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Critical Pedagogy and Language Acquisition: Studying Brazil's Crisis to Improve Second Language Acquisition

Jamile Forcelini

Abstract

Education has the power to influence learners to think critically. It empowers society to move from inertia to Freire's practice of freedom. The present article reflects upon language and culture. It supports including culture when promoting L2 instruction and implementing Critical Pedagogy: a problem-solving approach to discuss language and culture in Brazil, a country handling difficult transformations in fighting corruption and resolving economic crisis. Consequently, Brazilian Portuguese, a fundamental language worldwide, is the main language presented. It aims to combine Critical Pedagogy and second language acquisition and to benefit from a country's hardships to develop L2 acquisition.

Introduction

Education has the power to influence learners to either accept reality or critically deliberate and change it. Critical thinking is vital to empower learners and society as a whole to move from a practice of inertia to Freire's *practice of freedom* as well as *humanization*. Such change, however, is only attainable if pursued with one of the most powerful social tools: language; the most perceptible manifestation of culture, our connection to the world, what unites us in society, identifies us communally, and serves us as guidance for civic conduct (Larson & Smalley, 1972).

It is important to reflect upon the role of culture in the acquisition of another language as well as what implications culture brings to the teaching and learning process of a second language (L2) and the responsibility educators have when providing learners pedagogical tools to acquire a second language and consequently become aware of its intrinsic culture. L2 learners will only master

L2 communication if stimulated and prepared to think critically towards L2 cultural values to unfold deeper layers of culture and linguistic knowledge so that socio-cultural tolerance and empathy can be developed. As Brown (2000) affirms, becoming bilingual is a different and new approach in life. Previous principles and skills are impacted and a new challenge is encountered, to go beyond L1 boundaries into a new way of communicating, thinking, and (re)acting. As a result, a critical pedagogical approach is preferred in order to provide learners with skills to learn and communicate effectively in L2.

Critical Pedagogy seeks to empower education by enabling learners and educators to promote healthy, reciprocal opportunities for discourse, opinions, attitudes, and consciousness to be built. The construction of the self within or against mainstream conceptual views is secured through critical pedagogic practices. It builds tolerance towards distinct cultural views, develops social and political awareness, and cultivates moral practices aligned with social and political integrity.

The present article aims to present a compound view of language and culture acquisition. It emphasizes the intrinsic connections between language and culture learning that makes it impossible to adequately address both elements separately. Due to the compound nature of language learning, the present work seeks to show the importance of including cultural components when promoting L2 instructional practice since it is a vital element for effective L2 communication and comprehension. It also discusses the inclusion of Critical Pedagogy as a viable pedagogical practice in L2 instruction, a different educational practice that can blend problem-solving practices to think critically about language and culture, and diverge from stereotypical views of L2 cultural elements in order to overcome decontextualized and ineffective language instruction.

For this study, Portuguese as a Foreign Language, specifically Brazilian Portuguese (BP) will be used as the main language to exemplify such pedagogical practices. BP was chosen because Portuguese is considered a fundamental language worldwide and because Brazil currently occupies a unique position in the world today. Because of its size and vast resources, it is considered a promising economy with great international influence. Nevertheless, Brazil is facing a difficult transformation as the country attempts to reform a deep-rooted and long-lasting history of corruption and resolve its current economic crisis. A brief account of Brazil's current political and economic situation is presented in order to generate themes and ideas for Portuguese foreign language (PFL) instruction. This work aims to combine Critical Pedagogy utilizing the country's crisis to improve second language acquisition.

Language and Culture

According to Valdes (1986), a language cannot be simply classified as a formal system formed by vocabulary, syntax, and phonemes because it also entails its humanistic sphere. It is a domain that follows rules, and consents its speakers to assimilate experiences through the language and express themselves with it. Not

only does language influence its speakers, the language itself can also be influenced by the experiences speakers have when reasoning their own reality.

Culture is one of the most influential factors in a language. Therefore, in order to comprehend how culture influences language, it is important to conceptualize it. Moran (2001) perceives culture as composed of multiple meanings. It can be seen as any source of communication (verbal, non-verbal). McCarthy and Carter (1994) understand and divide culture into three different ways. Firstly, Culture, in capital letters encompasses artistic manifestations such as music, art, and literature. Secondly, culture is perceived as traditions and social forms of worldview that a group of people share and use to rationalize their own experiences. Thirdly, culture can also be perceived as social discourse and the social skills developed to enable comprehension of knowledge used for communication.

Brown (2000) states culture and language are intertwined and simply incapable of separation without costly loss of meaning. As Larson and Smalley (1972) state, it is also the social guidance of behavior in community. According to Orlandi (2006), words cannot signify in isolation. They are ideologically assembled and unfolded through relational discourse. Therefore, it is important to reflect upon the role of culture in the acquisition of another language as well as what implications culture brings to the teaching and learning process of a second language (L2) and the responsibility educators have when providing learners pedagogical tools to acquire a second language and consequently become aware of its intrinsic culture.

What is key to point out is the nomenclature used to refer to processes of “knowing” a new language and culture. Linguistically, language has been referred to as either being learned or acquired (Krashen, 1982). In other words, one can explicitly learn a language along with its syntactic, phonological parameters or implicitly acquire these rules and convert such parameters into effective L2 comprehension and communicative skills. Nor does acquiring an L2 imply negating a native tongue and consequently discarding previous cultural knowledge and values for the sake of new ones. Still, by knowing and understanding new cultural realities associated with L2, learners may accommodate new concepts and views comparing and even shifting former cultural and societal views of reality. Bakhtin (1999) states languages are ideological and its use is associated with ideological evolution.

Finally, Patrikis (1988) points out the risks of misjudgment of other cultures based on ethnocentric and prejudiced views of the culture of origin. Stereotyping, triviality, and political bias as well as incompleteness are common but imprecise interpretations of another culture divorced from the meaning of their context.

Culture and Second Language Instruction

It is pertinent for L2 learners to be attentive about the reasons guiding L1 speakers to comprehend and preserve their cultural values the way they do. Thinking critically towards L2 cultural values includes unfolding deeper layers of culture

and consequently linguistic knowledge so that socio-cultural tolerance and empathy can be developed. As Politzer (1959) declares, because socio-cultural tolerance is not considered innate, education becomes essential in the process of enabling learners to think critically about their socio-cultural realities as well as others. The linguistic and genuine communicative ability speakers have in L2 is directly and intrinsically connected to the amount of cultural knowledge and awareness L2 speakers have absorbed.

Motivation also plays a role in the incorporation of cultural aspects on L2 acquisition (Castro, 2004). When learners are able to see L2 knowledge produced in the classroom as also legitimate and applicable to their own daily lives, then the information becomes meaningful. The more relatable content becomes to learners' lives, the more linguistic confidence learners present to communicate effectively in a different language and engage in the learning process.

After seeing the multiple connective layers language and culture have as well as the motives underlying the inclusion of socio-cultural practices into L2 teaching, a distinct theoretical framework, that can be used to account for non-traditional forms of instruction and implemented in L2 classrooms, is presented below.

Critical Pedagogy

According to Reagan (2010), Critical pedagogy is a theoretical framework, a political and ideological effort that attempts to enquire about current views and practices present in schools. First introduced in the 1970s, it is based on the premise that education can enable learners and educators to promote healthy, reciprocal, or more neutral opportunities for discourse, opinions, attitudes, and consciousness to take place. Construction of the self within or against mainstream conceptual views is secured through critical pedagogic practices to build up tolerance towards distinct cultural views, to develop social and political awareness, and to cultivate moral practices that are aligned with social and political integrity. Critical pedagogy aims to deconstruct the view of what Barbara Craig (1995) calls "education as a quantifiable intellectual commodity." Dewey (2008) claims that societal dichotomy promotes individuals to pursue communal transformation and benefits securing change and improvement.

As one of the main contributors of Critical Pedagogy's core concepts, Paulo Freire's works assert that learners are fully capable of critically observing their world in order to construct their own social reality. However, this process is only possible through dialogue with others. Inertia and illiteracy, that provoke mere social reproduction and reactions by the oppressed, need to be transformed into critical responses of social engagement and action. A transition denominated *from object to subject* by Freire (1970).

Traditional educational practices are refuted by Freire (1970) and categorized as a system of *banking*. Part of a repressive and dysfunctional structure, it generates an oppressor-oppressed relationship. Educators (oppressor) retain power and knowledge while learners (oppressed) function as passive and uncritical

recipients. By implementing critical pedagogic practices, educators and learners become partners; learners are encouraged to express their ideas, generating channels where teachers and students can learn from each other's ideas and experiences, and develop conclusions together. Everyone is responsible for a joint growing process. What mediates this process is not the "teacher-preacher" approach but the reality within which both educator and learner are immersed. It serves as a generator of themes and issues, and consequently the educational materials to be used, developed, and solved through Freire's pedagogical proposal. Life itself becomes a self-renovating textbook without an answer key. Reality is not static but an ongoing progression of acts. A problem-solving education fits into a continuing process of life enabling socio-cultural growth.

The apparent risks of promoting critical pedagogy revolve around the challenges of bias and neutrality. Several scholars endorse educational practice that remains as neutral or reduces bias. Education has the power to influence learners to either accept reality or critically deliberate and change it. Critical thinking, as developed by Critical Pedagogy, can empower learners and society as a whole to move from a practice of inertia to Freire's *practice of freedom* as well as *humanization*.

Critical Pedagogy, the Classroom, and the Role of the Educator

The role of the educator is uniquely powerful in the process of introducing learners to a new culture as well as promoting opportunities to think critically. Moreover, as Eslami-Rasekh et al. (2004) note, the work and inclusion of pragmatic and cultural knowledge in the L2 curriculum is still a personal choice of every educator. Unfortunately, as previously noted, there are several reasons that diminish or impede the inclusion of cultural aspects into L2 classrooms. Non-native teachers do not feel comfortable enough to discuss cultural matters often claiming lack of knowledge. They feel they do not possess the same expertise as native speakers do. The process of L2 cultural awareness can also be seen as a potential threat to L1 cultural and linguistic knowledge. Hadley (2001) adds by saying some educators have limited time to include cultural knowledge in the classroom. Structural and linguistic information in L2 classrooms usually commands the most instructional importance and time commitments. Cultural knowledge may even be considered impertinent, unnecessary, or uninteresting. Cakir (2006) claims some educators do not seem to realize the importance and necessity of cultural guidance. Language is seen as a mere application of grammar rules and not as components of a complex unit, along with culture, responsible for effective communication in L2.

According to Hadley (2001), several educators also rely on future, authentic, cultural exposure abroad to meet the needs learners have and aspire to perfect their linguistic and cultural knowledge. However, as Castro (2004) outlines, foreign experiences are not reliable guarantees for learners to obtain such cultural understanding. It can simply unfold a continuation of learners' former cultural principles in another geographical setting. The natural and habitual inclination

individuals have to preserve and guard their own cultural principles remains present and may serve as an obstacle to the interaction and acceptance of new values and linguistic knowledge. The process of acculturation is healthier if promoted gradually with supervision and guidance instead of an abrupt encounter in native speaking territory. Educators can ease learners' apprehension on the acculturation process by properly managing the progression of potential discomfort, intimidation, and threat caused by the deliberation of unknown principles and standards. Failure to do so can jeopardize the progression of L2 acquisition and acculturation (Valdes, 1986). Therefore, the classroom becomes a critical and essential environment for the development of suitable processes of acculturation. Castro (2004) claims educators are in command to mediate the effective discovery and exposure of different ways of living and communicating as well as to assist learners while unfolding such discovery of information. As Freire (1996) recapitulates, education is not simply about spreading information but it is about generating possibilities for learners to develop their own understanding.

In order to solve some of these issues, it is important to remember educators have access to daily, original, and authentic information and materials on several different cultural aspects of any given language online. Such resources serve as an important opportunity for learners and educators to reflect upon different worldviews and may ease learners' anxiety and insecurities towards new information as well as relieve educators from supposed responsibilities to preach or claim what to know or learn. In this way, learners become more responsible and active actors in the educational process. Such method has the added benefit of reducing the instructional burden on educators when presenting and discussing cultural views in the classroom (Castro, 2004).

Portuguese as a Foreign Language

As mentioned beforehand, language is the most perceptible manifestation of culture and culture is our connection to the world, what unites us in society and identifies us communally. After reflecting upon the importance of integrating language and culture, especially in foreign language instruction, this work focuses on the inclusion of cultural elements in PFL instruction settings, more specifically Brazilian Portuguese (BP).

According to the Division of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures from the University of Iowa, Portuguese is the official language of eight different countries and has significant representation in four continents. Over 250 million people speak Portuguese natively in Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Portugal, East Timor, São Tome, and Príncipe. Brazil alone is responsible for nearly 200 million native speakers. Considered the official language of imperative and renowned organizations such as the European Union, Portuguese has become an important language to acquire in the 21st century. Knowing Portuguese allows business and international relations majors to become more marketable and expand their work territory to different global regions.

The issue lies with the fact that although interest in PFL classes has indeed increased over the past years, the development of adequate materials for such a growing population of L2 Portuguese learners is yet to be prepared, especially learners with a need for more advanced PFL instructional content. Quality and reliable materials for specific learning purposes such as business, international relations, second language acquisition of Portuguese, medical interpretation, and so on are scarce and infrequently offered by today's instructional market and publishing houses. In addition, existent materials continue to focus on structural matters of the language and either lack the inclusion of cultural aspects of the language and their native communities or reference them in a superficial and restricted manner. Unfortunately, most existent cultural instructional approaches in PFL teaching materials introduce stereotypical and one-sided views of cultural practices of the Lusophone world. Instruction then continues to be developed as a *banking* system (Freire, 1970) where educators are responsible for depositing information into learners, who are considered, according to Freire (1970) "empty receptacle for these deposits."

Terçario, Rizzotto, and Greuel (2015) also recognizes that Portuguese as a second language (PL2) classes face a series of obstacles such as lack of support materials, lack of curriculum tailored for the foreign students' needs, and lack of materials that can tackle social-cultural issues. Learners recognize linguistic and especially cultural differences can interfere with the learning process. These differences can challenge learners when attempting to take ownership of PL2 (Terçario, Rizzotto, & Greuel, 2015).

Sch lindwein (2013) acknowledges it is challenging accommodating heterogeneous students of Portuguese as Foreign Language, especially in Brazil, in terms of providing them fitting linguistic and cultural content in the target language. The gap between language instruction and learners' language cultural knowledge can become even wider when considering the ongoing shift from, what Sch lindwein (2013) calls a page-based to a screen-based world. Sch lindwein (2013) suggests a multimodal approach can help learners understand the linguistic and cultural aspects of Brazil. However, Sch lindwein (2013) admits a multimodal approach that can stimulate critical thinking and assist learners to acquire Portuguese in an involving and appealing manner is yet to be developed and implemented, broadly, and effectively.

An immediate but possibly lasting solution for the current situation is to follow what Freire's Critical Pedagogy presents as a problem-posing and problem-solving educational model as an alternative to our current traditional practices. Consequently, for a problem-solving approach to work in PFL classes, educators should limit the presentation of *stunning* or stereotypical cultural content such as *the beauty and magnitude of Brazilian Carnival, the taste of Brazilian food, the victories and glories of Brazilian soccer, the hospitality of the Brazilian population, and Brazil's abundant natural and biological diversity*. Instead, educators should work to combine Critical Pedagogy with socio-cultural awareness in L2 by tackling the complex socio-economic issues facing Brazil such as the political and corruption scandals omnipresent in today's media. It is not about

focusing only on positive or negative views but actually showing learners how every country and every population faces daily struggles. Presenting learners with today's concerns and reality can help them become better global citizens, better critical thinkers, and prepares them to interact more effectively and appropriately if later immersed in this new culture.

Traditional practices of “education” are capable of actually (un)educating L2 learners and (un)preparing global citizens to enter a competitive and rapid-moving world. There is a disconnection with reality when the education system chooses not to engage in current debates or struggles. Young learners are fully aware of current issues in today's world displayed daily in the media and other means of mass communication, but these issues are largely absent from traditional classroom curriculum.

A brief account of Brazil's current political and economic situation is presented below in order to generate themes and ideas for PFL instruction. Critical Pedagogy requires that educators be on top of current issues and trends. It does not expect them to know the “right answers” but it demands from them a capability to show different versions of an issue and assist learners to find their own answers. As seen lately in the media, Brazil as the B in BRIC, was considered an emerging and promising economy. However, Brazil is now facing a great political and economic crisis due to several different reasons.

A Brief Account of Brazil's Current Political and Economic Situation

After enduring 21 years of a brutal military dictatorship that started in 1964, Brazil, South-America's largest country and economy, has been governed by a democratic system since 1985. According to March's 2016 edition of the newspaper *Medium*, Brazil's 1988 constitution has assured a series of citizen democratic rights to its population (Green & Quinalha, 2016). Despite a range of political and economic advances in the last few decades, Brazil has also been facing notorious corruption scandals that have weakened Brazil's legitimacy as an effective democracy and powerful internationally reliable economy. While corruption scandals have always been present in Brazil, what changes now in the present national scenario is that the colossal amounts of money linked to current corruption scandals have outraged Brazilians.

Widespread mobilization of protests started right after the nomination of Brazil as host of both The World Cup in 2014 and The Olympic Games in 2016. The majority of the population claims Brazil's lack of excellence in education, health, and public safety, shows there is no need for the government to spend massive amounts of money on infrastructure for such events when not accommodating the population's basic needs.

The most recent operation against corruption called *Operação Lava-Jato* (*The Car Wash Operation*), has been investigating, over the last two years, a money laundering scheme of approximately 10 billion Brazilian reais (2.8 billion dollars) and it involves *Petrobras*, one of the biggest and most successful state-controlled oil company. For this reason, President Dilma Rousseff's administration has been

discredited by the immense bribery and corruption scandals going public during her government.

The country now faces the most severe economic crisis since the 1930s. Although inflation is decreasing with a 7.04 projection for 2016, it is still affecting the economy significantly. According to Kelly Oliveira (2016), a reporter from *Agência Brasil*, a Brazilian newspaper, inflation causes destabilization of public finances, which leads the country to raise taxes and cut budget expenses.

May's 2016 edition of *The Washington Post* affirms the country's first female president, Dilma Rousseff, 68, a former Marxist guerrilla is accused of a "crime of responsibility" based on fiscal maneuvering (Miroff & Phillips, 2016). She is accused of inadequately spending billions of dollars from the government as loans in order to cover the administration budget, hiding its insufficiency and financing social initiatives. For those reasons, she has been facing impeachment proceedings. On May 12, 2016, Dilma was removed from the presidency and vice president Michel Temer became the new Interim President.

Temer's administration is also receiving criticism for attempting to merge the education and culture ministries and for merging science and communication ministries. The current administration is accused of a democratic backlash in an attempt to "save" the economy and for lacking female representation in the power. According to May's 2016 edition of the *Science Journal*, scientists, environmentalists, and artists are also showing disapproval and discontent towards these changes.

The Role of Brazilian Media in Brazil's Current Crisis

As a repercussion and cruel vestige of two decades of a cruel dictatorship and censorship, Brazilians usually had little to say publicly about their political system. What is different now is that the population has decided to speak up and demonstrate their resentment and rage towards the political dishonesty displayed in the media daily. Brazilians seem to have outgrown Freire's (1970) *dependence* and *self-depreciation* towards their cultural reality. Since 2013, a rapidly growing number of massive protests were held against the government in a Movement called *O Gigante Acordou* (the giant is awake) according to Adriando Antoine Robbesom from *Inside Brazil* (2013).

The population has also been using new ways of protesting against the government and illicit corruption activity. Social media has been imperative in this movement. Besides numerous corruption scandals and the economic crisis, the population is also protesting against sexism, homophobia, urban violence, human rights, biased media, and so on.

The confusing side of this new civil movement is the fact that the actions taken to fight corruption are not always aligned with the number of "cyber" protests and complaints against our "democratic" processes. Even though the population is still engaging in massive protests, few public demonstrations of citizenship and social responsibility are organized to obtain more lasting or significant political reform. Still, the government seems to be responding fast to

this movement. The question is to what extent are these responses durable and effective for a democratic system to function accordingly.

Another potential social drawback caused by Brazilian anti-corruption movements is an intense political animosity between opposing political groups. Even though the battle against corruption is indispensable and desired from different parties, there is little political tolerance towards different political standpoints. The population is divided and consequently political parties risk losing legitimacy when simply discrediting opposing ideas without regard for the merits of such ideas.

Criticism of the Battle against Corruption and the Impeachment

Even though Brazilians, in general, are outraged with corruption scandals and the economic crisis, a portion of the population, mostly leftist-party sympathizers and people affiliated with the Workers' Party, claim part of the investigations against corruption have violated basic civil rights. For example, civil rights that are guaranteed by the constitution, such as the presumption of innocence, the guarantee of the right to privacy, the assurance of impartial judiciary, and attorney-client privilege says Green & Quinalha (2016), from May's 2016 edition of the newspaper *Medium*. They fear democracy to be at risk of becoming a new dictatorship. What aggravates the political scenario is that a smaller group of the population mostly right-party sympathizers and affiliated with the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party defend a radical re-establishment of a dictatorship regime in order to control widespread corruption in the country.

May's 2016 edition from *The Washington Post* discusses the lack of maturity that some of the opponents of the impeachment process seem to show, in their opinion (Miroff & Phillips, 2016). Impeachment proceedings have received two distinct trends of criticism. On one hand, the process of impeachment is criticized for disregarding 54 million voters who elected Dilma Rousseff for two consecutive terms (2010 and 2014). On the other hand, it is an attempt to eliminate a corrupt leader.

Authentic Materials for PFL Lessons

After briefly looking at the current political and economic issues Brazil faces, it is important to think about practical themes that could be included in PFL lessons. Authentic materials can be used in the classroom to show these problems and students can engage in tasks where they are invited to think critically about the following:

- a. What are the main political views in Brazil today? What have they proposed to the population? What have they done while governing the country?
- b. Corruption scandals from Brazil: How do they work? Which politicians are involved? What kind of affiliations do they have? How is the judiciary power handling each scandal?

- c. The process of impeachment: Should the president be impeached? Why? Why not?
- d. The new presidency plan: What responsibilities does the interim president Michel Temer have in order to try to re-establish the economy and to unify the population?
- e. The economic crisis: What has caused this crisis? How can the government handle this problem? What are possible solutions to this crisis, to control inflation and decrease unemployment rates?

These are only a few suggestions that can be implemented in the classroom. Each instructor as well as each learner can contribute to the inclusion of different themes, set the level, pace and progression of their debates, and the development of their learning process in BP. The present pedagogic proposal can be easily adapted to other varieties of Portuguese as well. Other issues and realities can also be debated for the development of meaningful pedagogical activities and instructional materials. As a result from the work with authentic materials in BP learners receive real content in Portuguese and can easily benefit from it by learning new Portuguese vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and so on.

It is important to consider to what extent learners' proficiency can hinder or stimulate the outcomes of this pedagogical proposal. In order to preserve and promote cultural "learning," instructors can decide whether to propose a debate in the learners' native tongue. That way, learners will be exposed, gradually, to the linguistic potential of such activity without missing the chance to benefit from its cultural content. Instructors can also choose to present classroom themes in more than one language. If instructors feel their learners are capable of reading and interpreting written information in Portuguese but need extra help while verbally stating their opinion, they can switch to their native language or use model sentences to build their thoughts and express their opinions. For example, when answering the question *Should the president be impeached? Why? Why not?* students can follow a model provided in class:

Question/Topic: The process of impeachment: Should the president be impeached?

Why? Why not?

Model:

Sim, eu penso que a presidente deve sofrer o impeachment porque _____.

Yes, I think the president should be impeached because _____.

Ela cometeu um crime/She committed a crime.

Ela escondeu a verdade/She hid the truth.

Ela cometeu atos de corrupção/She was corrupt.

Não, eu não penso que a presidente deva sofrer o impeachment porque _____.

No, I don't think the president should be impeached because _____.

Ela é inocente/She is innocent.

Ela é vítima de um golpe/She is the victim of a scam.
 Ela está tendo que governar o país durante uma crise política e econômica/
 She is having to run the country during a political and economic crisis.

When applying these themes/ideas into PFL classes, it is up to instructors to decide what linguistic elements need to be included in order to meet their learners' instructional and linguistic needs. The same topics can be used to present grammar topics as well as to develop different learning strategies and language skills such as writing, reading, speaking, and listening abilities in a foreign language.

Conclusion

Education frees and empowers people. It enables learners to think critically towards their own reality, to solve their own issues, and to promote social progress. Progress, however, is only attainable if educational practices are fully applicable in today's fast growing and moving world. Critical Pedagogy comes to empower education. It attempts to connect learners to their real lives and provide them effective tools to conceptualize their reality and think critically about their own civic connections and responsibilities. It also builds tolerance towards distinct cultural views, develops social and political awareness, and cultivates moral practices aligned with social and political integrity.

Social change and global awareness are only possible when effective communication takes place among speakers of the same language as well as different languages. For that reason, L2 acquisition is suitable to critical pedagogical practices and Critical Pedagogy becomes a valuable resource for L2 lessons, in particular BP. Portuguese is considered a fundamental language worldwide as Brazil occupies a unique and influential position in the world today. The teaching of BP as a foreign language can benefit from the inclusion of Critical Pedagogy practices. Critical Pedagogy allows instruction to use naturally generated topics found within the native speaker community. It allows life itself to become a self-renovating textbook without an answer key. A problem-solving education fits into a continuing process of life enabling socio-cultural growth to occur and L2 acquisition to take place successfully.

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