

CHAPTER EIGHT

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. FINDINGS EMANATING FROM THE LITERATURE SURVEY

The literature survey endorses the CLA perspective as a significant component of ESL learning and teaching programme. The significance of CLA lies within the critical reflection it brings to language teaching and learning. As an expression of Critical Discourse Analysis, CLA engages language learners with the multiplicity of language use within the society in general, and their academic pursuit in particular. The inevitable integration of CLA within ESL learning and teaching in the current paradigm is confirmed by each of the theoretical chapters. The mainstay of these confirmatory elements is the quest to deal with how language is used to propel the ever shifting paradigms.

8.1.1. By adopting a CLA perspective in addressing the sub-sections of this and other chapters the current researcher showed that this perspective is important in bringing to attention the theories and ideologies that could be used to either enhance or discredit *linguicism*. A CLA perspective enables ESL teachers to exploit the resources of the English language in order to facilitate learning **(Page 53)**.

8.1.2. The adoption of the CLA perspective critically examines how the ramification of language ideologies latent in the political and historical development influence(d) the endorsement of English, or a particular form of English, as a *lingua franca* **(Page 39)**.

8.1.3. CLA develops sensitivity to ideological values attached to language policy and planning **(Page 33)**, in particular the choice of language of instruction, and the standard variety **(Page 21)**

that serves the said role. This informs the society of the choices it makes with regards to its children's education and future. Through CLA a society would, for instance, not dismiss English merely because of its imperial past. Instead, it will critically accept its current role, yet acknowledge and challenge any attempt to use the English language in order to perpetuate an imperial action **(Page 53)**.

8.1.4. It at the same time expresses how the historical perspective and language ideology of a given context define the nature of language learning and teaching **(Page 40)**. For instance, the challenges of a monolingual nature of the British sociolinguistic context, coupled with the ideological class consciousness and social class discrimination, determine the nature and the manner in which English language education is conducted **(Page 40)**.

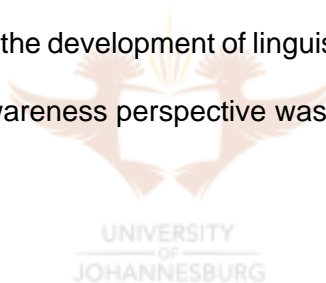
8.1.5. The combination of a high standard of English language education and the CLA perspective enables learners and citizens to grapple linguistically with the taken-for-granted and other related challenges typical of a social class conscious society **(Pages 42)**.

8.1.6. The multicultural and multilingual realities of both South Africa and the US constitute an English language educational context in which the English language coexists with a multitude of languages and English varieties **(Pages 42)**. Among the varieties are the African American Vernacular English, Black South African English and the Afrikaner English, to mention but a few. The anti-multilingual stance taken by the US is laid within a historical perspective and language ideology that are both racist. The implementation of the CLA perspective is crucial in this context in order to help both the learners and citizens to wrestle with the racial tendencies that are either covertly or overtly perpetuated in their daily and academic discourse. The ESL speakers in the two contexts could find the adoption of the CLA perspective within their ESL curriculum helpful in that it has the capacity to invigorate critical reflection on language use, especially if their mother tongue

pedagogy is not set within this perspective. This reflection engenders creativity, refines thinking and facilitates the learners' understanding of their academic tasks. This eventually leads to positive academic progress.

8.1.7. For pragmatic reasons, the adoption of the CLA perspective is set within Standard South African English, whilst at the same time acknowledging the existence and the impact of the other South African Englishes, the other ten South African official languages and their varieties on ESL education **(Page 51)**.

8.1.8. A language pedagogy which views language as a discourse that needs critical attention is traceable in each epoch of the linguistics theoretical exposition **(Pages 54-62)**. Although rudimentary in the earlier stages of the development of linguistics as a science, it seems positively clear that the Critical Language Awareness perspective was a destined mode of language study **(Page 58)**.



8.1.9. The Saussurean distinction of Parole and Langue and the Chomskyian explication of Competence and Performance indicate the vestigial drive towards the contextualization of language study within the society and its individual members **(Pages 58-62)**. It is here that the pendulum swings towards an awareness of how language is used within the society by different sectors of the society, as necessitated by the changing paradigms, could be discerned.

8.1.10. An understanding of how language and thought develop and relate to each other, as explicated within the fields of first and second language acquisition, helps language teachers to posit possible intervention areas and strategies that can be used to facilitate a better ESL learning and teaching. CLA is chief among the strategies that improve language facilitation. **(Pages 63-76)**.

8.1.11. The learner uses his language skills to facilitate his learning. It is through CLA that the learner comes to terms with the types of learning or communication strategies that best facilitate his understanding or learning (**Pages 79- 83**). This awareness is enlivened by his critical self-reflection generated by CLA. Consequently the learners continuously reflect on the processes they go through as they study. This reflection accentuates the point that any conclusion about the self, academic pursuit or life in general is provisional. An ESL language programme that is CLA-inclined is thus important in that it improves the learners' study or learning skills.

8.1.12. However, the success of CLA is inextricably tied to the learner's cognitive insight of the target language rules. The learner needs a fairly good vocabulary to critically access the mental processes and conceptualize theories (**Pages 64-66**). It is his good command of the target language that enables him to communicate and transform these abstractions to reality and vice versa.

8.1.13. An ESL programme that adopts the CLA perspective is meaningful if: First, the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency and the Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills are critically examined; second, the application of the two concepts is graded gradually to accommodate and challenge the learner's cognitive level (**Pages 87- 90**).

8.1.14. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) examines the connection between the broader social contexts, the social institutions and the discourse practices in which people engage in their daily social interaction; and it establishes the manner in which the elements of social change influence the discourse practice (**Page 110**). CDA expresses itself in this regard through Critical Language Awareness. Since language classrooms are microcosms of the above connection, the adoption of the CLA perspective brings in an element of authenticity and relevance to language education. A CLA

mode of teaching alerts learners or readers that a text or discourse is never neutral **(Page 104)**. Further, it illustrates the complexity of objectivity and subjectivity. The astuteness displayed by the learners in grappling with this complexity is dependent on their critical awareness of language use **(Page 105)**. CLA points to, among other things, the articulation and disarticulation characterised by the contemporary social life. The complexity of establishing the true meaning of reality is explored through a CLA perspective **(Page 107)**.

8.1.15. Moreover, the CLA perspective calls for the inclusion of a critical component in language education based on the conviction that people cannot be effective citizens if their education cuts them off from the critical consciousness of the key elements within their physical and social environment. The educational commitment of establishing resources for citizenship is realisable if Critical Language Awareness is regarded as an entitlement **(Page 112)**.

8.1.16. By raising the learners' consciousness, CLA initiates the first step towards educating them for democracy **(Page 113)**. It highlights the fact that education is about letting learners explore countless possibilities as they interact with their subject matter. The challenges and the skills acquired by the learners during this interactive and explorative educational process are crucial for both their educational success and personal growth as critical, reflective sustainable and autonomous learners.

8.1.17. The critical posture embedded within CLA is consonant to the development of critical literacy **(Page 115)**. Central to critical literacy is the fact that literacy has a dialectical relationship between human beings and the word, on the one hand, and language and transformative agency on the other. The major point of convergence between CLA and Critical Literacy is extended by the recognition that the human beings' consciousness has the capacity to surpass the limitation of the objective configuration -- transcendence **(Page 117)**. It is this transcendental intentionality that brings to

consciousness the drive to venture beyond limitations. Hence the common goal of both CLA and Critical Literacy is to conscientize human beings so that they can offset the false consciousness of being just recipients. The learners are therefore encouraged to be critically conscious subjects with a deepening awareness of both the socio-cultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality. As a conceptual framework of thinking anew, CLA engages learners in an emancipatory discourse **(Page 118)**.

8.1.18. CLA is therefore a vehicle that generates consciousness with regard to the inherent traps that are set through language. It highlights the fact that language sets traps, controls and determines meanings and as such is vulnerable to abuse. It gives learners the self-assurance which involves understanding social situations, knowing what the options are for action and knowing the consequences of rejecting or complying with a given convention, but it does not insist on opposing it. It helps language learners to recognise that they are linguistically placed in a subject position, and it shows them when and how to wrest control. It is their responsibility to either transform or conform to whatever social relation they choose. As such CLA serves as an analytical enterprise that initiates both the learners' and teachers' sense of political and moral responsibility **(Page 106, 147 and 119)**. It thus contributes towards building a critically accountable society **(Page 119)**.

8.1.19. C2005 exhibits some elements of conformists' intent **(Page 120)** and its Competency-Based-Education bears the instrumentalist tendency **(Page 124)**. Through this Curriculum the state determines the type of learners and citizens it wants – an act that blunts the individual's potential to exercise his autonomy and express creativity **(Page 124)**. The CLA perspective creates an awareness of this restrictive nature of C2005, approaches this as a necessary genesis for critical debate that begins a new epoch, whose essence is open to constant revision and changes **(Page 134)**.

8.1.20. The selfsame basic tenets of C2005 can be used to confront, transcend and transform itself as in: If learners are taught to use language critically and if teachers teach the critical dimension of language, then learners will understand the relationships between language and power, and power and identity; ultimately they will be able to challenge use of these where necessary; they will understand the dynamic nature of culture and will be able to resist persuasion where necessary **(Page 135)**. The critical dimension espoused by this statement is the epitome of a language programme that is grounded on a Critical Language Awareness perspective.

8.1.21. Yet another open endorsement of CLA perspective as an integral part of language education is expressed by the Specific Outcome number two of Language Literacy and Communication in the 2001 Revised Draft National Curriculum on Languages Learning Areas (**Page 6**), and the 2002 Revised Draft National Curriculum Statements on Language Learning Areas **(Page 132)**.

8.1.22. A teacher who engages in CLA perspectives keeps arousing himself to sharpen his critical edge so that the taken-for-granted and the fictitious boundaries created around his own life are not naturalized and transformed into unequivocal truth **(Page 136)**. His restlessness, questioning and probing reflect similar critical attitudes he wishes to develop in his learners, namely that conclusions remain provisional and open to change. It is through CLA that the teacher's self-critical reflection enables him to adopt a critical approach in his language class. Therefore CLA is an important perspective to adopt in ESL class, or any language class.

8.2. FINDINGS EMANATING FROM THE EMPIRICAL DATA

Although the empirical data also confirm that the CLA perspective is a crucial component of ESL learning and teaching, they acknowledge the challenges posed by the context under investigation.

Such an acknowledgement is underscored by the conviction that the CLA perspective can be successfully implemented in this context.

8.2.1. This stance flows from the single teacher who hinted, in both his questionnaire and the interview responses, at his attempt to develop his learners' critical language awareness through his ESL programme (**Page 169**).

8.2.2. The comments made by some learners exhibit their latent ability to deal with the challenges of a CLA perspective (**Pages 194,196, 203, 121 and 219**).

8.2.3. The two popularly used ESL textbooks support a CLA perspective. In fact, one of these texts, *Let's Use English*, is set within the CLA perspective (**Pages 182-188**). Regardless of being overwhelmed by the data indicating that CLA is not part of the ESL programme, the point expressed in **8.2.1.** and **8.2.2.** above shows, at least, the existence of the potential elements that could support the advancement of the CLA perspective in this context.

8.2.4. However, it is without doubt that CLA is not given adequate attention (**Page 171**).

8.2.5. ESL is taught purely to develop communicative competence. The development of the learners' critical response to language use is not considered as part of the ESL programme.

8.2.6. The fact that the teachers do not know the language teaching approaches indicates that the possibilities of contextualising ESL teaching within the CLA perspective by these teachers is slim (**Pages 172 and 220**).

8.2.7. The individual teaching methods used by the teachers do not offer the possibility for CLA (**Page 175**). The language teaching and learning practice is in the form of transmission pedagogy, rote learning and chalk and talk approach (**Pages 189-181 and 194**). This form of teaching and learning signifies that although the development of communicative competence is proclaimed as the main objective of ESL teaching, the classroom activities and the manner in which they are conducted focus on merely teaching grammatical rules (**Pages 194,199 and 200**). The essence of this type of teaching practice is devoid of any inclination towards the CLA perspective (**Page 195**).

8.2.8. ESL prescribed textbooks, couched within the framework of CLA, are neglected (**Pages 184-188**). This negligence stems from the teachers' inability to introduce the CLA perspective – because they do not know what CLA entails (**Page 222**).

8.2.9. Nothing could be found from either the teachers or the learners that suggests that the positive response displayed by the learners towards their ESL programme has anything to do with the CLA perspective being part of their current ESL learning and teaching (**Page 200**).

8.2.10. The fact that some of the learners, and most of the teachers, were unable to show how their ESL programme prepares the learners to contribute and participate in their society, and the fact that they did not comment on these two issues, makes it impossible to conclude that the CLA perspective is among the foci of their ESL (**Page 206**).

8.2.11. The issues mentioned by the teachers and the learners as the strength of their current ESL programme do not show any inclination towards the CLA perspective (**Page 205-208**).

8.2.12. Nothing is said by the teachers as to why and how the weaknesses they cited are manifested within their ESL teaching practice and teaching programme. This implies that the teachers are not

critical in their approach, which is why they would not consider the CLA perspective as one of the main components of ESL learning and teaching **(Page 208-210)**. The weaknesses raised by the learners with regards to their ESL programme maintain the point that the CLA perspective is not catered for **(Page 210)**.

8.2.13. The apparent gap between the solutions given by the learners and some of the teachers and the effect these solutions could bring about in order to improve the current ESL programme render these solutions speculative and therefore do not have anything to do with CLA perspective **(Page 210)**. The teachers' reference to TESOL programmes and the need for specialised teachers do not give direct reference to the CLA perspective **(Page 210)**.

8.2.14. There is strong evidence that the teaching community in this context do not take initiatives to keep themselves abreast with curriculum development issues, particularly those relating to their specialization, ESL **(Page 212-213)**. This lack of interest hampers the possible implementation of both the CLA perspective and C2005. It is therefore obvious that the context under investigation has not been prepared sufficiently for the implementation of both C2005 and CLA perspective **(Page 216)**.

8.2.15. The teacher training programme undergone by most of the teaching community did not include CLA as an integral part of language learning and teaching **(Page 218)**.

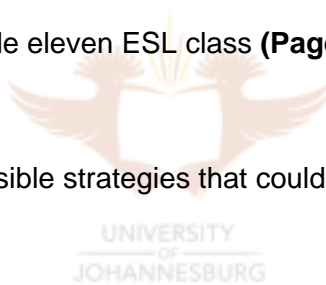
8.2.16. The support offered by the ESL Language Facilitators (LF), traditionally referred to as ESL Subject Advisors, to the teachers appears to be either insufficient or unhelpful, particularly to with regards to issues relating to CLA **(Pages 215, 219 and 222)**.

8.2.17. Apparently, information sessions and workshops relating to the CLA perspective and its inclusion within the current ESL programme have not been conducted **(Page 222)**.

8.2.18. Evidence that the basic teaching responsibilities such as monitoring learners' progress through teaching and marking the lesson tasks, and lesson preparation coupled with the teachers' questionable ability to handle English language spelling and syntax, do not augur well for the implementation of the CLA perspective **(Pages 221 and 222)**.

8.2.19. The overarching conclusion is that Critical Language Awareness does not form part of the ESL teaching and learning programme in this context. However, CLA has been confirmed by both the data emanating from the literature survey and the empirical data that it is a significant component of ESL learning and teaching. The empirical data have shown that the secondary school context in the Goldfields area exhibited potential elements that Critical Language Awareness perspective can be successfully implemented in a grade eleven ESL class **(Pages 215, 216 and 220)**.

The next section recommends possible strategies that could be used to incorporate CLA.



8.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The problems raised, with regard to the implementation of CLA perspective within the ESL programme

calls for: The restructuring of the English language teachers' training programmes offered by the universities; the introduction of in-service training for all English teachers by the language section of the Department of Education; the teachers to study and familiarize themselves with the ESL study packages designed for their grades; and to both observe and implement the curriculum change, particularly within the area of their specialization. The recommendations proposed by this research focus on these four components. The basic conviction is that if these components are revamped, the CLA perspective can be implemented with reasonable success.

8.2.1. ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME

Universities and other teacher training institutions should design and present the kind of courses described in **Chapter Five Section 5.7**. This could go a long way in helping to implement the Critical Language Awareness perspective in ESL learning and teaching. **(8.1.4 to 8.1.21 and 8.2.4 to 8.2.19)**.

8.2.2. IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR ESL TEACHERS

In-service training programmes along the lines of the courses discussed in **Section 5.7**, should be designed and conducted in order to empower the practising ESL language teachers. This could be in a form of compulsory 40 hours training sessions conducted twice a year. The language section of the Department of Education could collaborate with the teacher training institutions in designing and coordinating the programme of the training session. This will go a long way in ensuring that the practising ESL teachers are well prepared to help in the implementation of the CLA perspective in ESL programme and to further develop their critical reflection relating to their teaching practice. **(8.2.16 and 8.2.17)**.

8.2.3. ESL PRESCRIBED TEXTBOOKS

The ESL textbooks, the accompanying guides and other related materials that are set within CLA perspective, give the ESL teachers guidance and a mandate to implement CLA perspective and therefore must be used profitably by these teachers. However, ESL textbooks that are not couched within the CLA perspective must be revised in order to include this perspective of language teaching and learning. **(8.1.20. and 8.2.3. to 8.2.1.)**.

8.2.4. MEDIA AS ESL LEARNING MATERIALS

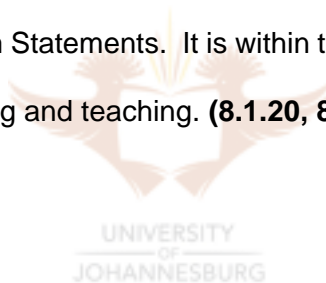
Newspapers, magazines and TV, should also be used as ESL learning and teaching materials. The stories, articles, and programmes presented in the media exhibit the different ways and various reasons of using language. These are suitable platforms to engage learners in CLA perspective. **(Refer to examples on pages 143, 150 and 153).**

8.2.5. CURRICULUM CHANGES

The ESL teachers must make it their duty to study and implement the curriculum changes advocated by the Revised National Curriculum Statements. It is within this document that CLA is endorsed as an integral part of language learning and teaching. **(8.1.20, 8.2.19 and 8.2.20).**

8.3. CONCLUSION

This study is not prescriptive. It is the threshold into a constructive engagement that seeks to add a critical dimension to ESL learning and teaching through the Critical Language Awareness perspective. The recommendations it advances should be seen as models which the readers could use to carefully align their language teaching practice with the need to develop language learners that are, on the one hand, critically aware of how language is used to achieve various goals, and on the other, are able to use their linguistic insight to activate and respond to their awareness. These recommendations, and other issues raised in this study, are grounded on the quest to develop critical learners for a responsible citizenry





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