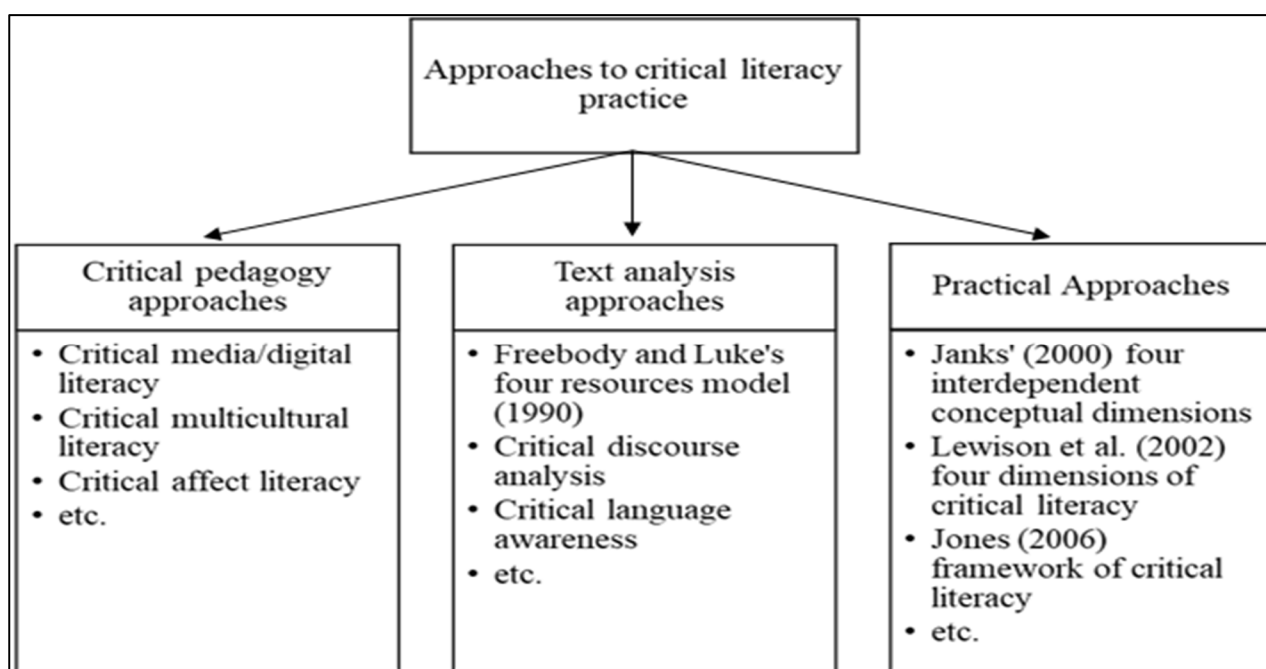


Figure 1: Approaches to critical literacy practice



#### ***4.1 The Critical Pedagogy Approaches***

According to Luke and Woods (2009), the critical pedagogy approach is primarily rooted in Freirean critical pedagogy. This approach is mainly concerned with the issues of ideology and hegemony, the tension between the dominant and the marginalized: «the focus is on ideology critique: exposing, second guessing and reconstructing dominant versions of the world provided in literature, textbooks and everyday texts and utterance» (Luke & Dooley, 2011, p. 5). In its development, this approach has attracted debates over what political/social issue that matters, whose voices are silenced, which groups are oppressed, how oppression works, and how identity is represented. The different standpoints, according to Luke and Woods (2009), have given way to such theories as feminist, post-colonialism, critical race, cultural studies through its critical media literacy, and other post-modernist theories to shape the practices of critical literacy in the school contexts. The review found three particular frameworks of critical literacy practices developed from the critical pedagogy approaches, namely critical media literacy, critical affective literacy, and critical multicultural literacy. In some cases, the frameworks were applied with certain critical theories, such as feminism and racism.

##### *4.1.1 Critical media literacy (CML) and critical digital literacy*

CML (e.g. Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) and critical digital literacy (e.g. Hinrichsen & Coombs, 2013), rooted in cultural studies, were born out of a perceived lack of attention to the 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy skills necessary for students, namely media and digital literacies. Critical media and digital literacies share similar key tenets such as promoting an understanding of the social construction and political/economic ramifications of the media and digital platforms. They differ, though, in that CML is more concerned with making students critical consumers of the media, whereas critical digital literacy is more concerned with the role of students as users of the digital media (Hobbs, 2010). CML was embedded in one of the teaching units offered by Torres (2017) to engage her pre-service teachers in being more critical in their writing and taking action through their writing. The pre-service teachers, whom she labelled reluctant writers who struggled with their writing skills, were in their final year before conducting teaching practicum in schools. The majority were from minority backgrounds for whom English was their second language. Through CML, Torres (2017) invited her pre-service teachers to examine their critical literacy skills in engaging with children-oriented media products. She also invited the pre-service teachers to pen a letter of protest as a form of their social action to the media. Finally, she engaged the pre-service teachers in creating a lesson plan to teach CML to their prospective students.

In the same context of teacher education, Dominguez (2019) engaged eight EFL pre-service teachers in a Colombian public university in a critical analysis of advertisements displayed in their surroundings. The findings of her research show that the pre-service teachers were able to gain awareness of the covert messages in the advertisements, an understanding that media are not neutral, and an ability to take action informed by their heightened awareness and understanding.

Finally, Kunnath and Jackson (2019) used twitter with 32 eleventh grade American students coming from diverse backgrounds in «a unit on American Transcendentalist literature» (p. 58). In this case, critical digital literacy was applied in teaching students how to use Twitter responsibly and critically. Twitter was used in a combination with conventional instructional methods such as lecturing to teach students critical literacy skills

in reading and engaging with the literary work. Their study suggests that the use of twitter afforded such benefits as transforming the classroom instruction, giving more space for students to make their voice heard, increasing their engagement, and providing a venue for students to take social action on current issues by voicing their opinion on recent social issues that mattered to them.

In some other practices, CML was used in combination with other theories, primarily feminism. Garofalo (2013) employed CML to engage four 7 to 11-year-old girls in Canada in two focus group studies to uncover the gender ideologies represented by Disney's *Cinderella* and *The Little Mermaid*. She also used feminist theory as a lens to understand the ideologies promoted in the Disneyfied fairy tales. Garofalo found that while the girls in her study were able to identify powerful female and the physical traits of these women, they seemed unable to comprehend that Disney has attempted to represent powerful women as evil.

In the EFL context, Huang (2019) conducted a CML investigation to 32 Taiwanese EFL first-year college students on their critical exploration of the "real life" fairy tale of Kate Middleton and other Disney fairy tales such as *Cinderella* and *The Little Mermaid*. Using a post-feminist lens, she discovered that the students were able to uncover the ideologies relating to race, class, gender, and sexuality and showed some «postfeminist sensibility» (Huang, 2019, p. 698) in their rewriting of the fairy tales.

#### 4.1.2 *Critical affective literacy*

Grounded in psychoanalysis, critical affective literacy emerged to address a concern «that critical literacy with a rationalistic bent may not enable us to cope with human suffering and our ethical responsiveness to it» (Anwaruddin, 2015, p. 381). As the name suggests, this model attends to the affective dimension of critical literacy practices. In their practice in Swedish context, Åberg & Olin-Scheller (2018) investigated how emotional relations among ninth grade students may reinforce or inhibit the development of their critical literacy skills. They carefully chose argumentative texts on wolf hunting, a sensitive issue for the students in their local communities. Observing two classrooms discussing the same issue, they found that students were emotionally involved in heated discussions of the issue that mattered to them and their communities. They argued that whether or not the emotional relations could reinforce students' critical literacy skills is determined by the significant role of the teacher in navigating through the complex web of emotions in the classroom.

#### 4.1.3 *Critical multicultural literacy*

This framework of critical literacy practice emerged to respond to a concern with the increasingly multicultural society and the accompanying issues such as racism and ethnocentrism (Weil, 1998). In one of the studies reviewed, Esau (2014) worked with South African pre-service teachers who were mostly Christians, white, and from the middle class, with only a few Black students with non-Christian background. In his study, he encouraged his pre-service teachers to get to know non-Christian religious groups by visiting their worship places and learning more about their religions. The main goal of his practice was to increase the pre-service teachers' multicultural literacy, so that these teachers will be able to envision and create a classroom of their own in the future that promotes multicultural literacy.

It should be noted that albeit grounded on critical theories, these models of critical literacy practices when applied into classroom instruction mostly used text as the core activities. The CML practices of Garofalo (2013)



and Huang (2019), for instance, used Disney films as text to incite critical discussion among students. The discussions revolved around the story and the characters in the films using feminist and post-feminist theories as the lens, respectively. Although the discussions were able to incite students' critical literacy skills, it is not clear how the texts were discussed and analyzed. For instance, in talking about the female characters in the films, what features of the characters were discussed to arrive at a conclusion that the female characters are powerful? Similarly, which features of the films show the connection between beauty and evilness? The discussions therefore did not address film features and techniques related to characterization, such as costumes, make up, shots, angle, lighting, etc. In addition, the multimodality of the films was ignored, despite the inclusion of visual, aural, audio-visual, gesture, and other designs in the films (The New London Group, 1996). The omission of the structural features of the text that enable certain interpretation in the critical discussion is one of the major critiques against the critical pedagogy approaches, which have prompted the rise of the text analysis approaches.

## ***4.2 The Text Analysis Approaches***

These approaches, as Luke and Woods (2009) argued, emerged as a critique to the critical pedagogy approaches. The critiques are mainly concerned with the synchronic nature of the critical pedagogy approaches in terms of how literacy is acquired and used in diverse social and cultural contexts. In the words of Luke and Woods (2009), «they lack specificity in terms of how teachers and students can engage with the complex structures of texts, both traditional and multimodal» (p. 6). As the term indicates, these approaches to critical literacy practices view the use of text as critical to the practices, with a focus «on equitable access to textual practices as an essential component to redistributive social justice» (Luke and Woods, p. 7). The models included in these approaches, such as systemic functional linguistics and its derivatives, critical discourse analysis, allow students to dissect and analyze the textual structure of text, for example, to unravel how the text is constructed and what ideology is represented by the text. Interpretations, thus, are enabled by understanding the way the text is constructed.

### *4.2.1 The four resources model*

Freebody and Luke's (1990) four resources model is one of the earliest models developed to translate the concept of critical literacy into more practical classroom instruction. This text-based model consists of four principles that are necessary for effective critical literacy practices, which are breaking the code (text), participating in the meaning making of the text, using the text, and analyzing and critiquing the text (Freebody & Luke, 1990). Luke (2000) warned that this model is not exhaustive and was originally intended for beginning learning instruction. With its target being beginning readers, Freebody and Luke's (1990) four resources model in the review was popularly used with EFL students with basic reading skills at various levels of education, from secondary to tertiary level (Gustine & Insani, 2019; Huh, 2016; Lee, 2017). The teachers and researchers employing this model suggest that the model was more effectively applied as stages that help beginning readers to first decode the text, especially new vocabulary and difficult terms, moving on to interpreting the meaning of the text, and then practicing using the text in the same or different contexts, and finally critiquing the text.

#### 4.2.2 Systemic functional linguistics and critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is related to systemic functional linguistics (SFL) in a way that many researchers and scholars use the latter as a tool to practice the analysis (Le, 2009). Therefore, the two models are discussed in the same section. CDA as an approach to critical literacy is mostly done to help researchers make sense of the critical literacy practices, understandings, and beliefs of practicing teachers or pre-service teachers through their classroom discourses and other relevant discourses (Alford, 2014; Alford & Jetnikoff, 2016; Rogers et al., 2016). It is also used to interpret students' classroom discourses reflecting their understandings and views about critical literacy in the form of their spoken discourses (Gordon, 2019) or reflective essays (Ko & Wang, 2013).

Both approaches are not commonly applied in the classroom practices of critical literacy (Harman & Simmons, 2014; Simmons, 2016). Within the limited practices, Harman and Simmons (2014) demonstrated how the latter engaged Advanced Placement American students with SFL analysis tools to examine «how particular patterns of meaning in literary texts enact a particular evaluative and ideological stance in building characterization and world view» (p. 77) using *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (Rowling, 1997). Subsequently, Simmons (2016) used SFL and CDA tools to assist 60 senior Advanced Placement American students across three classes in recognizing how authors' use of different genres and choices of linguistic devices position their readers to think and behave in a certain way. Her study shows that the tools also helped students critically read texts and show their support or critique of the claims made by the texts.

CDA with the specific tool of systemic functional grammar was also applied by Karagiannaki and Stamou (2018) in their study with first graders in the context of Greek as the first language. They argued that CDA was appropriate to the present reality of Greek curricula and could help transform first graders into critical researchers of language through the understanding of fairy tales' conventions and mechanisms against the hegemonic social discourses in the context of critical literacy.

Another approach adopted by practitioners of critical literacy instruction that also falls under the category of text analysis approaches is critical language awareness (Fairclough, 1992). Unfortunately, the only study in the review claiming to apply this approach to help pre-service teachers reflect on power and domination issues found in a text (Sultan et al., 2017) did not clearly describe how it was adapted and translated into classroom instruction.

The frameworks and models included under the text analysis approaches afford students with the metalanguage to analyze texts, understand its structure, and grasp how it has been constructed to position reader in a certain way or to represent certain ideology. However, as the name suggests, in practice the frameworks and models are largely focused on text and its linguistic features. Consequently, a large portion of the classroom instruction applying the models is spent on building students' comprehension and analysis of text using the appropriate metalanguage. They lack a strong emphasis on bridging the text or the word and students' world, to borrow Freire's famous quote of "reading the word and the world" (1970/1993/2005). Although the textual features such as genre, authorship, and readership are important to develop students' critical awareness and perspective of text, it is equally important to guide students to transfer the critical awareness and perspective from text to the real-life situations (Vasquez et al., 2019). Due to the lack of emphasis on this key tenet of bridging the word and the world in most of the practices using the frameworks reviewed here, the connection made to students'

lived experiences stopped short at the personal level (e.g. Gustine & Insani, 2019; Karagiannaki & Stamou, 2018). The teachers did not pursue further discussion on the social and political systems that make the experiences possible.

Another critique to the text analysis approaches also lies in their lack of focus on promoting the transformative affordances of text that students can use for political purposes. They focus on making students a critical reader and user of text by dissecting parts of the text, discussing the text critically, and analyzing how the text is constructed. However, they do not take advantage of students' newly-gained knowledge and critical awareness of text construction to encourage them to produce their own text for their own purposes, such as subverting the dominant ideologies. This missing dimension of students' production of text for transformative purposes is explicitly included in Janks' (2000) four interdependent conceptual dimensions. Janks' (2000) model and two other models found in the review are more practical and seem to defy the rigid division of textual analysis and critical pedagogy approaches. These three models are included under the heading of the practical approaches.

### ***4.3 The Practical Approaches***

Under this heading are models of critical literacy that provide teachers with some practical activities that they can do in their classrooms to develop students' critical literacy. These models are also more comprehensive, including more key tenets of critical literacy practices than the previously discussed models, such as students' production of their own text and social action.

#### *4.3.1 The four interdependent conceptual dimensions*

Janks (2000) proposed this model of critical literacy education with four interdependent conceptual dimensions of power, access, diversity, and design/redesign. The concepts of power, access, and diversity are applied in the analysis of text and other social discourses, including the global and personal "political" issues that students encounter in their respective contexts. The concept of design/redesign emphasizes students' production of their own text, a dimension that is missed by the previous three models of critical literacy practice. The concept of production does not only fill in the gap of the previous models but also promotes the multimodality of students' produced text (Janks, 2006). Through this dimension, Janks' (2000) model stresses the transformative affordances of text. Students, being aware and having the knowledge of how text is constructed to position readers in a certain way can in turn produce text for their own transformative (social/political) purposes.

Janks' (2000) model is more comprehensive than the previous models under both critical pedagogy and text analysis approaches. Its dimension of design is easily translated into a classroom practice of producing students' own writing as an act of transformation. However, in the review Janks' (2000) model was mainly adopted by researchers to analyze the relationship between critical literacy curriculum and national examination in Swedish context (Ekvall, 2013), teachers' orientations in critical literacy practices in the context of English as an Additional Language or Dialect (Alford & Jetnikoff, 2016), and the relationships between translanguaging and critical literacy in English as a Second Language context (Lau, 2019).

In their research with lower secondary school Swedish students, Molin et al. (2018) observed how emerging digitized classrooms across three subjects (English, Swedish, and History) may allow for critical literacy practices

to take place. They used Janks' (2000) model not as a practical guideline of how to teach critical literacy in digital classrooms; instead, they used it to analyze the classroom activities and 'digital' lesson design that allowed for critical literacy instruction to take place. They found out that the digital classrooms afforded students the tools to make their voices heard on certain social justice issues that mattered to them.

#### *4.3.2 The four dimensions of critical literacy*

The four dimensions of critical literacy, developed by Lewison, Flint, and van Sluys (2002) and further revised by Lewison et al. (2008), is another model popularly applied in the work under review (Harwood, 2008; Hayik, 2015a, 2015b, 2016b; Kuo, 2013). This model comprises the principles of «disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on socio-political issues, and taking action to promote social justice» (Lewison et al., 2002, p. 382). Lewison et al.'s (2002) model attends to the connection between the text and students' world by facilitating students to connect the socio-political issues found in the text to their relevant and current contexts, further taking the students beyond the classroom walls.

The important addition of Lewison et al.'s model (2002) is the dimension of social (justice) action that is translatable into practical actions students can take. In the studies that we reviewed, the dimension of social action was interpreted into Israeli lower secondary EFL students' creating posters with slogans promoting religious tolerance in an Israeli village where tension between Muslims and Christians was high (Hayik, 2015a), reconstructing fairy tales to voice their disagreement with the traditional gender representation in the original tales (Hayik, 2015b), and penning a letter of criticism to the authors of gender-biased fairy tales (Hayik, 2016b). Whereas these three classroom practices were the only ones faithfully implementing Lewison et al.'s (2002) model, other studies used this model as a framework to analyze and interpret their findings (e.g. Harwood, 2008; Kuo, 2013; Rahimi & Askari Bigdeli, 2015).

#### *4.3.3 Jones' (2006) framework of critical literacy*

Finally, there is the framework of critical literacy proposed by Jones (2006), consisting of deconstruction, reconstruction, and social action. This model is not as practical as Lewison et al. (2002) model. Its dimensions of deconstruction and reconstruction are similar to Janks' (2000) design and redesign, whereas the social action dimension is the same as the one in Lewison et al. (2002) model. One particular classroom practice informed by this framework found in the review is suggested by Clarke and Whitney (2009) with fairy tales employing multiple perspectives.

### ***4.4 The Missing Key Tenet: Localities of Critical Literacy Practices***

The frameworks included under the category of practical approaches are more comprehensive than the other approaches, encompassing most of the key tenets of critical literacy. However, they still fail to include the tenet of localities. Locality in critical literacy practices is concerned with taking into account the most pressing issue(s) in the local area where teachers or researchers work, combined with students' lived experiences in their local communities in the design of the practices. In other words, there are two dimensions to this tenet, namely local social justice issue and students' lived experiences, which is defined as the «experience as [students] live through it and recognize it as a particular type of experience» (van Manen & Adams, 2010, p. 450). Freire

(1970/1993/2005) early on warned educators of the practices that ripped students from the realities, from their lived experiences, what he calls “narrative or banking education”. He noted: «The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable. Or else he expounds on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the students. His task is to “fill” the students with the contents of his narration— contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance. Words are emptied of their concreteness and become a hollow, alienated, and alienating verbosity» (p. 71).

One of the examples of the practice of banking education, is, in Freire’s own words: «the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it» (1970/1993/2005, p. 73). This lack of students’ voices and relevance to local context is clearly a challenge that should be addressed by future practices of critical literacies.

The importance of students’ lived experiences is also confirmed and highlighted in the work reviewed here by experienced teachers who have practiced critical literacies in their classroom (Christensen, 2017; Gordon, 2019) or observed the practices of teachers (Jowallah, 2015). Christensen (2017), an award-winning teacher with years of experience in practicing critical literacies with US minority students, powerfully noted, «teaching language arts means plumbing my students’ lives to bring their stories and voices into the classroom as we examine racial injustice, class exploitation, gender expectations, sexual identity, gentrification, solidarity, and more» (p. 17), while also underlining the importance of connecting the local to the global issues. The connection, she argued, makes students aware that they are not “alone” in facing their problems and motivates them to learn. Huh’s (2014) study with three “economically privileged” Korean migrant students in the US further shows how students failed to be critical when they were posed with such alien issues to them as poverty. But when they talked about stereotyping of the marginalized society, they could easily identify with the issue and thus were able to disrupt the stereotypes.

Given the fact that the models and frameworks of critical literacy as discussed in the previous section do not address this key tenet of critical literacies, it is not surprising to find that only in a small number of practices reviewed that the tenet of localities can be identified. In some studies, teachers considered the locality of their practices by raising locally pressing issues they identified and taking into account their students’ lived experiences (Hayik, 2015a, 2015b, 2016a, 2016b; Huang, 2019). In some other, while teachers considered the students’ lived experiences in the design of the instruction, they did not really raise a localized issue that students could collaboratively address in the class (e.g., Garofalo, 2013). Other practices were admittedly done merely to fill the gap in the scarce implementation of critical literacy in their contexts, without any attempts to make the practices relevant to the local contexts.

## 5. Conclusion

Just as there is no single definition of critical literacy, there is also no uniformity in approaches to its practice. Brown (1998) explains some of the possible reasons why it is so hard to define critical literacy, which can also be applied to the reasons for differences in the frameworks of its practice, including «the different theoretical bases drawn upon, the histories of the different educational sectors the term is applied to, the extent to which it is

seen as relating to language and text, or more, broadly to total pedagogy, and the extent to which learners should be encouraged towards social or political action» (p. 5).

In other words, different ways of defining critical literacy and its key tenets will result in different ways of approaching and practicing it. Nonetheless, as the development of the frameworks show, it is becoming increasingly accepted that critical awareness and stance, text, and social transformation or action are the key tenets in critical literacy practice. The present review adds the key tenet of localities that, though not yet gaining a place in the existing frameworks, has gained more acknowledgement from critical literacy scholars and practitioners. Practicing teachers have also included this key tenet to ensure of relevance between the practice and students' real-life situations.

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