

Transformative Language Teaching through Critical Pedagogy

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Abstract

Contemporary language education has gradually moved beyond the exclusive focus on linguistic competence and communicative proficiency. Increasingly, educators recognize that language classrooms can also serve as spaces for cultivating critical awareness, social responsibility, and democratic engagement. Critical pedagogy provides a framework through which language teaching can be connected to learners' lived realities and broader social concerns. Drawing on the work of Paulo Freire and later scholars of critical education, this article examines how critical pedagogy reshapes language teaching by encouraging learners to interrogate issues of power, identity, culture, and inequality. The discussion highlights the theoretical foundations of critical pedagogy, its significance for English Language Teaching (ELT), and its relevance within the Indian educational landscape. Particular attention is paid to learner empowerment, critical literacy, classroom dialogue, and social participation. The article further outlines practical pedagogical strategies and considers the challenges that educators may encounter while implementing critical approaches.

Keywords: *Critical Pedagogy, English Language Teaching, Critical Literacy, Learner Empowerment, Social Justice, Transformative Education*

Language is not merely a tool for exchanging information; it is also a means through which people interpret reality, construct identities, and participate in social life. Every act of communication reflects particular cultural assumptions, social relationships, and power structures. Consequently, language education cannot be reduced to the teaching of grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation alone. It is inherently connected with broader questions concerning culture, identity, representation, and social participation. For many decades, language teaching approaches primarily emphasized linguistic correctness and communicative efficiency. Although these approaches contributed significantly to

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