

Group one describes what is being depicted in the cartoon. The second group discusses the meaning of “to cost an arm and a leg” whilst group three explains how the cartoonist has used a popular expression to make a humorous comment on the cost of medical treatment in recent times. Each member of the groups is expected to write at least five lines in response to the task assigned to his or her group. This ensures that every group member participate meaningfully. Thereafter the group discusses the responses from each member and then write a composite response on a flip chart. Each group will present its response. Further questions may be asked during the presentation in order to review the interpretation advanced.

To describe what the cartoon depicts, group one should identify the items and persons in the cartoon; examine arrangements of furniture and other equipment; note the dress code of the persons in the cartoon, their facial expression and what they are doing. All these and others should be associated with the graphic symbols in order to establish a justifiable position. In this case the position is that the cartoon captures a scene in the medical doctor’s consultation room and it highlights the fact that medical cost is too expensive. Group two could examine the literal and the figurative meaning of the expression, “...to cost an arm and a leg”. They could also relate both the figurative and literal meaning of the expression to the pictures in the cartoon. Group three could start by establishing what humour is, and then juxtapose the human parts shown on the cartoon plus the utterance on the cartoon with the reasons why people consult medical doctors. Out of these, and more, they should discern the humorous side of the cartoon and show whether or not this expression succeeded in highlighting the intended message.

The questions in the form of the tasks given to each group deal with the “contents” of the cartoon. These are surface questions that help the learners to formulate their basic interpretations of the cartoon. It is these interpretations that reflect their understanding. Up to this point we have covered only the first level of this lesson. However, the learners’ understanding creates a reasonable platform to generate deeper questions that are critical in nature. This critical mode signals the beginning of the second level of this lesson. The classroom arrangement adopted in the first level is still maintained but the learners are then asked to subject the cartoon to the mode critical questioning as in:

*Who is writing [or presenting]? For whom is it intended? Why was it written [presented]? When was it written [presented]? Where was it written [presented]? Does the writer [presenter] expect the reader [viewer] to agree with his/her beliefs in the field of politics, morality, religion, artistic value, etc? What are the writer’s [presenter’s] main beliefs? Do I agree with the writer [presenter]? What would an opponent of this writer [presenter] argue? What process of reasoning does the writer [presenter] follow?
(Dowling:2002:132).*

Group one is tasked to establish who drafted the cartoon. In its deliberation the group is made to look beyond the “content” of the cartoon. This means that the focus of group members is directed to the production of the cartoon. They will have to establish the identity of the person who drafted the cartoon by asking further critical questions such: Who could be the most

affected with regards to the high cost of medical treatment? Is everyone affected by the high cost of medical treatment able to draft a cartoon? What does he or she gain by drafting this cartoon? Who could possibly place such a cartoon in the Sowetan Newspaper? Such kind of questions, and the answers they generated, could help the group to discern the identity of the person who drafted the cartoon. The identity could be political, ideological, religious, philosophical or otherwise. The other important task could be to establish how the identity of the person who drafted the cartoon influences the formulation of the cartoon. The group could discern this from the discourse, pictorial or graphic, used in the cartoon.

Group two discusses who the target audience of the cartoon is. It could look at the poor quality of attire dressed by the torso and then relate that with the unshaven chin of the head on the table. The possible interpretation could be that this cartoon is meant for the poor member of the society. The fact that this cartoon is placed in the Sowetan Newspaper whose readership is mostly the African working class society presupposes that the specific target audience could be the members of this society. Multiple interpretations could emerge as the group discusses the contributions of its individual member. Group three discusses what the opponent of this cartoon would argue. This means that the group would have to assume an oppositional identity and choose whether they would approach their new identity from the political, religious, unionist or philosophical discourse. The key point is that the group is obliged to access the discourse type they have chosen.

The adoption of these types of questions helps learner-reader to realize that any text, regardless of its authoritative nature, must stand up to legitimate scrutiny. Furthermore, these questions are indicative of the explorative nature of dialoguing and reading because the more questions are asked, the more engaged the learner-reader is with the text. Reading is thus projected as a process rather than a mechanical enterprise. Both the bottom up and top down

processes of reading are interactively activated simultaneously (Dowling:2002:1). The former processes are activated by the pictures, colours and words of the cartoon whilst the latter are activated by the learner-reader's existing knowledge, ideas, opinions that are brought to bear on the cartoon. The explorative mode is further extended as the learner-reader's answers to the questions generate further questions, resulting in all possible answers being transformed into mere provisional ones. The mode of questioning is further enhanced by familiarizing the learners-readers with the conceptual toolkit of critical reading -- the model of which is attached as Appendix H.

The learner-reader's answer echoes the discussion made in **Chapter Three Section 3.6.** on the Vygotskian concept, the *Actual Developmental Level*. It is at this level that the learner-reader has achieved a sense of certainty and clarity. However, as more questions arise this sense of certainty is torn asunder and the *Actual Developmental level* becomes the *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD). Language learning and teaching abandon the caricature of a problem solving practice. Instead, it rests snugly within the essence of problem-posing exploit (Freire:2003:67). The oscillating undercurrent is the learner-reader's sense of autonomy as symbolised by his willingness to present and question his opinion on the text. The crucial point is that the learner-reader uses his cognitive insight of the target language rules to facilitate his reading process.

The CLA perspective could be further actualized by Critical Reading through an interrogative approach to multiple choice questions asked in ESL papers. Instead of merely choosing the correct option among the possible answers, learners could be requested to state why each of the given options is not correct and why his choice could be regarded as correct. In dealing with this type of activity learners are obliged to do critical self-reflection with regard to the processes they went through in order to arrive at their answers. These include reviewing the

initial learning or communicative strategies they adopted. Different learning strategies may be considered after a careful scrutiny. Among the possible strategies to consider are social, psychological and compensatory communicative or learning strategies -- these were discussed in full in **Chapter Three Section 3.3.4**. The learners would further be expected to examine and re-examine their stance and the possibility of the development of new provisional answers is stimulated. This explorative interaction could be successfully be enhanced by the learners' reasonable command of the target language.

Another exercise to enliven CLA through Critical Reading is topic or question analysis. In this type of exercise the learners are obliged to use the knowledge of target language to critically identify the instruction and the scope of a given question. Phrased alternatively, learners are tasked to use the target language to facilitate learning. Such an exercise helps them to answer the assignment or examination question relevantly according to the instruction inherent within the topic sentence. Here the learners are made aware that most essay type questions require the answers that consist of more than one part and more than one instruction or statement. They would then be tasked to identify and observe the following different components when they occur:

- choice (e.g. "Write either or x or y);*
- content or information key words (e.g. "Water"; "cities"; "health"; "censorship) ;*
- task words (e.g. "explain"; "analyse"; "list");*
- instructions regarding format and length (e.g. a paragraph, a page, an essay);*
- any special requirements, limits or injunctions (e.g. DO NOT...");*
- information regarding format and length (Dowling:2002:166)*

Their written or oral response to academic tasks could only enhance their academic progress if the above components are considered. Adherence to these is the subject of the discipline nourished by Critical Reading, and ultimately by CLA. The sooner learners are initiated into CLA mode, the better the chances are for them to deal with the taken for granted as they grow up. It

is incumbent upon the teacher to act within a CLA mode. The key is for him to ensure that his own discourses and human practices are neither monolithic nor univocal (Usher and Edwards:1994:27). First of all, the basis of CLA lies in plurality and multiplicity of interpretations, contestations, construction and reconstruction of the lived reality. Some kind of awareness into how humans, the teacher in particular, are defined within language, within specific historical, social, political and cultural matrices, is needed to sustain his quest to develop his learner's critical reflection (Marshall:1992:4). This is an ethical issue that reflects the teacher's moral responsibility. It is important to consider some of the points raised by Giroux (1992:73-78) regarding the concept of Critical Pedagogy because they relate to CLA perspective and the ethical responsibility of a language teacher who acts within it:

- ❑ *Ethics must be seen as a central concern for critical pedagogy. This suggests that educators attempt to understand more fully how different discourses offer students diverse ethical referents for structuring their relationship to the wider society.*
- ❑ *Critical pedagogy needs a language that allows for competing solidarities and political vocabularies that do not reduce the issues of power, justice, struggle, and inequality to a single script, a master narrative that suppresses the contingent, the historical, and the everyday as serious objects of study.*
- ❑ *Critical pedagogy needs to create a new form of knowledge through its emphasis on breaking down disciplinary boundaries and creating new spheres in which knowledge can be produced.*
- ❑ *The Enlightenment notion of reason needs to be reformulated within a critical pedagogy. Educators need to be sceptical regarding any notion of reason that purports to reveal the truth by denying its own historical construction and ideological principles. Reason is not innocent, and any viable notion of critical pedagogy cannot exercise forms of authority that emulate totalizing forms of reason that appear to be beyond criticism and dialogue. Limits of reason must be extended to recognise other ways in which people learn or take up particular subject positions.*
- ❑ *Critical pedagogy needs to regain a sense of alternatives by combining a language of critique and possibility (Giroux:1992:73-78).*


Here lie pre-eminently the sources and currents that run through the veins of this study. The “attitude of full attention to life and its requirements” as exemplified by the concept wide-awakeness need to be carried along as this study delves into the next chapter. This attitude should give the reader and the current researcher a sense of personal agency in dealing with the research data. The data, and this study as a whole, should be viewed as interstices,

openings and spaces (Bakker:1985:215). The strongest possibility is that this study could provide an ideal milieu for alternative approach to teaching English Second Language.

5.7 EXAMPLES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING COURSES SET WITHIN THE CLA PERSPECTIVE

Teachers cannot successfully implement the CLA perspective if they are not thoroughly exposed to the methodology of presenting within this perspective. It is therefore imperative that universities and other teacher training institutions should frame their English teaching training courses within the CLA perspective in order to train teacher-trainees accordingly. A focus on critical language literacy, problem-posing language pedagogy and development of critical thinking could be among the areas to consider. Below is the description of how these areas could be designed to serve as model courses that aimed at implementing the CLA perspective in teacher training programme.

5.7.1 A COURSE ON CRITICAL LANGUAGE LITERACY



In this course, teacher-trainees are engaged in the following core concepts: Discourse Studies, Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Language Awareness. This engagement conscientizes them on how language constitutes and is constituted by the society. It further makes them aware that the explication of their ESL teaching practice is linguistically framed to either put them or their learners in a subjective position. The critical reflection generated by CDA would, through the expression of CLA, afford the teacher-trainees the ability to question and transform their own teaching practice. They start from a position of strategic doubt and weigh the texts against their own ideas and values, as well as those of others (Janks:1993b:iii). This is indicative of their attempt to develop their critical reading ability.

To further sharpen their critical awareness, the teacher-trainees may be engaged in language

study activity set within the context of the aspects that exhibit how language is used in the society. Such thematic issues could include: Language, identity and power; language, advertisement and power; language and the news; words and pictures; language and position; language and politics; language and education; language in education; language and learning. One possibility could be to engaged teacher-trainees in an activity in which they watch and analyse a live or a recorded TV actuality programme on which topical issues are debate, for instance, ***Ngcuka's Spy Allegation Investigation***. In this example, they could be tasked to state why the commissioners and the other participating legal representatives at a certain point break and at another uphold the grammatical rule of phrasing questions. First the teacher-trainees must identify these instances. One such instance can be observed in below:

- *“So you are saying that Bulelani Ngcuka was a spy?”, Adv. Marumo Moerane asked Mr Maharaj with a sarcastic smile whilst paging through some documents. Seeing that Mr. Maharaj deliberately ignored this statement to be a question he rephrased to “Are you then saying that Mr. Ngcuka was a spy?” This prompted Mr. Maharaj to say, “There is gross violation of the National Prosecution Act by Mr. Ngcuka. As a responsible citizen I took it upon myself to highlight and stop Mr. Ngcuka from further eroding the credibility of the National Prosecuting Authority”. “Answer the question, Sir. Was Mr. Ngcuka a spy?”, Adv. Moerane demanded. This time he had stopped paging the documents and he looked straight at Mr. Maharaj. “I can’t say that but...” Mr. Maharaj responded. “Why is it difficult for you to just say yes or no, Mr. Maharaj? Just say yes or no”, Adv. Moerane interjected. “I don’t know”, Mr. Maharaj replied. “Now everybody knows that Mr. Mac Maharaj do not know whether Mr Bulelane Ngcuka was a spy” Adv. Moerane concluded. (ETV Live broadcast: April 2003)*

Furthermore, they could be asked to examine how this approach to question formulation defines the socio-power relation between the commissioners, defence counsel and the witnesses, the effect it has on the witness' response and how it determines the course and the result of the cross examination sessions. In examining these, the teacher-trainee could look, for instance, at: the reasons why Adv. Moerane posed a question in the form of a statement; how his body language assisted him in conveying his intended message; how and why Mr. Maharaj's knowledge of question-formulation allowed him to treat Adv. Moerane's question as a mere statement; why Adv. Moerane rephrased his question and changed his body language; Why his

reference to both Mr. Ngcuka and Mr. Maharaj changed, that is, from Bulelani Ngcuka, Mr. Ngcuka to Mr. Bulelani Ngcuka, and from Mr. Maharaj to Mr. Mac Mahara; how questions stating with auxiliary verbs generate different responses -- linguistically or para-linguistically -- from the WH questions.

Such a task obliges the teacher-trainees to activate and link their cognitive insight into the grammatical rule of question-formation to the dynamism of language change. This could lead to the re-conceptualisation of linguistic appropriacy because inherent within this is the redefinition of formal and informal language use -- or contexts. Ignited here is the teacher-trainees' critical examination of language use which in turn improves their critical language literacy. By so doing, the language teaching training programme involves both the enhancement of the trainee-teachers' cognitive insight of the target language and how this insight is used to engage the manner in which language is used in the society, particularly in their academic and professional activities. As such the teacher-trainees are made aware that language is a social enterprise and just like any social phenomenon it is both the victim and vehicle of change. It should therefore be clear to them that their language teaching practice should reflect this point. Further, it should help them to design language activities that require their learners to use their knowledge of the target language in order to challenge how this changing mode is grammatically constructed so as to pursue a particular stance at the expense of a multitude of others. Typical lessons that exemplify the mode expressed by this course were discussed in **section 5.6 (Page 143)**.

5.7.2 A COURSE ON PROBLEM-POSING LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

A course of this nature extends the spirit of the CLA perspective by projecting language learning and teaching as a problem-posing engagement rather than a mere problem-solving enterprise.

Its basic tenet is that it is due to the ability to engage in self-critical reflection that one would pose critical questions or problems immediately the moment of universal solution is sensed. Critical self-reflection is complimented by CLA. CLA is a live-wire that transmits and propels problem-posing language pedagogy. Summed up, the language pedagogy advocated here is captured below:

- ❑ *It is a praxis -- the action and reflection of teacher and learners upon the world in order to transform it.*
- ❑ *Defines language learning and teaching as a dialogical relation where both the learners and teachers teach each other, mediated by the world, by cognizable objects.*
- ❑ *Students are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, thus feeling increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge.*
- ❑ *Because they apprehend the challenges as interrelated to other problems within the total context, not as a theoretical question, the resulting comprehension tends to be increasingly critical and thus constantly alienated. Their response to the challenge evokes new challenges, followed by new understanding; gradually the students come to regard themselves as committed.*
- ❑ *Students develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as static reality, but as reality in the process, in transformation.*
- ❑ *It affirms humans as being in the process of becoming—unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with likewise unfinished reality. The unfinished character of humans and the transformational characters of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity (Freire:2003:63-67).*

Engaged in this framework the teacher-trainees experience in their own professional studies how the concept of dialogical relation mirrors their action and reflection with their teacher-trainers in which both (the teacher-trainees and the teacher-trainers) develop their power to perceive their existence in the world defined by their training programme and beyond resulting in its transformation. Their critical perception of their existence is a fundamental affirmation of the incompleteness of man and the changing constitution of reality which characterize any teacher training programme as a ceaselessly ongoing venture.

Among the activities that could serve as a model for the course is the one in which the teacher-trainees are engaged in seeking their identity as ESL teachers. Teacher-trainees are

introduced into different theoretical and philosophical frameworks so that they establish their individual identity as ESL teachers. They are then required to critically examine how the national department of education determines their identity and multiple roles as teachers by means of the Revised National Curriculum Statements, policy documents, norms and standards, workshops and other related activities. They are also expected to establish and scrutinize the theoretical framework behind the multiple roles given to them by the national department of education and show how this affects their individual theoretical framework that forms the nexus of their individual ESL teaching practice.

The key issue is that the teacher-trainees draw from the knowledge-base of the CLA perspective developed in the **Course in Critical Language Literacy (5.7.1.)** in order to see if they need to transform their own framework and/or the one given to them by the authorities in the National Department of Education. The onus is therefore on them to state whether or not transformation of the frameworks need to be changed. The key task here is for them to indicate how the shift of theoretical framework redefines both their objectives of teaching ESL and teaching approaches. The teacher-trainees are thus introduced into a critical debate on the essence of the different language teaching approaches and how these are conceptualised by different theoretical frameworks. Each teacher-trainee design and present a reading lesson based on the cartoon below.