

## Examining Critical Pedagogy in Iranian High School English Textbooks

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Research Paper

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**Abstract:** Critical pedagogy as a constituent of a democratic society is crucial to be raised and an educational system as a part of the society needs to get familiar with such a context for nurturing teachers and students with critical thinking as well as providing materials based on critical pedagogy principles. The present study intended to elicit the underlying themes in critical pedagogy and to examine their frequency in Iranian EFL textbooks. Following an exploratory sequential mixed method design, reviewing the literature critically, a host of underlying themes were extracted using content analysis and then six experts in Applied Linguistics were asked to select the more relevant themes in critical pedagogy according to the context of teaching the English language in Iranian high schools. Accordingly, the materials utilized in the present study were senior high school EFL textbooks entitled *Vision Series* and *Vision Series Workbooks* to examine the elicited themes. Furthermore, the frequency of critical pedagogy themes in *Vision Series* and *Vision Series workbooks* in terms of the level of the textbooks were examined. The results indicated "critical praxis" and "critical thinking" were the most frequently-used themes in *Vision Series* and *Vision Series workbooks* respectively and the frequency of critical pedagogy themes in these textbooks revealed no significant differences except in some themes. The findings of this study might have implications for stakeholders, materials developers, teachers, and students.

**Keywords:** Critical pedagogy, Critical thinking, EFL materials, Themes, Vision Series

### Introduction

The main aim of education is only not passing a course; the main aim should be to train and empower learners with critical thinking; training learners with intelligence to interpret the self as well as the world. In other words, education should not be just teaching some skills related to the materials, it is much more than passing or failing a course of education, it should be a starting point to learning philanthropy and respect humanity. Learning at school may be a significant point for students to discover the self, others, and the world in a way they will. So, in constructing an education system, critical pedagogy (CP) view can be a key tenet to cultivating critical learners and teachers (Dulun & Lane, 2023). In a chaotic, dynamic, and complex world, it is naïve to control humans' minds and not to give them the right to freedom of speech and opinion. Many researchers in the CP framework claim racial discrimination is dedicated to the US society and the education system (Dixson, et al. 2017; King & Swartz, 2016). The recent proof of racial

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discrimination in the world is the advent of "the Black Lives Matter" movement after George Floyd's murder by a police officer in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020. As it was mentioned discrimination is not limited to being black or white but it is related to gender, religious beliefs, and social class as well (Gatson, et al. 2023).

One of the most significant aims of teaching should be to train learners with critical thinking and to train insightful citizens for a democratic society. To this end, it is crucial to motivate curiosity as a component of critical thinking in learners. For this aim, no matter how much research has been done in this field, every research has the potential to open a new window in the CP approach. Curious learners never admit and never let others impose their own beliefs, opinions, and ideas on them. It seems that predetermined and structured textbooks do not give the opportunity to the learners and even teachers to engage in the content of the textbooks and do not motivate the students' curiosity and self-reflection regarding the content and purposes of the texts. Since curious learners are always investigating and examining new phenomena as well as challenging old opinions in their lives, they question everything, and they are not neutral; their views regarding the world are skeptical, so it is significant that the education systems give this chance to learners and update their traditional and expired attitudes regarding teaching and learning processes (Jubas, 2023).

It is not clear how much Iranian high school English textbooks help learners to discover their potential and nurture it to view their environments in skeptical ways. Dewey (1897) argues that education contains a social and a psychological procedure. The psychological procedure, or the children's potentiality and operations, should be the base of education, if not, education would be despotic. Learners have social personalities with society essence and the natural link of these social essences. Although there are numerous studies related to principles of CP in education (Davari & Iranmehr 2020; Guilherme, 2002; Walker, 2003), there are not sufficient studies that focus on investigating English textbooks based on CP themes in Iranian high schools. Therefore, it seems critical to run more studies in this field to improve the educational system for nurturing insightful learners. To this end, the current study intended to examine to what extent EFL materials in Iranian high schools were in accordance with CP themes. Furthermore, some textbooks of Iranian senior high schools named *Vision* (first, second, and third grades) were examined to indicate to what extent they are consistent with the major themes of CP.

### Literature Review

Today, the establishment of schools that are based on the principles of critical education and the principles of democracy in education is one of the most important concerns of any society to raise knowledgeable and insightful individuals to improve the science and culture of that society. As Giroux (1983) states, a social research institute was established in Frankfurt in 1923. The origin of the Frankfurt School was from this institute established by a merchant named Felix Weil and Max Horkheimer was its administrator ship. Some of its famous members were Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, and Theodor Adorno. Focal to the work of the Frankfurt school was testing how much the reasoning of power has been spread into the realm of daily life, the environment, and the method of production itself.

### Critical Pedagogy

Hinchey (2004) states the most significant demand for creating democratic schools is to train teachers who consider education in relation to political issues and they know contents are not devoid of ideologies, such teachers do not fear to talk about these ideologies and fingerprints of power parties in the contents. They view open talking with regard to these political issues as an ethical responsibility for themselves. Kincheloe (2008) states CP helps teachers and educators reconstruct their works and it empowers all students to follow their own aims. So, CP is based on the social and educational view of fairness and equalization, the opinion

that education is intrinsically political, the relieving of human affliction, and preparing situations in schools where educators do not abuse students. Suitable schools do not rebuke students for their defeats. Schools respect the experience and knowledge students bring to the classroom.

To Kincheloe (2008), the CP is involved in the use of generative tenets to read the word as well as the world, concentrated on the perception that teachers should act as researchers, allocated to the perception of the context in which educational acting occurs, and is based on the perception that teachers should research the powers' background that forms their students. Critical pedagogy tends to keep a precise harmony between social alteration and nurturing wisdom, this demands a strict pedagogy that researches both targets.

Kirylo (2013) argues critical pedagogy in general is a way to empower individuals thinking and behavior that does not take a passive position in the world by the imposing parties. In particular, when suppressor parties try to dehumanize, oppress, and marginalize individuals, authoritarians in CP as intelligence agents help others prevent and resist the effect of those imposing parties in different dimensions of their lives and try for a more just and democratic world.

### **Critical Pedagogy in Materials**

It is significant for teachers to play a role in providing materials for students and not leaving material development to those who are unaware of the necessities of schools in favor of political considerations. Elmore (1997) and Schubert (1998) state these policy constructors act in a standardized method and do not take teachers' expertise and classroom interests into consideration. According to Kincheloe (2004), those making curriculum policy never involve in classroom activities. Policymakers of curriculum impose the common ways of instructional work on teachers and students. He argues this type of force is not acceptable and believes that in a liberal and democratic community, teachers should have active roles in the configuration and shaping of practices, education, and instructional policy-making.

Kirylo (2013) argues education is not a context isolated from the world. He asserts a neoliberal way can be determined as the main marketization of the education system by which learners are seen as merchandise, and teachers as robots, and the fundamental aim of education is to train individuals only for the economic growth of countries. He also claims that marketization attempts to expedite its purposes in a predetermined and preplanned trajectory regardless of cultural sensitivities and appropriate approaches to teaching-learning. Marketization policy does not care about the value of an individual, and generally, the profits of some are preferred over others. He also states the marketization of education makes the aim and necessity of academic liberation and willingness seem insignificant. Marketization attempts to prove that the perception of teacher education is not a key aspect of teaching and learning and it even tries to wipe out the notion of teacher education. This current scenario is present in many education systems now. Surely, it is the prophecy of critical pedagogues not to allow this scenario to continue, for the sake of democracy; otherwise, there would be power parties governing the world.

In addition, Kirylo (2013) claims school knowledge often provides less understanding of learners' perception of the world and social affairs. Darder (2015) argues when the students' experiences and ideologies are different from the curriculum and policymakers' interests, it leads to students' silence as they see these contradictions. Tierney (2020) states with such contradictions, students cannot make a reconcilability between school materials and their lives and environment and it is because they are not allowed to pose these contradictions and discuss them.

A critical teacher considers it his/her right to interfere in the education process and tries to provide a safe and calm environment away from the planned demands of policymakers in education for him/herself and students so that they can gain a better understanding of the world. To Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993), post-formal teachers would no longer neutrally admit the preplanned methodologies and standardized tests and curricula without considering the social environment in which their learners live and the way that social

environment helps make students' activities. Critical students inherently love to discover and investigate unknown issues, they love to discuss controversial topics to reach an understanding of them. For critical students, the unknown of the world is not scary and unattainable.

### **Themes in Critical Pedagogy**

To meet the requirements of the study and also to elicit the underlying themes of CP in the literature, a literature review and content analysis were done and around 40 themes were extracted from the sources in the literature. In the Method section, further details are explained. Some of the elicited themes are listed here:

#### ***Action***

According to Kincheloe (2008), action is related to different aspects such as social, cultural, political, and educational issues that contain various tendencies in different spots of history, and considering these different aspects is crucial for the critical teacher and learner in the education process.

#### ***Adventure***

Freire (1998) argues being an adventurer helps learners resist the banking model of education attitudes; it cultivates curiosity in the learners and subsequently leads to creativity.

#### ***Autonomy***

Freire (1998) defines autonomy in CP as an essential factor for individuals' maturing.

#### ***Change or Transformation***

According to Freire (1998), transformation is a necessity for true learning. Learners by engaging in a constant transformation become valid agents of the producing and reproducing of what is being gained in association with their teacher as an agent who has an equal role in the learning process.

#### ***Conscientization***

According to Freire (1998), conscientization is a prerequisite for human beings. It is a key component that people need to empower their perception of the world, of realities, of happenings, of the needs of human astuteness to improve their potential for curiosity. Conscientization is normal to *unfinished* humanity.

#### ***Creativity***

Freire and Macedo (1987) state a CP must not repress creativity in both students and teachers. To Freire (1998), creativity is a tenet in the CP framework which is stimulated by curious learners.

#### ***Critical Praxis***

Giroux (1981) asserts to give power or freedom to someone is viewed as praxis; it illustrates humans are dominated by their destiny as well as dominating powers.

### ***Critical Thinking***

Kincheloe (1991) believes critical thinking is inherently an active procedure that promotes learners to challenge their knowledge and analyze the information they face, for gaining a better awareness of the world and for having control of their own lives.

### ***Curiosity***

Freire (1998) finds curiosity as continuous questioning, as action to the disclosure of something latent, as a question raised or not, as an investigation for transparency, as attention, as an offer, and as consciousness in the learning context.

### ***Democracy***

Kincheloe (2004) argues the need for democratic citizenry as the prerequisite of learning. In this perspective, being educated has a vulnerable notion because education in the democratic conditions based on democracy always allows for raising new ideas.

### ***Dialectical Relationship***

Freire (1998) believes dialogue is notable because of the dialogical agents, and the subjects in the dialogue, not only preserve their personality but defend it strongly, as a result, become knowledgeable together. The dialogical relationship does not diminish them to each other.

### ***Difference***

Tobin (2010) states the value of difference-rendered contributors collaborating successfully with one another while concentrating on gaining agreement on shared purposes/ motives and how to succeed. Dorney (2010) states the deliberation of the language learner features or individual differences (IDs) has been discussed for a long time in second language research and it is clear that tenets such as aptitude, motivation, or learning styles are significant elements to learn a foreign language. According to Dorney (2010), individual differences are appealing subjects to study. Cooper (2002) believes in four basic principles of individual differences including, abilities, personality, mood, and motivation.

### ***Dissent***

Phipps and Guilherme (2004) view dissent as a tenet in CP that may alter the view of intercultural relations, and it is different from intercultural consistency. Qualifications for intercultural negotiation require the potential to interact critically with dissent through critical cultural insights regard to the self and others and through trustful interaction.

### ***Emancipation***

According to McLaren (1989), emancipation is a tenet of critical thinking that helps humans view the world and what occurs in the world differently. To Freire (1985), emancipator or free-thinking facilitates the participation of individuals in the socio-historical change of their society under their own control.

### ***Equality***

Kirylo (2013) asserts a core component of making CP is to give individuals equal opportunities to contribute to the world's movement process. Darder (2020) claims the equal procedure of learning and the libertarian contents of learning provide a situation for the rational empowerment of learners.

### ***Empowerment***

Phipps and Guilherme (2004) assert the empowerment of both teachers and students occurs through the practice of critical thinking and critical conversation and the admission of difference and disagreement and is stated by the authenticity of their voices. Especially oppressed voices find the power to be heard in CP.

### ***Ethic***

Freire (1998) states awareness of *unfinishedness* leads humans to be responsible individuals. Humans are ethical but they can also be unethical. The world of culture which is also the world of history, as well as the world of freedom, choice, decision, and probability is only considerable because it can also be negated, or denied. As a result, teaching humans can never be only instrumental, it must also be in an ethical mode.

### ***Freedom***

Freire (1985) states that individual freedom by itself is not sufficient in a CP framework: Individuals should use their freedom to help others feel free by changing the totality of society, otherwise, individuals are experiencing an individualist theory about freedom. Different aspects of freedom are discussed below:

*Freedom in Ethnicity.* As Kincheloe (2008) mentions, there are various ways of learning according to culture, ethnicity, etc. considerations. So, a critical teacher should consider this key principle for successful teaching.

*Freedom in Culture.* Tobin (2011) states radical listening, thus, is an honor means to confront other standpoints, therefore, developing the possibility of accepting good opinions concerned with others' cultures. Effective listening is at the core of effective discussion.

*Freedom in Sexuality.* Butler (1990) argues the queer theory is related to an attitude considered to develop and describe the variety of sexualities in people. The most significant dimension of this perspective is viewing these affairs from the state of the resistor to traditionally determine male and female tasks beyond cultures and religious tendencies. She believes the notion of being male or female is something that has been inflicted into society through desires of legal heterosexuality.

*Freedom in Race.* Kincheloe (2011) believes social features like race can affect paradigms of education, but in the CP framework education process should conduct in a natural way considering that all affairs influence the context.

### ***Gender***

Giroux (1983) states according to gender studies, the progress of critical knowledge was viewed as the most significant pedagogical target that can solve multiple modes of sex (and race) prejudice.

### ***Generative (Self-Production)***

Kincheloe (2008) considers generative as one of the themes in CP. It means topics are taken from students' own experiences in their lives. Such a theme is under the influence of teachers and students' emotions and dreams. The generative theme has been intertwined with the universal aspects. The generative theme and content help students know themselves as well as the world, the environment, the daily issues, and the dominant powers that shape these all.

### *Hope*

Freire (1998) views hope as something common between teachers and students, the hope that teachers and students can learn, teach, and produce knowledge together and stand together against difficulties in the learning process.

### *Humanization*

Freire (1997) states one of the results of CP is humanization. He knows it as the task of each person to release him/herself from oppression and injustice, and believes the oppressed must protect him/herself against the *dehumanization* process that negates human equality and limits freedom. However, learning the humanization notion is not related only to the oppressed. He states the oppressed agent should also help the oppressor parties, who are also dehumanized by the procedure of oppressing, to become human.

### *Humility*

Freire (1998) mentions humility as a tenet of the CP framework and states a teacher with pure humility respects the curiosity of learners in the learning process and it paves the way for learners to pass the unknowing position to knowing position freely with an open mind.

### *Interpretation*

Derrida (1976) argues not only is the aim of attending content to get the meaning or to know the interests of authorities, but also the aim is to discover and interpret all aspects of content consistent with the context for getting a better understanding of the world.

### *Joy*

Freire (1998) states if a teacher knows him/herself as the one who should not know the response to all types of questions, though it does not confer on him/her the authority it gives him/her the joy of recognition of his/her lack of knowledge. So, s/he tries for providing a friendly and enjoyable situation to get a better understanding of the contents.

### *Justice*

McLaren (2015) believes social justice teachers can provide learners with critical conditions, so learners can pose, interpret, argue, and critically talk about controversial issues in a just space with respect.

### *Listening*

Tobin (2011) believes making an endeavor to realize others' points of view without trying to alter them is concerned with foundation or radical listening. When individuals approbate radical listening, they listen

carefully to a speaker, make sure that they understand what has been uttered, and realize the main elements of the speaker's standpoint. Tobin (2011) mentions rather than reasoning an occasion against what is being offered, radical listeners try to adopt that opinion, consequently discovering the probabilities. Only when the probabilities have been browsed according to their capabilities for the collective are alternatives regarded according to different opinions. He states radical listening, thus, is an honor means to confront other standpoints, therefore, developing the possibility of accepting good opinions concerned with others' cultures. Effective listening is at the core of effective discussion.

### ***Openness***

Elliott (2007) claims the only way a teacher can provide a space for learners to bring up their attitudes about different issues in the world as well as to argue it is to prepare an openness for learners. In such conditions, learners are always motivated to share their ideas without fear of being suppressed.

### ***Polyphonia***

According to Tobin (2010), *polyphonia* demands all contributors participate in the dialogue and talk about what is on their mind based on a given topic. It is significant that all persons' rights to associate with talking their mind is esteemed by all contributors and it is not important what is said; all participants have pondered attentively about the continuing dialogue.

### ***Problem Posing***

Freire (1997) states a problem-posing model in education uncovers in a conversational medium which does not simply mean sharing of ideas. Conversation in this way means a procedure in which learners have encountered problems connected to their relationship with the world, resulting them to examine ways to solve problems. Freire (2018) claims the purpose of problem posing is questioning the status quo.

### ***Progressive***

Freire (1998) views learners as progressive subjects in the learning process, and he believes progressivism makes learners' autonomy in the learning procedure.

### ***Questioning***

Freire (1998) believes the teacher should provide a position for learners to make their understanding of materials through curiosity and asking questions about the content. Teaching is not to transfer content to students, and learning is not to memorize content.

### ***Respect***

Freire (1998) argues that in the CP framework, all educators, administrators, and policymakers should respect the autonomy of the learners, no difference whether learners are children, youths, or adults. He claims such respect helps learners realize the notion of *unfinishedness*, and they can see themselves as unfinished beings.

### ***Responsibility***

Giroux (1992) argues the notion of the pedagogy of responsibility related to critical individuals. The pedagogy of responsibility in Giroux's terms means individuals cannot stay passive and neutral about their kind. For a better world for all individuals, people must consider each other's social, cultural, economic, political, and educational concerns and they are responsible for them.

### ***Risk Taking***

Freire and Macedo (1987) claim teachers should motivate risk-taking which is the basic component of being creative. Freire (1998) mentions learners memorizing everything are content slaves. These learners are afraid to take risks, they are unable to make connections between what is transmitted to their minds and what is happening in the world.

### ***Self-Reflection***

Kincheloe (2008) asserts that lack of self-reflection feature in learners in the traditional methods of teaching may lead to imposing ideologies and authoritarian attitudes on individuals. So, self-reflection notion is a priority for teachers and learners to shape the self.

### ***Synthesis***

Freire (1997) argues in cultural synthesis, individuals from different worlds and with different knowledge and thoughts are not considered aggressors. They do not come to transfer or impose their attitudes on others but rather cooperate and interact with other individuals about the world. In cultural synthesis, it is possible to cope with contradictions and the differences in ideas is imaginable cultural synthesis is based on these differences; it rejects the domination of some people over others.

### ***Tolerance***

Brown (1971) mentions the value and the necessity of tolerance in the education system. Tolerance allows all individuals to express their opinions freely without fear of being suppressed by the administrators. On the other hand, as a main aim of CP, tolerance from anyone provides a situation for oppressed voices to be heard.

### ***Uncertainty***

According to Freire and Macedo (1987), teachers should encourage students unlike rote learning to be doubtful and not accept everything without questioning. They assert certainty is a vulnerable notion in CP and educators should involve students in dialogues about the world. The students' language is the only way to expand their voice, a need for the progress of a positive feeling of self-value.

### ***Voice***

Giroux (1992) states it is necessary to give voice to those people who suffer from injustice such as sexual abuse, starvation, war, and racial discrimination. Giroux (1983) states the students' voice is the argumentative way to be heard and to make themselves an active constructor of the world.

In Iranian context on CP and ELT textbooks, Davari and Iranmehr (2020) examined CP in textbook development and focused on the comparison between the previous (*Right Path to English*) and the new Iranian high school English language textbooks (*Vision*). They claim that in the new English textbooks (*Vision*) CP has been applied because of attending to local culture. They also believe that the old textbooks (*Right Path to English*) were neutral. They confirm the change from the mainstream ELT to critical ELT in new English textbooks (*Vision*) by replacing the neutral contents of old English textbooks (*Right Path to English*) with more awareness raising and controversial contents in new English textbooks (*Vision*). As far as the gap in the literature is concerned, to our knowledge, no study has been conducted with a specific focus on examining the major themes of CP in *Vision Series* English textbooks in Iranian high schools, and the few recent studies (Davari & Iranmehr, 2020, for example) only compared the new English textbooks with the old ones regarding some limited and surface tenets of CP (as responsibility and awareness raising). To bridge the gap, in the present study we intended to firstly elicit the major themes of the CP using content analysis, and secondly, to examine the existence and frequency of the major themes of CP in *Vision Series* textbooks. Therefore, to satisfy the purposes of the present study, the following research questions were formulated:

**Research Question One:** What are the underlying themes in critical pedagogy?

**Research Question Two:** What are the most frequently-used themes of critical pedagogy in high school *Vision Series* and related workbooks?

## Methodology

### Design of the Study

This study used a sequential exploratory mixed-method design. Following the sequential nature of this research, in the first phase of the present study to answer the first qualitative research question, we used content analysis based on the existing literature on CP by pioneers and authorities in the field to elicit the main themes of CP and then reduced the themes of CP in Iranian context based on experts' opinion. In the second phase, following a quantitative procedure, the frequency of these themes in *Vision Series* and related workbooks was statistically analyzed.

### Participants

To investigate what themes in CP were more related to the context of EFL in Iranian high school textbooks and for the validation of themes, six experts in the field were invited to examine the relevance of the themes. The participant experts were: One Associate Professor of TEFL at Payam Noor university, Iran; one senior researcher at the Centro de Estudos Sociais at the University of Coimbra, Portugal; one Professor Emeritus at Durham University, UK; one senior lecturer of pedagogy at the Faculty of Science of Education and Teacher Education, Catholic University of Valencia, Italy; one Associate Professor in TEFL at the University of Qom, Iran; and one Assistant Professor at Islamic Azad University, Iran.

### Materials

For the purpose of the study, the official textbooks of Iranian senior high school named *Vision series* (first, second, and third grade) and their workbooks were examined based on the selected themes in CP.

### *Vision Series*

*Vision Series* (*Vision 1, 2, 3*) were compiled by Alavi Moghaddam and colleagues and published in 2022 by Iran Textbook Publishing Company Press. *Vision 1* contains 4 lessons, *Vision 2* and *Vision 3* encompass 3 lessons. Each lesson of *Vision Series* includes *Get ready, Conversation, New Words and Expressions, Reading, Grammar, Listening and Speaking, Pronunciation, Writing*, and finally *What you learned* as the review of each lesson. All the content of *Vision Series* was analyzed as the corpora according to the aim of this study. The workbook of *Vision 1* includes exercises related to each of the four lessons separately and each lesson exercise has five parts including reading comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing exercises. There are also supplementary materials like the student CD, the teacher book and teacher CD which were not included in the corpora. See Table 1 for the topics of *Vision 1* and its details.

**Table 1**

*Name, Number of Pages, Units, and Topics (Vision 1)*

	Grade	Number of Pages	Number of Units	Topics
Vision 1	10	124	4	Saving Nature Wonders of Creation
Workbook 1	10	78	4	The Value of Knowledge Traveling the World

The workbook of *Vision 2* contains reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and writing exercises for each of the three lessons separately. Table 2 presents the topics and more details.

**Table 2**

*Name, Number of Pages, Units, and Topics (Vision 2)*

	Grade	Number of Pages	Number of Units	Topics
Vision 2	11	110	3	Understanding People A Healthy Lifestyle
Workbook 2	11	59	3	Art and Culture

The workbook of *Vision 3* contains reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and writing exercises for each of the three lessons separately (See Table 3).

**Table 3**

*Name, Number of Pages, Units, and Topics (Vision 3)*

	Grade	Number of Pages	Number of Units	Topics
Vision 3	12	99	3	Sense of Appreciation Look it Up
Workbook 3	12	62	3	Renewable Energy

## Data Collection Procedure

### *Step 1: Exploring Underlying Themes in CP*

The themes in CP were exploited by reading and evaluating about 40 books and articles related to CP theories and frameworks/issues by authorities in the field including Freire, Giroux, McLaren, Kirylo, Kincheloe, Hinchey, and so forth. To meet the requirements of the study, to examine the main themes and tenets of CP, we analyzed all parts of books and articles related to the theoretical foundation, rationale, and principles of CP. The result of the content analysis was extracting 40 themes in the domain of CP.

### *Step 2: Delimiting the Themes*

To narrow down which of the exploited themes in CP might be related to the TEFL context, and for the validity of the themes explored, six Applied Linguistics professors were asked to judge in their opinions through personal communication (via email). Out of the initial 40 themes explored in the first step by the researchers, the themes with five and six experts' votes were finally selected to be used in the second phase of the study.

### *Step 3: Identifying Subthemes and Assigning Codes to Subthemes*

To facilitate the examining of the application of the themes in *Vision Series*, each theme was categorized into its subthemes according to the definition of each theme provided by the authors related to the CP framework and then the themes and subthemes received a code. Also, an independent researcher familiar with CP framework was asked to do the blind coding of the textbooks. For the purpose of inter-rater reliability, Cronbach Alpha was run ( $r=0.64$ ). Then, *Vision 1, 2, and 3* and their workbooks were analyzed based on these codes for each lesson, its sections and exercises (see Table 4).

**Table 4**

*Assigned Codes for each Theme and Subtheme*

Themes	Subthemes
Action (ACT)	Social Issues (ACT1) Cultural Issues (ACT2) Political Issues (ACT3) Educational Issues (ACT4)
Critical Thinking (CLT)	Challenge knowledge (CLT1) Analyze information (CLT2) Control on life (CLT3)
Dialectical Relationship (DLR)	Cooperation (DLR1) Unity (DLR2) Organization (DLR3) Cultural Synthesis (DLR4)
Empowerment (EMP)	Critical Conversation
Justice (JUS)	Conversational issues in just space and with respect
Self-reflection (SRF)	Help a learner shape the self
Voice (VOC)	The voice of minorities

## Results

### Question 1

In the first phase of the study, we tried to elicit the underlying themes in CP and could explore 40 themes through content analysis. The initial themes explored in the literature on CP were as follows:

*Action, adventure, autonomy, change (transformation), conscientization, creativity, critical praxis, critical thinking, curiosity, democracy, dialectical relationship, difference, dissent, emancipation, equality, empowerment, ethic, freedom, gender, generation, hope, humanization, humility, interpretation, joy, justice, listening, openness, polyphonia, problem posing, progressive, questioning, respect, responsibility, risk-taking, self-reflection, syntheses, tolerance, uncertainty, and voice.*

### *Narrowing Down the Themes*

To make sure the explored 40 themes were highly related to the educational context and the purpose of this study and to identify the most relevant themes, we consulted six experts who were familiar with the CP framework. The list of themes based on the experts' opinions is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Themes based on the Experts' Opinions*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Related</b>	<b>Non- Related</b>
Action	6	0
Adventure	3	3
Autonomy	4	2
Change or Transformation	4	2
Creativity	3	3
Conscientization	5	1
Critical Praxis	5	1
Critical Thinking	6	0
Curiosity	4	2
Democracy	4	2
Dialectical Relationship	6	0
Difference	5	1
Dissent	5	1
Emancipation	4	2
Equality	3	3
Empowerment	6	0
Ethic	5	1
Freedom	4	2
Gender	4	2
Generative (Self- Production)	4	2
Hope	4	2
Humanization	4	2
Humility	3	3
Interpretation	2	4
Joy	2	4
Justice	6	0
Listening	2	4
Openness	4	2
Polyphonia	4	2

Problem Posing	4	2
Progressive	3	3
Questioning	5	1
Respect	5	1
Responsibility	4	2
Risk Taking	3	3
Self- Reflection	6	0
Synthesis	4	2
Tolerance	4	2
Uncertainty	5	1
Voice	6	0

**Result of the Delimited Themes**

Based on the result presented in Table 5, out of the 40 themes explored in the present study, the themes with six experts' votes were finally selected to investigate the most frequently-used CP themes in *Vision Series* including *justice, self- reflection, voice, action, critical thinking, dialectical relationship, and empowerment.*

**Question 2**

The second research question asked about the most frequently-used themes of CP in the *Vision Series* and workbooks. To this end, the presence of each theme in *Vision Series* student book and workbooks was analyzed separately. Each Table includes the corresponding theme count (the number of each subtheme occurrence) and percentage of each subtheme and then the findings of Chi-square for the *Vision Series* and workbooks are shown.

**Analysis of the "Action" Theme**

As displayed in Table 6, the most and the least frequently used *action* categories in *Vision Series* and workbooks were "educational issues" and "political issues" with 162 in *Vision Series* and 88 occurrences in workbooks, and "political issues" with 3 and 1 occurrences in *Vision Series* and workbooks respectively. The absence of "political issues" in *Vision 3* and workbook 2 and 3 is noticeable.

**Table 6**

*Descriptive Statistics of Action Subthemes in Vision Series and Workbooks*

	<i>Vision 1</i> Freq%	<i>Vision 2</i> Freq%	<i>Vision 3</i> Freq%	Total Freq %	<i>Workbook1</i> Freq%	<i>Workbook2</i> Freq%	<i>Workbook 3</i> Freq%	Total Freq %
Social issues	12 42.9	9 32.1	7 25.0	28 100.0	7 41.2	4 23.5	6 35.3	17 100.0
Cultural issues	16 40.0	11 27.5	13 32.5	40 100.0	8 57.1	2 14.3	4 28.6	14 100.0
Political issues	2 66.7	1 33.3	0	3 100.0	1 100.0	0	0	1 100.0

Educational issues	41 25.3	66 40.7	55 34.0	162 100.0	48 49.0	23 23.5	27 27.6	88 100.0
Total	71	87	75	233	64	29	37	120
Mean	17.75	21.75	18.75		16	7.25	9.25	
SD	14.36	25.82	21.43		18.67	9.20	10.47	

**Distribution of the "Action" Theme in Vision Series and Workbooks**

Based on the results, there was no significant difference between the frequencies of the "action" theme in *Vision Series*, i.e., Sig = .41, but the "action" theme in *workbooks* was not distributed equally, i.e., Sig=.000 (p< .05).

**Analysis of the "Critical Thinking" Theme**

The most frequently-used subtheme in the "critical thinking" category was "analyze information" with 124 occurrences in *Vision Series* and with 102 occurrences in *workbooks*. Table 7 presents the result.

**Table 7**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Critical Thinking subthemes in Vision Series and Workbooks*

	<i>Vision 1</i> Freq%	<i>Vision 2</i> Freq %	<i>Vision 3</i> Freq %	Total Freq %	<i>Workbook 1</i> Freq%	<i>Workbook 2</i> Freq%	<i>Workbook 3</i> Freq%	Total Freq%
Challenge knowledge	6 37.5	5 31.25	5 31.25	16 100.0	7 50.0	0	7 50.0	14 100.0
Analyze information	30 24.2	49 39.5	45 36.3	124 100.0	41 40.2	30 29.4	31 30.4	102 100.0
Control on life	5 25.0		60 100.0	20 100.0	8 56.65	0	6 43.35	14 100.0
Total	41 13.66	59 20.74	20 17.79	160	56 18.66	30 10	44 14.67	130
Mean	11.55				15.8	14.4	11.55	
SD								

**Distribution of the "Critical Thinking" Theme**

The Chi-square result for the "critical thinking" theme in *Vision Series* and *workbooks* indicated the difference between the frequencies of this theme was significant in both *Vision Series* and *workbooks* at different levels (Sig = .11 for *Vision series*, Sig = .02 for *workbooks*, p<.05).

**Analysis of the "Dialectical Relationship" Theme**

Table 8 indicates the frequencies and percentages of subthemes in the "dialectical relationship" theme in CP in *Vision Series*: 39 occurrences for "cooperation", 35 occurrences for "unity", 38 occurrences for "organization", and 35 occurrences for "cultural synthesis". The absence of these four subthemes in *workbook 2* and *3* is considerable.

**Table 8**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Dialectical Relationship Subthemes in Vision Series and Workbooks*

	<i>Vision 1</i> Freq%	<i>Vision 2</i> Freq %	<i>Vision 3</i> Freq %	Total Freq %	<i>Workbook1</i> Freq %	<i>Workbook2</i> Freq %	<i>Workbook3</i> Freq %	Total Freq%
Cooperation	15 38.5	10 25.6	14 35.9	39 100.0	1 100.0	0	0	1 100.0
Unity	11 31.4	10 28.6	14 40.0	35 100.0	1 100.0	0	0	1 100.0
Organization	14 36.85	10 26.3	14 36.85	38 100.0	1 100.0	0	0	1 100.0
Cultural synthesis	10 28.6	11 31.4	14 40.0	35 100.0	1 100.0	0	0	1 100.0
Total	50	41	56	147	4	0	0	4
Mean	12.5	10.25	14		1	0	0	
SD	2.06	0.43	0		0	0	0	

***Distribution of the "Dialectical Relationship"***

According to the Chi -square results, the distribution of the "dialectical relationship" theme in *Vision Series* was not significant (Sig = .31). Due to the lack of four subthemes of "dialectical relationship" in *workbook 2* and *3* and the low frequency of this theme in *workbook 1*, Chi-square could not be meaningful for the statistical analysis of the "dialectical relationship" theme in *workbooks*.

***Analysis of the "Empowerment" Theme***

It can be readily discerned from Table 9 that the only subtheme in the "empowerment" category is "critical conversation" with 14 (60.9%) occurrences in *Vision 1*, three (13.0%) occurrences in *Vision 2*, and six (26.1%) occurrences in *Vision 3*. The absence of "critical conversation" in *workbook 2* and *workbook 3* is notable.

**Table 9**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Empowerment Subtheme in Vision Series and Workbooks*

	<i>Vision 1</i> Freq%	<i>Vision 2</i> Freq %	<i>Vision 3</i> Freq %	Total	<i>Workbook 1</i> Freq %	<i>Workbook 2</i> Freq %	<i>Workbook 3</i> Freq %	Total Freq %
Critical conversation	14 60.9	3 13.0	6 26.1	23 100.0	9 100.0	0	0	9 100.0
Total	14	3	6	23	9	0	0	
Mean	0	3	6	100.0	9	0	0	
SD		0	0		0	0	0	

***Distribution of the "Empowerment" Theme***

The distribution of the "empowerment" theme in *Vision Series* was significant, i.e., Sig. =.015 (p<.05). Due to the lack of the "empowerment" theme in *workbook 2* and *3* and the low frequency of this theme in

workbook 1, Chi-square could not be meaningful for the statistical analysis of the "empowerment" theme in workbooks.

**Analysis of the "Justice" Theme**

Table 10 displays the frequencies and percentage of the only subtheme of the "justice" theme in CP with a total number of 13 occurrences in *Vision Series* and seven in workbooks. The absence of the "justice" subtheme ("conversational issues in just space and with respect") in workbook 3 is remarkable.

**Table 10**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Justice Subtheme in Vision Series and Workbooks*

	<i>Vision 1</i> Freq%	<i>Vision 2</i> Freq %	<i>Vision 3</i> Freq %	Total Freq %	<i>Workbook 1</i> Freq %	<i>Workbook 2</i> Freq %	<i>Workbook3</i> Freq %	Total Freq %
Conversational issues in just space and with respect	5 38.45	5 38.45	3 23.1	13 100.0	5 71.4	2 28.6	0	7 100.0
Total	5	5	3	13 100.0	5	2	0	7
Mean	5	5	3		5	2	0	
SD	0	0	0		0	0	0	

**Distribution of the "Justice" Theme**

There were no significant and meaningful differences between the "justice" themes in *Vision Series* and *workbooks* at different levels (Sig = .052, Sig = .25, p< .05) respectively for *Vision Series* and *workbooks*.

**Analysis of the "Self-reflection" Theme**

Table 11 reveals the frequency and percentage of the "self-reflection" subtheme ("help a learner shape the self") in *Vision Series* and *workbooks*. The frequency and percentage in *Vision 1-3* were 13(25.5%), 17(33.3%), and 21(41.2%) respectively. In *workbook 1-3*, it was 9(39.1%), 4(17.4%), and 10(43.5%).

**Table 11**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Self-reflection Subtheme in Vision Series and Workbooks*

	<i>Vision 1</i> Freq%	<i>Vision 2</i> Freq %	<i>Vision 3</i> Freq %	Total Freq %	<i>Workbook1</i> Freq %	<i>Workbook2</i> Freq %	<i>Workbook3</i> Freq %	Total Freq %
Help a learner shape the self	13 25.5	17 33.3	21 41.2	51 100.0	9 39.1	4 17.4	10 43.5	23 100.0
Total	13	17	21	51	9	4	10	23
Mean	13	17	21		9	4	10	
SD	0	0	0		0	0	0	

**Distribution of the "Self-reflection" Theme**

The Chi- square results revealed there were no significant and meaningful differences between the "self-reflection" themes in *Vision Series* and *workbooks* at different levels, i.e., Sig = .39 for *Vision Series* and Sig = .26 for *workbooks* (p< .05).

**Analysis of the "Voice" Theme**

According to Table 12, the total occurrence of "voice" in *Vision Series* was 15 and 2 in *workbooks*. The low frequency and the absence of this theme category ("the voice of minorities") in *workbook* 1 and 2 are remarkable.

**Table 12**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Voice Subtheme in Vision Series and Workbooks*

	<i>Vision 1</i>	<i>Vision 2</i>	<i>Vision 3</i>	Total	<i>Workbook1</i>	<i>Workbook2</i>	<i>Workbook3</i>	Total
	Freq%	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %	Freq %	Freq%
The voice of minorities	6 40.0	6 40.0	3 20.0	15 100.0	0	0	2 100.0	2 100.0
Total	6	6	3	15	0	0	2	2
Mean	6	6	3		0	0	2	
SD	0	0	0		0	0	0	

**Distribution of the "Voice" Theme**

The distribution of the "voice" theme in *Vision Series* was not significant (Sig = 1, p< .05). Due to the absence of the "voice" theme in *workbook* 1 and 2 and the low frequency of this theme in *workbook* 3, Chi-square could not be meaningful for the statistical analysis of the "voice" theme in *workbooks*.

As it was mentioned, the second research question examined the most frequently-used themes of CP in high school *Vision Series* and workbooks. According to the descriptive statistics Tables of subthemes in *Vision Series* and workbooks, the most frequently-used themes of CP in high school *Vision Series* were "action" (233), "critical thinking" (160), "dialectical relationships" (147). The most frequently-used themes of CP in high school *Vision Series* workbooks were "critical thinking" (130) and "action" (120).

**Discussion**

This study attempted to explore the main underlying themes in CP as found in the literature by authorities in this field and to decide what themes might be more related to the Iranian high school English textbooks named *Vision* and its workbooks. Some experts in Applied Linguistics were asked to choose the most related ones. *Vision Series* and their workbooks were examined regarding these selected themes in CP to investigate the most frequently-used themes. This study also tried to find out the relation between the level of *Vision Series* and workbooks and the extent to which CP themes were used.

The first research question was about the underlying themes in CP. Forty main themes were initially explored based on the content analysis and literature review. Forasmuch as the essential aim of scientists in CP is to make people familiar with their own rights in the world and to make them aware of the value of justice for the whole people around the world, these all-exploited themes in CP intertwined with "justice". In other words, these themes are applicable in the education system if the authorities in this field such as

stakeholders, teachers, and policymakers believe in the essence and the necessity of the existence of justice for nurturing thoughtful individuals and constructing a better world. To our knowledge, as far as the related literature revealed, there were no studies to examine the existence or absence of the themes of critical pedagogy in Iranian high school ELT textbooks neither in Iran nor around the world for the purpose of comparison of the findings regarding pros and cons.

Studying carefully the underlying themes in CP, the value of humans based on their interests, talents, and intellectual capacities can be deduced. No matter where people live, what their language is, or what their affordability is, all individuals must enjoy the same opportunities to make life according to their needs, and they have the right to benefit from social, educational and financial resources equally. As the themes and subthemes in CP implied, there must be a belief in the existence of differences in humans to make sense. So, it is not attainable without respecting humans' rights, differences, and voices. As was stated, one of the tenets of CP is the "dialectical relationship" which happens when the parties of dialogue accept their differences but never try to change each other (Gadamer,1975). By accepting differences among humans, individuals become empowered to conduct critical conversations. "Critical thinking" as another main tenet in CP enables individuals to have active roles in making history instead of being dominated by history (Kincheloe, 2005).

When the "difference", "dissent", "respect", "justice", "self-reflection", "ethics", and "questioning" were established as main tenets for having a democratic society, it indicates the empowerment of that society in "social", "cultural", "political", and "educational issues" as empowerment is one of the main tenets in CP. "Uncertainty" as another main theme in CP is crucial because critical individuals are skeptical and doubtful about new ideas and ideologies. Critical individuals dialogue about the world and are never influenced by imposed thoughts. Finally, "voice" might be seen as one of the most important themes in CP. In a justice-oriented society, minorities (ethnic and religious) have the same right to be heard as well as elite groups. Kincheloe (2008) argues *complex CP* is looking for new voices which may have been kept out by the authoritative culture. As a result, until individual, gender, ethnic, and religious differences are accepted, the principles of CP cannot be applied.

The second research question examined the most frequently-used themes in *Vision Series* and their workbooks. As the analysis indicated, the most frequently-used themes of CP in *Vision Series* were "action", "critical thinking", and "dialectical relationships". The most frequently-used themes of CP in *Vision Series* workbooks were "critical thinking" and "action". To our knowledge, there were no studies to examine the existence or absence of the themes of CP in Iranian high school English textbooks. Most studies were related to the teachers' perception regarding CP. Davari and Iranmehr (2020) conducted a comparative study about CP in textbook development and compared three previous senior high school textbooks named *Right Path to English* and three new senior high school textbooks named *Vision* to investigate the alteration that English textbooks have had. They claim the new textbooks avoid neutral topics, and the content of the new textbooks is related to the learner's real life, and the emphasis on some moral aspects might indicate the footprint of CP in high school new English textbook development in Iran. Asakeret et al. (2019) in a critical content analysis of English textbooks, *Prospect* and *Vision*, in the Iranian education system argue that the ELT textbooks used in Iran are completely culture-bound, they focus on developing learners' linguistic accuracy and do not give attention to the learner's real life. According to Freire (1998), freedom has no limits and it is the main component for humans as an *unfinishedness* creature. So, it is significant to consider the educational context as a flexible environment in which all students and teachers with different background cultures, religions, and knowledge have this right to expose their ideas about political, social, and cultural issues not only in society but also in the world, and educational systems should provide such atmosphere for them and it should reflect this diversity. Loveless and Griffith (2014) mention the synthesis of ideology, culture, and language makes diverse, various discourses and cultural statements.

### Merits of Vision Series and Workbooks

Teaching new words in the context. Tobin (2010) claims the origin of the knowledge or how it forms is not significant. Decontextualized knowledge, is gained separated from the lived experience. He believes when learners analyze the process of generating knowledge regarding the context learners reach insights about context and significance. An interesting point in the grammar section is teaching grammar in content and within attractive topics (*Vision 1*, pages 24, 52, 82, 107, *Vision 2*, pages 28, 64, 95, and *Vision 3*, pages 29, 57, 86). Another strength of *Vision 1* and 3 is to arouse a sense of "responsibility" in the students (*Vision 1*, page 26 and *Vision 3*, page 24 reading about respect your parents). Giroux (1992) calls it a pedagogy of responsibility. As it was mentioned, education cannot be neutral and it is in relation to social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental issues.

### Demerits of Vision Series

In *Vision 1* exercises where students are asked to match words with pictures, the activities do not help learners' creativity since such exercises are based on predetermined patterns (see pages 18, 46, 73, 99). In *Vision series*, most questions are "factual questions" based on the text in which students can find their answers in the given text with no exploration and heuristic thinking. It seems they do not motivate students and do not encourage the students for more critical dialogue. The third question on page 19 in *Vision 1* starts with a yes/ no question form known as closed questions (Do you take care of animals?). It would be better to start with or complete with "how questions" (How do you take care of animals? or How can people take care of animals? Such questions might motivate "critical thinking" in students. Walker (2003) states "critical thinking" makes students engage in the learning process actively. So, learners should analyze and interpret information. The conversation sections in this book just intend to teach some new words to learners. The orange box on page 21 in *Vision 1* indicates that it is important according to the aim of this part for students to reflect on what they learn unlike it is not in an open and dialogical relation. Dewey (1902) asserts the teacher's task is to make the situation for the students to learn by actively involving and reflecting upon ongoing collaborative practices among learners and to motivate them that they have this right even to change the situation. Dewey (1938) states reflective thinking is significant to learning, which not only includes an empirical aspect to education but also agitates the tendency to learn. The reading section on page 22 in *Vision 1* attends to the local issues (Iranian Cheetah) but without challenging practices with no analytic questions. Most practices in these *Series* are not based on dialogical ways of teaching.

Another weakness of this book seems to be not caring about cultural issues. According to Guilherme (2002), language and culture are significant factors in CP. Cultural education is an essential point for the completion of CP. The pattern-matched exercises suggest that the purpose of the book is only to teach the language not to enjoy the process of learning it. Monchinski (2008) asserts the banking system of education puts teachers in a position that is far from students' position and this situation makes them both not enjoy the education context.

Another drawback in *Vision 1* is the listening and speaking sections. These parts are based on pattern-matched exercises and they do not respect the learners' autonomy and freedom (see pages 30 and 31). Kincheloe (2011) believes autonomy is an ethical right of individuals. According to Freire (1998), the aim of education is not only teaching and repeating words, but also the aim is respecting the autonomy, eminence, and personality of the learners. Kincheloe (2008) states freedom helps students to construct their own knowledge. Pronunciation sections are again based on traditional methods of teaching (*Vision 1* pages 32, 60, 89, and 114).

The writing section in *Vision Series* is not based on the topic of the lessons (*Vision 1* pages 34, 35, 62, 91, 115, *Vision 2* pages 37, 72, 102, and *Vision 3* pages 34, 63, and 91). It is not creative and it is based on the predetermined words according to the aim of this section. The aim is more to teach a part of the language and not more. Writing parts are trying to teach grammatical points and students confront a mass of grammar tips. To Courtney (1988), education based on problem-solving denies the importance of

questioning and *problem-detecting* which are the main elements of being creative. The writing sections try to teach learners the grammatical points which are not probably interesting to the learners. It might be better to ask students to write about the most recent happenings in their country or the world. This part ignores other factors that affect writing such as mechanics, unity, topic, etc., and the procedures of writing as pre-writing, writing, and post-writing are not practiced.

Most exercises in *Vision Series* are based on individuals' decisions and solutions. As Kirylo (2013) states, the marketization of education considers that individuals' decisions in the process of solving a problem or answering questions are valued over group collaboration or cooperation. Tobin (2011) mentions the notion of *cogen* or co-generative dialogue as a major idea in which teachers, students, and others with an interest in the quality of teaching and learning could gather together to discuss ways in which proper curricula could be developed. "Polyphonia" demands all contributors participate in the dialogue, talking about what is on their minds based on a given topic. The practices with dictated patterns ignore the autonomy of learners which is crucial for enjoying the learning process.

Walker (2003) argues working in a group and cooperative exercises can stimulate "critical thinking". In *Vision Series*, there is no room for controversial topics. There are various exercises, but they all pursue a monotonous fashion and they do not promote learners to propose a plan, suggest or construct a solution. In *Vision 2*, the banking model of education is more tangible by a pile of grammar and language tips. There is no room for learners' autonomy and they have to learn these parts and answer the questions that are related to these hints. Freire (1998) argues "autonomy" is a process of shaping the self, a necessary way for maturing. It does not occur suddenly. So, for training autonomous learners, the education system should focus on practices that encourage decision-making and responsibility, and it should focus on experiences that respect freedom. In *Vision 3* the focus is more on teaching grammar tips. Critical pedagogy is not just about teaching, learners and teachers should learn from each other. It should focus on what learners like more and could help them shape the self.

The writing section in all *Vision Series* is not enjoyable. They just try to teach tips in a banking model. As we teachers know by experience, writing in a foreign language is difficult for most students, so it would be better to start by brainstorming, pre-writing, writing, and post-writing to make it more engaging and challenging. The workbooks also do not give an exclusive perception of the world and its issues. The important points in workbooks are the black and white photos and papers with low quality. The main problem with practices in the workbooks is that they do not have challenging questions. The workbooks include mechanical exercises and structured questions. The yes/ no questions are not that much challenging and do not stimulate "critical thinking". Workbook exercises mostly focus on teaching English itself and teaching grammatical points in a traditional way. Most exercises are based on a given text and do not start with open questions (*workbook 1*, pages 13, 27, 39, 45, 49, 63, *workbook 2*, pages 12, 29, 34, 35, 48, *workbook 3*, pages 20, 49, 57).

Writing parts in workbooks only focus on writing based on grammatical points. There are no cooperative practices and students have to follow a predetermined plan and answer the questions based on the reading passage, not on their own or based on their thoughts and perception of the topic (*workbook 1*, pages 8, 26, 44, 62, *workbook 2*, pages 10, 27, 46, *workbook 3*, pages 10, 28, 47). *Vision Series* and their workbooks have tried to teach mostly grammatical points and the voluminous content does not let teachers and learners enjoy teaching and learning the context which is the essence of education. It seems the main aim is that teachers have to prepare learners for school exams and not more. Taking all features of CP themes into account, to us, one of the most important drawbacks of *Vision Series* is its conservative stance towards global issues. The *Vision Series* do not deal with controversial affairs such as political, educational, and cultural issues although they are the main components in CP to see the diverse aspects of the world.

### Conclusion and Implications

The purpose of this study was first to do a content analysis and explore the underlying themes in CP and then to investigate the most frequently-used themes in *Vision Series*, an Iranian high school English language textbook series. Since this research followed a subjective line in the qualitative phase of eliciting the underlying themes of CP, further research is suggested for the reliability and generalizability issues. Also, this study tried to examine the existence of CP themes in Iran's senior high school English textbooks; therefore, further research can be applied to junior high school English textbooks, or the junior and senior high school English textbooks can be compared regarding the underlying themes in CP. Critical pedagogy principles may help not only students and teachers but also all individuals use their art and abilities to build a bridge for their own and their society's progress. Iran consists of a rainbow of races, ethnicities, religions, and dialects which should be paid attention to so that their voices are heard not only in their own country but also in the world, and this is not possible without education and belief in the themes related to CP. As far as the theoretical implication of the study is concerned, the purpose of education should be to empower learners/citizens to tackle the society issues. It seems that in compiling ELT textbooks regarding localization of education, CP themes should be organized and materialized in a sound theoretical framework in practice.

The first implication of the present study might be related to the stakeholders and school administrators. The task of education is not only teaching English in a specific framework like teaching grammar, but it can be completely integrated with people's lives and deal with the issue of the day. A country with freedom of opinion and thought allows those involved in the development of materials to discuss and introduce the voice of minority ethnic and religious groups to be heard and not consider it as a threat. The second implication might be related to the EFL teachers. First of all, it is necessary for a teacher and a student to learn to be critical. Although an educational system is forced to follow certain policies, the main responsibility is on the teachers, based on the knowledge they have of their students, to teach them the principles of CP and critical thinking and be role models themselves. The third implication might be related to EFL students. A student familiar with CP themes always has a skeptical view of the world and life and is always learning to make a free world away from imposed thoughts and ideas.

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### **Declaration of Conflicting Interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflicting interests related to the study presented in this manuscript. They also confirm that they have no direct or indirect financial interest in any product, service, or company that could be perceived as influencing the outcome of this research.

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