Attitudes toward Teaching English in Lebanon: An Exercise in Critical Applied Linguistics

Submitted by

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that any material that has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University has been acknowledged.

ABSTRACT

Critical Applied Linguistics (CALx) is both a means of examining the status quo governing the teaching and learning of languages and an opportunity to change or transform existing assumptions and practices. Within the multilingual context of Lebanon, my initial assumption was that English foreign language teachers have not explicitly scrutinized their attitudes to the language they teach or its impact on Arabic (L1). Teacher education and professional development have also not appeared to provide an opportunity to facilitate such a discussion. As such, my study based itself upon the assumption that current teacher education and training have established and reaffirmed mainstream attitudes to the teaching and learning of foreign languages in Lebanon. In order to examine my critical position, my study involved two main phases. Using action research with a mixed methods approach to data collection, the first phase included a survey of 62 English language teachers from different contexts: primary, middle, and high school, in addition to tertiary education. The purpose of this survey was to determine whether teacher attitudes would be mainstream or explicitly critical. In the second phase, I created an intervention in the form of a 'reflexive practice model', wherein nine in-service English language teachers, from different contexts as well, would meet to discuss relevant critical themes in the hopes of creating a platform for dialogic inquiry and transformation. Following the model set by Kumaravadivelu (2012), these sessions would value both professional and personal knowledge as participants negotiated their espoused attitudes, with emphasis on the local, 'lived', experience. The results of my research showed

that teachers, in general, had some mainstream attitudes to the teaching of English, especially the need for early exposure to a foreign language, maximum exposure through English as a medium of instruction, and the monolingual fallacy. They also commonly taught English without reflecting upon any power dynamics or hegemony involved. While most participants agreed that the Arabic language might be suffering because of these practices, they did not believe they had any active role to play in order to preserve L1. However, they were also critical of certain pedagogical practices, especially related to teaching resources and policies that left them feeling powerless and passive. They also mostly believed that their professional development opportunities were insufficient and involved sporadic, expert-led, sessions that were not immediately relevant to their context. From an action research perspective, the 'reflexive practice model' was successful as it allowed participants to discuss their assumptions and identity as a whole, creating some immediate change in attitudes and practice, in addition to a feeling of empowerment and hope in a better future. Participants also concluded that such communities of practice would provide in-service teachers with a voice that they could later amplify both within their institutions and beyond, through publishing their findings and participating in conferences in Lebanon that included both 'experts' and the practicing teachers. Thus, this 'reflexive practice model' can provide an opportunity for continuing – and critical - professional development that also allows participants from different institutions to support one another as they reflect upon their identity and practice.

DEDICATION

'There is never a right time.'

This dissertation is a labour of love… completed while I went into labour twice.

With love to my children, Lucas and Celia, who were my constant companions,

and to my support system, my husband and mom, who spent endless hours

holding down the fort as I typed away.

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Fifteen years, three acceptance letters, one doctoral dissertation

My journey in academia took many twists and turns before I finally began my doctoral work at Exeter, a journey that I completed in times of grave difficulty and personal pressure during the COVID-19 lockdown. However, I could not have completed this dissertation without the support of some exceptional individuals who have helped me along this path.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

AR	Action Research
AMI	Arabic Medium Instruction
BA	Bachelor of Arts
CALx	Critical Applied Linguistics
CELTA	Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
CFG	Critical Friends Group
CoP	Communities of Practice
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CP	Critical Pedagogy
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CT	Critical Theory
EIL	English as an International Language
EMI	English Medium Instruction
FMI	French Medium Instruction
ICC	Intercultural Communication
KARDS	Know, Analyse, Recognise, Dialogic Inquiry, and See

L1	First language (mother tongue)
L2	Second language
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian/Gay/Bilingual/Transgender/Queer/Intersex/Asexual+
LTR	Language Teacher Research
MA	Master of Arts
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
NVivo	Qualitative research analysis software tool
PD	Professional Development
PR	Practitioner Research
SAT	Scholastic Assessment Test
SLTE	Second Language Teacher Education
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TESOL	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a foreign language
WE	World Englishes
VCoP	Virtual Communities of Practice

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

> It doesn't matter what you do, he said, so long as you change
> something from the way it was before you touched it into something
> that's like you after you take your hands away. The difference
> between the man who just cuts lawns and a real gardener is in the
> touching, he said. The lawn-cutter might just as well not have been
> there at all; the gardener will be there a lifetime.

> Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*

Ray Bradbury, in his polemical novel *Fahrenheit 451*, warns of a world where people desire simplicity over complexity, neutrality over controversy, and the certainty of the *status quo* over the ambiguity dwelling within change. It is precisely this uncertainty that I hope to address throughout my work.

1.1. The Nature of the Problem

As teachers of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), our profession is fraught with change. Richards (2009), in his plenary address at the TESOL convention, categorizes these changes into internal and external ones. Internally, teachers of English should address their connection to culture, knowledge, and teacher education in a 'post-methods' era. These alterations are further complicated by the changing nature of global English and its status. This has led some linguists to warn of being 'imprisoned in English' (Wierzbicka, 2014) as English engulfs other languages and plays a central role in academia, professional communication, and even individual interaction worldwide. Wierzbicka (2014) warns that the potential loss of these languages implies the

loss of their speakers' unique (and diverse) conceptual worlds. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) had previously labelled such loss as a more violent 'language genocide' implying the presence of a determined force, consciously destroying other languages in its path. Phillipson (1992; 2009) further develops this concept of 'linguicism', claiming that such deliberate practices are reinforced by British and American governmental policies, which gain power (and financial resources) through developing these agendas.

Where does that leave the English 'teacher' as they navigate these fluctuations? Wallace and Poulson (2003) urge teachers 'to adopt a critical stance towards others' claims to knowledge' through constructive scepticism and 'scrutinizing' persuasiveness (p. 6). Poulson (1998) also describes a professionalism that includes 'resistance' to imposed restrictions. To what extent, though, do teacher training and development programs cater to these conversations? Day (1999) claims that teaching requires 'continuing career-long professional development' (p. 1). This is especially true in a world 'dominated by change, uncertainty, and increasing complexity' (Day, 1999, p. 8), which applies to the language teacher, specifically the English language teacher in this case. Books such as *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Teacher Education* by Anne Burns and Jack C. Richards (2009) do include chapters focusing on these turbulent times and the need for a growing awareness of these uncertainties. More recent works by Gao (2019) connect English language teaching to matters of social justice and language policy. However, are such discussions the norm when it comes to teacher development or the exception?

What form of teacher knowledge is currently being developed while preparing pre-service TESOL educators and developing the skills of those in service? According to Burns and Richards, most teacher training programs have focused on two major components: content knowledge through language-based courses and teaching methodology. The criticism, though, is that these two types of knowledge are taught separately and might not necessarily affect classroom practice. The authors claim that this is changing as more TESOL programs focus on classroom research and reflective teaching as a means of expanding teachers' knowledge base. Similarly, Freeman (2009) cites the means through which 'an expanding research base' has changed the scope of second language teacher education (SLTE) (p. 17). However, Troudi (2005) remains critical of teacher training programmes. Despite the fact that he describes a 'quiet revolution' prioritizing 'sociocultural factors and local contexts' to language teaching, there should be increased opportunities to 'engage in ongoing philosophical discussions about what education is' (Troudi, 2005, p. 118). In a more recent publication, Troudi (2015) explains that critical work has occurred in the last decade, but there is still room for a more systematic and explicit adoption of critical and reflective paradigms in language teaching education. This is particularly important in the Arab world where such critical work is still in its 'infancy' (Raddawi & Troudi, 2018). Burns (2017) makes a similar commentary on language teacher education, claiming that it is still very much 'thing-based' or 'content-based' (p. 188). More recently, Gray (2019) acknowledges the neoliberal forces affecting any critical teacher education, identifying the difficulty in resisting

such global assumptions. Gray, though, concludes the review of critical teaching programmes with a slight ray of hope, claiming that these forces can be resisted. My expectation, therefore, is that some changes to the way we view TESOL and SLTE programs are being advanced in Lebanon as well, but I am interested in the extent to which they include sufficient focus on a more critical look at our field. Additionally, do training and development programs include such awareness and discussion of common assumptions that may or may not be taken for granted?

Pennycook (2001) believes the central task of a critical look at language to be one of 'problematizing givens'. He claims that it is necessary to remain sceptical of our assumptions, especially those that are 'no longer questioned' (p. 7). This is a focal point in this study as well. To what extent do teachers of English in Lebanon, both at a school and university level, question their own practice? Additionally, would specific training sessions that foster such a critical environment facilitate this 'problematization' process? While we might teach critical thinking and reading within our classrooms, how critical are we when it comes to our assumptions and 'myths'? As the English language changes its status to become one of English as an International Language' (EIL), where learners of English are no longer 'mere recipients' but more fully involved in the language process (Shin, Eslami & Chen, 2011), our 'norms' must be revisited as well. As such, central to this study is the need to identify and critique assumptions that might be taken for granted. The focus will also be on assumptions that might detrimentally affect our view of our native language,

Arabic in this case, as we teach English to our students. Scholars warn of the danger of losing our Arabic due to the ubiquitous nature of English as a medium of instruction (Al-Issa, 2017; Troudi & Al Hafidh, 2017; Ahmed, 2011a; Ahmed, 2010), but it is my desire to shift the burden of responsibility from where it currently resides, policy makers, to that of the individual English teacher who can also play a substantial role in the process.

At various points in the study, I refer to assumptions, attitudes, givens, and myths. These terms involve a certain nuance, which I will attempt to classify, as it would explain their use in my research. Attitude is referred to as the tendency to adopt or promote a certain perspective. This perspective is, usually, based on acquired knowledge, either through expert knowledge in the field, personal research, or even through practice. Sometimes, this knowledge might not be scrutinized and might be based on assumptions that have been considered as 'fact'. These are the 'givens' Pennycook (2001) urges teachers to revise. Some of these assumptions have become ubiquitous and have been delineated as 'myths' that are not necessarily grounded in reality - such as the 'standard English' myth (Bacon, 2017). Others have been classified as fallacies in the literature as they have been discredited - such as the monolingual fallacy (Cook, 2001).

One means through which the individual English teacher can play a more critical role is to question underlying assumptions through inquiry-based learning and workshops. Professional development (PD) refers to a number of different activities that preserve lifelong learning, from attending conferences, to in-house

workshops and also peer-to-peer coaching and mentoring (Lieberman, 1996). These have traditionally been passive, where teachers attend a workshop and focus intently on the 'expert' (Johnson, 2009). While some might now resort to more participatory sessions (Evans, 2019), the extent of their criticality remains a matter of debate, in addition to their impact on mainstream PD. The results of previous research in the local experience of Lebanon, for instance, portray a general dissatisfaction with PD (Nabhani & Bahous, 2010). As such, one of the questions I focus on is the impact of a reflexive approach, as teachers assess and present their own findings while developing their knowledge about both language content and teaching methodology. This would provide teachers with an opportunity to develop 'a constant ongoing negotiation of how we relate to the world' (Pennycook, 2001, p. 149). Pertaining to the way we learn (and teach) English and its impact on the use of Arabic in our part of the world, a few relevant assumptions were examined and discussed at length. These assumptions include the following major sub-themes:

- One 'standard' English or world 'Englishes': Bacon (2017) tackles the myth of a 'proper' English that we should all aspire to learn. What are teachers' attitudes towards this target language and do they participate in language discrimination based on a 'desired' fluency? This echoes Phillipson's call to question the political agendas behind English.
- Neutrality of English: Phillipson (2016) warns against the perception of English as a neutral language used to facilitate professional and

academic writing. Instead, he extensively discusses the British and American political and economic agendas that have created a world where English is *'uncritically'* considered the sole language needed for the future. This spread of the English language, Phillipson claims, replaces native languages.

- Native speaker fluency: a related assumption is the ideal of reaching 'native speaker' fluency. Cook (1999) argues that a teacher's resolve to create such fluency has resulted in 'unattainable' language goals while ignoring the specific success L2 language learners could achieve.   This can also be seen in Lebanon and the need to attain a 'standard' English, which mostly follows 'American' English, is widespread (Lee, 2015).

- Use of L1 in the classroom: The monolingual fallacy is another 'assumption' that should be thoroughly examined. Cook (2001) critiques the tradition of avoiding L1 in the classroom and calls for acceptance in order to use L1 to develop increased efficiency, learning, naturalness, and relevance. Ismail (2012) further examines the presence of this assumption in a study aimed at assessing teachers' awareness of the monolingual fallacy.

- Target culture: another discussion covers the assumptions behind target culture and the role of the language teacher as cultural agent. Which aspects of culture should teachers advocate for in the classroom? Should we ignore the role of culture completely or

focus on the specific 'articulation of cultural differences' (Bhaba, 1994) and the teacher working with a 'particular' set of students (Kumaravadivelu, 2001).

1.2. Rationale for the Study

According to Troudi (2005), it is important for teacher preparation programs to conduct discussions centred upon the philosophy of education. Teachers should explore, express, and revisit their own views. This reflexivity allows them to question pre-conceived notions and assumptions. According to Pennycook (2001), language-related questions reside in a broader world of pain and injustice and the role of the philosopher is to alleviate this pain. However, language teacher education might still not be preparing teachers for such critical discussions.

Through this study, I created a space for in-service teachers of English in Lebanon to discuss these assumptions. Their discussions were inquiry-based and relied on both research-based discussions along with their own specific experiences. My research purpose was to offer a 'critical' space whereby teachers of a diverse background can meet, connect, and critique pre-established ideas and tendencies. Giroux (2011) discusses at length the need not only to 'consume' knowledge but also to 'transform' it. This is echoed by McLaren (2009) as he calls for action after our new awareness. This notion of *praxis* is also an essential factor in Paolo Freire's theory, where action and reflection work together simultaneously (Freire, 2005). The challenge in this study, therefore, was to create such a critical space where teachers would

attempt to both critique their current assumptions and ideally act upon their realizations.

One premise I was under, as a critical researcher, is related to Gramsci's 'theory of hegemony' as power is being exerted through 'reinforced universal "common sense" assumptions of "truth"'. Gramsci warns of the gravity of the situation as such power is wielded through softer, more manipulative, structures (As cited in Darder, Balodano, & Torres, 2009, p. 6). The critical researcher's epistemological position 'places the researcher in the world that is constructed through people manipulated by power' (Howell, 2013, p. 79). However, the participants in the study might not share this premise, and it is equally important to address personal biases in that space.

The study involved three major phases: initial data collection, intervention through focus groups, and final critical reflection. In phase one, my objective was to identify the assumptions and myths in-service teachers currently adopt. My aim in this initial phase was to survey the study's participants to identify the extent to which they might critique such assumptions. In phase two, I conducted specific focus group sessions dedicated to global myths such as 'the standard English myth', the 'monolingual fallacy', 'native speaker' preference, and preservation of native languages. Discussing these assumptions within our local context and individual experience provided an opportunity for reflexivity and dialogic inquiry. In the third and final stage, participants then reflected upon their experience in a final interview. This connected our focus group reflection sessions to their classroom practices to ensure reflexivity, where research

attempts 'to develop and share practitioners' own practice knowledge from a […] self-critical standpoint towards their work (Wallace & Poulson, 2003, p. 24). As such, these reflexive sessions, with their emphasis on 'deep reflectivity on [a teacher's] own practices' (Hawkins & Norton, 2009, p. 36) provide a PD opportunity that takes the focus away from the 'instructor', whose purpose might be traditionally to transmit knowledge, in order to provide an exchange of information. It might not even be possible to recognize the facilitator of the sessions 'immediately' as 'information and discussion is provided by all participants' (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p. 31).

1.3. Significance of the Study

The objective for this study was to create a critical space, grounded in research, in order to reflect upon our current perspectives: our values, assumptions, and 'facts'. Every 'myth' or classroom practice was discussed in light of empirical research and personal experience.

As this study also followed sound methods of analysis and presentation of findings, it generated recommendations for future attempts at incorporating a critical space in teacher training and development programs. This space allowed for interpretive findings in its initial and final phases in order to provide room for participants to share their perspectives beyond the dynamics of focus groups. I remain cognizant of the power of group dynamics to shape our way of thinking and exert another element of 'soft' hegemony. This is why the first and last stages of this study allow participants to express themselves individually, as opposed to the pressure involved in being part of a group.

1.4 Contribution to Knowledge

My research incorporated critical practices while adopting Action Research (AR). Altrichter et al. (2002) define AR as 'enquiry *with* people, rather than research on people' (p. 130). Troudi (2015) provides a general process pertaining to AR design and implementation. This involves a cyclical progression from rationale to intervention, reflection, and finally preparation for another cycle of AR.

In order to accomplish this goal, one of the most important steps was to create a comprehensive initial survey. While some studies, like that of Ismail (2012), focus on one specific myth, the monolingual fallacy in this case, I created a survey that covered most of these assumptions. In creating this data collection tool, I reviewed the literature on these assumptions, which allowed me to formulate the survey itself. This tool can be adapted and used in diverse contexts to conduct similar exercises. In addition, I created a framework for conducting critical focus groups that allows all participants to have a voice. This is what I call the 'reflexive practice model' – a critical intervention for professional development – through creating communities of practice. This is especially important as most focus groups place the researcher at the centre of the discussion. A more critical awareness of the tool itself is essential, especially when the research is grounded in critical practice. In order to accomplish this, I followed the example set by critical dialectical pluralists, who 'aim to conduct research wherein an egalitarian society is promoted and sustained for the purpose of advancing both universalistic theoretical knowledge and local practical knowledge'

(Onwuegbuzie, 2015, p. 161). My awareness of both group dynamics and the hierarchical power of the moderator was essential to limit my impact on the group discussion and allow participants to reach any critical realizations within their own personal and specific contexts.

1.5 Research Questions

My principal research question was the following:

Does an explicit and critical discussion of current assumptions and myths pertaining to TESOL affect a teacher's awareness and approach to their role as language teachers?

In order to reach this answer, some additional research questions were addressed that follow the cyclical nature of AR.

a) What set of perspectives do in-service language teachers in Lebanon hold about the nature and impact of TESOL?

b) Does a critical intervention that emphasizes dialogic inquiry and the 'reflexive practice model' affect a TESOL teacher's perspective and practice?

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This introductory chapter, Chapter 1, provided an overview of the issue at hand, along with the connection between the researcher and the subject, a connection that is quite personal and critical. Chapter 2 will expand on the context of this study, which is the specific case of English language teachers in Lebanon, a country that continues to favour English and French over Arabic, not only in academia but in personal communication as well. Chapter 3 will develop a

literature review wherein I will discuss relevant research, which has focused on both teacher training and development in general, and the specific critical awareness exercise that will be conducted in this study. Additionally, my review will include a detailed illustration of the myths and assumptions, along with expanding knowledge on the changes to the English language from a postmodern perspective and the specific problem of linguistic imperialism. I will also examine the ways in which some communities have successfully dealt with their position as English language learners while preserving the plurality of their own native languages. Chapter 4 will then discuss and justify the methodology at length. This will include both the theoretical overview and the specific data collection methods. Chapter 4 will also include any limitations to the study, which might inform further research in this area. Chapter 5 will report on all results pertaining to the research questions and will discuss these findings. A separation of results and findings will not be necessary, as there is a need to critically evaluate and analyse all results without isolating one from the other. The final chapter, chapter 6, will conclude this study through identifying my general conclusions, contribution to the field, and the personal reflection that has accompanied my research thus far.

CHAPTER TWO – CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Still I know that in London,

In Paris and in Rome

Our writers could never earn

The same native rights;

They will always remain,

Despite their humanity,

Outside the human race.

For, a people is orphaned

When it hasn't a tongue;

And the languages of others

Are borrowed outer cloaks,

In which one seems dubious,

Shameful, frail and lifeless,

Obnoxious and strange!

A man without his language

Is like an intruder barging in

On someone else's feast,

Even when turning up

With the best of intentions,

Loaded with the kindest gifts.

Charles Corm, 1934, *The Sacred Mountain*

Charles Corm warned about the Lebanese citizen's tendency to ignore his or her native language nearly 100 years ago, and we continue to struggle with that phenomenon to this day.

2.1 'There is no alternative!': Foreign languages in Lebanon

Claiming that 'we have no other alternative' is a recurring sentiment in a recent study conducted by Orr & Annous (2018) in a private university in Lebanon. Students were asked about their attitudes towards learning English, and while many provided reasons relating to employability and living abroad, there was a general feeling of inevitability. The need to learn another language, and to achieve a high level of proficiency in that language, was a 'given'. In a very recent publication, Banat (2020) echoes this 'economic' and 'pragmatic' necessity.

This chapter will focus on the context of my present study: learning and teaching English in Lebanon. However, the context itself is quite complex. From colonial influences to the role of missionaries (Esseili, 2017; Diab, 2000), Lebanese history is fraught with linguistic territorial battles (Suleiman, 2003). This led to the establishment of delineating lines, classifying certain languages as integral to the socio-cultural group identity, one burdened with political and religious tensions. Even though English seems to be surpassing these lines, it has now become a 'super' cultural marker, on both a social and academic level. Questionable government policy has also affected both the status of foreign languages and peoples' attitudes. In the last section, I will also focus on the inevitable social injustice resulting from the current state of affairs. Teacher

development, and the role of British and American publishing houses and cultural centers, will also be considered, though only a few researchers have focused on that particular area, leaving a comprehensive research gap.

2.2 Lebanon: A Brief Linguistic Background

While the last official census on the Lebanese population and demographics was conducted in 1932, estimates place the population of Lebanon at 4.7 million from 'eighteen different religious sects juxtaposed to one another over an area of 10,452 square kilometers' (Abouchedid & Bou Zeid, 2017, p. 59). Ninety-five per cent of the population is ethnically 'Arab' while the remaining ethnic groups include Armenians and Kurds (European Commission, 2017). This 'mosaic' (to use a popular term in Lebanon) is delicately balanced upon a means of sharing power among the different (and historically warring) factions. Education, in its own right, is also essential to this 'power-sharing formula' (Abouchedid & Bou Zeid, 2017).

In the 18th and 19th century, as the power of the Ottoman Empire began to diminish, French Jesuit and American Protestant missionaries became the most successful at introducing new schools and colleges of higher education, exposing the Lebanese population to their language and culture (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1999; Diab, 2000, 2006; Abouchedid & Bou Zeid, 2017). Currently, medium of instruction varies between Arabic, French, English or a combination of two or three of these languages. To look at institutes of higher education as an example, out of 41 universities, the government-run Lebanese university uses Arabic and French, while the rest mostly use English and French with a minority

including Arabic (Esseili, 2017). This trend has also occurred in primary and secondary schools. Both private and public schools with English as a medium of instruction (EMI) have increased recently, while those with French as a medium of instruction (FMI) have decreased. This is connected to the fact that 'French culture and language in Lebanon has been gradually weakening (Diab, 2000, p. 181). According to more recent reports published by the Center for Educational Research and Development, students in EMI institutions have increased from 39.76 % in 2011–2012 to 49.39% in 2016–2017, heralding a decrease in those enrolled in FMI or even AMI (Arabic as a Medium of Instruction) schools. This is consistent with research on other countries where English as a foreign language not only displaces L1 in many countries but also other foreign languages (Slimani-Rolls & Kiely, 2019). As such, even FMI and AMI institutions feel the need to add English classes, though they still teach their courses in predominantly French and/or Arabic.

When it comes to using L1 within the language classroom and even other classes, the monolingual fallacy appears to be pervasive. Though teachers seem to be aware of the positive impact of L1 on learning another language (Diab, 2009), adopting L1 in non-Arabic classes is still resisted. This need to avoid code-switching and L1 use in the non-Arabic classroom was discussed in Bahous et al.'s (2014) study. Esseili's (2014) research also emphasized that teachers perceive using L1 as a 'weakness'. More recently, Bou Ayash (2019) showed how teachers in Lebanon would default to English and prefer the use of English even when their syllabus explicitly mentions the value of translation.

2.3 Language as an Identity Marker

The rise of English as a language of instruction and use, both academically and socially, is worth noting. A mere decade ago, research by Suleiman (2003) on the use of language in Lebanon and national identity deemed English to be of 'no concern' as it does not significantly impact identity and culture. The situation is radically different though where the labels 'French-educated' and 'English-educated' have become established as accepted social identity markers (Diab, 2006).They reflect a speaker's social class, educational level, and even geographical location (Bou Ayash, 2016). Additionally, research from the mid-90s warns of the decrease in the usage of French both socially and in educational settings (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2002). Esseili (2017) attributes this to the rise of American schools and universities after the civil war (1975-1990), which made English 'an essential mode of expression in various instrumental, interpersonal, regulative, and innovative functions' (p. 688). It is noteworthy to mention, though, that many Lebanese students refer to themselves as 'bilingual' and 'trilingual' (Diab, 2006; Esseili, 2017) rather than students learning a foreign language, again making this discussion instrumental to notions of identity. Lebanon as a whole becomes a multi-faceted linguistic ground where the need to 'preserve strong historical ties with neighbouring Arabic-speaking nations and France, its ex-colonizer, while simultaneously participating in the worldwide globalization movement' have resulted in Arabic-French-English trilingualism (Bou Ayash, 2016).

2.4 Lebanese National Identity

The issue at hand, however, is the connection between identity at a personal level and its impact on the 'nation'. Arabic is still the official language in Lebanon with the Lebanese government firmly enforcing policies and laws to establish its necessity (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2002; Esseili, 2017). This situation is complex as well. Diglossia remains an important factor (Esseily, 2017). This diglossia not only refers to a combination of Modern Standard Arabic and a Lebanese dialect, which is a simplification of the linguistic reality. There are also many varieties of that dialect, affected by both regional and socioeconomic factors across the Arab region and within specific countries (Amin & Badreddine, 2020). This plurality on the level of the first language also impacts oral development, especially at an early stage (Oweini et al., 2020). However, in their study, Oweini et al. also explain that oral development of both colloquial and classical Arabic increased 'as participants progressed through their schooling' (p. 197). Amin and Badreddine's (2020) study, though, highlighted the importance of selecting varieties of L1. In their research, the two science teachers using Arabic in class deliberately chose to focus on either Modern Standard Arabic or the local dialect. This linguistic choice impacted the pedagogical focus of the class, where adopting the local dialect led to more emphasis on the content of the science course, while deliberately speaking in Modern Standard Arabic necessitated more stress on the language being used. In Oweini et al.'s (2020) study, though, the researchers highlighted a 'clear preference' for English over L1, regardless of dialect. Additional multifaceted issues relating to the 'Lebanese' identity need to

be addressed. While many Lebanese fully embrace the need for Arabic over any other foreign language (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2002), other intellectuals also called for a new 'Lebanese' language, with its own Latinized alphabet to elevate the status of the Lebanese colloquial form (Suleiman, 2003; Salemeh, 2010; Esseili, 2017), currently in use on social media for example. This call for a national identity which is not 'purely Arab or purely Western' became a topic of dispute, with language – and its connection to religion - at its centre (Suleiman, 2003, p. 205).

Government policy has been unable to resolve this issue. While the Lebanese government has stressed the importance of Arabic after independence and after the civil war, this has always been accompanied by additional support for learning foreign languages at the expense of Arabic (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2002). Shaaban and Ghaith (1996) even call this commitment to Arabic mostly 'lip service'. Even the government's 'official' public school curriculum values the importance of learning French and English (Shaaban, 2000; Diab, 2006; Esseili, 2014), leading to linguistic plurality where most official documents are in Arabic, international business conducted in all three languages, and financial matters remain the jurisdiction of English (Esseili, 2017). With the advance of mobile technology and social media, the increasing use of English and the Latin alphabet to communicate has placed formal Arabic, and its alphabet, in jeopardy. Anecdotal evidence even points to the inability of many Lebanese graduates to recite the Arabic alphabet (Al Assad, Hazoury, & Saab, 2019). This could be due to parents as well who do not encourage reading and writing in standard Arabic

(Bahous et al. 2011). With seminars and national calls for 'saving' the Arabic language becoming more common in Lebanon, it is worth discussing whether student proficiency in English necessitates measures that decrease the value of the Arabic language, especially since it is possible for learners to become multilingual. There is also the concern that this multilingual milieu could not only decrease the value of the Arabic language, but also might be producing students who are not comfortable with any of the languages they are expected to learn, resulting in a 'genuine struggle' which could affect their ability to communicate as a whole (Bahous at al., 2011). Consequently, even though both Christian and Muslim communities have spoken Arabic historically, 'English is used in Lebanon for a variety of functions, including communication among speakers of Lebanese Arabic within the same country' (Esseili, 2017, p.686). This has led some university students to feel confused as to their 'first language' or 'mother tongue'. In a recent study conducted at the American University of Beirut, an EMI private university, student participants found it frustrating to choose a 'first language', claiming their knowledge of English exceeds any capacity of using Arabic, technically their L1 (Arnold, 2020).

2.5 The Status of English and Language Proficiency

The reasons for learning English are diverse, but they mostly fall into three broad categories: academic, economic, and cultural. From an academic perspective, students need to learn French, English, or both to be able to complete their school and university education. Despite the government issuing many decrees to promote Arabic, most subjects are taught in a 'foreign' language

at primary and secondary school levels, including science and mathematics. This practice occurs in both public and private schools. French and English are 'deeply rooted in the Lebanese educational system' (Diab, 2006) and even schools that pride themselves on championing Arabic have had to use either English or French to teach many of their courses. Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics are almost never taught in Arabic, except for very few instances. Professionally, the need for English is also on the rise since 'private schools and universities in the Middle East respond not only to a need to teach English as a foreign language, but also to a perceived need to educate *in* English' (Orr, 2011, p. 2). Many employment opportunities are also linked to knowledge of a foreign language, mostly English. Both schools and universities advertise the need for English in order to work in many professional settings, especially Lebanon's tourism and finance sectors, while providing 'easy access' to the Gulf job market (Esseili, 2017). This is very much in line with the 'growing importance of the English language' on an international business level (Diab, 2006, p. 82). With Lebanon's dire economic situation, it is quite logical to look to the outside world for economic empowerment and employability, and the entire educational system appears to cater to that vision. This sentiment is held by the majority of pre-service English and Education majors at a private university in Lebanon who believe English necessary for 'academic success and to get a better job in the future' (Lee, 2015, p. 28). This is facilitated by a growing cultural need to use English, as it is believed to mirror 'modernity, coolness, and hip culture' (Esseili, 2017, p. 693).

However, despite the myriad uses for English and the factors advancing its presence in Lebanon, proficiency remains a matter of concern. In the mid-90s, when the new EFL program was developed for primary and secondary schools, the purpose was to advance English language proficiency to improve working relationships and to facilitate English use in academic circles (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1997). Shaaban (2000) carries this message forward by discussing a dual need for foreign language proficiency, where every Lebanese should be able to fluently communicate for both academic purposes and 'cultural openness' (p. 307). This proficiency level, though, is not always possible. While both university students (Diab 2006) and EFL teachers (Diab, 2009) seem to believe English to be an 'easy' language to acquire and some teachers 'brag' about their students' proficiency (Bahous et al., 2011, p. 745), reality seems to present a different picture as students continue to struggle with acquiring the language. Attitudes towards 'fluency' and even achieving an 'authentic accent' further complicate both teacher and learner expectations. In a study on the official middle school exams in Lebanon, for example, it was found that 87.7% of passing students received a failing grade in English and Arabic (Esseili, 2017). Student motivation is listed as the primary reason for their inability to achieve this desired proficiency, along with influences from their L1 (Arabic) and sometimes their L2, French (Bacha, 2002). Code switching then becomes another practice, one that seems to be unconsciously employed by both teachers and students (Bahous et al., 2014).

2.6. Social (in)Justice: Fairness and Equality

In a recent informal conversation, one Lebanese mother was proudly commenting that her 3-year-old son was accepted into a prestigious French-medium private school because he was successfully able to answer a few questions (in French) during the interview process. She attributed this success to the fact that she regularly spoke to her child in French at home. This is common practice for many Lebanese parents who wish to 'advance' their children's academic prospects (Banat, 2020; Esseili, 2017). According to Banat (2020), by deciding to enrol their children in the private sector, in EMI schools, parents are making a 'conscious decision' because this will orient their children towards American universities and colleges for the rest of their academic lives (p. 8). Such decisions also influence specific parental practices such as promoting English over Arabic (Bahous et al., 2011). This is also a familiar pattern, where prestigious private schools might routinely classify prospective students based on foreign language 'readiness', focusing on both the child and their parents' proficiency levels. Such a commonplace policy though ensures one other social phenomenon: injustice. Shaaban & Ghaith (2002) conducted research on the linguistic vitality of languages in Lebanon pertaining to income levels. Their findings were clear: the 'high-income group accorded both French and English higher vitality than did the low-income group' (p. 570). However, justice and fairness, according to the philosopher John Rawls occurs when everyone is in the original position, where no one has any arbitrary advantage over others. This is different from the linguistic reality in Lebanon. Many students who might not

receive foreign language instruction from teachers who, themselves, are not proficient might be at a grave disadvantage. Esseili (2017) categorizes school teachers into two extremes: either those who speak in Arabic more than 'half of class time' or those who rely on the foreign language completely, without ensuring that the students have understood the actual concepts. In both these cases, students might not do very well on the standardized tests as they prepare for university, with entrance exams to most universities conducted in that foreign language (p. 690). Injustice at this tertiary level also occurs in the division between private and public universities. According to recent statistics, over 60% of student are in private universities. Some of these universities (the elites) are very expensive (25,000$ per academic year) and not very accessible to middle and low - income families. Alternatives include cheaper private universities that do not hold some of the standards of higher education and do not have facilities for research (Redd & Hassan, 2019). This reinforces the unjust system and does not allow for economic migration. Scholarships to these universities also highly depend upon entrance exams conducted in mostly English or French to a lower extent. Additionally, many private universities are built upon sectarian, political, and religious, affiliations (Abouchedid & Bou Zeid, 2017), which reinforce the unjust status quo. The only public university, the Lebanese University, on the other hand, is suffering from lower budget and marginalization (Redd & Hassan, 2019). Some of its faculties also require knowledge of a foreign language.

2.7 English Language Teachers: Resources and Development

As such, teacher readiness is a crucial factor in the proficiency level and preparation of students as they embark on their academic journey. While pre-service English teachers at all levels appear to maintain the need for a Standard English, their opinions relating to how to actually achieve such a stream-lined proficiency diverge. Lee (2015) shows how the teachers surveyed in a private university in Beirut appear to both endorse the need for a Standard English while also advocating the need for English to adapt to specific Arabic contexts. One pre-service teacher even compared the variations we could possibly have in English to the variations in Arabic found across the Arabic-speaking world. However, when it came to their own language proficiency, the majority seems to adhere to a 'correct' – or standard – version of the language. This is also how they characterized their accents as being as close as possible to the 'proper' American accent for the most part. These attitudes are very much in line with the criteria set by school administrators who opt for standardized international tests (TOEFL and SATs) to measure student proficiency, also giving greater value to American systems of instruction (Bahous et al., 2011). Internationally, this remains an issue as well. In a recent publication, Jenkins (2019) argues that if university managements 'were less concerned to promote native-like English in their institutions, many of the inequities relating to EMI would be speedily resolved' (p. 94).

These pre-service teachers will then work within an educational system that also discriminates in terms of the material selected. To illustrate, the

textbooks used in public and private schools, for example, are very different. While public schools use government-issued books, private schools work with textbooks imported from the United States, for the most part – which have their own set of problems relating to cultural accessibility (Esseili, 2014). More than 20 years after the establishment of the new curriculum, most teachers who have been surveyed continue to seek greater development and training in order to cope with these obstacles. My study will not focus on pre-service teachers, though, as it was important for my participants to have experience within their specific context. For more on participants and the selection process, refer to sections 4.5.1.1 and 4.5.2.1.

2.8. Conclusion

As we have seen in this chapter, the challenges associated with teaching (and learning) English in Lebanon are numerous and diverse. They range from its impact on our identity, to proficiency in the English language and effect on our L1, Arabic. As such, there is a rift between the promise of globalization and economic mobility associated with English and the current reality for both teachers and students. The need to explicitly discuss these issues and identify where Lebanon falls within the present linguistic landscape is a priority, and teacher development programs need to critically address these issues, to achieve a heightened level of reflexivity and teacher agency. As critical language teaching provides a platform for educators to discuss the assumptions and practices in the field, my purpose in the first phase of this study is to identify current attitudes to foreign language teaching in the Lebanese context and

degree of criticality. In the second phase, my intervention will also attempt to fill the gap in terms of critical teacher training and professional development as participants share their attitudes in the 'reflexive practice model' in the hopes of changing the status quo, or at the very least, actively critiquing the power dynamics and injustice in the current Lebanese educational system. Before reporting on these phases, though, it is important to identify the principles and themes my study will focus on as I also review similar studies in the field.

CHAPTER THREE – REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the theoretical framework governing this critical study and to clarify the theoretical model in the 'reflexive practice model' with the in-service teachers in Lebanon. While chapter two focuses on the Lebanese context in specific, this literature review will look at matters related to Critical Theory (CT) and Critical Pedagogy (CP) in general and Critical Applied Linguistics (CALx) with an emphasis on TESOL in particular. The goal is to show both the challenges that have governed such a 'radical' movement along with the glimpses of hope in creating a transformative model of English language education. Throughout, I will be referring to the Lebanese context whenever possible, but this chapter's focus will be on the ontological background that has shaped me as an educator and a researcher. Finally, I will also examine current studies in the field pertaining to critical language teacher education and critical professional development. As such, the first section will provide a brief historical overview of critical theory and critical pedagogy, emphasizing their 'founding principles' and the scholars who have developed these movements. The second section will focus specifically on CALx, exploring issues in language teaching and the field of TESOL. The emphasis will be on the notion of 'problematizing givens', which is central to the reflexive sessions that will be co-created with the participants of this study. Additionally, I will examine matters pertaining to globalization, critical language awareness, and movements such as *translanguaging*. Garcia and Lee (2014) define *translanguaging* as:

an approach to the use of language, bilingualism and the education

of bilinguals that considers the language practices of bilinguals not

as two autonomous language systems as has been traditionally the

case, but as one linguistic repertoire with features that have been

societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages (p.

2)

Within my study, *Translanguaging* will be used as an example of a transformative

teaching pedagogy that could bridge the gap presented through any dominant

monolingual ideology. This is especially important as language learning has

adopted what has been called 'the multilingual turn' (Meier, 2017) with language

learning seen as an individual process, influenced by the personal and local

context. As critical teacher development is central to this study, the final section

of this review will look into mainstream teacher training and development

programs and the transformative means of critically examining teacher

knowledge and resources.

3.1 Theoretical Framework: Criticality and Critical Pedagogy (CP)

3.1.1 Critical Theory and Educational Research: A Brief Introduction

Critical Theory (CT) was born out of the need to embrace complexity and

uncertainty in order to effect change (See section 4.2 for a more detailed

development of CT and the Critical Paradigm).

Many in our present educational systems still place high value on the

knowledge generated through positivist paradigms (Giroux, 2011), which entail

only studying that which is 'clear, factual, and open to observation' (Pring, 2000,

p. 90), while human relations and social sciences are more complex and nuanced. While such need to identify empirical data is reasonable, as it is important to ensure our claims to knowledge are built on some evidence, attempting to restrict our ability as researchers to look into the uncertainty of human life is the ultimate weakness of the Positivist agenda (See section 4.1 for a detailed background to research paradigms). This is essential when studying value-based judgments. To a Positivist, 'matters of value were not open to empirical inquiry' (Pring, 2000, p.94). Researchers could study and comment upon processes and causal connections, but they were not supposed to discuss matters of obligation and morality (Pring, 2000). However, here lies an essential question regarding the usefulness of such knowledge. If the scientists and 'experts' with the most empirical knowledge cannot make value judgments, then whose role is it to take such crucial stances? Leaving matters of intention and planning and political agenda to other participants, while those with the most knowledge remain detached, seems to defy what is rational and practical. The 'reflexive practice model' in phase two of my study will attempt to subvert this practice, placing knowledge in the hands of the teachers who are at the core of language teaching.

However, this dominant narrative and its separation from values and politics continues to dominate and affect educational research well into the 21st century. Henry Giroux, a central figure in CP (which espouses the principles of CT), explicitly critiqued such a doctrine, calling it 'historical amnesia' (Giroux, 2011, p. 26). He blames this 'culture of positivism' for advancing 'context-free'

and 'value-free' knowledge while attempting to study social phenomena 'divorced from political and cultural traditions' (Giroux, 2011, p. 36). After all, 'knowledge is created within a historical context and it is this context which gives life and meaning to human experience' (Darder, Balodano, & Torres, 2009, p. 10). This echoes the father of CP, Freire, who explicitly stated that 'one cannot conceive of objectivity without subjectivity'. They cannot exist separately and cannot be 'dichotomized' (Freire, 2005, p. 50). This is emphasized by Raddawi and Degenaro (2017) in their study on critical pedagogy and academic writing courses in the United Arab Emirates. They highlight the need for academic courses to connect with students on a personal level and provide opportunities for reflection and social change. They also reflect upon the critical notion that Freire's ideology should be scrutinized as well, to reveal the needs of the local context. Similarly, my study will place value on personal and local knowledge, generated from interaction and collaboration among teachers to address the learning and teaching process in their specific context.

3.1.2 CP and the Critical Educator

In the same light, CP seeks to challenge the more traditional view of education, which places the focus on 'a set of strategies and skills to use in order to teach prespecified subject matter' (Giroux, 2011, p. 4). Instead, educators embracing CP deliberately incorporate the complexity of our social reality. Both Freire and Giroux, another vocal proponent of CP, highly emphasize this particularity. For Freire, pedagogy is a process where educators learn to understand the often 'distorted' image of social reality (Castro, 2016) and create

knowledge based on 'the specificity of particular contexts, students, communities, and available resources' (Giroux, 2011, p. 4). Educators who embrace CP, such as Chomsky, Butler, and Montessori are considered 'pedagogues of resistance', actively critiquing mainstream notions of education while fighting for more equality, dialogue, and critical practice (Kirylo, 2013). This is essential to the study I am undertaking, with its emphasis on critical reading and re-reading of the Lebanese educational context.

While CP appears to be an ideal, and often liberating, teaching philosophy, the challenge lies in its diversity. However, McLaren (2009) stresses the point that 'common themes and constructs' (p. 61) can be easily identified. A central notion is the need to resist the 'dominant culture'. According to Freire and Shor (1987), 'it is society which shapes education according to the interests of those who have power' (p. 36). However, since it is impractical to assume that those with the power will deliberately change a situation that works in their favour, it is up to the 'oppressed' themselves to resist this dominant ideology (Freire & Shor, 1987). Freire (2005) heavily critiques the 'banking' model of education, where a teacher simply delivers a pre-set lesson place, transmitting 'knowledge' to a group of students consuming this information. Instead, he offers a view of a critical teacher, one who allows learners to 'see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in the process of transformation' (p. 12). This is an immediate connection to CT as a whole, and Habermas in specific. Morrow and Torres (2002) address the similarity between these two thought leaders who both called for the individual to become 'an active participant in the appropriation of

knowledge in relation to lived experience' (p. 1). To Freire (2005), this form of 'problem-posing' education allows us to see ourselves as 'unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality' (p. 84). Giroux (2011) echoes this ideal where the power of education lies in the student's ability to 'transform knowledge rather than simply consume it' (p. 7) and CP offers an opportunity for understanding the relationship among knowledge, pedagogy, and power (Giroux, 2015). This reflects the progressive philosophy behind CP as a movement, one that brings to mind Dewey's ideal of an education that must connect students to 'an enlarged experience', where 'students must freely interact with their environments in the practice of constructing knowledge' (Darder, Balodano, & Torres, 2009, p. 3).

This knowledge is one of liberation. Emancipatory teaching methods allow the educator to remain aware of the sensitivities and politics involved in the classroom and emphasize 'listening for the human' and identifying any injustices (De Lissovoy, 2015, p. 57). The term 'militant' is heavily associated with CP, and what is also termed 'radical' pedagogy associated with Freire, Shor, Giroux, and McLaren. Giroux (2015) calls for more outrage, more 'political' teachers who do not readily accept the institutional norms, but actively question them. McLaren (2015) also calls for educators to have a 'particular political project in mind - an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-racist, anti-sexist and pro-democratic and emancipatory struggle' (p. 27). This form of 'radical' thought might cause some teachers to hesitate before explicitly adopting CP. However, Smyth (2010) clarifies that being 'political' does not mean being a political 'partisan'. Instead, it

involves 'critical intellectual work' – problematizing 'the assumptions and practices of the existing order' (p. 191). A critical teacher can resist forms of 'pre-scribed' knowledge through creating room for alternative, constructed, knowledge.

While CP provides educators with a philosophical perspective, it also attempts at creating strategies for action and practice. It is important to note that these strategies are not a finished product that can be applied to any given situation. This is especially important in my study, as I do not intend to offer a 'pre-packaged' strategy for continuing professional development (CPD), as that would be in opposition to critical attitudes. The 'reflexive practice model' is closely connected to the participants themselves, providing only a general framework for critical practice. Giroux (2009) touches upon this issue and clearly states that critical theorists do not enforce a 'grid-like' structure to be imposed onto CP (p. 49). Due to its emancipatory nature, it is quite difficult to identify one 'template' that signifies the practice of CP. This should not come as a surprise as the term 'critical' would resist such stringent compartmentalization. This is what has led some critics of CT and CP to argue that even though these theories may offer emancipatory insights, practice remains problematic. Freire (2005) discusses these perspectives at length, where some participants were concerned about their own promised emancipation, comparing it to anarchy, juxtaposing freedom with 'disorder'. My study will keep these concerns in mind, especially during the reflexive participation sessions. This is in line with lessons learned from previous studies in the field. For instance, Freire and Shor (1987) discuss

this same scenario, where some participants in a critical classroom considered the discussion 'a threat to their established values' (p. 25). Reynolds (2015) felt a similar reaction in his classroom, where students were openly 'hostile' and saw CP as an 'assault on their common sense' (p. 11). This is especially true in the field of education, where the educator does not control most of the decision-making process, and power is usually held away from that 'liberated' teacher (Cohen et al., 2018). Even action research, once espoused as the most critical of research stances, falls under scrutiny here, as 'giving action researchers a small degree of power […] has little effect on the real locus of power and decision making, which often lies outside the control of action researchers" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 145). McLaren (2009) even claims that those in power may 'allow' certain 'oppositional ideologies' and even 'tolerate' those who might challenge the dominant assumptions. Without any major effect on the dominant ideology, these different and opposing perspectives can be absorbed by the more powerful system (p. 71). Crooks (2013) also explains the challenge involved in applying CP as it involves evolution through 'embracing certain aspects of the approach on one level, attempting to apply this preliminary understanding in practice, bumping into problems that trigger further reflection, then applying this new understanding, bumping into new problems (or the same ones), and so on' (p. 46). Such a cyclical reflexive framework will be at the heart of this study, as this challenge affects both the teacher and students as they share 'lived experiences' in relation to society, education, and even personal biases and discrimination,

which 'have become entrenched in schools and universities as they have become corporatized' (Reynolds, 2015, p. 12).

A final criticism pertaining to CP is quite important to note, though it might not be very relevant to the study at hand. CP has been accused of being dominated by white men, neglecting both the female experience (Darder, Balodano, & Torres, 2009) and issues of race and colour (Orelus, 2015). While such claims are still being debated, some marginalized communities might continue to resist the label of 'critical pedagogy' (Alemán & Gaytán, 2017) or study critical educators who might espouse such theories without explicitly adopting the 'critical' title (Lynn & Jennings, 2009). Kirylo's (2013) work, highlighting both famous critical educators like Freire and McLaren while also promoting the work of lesser-known pedagogues attempts to fill that gap. As Giroux (2009) explains, it is crucial to examine the contributions of CT in light of our present historical conditions. This would allow us to maintain the 'emancipatory spirit' inherent to CT and CP (p. 50) while remaining open to our current local experience.

3.1.3. Emancipation with People: Reflexivity, Dialogue, and Praxis

Despite these challenges, a critical teacher can embrace the essential spirit of CP, which involves reflexivity, dialogue, and *praxis*. One principle espoused by CP, a teacher's need for reflexivity, will be central to this current study. Carr and Kemmis (1986) believe social life to be reflexive as 'it has the capacity to change as our knowledge and thinking changes, thus creating new forms of social life which can, in their turn, be reconstructed' (p. 43). This is in stark contrast to

Marcuse's (1966) one-dimensional man who represented the oppressive characteristics inherent to today's 'advanced' society. Though Marcuse wrote about society in the mid- twentieth century, Box (2011) argues that present day society has 'fulfilled Marcuse's vision' as 'we are trapped in one societal dimension' (p. 169). However, despite what appears to be a pessimistic outlook towards the future, Marcuse also believes 'historically conditioned needs that function in the interest of domination can be changed' (Giroux, 2009, p. 49). One means of questioning these values is through critical teaching strategies. Kincheloe (2008) identifies six types of knowledge, which teachers can use to develop a more critical outlook in their students. Central to this study is the sixth type: the reflective-synthetic knowledge that can be used in critical action 'with the aim of avoiding the indoctrination of students' and opting for a plurality of sources to 'objectively inform their opinion' (Maviglia, 2016, p. 69). This is in line with CT, which specifies understanding both the 'self' and society in order to 'challenge and undermine what appears normal or natural' (Howell, 2013, p. 81). Freire (2005) explicitly calls this a process of 'ethical-critical consciousness', which he labels 'conscientization' and offers self-reflection as the means through which to acquire emancipation (Freire, 2005; McLaren, 2015, De Castro, 2016).

A central strategy in order to achieve this form of criticality and develop this new 'conscientization' is through dialogue. In a 'talking' book built upon dialogue, where Shor and Freire (1987) discuss CP, they claim that 'through dialogue, reflecting together on what we know and don't know, we can then act critically to transform reality' (p. 99). They also cite the dialogical method as the

means through which we can 'go beyond tomorrow without being naively idealistic' (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 185). This method is realistic because participants in dialogue are expected to discuss their social reality in its totality, without assuming a brighter future exclusive of any grounds for their assumptions. Freire (2005) does not consider dialogue as a mere technique; instead, dialogue is a 'way of knowing' – it is a philosophical stance on how knowledge is created, where one cannot learn about present social reality without the other because knowledge is not an individual process (p. 10).

In a similar light, Freire's (2005) concept of *praxis* involves a connection between action and reflection, which work simultaneously in a continuing dialectic relationship. Cruz (2015), among many other critical educators, employs this way of teaching and learning to allow students to reflect on their experiences and learn about themselves through critical literacy, which allows them to evaluate any received 'knowledge' in light of what we could consider Giroux's macro objectives, looking at the social, political, and ethical repercussions. Giroux (2011) focuses on 'interrogating texts' instead of studying them, with 'critique as a mode of analysis that interrogates texts, institutions, social relations, and ideologies as part of the script of official power' (p. 4). This is a reminder of Dewey's perspective on the role of an educator, one who does not simply 'impose certain ideas' but helps the child in 'responding' to these influences (Hickman & Alexander, 1998, p. 231). All of these critical educators therefore allow CP to guide their practice, and allow individual experience to expand their knowledge, exemplifying *praxis*. However, it remains challenging to

ensure this does not become a mere 'technique' used in class as it needs to remain part of the educator's critical fabric, a means of operating, or of being, that would accompany an educator's path throughout their critical journey. McLaren (2015) calls this a process of 'acting upon the social totality by turning abstract 'things' into a material force for liberation, by helping abstract thought lead to praxis, to revolutionary praxis' (p. 29). This would allow a critical practice that would achieve Freire's vision of 'hope' with an 'education that could truly challenge the injustices and inequalities of the past and present' (Van Heertum, 2010, p. 217) in order to alter our present 'suffering' into a transformed future. Such an attempt at dialogue and dialogic inquiry will remain at the forefront of the reflexive participatory sessions, ensuring 'no voice is left behind'.

3.2 Problematizing Givens: Critical Applied Linguistics (CALx)

> Teachers of Discourses take on an impossible job, allow themselves to be evaluated on how well they do it, and accept fairly low status all the while for doing it.
>
> (Gee, 1989, p. 12)

When discussing challenges, injustices, and inequalities, I believe the above quote by Gee (1989) succinctly summarizes the dilemma where many language teachers find themselves. Foreign language teachers have the additional task of teaching 'discourse' even without the social element that usually accompanies first language learning. This is why my study is grounded in the need for criticality and embracing CP, within the field of CALx.

CALx is both a 'mode of critique' and a 'mode of practice' (Pennycook, 2004, p. 785). To some, it serves as a means of judging 'normal' research in applied linguistics, which might not be explicitly concerned with the 'transformation of society' (Davies, 1999, p. 145). Others, however, see it as a means of changing the practice of applied linguistics itself, by including a number of critical approaches to the study of language (Davies, 1999; Pennycook, 2001; Pennycook, 2004). Pennycook's (2001) introduction to CALx clearly outlines the goals of the field along with its principal concerns and areas of practice. A brief look at this introduction immediately reinforces the principles associated with CT and pedagogy. Critical patterns in CALx emerge through its emphasis on *praxis*, micro and macro relations, critical social inquiry, self-reflexivity, and problematizing givens. This last call for 'problematizing givens' is of importance to this current study. Dean (1994) calls for the need to pose questions 'where others had located answers' and to review the narratives around us with the explicit goal of 'problematizing' them. This is seen as an 'unwilling[ness] to accept the taken-for-granted components of our reality and the 'official' accounts of how they came to be the way they are' (Dean, 1994, p. 4). Pennycook (2001) refers to this as 'problematizing givens' and calls on language teachers, especially those in TESOL, to constantly question the body of knowledge in their field and the limits of their own knowledge.

CALx has also called upon language teachers to re-examine the goals of language learning. Fairclough (1989) actively critiques the idea that language is 'task-oriented' with language teachers responsible for creating employees who

write effectively without grammatical errors. Instead, he focuses on language as a means of expression, of 'reproducing social identities and social relations' and as a means of representing 'relations of power' (p. 237). This is quite important in the current reality of a neoliberal education that aims to produce students who are ready for the 'market', which is rather clear in our context in Lebanon as well, with foreign languages deemed an economic necessity (see section 2.1). If we were to consider language as one that 'is created by society […] and helps to create society in its turn' (Halliday, 2007, p. 249), though, we would need to revise such restrictive 'language learning outcomes'. Similarly, Kumaravadivelu (2003) explicitly calls for 'provoking' the language teacher, in order to go beyond the limited, and limiting, concept of method and consider the challenges and opportunities of an emerging postmethod era in language teaching' (p. 1) which would combat the 'power ploy' of the elites, according to Bhabha (1994), who favour one dominant method and marginalize others. Pennycook (2001) makes this same call for language teachers to focus on more than just the means of arranging chairs in a classroom and look beyond that to macro objectives. Education 'must see pedagogy as a question of cultural politics' (Pennycook, 1999, p. 329), not politics of a partisan kind, but one that involves a 'renewal of thinking' to consider language as 'local' with varieties of everyday use for work, social interactions, and academia (Pennycook, 2010, p. 16.9). As such, experts in the field like Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001) and Richards (2009) actively call upon teachers to embrace this postmethod era and 'develop their personalized teaching methods' in a bottom-up approach, as opposed to previous theory

which called for the 'ideal' way to teach a foreign language. This brings to mind the study by the Douglas Fir Group (2016), a community made up of 15 academics and researchers in North America who have chosen to focus on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in a similar 'local' sense, focusing on peoples' lived experiences, along with their multilingual context. They call for a 'new SLA', 'one that can investigate the learning and teaching of additional languages across private and public, material and digital social contexts in a multilingual world' (p. 20). Though the Douglas Fir Group identifies the limitations of their own context (mostly North America), their insights on language could be adapted and discussed within a framework of foreign languages, while looking at our specific Lebanese context and its unique needs (Banat, 2020).

3.2.1 Globalization and the International English Language

This notion of globalization has been used to justify our Lebanese reliance on foreign languages at all educational levels. Richards (2009) illustrates a world that is heavily reliant on English language speakers. Globalization has made this necessary, as English has become the dominant language, problematically described as a *lingua franca* (Kachru, 1997; Phillipson, 2009). While Richards (2009) might agree that teaching English should no longer be seen as a 'politically neutral activity', his rationale behind this change is problematic. While Phillipson's (2009) description of a *lingua Frankensteinia,* devouring other languages in its path, might appeal to many who denounce the hegemonic power exercised through the powerful economic and political forces supporting the English language, Richards's (2009) address to TESOL members focuses on the

ability of a new globalized world to claim ownership of the language, as it is no longer the property of a few native speakers 'with blond hair and blue eyes'. Richards (2009) optimistically believes that it is possible to learn the English language without its 'cultural trappings'. While some would identify a similar need for EIL (Ali, 2014; Van den Hoven, 2014), Kachru (1997) warns that this might falsely portray the presence of one accepted version of the English language, which is 'far from the reality' we inhabit. Kachru (1997) also decries the optimistic 'WE' – referring to World Englishes – which assumes all English language speakers as a 'club of equals' (McArthur, 1983, as cited in Kachru, 1997). Instead, Kachru (1997) embraces the complexities of the English-speaking world and the different communities within it, known as the Three Concentric Circles: the 'inner circle' - Australia, UK, US, etc., 'outer circle' - India, Nigeria, Philippines, etc., and 'expanding circle' - China, Japan, Korea, etc.

Research on EIL is ongoing, with the need to find shared paradigms and goals, but whether this has reached the level of the English language classroom remains a matter of contention, with current research like that of Ali (2014) reviewing specific teaching contexts and teacher attitudes. Other research by Van den Hoven (2014) advocates for new resources and assessment tools that accompany this 'new' perspective on the English language. Unfortunately, though, attitudes such as 'native teacher idolisation' are still prominent in certain teaching contexts, as Pollard (2014) shows in his exploration of Korean teacher attitudes. These perspectives towards 'inner circle' English may continue to affect the extent to which teachers might embrace WE, and this is why this study will

include particular reference to this debate to evaluate teacher preferences in Lebanon.

As I have previously discussed, our globalized world perceives language as the means to achieve economic and social mobility with the English language dominating this field (Philipson, 2009; Richards, 2009). The situation in Lebanon draws upon a similar need for foreign languages both economically and socially (Diab, 2000; Suleiman, 2003; Diab, 2006; Esseili, 2017; Banat, 2020) with the deteriorating political and economic situation in the country making it even more imperative to look outwards. CALx, however, would call upon the need to fully evaluate our present view of language and critique our assumptions and body of knowledge. It also calls for a transformation of the goals of language learning and teaching (Diaz & Dasli, 2017). For instance, while previous calls for native-speaker language competence and fluency dominated work in foreign language teaching, there is a move towards complicating this oversimplified narrative and addressing the social and economic injustices inherent within this approach, which marginalizes those who might not achieve this form of 'near-native' language competence (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Diaz & Dasli, 2017; Kramsch, 2019). It is these 'myths' that we might unconsciously (or even at times consciously) include within our knowledge of learning and teaching that would need to be actively scrutinized. This has led to a change in the goal of achieving 'near-native' fluency for example (Richards, 2009). Additionally, previous trends towards teaching target culture have now been heavily critiqued in favour of multicultural and intercultural perspectives (Kumaravadivelu, 2008; Crozet,

2017). Richards (2009) also gives the example of off-shore English programs, which 'clean up' a speaker's native language and promote 'core English' without idiomatic expressions that could complicate a message. This could mean a move away from associating one language with native speakers or even a 'mother tongue' (Meier, 2017), thereby decreasing the need to claim 'ownership'. While such examples of English language teaching fall within Kramsch's (2019) concerns regarding the commodification of a foreign language, they do provide counter-examples to the 'ideal' of near-native fluency. The extent to which reality and teaching practice has caught up with all of these theories remains a matter of debate. However, Canagarajah (1999) advocates the need to remain fully aware of the 'oppressive history and hegemonic values associated with English' as it is not realistic to expect a 'culture-free' identity. Such an 'ideal' negates our social and linguistic reality (p. 2).

3.2.2 Critical Language Awareness: Power, Imperialism and Hegemony

When the voices of children are heard on the green,
And laughing is heard on the hill,
My heart is at rest within my breast,
And everything else is still.

William Blake, Songs of Innocence

When voices of children are heard on the green,
And whisperings are in the dale,
The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,
My face turns green and pale.

William Blake, Songs of Experience

These two extracts from Blake's (1789) Songs of Innocence and Experience juxtapose the manner in which people lead their lives before 'knowledge' and afterwards, when their newfound experience gives them awareness of what lies ahead. The 'innocent' nurse in the first stanza hears laughter and joy, but the more experienced nurse is cognizant of the hidden dangers. In a similar light, a post-modern view of education has also 'lost its innocence'. This newfound perspective is able to highlight the ideologies and propaganda within education, and it should advocate a 'critical orientation' to these dominant paradigms (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 3).

Sociolinguistics is a field that focuses on the study of language while concentrating on social relations and differences based on class, gender, geography, and other demographic factors. The importance of this body of knowledge echoes Dewey's belief that the value of language and literature lies in embracing its social element (as cited in Hickman & Alexander, 1998). Fairclough (1989) and Pennycook (1999), though, both accuse mainstream sociolinguistics of *only* attempting to describe the connection between language and power, without commenting on these power structures. Instead, Pennycook (2001) advocates a critical sociolinguistic stance, which openly discusses oppression, power struggles, and 'the role of language in reproducing inequitable social relations' (p. 37). This is why Fairclough (1989) promotes the value of raising awareness for both teachers and students. In his language-learning model, there is a necessity to combine discourse practice with critical language awareness, and Pennycook (2001) later positions English language teachers, specifically, 'at

the heart of the most crucial educational, cultural, and political issues of our time' (p. 190). Such weight must be critically assessed, though, in order to identify the extent of our work as English language teachers in this critical domain.

I argue that many of our assumptions as language teachers remain 'innocent', assuming language to be a 'neutral' vessel of economic advancement for our students without fully questioning power dynamics and possible injustices we might be inflicting on our students in our drive to teach them what they need for the next level of the educational hierarchy. With matters relating to the English language and power, my starting point will be one of its fiercest critics, Phillipson (1992), who wrote his polemic book on the political and economic benefits that Western powers, mostly the United States and the United Kingdom, have gained through the imposition of the English language on the rest of the world. He clearly blames political figures that identified 'dominance through English' as part of their policies to take control through a 'softer' form of imperialism. The British Council, publishing houses, and specific language policies all serve to make the English language a very 'political' language, which opposes the earlier, and innocent, narrative of English as a neutral *lingua franca* (Phillipson, 1992, 2009). While critics such as Davies (1996) accuse Phillipson of promoting a 'culture of guilt' among colonial powers and resorting to a form of 'romantic despair' (p. 485), there is some truth to his central premise: dominant colonial languages – with English at the centre - have not been 'accommodating' in their presence within the foreign language classroom. Quite the opposite, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) deems this a phenomenon of *linguicism*, where practices and ideologies

'reproduce an unequal division of power' based on language (p. 40). Garcia (2019) would even go as far as to argue that categorizing language into 'foreign', 'second' and even 'first' languages are 'constructions of Western powers' because this implies a language that is an 'anonymous whole'. Instead, it is less hegemonic to consider the dynamic nature of language, with its ability to transform *with* the user (p. 152). Kramsch (2019) reinforces these geopolitical factors, connecting demand for a language with 'displays of military strength, economic and technological power, and claims to cultural superiority' (p. 50). While Phillipson (1992, 2009) and Kramsch (2019) focus on the political and economic factors influencing linguistic imperialism, Garcia (2019) firmly reminds readers of the colonial forces entangled within dominant languages such as Spanish and English. Although this extreme form of language domination might not be as common today with countries and armies forcefully 'killing' languages, the discussion on target language and value given to one version of English over others, for instance, does bring to mind similar narratives of superiority and inferiority (Kachru, 1997; Tollefson, 2000; Kumaravadivelu, 2008; Burns & Richards, 2009; Kramsch, 2019; Pennycook, 2019). Though Gee (1989) does not explicitly refer to this colonial past and explicit racism, he does mention the gatekeepers who ensure appropriate measures will always ascertain the 'natives' and clearly differentiate them from those who are not 'born' into the language. On the other hand, Kubota (2002) has received ample criticism for explicitly targeting racism in a 'nice field like TESOL'. While admitting that many TESOL practitioners are humane and liberal, Kubota (2002) claims that the field itself

relies on knowledge and practices that could be viewed as racist, from textbooks with a 'hidden agenda of assimilation into the White culture' (p. 86) to practices which maintain 'Whiteness as an invisible norm' (p. 87). These educational resources that reinstate inequality and hegemony can be found in most parts of the world, including Lebanon.

Troudi and Al Hafidh (2017) present these challenges in the Arabian Gulf, while investigating 'the potential loss both of competency in mother tongue Arabic and of cultural and social identity' as a result of adopting English as a Medium of Instruction in the United Arab Emirates (p. 94). This recalls Wierzbicka's (2014) detailed explanation of a 'hypothetical' situation where the 'words that define reality for us—especially human reality—are English words shaped by history and culture' which would result in a 'slanted' worldview and a 'conceptual barrier between us and the speakers of other languages, and preclude a neutral, culture-independent perspective' (p. 188). This hypothetical situation, though, has become reality in many parts of the world. Kubota and Lin (2006) develop this argument further by claiming that even the way we 'think, [analyse], socialize, and educate' come from a similar 'epistemological racism' with influential philosophers who are 'virtually all White males' dictating the canon (p. 479). Additionally, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) warns of a world where '[l]anguages are being killed today at a much faster pace than ever before in human history' and puts the blame firmly on the shoulders of English language teachers who are participants in this 'language genocide' as formal education and the media are the main culprits (p. 22-23). This statement is debatable, but a

key aspect of CALx, therefore, would be to understand these power structures and the means through which they operate 'in the ongoing tasks of teaching, learning languages, translating, and talking to clients (Pennycook, 2001, p. 28). After all, anyone who does not have exposure to 'high-quality English language education' will be faced with immense obstacles in a world so heavily dependent on a certain kind of English proficiency (Tollefson, 2000, p. 9). Pennycook (2019) even identifies this as 'unequal Englishes' and critiques the overly utopian view of EIL (p. 173). He is also critical of the 'liberal laissez-faire attitude', espoused by organizations such as TESOL, which claims that it is possible to both teach English and maintain a balance of local cultures and identity. The problem, as per Pennycook (2001), is that finding this balance should not be left to chance, as that could be quite 'naïve'. Simultaneously, though, Pennycook (2019) also explains the need to avoid a dystopian approach to the English language, which usually presents English as a dominating 'monolithic' force to be reckoned with. Regardless of the approach taken, it is critical to discuss alternatives to both 'anti-' and 'pro-' English rhetoric to investigate the 'paradox' brought forward by Tollefson (2000):

> '[A]t a time when English is widely seen as a key to the economic success of nations and the economic well-being of individuals, the spread of English also contributes to significant social, political, and economic inequalities' (p. 8).

This paradox and the need to find an alternative calls for the work of Canagarajah.

Canagarajah (1999) offers a detailed perspective of a reality where English is no longer 'alien'. In his view, Phillipson's notion of a *lingua Frankensteinia* does not take into consideration the local reality of a number of post-colonial communities where, 'with the passing of time, the possibility of choosing one [language] or the other may no longer be open' (p. 1). While fully acknowledging Phillipson's work on linguistic imperialism and the importance of identifying the economic and political power of the English language at a macro level, Canagarajah (1999) calls for examining the local. His focus is on the 'micro-social' level, and especially that of the classroom. For, if the language teachers themselves were unsure of 'whether and how English can be taught in the context of imperialism', then it would be difficult to effect any change (p. 42). Instead, Canagarajah's (1999) ethnographic research analyses how different speech communities adopt and deploy certain English words in the 'right' context, while resisting the use of English in many others (p. 73). His research offers a third manner of English language teaching, one that resists both extremes of utopia and dystopia. This means of creating an 'alternative' English is now a running narrative in the literature, one that could promise a plurality or ecology of languages model with additive bilingualism or multilingualism.

3.2.3 Transformative Language Pedagogy

A closer look at an alternative means of learning English allows two crucial processes, which lie at the centre of CT and CP, what Canagarajah (1999) considers 'the empowerment of minority communities' and 'the democratization of English' (p. 175). In this section of the review, a few alternative strategies for

'embracing' English will be discussed, but the central question to keep in mind is 'not whether English should be learned, but how' (Canagarajah, 2009, p. 175).

Regardless of the specific strategy employed, at the heart of this discussion is the need to find an alternative, to find *hope* that would allow language teaching pedagogy to transform, in a manner similar to Freire's notion of transformative pedagogy. Thus, my study will promote the need to both discuss current assumptions and identify alternative means for change. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) calls for a paradigm shift from the currently predominant 'diffusion of English' paradigm that treats language as 'mono' while promoting 'subtractive' practices that decrease the value of other languages. Instead, she calls on language educators and policy makers to learn from other models of language teaching that allow languages to co-exist, maintaining language diversity, equality, and cultural exchange. This 'ecology of languages' model, which has been successful in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Nordic countries, allows for greater linguistic human rights (p. 40).

This 'ideal' is one that should govern our approach to a critical evaluation of the language classroom, but in practice, there needs to be a clear roadmap of the process involved. Wierzbicka (2014) offers one solution to release us from the English 'prison' she describes in her book. She calls for the creation of a 'Minimal English'. In her view, though English, like other languages, encompasses the cultural values of its colonial history and 'native' users, it has a 'core that is free of such imprints' (p. 194). She firmly believes that finding this 'core' and moving away from 'complex English' would allow new language

learners to learn English while remaining 'independent' of its cultural trappings. She is optimistic that building a 'semiartificial' mini English, as opposed to the currently taught 'maxi' English can become 'a common auxiliary inter-language for speakers of different languages' (p. 194). The problem with this 'solution', though, lies in whether one can learn any language without its social and cultural historical context. Can a language be stripped of its history that simply? Janks and Ivanic (1992) are among many linguists who argue that one cannot learn language 'apart from social involvement' as it is a fundamental part of any meaning-making process. Additionally, this means of learning a language might turn it into the very commodity that Phillipson (2009) and Kramsch (2019) might have been warning us about. Similarly, Canagarajah (1999) believes the solution should not be one where we attempt to hide from the ideological nature of language and 'run away' from its political underpinnings. Instead, we should 'negotiate with the agencies of power for personal collective empowerment' (p. 174).

Such negotiation is central to a current shift in language pedagogy. One example of such a transformative model of education, that will be actively discussed in the reflexive practice model, is the strategy of promoting *Translanguaging,* which looks at language not as a holistic system, which needs to be adopted in full, but as a process of 'languaging' where speakers can negotiate language and utilise different repertoires in different contexts (Pennycook, 2008). This, I argue, is a critical pedagogy where teachers embrace the ecology of languages and promote linguistic human rights – against the

current monolingual strategy. This also allows learning to move beyond the colonial, historical, and political connections to language (MacSwan, 2017). When the term 'translanguaging' was first coined, it referred to moving between languages for different communication channels, where one could read a text in one language but report this text in another (Baker, 2011). The term itself, along with its prefix 'trans-' and suffix '– ing' is significant, as it promotes 'fluid practices that not only go between but more importantly go beyond socially constructed language and education systems, structures and practices to engage diverse students' (Wei & Lin, 2019, p. 210.). Garcia (2019) has been instrumental in transferring this concept to the language classroom, referring to students who attempt to optimize their communication through deploying 'independent' languages together, to clarify their message in a 'fluid' manner. This fluidity allows both language teachers and learners to approach language with fewer restrictions. In its optimistic view, *translanguaging* refers to a speaker's ability to use their 'full linguistic repertoire' – whether bilingual or even multilingual – without being concerned about what is socially 'acceptable' in a given context (Garcia, 2019, p. 163), which recalls Canagarajah's (1999) communities who adopted English and other languages in a more dynamic manner, without external restrictions. This is also in line with Kumaravadivelu's (2008) call for developing a 'global cultural consciousness' where language learners are aware of the new global reality that identifies 'disappearing borders', social reality in specific communities, and an 'individual reality that depicts the individual as having multiple, contradictory, dynamic, and changing identities' (p. 7). As such, I

hope to present *translanguaging* in phase two of my study as a contrast to mainstream (restrictive) language policies to embrace a more transformative and fluid approach to language. In a manner similar to *translanguaging*, Kumaravadivelu (2008) discusses the 'synergy' and holistic perspective of culture (and language) that is more pluralistic in nature. Kramsch (2019) calls this 'the multilingual turn' where foreign language education places more value on the linguistic experience that each individual student brings into the 'new' language classroom. Additionally, Pennycook (2019), referring to Garcia's work, calls for 'translingual activism' in order to 'decolonize' the English language classroom (p. 171). A similar look at culture in the language classroom highlights the need for 'a cosmopolitan agenda' with emphasis on exploring human culture in general without labels such as 'origin/native' and 'target' culture to accomplish a critical, and transformative, pedagogical turn (Kennedy, Diaz & Dasli, 2017). However, Pennycook (2019) warns that this does not mean 'anything goes'. There needs to be a 'principled polycentrism' which acknowledges the need for fluidity while determining 'commonalities and shared resources' (p. 177), resulting in language speakers who would not be labelled 'proficient native-speaker-like speakers' but 'critical activist resourceful speakers' who make use of their full linguistic repertoire (p. 181). The ability to create a critical space where such strategies are used could also help teachers avoid the accusation that they might be 'smuggling the vernacular into the classroom' in their attempt to promote L1 (Probyn, 2009, p. 123). Though Probyn's work on code-switching in a small rural community in South Africa might be outdated, such assumptions and prejudices need to be

examined in different contexts before adopting these *translingual* strategies as they may remain relevant (Wei & Lin, 2019).

Such a transformative pedagogy could create a different future for the English language classroom, but it should also, essentially, embrace its principal agents, the English language teachers and their own development.

3.3 Teacher Readiness: Development, Knowledge, and Resources

A critical discussion of language teaching assumptions and practices needs to embrace the principal 'agent' in the classroom, the language teacher. A teacher's foundational knowledge, continuous development, and the resources in use are pivotal in shaping attitudes and practice. Critical teacher education would therefore 'promote critical awareness' in pre-service teachers through 'raising consciousness about the ways in which power relations are constructed and function in society' (Hawkins & Norton, 2009, p. 33). As we have seen throughout this review, CP holds the following truths to be self-evident: schools both reproduce social inequalities and simultaneously present 'a humanist vision of their redemptive and transformational power' (Darder, Balodano, & Torres, 2009, p. 436). This is why teacher education is considered a major battleground, between traditional learning programs, which reinstate hegemonic values and emphasize stand-alone courses that treat teachers as 'clients' (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p.16) and transformative models 'committed to a liberatory ethos of schooling' (Darder, Balodano, & Torres, 2009, p. 436). My study will therefore assess the extent to which teachers in Lebanon might hold mainstream attitudes in addition to their opinions of their teacher training journeys. As such, I will

gauge whether their teacher education and professional development has mostly followed mainstream or transformative critical models. This would also allow me to assess whether programs in Lebanon might be closer to Troudi's (2015) critical model or whether they are still mostly mainstream.

There has been a lot of literature focusing on teacher knowledge, what most would consider as fundamental in any pedagogical program. However, this literature has assessed the move from an oversimplified 'knowledge' base to one that is critical in nature. To illustrate, when discussing disciplinary knowledge of applied linguistics, Grabe et al. (2000) call for the need to 'move beyond native (or native-like) intuitions' and understand language as both a system and 'social expectations' (p. 180). They also call for knowledge in psychology, anthropology, and education which will assist teachers in making 'sound pedagogical decisions, planning classes, developing materials, delivering instruction, evaluating student progress, and conducting meaningful action-research projects to improve one's teaching' (p. 193). However, despite the apparent comprehensive knowledge basis in Grabe et al.'s (2000) framework, it still does not fully address one important critical concern: social justice. In his paper reviewing the current debate in TESOL surrounding what constitutes 'teacher knowledge', Troudi (2005) introduces 'cultural knowledge' as a means of expanding the current restrictive focus on content knowledge. Troudi (2005) believes teachers should invest the time and effort needed to improve upon both their knowledge of 'large culture' – knowledge about community values, practices, and educational policies – and 'small culture' focusing on the particular group of students in the

classroom. As such, the reflexive practice model I will adopt in my intervention will attempt such a transformative lens. My study will rely upon Kumaravadivelu's (2012) call for a new postmethod L2 teacher education program, one that replaces 'sequential course offerings' in second language acquisition, testing, and curriculum development, among others, with a 'holistic' training program. This critical program would emphasize modules that are 'cyclical, integrated, interactive, multidirectional and multidimensional' (p. 17). Kumaravadivelu's (2012) KARDS programme (Know, Analyse, Recognise, Dialogic Inquiry, and See – which will be described in detail in section 5.2.2.1) prepares teachers who acquire Knowledge on both a professional and personal level, Analyse their learner's needs, Recognize their own needs as well, conduct Dialogic inquiry throughout their teaching journey, and See their own journey in a self-reflective light. This is in line with the notion of 'teachers as reflective practitioners' who are aware of both cultural and institutional dimensions and address these in the classroom (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 11). One means of accomplishing this feat, according to Cruz (2015), is to expose teachers to CP early on in their teacher development programs and make this a continual part of their training, rather than just a 'one-course offering'. Cruz (2015) is certain that this 'will result in competent teachers who are also responsible citizens within a democratic society, who can support a functioning democracy, and teach their own students also to be responsible members of a participatory democratic society' (p178). This is a very optimistic call to action, one that could face a number of challenges in today's neoliberal society.

While Giroux (2009) also calls for teacher education that creates a 'transformative intellectual', he also argues that our current reality, and the debates on education in the United States at least, have maintained 'an ominous silence' regarding the role of teachers as critical intellectuals in matters pertaining to democracy and citizenship (p. 439). This is reflective of Giroux's (2009) complaint that matters relating to teaching policy are increasingly being given to 'administrative experts' or influenced by publishers and their agendas (Giroux, 2009, p. 442) disregarding the actual role of teachers as 'the architects of society' (Celebi, 2019, p. 252). Similar trends are becoming more common in Lebanon, where teacher complaints seem to be ignored, at least in the few documented cases (Esseili, 2014).

While only a few researchers have explicitly examined the attitudes of language teachers in Lebanon, there have been some advances in this direction. Esseili (2014), for instance, has explored the working conditions for teachers in both public and private schools. Her interviews with 20 teachers in different areas in Lebanon have uncovered the challenges faced. One major obstacle refers to the resources used, with public school teachers complaining that these books are a 'total failure' and 'worthless'. In private schools, language teachers also believed that imported books do not take the local students' needs and backgrounds into account, which is quite critical as a comment (p. 107). Professional development was another major challenge. Teachers mostly complained that their institutions were 'indifferent', and some teachers were even worried that they were losing foundational skills, such as their knowledge of

English (Esseili, 2014, p. 109). At this point, it becomes very difficult to expect institutions to work towards critical development when technical knowledge might be at risk.

3.4 Critical Language Teaching PD: Advances in the Field

> To improve education, we must change schools. To improve schools, we must change individuals. To improve individuals, we must change the ways we attempt to create change.
>
> (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p. vii)

I have already explored the need for more critical teacher training (Troudi, 2015) and professional development (Kumaravadivelu, 2012), but the extent to which these practices are taking place in Lebanon has yet to be determined. While only a few authors have discussed critical pedagogy in the Arab world (see Wachob's 2009 anthology on critical practices and language in the classroom), these works have mostly explored the student-teacher interaction and the curriculum, with little emphasis on teacher training and development. Studies that emphasize critical issues pertaining to the English language in Lebanon mostly focus on the role of the English language and its economic role. The most recent of these by Banat (2020) builds a socio-historical case study, though Banat mostly focuses on critical issues pertaining to language policy and the curriculum, without venturing into critical teacher training. However, his outlook on policymaking and critical applied linguistics resists the narrative of linguistic imperialism, emphasizing the economic and pragmatic need for English instead. Banat appears to ignore the possibility of varieties of English in the classroom, though

such research into the plurality of English – and *translanguaging* – has been covered by both Bahous et al. (2014) and Bou Ayash (2013), who explain how 'natural' such fluidity would be in our Lebanese context.

Following a similar critical lens, a very recent edited compilation by Troudi (2020) provides more insight into the field with many authors focusing on the Arab world. Most chapters still focus on critical pedagogy in terms of classroom practices, but a chapter by Riyami et al. emphasizes the teachers' attitudes to critical pedagogy. However, in a recent study specifically focusing on the Arab world, in particular the United Arab Emirates, Raddawi & Troudi (2018) believe such critical teacher training to be in its 'infancy'. Their work advocates for emancipating teachers from the power structures that control their agency, including 'the policy maker-administrator-teacher-student relationship' to achieve a more critical look at pedagogy (p. 91). Such a philosophy is central to the intervention model of my study. Exploratory Practice (EP) also offers another model for PD, relying on 'a set of principles to guide teachers and learners in their endeavour to develop a better understanding of their classroom practice by integrating research into their pedagogy' (Slimani-Rolls & Kiely, 2019, p. 37), transforming traditional PD into communities of practice (CoP) and situating itself within the 'emancipatory movement' (Slimani-Rolls, 2020, p. 215). This is consistent with the recognized need for more collaborative teacher development that emphasises 'a view of teacher learning as a fundamentally social process' (Johnston, 2009, p. 241). Such ideals have also been seen as effective in an action research study on teachers in Mexico, where dialogue and critical inquiry,

central to my study as well, allowed participating language teachers to reflect upon their practice and transform it (Martínez, 2018). One strategy includes creating Language Teacher Research (LTR) projects, where teachers collaborate based on research in their field of interest as a form of CPD, similar to the practitioner research (PR) proposed by Arayssi et al. (2020). Such reliance on local and personal knowledge is in line with the model developed by Kumaravadivelu (2012) and employed in my study. A final recommendation is to create these collaborative environments across different institutions, allowing participants from schools and universities to work together and form long-term communities (Fraser et al., 2017).

However, an overview of PD in Lebanon confirms that most work has not reached such a 'critical' stage. In 1994, Sparks heralded a paradigm shift in PD, signalling the need to move beyond 'experts' sharing their knowledge with a group of participants 'receiving' this information, to increased collaboration among peers, administrators, and policy makers. While Sparks (1994) was not referring specifically to language teaching PD, these insights could be transferred to our field as well. This is in line with other research in the region that has found PD to be sporadic, with opportunities for dialogue and reflection limited to a teacher's individual endeavours (Rabi, 2013). In Lebanon, Nabhani and Bahous (2010) also concluded, after conducting a large scale study on 739 teachers, that continuing PD mostly includes the 'odd workshop or lecture which these teachers are either encouraged or obliged to attend by the school administration' without any systematic structure or any recommendations on a national level (p.207).

These findings are confirmed by Orr's (2011) study on 711 teachers, assessing their attitudes to their profession as English language teachers in Lebanon in addition to their teacher education programmes and training opportunities. This has implications for much needed reform in this area with calls for reform by Nabhani and Bahous (2010) and Kotob (2007) to replace the currently 'fragmented' approach. This is consistent with current practices for PD that value inquiry-based development and dialogic investigation. One strategy has been to support PR, emphasizing AR, self-reflection, and dialogue (Arayssi et al., 2020) despite concluding that teachers need support from both their institutions and academics in higher education to equip them with the research tools necessary to avoid remaining 'receivers of knowledge' (p. 906). However, Evans (2019) warns that 'ways of thinking that have been embedded within people's consciousness may take time to become gradually integrated into their practice; and these ideas augment through interactions with countless other influences on practice' (p.7). In a small-scale study in Turkey, Aktekin (2019) examines this strategy through a 'Critical Friends Group' (CFG), a model for critical PD and EP where participating teachers 'can mentor and support one another' (p. 3). While these CFG sessions mostly examine teachers from the same context, the sessions I conducted in my study allow teachers from different contexts to share and interact, bringing one another into their 'lived experience', and filling a knowledge gap during that interaction.

Other regions of the world, especially in central and south America, are researching more 'radical' approaches to PD, critiquing the need to teach (and

learn) English in the first place. One example would be the recent study by Estacio and Camargo Cely (2018) on countering the 'supremacy' of the English language as an integral part of our development. Other research has explored the interplay between hegemonic practices and teacher identity (Mora et al., 2014). Such discussions, however, are not currently being considered in Lebanon to my knowledge, and this is where CoPs could discuss these ideas as part of their long-term collaborative development, after building trust among all participating members. This is the gap my study attempts to fill through the reflexive practice model, allowing participants to share thoughts and concerns before actively discussing opportunities for change. This is why the studies I selected for this section of the literature review mostly focused on recent approaches to CALx and PD that centred on the individual, allowing participants to explore and share personal knowledge or calling for such practices (as per Kumaravadivelu's 2012 model) to raise critical awareness and focus on the language teacher within a larger, and more political, sphere.

Additionally, the reflexive practice sessions will also follow a new movement in critical language teacher education, 'from multicultural teacher education to social justice teacher education' – from practicum to Pennycook's *praxicum* (Hawkins & Norton, 2009, p. 32). Despite the difficulties and challenges ahead, this notion of possibility and hope is common in many transformative models. Harman (2018) looks at a number of bilingual classrooms in the United States, for instance, to identify how critical approaches to language awareness, reflexive literacies, and engaging pre-service teachers in reflective practice can

help create social equity. Similarly, research in both Japan and France has shown how a critical teaching strategy allowed participating English language teachers to develop a different way of looking at their own classrooms and created a ripple effect (Hélot et al. 2019). Additionally, a central factor is the need for transformative teaching material as well, to serve as an alternative to mainstream language books. One such example is the series *Raise Up!* by two educators based in Brazil and Germany, which created a series of inclusive lectures that use the English language classroom to promote issues of injustice to women, the Lesbian/Gay/Bilingual/Transgender/Queer/Intersex/Asexual+(LGBTQIA+) community, and refugees, among others. Another new series is *Students for Peace* by Eduardo Amos, with the self-proclaimed mission to create an English language classroom that provides both teachers and students 'with an opportunity to go beyond the linguistic objectives of their respective syllabi' (Global Issues SIG, 2018). This is in line with the need for schools to 'take students' lives seriously' and 'accommodate the storied and narrative representation of the way students lead their increasingly complex lives' (Smyth, 2010, pp. 192-193). All of these examples show that the future of the English language classroom can become quite critical, provided the teachers have been exposed to this material in their teacher training and/or development programs. The only caveat is whether books like *Raise Up!*, which are non-profit and not as easily distributed worldwide, can truly compete alongside major publishing houses. However, this movement, though still at its infancy, is crucial in the

development of 'militant' and 'critical' teacher activists that could 'act critically to transform reality' (Freire & Shor, 1987, p. 99). Through these forms of transformative teaching and training programs, we could "hopefully identify the gap between 'what is' and 'what ought to be'" (Giroux, 2015).

3.5 Conclusion

In this literature review, I have attempted to describe the essential ethos governing my study. Through looking at CT and the need to develop a clear connection between theory and transformative practice, *praxis*, I hoped to create a critical environment, the reflexive practice model, wherein English language teachers in Lebanon could openly debate their 'givens' and reflect upon their teaching practices and their local experience of teacher development programs. My central argument is that current teacher education and professional development in Lebanon is not explicitly critical, and more work is needed on developing a platform that could allow language teachers to openly critique and reflect upon their practice, through collaboration and dialogue. The next chapter will examine the methodological framework that will bridge the gap between this theoretical background and the reflexive practices that will be governed by the principles of AR and critical teacher development. In light of Freire's call for an emancipatory teaching practice, this study is firmly in line with the need to provide hope. As such, the central tenet posits that our language teaching future is very much critical and it is possible to create critical teacher training programmes and reflexive PD opportunities.

CHAPTER FOUR – METHODOLOGY

This chapter develops the theoretical framework governing my study. It begins with an overview of the research paradigm, methodology, and strategy of inquiry. Additionally, it includes details of the research questions, the purpose and format of the intervention, and the specific data collection procedures. Furthermore, measurements to ensure the reliability and validity of the research are discussed in detail. Finally, the ethical considerations of the study are also shared. The challenges and limitations of the study are included in the concluding chapter.

4.1 Research Paradigms

Our view of reality has been the subject of considerable discussion, and our philosophical perspective can considerably impact the research framework we adopt. In Kuhn's (1996) polemic book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, he argues that the scientific community can become immersed in both 'normal' and 'revolutionary' phases. In a normal phase, scientists would hold similar beliefs and perspectives about the manner in which they conduct research. Once a shift in beliefs occurs, though, it heralds a revolutionary phrase where these previously accepted assumptions might change. This is the essential notion of paradigms and what we refer to as paradigm shifts. These shifts have also created different – and sometimes contrasting - means of experiencing reality, performing our role as researchers, and evaluating the strategies we can adopt. As such, these research paradigms incorporate both our 'beliefs' about particular

problems and the method we adopt in order to investigate them (Cohen et al., 2018). For more on Positivism and other research paradigms, see section 3.1.1.

For those who embrace a 'Positivist' outlook, the central premise is that an external world – extrinsic to the researcher - exists, and researchers can measure and observe this world empirically (Howell, 2013). Pring (2000) also describes this reality with 'objects interacting causally', allowing the researcher to identify and explain these extrinsic relationships (p. 48). This is in stark contrast to other philosophers, such as Emmanuel Kant, who decree that our experience of reality is merely an 'appearance', as reality is completely shaped by our own thoughts. Our reality is always subjective because, according to Kant, it is shaped by our minds (Kant, 1982). Those who adopt such a philosophical view begin to view reality as an 'experience shared by many', which could also vary depending on the group (Howell, 2013, p. 8). On the other hand, a Critical approach – which I discussed in chapter three and will also develop in greater detail in this chapter– highlights a reality that is 'shaped by history' and assesses whether certain values may have 'crystalized over time' (Howell, 2013, p. 78).

Furthermore, these ontological debates have, in turn, created different means of trying to study the world around us. Cohen et al. (2018) trace this development from ontological assumptions about 'the nature of reality' to 'ways of researching' and studying that reality - epistemological assumptions. These would then lead to reflecting upon methodology, with an in-depth focus on data and instruments (p. 54). To illustrate, researchers who wish to conduct a study based on Positivist approaches aim to create an objective causal explanation of

reality, with initial predictions and an attempt at generalization. In contrast, Interpretivist and Critical approaches emphasize 'the interconnection between patterns rather than the identification of cause and effect' (Howell, 2013, p. 25). In particular, CT, which is the central epistemological approach in this study, 'looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world' (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). The value of having a theory, in and of itself, allows for a foundation for the research and a plan of action. According to Morgan (2007), this provides a 'framework' for the study's design and a way to articulate my beliefs as a researcher.

4.2 The Critical Paradigm

While most of the debate in the early 20th century involved contrasting Positivist agendas to Interpretivist research philosophies, CT came to find both paradigms 'incomplete' as there was a need to ensure the researcher's political and moral responsibilities (Cohen et al., 2018). Sometimes, it is very necessary for a researcher to have an agenda, especially when social justice is concerned. This is what the Critical paradigm seeks to accomplish through an explicit political and social schema, identifying power dynamics at the core of our subjective reality (Cohen et al., 2018; Howell, 2013; Lather, 2006; Pring, 2000). As such, while a Positivist or Interpretivist researcher 'merely reflects the current situation', a critical theorist 'seeks to change the situation' (Crotty, 1998, p. 130).

While a lengthy description of CT is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is necessary to give credence to its two major branches. Initially, the first branch came as a result of the Frankfurt school established in 1923 with three figures

central to the development of CT: Hokheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse, among others. The second wave involved the contributions of Habermas from the 1970s onwards (Held, 1980). One of CTs most influential theorists, Horkheimer, sought to explicitly focus on the researcher's subjective involvement in the research process. Additionally, researchers who adopt CT are attempting to change phenomena, which is in line with Habermas's emancipatory interest, which threatens the *status quo* and that which is more prevalent in society (Cohen et al., 2018). One of these prevailing concepts is the notion of 'finished systems of thought'. Instead, Horkheimer focuses on the need for 'dialectical thought', which attempts to expose 'incompleteness where completeness is claimed' (Held, 1980, p. 177). This dialectical reasoning is central to CT and this study in specific. To Horkheimer, at the core of dialectical theory is the idea that what we perceive is generally a 'product of human activity'. Our agency as members of this activity involves learning 'to look behind the facts', not just to 'merely' record them (Horkheimer, 2002, p. xiv.). This is in line with his view of an incomplete society 'continuously restructuring itself' (Held, 1980, p. 179). Such a subjective research stance 'liberates' the critical theorist and critical educator, 'temporarily freeing researchers from the bonds of positivism' (Howell, 2013, p. 76). The reflexive practice model in my study also places value on such a subjective stance, allowing me as the researcher to be personally invested in the discussion as well.

It remains important to note that the rationale behind CT is to transform society, 'to change society and individuals to social democracy', and this is why

the purpose of critical education research remains firmly within the realm of 'individual and collective freedoms' while denouncing any attempt at illegitimate power (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 138).

4.3 Research Questions

My purpose in conducting this study involved answering the following question:

Does an explicit and critical discussion of current assumptions and myths pertaining to TESOL affect a teacher's awareness and approach to their role as language teachers?

Subsequently, the two sub-questions that my study focused on are critical in nature. My initial survey and interviews identified the perspectives held by in-service English language teachers in Lebanon. This allowed me to answer my first sub-question:

What set of perspectives do in-service language teachers in Lebanon hold about the nature and impact of TESOL?

While reviewing the data, I specifically focused on elements that display participant views, especially those concerning their awareness of the fallibility of previously held assumptions and critical inquiry into the field.

The second part of my investigation directly emphasized the value of the intervention in this study and gauged whether the critical sessions conducted with the small group of participants allow for a *transformation* of attitudes and/or practice. As such, this helped me answer the following sub-question:

Does a critical intervention that emphasizes dialogic inquiry and the 'reflexive practice model' affect a TESOL teacher's perspective and practice?

4.4 Research Methodology and Participatory Strategies of Inquiry

Howell (2013) investigates the prominence of a 'participatory paradigm of inquiry' that prioritizes the subjective individual experience as it views 'reality as integrated with human existence'. Methodology here would include both collaborative action and participation (p. 94). My research methodology also involved a strategy of inquiry that is 'transformative' (Cohen et al., 2018). My research design focused on a mixed methods design, emphasizing AR. This approach has been discussed at length within the realm of 'participatory action research and empowerment' research studies, which is very much in line with my research purpose, namely the concept of 'research as praxis' where the research process provides an opportunity for participants to advance *emancipatory knowledge* (Lather, 1986). Figure 1 provides an overview of the major stages of my study, along with my data collection methods.

Figure 1: The stages of the study
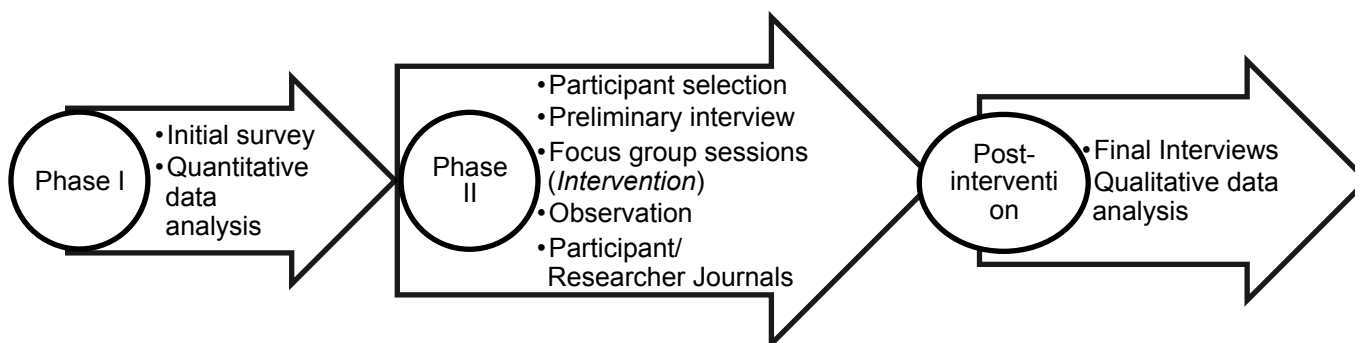
4.4.1 Action Research and the Reflective Cycle

The central methodology of my critical study is that of AR, which is generally described as 'enquiry *with* people, rather than research *on* people' (Altrichter et al., 2002, p. 130). Additionally, Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998) claim that participatory AR provides an opportunity for practitioners to 'investigate and change their social and educational realities' (p. 21). Similarly, Wallace (1998) believes that 'the most effective ways of solving professional problems, and of continuing to improve as [teachers] is through reflection on our professional practice' and considers AR as one of the best means of accomplishing that improvement (p. 1) as it is specific and 'problem-focused'. It also involves a process of 'practice' to theory – where teachers participate and collaborate in order to later reflect and theorize (Burns, 1999) – essentially fulfilling Freire's concept of *praxis*.

The four major stages of AR (Planning the research design, Implementing the data collection, data analysis, and reflection/interpretation) roughly correspond to the pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention stages identified in figure 1. The survey in Phase I and II of my data collection informed the study and allowed me to create 'insightful links between data collection methods and the focus under investigation' (Dikilitas & Griffiths, 2017, p. 4). While my data collection process (outlined later in this chapter in greater detail) began with an initial introductory survey that identified current attitudes towards teaching English in Lebanon, the data generated from the survey supported the subsequent pre-intervention interviews and allowed me to create a protocol for a

'critical intervention' with the participating in-service teachers, specifically the 'reflexive practice model'. Whether these teachers showed critical awareness during their initial interview or identified as more 'mainstream', this intervention allowed for the creation of a participatory environment of collaboration, which could heighten awareness of critical issues. This is in line with Kemmis and Wilkinson's (1998) definition of 'participatory' approaches that 'engage people in examining their knowledge and interpretive categories' (p. 23). Throughout the intervention, my ultimate focus was on creating an environment synonymous with problem posing, 'power sharing', and collaboration. This is in order to remain true to the essence of AR, which should not only be centred upon the individual, but the 'collective' (de Castro, 2016, p. 117).

AR was also a relevant strategy within my theoretical framework for two major factors: It is 'critical' and allows participants to 'release themselves from constraints'; it is also 'reflexive' and allows participants to learn 'by doing' (Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). In practice, Troudi (2015) reflects on a concrete model of application based on Zuber-Sklerrit's four phrases. Troudi (2015) identifies the AR strategy that could lead to 'emancipatory' research, and it involves having a concrete plan, taking action or intervening, completing initial observation – which includes evaluation and self-evaluation, and finally 'critical and self-critical reflection' (p. 92). These four phases would then allow the researcher to make decisions for a new AR cycle (Burns, 2009).

Similarly, in his discussion of AR as an approach for professional language teacher development, Wallace (1998) presents the 'reflective cycle',

which involves initial professional practice accompanied by reflection upon that practice, which then feeds back into the practice itself. This becomes a 'tool for reflection' that provides 'increased professional competence' (p. 12). This is also necessary when studying the complexity of our social, 'lived' experience. Carr and Kemmis (1986) develop this notion of change when discussing the reflexive nature of our social life, which changes as our knowledge and awareness continue to develop. This also connects the reflective nature of AR to the critical notion of *praxis* (discussed at length in chapter three). De Castro (2016) forms another connection between AR as a method and the values espoused by CT and CP. De Castro (2016) concludes that AR allows participants to not only reflect upon their own individual experience and contribution, but also allows the group as a whole to 'investigate and support' a 'specific piece of reality' in order to achieve Freire's principal notion of *conscientisation* (p. 122).

4.4.2 The Intervention: Reflexive Practice Model (RPM)

This intervention model, which allowed the participating in-service teachers to examine the issue at hand, namely our attitudes toward learning and teaching English in Lebanon, lies at the core of this study. This is why it is necessary to discuss the intervention model in detail. I also envision this model as transferable, whereby the structure could be replicated in other contexts beyond Lebanon, with changes made to the topics and research selection to ensure relevance to the local context and the participants' lived experience.

As AR is essentially problem-based, my initial research assumption is that:

Teacher education in Lebanon and professional development opportunities tend to focus on mostly technical knowledge, which is proficiency-based, without resorting to a critical discussion of TESOL. As a result, in-service language teachers should explicitly explore critical issues relating to their field.

My initial assumption attempted to frame current PD as problematic, since it does not explicitly focus on critically evaluating our assumptions and tends to follow a passive model where the 'expert' is still the focal point and the participants receive knowledge uncritically. This is why my intervention model mostly focused on creating a collaborative space for a small group of participants to critically discuss their 'espoused beliefs' or 'theories-in-use' and local practice. Focus groups are important as they give participants a voice, in line with Freire's (2005) dialogic process, without the 'backward and forward' mechanism between the interviewer and the speaker, allowing for more interaction among the participants (Cohen et al., 2018). While they were originally used in the field of marketing, they have become a valid research tool in the social sciences (Wellington, 2001). Most of the sessions in my study introduced discussions on both CALx, major assumptions in TESOL, and our attitudes about language learning and teaching (See section 4.4.2 for details).

These five sessions provided an opportunity for inquiry-based teacher development, where each session focused on one of the aspects of our body of knowledge, to be actively critiqued and discussed by a diverse group of in-service teachers. Kumaravadivelu's (2012) KARDS approach to teacher

development played a guiding role in these sessions. In essence, this was the basic intervention phase of the AR cycle. My intervention in phase two consisted of selecting the participants (8-15 in-service language teachers), choosing a relevant topic, sending an academic article as mandatory reading ahead of the session, and providing the location for an open discussion of this article and the themes it espouses.

To provide a weekly platform for participants to reflect upon their practice and engage in critical discussions, my preliminary plan had been to conduct these five focus group sessions on campus at my institution, and I had received approval to begin the first session in March 2020. However, due to the lockdown after COVID-19, it was no longer possible to follow the original vision of these sessions. After receiving approval from my supervisor and the ethics committee at Exeter (See Appendix 1 for revised ethics application forms), I was able to hold these consecutive sessions online, using the 'Webex Training Center' platform. The choice of Webex Training Center allowed me to hold both a 'full session' where all participants could be in the same online meeting room, and then create 'breakout sessions' where I could allocate smaller groups to work on their own. I was also able to create different groups in each session so the participants could work with different people and form bonds with all participants by the end of the five-session intervention.

Once the move to an online platform was approved, I informed my participants and ensured their willingness to commit. They then consented to the intervention once more after I had shared the new schedule. At the onset of the

intervention in April, nine participants had agreed to participate. One of them, Alana (pseudonym), dropped out a few days before the sessions began for personal reasons. While I remained within my original vision of having 8-15 participants and keeping these sessions both diverse and intimate, it was not always easy to have all participants join each session. One participant, Chip (also a pseudonym), had a number of Internet difficulties and could not fully attend. Other participants would sometimes lose connection at some point during the session and would then have to reconnect. Despite these technical difficulties, though, the discussions remained quite engaging and the participants were actively involved.

My role in these sessions was as both a participant who had her own particular context and relevant knowledge and as a facilitator who ensured all participants were given an opportunity to present their perspective in an attempt at power-sharing. This is in line with the need for focus groups to allow collaboration among participants, in order to 'utilize group interactions' (Wilson, 1997, p. 211). Thus, I created a framework for this 'Reflexive Practice Model'.

Each 90-minute session focused on one specific theme or topic and was divided into: warm-up activity inspired by the reading and/or topic (15 minutes), group discussion with guiding questions (30 minutes), knowledge sharing among the different groups (30 minutes), and a final writing exercise (reflexive journal writing for 15 minutes). As these sessions were conducted online, with specific 'breakout rooms' for smaller group discussions, recording them was not possible. I took detailed notes throughout the process though and referred to these notes

in the results section. I was also able to 'enter' the virtual breakout rooms and observe the different groups. For a detailed description of these sessions, refer to section 5.2.2.

4.5 Methods of Data Collection

Though my research paradigm remained that of CT, and the central strategy for inquiry was participatory AR, the methods I used for data collection and analysis followed a Mixed Methods Research (MMR) approach. The following section will attempt to justify this decision. I have adopted Creswell's (2009) view of qualitative and quantitative approaches to research methods as complementary elements at 'different ends on a continuum', not 'polar opposites' (p. 4). This is in line with research by Greene (2005) and Collins et al. (2012). Brown (2014) considers MMR a 'strategic' use of both methods, either simultaneously or sequentially. While qualitative research methods rely on in-depth examinations of fewer numbers, quantitative approaches target a larger group (Creswell, 2009). Cohen et al. (2018) also heavily discuss the advantages of MMR, citing claims that the 'synergy of quantitative plus qualitative offers more than the individual components' (p. 116). Thus, the fluidity of MMR echoes the need to embrace complexity and uncertainty, a point I have discussed extensively under my review of CT. This is supported by Cohen et al. (2018) who view MMR as not only a means of 'look[ing] at the world in different ways but to share those multiple, different views in making sense of the world, discussing our views and values in it' (p. 103). Additionally, MMR can provide greater research reliability. For instance, Denscombe (2014) and Wellington (2001) both discuss

the importance of *triangulation* in research methods, which would overcome individual bias and enable the researcher to compensate for any weaknesses in one specific method used and present more accurate results. Morgan (2007) also considers such a pragmatic approach as a means of 'reorienting' social research towards achieving the purpose of the study at hand (p. 73). While validity within approaches will be discussed in detail for both quantitative and qualitative measures, the validity of using Mixed Methods Research (MMR) is worth mentioning first. The major element of validity in using MMR in my study emphasizes instrument triangulation (Cohen et al., 2018) or methodological triangulation 'between methods' where different tools are used to study the same topic or issue (Wellington, 2001, p.35). Through using different instruments to identify teacher attitudes and then employing more than one strategy to gauge the impact of my critical intervention, I was able to create greater validity and convergence.

Despite its many advantages, though, MMR can also pose some challenges for a researcher. The primary one involves the 'extensive data collection' and analysis needed for in-depth text analysis and numerical data (Creswell, 2009, p. 204). Additionally, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) identify the problematic 'incompatibility thesis', which claims that these separate research methods 'cannot and should not be mixed' (p. 14). This is why some would prefer the notion of having these methods working alongside one another, without necessarily 'mixing' (Cohen et al., 2018). Cohen et al. (2018) describe such pragmatism as 'eclectic' and 'driven by fitness of purpose' as the researcher

resorts to quantitative and qualitative data whenever relevant (p. 108). In general, many studies might begin with quantitative research methods before continuing with qualitative methods (Cohen et al., 2018). My study followed a similar pattern:

- Phase One: Quantitative survey to identify general teacher attitudes and degree of criticality (with only a few open-ended questions)

- Phase Two: Qualitative interviews, intervention, and critical analysis to gauge both participant attitudes and any transformative changes after the intervention.

In this study, such a mixed methods approach to research (MMR) lends itself to action research and CT as it emphasizes both 'pre-determined' categories along with emerging ideas. The following section will depict the different data collection instruments that I used, drawing upon quantitative closed-ended survey questions, qualitative open-ended survey questions, semi-structured interviews, and guided reflexive journals.

4.5.1 Quantitative Research Methods

Quantitative data analysis is a 'powerful research form' (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 1313). Though it is usually used in connection to large-scale research, smaller studies like mine can also benefit from the numerical data provided by such research processes. The primary purpose of quantitative research methods is to provide the researcher with a means of 'explaining phenomena' using 'mathematically based methods' (Muijs, 2004, p. 2). The emphasis is on converting information that might not be numerical at first, like the attitudes of English language teachers in Lebanon, to numerical values that correspond to

certain factors. In order to gauge whether my respondents have a more mainstream or critical approach to the teaching and learning of English, I explored their attitudes to my closed-ended Likert-scale questions. The quantitative research instrument used is the attitudinal survey that I designed. Stockemer (2019) considers such attitudinal surveys as important in social science research because they provide researchers with the ability to 'detect cultural values, political attitudes, and social preferences' in a standardized manner (p. 23). Such surveys have been used by researchers in the past to not only describe a certain phenomenon but to also explain and *generaliz*e from a given sample (Babbie, 1990; Creswell, 2009). While similar Likert-scale questions use the 'strongly-agree' to 'strongly-disagree' labels, I wanted to slightly hedge in the response options and show a degree of uncertainty. As such, I opted for 'generally disagree' to 'generally agree' leaving room for discussion. The survey layout allowed participants to easily view the 1-5 scale though while answering. I also tried to avoid any confusion by combining responses to 'agree' and 'generally agree' while reporting results as I was interested in where participant responses fell on a continuum, with mainstream and critical attitudes at either extreme. The survey was a useful tool in this situation as it also allowed me to identify a range of attitudes (outlined in table 1) in a very efficient and economical manner (Cohen et al., 2018). Wellington's (2001) definition of the survey as a 'fact-finding mission' that may 'add weight to a theory' is very much in line with my research purpose (p.191). Additionally, the survey was cross-sectional (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell, 2009) as the data was

collected from one sample at a given point in time (Stockemer, 2019) to explore teacher attitudes in Lebanon at a certain point in time, without the need for a longitudinal study. This produces a 'snapshot' of the target population (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 654). Creswell (2009) would explicitly state that a researcher might even seek to 'qualify quantitative data' through connecting numerical data to factors and themes that 'can be compared with themes from the qualitative database' (p. 218). In the sections below, I will proceed to explain the sampling methods, survey procedures, and validity process associated with the first phase of my data collection: the attitudinal survey. This complete survey, with 52 questions in total, can be found in Appendix 2.

4.5.1.1 Sampling Procedures

There is no accurate data as to the population size of English language teachers in Lebanon. However, my sampling method relied on non-probability sampling, used when 'precise representativeness is not necessary' (Babbie, 1990, p. 97). My purpose from conducting this survey was not to generalize but to *understand* diverse teacher attitudes. As such, there was no need for a probability sampling to ensure representation. My aim was to collect information from a 'smaller group or subset of the population under study' (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 394) that will only represent its own views. The size of that group will depend on the response rate. A sample size of 30 participants would help me analyse preliminary quantitative data, and this sample size is generally seen to be sufficient to create preliminary analysis (Cohen et al., 2018). However, ideally I should aim for a larger number to identify teachers from the different subgroups or strata. 'Stratification' refers to

the process of identifying whether specific characteristics of the individual participants are adequately represented in the sample (Creswell, 2009). For example, some of these factors include diverse teaching contexts, years of experience, and teacher-training methods, which necessitate a larger number of respondents. This is why I aimed for a larger sample from these different groups, though I am fully aware that these respondents do not represent any of their respective groups. This will ideally ensure that each factor would allow for 'a reasonably large sample size' (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 398). One of the challenges though was that the respondent remained fully in control and could simply opt out of participating (Dillman et al., 2009); however, my goal was to motivate each recipient to take part through drafting a short and clear explanation of the research purpose. The question format and the survey design also ensured clarity and parallel structure to decrease the amount of time needed to respond (Dillman et al., 2009; Fowler, 2009). Open-ended questions were also optional, allowing greater flexibility.

Additionally, a combination of 'convenience' and 'purposive' sampling was used to ensure a larger response rate and participants from each stratum. This involved non-probability sampling. I am fully aware that my participants do not represent the 'wider population' (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 422). Instead, they represent their own attitudes and individual experiences, which is in line with the emphasis on the 'particular' in CT. Under 'convenience sampling' participants are chosen because they are 'readily available' (Cohen et al., 2018; Stockemer, 2019). This strategy prioritizes ease and efficiency. Alternatively, in purposive

sampling, subjects are selected because of some characteristics (Brown, 2014), which the researcher predetermines before the study. On the other hand, 'purposive sampling' might be necessary as well. This sampling method is used when 'the researcher needs information for a specific target group' (Stockemer, 2019, p. 63) and allows the researcher to create a 'purposive sample of unique individuals' (Shank & Brown, 2007, p. 127). In my case, I reached out to connections in different schools, universities, and language centres in Lebanon to connect with as many diverse participants as possible. I also sought in-service teachers with diverse experience levels, teaching English in public and private schools and universities. This was because I wanted to evaluate whether different contexts share similar concerns and experiences, especially since my intervention also attempted to connect in-service teachers from different institutions and teaching contexts all over the country.

4.5.1.2 Demographics

The 62 participants (female = 56, male = 5, not specified = 1) who completed the online survey had a diverse educational background, experience level, and teaching context. The majority had completed a BA in English Literature (n=25), English Language (n=15), and Education (n=8). Many participants had also completed an MA in English Literature (n=13), English Language (n=9), and Education (n=8). Ten participants had received a doctoral degree. However, many of these respondents did not specify which BA/MA they had completed initially. Five participants did not have a degree in English or Education, but had an English teaching certificate from programs such as the

CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). One participant did not have any teaching certification but had an MA in Film Studies and was teaching English.

As for current teaching context, some participants were teaching in more than one institution, and the breakdown included a majority teaching at an institute of higher education or university (n=30), followed by primary school (n=17), middle school (n=12), high school (n=10), and a language centre (n=5). Experience levels also varied, with over half of the respondents having more than 10 years of experience (n=33), 17 participants with 6-10 years of experience, and 12 participants with 1-5 years of experience. As the Lebanese context is also quite diverse pertaining to educational institutions (refer to chapter 2), identifying the language of instruction used in the participants' teaching context was relevant. Institutions were categorized based on whether they depended on EMI, FMI, AMI, or a combination of these three. My participants were, for the most part, in an EMI context (n=42), followed by institutions that placed equal value on EMI, FMI, and AMI (n=10), followed by those who only used French (n=7), and with very few participants in an Arabic-speaking context (n=2) or an institution where Arabic is used alongside English (n=1).

All survey fields were completed as those responses were 'required' by the online system before submission. As such, all survey responses submitted did not include any missing data points. In addition, while there had been 63 submissions in total, I deleted one response as it was a clear duplicate with exactly the same open-ended and closed-ended replies.

4.5.1.3 Survey Questions

The comprehensive survey labelled 'Teacher Attitudes towards English Language Learning in Lebanon' was completely designed for this study, while drawing upon themes and categories emergent from the literature review. Surveys usually consist of either open-ended questions – which 'allow respondents to come up with their own answers in their own words - or closed-ended questions which limit them to pre-set options; alternatively, there could be a combination of both (Stockemer, 2019, p. 42). In this survey, I relied on Likert-scale questions to measure attitudes or opinions as they allowed me to efficiently create more questions using parallel structures (Mjeis, 2004), which are easier for participants to complete. In other cases, I also used multiple-choice formats that might be restrictive but also allow for fast response rates (Stockemer, 2019).

In trying to create the survey, I included many of the assumptions and attitudes associated with CALx identified in the literature review. Additionally, a few open-ended questions were added to justify any of these attitudes and assumptions. For example, the section on attitudes to language draws upon work on Standard English and native speaker fluency (Bacon, 2017), language myths and tenets (Cook, 1999; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), and use of translation (Berry, 2015). The section on translanguaging and use of L1 was also strongly connected to research by Cook (1999), Gracia (2009), Ismail (2012), and Bahous et al. (2014). The politics of teaching English section was heavily influenced by the work of Richards (2009), Phillipson (2016), and Wierzbicka (2014) who explicitly focused on the lack of neutrality and oppressive nature of the English

language worldwide. Hall and Egginton (2000) also informed the section on pedagogical resources and attitudes towards the role of publishing houses and marketing techniques.

A number of survey questions, however, were distinctly created in order to identify additional relevant factors, such as educational background, current experience, and PD opportunities. Through these questions, the numerical data could also lend insight as to whether participants view their education as 'mainstream' or critical. For instance, the question on the type of knowledge participants believe they gained from their educational background directly relates to Habermas's theory of the three forms of knowledge (technical, practical, and emancipatory) – also directly connected to McLaren (2009) and Giroux (2011). Such inquiry allowed me to predict whether participants may be closer to 'technicists' or 'reflective practitioners' (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). This distinction was made by Argyris and Schön (1974). While they did not specifically focus on language teaching, their classification of knowledge into 'theories-in-use', which pertain to the daily learning environment teachers would be exposed to, compared to 'espoused theories' handed down by mostly experts are useful to my study.

4.5.1.4 Survey Procedure

Internet surveys are more prominently used in current research (Cohen et al., 2018; Stockemer, 2019). Additionally, survey instruments are currently being 'increasingly designed for online surveys' (Creswell, 2009, p. 149). I used 'Google Forms' as my online survey tool as it is openly accessible and does not

restrict the number of participants. As per Stockemer (2019), even though these online surveys can be very advantageous as they are economical and democratic, they can be 'particularly problematic if an online sample is drawn from a biased sample to draw inferences beyond the target group' (p. 66). This is why it is important to try to reach a number of diverse participants from the different strata.

Furthermore, this survey was also piloted to 'establish content validity of an instrument and to improve questions, format, and scales' (Creswell, 2009, p. 150). It was piloted on three instructors of English, with different experience levels, and their feedback immediately guided me in reformulating some of the questions to clarify my original meaning. I also used this opportunity to identify the amount of time needed to complete this survey, which was later added to the introduction section and the consent form.

The procedure I followed when administering the survey varied slightly from the four-phase process recommended by Salant and Dillman (1994). They recommend these phases to ensure a high response rate via email. The first mail-out will inform the sample participants that they are about to receive a survey. Salant and Dillman (1994) then recommend waiting for a week before submitting the email with the survey attached. Their recommendation is to then send a reminder after 4-8 days with a final reminder to those who did not submit their response three weeks after sending out the survey. This process proved challenging, though, as I did not always have the full mailing list for all participants. In order to increase my pool of participants, some of my initial

respondents shared the survey with their own networks. As such, my reminders were sent to everyone I had initially contacted, in the hopes that this would increase participation levels. Additionally, I also shared my survey via social networking platforms like Facebook to reach professional groups that included a large number of language teachers in Lebanon. As such, I was able to utilize two of the most common strategies highlighted by Cohen et al. (2018): an email with an embedded survey through the Google form link and a general post promoting the survey via special interest groups online on social networking sites over a period of three weeks in January 2020.

4.5.1.5 Analysis, Validity, and Reliability

As per Creswell (2009), clarity of purpose is necessary to ensure the reliability and validity of a survey as a research instrument. The initial premise guiding this survey is the following:

The more 'mainstream' a teacher's educational training and development, the less critical that teacher would be of TESOL assumptions and practice.

In order to support this initial assumption, clear labels needed to be assigned. In this case, it was the assumptions or attitudes English language teachers in Lebanon hold and whether they would be considered critical in nature. Table 1 outlines the survey items and focal areas.

Table 1: Constructs and Survey Items

Factor/Construct	Item on Survey
Educational background	Question 46: BA in Education/English, MA in Education/English, PhD or EdD, training course; Question 47: type of knowledge (technical vs. critical)
Current teaching experience	See question 2: primary, middle, high school; university, language center and question 4: years

	of experience (1-5; 6-10; over 10 years); question 5: institutional values pertaining to language of instruction
PD experience	Question 50, 51: Degree of exposure
Attitudes towards language learners	Question 6: student proficiency levels; Questions 7, 8, 9, 11: mastery of Standard English; Questions; Question 10: Native speakers
Attitudes towards L1 use	Question 12: student use of L1; Question 17: monolingual fallacy; Questions 21, 23: reasons to use L1
Attitudes towards language teaching	Questions 13, 14, 18: native speaker fallacy; Questions 15, 22: Exposure to non-native speakers; Question 16: early start fallacy; Question 18: maximum exposure fallacy;
Attitudes towards target culture	Question 20: teaching target culture; Question 28: teaching particular/local culture
Attitudes towards classroom resources	Questions 24, 25, 29, 30: Attitudes towards books and classroom material; Questions 26, 27, 31, 32, 33: Freedom while using assigned material
Attitudes towards the status of English as an International Language	Questions 34, 35, 37: Necessity of using English; Question 36, 38: Linguistic Imperialism and genocide
Attitudes towards the 'politics' of language teaching	Questions 39, 40: Duty to promote Arabic; Questions 41, 43, 44, 45: political/critical role of teacher
Attitudes towards their education training and PD	Questions 48, 49: Attitudes towards educational training;
Attitudes towards PD	Question 52: Selection of necessary PD training session (Mainstream vs. Critical)

However, it is important to note that while I tried to identify clear connections between constructs and survey items, these measurements are based on teacher's attitudes on a specific question on a survey. *Content validity* is essential in quantitative research as it refers to whether the survey items accurately measure the concept at hand. Muijs (2004) recommends the importance of 'theory in determining content validity'. Once the concepts are based upon clear theories, the instrument in use is considered 'content-valid' (p.

66). *Construct validity* is another, slightly more complex, means of determining the validity of the research instrument. Stockemer (2019) stresses the importance of construct validity for concepts that might be more difficult to measure. In such cases, researchers rely on more than one sub-scale in order to identify a variable/construct (Muijs, 2004). In my survey, each construct was sub-divided into different sub-topics based on the theory (See Table 1). Using SPSS (a statistical analysis software package), I analysed descriptive statistics and frequency, with cross-tabulation to compare different factors – because I am not interested in establishing association or causality between factors. While I am using MMR, my study remains connected to the critical paradigm, with no attempt at a Positivist approach to data analysis. My study also does not attempt to generalize from the sample to "the population' but to describe the responses.

I did, however, rely on *Cronbach's alpha* to measure the internal consistency or level of significance of my data (Muijs, 2004). Despite the criticisms of using such blanket tools that might provide a surface level feeling of 'reliability' (Parkhurst, 1997), Cohen at al. (2018) recommend that this measurement tool is 'useful for multi-item scales and is a measure of the internal consistency among the items' (p. 515). My conclusions remained firmly associated with the sample itself, without generalizing, and the numerical data only served to inform the theory on the topic and connect this theory to the specific local context. This was especially true for the four qualitative open-ended questions in the survey, which allowed me to identify specific details that 'may

even be richer and more honest than data collected in a face-to-face interview' (Wellington, 2001, pp. 198-199).

4.5.1.5 Instrument Reliability: Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the survey. However, as the survey covered a number of different sub-themes relating to language teaching, learning, teaching resources, and training/PD opportunities, it was imperative to divide survey items into different scales to adequately measure the reliability of each scale. The first scale used, consisting of 14 items, measured the reliability of the questions on 'mainstream attitudes to language learners, teaching, and teacher identity'. I grouped these questions based on the literature review relating to common assumptions and myths associated with language learning and teaching (developed in Chapter 3). This yielded the reliability scale outlined in table 2.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics for Scale 1 (Mainstream Attitudes)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.722	0.712	14

0.722 is generally considered a reliable validity measure, though sometimes a scale above 0.5 is considered reliable if the number of items is less than 10 (Pallant, 2013). A second scale measuring items related to participant views on teaching resources yielded the following results.

Table 3: Reliability Statistics for Scale 2 (Views on Teaching Resources)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.694	0.703	8

The next section will further discuss the value of qualitative analysis and the process involved.

4.5.2 Qualitative Research Methods

While quantitative approaches can provide numerical data, qualitative research approaches allow a researcher an in-depth exploratory look through interacting with a smaller number of participants (Brown, 2014). For my research, qualitative approaches provided a more personal and reflexive look at the participants as I collaborated *with* them, in line with the attributes of qualitative research as more 'subjective' where 'reflexivity is vital' (Wellington, 2001, p.28). Characteristics of qualitative research procedures include a greater reliance on 'face-to-face interaction' between the researcher and the participants, 'multiple sources of data' (interviews and journal entries in this study), an 'inductive approach' to data analysis, a 'theoretical lens' to keep the context of the study in mind, an 'interpretive' means of inquiry which directly places the researcher within the research process, and finally a 'holistic account' of the issue along with its layers of complexity (Creswell, 2009, pp. 175-176). All of these characteristics are in line with critical research in general, with its emphasis on remaining connected to the particular issue at hand and a need to involve participants. While I adopted a theoretical lens or perspective in the qualitative part of my

research, this strategy only 'provide[d] an overall orienting lens' that allowed me to focus on the specific questions to ask (Creswell, 2009, p. 62). In my case, this was the general spectrum of mainstream vs. critical pedagogical practices as seen through my participant responses. CT, therefore, remained the theoretical lens throughout the data collection process, as I was concerned with the degree of empowerment and scepticism exhibited by my research participants. The following sections will describe the sampling procedures, data collection instruments, and strategies for analysis and validity.

In general, the qualitative interviews and journals aimed to answer the following critical question:

What is the impact of explicitly discussing CP and applied linguistics on the participants in collaborative focus groups? And does such an intervention *transform* a language teacher's attitudes and/or teaching practices?

Some of the areas of focus included a critical discussion of 'givens' in the following areas:

- *Assumptions regarding English language learners*: native speaker fluency (Bacon, 2017), proficiency level (Hall & Egginton, 2000)

- *Assumptions regarding English language teaching practices*: the monolingual fallacy (Cook, 1999), use of Arabic (Ismail, 2012), the maximum exposure fallacy (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), translanguaging (Garcia, 2019), cultural awareness (Bhaba, 1994),

particular language contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 2001; Troudi, & Al Hafidh, 2017)

- *Assumptions regarding English as an International Language*: Standard English vs. World Englishes (Canagarajah, 1999; Kachru, 1997), neutrality of English (Phillipson, 1992; Richards, 2009), Language and power (Fairclough, 1989; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Wierzbicka, 2014)

- *Assumptions regarding teacher knowledge, training and development*: Types of teacher knowledge (Kumaravadivelu, 2012), micro vs. macro objectives (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Giroux, 2015)

- *Assumptions regarding EFL resources and classroom material:* economic agendas and publishing houses (Leistyna, 2000; Giroux, 2011), inclusivity and social justice (Harman, 2018)

4.5.2.1 Sampling Procedures

Qualitative research does not need to identify a representative sample of the population being 'studied' in terms of numbers, but does attempt to diversify the sample. A common feature of such research (as per Cohen et al., 2018) is the need to adopt *purposive sampling*. Here, researchers carefully select the participants to 'meet their specific needs' (p. 424). This would allow the researcher to make comparisons among participants with different characteristics and to even focus on specific 'local' issues. My purpose was to include participants who have an in-depth knowledge of their particular teaching situation so that the focus group sessions can offer an opportunity for *praxis*. Osterman

and Kottkamp (2004) believe that learning is most beneficial when it is initiated through experience first. This is why having in-service teachers of English was important at this level, as they could bring their unique experience into the focus group sessions. My role, therefore, was to 'purposefully select participants that help [me] understand the problem and research question' (Creswell, 2009, p. 179). This includes identifying the following elements: the setting, the actors, the events, and the process. Section 4.4 describes the process and events that unfolded in the focus group sessions. Here, I will describe the participants.

These sessions (described in detail in chapter 5) were intimate enough to create an environment of inquiry-based sharing and reflexivity. My aim was to have 8-15 participants from different school and university levels, along with diverse experience level (*two of these participants later informed me that they had completed the survey in phase I.*) I resorted to purposive sampling to select these participants. This allowed me to identify people knowledgeable about their teaching contexts and motivated to undertake this exercise. My aim was to create maximum variation sampling (Cohen et al., 2018) insuring participants have different characteristics and experiences. I sought participants from different educational levels (primary, secondary, and tertiary), different institutional linguistic focus (EMI, FMI, AMI), and public/private status. The last factor was significant as participants from public schools and universities are not always represented in professional development settings that include participants from private institutions in Lebanon. This segregation was an example of social injustice that I also wanted to address in selecting participants. Geographical

location was interesting as well to identify different linguistic contexts across the country, though no attempt at generalization based on location would be necessary. An essential means of filtering applicants was also related to their commitment levels, as they would commit to the initial interview, the five participatory focus group sessions, and follow-up interview. Recruitment was completed through personal networks. As I work in a higher education context in Lebanon, selecting university teachers was less problematic as my network is diverse. The challenge was in locating school-level teachers of different backgrounds and different locations in the country, but this was arranged, especially since the number of participants remained low. The most challenging was finding teachers in public schools though.

Each participant signed a written consent form (see Appendix 3) before the initial interview, which stipulated the full intervention along with the necessary requirements for maintaining anonymity and confidentiality. This was especially important so that these participants remained actively engaged in a large section of the data collection process. Their names remained confidential and I used pseudonyms while reporting any results. As the five participatory sessions necessitated a discussion among participants, I also ensured that any reporting of their feedback does not contain any details that might reveal their identity.

4.5.2.2 Semi-structured initial and post-intervention interviews

Awareness of the power dynamics within an interview is vital (Kvale, 2006) to overcome challenges and achieve an inter-personal exchange, 'a conversation between two partners about a theme of mutual interest' (Kvale, 1996, p. 125).

Interviews offer a researcher the opportunity to 'probe an interviewee's thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives' (Wellington, 2001, p. 137). In essence, they allowed me a window into a single participant's perspective of the 'truth' – a truth unique to their individual context, which falls in line with the principles of CT, CP, and CALx. A semi-structured interview offered a balanced means of both focusing on questions that are relevant to my research, while also remaining open to any additional information or topics shared by the interviewee which would provide 'unique, non-standardized, personalized information about how individuals view the world' (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 938). This leads to what Wellington (2001) describes as a 'compromise' (p. 141) between the two ends of the continuum, maintaining some structure without sacrificing the openness needed to identify unique ideas and personal interpretation. According to Cohen et al. (2018), in a semi-structured interview, the researcher would include the topics and questions, but the wording would remain open-ended and the sequence might also change depending on the participants and the flow of the responses. The challenge of conducting these interviews, though, is that the researcher plays an important role in helping the interviewee to openly discuss matters that might be sensitive, while remaining aware of any bias on the researcher's part as well (Creswell, 2009). Additionally, in order to create a feeling of participation and reciprocity, I also conducted the interview in 'an interactive, dialogic manner' (Lather, 1986, p. 266) and disclosed my personal experience and teaching context.

In essence, the preliminary interview, before the focus group sessions, allowed me to understand my participant's attitudes and teaching philosophy. I focused on the same topics identified in the survey (see figure 1). This also helped me construct a clearer idea of how these teachers view their unique experience. This is in line with research in TESOL aiming at a 'social constructivist view of language learning' (Troudi, 2005, p. 117). These interviews also allowed me to gather information relating to the participants' 'espoused theories' (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004, p. 42). Conducting interviews before the focus group sessions and afterwards also helped me identify any changes to these espoused theories because of the critical intervention, therefore clearly answering whether my intervention *transformed* any attitudes. The interview questions (listed in appendix 4) followed topics similar to those in the survey, namely: attitudes to language learning, language teaching, EIL, teaching resources, and teacher training and development. An introductory section helped me identify the particular teaching context, institutional values, and current practices in the interviewee's specific educational context.

While the initial interview only focused on describing a participant's current worldview, the post-intervention interview created a form of 'debriefing session' (Lather, 1986, p. 268) for participants to share their unique perspective. Most importantly, I needed to determine whether any change occurred after completing the focus group sessions. While I posed questions similar to the ones in the preliminary interview, the discussion pinpointed whether any change in perspective had occurred and discussed the challenges involved with changing

any current teaching practices. An important concept here is that of *catalytic validity* or 'the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses, and energizes participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it' (Lather, 1986, p. 272), what we have previously discussed as Freire's (2005) *conscientization*. This is in line with validity in qualitative research as a whole, and here I refer to Guba and Lincoln (1989) who developed a means of evaluating qualitative research that provided a meaningful shift from positivist 'standards'. This is where validity would be measured by whether research participants develop a 'more sophisticated' understanding of the topic, to acknowledge the importance of other peoples' perspectives, and most relevant to my study, 'catalytic authenticity' – to have initiated any action after the intervention.

Both the preliminary and post interview transcripts were sent to the participants for their review to confirm *descriptive validity* – to ensure accurate content (Maxwell, 2005) - before completing a detailed thematic analysis. Section 4.5.2.4 describes the analytical process I used with NVivo, a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software, and a coded interview sample can be accessed in Appendix 5.

4.5.2.3 Reflexive Journal Entries

Essentially, 'the validity of a critical account can be found, in part, in the participants' responses (Lather, 1986, p. 268). To identify whether my research is 'critical' and has elements of empowerment, I needed to invite participants to critique the critical sessions themselves. Similarly, Wellington (2001) posits that

'being critical is about having the confidence to make informed judgements'. It is the ability to find 'your own voice' while remaining open to new knowledge (p. 93). This is why I found it important to record both my own observations and those of the participants in a reflexive and personal manner through keeping a research journal throughout the whole intervention process. This form of observation was also useful so I could critically share our interaction with the theory and the discussion in each focus group session. In this manner, I was able to report on our subjective and critical review of the material. This is in line with semi-structured observation methods which gather data on topics in a 'less predetermined or systematic manner' through responding to what is unfolding and what is being observed (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 998). My researcher journal included both *descriptive notes* from my direct observation and *reflective notes*, describing 'personal thoughts, such as 'speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, and prejudices' (Creswell, 2009, p. 182). On the other hand, participants shared their *reflective notes* through the online guided journal entry at the end of each session (See sample in Appendix 6). The guided questions were general, allowing flexibility while ensuring common themes were covered. Miller (2009) considers critical reflection fundamental to professional teacher development, as it allows them to reconsider 'how change is effected, and how knowledge, pedagogy, and identity intersect' (p. 178). Similarly, Wallace (1998) believes journals allow teachers to reflect on their own teaching. While journals might not be as 'truthful' as diaries since they are written to be 'publicly' read by the researcher, they still 'provide an effective means of identifying

[factors] that are important to individual teachers and learners' (p. 63). This also emphasizes *interpretive validity* through sharing the participants' account of their experience and the manner in which they interpret meaning (Maxwell, 2005). The disadvantage, though, remained that of time and whether participants made the effort to complete them sufficiently. This is why I set aside 15 minutes at the end of each session for completing the journal, which also limited the amount of writing and created an incentive to complete them effectively. However, one limitation was that not all participants developed their entries extensively, and this hindered my findings using this tool (Creswell, 2009). As the sessions were online, participants completed these using Google forms so they were anonymous and easily accessible. This also eliminated the need to type any written entry and minimized potential errors. These entries were decoded using NVivo as well. A coded participant journal entry can be found in Appendix 7.

4.5.2.4 Analysis, Validity, and Reliability

Throughout the section where I described my qualitative research, I remained open to Maxwell's (2005) discussion of the pitfalls of qualitative research and the means through which a researcher can achieve greater validity. In addition to *descriptive* and *interpretive validity*, which have been mentioned earlier, *theoretical validity* is essential to my research, in order to share data in full detail (Maxwell, 2005; Cohen et al., 2018).

All open-ended survey questions, intelligent verbatim interview transcripts, and journal entries were analysed using the same strategy: Thematic data analysis is a 'horizontal process, cutting across the data base to link areas into

more meaningful segments to facilitate analysis, display and interpretation'
(Grbich, p. 178). While CT helped me identify the theoretical lens that I relied on
to create the research methods in this study, the data itself guided me in creating
a 'bottom-up' approach. Using NVivo helped me classify and code the data
uncovered from the interviews and journal entries. As such, I relied on both
'predetermined codes' from my initial research problem and the relevant
literature, and then modified these into 'emergent codes' based on participant
responses (Creswell, 2009, p. 187). These codes could be classified into three
major categories: codes on 'topics that readers would expect to find, based on
the past literature and common sense' (Creswell, 2009, p. 186) – such as
language and power and *teacher agency*. The second category included codes
that are 'surprising and that were not anticipated at the beginning of the study'.
The third category included codes that focus on the theoretical perspective of the
study – for example *critical* vs. *mainstream perspectives* on language and
teacher development. The figure below identifies a list of these codes, which
correspond to the categories and labels listed in the qualitative codebook
(Appendix 8). A full list of these nodes, along with their frequency, can be found
in Appendix 9.

Figure 2: List of Nodes in NVivo

Name	Files	Referen...
▼ ◯ Attitudes to Teaching	0	0
◯ Language Teaching As...	5	8
◯ Radical Pedagogy	6	8
◯ Language Resources	9	30
◯ Target Culture	9	24
◯ Use of L1	10	17
▼ ◯ Critical Ideology	0	0
◯ Dominant Ideology	4	11
◯ Powerlessness	9	18
◯ Critical perspective	11	30
◯ Teacher Agency	11	25
◯ Hope	13	19
◯ Hegemony	14	28
◯ Problematizing Givens	17	22
◯ Dialogic Inquiry	18	24
◯ Reflexive Action	23	36
▼ ◯ Education-Professional D...	0	0
◯ Intervention	3	5
◯ Teacher Education	5	9
◯ Teaching Context	8	25
◯ Educational Background	9	18
◯ Professional Developm...	9	30
▼ ◯ Attitudes to Language	1	2
◯ Native Speaker Fallacy	3	3
◯ Early Start Fallacy	5	8
◯ English Neutrality	5	6
◯ Language and Power	6	13

DATA
- ▼ Files
  - Participant Journals
  - Post- Interviews
  - Pre- Interviews
  - Researcher Journals
  - File Classifications
  - Externals

CODES
- Nodes

CASES
- Cases
- Case Classifications

NOTES

SEARCH

MAPS
- Maps

OPEN ITEMS

This analytical strategy also allowed for greater validity as I conducted 'data transformation', which offers the researcher a chance to 'quantify the qualitative data' (Creswell, 2009, p. 218) through creating codes and themes, reviewing each interview transcript or journal entry in detail, which allows the researcher not only to identify emergent patterns but also accurately calculate the frequency within which they occur in the text. Such a clear and detailed

analysis of qualitative data allowed me to classify and manage my information 'with ease, dependability and trustworthiness' (Grbich, 2019, p. 182).

4.5.2.5 Credibility, Transparency, Trustworthiness

While the notion of validity in qualitative research varies from that of quantitative procedures, qualitative validity and reliability signify that 'the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures' and remains 'consistent' with other best practices in similar research (Creswell, 2009, p. 190). This included reviewing transcripts for any errors, ensuring unambiguous coding processes, and adopting a qualitative codebook – which clarifies each code and its definition (Appendix 8). This codebook was created as the data collection process began, including additional sub-themes based on the information provided in the interviews and focus group sessions (data-driven). This combination of strategies ensured that the codebook was based on recognized themes and trends in the literature, but also remained flexible and adapted to the local experience. This was also in line with the iterative – or repetitive – nature of code development (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). The final codebook included five major categories: Knowledge types, attitudes to language, attitudes to teaching, critical ideology, and educational/PD. Each of these classifications included additional sub-themes, which became the labels/codes used in NVivo.

Additionally, Maxwell (2005) cautions researchers to ensure *evaluative validity*, to remain sensitive to any possible biases while attempting to form any evaluative or judgment stances. Thus, I attempted, throughout the section where I discussed my findings, to clarify any bias that I might have, especially as I am

subjectively involved in both the teaching of English in Lebanon and working with a number of different teachers who might have espoused both critical and mainstream attitudes towards this topic under study. I also kept in mind the nuanced notion of 'generalization' in qualitative research as '*particularity* rather than *generalizability* is the hallmark of qualitative research'. However, there is room for some form of generalization that connects the valid data to a '*broader theory*' (Creswell, 2009, p. 193), which is in line with the concept of *generalizability* in qualitative research (Maxwell, 2005). While using software such as NVivo could tempt a qualitative researcher to focus on a trend that appears to be widely shared by participants, I remained sensitive to minority voices that might otherwise be silenced in the emphasis on 'quantifying' qualitative data.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

According to Wellington (2001), 'the main criterion for educational research is that it should be ethical' (p. 113). Stutchbury and Fox (2009) develop a more comprehensive overview of ethics in educational research, with an *external layer* that includes laws and codes of practice, a *consequential layer* which reminds researchers to think of the repercussions, *deontological considerations* – which reflect Kant's theory – to do one's duty while 'minimising harm', and the final *inner layer* associated with the individual and their autonomy (p. 492). To identify all the necessary ethical considerations, I prepared my study for review by both the Ethics Research Committee at Exeter (Appendix 1) and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the Lebanese American University. This

allowed me to examine the 'potential for risk, such as physical, psychological, social, economic, or legal harm' (Creswell, 2009, p. 89) that might affect my participants. Furthermore, all participants who took part in the initial questionnaire and the participatory sessions completed a consent form that clearly identified the following recommended items: the identity of the researcher, the lack of external funding, the selection of participants, the level and type of involvement, any anticipated risks, and assurance of confidentiality and right to withdraw.

Anonymity is a major element of critical research where 'investigators dissociate names from responses during the coding and recording process (Creswell, 2009, p. 91). For this study, the survey did not require any personal or institutional details. For the interviews and the journal entries, I followed guidelines to use an alias or a pseudonym to protect the participants' identities (Cohen et al., 2018). Moreover, data storage was also a matter of concern, and the data, in my case, will be stored for three years. As for data ownership, as I am the sole researcher in this study, I stored this data under my personal university drive at Exeter and the OneDrive options provided by the university.

As this research is participatory in nature, it was also essential to safeguard against any marginalization of the participants. It was necessary to 'establish trust and respect with the participants' (Creswell, 2009, p. 88). This is why I interviewed the participants first to maintain some element of trust and also share my own experience during this session. I also closely observed group dynamics in every group session and changed the group members accordingly to eliminate any unbalanced power dynamics. Additionally, all participants were

informed of the nature of the intervention in addition to their commitment level and the details of their participation. This information sheet (see Appendix 10) was given to participants before the data collection process, in line with ethical considerations (Wellington, 2001).

CHAPTER FIVE – FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to report findings from the two major phases of the study, covering the initial survey, initial participant interview, researcher reflexive journals during focus group sessions, participant journals after each session, and the final interview with participants. In each of these sections, my emphasis is to identify relevant findings and compare them to the critical issues discussed in the literature review and relevant studies in the field. Additionally, I have highlighted perceived mainstream or critical attitudes to language learning and teaching, PD, and the teaching context itself. The final section attempts to identify the impact of my intervention and the degree to which participants are able to make certain changes to their assumptions and practice.

5.1 Phase One: Mainstream vs. Critical Attitudes in the Initial Survey

The initial survey allowed me to obtain answers related to my first research sub-question:

What set of perspectives do in-service language teachers in

Lebanon hold about the nature and impact of TESOL?

While analysing the data, my focus was to identify respondent attitudes that might appear 'mainstream' as opposed to those that could be critical. I also sought to identify respondent views towards their educational background and PD opportunities. This will complement the intervention planned for phase two of my research. The findings of phase one will be categorized based on the sub-themes within the survey.

5.1.1 English Language Proficiency: Native Speaker Fallacy

In the literature review chapter, I discussed the matter of belonging to the English language, and the extent to which 'native speakers' might own the language and act as a standard (Richards, 2009; Kachru, 1997). While some participants might actively believe English 'belongs' to the inner circle, some of the questions in the survey attempted to identify whether there are multiple perspectives on this issue, and whether participants might be in favour of 'varieties of English' or WE (Esseili, 2017; Banat, 2020). This also brings them closer to Canagarajah's (2009) recommendation to focus on *how* to teach English. In order to gauge participant attitudes towards this particular issue, the survey included a number of questions relating to English language proficiency and whether there is a standard or 'ideal' to follow. In general, participants in EMI institutions consider their students highly proficient (61.9%). Similarly, those who work in contexts where equal value is placed on English, Arabic, and French showed very close confidence levels (60%). This finding is interesting as there is a general assumption that maximum exposure to English is necessary for proficiency, yet these schools do not claim such targeted exposure as they place equal value on three different languages. Participants from FMI contexts had considerably lower numbers (28.60%) though. This is in keeping with the general assumption that institutions that highly value French might not always have students who are proficient in other languages (including Arabic in many cases). In general, perception of student proficiency was not my primary motive behind these questions. While most participants believe their students to be highly

proficient in English (n=34), I was mostly interested in what that 'proficiency level' meant to them. Did they believe students to be proficient if they could clearly transmit a message in English, or did they expect them to follow a Standard English protocol? Participant responses to individual survey questions, highlighting their attitudes, can be found in table 4.

Table 4: Survey Items Delineating Attitudes to English Language Proficiency

Survey Item	Disagree	Generally Disagree	Neutral	Generally Agree	Agree
The ideal language learner is one who can master standard English.	12.90%	1.60%	32.30%	14.50%	38.70%
English learners who depend on nonstandard varieties of English cannot express themselves well.	17.70%	16.10%	40.30%	9.70%	16.10%
English language learners should try to master a form of English that is very close to a native speaker's.	19.40%	16.10%	29%	11.30%	24.20%
Native speakers of English have a better grasp of the language.	21%	11.30%	19.40%	19.40%	29%
Language teachers should expose learners to skilled non-native speakers.	3.20%	3.20%	29%	35.5%	29%

An overview of the first four survey items that correspond to 'mainstream' attitudes yields the results in figure 3.

Figure 3: Mainstream Attitudes to English Language Proficiency
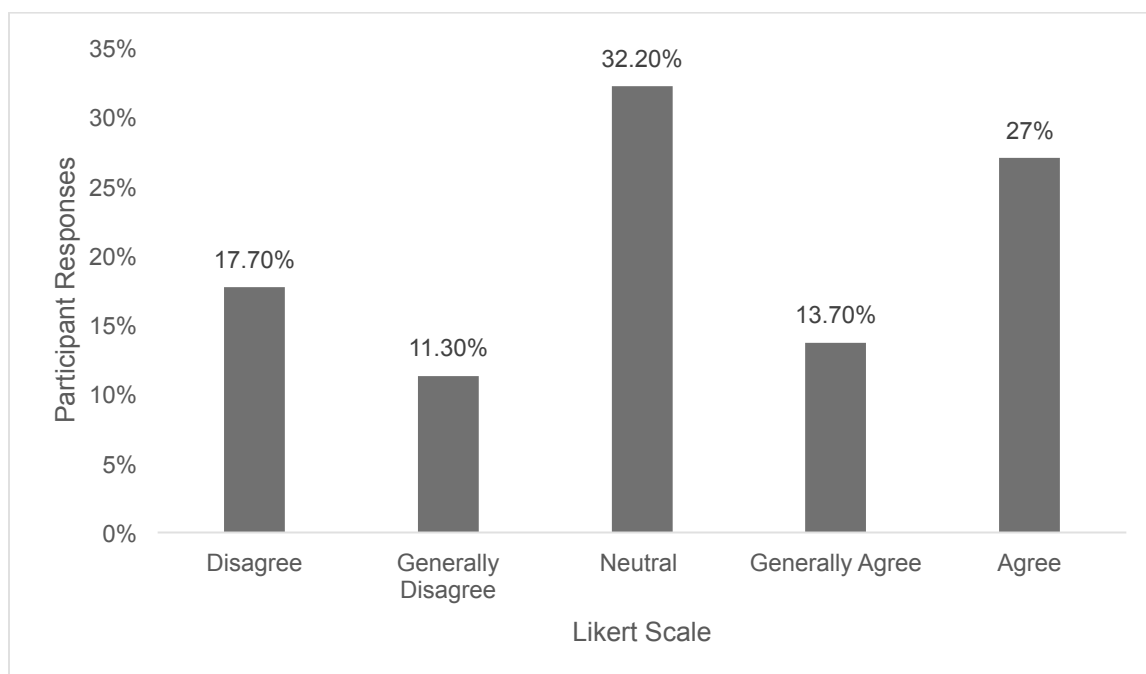
The majority of participants believed that one standard of English remains 'ideal', equating language proficiency with achieving that standard. While over 32% of respondents selected the 'neutral' option to many of these statements, this neutrality itself is an issue worthy of further investigation, especially considering participant experience levels. Upon further scrutiny pertaining to individual statements, such as 'The ideal language learner is one who can master Standard English', respondents mostly agreed (53.2%). These results are consistent with research by Lee (2015), who studied attitudes to English in a private university in Beirut, and found that teachers supported the need for a Standard English. Bou Ayash (2016) also discussed similar sentiments in writing programmes in Lebanon, which proclaimed the 'fixity and centrality of Standard English in academic discourse' (p. 561). When examining these responses in relation to participant experience levels, though, there is a slight difference among those

having 1-5 years of experience agreeing over 66% of the time, with a decrease to 54% among participants with over 10 years of experience. While these data are not meant to identify any correlation as my purpose was to describe current attitudes, experience could play a role in creating more opportunities to question our initial assumptions as we continue to develop on a professional level.

On a similar note, additional survey items prompted participants to discuss native vs. non-native English language teachers. Within the Lebanese context, we do not actively recruit native English language speakers, especially since we have a large number of TESOL non-native Lebanese graduates. This is consistent with research by Annous (2006) who found that 'nativespeakerism' was not commonly discussed among university teachers in Lebanon for example. However, despite their lack of emphasis on this topic, research by Orr (2011) has confirmed perceptions of the native speaking teacher in Lebanon as 'a superior professional' due to proficiency in the language.

In my study, when responding to this statement: 'The ideal English language teacher is a native speaker', only six participants agreed while 45 disagreed and 11 were neutral (M = 1.94). Additionally, 45 participants chose to respond to the optional open-ended question prompting them to clarify their selection. Those who agreed with the native speaker ideal mostly cited the ease of communicating when one has an 'accent', 'fluency', 'a good vocabulary', and 'the correct way of speaking English'. One participant in the survey believed native speakers could add to a student's linguistic repertoire:

I believe that English language teachers who are native speakers have a very different grasp on the language than non-native speakers. Students can benefit from certain collocations or pronunciation that a non-native teacher may not be able to provide.

This is in line with recent studies in other contexts as well. For instance, Tajeddin et al. (2019) conducted roundtable discussions with 10 native and 10 non-native teachers in Iran, and the non-native English teachers espoused ideals related to 'nativespeakerism' and began by discussing the superiority of native speakers. Though, to my knowledge, there are no studies that explicitly target native vs. non-native English language teachers in Lebanon, some of the qualitative responses in my survey also supported the assumption that native and non-native teachers would have different competency levels. One such instance is the assumption that a native speaker would be more successful at teaching oral communication skills (specifically mentioned by seven participants in the open-ended question), while teaching grammar or writing might be more difficult as they did not learn this language as bilingual students, a response shared by six participants who touted the ability of non-native teachers to teach grammar because they studied it themselves in a classroom environment. Three other responses to the open-ended question also discussed the need for an accent, but two of those participants claimed Lebanese teachers have those skills as well:

Because the most important thing about being an English teacher is to have fluent and accurate language and […] some Lebanese

people have the best accent and fluency without living outside

Lebanon.

This statement, though touting the virtues of Lebanese non-native teachers, also

falls into the trap of assuming some ideal – a 'best accent' category.

Despite these few responses showing a more mainstream attitude, the

majority of responses converged along the lines that teaching a language is not

necessarily about the accent or the communication skills of the teachers, but

their ability to deliver a message and actually 'teach' (explicitly shared by nine

participants). Those are skills that native and non-native speakers can equally

master. According to these responses, the advantage of having a non-native

speaker, though, is the ability to relate to the bilingual student experience, 'clarify

tasks', relate to a student's context, and accurately explain grammatical

knowledge. A few participants (seven in total), however, were highly critical of the

definition of 'native speaker':

The concept of native speaker is itself problematic. What is meant

by native speaker? Why do they get to decide what the standard

is?

This response was closely connected to participants who discussed English as a

foreign language in a globalized world (n=3), and our need to accept that 'English

is a language of communication in many countries other than Britain and the

USA.' As such, even though some participants felt native speakers to have a

superior grasp on the language, others were highly critical of that same ideal.

Additional discussions of this critical issue might yield a shift in perspective,

similar to the roundtable discussions that led non-native Iranian teachers to change their ideals regarding nativespeakerism (Tajeddin et al., 2019).

However, those same respondents did not believe their administration had similar sentiments, as 39 participants agreed that schools would still prefer native speakers, even if they did not have appropriate credentials. This is similar to findings from other studies in the region, but specifically one in Turkey that targeted 94 school administrators who believed expatriate teachers were quite important (Tatar, 2019). This notion that school and university administrations might not always have the same attitudes as the teachers themselves is a common theme in my findings, especially in phase two. One participant also shared anecdotal evidence of a private EMI school that had been 'reprimanded' for mostly hiring non-Lebanese teachers, which is illegal as per Lebanese labour laws, and had to rapidly hire Lebanese teachers to create a more balanced workforce. As such, while most participants did not believe the 'native speaker fallacy', it continues to infiltrate Lebanese teaching contexts.

5.1.2 Using L1 in Class: Monolingual Fallacy

Closely related to the ideal of language proficiency is the notion of using only the target language in the classroom. While many have actively questioned this monolingual fallacy (Cook, 2001; Ismail, 2012; Bou Ayash, 2019), the assumption that teachers should only use and 'allow' the target is still quite common. As such, some of the questions on the survey sought to identify perspectives on this particular teaching strategy. Figure 4 presents participant

responses to the statement: 'It is better to only use English in the English language classroom, without resorting to any other language.'

Figure 4: Participant responses to using only the target language
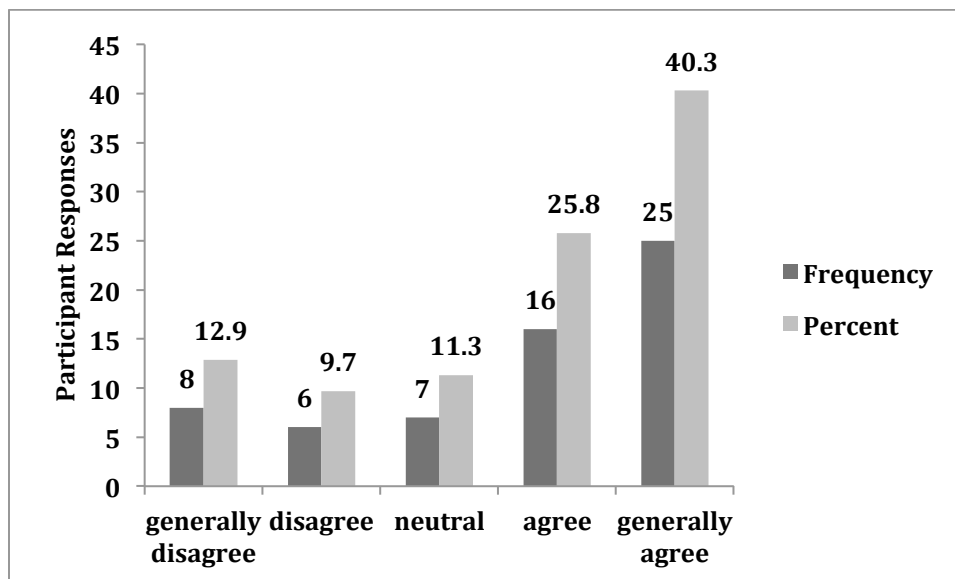
Approximately 66% of respondents agreed with this statement, and when asked whether they would reprimand students for using Arabic (or French) in the English language classroom, approximately 34% agreed with 19.4% remaining neutral. This number also decreased with years of experience. Teachers with 1-5 years of experience were more willing to reprimand students over using L1 (50%) than those with 6-10 years (35.3%) and those with over 10 years (27.3%). This need to avoid code-switching or deliberately using L1 in class appears to be quite common in the different contexts in Lebanon (Bahous et al., 2014), with administration in many cases 'reminding' teachers to use only the target language in their classes. Esseili's (2014) study also emphasizes that teachers consider using L1 a weakness. They complain that classes sometimes resort to Arabic and believe translation from Arabic to English 'weakens' their grasp of the

target language. This issue was further discussed in phase two of my study. Many teachers routinely receive memos from administration asking them not to speak Arabic in class, and this message is sent to all teachers, whether they teach language or Maths, which is also taught in English or French in many institutions (Esseili, 2017). This assumption is also thriving at institutes of higher education, with the end-of-term course evaluation including statements such as 'The instructor explained course material in English throughout the semester.' It thus becomes quite difficult to change this particular assumption as it has become institutionalized, and any change here needs to be on a comprehensive scale because teachers would not be able to change their current practices if their livelihood might be at risk. This is where power dynamics and language policy would interfere with actual teaching practices and invade the classroom.

Despite these initial reservations, though, when asked to specifically select the purpose behind using L1 in the English language classroom, 11.3% continued to state that teachers should never use L1 under any circumstance, while others believed teachers should allow the use of L1 when a code-switching environment feels more natural to the students (38.1%), when the task can be conducted more efficiently in Arabic (22.7%), when it is more relevant to their use of English beyond the classroom (17.5%), and when using Arabic supports learning the target language (10.3%). This is in line with research by Cook (2001) which cites the value of using L1 for increased efficiency, learning, naturalness, and relevance. It is worth noting, though, that the most frequently cited use for Arabic in the English classroom is mostly 'unconscious' – as teachers and

students might 'naturally' code-switch without making it a deliberate teaching strategy. This is quite different from consciously opting to use L1 for teaching purposes. The question remains whether teachers would willingly create a space for practices such as *translanguaging,* where students are encouraged to use their 'full linguistic repertoire' to negotiate independent languages in the classroom as a teaching strategy (Garcia, 2019, p. 163). However, even though some teachers find a certain value in using L1, the hierarchical messages they receive might not allow them to explore this strategy, especially in the language classroom. Bahous et al. (2014) confirm these 'norms' in higher education in Lebanon, for instance, where teachers might not feel 'proud' to use L1 or code-switch in the classroom. The stigma or 'shame' associated with using L1 might therefore hinder any opportunity to discover the potential of adopting a multilingual approach to language learning (Bahous et al. 2014, Bou Ayash, 2019; Saneka & DeWitt, 2019). However, opening up the discussion and exploring diverse opinions might be the catalyst for change.

5.1.3 'Start them Young': Early Start Fallacy

In the quest towards identifying language teacher attitudes, their opinions towards some very common educational trends were pivotal. In Lebanon, the common assumption is that foreign languages (French and English mainly) need to be introduced as soon as possible, 'the younger, the better'. This starts at home, with parents acting as language teachers and speaking to their children in French and/or English, orienting their children towards those foreign languages (Banat, 2020) and sometimes avoiding Arabic altogether (Bahous et al., 2011).

While this has been frequently discussed in social circles and in the media, very little formal research has been conducted on parental attitudes and experience. Officially, the curriculum favours early adoption, with research into evaluating English language proficiency for young learners at elementary levels to ensure effective implementation (Shaaban, 2000). Additionally, Educational institutions, such as day-care centres, nurseries, and primary schools also opt for either EMI or FMI, with some Arabic instruction in some cases. These are considered points of strength, as day-care centres around Beirut and its suburbs proudly display certificates from l'Institut Français du Liban (The French Cultural Centre affiliated with the French Embassy) or the British Council or American Centres, as marketing strategies to verify that their teachers have been 'adequately trained' in these foreign languages. All of these practices originate from the same common belief: For an individual to master a language, they have to start at a very young age.

When asked to either agree or disagree with the following statement - the earlier English is introduced the better the results – almost 84% of our study's participants agreed that early exposure is necessary, with only 6.5% disagreeing. A detailed breakdown of participant responses can be found in figure 5.

Figure 5: Participant Responses to an Early Start
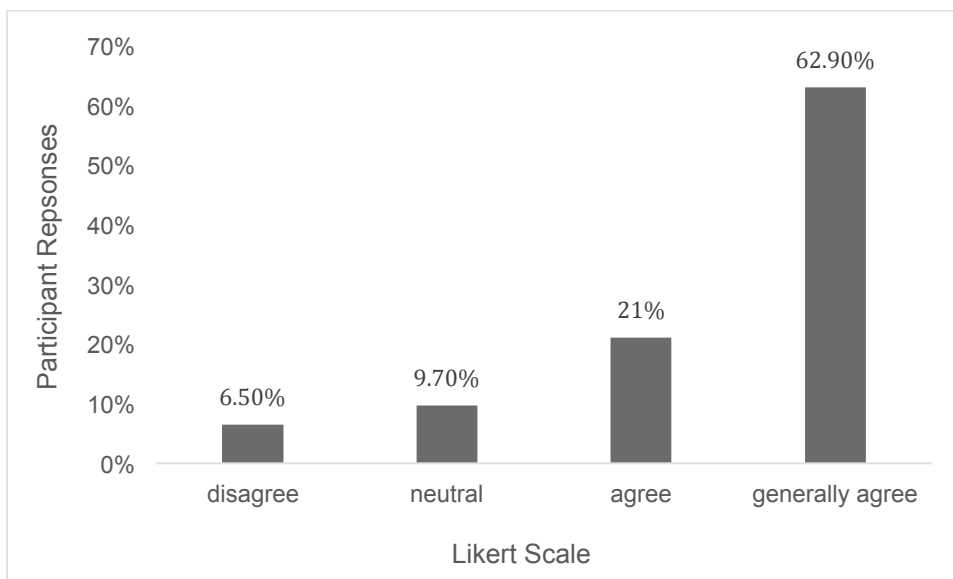
This response varied only slightly when looking at participant educational background, teaching context, or even experience level. Even those teaching in institutions where equal value is placed on more than one language still believe foreign languages should be taught early on. Both Phillipson (1992) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) discuss this 'early start' fallacy when it comes to the spread of English, claiming that countries that do not introduce a foreign language until Grade 3 or even later still have good results with foreign language proficiency. More importantly, this strategy also allows young learners to master their L1, a skill many students lack in Lebanon (see section 2.4). As foreign language teachers are some of the key players in this issue, identifying their assumptions pertaining to this specific trend is crucial. This particular topic is also highly discussed in the focus group sessions as well.

5.1.4 English Everywhere: Maximum Exposure Fallacy

An assumption closely related to the early start fallacy is the idea that the target foreign language has to completely surround the language learner, that they need to be immersed in this new language, through speaking at home with parents and siblings, to taking all class subjects in that target language, including science and maths. In Lebanon, this has led certain parents to avoid using Arabic at home (Bahous et al., 2011) and has caused institutions to penalize even non-language teachers for using L1 in their classrooms. The findings of my study and the various experiences participants share are in line with Ghaith and Shaaban (1996)'s claim that institutional practice favours foreign languages in Lebanon across school levels and in different contexts. Foreign language teachers are also extremely pivotal here, as many advise parents to talk to their children in the target language at home, and many try to create a context where the foreign language is spoken even outside the classroom. In Esseili's (2014) study, teachers even complained that parents do not 'do enough' to speak to their children in foreign languages. Banat (2020) justifies these decisions as an economic necessity in a country that needs to look outwards for 'rational' purposes, thereby diminishing any emotional or 'colonial' connection to the foreign language. This remains debatable, though, as it is possible for children to learn more than one language, while fully embracing L1. The reality in Lebanon, though, is one where in some contexts, children are reprimanded for using Arabic, for instance, even during their break, violating one of their basic human rights due to the emphasis on subtractive bilingualism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000;

Saneka & DeWitt, 2019). Students in some FMI contexts are reprimanded for using L1, and instead of critiquing these practices, though, many of the survey participants also shared this sentiment, that maximum exposure is crucial for language proficiency. In response to the statement:

> The standards of English will improve if other subjects are taught in English as well,

Over 90% of the participants agreed, 6.5% remained neutral, while only 3.2% disagreed. A detailed breakdown of participant responses can be found in figure 6.

Figure 6: Participant Responses to Maximum Exposure
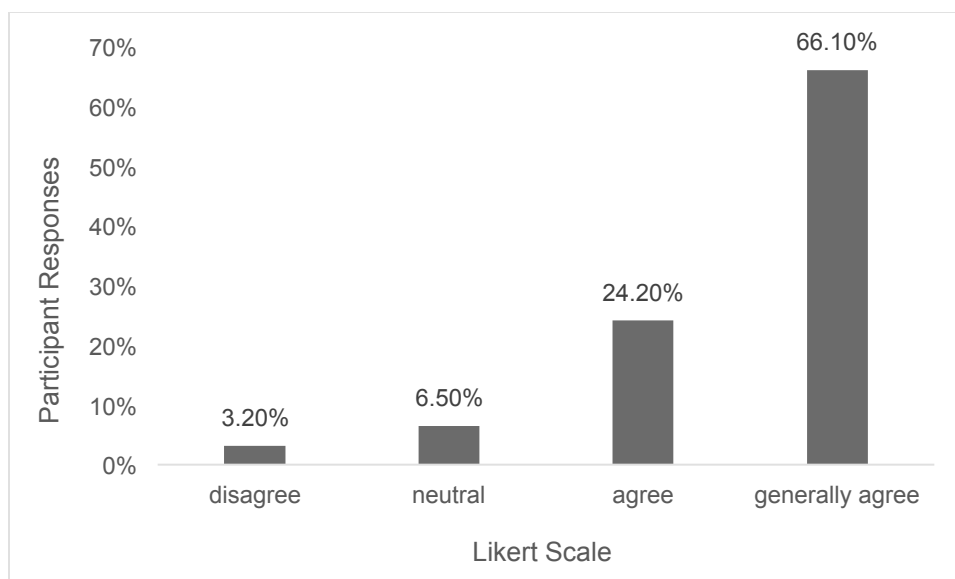
It is worth mentioning that this was the least divisive statement on the survey, exhibiting consensus with a mean of 4.53. This highly significant accord is, however, being contested globally, with examples from Nordic countries showing that it is possible to achieve foreign language proficiency levels when a language is being taught only as a foreign subject (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000),

without 'invading' other classes, the playground, and even the non-English speaking home. University students in Bou Ayash's (2016) study of English as a foreign language in Lebanon explained their frustration with a system that made English a 'rock' they were 'forced to swallow' as their teachers advised them to watch American movies, read English books, and listen to English news, turning extra-curricular activities into English language lessons (p.563). When such assumptions remain uncontested, however, we find ourselves in a world where language policy dictates the pervasive use of the foreign language, sometimes to the detriment of L1.

5.1.5 Linguistic Human Rights: Is English Oppressive?

This was the reason for including a number of survey items to gauge participant responses to the importance of English and their assumptions regarding its impact on other languages. Participant responses to individual survey questions, highlighting their attitudes, can be found in table 5.

Table 5: Survey Items Delineating Attitudes to the Value and Impact of English

Survey Items	Disagree	Generally Disagree	Neutral	Generally Agree	Agree
Anyone who knows English right now has no need for any other language.	29%	50%	8.10%	1.60%	11.30%
All relevant resources and scholarly output are in English.	12.90%	9.70%	30.60%	16.10%	30.60%
The English language offers a means of economic advancement and students should achieve optimal fluency for their personal benefit.	0%	1.60%	6.50%	35.50%	56.50%
English is currently oppressing all other languages	8.1%	9.70%	37.10%	17.70%	27.40%

When asked about the importance of English as a means of economic development, the overwhelming majority of participants (n = 57) agreed. However, over 45% of participants believed English was oppressing other languages, while over 37% remained neutral, and only 17.8% disagreed. Their awareness of this oppression was significant, but this awareness did not fully extend to their role, especially since it has become commonly accepted that 'EFL instruction starts with the beginning of schooling (kindergarten), and English gradually replaces the native language, Arabic, as the medium of instruction in many of the country's major institutions of higher learning (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1997, p. 200).The follow-up question specifically targeted their role as language teachers in this 'oppression'. Participants were given the following statement:

> Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) claims that EFL (English as Foreign
>
> Language) teachers are killing their mother tongue and participating
>
> in linguistic genocide.

Participant responses to this claim can be found in figure 7.

Figure 7: *Responses to Skutnabb-Kangas's Claim*
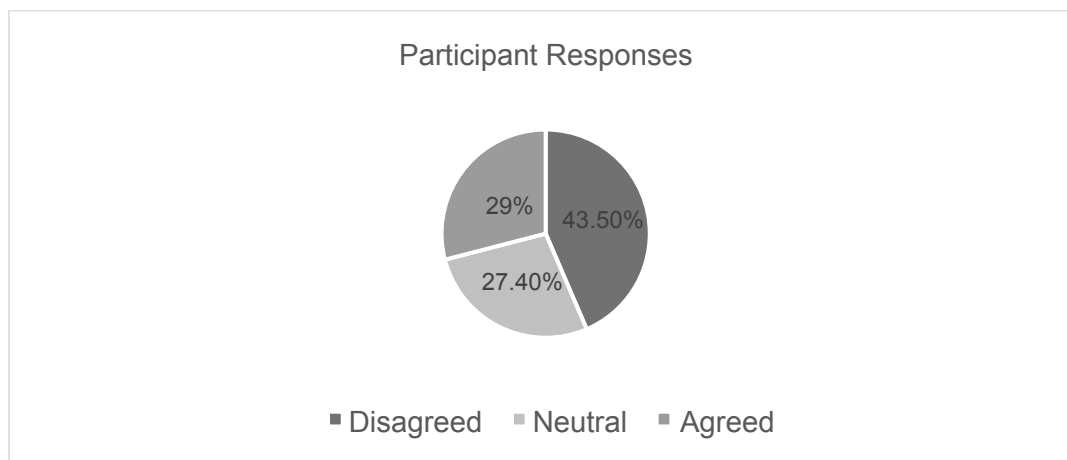
43.5% of respondents disagreed, 27.4% remained neutral, while only 29% agreed. Upon closer examination, when categorizing respondents based on their current teaching context, those in EMI institutions were the least likely to disagree (35.7%), while those in FMI contexts or institutions placing value on all three languages were more likely to disagree with Skutnabb-Kangas (71.5% and 70% respectively). To my knowledge, no study in Lebanon has specifically inquired about the teacher's agency pertaining to the impact of the foreign language on the native language. A related question in the survey then asked participants whether they felt it was their duty, as English language teachers in Lebanon, to promote the Arabic language. Participant responses can be found in figure 8.

Figure 8: Participant Role or Duty in Promoting Arabic
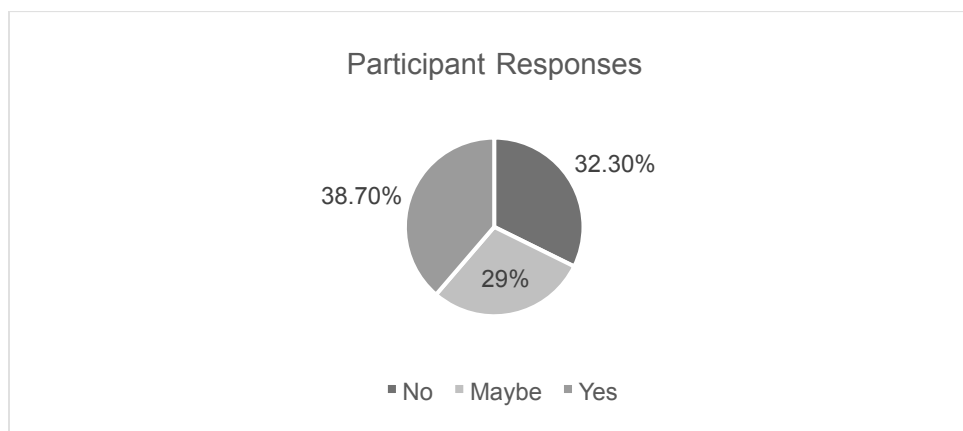
Results were divided as follows: 24 agreed, 20 disagreed, and 19 chose 'maybe'. 39 of these participants went on to explain their answers in the open-ended prompt. Those who disagreed did not believe it was their duty to support Arabic, as that was not their role:

> As an English teacher, I'd rather focus on teaching English only since that is the role I've been assigned.

Others justified their choice by claiming that the Arabic language has its 'promoters', that it wasn't within their field of interest, and that it is primarily up to the language learner to make these decisions and opt for the language they want. Identifying this as a 'personal choice', though, ignores the power imbalance here. Most language learners do not have the luxury of a choice when their educational system and its linguistic policies dictate what they are given at a young age. These frustrations were clearly documented in Bou Ayash's (2016) study, with students blaming their teachers for the pressure to learn a foreign language and even asking them to 'stop thinking in Arabic' (p. 561).

On the other hand, those who were not as certain and chose the 'maybe' option (n= 18) primarily cited the fact that they might promote Arabic and other languages, but that they do not consider it explicitly as their 'duty':

> I hesitate to place value on one language over the other as I am fascinated with languages and think it is a true asset to be able to speak more than one. I don't know though if it is a "duty" of mine to promote Arabic. I certainly don't disparage it. I often remark to my students that we are lucky to know such a rich and expressive language as Arabic.

The word 'duty' was problematic to some, as they believed it should not be a deliberate and conscious attempt at preserving L1. One participant was also worried that promoting any other language might affect what 'you are supposed

to do for the English language'. Another explained that promoting both languages was a priority:

> We should be promoting both languages because in the end Arabic is our mother language but English is at the same time essential.

Furthermore, those who firmly answered that it was their duty (n=24) had a variety of reasons for their agreement. One important factor was preserving heritage as Arabic 'is our mother tongue; many have forgotten that.' This sentiment was fully explained in this response below:

> The treasures of the Arabic language are not by any means lesser in value than those in the English language. It is our duty to prevent the extinction of the native language and what it bears with it.

The advantages of being bilingual in general were also discussed, as 'good L1 skills are transferable to L2.' This is consistent with attitudes towards the positive impact of the first language identified by teachers in Diab's (2009) study. Another participant explained this point in relation to both their home environment and their classroom:

> I believe the mother language is essential to broaden a person's cultural, cognitive and even linguistic skills, so I insist on passing Arabic to my own children before any other language.

However, some participants discussed the negative attitudes towards Arabic. A final quote I will share is from a respondent who is trying to change this trend:

> I think it's a beautiful language and we need to fight back against the encroachment of English. From experience, this may lead to

some kind of language attrition of the L1 and it would be shameful for native Arabic speakers to forget their mother tongue. English should be promoted as the current lingua franca but not at the expense of Arabic which just needs some good PR. Students these days perceive Arabic as a language without prestige and not worthy of using. We need to work on changing these attitudes.

This extract highlights changing attitudes that consider Arabic as 'less worthy' to the new generation. In research I conducted with students at a private university in Lebanon, this sentiment was quite clear. Students did not only believe Arabic was less useful in academic circles; they also reported 'feeling ashamed of it' and avoiding its use in social circles too (Azzi, 2020, p. 112). Focusing on the public relations aspect is also important because it shows how we could change these attitudes, and this is where language teachers in general could help. When students receive the signal that English is the only acceptable language both in class and beyond (and the only essential one), then many would comply with those messages and treat Arabic accordingly. Similarly, the students in my research blamed their 'teachers, universities, and government' for this marginalization of the language (Azzi, 2020, p. 112).

All these sentiments fall well within Skutnabb-Kangas's (2000) ideals of preserving linguistic human rights, which have not always been considered as essential as other human rights. While this section of the survey does show that participants generally believe in the importance of other languages (79% believe other languages necessary) that might not be enough to convince the majority

that English is a culprit, or that they play a significant role in resisting its power and deliberately promoting their more vulnerable native languages. This is especially true considering claims that 'Arabic can hinder learning the right accent in English' (Diab, 2009, p. 26), for instance. Such assumptions about learning a language could determine whether teachers promote linguistic plurality.

5.1.6 'Who am I?' Language Teacher Identity in a Globalized World

The idea that an educator's role is beyond simply teaching the skills relevant to their field is not new. Historically, a teacher's wisdom meant they were an authority figure, one who could discuss broader issues beyond the specifics of the syllabus or the curriculum. Educators like McLaren (in Leban & McLaren, 2010) and Giroux (2015), while following the ideals of critical educators such as Paulo Freire, believe teaching to be primarily a political activity, calling for more outrage as teachers work within a neoliberal system that encourages compartmentalization and passivity. This is why respondent attitudes towards their role as language teachers were relevant (See Table 6).

Table 6: Attitudes towards Role as Language Teacher

Survey Items	Generally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Generally Agree
I am an English teacher. My role is to teach a language, not to have a political or revolutionary agenda.	11.30%	16.10%	16.10%	19.40%	37.10%
Teaching is always a political activity. A teacher cannot teach a class without being aware of external social power struggles.	6.50%	11.30%	22.60%	22.60%	37.10%

The role of the language teacher should be restricted to teaching the material in the books and the syllabi.	54.80%	24.20%	12.90%	8%	0%
A language teacher's role is more transformative and has global consequences.	0.00%	1.6%	12.9%	45.2%	40.3%

Almost 80% of participants believed their role as lying beyond just teaching from books and following the syllabi. Nearly 60% of respondents also agree that teachers need to be aware of social struggles. However, the manner in which their role as teachers could be expanded showed some ambiguity. While a clear majority believed their role to be 'transformative' (85.2%), participants seemed more hesitant to agree with a teacher's 'revolutionary agenda', with only 56.5% supporting that statement. It might be the word 'agenda' that could have caused some hesitation there as that might have a sinister connotation, but CP would explicitly require a conscious awareness of the political undertones of teaching, with the intent to change the *status quo.* This is especially necessary in TESOL, as '[c]ritical sociocultural studies draw attention to the fact that identity also involves an often problematic positioning by the "Other", which is especially true for non-native teachers (Miller, 2009, p.175).

Language teachers lie at the heart of this discussion. If one were to read Phillipson (1992, 2009, 2017), it would be relevant to identify where we could 'resist' and the agenda we could adopt. If English is closer to a '*lingua Frankensteinia'* devouring other languages in its path (Phillipson, 2009), then it would be our responsibility as language teachers to question our role within this field. If we were to also discuss the political undertones of using (and in some

cases abusing) the English language, through practices such as early and maximum exposure, then we would realize that we might be agents within this global 'industry', as Kubota (2002) warns.

The teachers themselves might believe their mission to be 'innocent', one of spreading a *lingua franca* in order to improve their students' current standing and future progress, despite Phillipson's warnings. Banat's (2020) study in Lebanon explicitly attempts a response to Phillipson's views. Banat explains that 'pragmatic motives' place Lebanon is a context where English is not seen as an oppressive language with political undertones. Instead, Banat believes that our 'reality' restricts our ability to act upon 'emotional or ideological' linguistic reflections, where 'the Lebanese can only afford decisions based on rational considerations' (p. 11). This insight needs to be debated, especially since choices pertaining to foreign language education do not necessarily need to affect L1. While the findings that English is important for many Lebanese children and our future workforce have been clearly outlined in my study as well, there are strategies that could be employed to still preserve the Arabic language in the process and achieve additive bilingualism. As foreign language teachers, we can also assume a more critical stance while still teaching a foreign language. This study by Banat appears to assume that there needs to be a 'trade off', but research shows that learning one's native language should not theoretically deter that student from learning others, and this is where critical and political awareness can impact the learning/teaching process.

One means of moving beyond this politicization of the language and removing it from the grasps of any linguistic/political superpowers is to incorporate the particular, local, experience in line with Kumaravadivelu's (2008) call for developing a 'global cultural consciousness' where language learners are aware of the new global reality that identifies 'disappearing borders'. This is where deliberately introducing voices from Kachru's (1997) outer and expanding circles (see section 3.2.1) into the English language classroom, through choice of teaching material and moving beyond portraying only 'target culture', could be a starting point where it is possible to learn (and appropriate) a foreign language and bring it 'closer to home'. This is also in line with identity as an ongoing process, rather than a static and external impression. In Miller's (2009) treatise on teacher identity, she cites numerous voices calling for this dynamic look at identity as a 'constant ongoing negotiation of how we relate to the world' (Pennycook, 2001, p. 149) and, more relevant to the 'reflexive practice model' in this study, as 'relational, constructed and altered by how I see others and how they see me in our shared experiences and negotiated interactions' (Johnson, 2003, p. 788). The connection between Johnson's work and my study is related to the intimate relationship formed when PD is taken from a pre-package conference/workshop model to a more intimate platform where teachers mentor or discuss their assumptions on a small-scale, interpersonal level.

5.1.7 Teaching Resources: Freedom vs. Restriction

A number of questions on the survey focus on teaching practices and the resources used in the language classroom. These questions sought to identify

the confidence levels teachers had in their curriculum, syllabus, and course material, in addition to whether they had been given (or even requested) greater flexibility. This notion of flexibility would fall in line with the critical need to cater to our students' specific experience, as opposed to following a 'ready-to-wear' syllabus and textbook. Another component involves identifying whether participants are attempting to move away from target culture in the classroom to a local classroom discussion, which would be closer to their students' 'lived' realities and the ideals of CP (See more in section 3.1.2). This is in line with recent studies, like that of Bou Ayash (2019) to bring the Lebanese local experience into the academic world, mostly through embracing translation and *translanguaging*.

When asked about their preferences pertaining to course material and guidelines given to them by course coordinators, for instance, the responses varied (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Attitudes towards Guidance from Course Coordinators
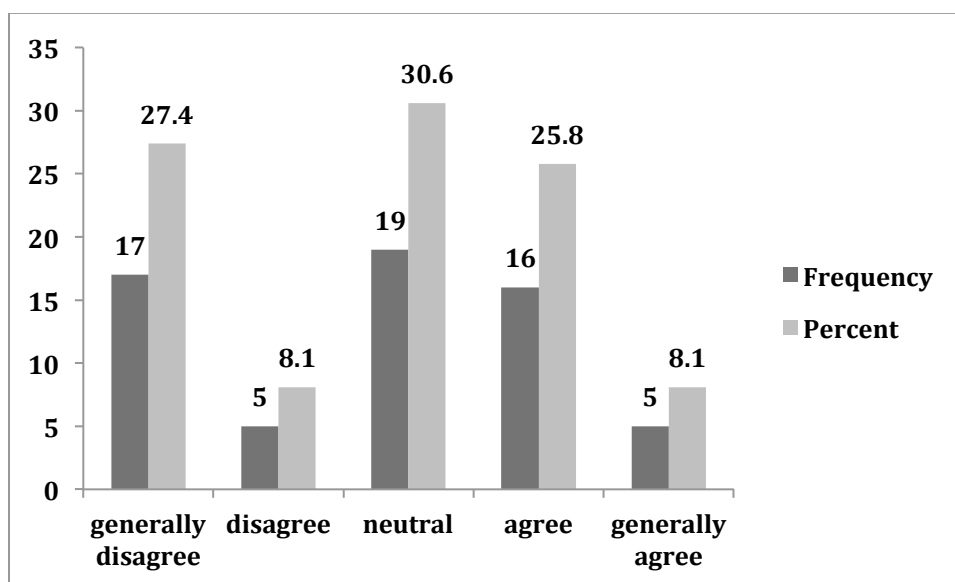
Figure 9 shows that over 35% of participants do not want to closely follow guidelines handed down to them. However, the rest were neutral or disagreed with this sentiment. When dividing these responses based on years of experience, this result was not very surprising as teachers with 1-5 years of experience were more willing to follow direct guidance (50%), while this percentage gradually decreased with years of experience (6-10 years of experience/41.2% and over 10 years/ 24.2%). On a similar note, when asked whether they were satisfied with the course book or teaching material, 50% of participant agreed. However, these same participants went on to say that they were selective, with only slightly over 11% of participants following these teaching resources without making any changes. This need to supplement was explained in an open-ended question, as many teachers who were satisfied still felt that they needed to supplement certain skills, add some cultural relevance, or offer some additional readings. A few participants did discuss, at length, the failure of the Lebanese curriculum and the Lebanese textbooks, though, as they did not offer opportunities for critical thinking and creativity. Orr (2011) reports on these shortfalls as public schools rely on national textbooks while private schools mostly import books in foreign languages. One participant fully explained the inadequacies of the books they had been using:

> Not always sufficient for our needs - we need to supplement a lot
>
> I have taught a course where I thought the book was terrible
>
> because most reading selections in it were not culturally relevant to
>
> the local context of Lebanon.

This excerpt shows the degree of flexibility awarded to some of the participating teachers. It remains crucial, though, to identify what they were willing to do with this 'freedom', especially in relation to the target vs. local culture continuum. Many who were not satisfied with their current textbooks or felt the need to supplement cited cultural relevance as a major reason. One participant believed the book included 'texts of natives', biographies, history, or geography, which is irrelevant to our students. This is consistent with Esseili's (2014) study where teachers also commented on the cultural accessibility of textbooks imported from the United States, for instance. In my survey, other teachers discussed some 'inappropriate' readings that might not be oriented towards our culture or 'based on ideals or beliefs our society adheres to'. Another respondent specifically stated that these different cultures could act as a deterrent to language acquisition:

> In the long run students in such an alien culture will have an added difficulty to the one of acquiring a new language.

Finally, one participant was satisfied with the textbooks being used specifically because 'they are not strictly British or American in terms of accent, culture, names.' The majority of participants did not share this opinion though. When asked about the need to teach or focus on British and American culture in the English language classroom, over 48% (n=30) believed it was a necessity, while 24.2% remained neutral (n=15), and over 27% (n=17) disagreed and did not believe in such a requirement. This does not appear to be the norm though. Bou Ayash's (2016) study paints a picture of teachers considering English quite rigid.

One university student in her study claims 'English was represented […] as monolithic, static, and discrete from its learners and their diverse resources' (p. 565). This student did not feel any personal ownership of English. On the contrary, his description makes the language slightly alien to his unique experience as he sought to avoid writing about "things that don't happen in English" (Bou Ayash, 2016, p.565).

On a related note, when asked about whether they would add material relevant to their students' specific experience and issues that matter in Lebanon, participants agreed to a great extent (87.1%). This is highly encouraging and does show a willingness to cater to the local experience. When prompted to evaluate books from 'lesser-known publishing houses' as potential alternatives to international books, over 93% of participants said they would be willing to use these books instead if the content is more relevant to their students. Additionally, almost 63% of participants were willing to experiment with radical texts and course content that might introduce potentially divisive topics, such as LGBTQIA+ issues. These results depict a great willingness to move beyond a 'customized' syllabus and course material, and the desire to make course content both engaging and relevant to students.

Finally, there was an additional, critical, component here when asked about their 'confidence' levels in published textbooks. In response to the statement:

> Course books have been created by knowledgeable individuals
>
> who are experts in the field. I should follow their guidelines,

Only 25.8% of participants agreed. The breakdown of these results is in figure 10.

Figure 10: Confidence Levels in Published Textbooks
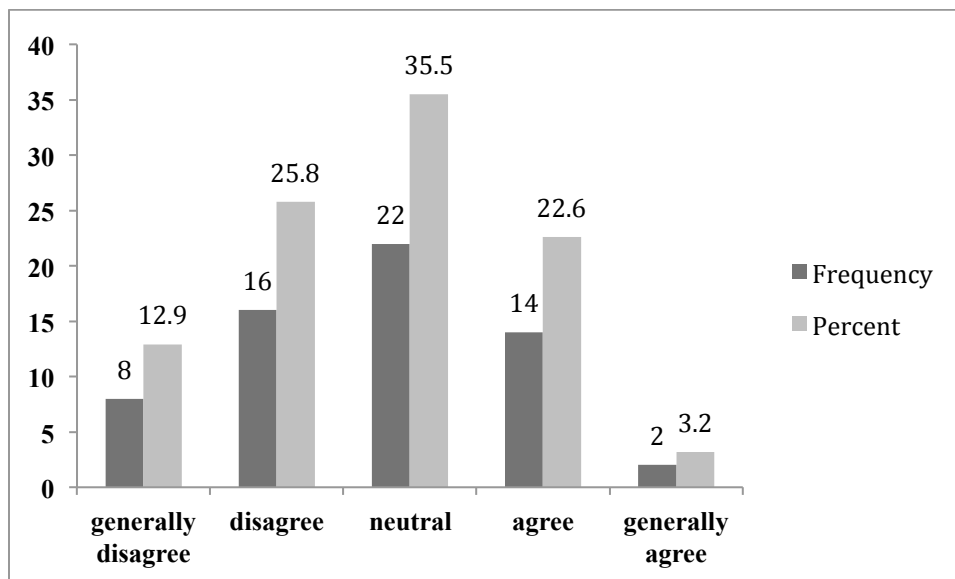
This, however, is not consistent with previous research in Lebanon where teachers and administrators appeared to prefer books by established publishers, especially those 'prepared and published in Europe and the United States' (Bahous et al, 2011, p. 745). When further examining these responses in relation to participant experience levels, my participants' faith in these published books significantly decreases as they become more experienced. While the point here is not to generalize, it is interesting to note the significant drop in agreement, from 58.4% (1-5 years of experience) to 17.6% and 18.2% (6-10 years of experience and over 10 years respectively).

5.1.8 Teacher Education and Professional Development

My research sought to both identify current attitudes to teaching English in Lebanon and to explore an intervention that involves critical PD in a unique

context. As such, I needed to classify participant attitudes towards their previous teacher education programs and the PD sessions they might have attended over the years. This is why I attempted to design my intervention to suit individual needs and the particular situation (See more in section 3.3 on Kumaravadivelu's KARDS program).

While I have mentioned the educational background of my 62 participants in the demographics section (See section 4.5.1.2), I was more interested in the way they would personally evaluate these programs. According to previous studies on teacher education in Lebanon, there have been some considerable advances in the field. In the past, teachers could begin working with a high school certificate and some external training degrees; currently, teachers are expected to have a BA, and in most cases a Teaching Diploma (Orr, 2011, p. 3). However, Shaaban (2005) reported this training as 'inadequate', with 'low levels of language proficiency' (p. 111). This research is outdated though so it would be interesting to gauge whether this remains true.

In my study, participants were given three options to describe their educational program:

- We mostly focused on the technical knowledge needed in teaching English

- We focused on technical knowledge but also worked on understanding societal issues that could inform our teaching practices

- We focused on technical knowledge and practically understanding our society, but also made time to actively critique our agency

Table 7 categorizes participant responses to these statements.

Table 7: Evaluation of Teacher Education Program

	Frequency	Percent
Technical + Critical	15	24.2
Technical + Societal	14	22.6
Technical	33	53.2
Total	62	100

It is worth noting here that over 53% of participants described their educational program as mostly 'technical'. However, when asked whether they were satisfied with their programs, a similar number of participants, 53.3% were satisfied, contrary to Shaaban's (2005) report. This result also contradicts the findings by Orr (2011) whose study on teachers in Lebanon found many of them had not seen the relevance between the theoretical courses they studied and their classroom needs. In my survey, only 6.4% believed their programs to be lacking, while over 40% remained neutral. These numbers on their own might not explain the rationale behind their classification, but the open-ended responses give a clearer impression.

Those satisfied with their programs believed that they gave them the technical skills needed in the classroom. Others mentioned that they had good teachers with extensive knowledge and support. One participant specifically focused on the practicum classes which allowed them to learn from teachers 'on site', and those classes were the most beneficial part. Clearly, these participants did not believe their programs to be 'inadequate' as Shaaban had claimed in 2005.

However, not all programs gave participants the practical knowledge they needed, a sentiment voiced in Orr's (2011) study when teachers valued methodology and lesson planning above other courses. One participant in my survey expressed this sentiment:

> I think that the education we received did not really prepare us for the classroom and for what being a teacher really means or requires. A lot of English teachers graduated with me yet cannot speak proper English!

The issue with the statement above is less about learning teaching skills and strategies but about being proficient in the language in the first place. This resonates with Shaaban's (2005) conclusion pertaining to language proficiency. He had concluded that teachers without sufficient proficiency would still be hired because of the great need for English language teachers.

Other participants in my survey discussed the point that their programs focused on providing them with knowledge and theories but not specific strategies for the classroom. This is in line with the different types of knowledge Kumaravadivelu (2012) discusses: Professional knowledge which is usually 'received wisdom' from experts (provided abundantly in these programs), procedural knowledge which includes classroom management strategies that some programs seem to be lacking, and finally personal knowledge, considered as 'unexplained' teacher insight. One participant shared the long journey it took for her to acquire this knowledge:

I do not feel I had any preparation for the classroom from my MA

program. I wish there had been more teacher preparation/

classroom-focused practicum because learning everything on my

own was emotionally and physically exhausting.

Another participant used a very thought-provoking analogy to sum up their

learning experience:

They taught us education through lecturing without practicing...

It's like teaching music without instruments...

Another trend in the responses was to discuss the need for life-long

learning, that a teacher should never be 'satisfied' with their educational training

but always seek more knowledge, more research, and more PD opportunities.

Many participants explained that their undergraduate courses might not have

been sufficient, but their more advanced degrees allowed them greater insight,

especially in terms of creating life-long learners who became interested in

reflection throughout their teaching journey, both inside the classroom and

beyond. This shows that Troudi's (2015) recommendations for more critical work

in teacher education programmes might be possible, but only at higher levels of

training, leaving the greater majority of language teachers at a disadvantage.

This is where continuous PD becomes a recognized priority. Previous

studies in Lebanon identified a general dissatisfaction with PD, which 'consists

mainly of the odd workshop or lecture which these teachers are either

encouraged or obliged to attend by the school administration' (Nabhani &

Bahous, 2010, p. 207). My survey results, however, showed some different

responses. While only 17.7% of respondents have been dissatisfied with their PD opportunities so far, a larger percentage (40.3%) were only satisfied to a certain extent, while a slight majority expressed general satisfaction (41.9%). This evolution could be due to positive changes over time as more researchers called for improved PD opportunities. These results can be seen in figure 11.

Figure 11: Degree of Satisfaction with PD Opportunities
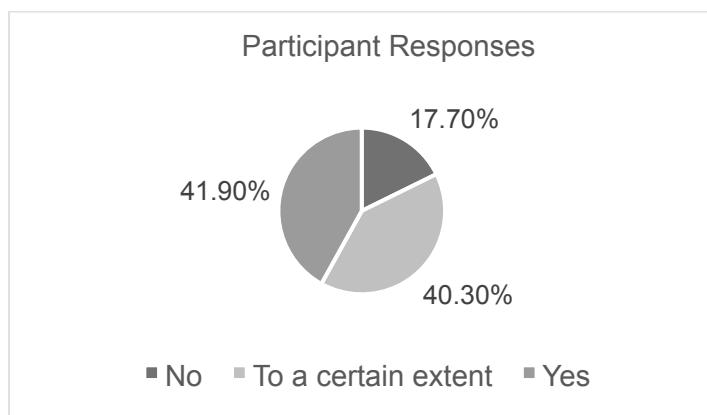
58 respondents went on to clarify the reasons behind their response. Those who were satisfied (n= 26) gave credit to institutions that provide them with diverse opportunities and finance additional conferences and workshops. They also discussed the importance of the presenter, who could be extremely 'inefficient' or 'boring' in some cases, but very interesting when the session focuses on practical issues and relevant strategies. Others also touted the advantages of networking opportunities during these sessions.

Those who held positive views of their PD sessions 'to a certain extent' (n=25) mostly wished they could have more options. One participant mentioned something very relevant my study, the idea that 'Most trainers give theories

without any solutions for problems that teachers face in actual classes.' Others called for more diversity, but one participant was especially critical stating that:

> Most professional development workshops held in Lebanon are usually marketing strategies for the provider or sponsor.

This point regarding 'marketing' and having presenters simply sharing the same presentation regardless of context or teacher expertise is heavily discussed in the focus group sessions later, as many participants have experienced a few of these sessions throughout their careers.

Finally, those who were dissatisfied with their PD so far (n=11) mostly complained that their institutions did not provide these opportunities, that the sessions they have attended have been 'repetitive and useless', or that they needed more. One participant was very frustrated with the context she found herself working in:

> I have repeatedly asked for more of this [PD], but no one seems to care about this. It's always written off like yeah yeah write it in your comments.

Thankfully, the minority in this survey had such experiences, and there was always the attitude that if their institutions were not providing them with support in this regard, they would seek it on their own. This is consistent with the study by Esseili (2014), where teachers also complained and a few participants mentioned that they were paying for their PD. Similar experiences were found in Lebanese public schools, where teachers complained about insufficient training as they tried to negotiate the curriculum without much support (Saba 'Ayon, 2013).

The last question on the survey then asked participants to identify their priorities in terms of PD opportunities. I was particularly interested in this question, as it would help me identify whether participants desired the sort of critical intervention I was hoping to provide. Orr (2011) had previously identified general categories of in-service training and PD opportunities. These mostly included reading, writing, speaking, listening, and testing. There is no reference to any critical discussion though. As such, in my study, respondents were given the list of themes and topics that had a broader overview, without being restricted to specific skills. They could only choose one option because I wanted to identify their priorities, but they could add their preferred focal area as well. The list included the following themes, and participant responses can be seen in table 8.

- Debating critical and political issues in the teaching of EIL

- Motivating students to take their English language learning seriously

- Innovative strategies for using technology in the language classroom

- Classroom management techniques and dealing with different competency levels

- Innovative strategies for teaching vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure

Table 8: Choice of PD Topic

	Frequency	Percent
Critical & Political issues	17	27.4
Motivating Students	9	14.5
Technological Strategies	10	16.1
Classroom Management	11	17.7
Teaching Strategies	15	24.2
Total	62	100

The largest number of participants (n=17) chose critical and political issues, which is the exact purpose of this study and its intervention. This adds credibility to my research as I am clearly filling a gap. This is also in line with recommendations by Wallace and Poulson (2003) relating to a more critical stance to teaching and learning. It is still worth noting, however, that while participants might want to discuss critical issues, they are also interested in practical linguistic and classroom management strategies (n=15 and n=11 respectively). However, more work is needed on adding explicit critical approaches to language teaching education. This echoes the call by Troudi (2015) who found that even though critical work has been gaining popularity in the recent past, there is still a need for critical research 'as an approach' with clear methodologies and structures (p. 89). This delay in adopting a more critical paradigm could be due to the hegemony of more mainstream approaches to language teaching education. Another possible factor could be the assumption that undergraduate programs should focus on more practice and theoretical knowledge, leaving critical knowledge to postgraduate programmes.

To sum up the findings in phase one, it increasingly became clear that, while participants might still espouse certain fallacies and myths, they are also critical of their teaching contexts, educational background, and PD. There is also a high demand for training and PD that caters specifically to their unique teaching context and strategic needs.

5.2 Phase Two: Reflexive Practice Model

The next session reports on findings from the initial survey, describes the intervention model, reports on participant journal entries and post-intervention interviews, and connects these findings to similar studies in the field and to CP.

5.2.1 Initial Participant Interview: Attitudes and Expectations

Phase two began with the preliminary participant interview to gauge attitudes towards the topics that would be discussed in the focus group sessions and to identify their initial degree of 'criticality' and awareness of themes and debates relevant to CALx. This section also allowed me to reach additional conclusions corresponding to my first question:

What set of perspectives do in-service language teachers in

Lebanon hold about the nature and impact of TESOL?

Nine participants agreed to the interview and signed the consent form. The duration of these interviews ranged from 33 minutes to one hour and 10 minutes. The nature of the semi-structured interview was efficient and allowed the discussion to flow depending on the participant's need to contribute to the conversation. An example of a full interview transcript, along with the coding on NVivo can be found in Appendix 5. Additionally, table 9 presents some demographic information about these participants, along with their case classifications in NVivo.

Table 9: Case Classifications

Pseudonyms	Gender	Experience	Teaching Context
Alana	Female	1-5 years	Public School
Anna	Female	1-5 years	Private School
Chip	Male	1-5 years	Public School

Mulan	Female	5-10 years	University
Rapunzel	Female	Over 10 years	Private School
Sarabi	Female	Over 10 years	University
Elsa	Female	Over 10 years	University
Wendy	Female	Over 10 years	University
Moana	Female	Over 10 years	Private School

As detailed in the methodology section, I needed participants who had some experience with English language teaching in Lebanon and deliberately attempted to find a diverse group from different teaching contexts. It was vital that I included teachers from public schools, private schools, and higher education contexts to insure this diversity. This is in line with Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) who believe that such in-depth learning would be more effective when accompanied by initial experience. The findings from the preliminary interviews are in the sections below.

5.2.1.1 Educational Background and Professional Development

As my intervention is a form of critical PD, I sought to identify the participants' educational background, current teaching context, and their experience with PD in the past, a process similar to that conducted in the survey. Table 10 shows the different sub-themes we explored in this category, along with their coded frequency and the percentage taken from the reference source.

Table 10: Educational Background and PD: Nodes in NVivo

Nodes	Frequency	Reference
Educational Background	9	18
Intervention	3	5
Professional Development	9	30
Teacher Education	5	9
Teaching Context	8	25

While two participants, Moana and Mulan (Pseudonyms), generally enjoyed many of the courses they took in their BA, other participants were dissatisfied with their undergraduate education, stating that the material they studied was not very practical and mostly consisted of memorizing theory without critically discussing it or even working on practical skills they would need in the classroom. This is consistent with research by Orr (2011) and Shaaban (2005) (See section 5.1.8). Anna, for instance, describes her BA below:

> I felt that they're just telling us some information to memorize.

The MA, however, allowed more participants to feel critically engaged, as they were able to focus on topics that mattered to them. Mulan felt she could finally concentrate on the 'good stuff'. This is consistent with Orr's (2011) research, where postgraduate degrees were perceived useful by a larger percentage of teachers. A common issue that my participants shared, though, was the delay in discussing their own teacher identity. Elsa felt that she had to wait until her doctorate to begin consciously reflecting upon her role:

> One of the courses that I took last year was language teacher
>
> identity... And that changed my entire perspective on how I want to
>
> be perceived as a language teacher… and what difference I
>
> want to make in peoples' lives…

Moana also discussed this gap in teacher education because she did not feel that they ever conducted a 'self-evaluation', which she had seen in some schools in the Gulf. She believed this to be vital 'because you see where you are, where you were, where you're going'. This need for reflection and self-awareness is vital

to the Kumaravadivelu's (2012) knowledge types. This is also in line with the call by Troudi (2005) to incorporate more philosophical reflection in teacher training programmes. This also connects to the concept of *praxis* with the teachers' 'emerging awareness of ways in which societal discourses have shaped their self-perception and thus their ability to act on the world (Hawkins & Norton, 2009, p. 34).

A similar dissatisfaction was common when it came to PD opportunities. Participants like Alana and Chip, who are relatively fresh graduates, had generally not attended many workshops. Anna was also relatively 'new' to the language-teaching sphere and was trying to join some sessions delivered by language teaching associations. Moana, who had a lot more experience, still criticized the fact that 'there was no continuing education program that you can pursue over the years.' This caused her to attend many disparate conferences and workshops (See section 5.1.8 for similar results identified in Nabhani & Bacha (2010), Orr (2011), and Shaaban (2005)). Mulan and Wendy spoke mostly about the interesting online sessions – which were not specific to the Lebanese context - they had participated in and how fruitful they found those. Elsa had a lot more exposure to different workshops and has become selective along the way. The general view, though, was that these workshops were mostly 'hit and miss'. Some of them were very interesting and useful; others completely unnecessary. This quote from Rapunzel describes the situation related to a workshop she had attended recently:

> Every time I go to a workshop […] I go with very low
>
> expectations. This time I was a bit impressed. It wasn't as boring as
>
> I expected it to be.

Sarabi blames the culture in some institutions, which in her opinion 'has not been as much of a development culture'. In Orr's (2011) study, some teachers also spoke about the predominant culture or values of the trainer, claiming that local (Lebanese) trainers were mostly interested in theory while foreign trainers would emphasize 'activities, activities' (p. 11). Despite some negative experiences, though, all participants were excited about the PD opportunity in the study. Even Wendy, who had had some negative experiences with workshops and conferences where she felt completely frustrated and 'traumatized', still shared her opinion of PD in general, which, if done right, allows participants to develop unique insights. She spoke of a radical shift in her perspective upon attending her first online course early on in her career:

> When I started teaching and for a very long time, I used to think it
>
> was innate, it's something you're born with […] I took this online
>
> course and […] this was a revelation… to realize that the things I
>
> do in class… or don't do … are being researched. I had something
>
> to say. I could agree or disagree […] And this is when I started
>
> taking education more seriously.

This form of reflective thinking and 'conscientization' (Freire, 2005; McLaren, 2015, De Castro, 2016) is at the heart of CP, and allowed Wendy to gain a newfound awareness that was liberating. Orr (2011) claims theory to be vital for

such reflection, provided it is clearly connected to a teacher's practice. This is the fluidity of knowledge at the heart of this study, the notion of connection that informs reflexive action.

5.2.1.2 Knowledge Types

While discussing this kind of reflexivity, it was imperative to shed light on the types of knowledge that participants felt were more valuable. Despite the growing resistance to 'traditional' workshops, '[e]xposing academics to new knowledge has traditionally been done through formal professional development activities, such as seminars and conferences, often with large numbers of attendees' (Mercieca, 2017, p. 5). This form of learning also emphasizes knowledge by experts with a 'relatively passive and unengaged audience' (p. 5). Similar experiences with passive PD have been reported in Lebanon (Orr, 2011; Shaaban, 2005).

In order to explore this focal area, I focused on the categories developed by Kumaravadivelu (2012) who classifies knowledge as Personal, Procedural, and Professional (See more in section 5.1.8). I also wanted to identify whether the knowledge participants had received could be considered more 'technical' or reflective and emancipatory (as per Habermas's theory on the three forms of knowledge). Similarly, Orr's (2011) recommendations were to specifically develop meta-cognition 'thinking *about their thinking about their teaching*, the concept of which is important where teacher education is influenced by western organizations with relatively little knowledge of the reality of teachers' lives, as is the case in Lebanon' (p.12). This is why I needed to explore the participants'

views and their expectations relating to our intervention and the knowledge they hoped to acquire. Their feedback, as coded in NVivo, can be found in the table below.

Table 11: Knowledge Types: Nodes in NVivo, Frequency, and Reference

Knowledge Types	Frequency	Reference
Personal Knowledge	3	3
Procedural Knowledge	5	8
Professional Knowledge	6	12
Reflective Knowledge	8	24
Technical Knowledge	7	11

As can be seen in table 11, many participants discussed technical knowledge, which has been the foundation of their BA programs and even, in some cases, their MA. To some, it was very rare to find even one teacher who was willing to conduct an open debate in class. Chip spoke of that one teacher quite fondly as he compared him to all the others who simply explained theory. Rapunzel, who enjoyed some classes that were not related to education per se, explained how taking different courses with the same instructor felt like a repetitive cycle, and that was her main motivation behind refraining from an MA in education, as she would be taught by those same instructors. She also shared a specific theory they had discussed, the Montessori approach to education, which in hindsight was a topic she would have loved to explore in depth, but that was never an option. Moana discussed the need for more Procedural knowledge (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). She wanted to know how things were done in the classroom. Rapunzel and Anna also sought similar exposure. Their experiences were consistent with those in Orr's (2011) and Shaaban's (2005) research.

PD also followed a similar focus on expert knowledge. Wendy, who had been in charge of PD at a private school, discussed the challenges:

> …when I was a decision-maker, it was hard. It was a clash. Other decision-makers would want to get professors, PhD holders.

This spoke of a common trend in PD that emphasizes 'Professional knowledge' as per Kumaravadivelu (2012) to benefit from the words of an 'expert' in the field, regardless of whether that expert's session is relevant to the teachers in the room. This is confirmed by Orr (2011) who observed that trainers 'often make decisions based on guesswork and predetermined ideas and materials, rather than extensive knowledge of the people who will receive training' (p. 2). Elsa, though, warned about going in the opposite direction. She complained that some workshops seem to put most of the work on the participants, creating a space only for group work and conversation. She did believe, though, that there needs to be a balance there, where the practitioner still manages to share some 'wisdom' at first 'before leaving us to fend for ourselves and swim the waters.' While her statement does not devalue the personal knowledge of the teachers in the room, it was pivotal at that point in my research because I was still finalizing the design of my focus group sessions. This was a moment of criticality and reflexive *praxis* for me early on because the interview with Elsa was the first in the series of preliminary interviews. It allowed me to create a balance during the intervention where I would share some ideas from the assigned article (Professional knowledge) before exploring personal knowledge and later discussing how this could be applied in the classroom (procedural knowledge).

This exercise allowed me to optimize the types of knowledge Kumaravadivelu (2012) presents while also making room for reflection.

The purpose of these interviews, primarily though, was to identify participant attitudes to language learning, teaching, and CP.

5.2.1.3 Attitudes towards Language Learning

This category included most of the attitudes towards the English language, assumptions and myths in the literature, and general awareness relating to language and power and the neutrality of the English language. A detailed list of the sub-themes covered in this section – the largest category covered in the interviews - and their coded frequency can be seen in table 12 below.

Table 12: Attitudes to Language: Nodes in NVivo, Frequency, and Reference

Attitudes to Language	Frequency	Reference
Early Start Fallacy	5	8
Ecology of Languages	7	9
English Neutrality	5	6
Language and Power	6	13
Language Learning Assumptions	8	12
Linguicism	6	10
Maximum Exposure Fallacy	8	20
Monolingual Fallacy	7	14
Native Speaker Fallacy	3	3
Preservation of L1	8	19
Standard English	9	23

While an attempt at quantifying qualitative data looks appealing, the primary purpose of collecting qualitative data is to identify detailed perspectives and interpret nuance as well. First, I was interested in attitudes relating to the English language and whether participants considered it a 'neutral' means of achieving economic and social success, or whether they attached more 'sinister' qualities

to this language we are immersed in teaching, along the lines of criticism by Phillipson (2009). In general, most participants truly believe the English language to be our passport to success in Lebanon (echoing research by Banat, 2020), especially since many of our students complete their education in American-style institutions both in Lebanon and abroad. They also consider it necessary for work outside the country, especially due to the 'brain drain' phenomenon in Lebanon. Alana equates it to survival:

> …the English language is a worldwide language and, without it, our students won't be able to survive the outer world.

Chip and Mulan, on the other hand, while acknowledging the need for English, also questioned its 'political aspect' and the problematic issue of globalization. Elsa would be the closest to a critical perspective on this issue. She labels our dependency on English 'marginalization' and that the mere fact we consider it a 'survival skill' is due to this dominant narrative handed down to us from the Lebanese diaspora, as we believe that:

> We're not privileged … we need this because we're traveling abroad.

This power that the English language has over us was a common trend across the interviews, along with powerlessness and lack of awareness. This clearly contradicts the narrative that we, in Lebanon, view English as harmless and 'pragmatic' (Banat, 2020). While one participant, Elsa, had actively been reflecting on this issue and the means to overcome it, the struggle to gain some agency is still in its infancy. Two participants also brought up the issue of French,

and how French was taught in a very 'pervasive' manner, with 'nuns forbidding [children] from speaking their mother tongue' and creating an environment where everyone at school spoke in French. This ubiquitous nature of the foreign language, whether English or French, has taken its toll on students' L1. All participants discussed attitudes towards that Arabic language, which students find 'shameful' and 'a bitter pill that they have to take', with young Lebanese students refusing to speak Arabic because other children 'made fun of them'. This is in line with my previous research on linguistic imperialism and attitudes to Arabic in Lebanon (Azzi, 2020), creating a situation of linguicism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Rapunzel discusses this phenomenon where language teachers at school ridicule students who are 'Arabophone' – assuming that their poor performance in foreign language classes is due to their parents' use of Arabic at home. This assumption is quite prevalent as many language teachers in Lebanon immediately urge parents to speak in French or English at home. This also causes inequity, as parents who might not be proficient in foreign languages would not be able to provide the anticipated support. In critical terms, this power imbalance is a political issue, creating a status quo that needs to be actively debated. The resulting social injustice (see section 2.6) precipitates limited professional and academic opportunities for students with 'inadequate' foreign language proficiency.

Additionally, the 'maximum exposure fallacy' that Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) discusses is very common in Lebanon and eight participants discussed this issue at length. There is a general attitude that students need to be exposed to the

language, both at home and at school across different subjects. Contrary to the Nordic model that Skutnabb-Kangas describes, foreign languages in Lebanon are not treated as an 'additional subject'. They are the means through which students have to achieve academic success across all subjects, with Arabic reserved for just a few subjects: mostly history, geography, and Arabic grammar and composition (See section 2.5 on the status of EMI in Lebanon). This has led to a conflict that some participants openly acknowledge, especially with the poor performance of students who do not master L1 fully. While participants like Rapunzel and Moana are openly critical of schools that expect parents to be agents in their children's language acquisition, many agree that maximum exposure at school, across different subjects, is better for language acquisition. This is consistent with participants in other studies in Lebanon (Bou Ayash, 2016) who placed value on 'exposure and immersion', even claiming that students need to be exposed to the foreign culture as well to become proficient (Diab, 2009, p. 22). Moana, for instance, believes that 'kids take English more seriously when they take all subjects in the foreign language'. I know I have been guilty of this assumption too, blaming other professors at university for not stressing on 'proper English' while assessing their students. Wendy, though, was willing to have a less radical approach. She believes immersion necessary if we expect language proficiency to occur quickly. She talks about her nephews who do not have full immersion and believes 'they're getting there when it comes to other languages… at a normal speed'. She goes on to say that 'they don't have to

achieve fluency at a rapid rate'. However, it is important not to underestimate societal pressure. Rapunzel exemplifies this:

> I refuse to speak English to my kids. My husband, his parents… keep saying and some friends also… Oh… you're an English teacher and your kids don't speak English? I refuse. I just started speaking to my daughter in English recently… because some of her friends speak only English so I thought maybe this could help her.

This kind of pressure from family and friends might further exacerbate the situation, making it more difficult for even English teachers who are conscious of their duty to preserve Arabic.

> I feel like the Arabic language is disappearing little by little. I have my cousin's baby girl. I feel like Arabic is like a second foreign language for her.

While Alana presents these sentiments above and clearly feels conflicted, she does not believe it to be her duty to preserve Arabic. This is similar to the results in phase one as teachers generally hesitated to take the blame for any impact on Arabic. Alana believes it is the responsibility of the Arabic teacher, who needs to 'put in some more effort to protect the language'. It is important to note, though, that many participants are actively trying to preserve Arabic, whether at home through talking to their family in Arabic or in class through trying to remind their students of the importance of their local language and culture. They do this through choosing themes that focus on local heritage, avoiding ridicule over

mistakes influenced by L1, and reminding students of the importance of L1 in general and Arabic in specific. Wendy also believes that Arabic is becoming more relevant now, with podcasts and popular media trying to re-integrate Arabic. She hopes that this would lead students to 'see beyond the language'. While Wendy did not consciously voice this, her discourse allows room for Skutnabb-Kangas's (2000) call for 'ecology of languages' where languages could survive alongside each other, in a conscious attempt at preserving linguistic human rights. This is also being actively discussed in Lebanon, with calls for multilingualism and *translanguaging* by Bahous et al. (2014) and Bou Ayash (2019) respectively. There are still a number of challenges, though, with some teachers hesitating and still valuing English over Arabic, even in translation courses with learning outcomes specifically catering to multilingualism (Bou Ayash, 2019).

This was especially important when it came to participant assumptions regarding other language myths as well. One of the myths we referred to earlier is the 'native speaker' as an ideal teacher that should be held up as a standard. Similar to the results of the survey (section 5.1), the participants also do not believe in this myth, while they acknowledge its existence. One participant spoke of the manner in which other teachers would 'look up to' the American teacher in the room, assuming that they would have the answer to a given question on the English language. (See section 5.1.1. for the survey results and research on nativespeakerism in Lebanon). Many of my participants did not agree though. For example, Elsa unequivocally advocates 'getting rid of this notion that you have to

be a native speaker for you to be a good English teacher.' However, the myth does exists, and according to Wendy, teachers who have lived abroad and 'acquired the accent' are preferred and usually get more access to teaching positions. Similarly, participants had no illusions about their own linguistic ability. For instance, Moana, explicitly stated that:

> I tell my students… look, I'm Lebanese, I've never lived in the
>
> United States. And this is the language… this is my accent.

This is consistent with research by Shaaban (2005) relating to Lebanese teachers and language proficiency, and might explain why they remained flexible when it came to their students' abilities as well. In the interview, even though I did not raise the issue of an accent, the participants themselves mentioned that they do not focus on the accent at all. Instead, they emphasize good communication skills, fluency, and correct grammar. However, three participants did mention the need to avoid code switching and pronounce words with 'near perfect accuracy'. The problem, though, remains that of impractical standards that others might hold. Elsa discussed her teaching context where colleagues 'are openly criticizing' their programme and assuming that their students are below a 'standard'. She actively critiqued this ideology though, calling it 'marginalization… classism […] discrimination.' Orr (2014) believes second language teachers should be explicitly taught to recognize such ideology, to avoid exacerbating social injustice and inequity. Similarly, Wendy commented on this need to have a 'standard' but then explained that she usually exposes her students to different non-standard variations. In many cases, teaching resources could help, and this

is where Rapunzel discussed the schoolbooks they currently use which focus on WE. This is an optimistic move forward, as it shows the willingness to invest in resources supporting critical language development.

Another common attitude that needed exploration referred to whether teachers felt the need to use only the target language in the classroom. Alana, for example, who teaches both English and Arabic in her primary level classes at a public school, clearly segregated these languages:

> Today we're speaking English, after recess, we're going to do the Arabic class.

Others like Chip called for the need to code-switch when learning a new language, but believed that teachers should try to limit this so that students could focus on the target language. This monolingual fallacy (Cook, 2001; Ismail, 2012) was associated with being 'purists' by both Sarabi and Mulan. While they both 'confessed' to being purists in the past, they have become a lot more flexible. Similarly, Elsa used to only speak in English in class, but has now realized the need to allow more L1 as it is both 'empowering' and allows the students to 'do the thinking in their mother tongue' which yields better second/foreign language acquisition. The major issue here, though, is the role of administration in supporting this trend. Both the survey respondents and the participants clearly discuss this divide between teachers and upper administration. This could be the reason why, according to Bahous et al. (2014), teachers might have hesitated before 'admitting' to code switching. Chip specifically called out public school administration and the unreasonable demands set by the ministry of education:

> They send somebody to overlook the teaching process that's happening in the public school. Yeah, the first thing they ask you is: are you speaking Arabic in class? And they will tell you like that's a no no, you cannot speak Arabic in the class.

He then explained that many teachers simply do not comply with these requirements simply because they would not be able to give a class when students are not proficient. This is consistent with research on foreign language proficiency in public schools, where it was found that students from public high schools in Lebanon could not even produce a complete sentence in English or French (Saba 'Ayon, 2013). This exemplifies the agency and 'resistance' described by Poulson (1998) as teachers contest 'external controls' and defy restrictions (p. 431) to negotiate their lived experience and reality.

Private schools have similar demands and send emails to their teachers reminding them of the 'English-only' or 'French-only' policy, and they consider this necessary in all classes, not just language classes. This is not exclusive to Lebanon, with additional countries in the Middle East opting for EMI primarily, and in many cases, silencing other languages in the process. Ismail (2012) discusses the monolingual fallacy in Oman, while recent work on critical language and EMI has discussed the impact of similar policies on students in UAE (Masri, 2020) who only see English as the language of academic instruction. Many universities are similar, with course evaluations specifically asking students if their teachers had relied on English during class instruction and if their English level was up to 'standard'. However, while some participants

may use translation and other strategies to incorporate L1 into the class despite these restrictions, this feeling of turning the topic into a 'taboo' can only reinforce the myth behind speaking only the target language in class. Elsa seems to shed some hope on the situation, though, stating that using L1 in her institution of higher education has become 'celebrated'.

5.2.1.4 Attitudes towards Language Teaching

The role of the language teacher and their agency is connected to attitudes towards language learning. As such, this category is related to the language resources they use, whether they focus on local experience or target culture, strategies they might use in class, and the degree to which they embrace their role as 'political' agents. The motivation behind this line of questioning was to gauge the degree to which they might hold some critical views of their profession and teacher identity. Table 13 presents these findings as coded in NVivo.

Table 13: Attitudes to Teaching: Nodes in NVivo, Frequency, and Reference

Attitudes to Teaching	Frequency	Reference
Language Resources	9	30
Language Teaching Assumptions	5	8
Radical Pedagogy	5	7
Target Culture	9	24
Use of L1	9	16

While consciously using L1 might support the preservation of the Arabic language, critical awareness of the teaching resources and strategies used in the classroom is also relevant to CP. This is in line with a call for the postmethod era (discussed in section 3.2), which advocates the teacher's ability to personalize

their teaching strategies (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2001). There is no guarantee for this flexibility however. Sarabi was the most frustrated because she wished she had leeway, but her courses heavily relied on an international book, and even though she really did not believe the readings were relevant to her students, she had to teach what was on the syllabus. Similarly, Chip and Alana, both working in public schools, discuss the 'legal' demands on them and the pressure to use the books set by the curriculum, books that Alana extensively reviewed for her MA dissertation and did not believe 'served any of the curriculum goals at all'. Similarly, participants in Esseili's (2014) research described these government-issued books as a complete 'failure' (p. 107). Chip and Alana do manage to get some external resources, though, but it is mostly material taken from the Internet. This is consistent with other experiences in Lebanese public schools, where teachers felt a discord between the curriculum design and practice in the classroom (Saba 'Ayon, 2013). Anna also heavily relies on the Internet and a few recommended sites, and her decision was a necessity, as her private school did not buy the books until well into the academic year. Moana discussed a very important matter relating to conflict of interest and 'the corrupt educational system', where the books her school uses are written by the same committee responsible for preparing the government exams, making these books a necessary resource as the exam questions and the vocabulary are heavily influenced by the books. In essence, if teachers wanted their students to pass the exam, they could not ignore these books. On the other hand, some participants like Rapunzel were quite satisfied with the books they had, but the

only flexibility they had as teachers was in terms of which chapters to select from these required textbooks. Elsa was the single participant who was actively living the postmethod era. Her institution has been using their own 'reader' for a few years. Elsa described these books as:

> A homegrown reader, published by a Lebanese publisher … done
> by Lebanese people.

There was a sense of pride and accomplishment as she spoke about these books, which included texts written by Lebanese authors and also related international texts to 'overarching themes' that capitalize on the local experience. These are the kinds of resources we advocated for in the focus group sessions, ones created by the participating teachers as they attempted to negotiate cultural diversity (Bhaba, 1994) through allowing for multicultural perspectives (Kumaravadivelu, 2008).

This need to focus on the local experience and culture versus an international one was a matter of debate among the participants. Elsa's position was clear: International books do not 'speak' to the local culture and that is frustrating. Other participants like Mulan and Sarabi have tried to add some articles about the local context to supplement predominantly international material. Wendy does not feel she had flexibility to do so in all her classes, so she relies on extra-curricular activities like student clubs where she feels she is more of a decision-maker. However, whenever she can, she has tried to incorporate different texts from different contexts because she values the need for diversity. Moana, however, has a completely different perspective:

We as teachers, as educators, we do not teach nationally. It's very

much the international thing […]. We want to create a global citizen

because we believe that's an added value.

She also believes her students are not as interested in local experiences as well, that many of them care more about global issues. This is not the predominant attitude though, with more participants adhering to Troudi's (2005) call for valuing the 'local' context. This is also in line with Esseili's (2014) research were teachers critiqued imported books for not meeting local needs or interests. Alana, though, has also never consciously selected readings for their local appeal. While Chip has tried to connect the readings to local issues to keep his students motivated, his selections are usually international and he tends to rely on American literature because he enjoys it. The one common issue I have found here, though, was that participants in general – except for Elsa - are not consciously and deliberately attempting to make their classroom more 'bottom-up' and local, as per critical recommendations from Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2001) and Richards (2009). Any use of material from Lebanon or about Lebanon was mostly employed to create more interest in the classroom, not explicitly due to a critical lens. As such, the focus group sessions needed to deliberate these choices, and many participants were able to negotiate their decisions vis-à-vis their context.

5.2.1.5 Critical Ideology

The final category I explored in the initial interview is the extent to which I could consider my participants as 'critical' in their awareness of issues relevant to CALx and CP in general. This served as an attempt at a benchmark through

which I could later discuss the impact of the intervention. Table 14 shows these themes as coded in NVivo.

Table 14: Critical Ideology: Nodes in NVivo, Frequency, and Reference

Critical Ideology	Frequency	Reference
Critical perspective	3	6
Dialogic Inquiry	1	2
Dominant Ideology	4	11
Hegemony	9	20
Hope	2	2
Powerlessness	3	10
Problematizing Givens	5	9
Reflexive Action	3	3
Teacher Agency	8	18

Many of these themes are inter-related, but I will begin with a discussion of hegemony, a fundamental area in any critical discussion. While Phillipson (1992) focuses on the political and economic power imbalance in English language teaching, Kubota (2002) addresses inequality in what she analyses as the 'industry'. During these initial interviews, participants shared experiences of powerlessness and hegemony. These centred around the role of administration - course coordinators and even supervisors who impose certain 'ideals' such as the need to avoid using L1. Parental interference, mostly in private schools, was also important as parents attempt to dictate which novels are assigned or which chapters are removed. Additionally, program values could transform a teacher's agency in the classroom, with capitalist calls to follow the book closely because students paid for it. McLaren (2005) and Giroux (2011) have called upon teachers to resist this capitalist nature of the field. However, many participants

found themselves dealing with lack of flexibility in these scenarios as they simply executed the vision of the publisher and/or program coordinator.

This has led some to feel they have limited power in their classroom. Mulan stated:

That's something we don't do… there's no room for reflexivity…

This is echoed by Sarabi who taught an article that she finds completely irrelevant because 'the syllabus says…'. Wendy explained how one institution deals with teachers who do not cover material on the syllabus:

I actually get a phone call telling me 'you didn't cover that' …

Though she stated that this could be less work for the teacher because everything is 'set', she later explained the joy she feels when she is able to find her own material and work on something relevant to her students. This need for some agency and empowerment as a teacher, for flexibility, has caused Alana to defy expectations:

I believe that at a public school because you don't have a lot of

inspectors going into your classrooms…you can be as flexible as

you want, but by law you're not allowed to.

This need for flexibility and initiative is at the heart of a new spirit in the field, one that calls for 'collective empowerment' (Canagarajah, 2009, p. 174), and one means to achieving this is through identifying restrictions and discussing the assumptions behind them. Similar constraints were discussed in private schools. While teachers could choose their own material, this was mostly from a pre-assigned book and after receiving approval from a direct supervisor. At a

university level, though, participants like Moana explained that they had some more freedom and could choose their own material. This was not common to all participants working at institutes of higher education though. Sarabi exclaimed:

> Do I want the flexibility? Very much.
>
> Do I have the flexibility? Not at all.

Despite these frustrations, though, there was a glimpse of critical hope in these interviews. An initial starting point for CALx as per Pennycook (2001) is the need to problematize givens, and this criticality was present throughout these conversations. Anna and Chip, who are relatively new to the field, continuously interjected their responses with statements showing uncertainty and the need to study the issue further. When discussing whether she uses L1 in the classroom and the rules set by administration, Anna responded:

> Should they say this? Are they right to say it or not?

Chip, while discussing whether he would use L1 deliberately, also ended with a call for further research:

> I don't know… I think it's because, as an English teacher, I would assume that you know… But this is your assumption…I haven't done my research   on this.

This call for embracing uncertainty lies at the heart of CT and notions of *praxis* (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), where critical teachers remain aware of their unique and local experience (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Elsa also called for examining other assumptions we might have, like immediately sending out a resume in English, a remnant of this need for globalization in many cases. Similarly, Mulan focused on

some assumptions she had held when it came to introducing radical and the reason she had refrained:

> I don't know why… Why? Trying to keep it safe? But lately I find
>
> myself wondering… why am I keeping it safe?

All of these attempts at questioning initial assumptions are necessary to actively reflect upon our practices. Pennycook (2001) calls upon teachers to avoid participating in their own 'marginalization' and 'accept that they are involved in a crucial domain of political work' (p. 23). The fact that my participants were already 'there' in terms of being open to uncertainty allowed me to further examine the topics and material I would introduce in the sessions and the degree to which I could have hope, as a critical researcher, that this intervention would have positive impact.

5.2.2 Reflexive Practice Model: Structure and Findings

While the first two sections provided findings related to my first sub-question on initial language teacher attitudes, the upcoming sections will answer the critical component of my study, reflected in my second sub-question (Section 4.3):

> Does a critical intervention that emphasizes dialogic inquiry and the
>
> 'reflexive practice model' affect a TESOL teacher's perspective and
>
> practice?

The data below were mostly taken from my researcher journal (written during the sessions with personal reflections after each session ended). Throughout the sessions, I kept a detailed journal that both described the context of each session

and then allowed me to reflect upon this content and the conversation that ensued. This is in line with recommendations by Creswell (2009). My reflections included commentary on participant engagement levels, criticality, and their conclusions in addition to anything that needed to be changed before the forthcoming session. Each session began with a brief 'warm-up' for five minutes where we all conversed about recent events. This naturally revolved around how we were coping with the COVID-19 lockdown, and it allowed participants who were trying to access the online platform to do so in time. This was also crucial to build rapport and establish trust (Creswell, 2009) and camaraderie among the participants to initiate Freire's dialogic process. Then, as the facilitator, I gave a short 10-minute presentation on the assigned article where I explored the major issue at hand along with the corresponding theory. The purpose of this introductory session and assigning an article is to achieve what Wellington (2001) would describe as a 'conversation with a purpose' (p. 243). I then left the participants with a prompt inspired by the reading and invited them to their group breakout sessions. They had internal discussions in their separate 'online rooms' for around 20 minutes, with the expectation that they would need to report back to the main room once the breakout session ended. These online rooms allowed each group to interact (Wilson, 1997) and discuss the topic without any hierarchy of back and forth with the researcher (Cohen et al., 2018). This process mostly went smoothly and the subsequent group report was always engaging as participants had sufficient ideas from their smaller group work to expand upon. In many sessions, I extended the discussion at the end, attempting to prompt

participants to reflect upon how their discussion could inform their practice, thereby facilitating *praxis* and reminding participants of the possibility to turn theory into action (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). That final conversation would take around 15 minutes before participants completed their online reflexive journal via Google Forms (for more details on logistics and participants, see section 4.4.2).

While my original plan had been for participants to complete this journal online and then 'physically' leave the meeting room, the fact that participants were now meeting virtually meant that I could not identify when participants could access the link. My recommendation was for them to complete these as soon as they could, but some participants took longer and some went back to those journals and completed them later in the day. In a few cases, not all participants completed all journals despite further prompting, and as these were anonymous, I could not identify which participant did not complete them. These instances were not alarming, though, and in general, I was able to generate sufficient participant feedback during the sessions. While I might sometimes refer to journal entries here, complete analysis of these entries (as coded in Nvivo) is included in section 5.2.3. The breakdown of topic and content area for each session can be found below in addition to the major conclusions from the reflexive section of the journal. The structure of each session and its connection to Kumaravadivelu's (2012) KARDS framework can also serve as a template for similar critical professional development opportunities.

5.2.2.1 Criticality, Action Research, and Trust Building

The purpose of the first session, held on April 25, 2020 was to create camaraderie among the participants. While my original plan had been to discuss criticality and AR in general, the immediate 'lived' experience of the COVID-19 lockdown made it a more relevant issue, in line with similar models of critical PD that highlighted the personal experience (Aktekin, 2009). I had also recently read an op-ed in a higher education blog originally titled 'Instructors, Please Wash Your Hair' by Kristie Kiser (2020), focusing on 'professionalism' and online teaching during the lockdown. I believed this would be an excellent means of engaging participants as many of them were currently teaching online and this article's call for teachers to serve as an ideal role model was very relevant, and in many cases, provocative. Its portrayal of the educator as a beacon of knowledge without personal concerns or fears – even during a pandemic - also lent itself towards a discussion of CP in general. The breakdown of the first session and its connection to Kumaravadivelu's KARDS programme was as follows:

1. *Warm-up activity*

2. *Action research and Criticality:* This presentation focused on **K**nowledge on a professional level, as per Kumaravadivelu, 2012) and included Stringer's (1999) Look – Think – Act model, Troudi's (2015) AR model, and Emancipatory research (Lather, 1986).

3. *Breakout session:* Here, participants embraced **K**nowledge on a personal level while discussing a prompt relevant to the assigned article. (*Prompt: Do you agree with the article's claims? Have you experienced similar*

concern over your 'professionalism' during online teaching? Are there any other issues of fairness and equality pertaining to both faculty and students that you have considered?) Discussing the topic in terms of both teachers and students also fulfilled an essential part of Kumaravadivelu's (2012) KARDS programme, both **A**nalysis of learner needs and **R**ecognizing the teachers' needs as well.

4. *Reporting back and Praxis:* This final discussion attempted to reconnect the disparate groups and allowed for **D**ialogic inquiry (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). It mostly focused on whether there was something we could change to improve this current situation.

5. *Guided Participant Journal Entry:* All journal entries followed the same guided format (Appendix 6) and allowed participants to reflect upon the topic covered and identify any change in attitudes. This guided journal capitalized on the final step in Kumaravadivelu's programme: **S**eeing their journey in a reflective light. This also confirmed the 'reflexive' nature of my model.

While reflecting on this session, it became apparent that the choice of a provocative article from participants' current experience with the 'forced' transition to online teaching allowed for an immediate sense of companionship. During the focus group sessions, participants connected with the material as they were living this challenging moment. They shared personal stories on how they transitioned to online teaching during the pandemic, and a debate unfolded, as some were actually very frustrated with the assigned reading as they felt it was

too biased and idealistic, while others agreed that teachers needed to maintain an element of decorum even during these tougher times. They were not passively consuming the assigned article. On the contrary, they were very critical of the author's assumptions that a teacher needed to be a 'role model' or a paragon of virtue. However, on the notion of 'professionalism', some participants did agree that teachers should maintain a certain level of professionalism, should be prepared, and should not let their personal issues affect their teaching presence, which is the way they believe teachers should be, both inside and outside the physical classroom. This did show me, though, that not all participants were openly rebelling against the *status quo*, at least not in an explicit manner that Giroux (2015) would probably support. This article resonated, though, and participants continued to refer to 'washing their hair' for the duration of the sessions.

After their discussion in the breakout sessions, and later in the main training 'room', the following critical sub-themes emerged:

a) *'Professionalism' and vulnerability:* This point focused on whether teachers should 'wear pyjamas with pokemons' – a critique in the article – as a means of being relatable to their students, or whether they should put on their 'teacher mask'. This was a central point pertaining to CP where a teacher is essentially sharing their personal attitudes in a 'vulnerable' manner. Participants were generally divided here, with some believing 'we need to be professional regardless of the platform being used', while others expected both institutions and students to grant teachers more

'grace'. Most of them agreed though that the piece was 'idealistic' as one participant stated.

b) *Education as a business (and the banking model):* One group in specific focused on this issue, and there was consensus in the full room afterwards. The article does seem to present education as a business with the student needs coming in first and the teachers holding on to these 'clients'. This goes against 'the mission' that some teachers feel they have, as one participant stated, to be more than just teachers in an institution. There was also a reference to the teacher as 'all-knowing' and simply transmitting the message to students, pandemic or not, further confirming the banking model as per Freire (2005).

c) *Institutional unfairness:* This was a major issue covered in both breakout sessions and the main room. Teachers, in general, felt that their institutions value student well-being and 'were not very concerned' with faculty well-being. While some institutions have created small online groups to inquire as to their teachers' mental health and the way they have been dealing with the crisis and the transition to online teaching, others have simply ignored the teachers, just making demands. A more controversial issue, though, is the notion of compensation. Some teachers were either not getting paid at all, while others had a drastic cut to their salary. In a country like Lebanon, which is currently suffering from price inflation and increased cost of goods due to the current economic collapse

and the devaluation of the local currency, this becomes even more problematic.

d) *Empowerment and the online transition:* One participant spoke about the first two weeks of transitioning online, before the school administration began to interfere and place its protocols. During those two weeks, she felt 'empowered', as she had been able to create her own schedule. She passionately talked about how she had 'prepared more than what was on the original syllabus'. Ironically, the new schedule imposed by the department was less demanding, and she was not satisfied with the quality of work as a result. Another issue that a few participants discussed was the institution's recommendations for teachers to be 'lenient' while also holding them accountable for maintaining academic standards, an 'impossible mission' as one participant mentioned.

e) *Values assigned to online teaching:* There was a general complaint regarding the way parents viewed teachers in general, with many assuming that parent-teacher-associations have created a situation where teachers have felt undervalued. With online teaching, this has become significantly worse, with some memes highlighting how 'we don't need teachers anymore' and 'we can just Google it'. Many parents also feel there is 'no need to pay for online teaching'. Participants were highly resentful here as they felt they were putting in 'more work with very little reward'.

In general, the participant journals echoed similar themes but also showed that, while some teachers felt they had to change the current *status quo*, other participants were also 'resigned to their fate' as one entry stated, working within the restrictions and their 'boundaries'. One participant wrote, 'I can make changes in the way I teach (bottom up) but not in what I am required to teach (top to bottom)'. This shows the lack of empowerment that participants had embraced in many ways, bringing them further away from any rebellious CP, at least at the beginning of the session.

As for the platform itself, the pace of the session was very convenient for all, and they engaged with the breakout sessions. Those participants who had previously stated that they find it more efficient to be exposed to theory before beginning group discussion appreciated the structure of the session. Internet remained an obstacle for some participants but that was something I could not actively improve.

5.2.2.2 On 'Knowledge' and Assumptions in TESOL

This purpose of the second session, held on May 2, was to critically discuss the types of knowledge participants had been exposed to. As Kumaravadivelu's KARDS approach to teacher development was the guiding principle of these sessions (See section 4.4.2), the assigned text participants had to read was Kumaravadivelu's (2012) chapter titled 'Knowing' from the book *Language Teacher Education for a Global Society*. The breakdown of the second session was as follows:

1. *Warm-up activity*

2. *Teacher Knowledge* (focusing on Kamaravadivelu's work). This included provoking the language teacher, prioritizing cyclical teacher training over sequential/traditional, focusing on the goals of particularity, practicality, and possibility, types of knowledge: professional, procedural, personal, and the KARDS programme for teacher reflexivity

3. *Breakout session:* The first group discussion revolved around the following prompt from Kumaravadivelu (2012): Professional knowledge has been described as something that experts produce. Under what circumstances can teachers produce professional knowledge? When does (or can) a teacher's personal knowledge get recognized as professional knowledge? If teacher knowledge is more important than expert knowledge, why do you think experts' knowledge has been privileged over teachers' personal knowledge? And can we transform this reality? The second discussion prompted teachers to identify major assumptions in TESOL and their effects on their approach to teaching. They were also expected to classify the source of these assumptions.

4. *Guided Participant Journal Entry* (same as description in 5.2.2.1)

    All attendees had all read the article and were pleased with the way in which

Kumaravadivelu (2012) had classified the different types of knowledge. The discussions were engaging, and they shared a lot of their experiences and their attitudes, especially concerning administrative 'power structures' and the values in conferences they had attended. While participants were generally not critical of

Kumaravadivelu's article, as they seemed to accept the classification he created, the discussions themselves were highly critical. Topics covered in the breakout sessions, and later in the main training 'room' included the following themes:

a) *Personal knowledge vs. 'Expert' knowledge:* Most participants stated that personal knowledge is extremely important, but without publications and the research process as a whole (including AR), this knowledge would not be taken seriously. As one participant said, 'without being published, it will always be considered subjective'. The problem, though, is that subjectivity was considered *negative.* However, they felt that most teachers are usually so overwhelmed with teaching and service that they rarely have time for research. One participant shared that their personal knowledge was only considered valuable when the whole school conducted a formal AR activity. This is consistent with recent research in Lebanon by Arayssi et al. (2020), who claim that most teachers need support at an institutional level to be able to publish in their field and conduct AR/PR. Another participant discussed the impact of blogging, which might not affect the curriculum as a whole or be considered valuable on an institutional level, but is still quite relevant to teacher knowledge, where many teachers rely on these blogs and find them 'authentic'.

b) *The nature of TESOL as a discipline:* One participant shared the fact that she always felt 'in between' disciplines, 'grasping to find what works' from different experts to acquire some form of credibility. Sometimes, this meant valuing one field over another. In her institution and local context,

for instance, 'corpus-based linguistics might not always work' but it is being valued over other types of research/sources of knowledge. No one at their institution had openly reviewed this though or requested looking at a wider spectrum.

c) *The 'Positivist' turn:* A debate regarding quantitative data and positivism ensued, with many participants discussing their weariness that research is always geared towards positivism. One participant even stated that the 'positivist need to verify was problematic'. Another also believed this fascination with collecting quantitative evidence further affected whether a teacher's personal knowledge would be considered as valuable, which might explain why blogging might 'influence other teachers but will not reach the curriculum or institution'.

d) *Lack of trust*: This was another important theme to emerge, the idea that institutions do not always place a lot of trust in their teaching staff. This is even more relevant in TESOL and if the teacher is not a native speaker. There was a general feeling that they were never 'good enough'.

e) *Native vs. non-native speakers*: While I had been under the impression this was not a major issue in Lebanon, as most English language teachers are non-native and Lebanese (see previous sections on nativespeakerism), one participant explained that this might be due to legal issues as well. Some private schools had apparently resisted hiring Lebanese English language teachers until they were *obliged to do so by law.* One way to gain more trust was to assign these teachers 'grammar

classes' as these are skills they could learn and thereby teach, as opposed to more 'complex' skills, creating a situation of social injustice. They also discussed employability in the Gulf and how having an 'accent places you on a higher pedestal'. The criticality involved in debating 'which accent' though was not one they had openly discussed in their institutions.

f) *Use of L1*: This was an assumption that all breakout groups discussed. One group also theorized the reason behind this trend, blaming nuns – usually the administration in many private FMI schools - who would punish kids who spoke Arabic, even outside the classroom. 'We were simply not allowed to speak any other language', one participant stated when remembering her experience.

g) *Some changes to previous trends*: One participant, who has had extensive experience with creating tools that work for their particular context, proudly explained that their institution even created its own entrance exam, catering to what they want, not an external test like the SAT. However, participants believed that these conversations are needed at an inter-institutional level as well for others to create their own tools. This is in line with recommendations for teachers to become more involved as they avoid being consumers of 'prescribed theories' (Arayssi et al., p. 903). Such a call for change is also in line with CP in general and Freire's hope in a better future (Van Heertum, 2010).

Unlike the previous session, the journal entries here showed a general feeling of hope that change could happen. When it came to research, one participant

stated that 'Lebanon was a barren land', and teachers could 'make a difference'. Others similarly believed it was time for new researchers to value 'personal knowledge'. This is consistent with Arayssi et al.'s (2020) call for PR, but the institutional challenges are still important to note. Participants in my study echoed that we have an opportunity to make a difference and change the current *status quo*, a very hopeful and critical turn. One entry spoke of always finding the 'possibility for change' and remaining optimistic. Blogging was also an easily accessible option that a couple of participants wished to try. One journal entry included a personal call to action immediately connected to the theme of the second session:

> 'I got encouraged to start writing blogs questioning these assumptions so that more teachers/instructors can start rethinking them.'

This confirms that participants found the topic relevant and worth sharing with their communities, a recurrent theme in the sessions. Additionally, the need for effective communication channels between institutions was highlighted. The emphasis, though, was that these channels should not feel 'condescending', as if one institution is 'telling' others what to do. That entry advocated for a space where there are no institutions or academics who 'know more'; instead, we should create a space 'where egos are not allowed'. This inter-institutional PD will be one of the recommendations from my study (See chapter 6). PD should be a conversation about the different processes, and an invitation for each institution, coordinator, and teacher to adapt these strategies to their own

context. This would also maintain equal power structures. Another call to action was expressed regarding holding 'a different kind of conference'. One participant felt that current conferences involve a lot of 'showing off' as opposed to sharing, and all participants agreed on that point. They believed that many conferences seem to marginalize most teachers, as professional speakers 'bestow their expertise and knowledge' onto others (to quote one participant). One participant remembered a session where the keynote speaker spoke about CV writing in the Gulf, and the Q&A was facilitated by an administrator who was also new to Lebanon, leaving everyone in the room effectively out of the conversation. The problem with this is that it usually leaves attendees with two options according to this entry: Either losing trust in the effectiveness of these PD opportunities or 'buying into the narrative' and the assumption that these experts are better and 'need to be followed' for their professional knowledge. One suggestion was to create a space where speakers with both procedural and personal knowledge (*the participant actually used Kumaravadivelu's terminology*) would be hosted in addition to what would be considered expert knowledge. This is consistent with the need to create what has also been called 'intentional learning communities' where teachers share their experiences in a fluid and borderless manner, thereby 'giving shape to the substance of educators' experiences […] which is often invisible to outsiders yet binds insiders together' (Lieberman, 1996, p. 52).

5.2.2.3 On 'Languaging' and Common Fallacies

This third session, held on May 16, focused specifically on CALx and issues pertaining to 'languaging' and common fallacies associated with language

learning and teaching. The assigned text was by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) titled 'Linguistic Human Rights and Teachers of English' though she bases her research on the Nordic model of teaching, which offers conclusions that might be quite different from our context. The breakdown of the session is as follows:

1. *Warm-up activity*

2. *Attitudes:* Linguistic human rights vs. modernization and the 'free' market

3. *Common language fallacies*: The monolingual fallacy, the native speaker fallacy, the early start fallacy, the maximum exposure fallacy, and the subtractive fallacy

4. *Breakout session:* The first group discussion revolved around the five common fallacies and the Nordic model Skutnabb-Kangas proposes. Participants were prompted to discuss the five common fallacies within their contexts.

5. *Praxis:* Then, there was a discussion regarding *Translanguaging* and the fluidity of using a student's 'full linguistic repertoire' (Garcia, 2019) with the example of cartoons like 'Dora the Explorer' which expose children to languaging through blending English and Spanish in the original version, and French-English in the dubbed French version. There was also a final open discussion on whether translanguaging would work in Lebanon.

6. *Guided Participant Journal Entry* (same as description in 5.2.2.1)

The breakout sessions were very animated with participants sharing diverse experiences to the extent that I had to prolong the originally allocated time given to these sessions. One group also actively decided to conduct their breakout

session fully in Arabic, to defy the current *status quo* where all our conversations had been mostly in English even though we are all Arabic speakers. This showed both their versatility and the critical awareness that resulted in an immediate change, further confirming the catalytic validity of this intervention. They had all read the article and were mostly in agreement with Skutnabb-Kangas, though they did question some of the fallacies she covered and whether the choice of Nordic countries could be a context that we could follow in Lebanon. The Lebanese context is different, especially the pragmatic need for foreign languages (Banat, 2020). Topics covered in the breakout sessions, and later in the main training 'room' included the following themes:

a) *The Early Start fallacy:* While the other fallacies mostly went uncontended, this one was heavily debated. The major argument revolved around previous research showing that babies (0-18 months) are 'neurolinguistically' ready to learn languages, and the feeling that we should not take this away from them. This assumption has been debated, with research showing that such linguistic abilities are not necessarily dependent on early acquisition (Vega-Mendoza et al., 2015). Another comment related to whether being bilingual/multilingual at an early age positively influences intelligence, but the research has not apparently been conclusive on this point as well. One recent study has also debunked the myth of the bilingual advantage in general, claiming that the 'cognitive benefits of bilingualism are not as broad and as robust as previously assumed' (von Bastian et al., 2016). One participant shared how their

family has been using the COVID-19 lockdown to teach her nephew Arabic without any other distraction and has slowly come to realize that 'being monolingual is not that bad at one stage'. Another important point was that many participants in the study had learned English at a later stage, in middle school mostly, and still managed to achieve fluency. This made them highly critical of the early start assumption they might have previously adopted.

b) *Attitudes towards Arabic vs. French/English:* There was a general agreement that our connection to Arabic has changed since the October 2019 revolution in Lebanon, where Arabic has become the unifying tongue, with slogans and chants in Arabic and even social media users critiquing non-Arabic users. One participant explained that 'our problems are local, and we cannot use a foreign language to communicate them anymore'. Another conversation revolved around how we might switch between Arabic, French, and English depending on the topic, using French for example to discuss attitudes towards fashion because those words are more accessible to us. This is a strong point in favour of *translanguaging* and using our 'full linguistic repertoire'. However, one participant discussed the problematic notion of 'prestige' associated with learning a foreign language in Lebanon, with certain families hiring foreign domestic workers and caregivers so they can 'positively influence' their children's access to English/French. Another important point here is our unique Lebanese context and seeking employment and immigration

opportunities elsewhere, which makes multilingualism a necessary (and pragmatic) part of our lives (See section 2.1).

c) *Marginalization:* One participant explained that in order to gain access to Wikipedia.edu, for instance, her class had to prove its affiliation with an American university, and she was shocked at how a platform that claims to democratize knowledge can still be restrictive when it comes to academic institutions. There was also a discussion on Arabic resources, which made our access to Arabic seem 'fake' because these resources are quite out-dated. One group even spoke of a 'conspiracy against the Arabic language'. There are resources in Arabic, though, for all academic levels, but teachers might either not be aware of that or might have just accepted the narrative that Arabic resources are simply unavailable.

d) *Connection to our mother tongue*: L1 was associated with being the 'mother tongue' and allowing access to all the emotions when learning a language from a loved one. When parents do not use that language with their kids and prefer to speak using a foreign language, inevitably something is lost. Currently, there are informal reports of young children in Lebanon who cannot emotionally connect to their parents, with language as a barrier (El Alam Haddad, 2019), but more research is needed on this issue. Additionally, one group reported the 'lack of proficiency that mothers may have', which might 'eliminate that emotional bond' and connection to language. This is where code switching might be that

mother's only 'natural' repertoire, as 'mothers don't have enough L1 to give'.

e) *Is translanguaging a solution?* This approach was new to all participants. There was a general excitement over translanguaging as a strategy, but the unanimous opinion was that we were not ready. Some teachers are firmly rooted in the notion of only using one language in class. Administration heavily stresses the need to speak English and/or French even for non-language classes, considering the use of L1 'a taboo' as one participant stated, so the 'radical' notion of a language teacher choosing to consciously adopt a fluid approach in the classroom might not be accepted – at least for now. One participant ironically spoke of 'the shock' that might follow such a suggestion. However, some institutions are becoming more progressive. For instance, one participant is about to publish a paper on translanguaging in her academic English class where students are using Armenian and English to report to the class. She believes this to be a means of welcoming our students into the classroom, as opposed to marginalizing them.

Following this session, the participants called for a revolution in their journal entries, joking about the need to design and print t-shirts calling for translanguaging. Many explained that they were going to share this week's discussion with a number of people in their personal and professional milieu as it offered a means of 'gaining equality in class', a theme common to CP. As one entry mentioned,

I am now more determined to work on this especially to try and fight the ingrained system that not only forces us to prefer the foreign made over the local but also shames us if we think otherwise.

All participants had been unaware of translanguaging explicitly, which is not surprising, as it has not been commonly discussed in educational circles in Lebanon. While it has recently come to my attention that a few workshops on translanguaging have taken place in the Gulf in 2020, these have yet to become part of the more mainstream language teacher workshops or PD workshops. Myths and assumptions regarding a 'pure' way to learn a language continue to surface in mainstream circles. One journal entry also expressed concern over rebelling against institutional norms because 'not subscribing to that could jeopardize my work and also my authority'. This is where critical studies need to acknowledge the obstacles and people's attitude to their reality. Social media has also played a role here as accounts claiming to be experts in raising bilinguals prescribe how to learn two languages at once. A recent post shared on July 22, 2020, while writing this chapter, claims *without any doubt* that parents should 'make sure your child starts and finishes a sentence in the same language' (how2raisebilinguals, 2020) which does not promote the same fluid tone embraced by advocates of translanguaging (Garcia, 2019; Wei & Lin, 2019). While there might be some logic to this approach, the major issue is its 'prescriptive' tone, allowing little room for debate, which runs contrary to the spirit of critical research in general.

5.2.2.4 On Language Teaching Resources and Culture

This fourth session, held on May 23, focused more specifically on procedural approaches and decisions made while teaching English, mainly the selection of language teacher resources and the spectrum of target or local culture. Before the session, participants were asked to read an article by Sobkowiak (2016) titled 'Critical thinking in the intercultural context: Investigating EFL textbooks' to gauge the values they felt were prioritized in their programs and whether they have had the opportunity to target critical thinking and multiculturalism. The breakdown of the session was as follows:

1. *Warm-up activity*

2. *Values:* The need to identify texts that value Critical Thinking (CT) and Intercultural Competence (ICC)

3. *Rationale:* The convergence of developing ICC and CT

4. *Breakout session:* The first group discussion revolved around the teaching resources participants had brought with them. Participants evaluated their texts based on their values, evidence, cultural background, challenges to existing biases.

5. *Praxis:* Participants then discussed whether they could introduce more 'radical' texts and gender non-conformity in their classrooms.

6. *Guided Participant Journal Entry* (same as description in 5.2.2.1)

By the fourth session, participants had begun to look forward to our weekly meetings, stating how this allowed them to converse with their community. As this session relied heavily on power sharing, with participants bringing their own

resources 'to the table', attendees were engaged especially when they discussed the process they follow as they select articles. They were also very interested in stories of success and challenges faced by their colleagues in different contexts.

They all found the article by Sobkowiak (2016) practical and were able to apply the concepts of CT and ICC to their texts. Topics covered in the breakout sessions, and later in the main training 'room' included the following themes:

a) *Challenges:* The major obstacle to focusing on ICC was the lack of flexibility in some curricula, where teachers are simply handed down the material. Another difficulty is the need to focus on academic writing, which makes it 'a challenge to find interesting and relevant cultural content' that both appeals to students and meets course requirements, as one participant stated.

b) *Local vs. international*: This took centre stage in the discussion. One participant discussed their experience of creating their personal reader because they did not want to buy an 'international edition' from a major publisher. They wanted articles from the students' experience. Other participants felt that choosing mostly Lebanese authors would restrict our options. However, the discussion then turned towards the need to motivate our writers to contribute. For instance, the participant who had worked on their personalized reader explained how 'soliciting contributions to the reader encouraged students to write and prepare content'. These supplemented some works which were also sometimes from American and British authors. The need to be inclusive was the guiding principle

though. To quote this participant, 'international editions feel like hand-me down clothes when you're the third child.' This statement resonated when discussing the power dynamics. In contrast, the empowerment felt through creating a local reader at a tertiary level of education lends itself to valuing local knowledge while remaining aware of the need to diversify and include international material where relevant. This is in line with calls for finding an 'alternative' means of learning English that resists extremes (Canagarajah, 1999) while empowering local communities (Canagarajah, 2009).

c) *Flexibility*: The general impression was that teachers given more flexibility would become more critical of the material that appeals to their students. They also felt that teachers and students should discuss the motivation and rationale behind the choice of topic. One participant spoke of the importance of 'intentionality' and being critical while selecting class resources. Another shared a more egalitarian practice adopted in her school, where they empower students to choose topics of interest at the beginning of the year. These topics are usually from a pre-assigned book though.

d) *Controversial/radical texts*: One participant mentioned how students 'respond more to controversial texts'. However, radical texts pose a challenge as the parents and administration may not always be tolerant. As one participant stated, parents in their school 'went crazy' when they realized a book included a story of a pregnant teenager. Another father

asked a teacher what she meant by using 'girls...boys... and others' in class. This participant ended up replying that she believed in ghosts, which were 'gender-neutral'. The irony is that the father was more willing to tolerate a teacher conversing with ghosts in class over tolerance towards gender neutrality. Participants who taught at a university level, who felt that they could frame these controversial texts as an opportunity for students to practice CT and suspend judgement, did not face this challenge. Administration is also explicitly clear with some teachers that there should be 'no talk about sex, religion, and politics' in the classroom'. This is where defying the *status quo* could 'affect their livelihood' according to one participant.

In conclusion, the participants felt that they could try to make minor changes to their reading selection to accommodate ICC. One journal entry confirmed this immediate desire to include 'Lebanese/Arab authors (also preferably female)'. Thus, they were willing to take steps to ensure greater diversity and inclusivity in their choices. However, they were cognizant of the challenges involved. As one participant wrote, the discussion during that session made them aware of their 'privilege to talk about and discuss anything I want to with my students in comparison to other teachers in other institutions and schools'. This confirms the importance of connecting as peers in such focus groups, an essential requirement to create dialogue and equality (Kirylo, 2013).

5.2.2.5 On 'Political' Teacher Training

This last session, held on May 30, created a roadmap for critical and reflexive *praxis.* The session allowed participants to focus on their critical language teaching identity, whether they considered themselves 'political' in a critical sense, and whether they would be willing to embrace a deliberately political agenda that took into consideration current debatable issues in the field and matters of power and hegemony. Before the session, participants read part of a discussion by Leban and McLaren (2010) titled 'Revolutionary critical pedagogy: The struggle against the oppression of Neoliberalism' and watched a YouTube video titled 'Where is the outrage? Critical pedagogy in dark times' by Giroux (2015). The breakdown of the session was as follows:

1. *Warm-up activity*

2. *Attitudes:* The main topic was on critical 'political' teacher training and the concept that 'the basis of education is political' – from a discussion by Leban & McLaren (2010). We also discussed 'global hierarchies of sexual, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, linguistic, and racial forms of domination and exploitation.'

3. *Call to action:* The discussion then focused on Giroux's (2015) call for more 'political' teachers who actively question institutional norms. The final message was at the heart of CP and critical research: changing the world instead of just interpreting it, with hope in a new beginning.

- *Breakout session:* The group discussion focused on whether participants had ever advocated (in class) for a cause they believed in, they had

experienced examples of a 'capitalist' framework at their institutions, and they felt it was their 'duty' as teachers to move beyond the lesson and advocate against educational policies.

4. *Guided Participant Journal Entry* (same as description in 5.2.2.1)

As this was the last session, there was a resounding feeling of hope in new ventures and new ways to remain in touch. With respect to the topic, though, there were mixed feelings regarding the 'politics' of a teacher's identity. While many examples were given about ways in which teachers could be political, there were also concerns and fears over the challenges and risks involved. Topics covered in the breakout sessions, and later in the main training 'room' included the following themes:

a) *Examples of 'decolonizing pedagogy'*: Participants discussed different examples of institutional policies deemed consumerist and discriminatory. These included preference for larger class sizes, removal of low-enrolled programs, competition among institutions, and emphasis on teacher evaluations (with inequity involved there as well among male/female academics). One participant shared her experience in her institution that paid for an expensive programme but did not fully train teachers, as the priority had been 'just to compete with other schools' over existing resources. One participant voiced the viewpoint that 'schools, universities, and hospitals should not be businesses and money-making machines with branding'. Sadly, participants felt that this was our consumerist reality.

b) *Discussing controversial or 'change-making' topics*: Participants generally felt that they had to share topics related to gender and sexuality for example, as a means of countering the current narrative. However, some believed this should happen with graduate students 'due to their level of maturity'. Other examples were given relating to revising the curriculum as a whole to focus on social issues at a very young age. However, inherent within this strategy is the need to teach critical skills that focus on human rights without explicitly identifying a political 'agenda'. Many agreed with one participant who described students 'as a conservative generation', thereby making it difficult for the teacher to be explicitly political or radical.

c) *Challenges*: One of the surprising challenges mentioned included the students themselves. They sometimes tend to be focused only on their grades and 'competition' (another manifestation of the Capitalist mentality), making it difficult for them to care about other skills that might not be graded. One participant stated that, in many cases when she focused on items that were not emphasized in the curriculum, she felt that she could not do more than counter the dominant narrative and play the devil's advocate when it comes to certain causes. 'I really feel alone. The system – syllabus – curriculum – it's all against me.' There was also talk of 'students who feel we are pushing an agenda'. This was stated as if having an agenda was a taboo, and it led to a debate afterwards, as some participants were comfortable with explicitly mentioning their aspirations for social issues beyond the syllabus. There was also criticism that

students would 'prefer to be bystanders' or even 'ridicule other peoples' efforts'.

d) *Owning your truth… to an extent*: A discussion arose regarding the degree of honesty that instructors could have in the classroom. A participant shared an experience whereby students asked if she had tried marijuana (during a discussion on legalizing marijuana), and she felt that she had to lie about that. A teacher's inability to be completely open and 'political' was attributed to the perceived risk to their job security and the conservative nature of some. This, however, does not affect all teachers equally. As such, teachers who have assumed some power might be able to make their opinions heard clearly, but the majority would probably be worried about possible repercussions. Additionally, some participants felt there was no need to 'actively create a political agenda' – at least not deliberately. They would address issues as they arise 'in a more implicit manner'. One participant preferred to 'allow student voices and only share my voice if the situation allows'.

f) *Empowerment:* The overwhelming consensus was that empowerment could be achieved once we have the data to justify our outrage and a community we can rely on. One participant shared the example of the Women's Faculty Alliance at their institution. This alliance was formed after a longitudinal report showed that male academics in general are paid 30% more than female faculty and tend to receive promotion at a faster rate. Because of these data, the female faculty members were

empowered to create their alliance. Currently, this alliance works without any institutional support but maintains its momentum from its constituents, who have been using school meetings as opportunities to make their voice heard. In her words, they have been 'working underground'. Despite its limitations, the story of this alliance had a positive impact on the participants, who felt empowered simply by listening to this experiment in power sharing, but one participant still spoke of the 'politicization' of these groups that could 'warn faculty not to speak up against administration to not risk losing work'.

g) *CP vs. Indoctrination*: One extremely important distinction was made here. One participant believed that students 'look up to you'. This made the teacher feel that she could not openly share her opinions because she would be 'taken as a higher voice with more authority'. Participants discussed whether being openly political or expressing our voice might have the opposite impact, allowing room for indoctrination rather than active critique. This is where power sharing needs to occur and students need to be aware of their own power in the conversation, with the teacher's voice and opinions being just one additional opinion. This involves a highly critical stance by the teacher, and some participants were worried that this might not always be the case. Another point was to clarify that having a 'political' agenda does not necessarily mean discussing the politics or government of one's country or context, though that might be an issue at times. Smyth (2010) comments that a 'political'

and critical educator does not mean being a political partisan. Instead, it involves a problematization of institutional politics (Giroux, 2015). In Lebanon, though, education, social justice, religion, and politics have been intertwined (Diab, 2000), and teachers might hesitate before opening up any discussion that might become political and sectarian.

The major conclusion from this last session was the need for more teacher development and training, similar to what we had just experienced in the study, and the need to create a community of practice. This was a demand made by all participants, and I shared all their contact details (upon their request) to facilitate the process. There were plans to create events with more teachers and to work on similar topics to empower others and conduct additional research, consistent with recent calls for PR by Arayssi et al. (2020). Such concrete calls to action are in line with CP in general and the need for empowerment and reflexive action at the local and individual level, without a hierarchical structure. It also supports recommendations by Kotob (2007) and Nabhani and Bahous (2010). The major conclusion of these sessions, however, was their ability to portray *praxis*. McLaren (2015) emphasizes the ability for abstraction to lead to action, to 'revolutionary praxis' (p. 29).This is echoed in one participant journal who stated, 'I am not alone', which gave her a feeling of empowerment and the notion that she could exercise her 'voice without guilt'.

5.2.3 Reflexive Journal Entries: Participant Feedback

While I have previously referred to individual journal entries after each session in section 5.2.2, this part of the thesis will identify emergent themes

across these entries. Primarily, participants had been aware of the shortcomings of PD in Lebanon. Elsa was also clear on why she wanted to join these sessions despite the fact that she had been exposed to the same material for her doctoral degree:

> I'm so opposed to hearing somebody come and tell me 'this is how it should be done' … so I want to hear people's experiences…

This emphasis on a bottom-up approach, focusing on participant experiences and personal knowledge, appealed to everyone. This is why I was extremely interested in reading the participant journals. These guided journals, accessed through the same Google form link, were anonymous because I needed their feedback without any additional pressure. All of these journals were coded in NVivo using the same qualitative codebook employed for analysing the initial interviews. This also ensured triangulation across the different data sources. However, my focus was to review any reference to *dialogic inquiry* (Freire, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2012), where participants explicitly discuss their relationship to each other, as this attempt at dialogue is crucial to the focus group sessions, where the researcher only exists as one participating member of the discussion (Cohen et al., 2018). Another focal point was any mention of a *change* in opinion or any reference to questioning assumptions, a central component of CALx (Pennycook, 2001). These two elements allowed me to answer my second sub-question. 'Powerlessness', 'reflexive action', and 'hope' were also critical areas I chose to focus on to identify any *planned action* based on the discussion at hand.

A breakdown of the sub-themes relevant to the focus group sessions can be found in table 15

Table 15: Sub-themes in Participant Journals (Nodes in NVivo)

Critical Ideology	Frequency	Reference
Dialogic Inquiry	14	14
Hope	5	5
Powerlessness	6	8
Problematizing Givens	11	12
Reflexive Action	15	19

5.2.3.1 Reflexive Action, Problematizing Givens, and Dialogic Inquiry

As can clearly be seen in the coded anonymous journals, the most frequent reference was to the *reflexive action* that participants were considering after the sessions. This is in line with the purpose of action research and 'research as *praxis*' (Lather, 1986; Freire, 2005). In some cases, participants showed a newfound awareness of the role of reflection itself:

> I think I will be focusing more on the reflection aspect of the
>
> teaching process. If I could reflect on my procedural knowledge
>
> then this could improve my teaching skills.

In others, it was an immediate action to change their practice. For instance, the discussion on *translanguaging* inspired many participants to work towards allowing students (and teachers) to employ their 'full linguistic repertoire' and Garcia's (2019) concept of fluidity.

> I feel the need to start working on this issue mainly to have equality
>
> in class by breaking the pedestal teachers were put on!

One participant, who deliberately used a combination of Arabic and English in their journal entry explicitly referred to the empowerment of such holistic strategies:

> See? I started translanguaging. I am now more determined to work on this especially to try and fight the ingrained system that not only forces us to prefer the foreign made over the local but also shames us if we think otherwise.

While some journals reflected on macro strategies, others were more specific, looking at ways in which they could immediately introduce more works from local writers, for instance, to diversify their teaching resources and focus on the students' lived experience. Another interesting action involved valuing their personal knowledge as teachers and the need to share that with the world, mostly through writing blogs. One participant voiced this early on, after the session on knowledge types, with the desire to: 'start writing blogs questioning these assumptions so that more teachers/instructors can start rethinking them.' This need to share and embrace personal knowledge was also echoed throughout the journals with the value placed on *dialogic inquiry*. Early on, after the first session, one participant wrote:

> I am reminded today that there are different ways of looking at things, that some colleagues come from a different place and have a different experience.

The level playing field where participants just shared and had conversations without any hierarchy was also highly valued:

… a conversation that is not rooted in "who knows best" but rather something where egos are not allowed.

The simple act of sharing thoughts and ideas with others also allowed one participant to feel they have become part of something bigger than themselves:

This now has become about me as part of a larger group of language teachers or teachers in general and their collective power in shaping and changing the country or in challenging power structures.

This is a key factor in CoPs, which 'puts all participants on an equal footing' (Fraser et al., 2017), a vital component of the reflexive practice model.

These positive feelings of empowerment and solidarity were also intertwined with awareness of the challenges along this path. Participants were critical of certain assumptions they might have held, *problematizing* these *givens*, but also aware that many do not share their sentiments:

I remember how a Lebanese teacher of French language once said proudly "When i want to corner them, i speak in French so that they can't answer back." This made me feel sorry for her having to hide behind the power of a language and having the need to feel superior to her students.

5.2.3.2 Powerlessness and Hope

This foreseeable resistance from colleagues and administration was acknowledged throughout and referred to often as 'frustrating', leading to common statements such as: 'I don't feel I am able to change the situation.' In

many cases, though, any mention of *powerlessness* was immediately accompanied by a resurging feeling of hope. While participants felt they could not change their context as a whole, they were excited about changing on a personal level, at least in their immediate classrooms. This can be summed up in this extract from a journal entry:

> I can make changes in the way I teach (bottom up) but not in what I am required to teach (top to bottom).

Despite these challenges, participants were mostly quite hopeful. I would like to conclude this section though by referring to a very touching entry:

> At the same time, if power does not come with awareness and a sense of responsibility, it can and will be dangerous to hold. The power to change or shape. The power to even challenge. Or simply the power to resist.

This level of *reflexivity* generated after the session and the flow of ideas exemplified the type of teacher development that is both *critical* and deeply personal. This brings to mind a new language teacher who is unafraid but also armed with knowledge on both the professional and, more importantly, personal levels. This is the critical language teacher I had hoped to meet during these sessions, and though we had a small group of participants, their interaction and reflexivity were inspiring on many levels.

5.2.4 Post-intervention Participant Interview

The final means of gauging the impact of my intervention and what participants felt they could achieve was through a follow-up interview with each

participant alone. In order to identify the impact of the intervention and form any conclusions regarding validity, I relied on qualitative research criteria developed by Guba and Lincoln (1989) and associated these with the patterns identified through analysing the interviews. Ontological authenticity – which refers to a shift in awareness pertaining to the topic at hand – was associated with participant discussion of a newfound critical awareness. Educative authenticity, according to Guba and Lincoln, measures the extent to which participants develop an appreciation for the opinions and perspectives of others. This is related to the concept of *dialogic inquiry* that I also highlighted in the journals. Finally, I explored catalytic authenticity – also catalytic validity – which focuses on whether a change in habits or actions resulted from the intervention. Here, I explored both *reflexive action* and *hope* to identify the *transformation* of attitudes and practices. An NVivo sample of one of the nodes used to gauge catalytic validity (in this case, reflexive action post intervention) can be accessed in Appendix 11. Table 16 provides an overview of the nodes and frequency coded in NVivo. Additionally, Appendix 12 includes a word frequency query generated through NVivo.

Table 16: *Sub-themes in Follow-up Interviews: Nodes in NVivo*

Critical Ideology	Frequency	Reference
Critical perspective	6	21
Dialogic Inquiry	3	8
Hope	6	12
Problematizing Givens	1	1
Reflexive Action	5	14
Teacher Agency	3	7

5.2.4.1 Critical Perspective and Problematizing Givens

The most frequently coded item referred to a *critical perspective*, and what I was looking for in the follow-up interviews was any newfound awareness or a more 'sophisticated' understanding of the topic at hand (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This could be a *transformation* of opinion, exemplified by Anna who had previously associated using L1 in class only with technological deficiency. In the follow-up interview, she now added more complex reasons for using L1, which included a more critical awareness of inclusion:

> I think it's better to use their native language in the classroom
> because they will be able to understand the world better. They will,
> cognitively speaking, engage better.

Other participants communicated the more holistic impact of this line of thinking, where any conversation is connected to the wider self:

> It's political understanding, it's not just about disassembling our
> linguistic identities or linguistic understanding.

Elsa called this a 'growth mentality' on all levels. One means in which she reflects on her personal growth included her connection to Arabic:

> I just remembered something that I learned in these sessions that
> was paramount to me and solidified my will, my need, my drive to
> hold on to Arabic in the right way and appreciate and develop it.

This was also an opportunity for reflexivity, allowing participants to question pre-conceived notions and assumptions, a vital factor in critical PD (Troudi, 2015) and *problematizing givens* in CALx (Pennycook, 2001). For instance, the

discussion on linguicism and the idea that we might be personally responsible for protecting our local language and culture in general resonated with many participants. To use one more quote from Elsa's interview:

> Before it was… how can we make the world understand our plight and support us… and now it's … [spoken in Arabic] are we able to understand one another?

This radical shift in perspective is crucial, as Elsa is openly confronting previous biases and also connecting language to the political situation in the country following the October 2019 uprising. Questioning our own bias is also a fundamental part of critical thinking in general (Reynolds, 2015). Language became about connecting with one another on a local level, as opposed to thinking outwards to the 'international community'. Mulan also referred to this nuanced need to use a language and its impact on language policies:

> Those policies tied to education policies tied to the political situation and people's perceptions of utility of the language.

What is noteworthy, though, is that Mulan, a self-identified 'recovering purist' has become more willing to experiment and is especially interested in *translanguaging* as a new strategy to explore. Similarly, Rapunzel was especially excited to practice this new approach:

> For example, the idea of… what was the term… translanguaging? Yeah. Translanguaging. Before that, I used to think that that's a no no, especially that…. I've been taught that, in order to teach a language, one should be fully surrounded by that language, forced

to use it and should hear it solely all the time. But then the new

concept made a lot of sense to me, and I can't wait to start trying it

honestly.

This change in perspective, though, also came with a critical awareness of

obstacles, from restrictive programs that Sarabi felt stifled her ability to make any

change because of overemphasis on the technical aspects of language, to the

institution as a whole, and Wendy felt that could radically influence what a faculty

member could do:

It's very tricky. Very controversial. Again, because you might not

have the right to decide. If you are part of an institution.

This awareness was an important factor in the intervention, providing space for

participants to develop their practice 'either within the prevailing ideology or

according to an alternative ideology' (Wallace & Poulson, 2003, p. 24). Wendy

identified another vital issue, the difficulty in achieving *praxis*. She openly

acknowledged how teachers might 'know' what they are supposed to do, but that

does not always translate into the classroom:

There are teachers who might know a lot but, in practice, in the

classroom, they aren't student-centred. She might not let a

student even speak. She asks the question and then answers it

herself.

As such, these sessions did not attempt to provide false hope. Instead, they

allowed teachers navigating the field of TESOL to be aware of both the

'challenges and opportunities in this postmethod era' (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

5.2.4.2 Reflexive Action

This is very important to ensure that 'a community of practice' does not only yield 'talk' without action. This is why I was especially interested in any utterances I could identify as *reflexive action*, bringing us closer to catalytic authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) or catalytic validity (Lather, 1986). One very clear example is the new activity Rapunzel was going to employ:

> [D]ue to the limitations of online teaching […] we're prioritizing some activities, especially things that are easily done online. So that activity comes up. And I'm like, okay, I want to do this, I want to try this.

The activity she referred to appealed to her especially after we had completed the work on *translanguaging*. However, Rapunzel was not satisfied with just this individual class activity. She is planning to talk to the language coordinators at her school and even share articles on *languaging* with the principal who has enforced 'monolingual' policies in the past. This is clearly an attempt at changing or questioning the *status quo*, a principal factor in CP (Freire, 2005).

On the other hand, Wendy's form of reflexive action is more introspective:

> […] mostly to be more thoughtful and intentional about what I do. Because you get to a point where, especially if you're a long-time teacher, you start doing certain things mechanically.

In other cases, reflexive action might not refer to a specific classroom or a teacher's personal identity, but to the need to conduct further research. This is Mulan's strategy moving forward. Upon discussing the fact that English seems to

be gaining ground in her specific context of North Lebanon, she expressed the fact that she now has many ideas for research because 'this area is understudied'. Lieberman's (1996) theories on learning communities also identified a similar purpose for these peer networks as they 'help shape the agenda, which gives a voice to those who usually respond to the agendas of others.' (p. 53). Action through research was also highly relevant in Arayssi et al.'s (2020) call to Lebanese language teachers, with the importance of professional growth through PR.

5.2.4.3 Hope, Dialogic Inquiry, and Teacher Agency

The most common attitude towards a positive change, though, came mostly from the idea that this is only a start, that there is a need to have similar sessions in the future. This idea was expressed in most of the follow-up interviews. This is in line with the need for continuous PD (Nabhani & Bahous, 2010) and the creation of CoPs that move beyond sporadic or project-specific collaboration (Fraser et al, 2017). The notion of *hope*, a very critical idea in itself, was also quite common:

> The reason I'm hopeful is because when you talk about these things, so you have these ideas that are in your head, but then you meet somebody else…

This connection between *hope* and *dialogic inquiry* was prevalent because participants were able to engage with one another, despite some apparent differences.

In general, I'm a hopeful person […] Or maybe because I tend to

meet people who think the same way as I do, or maybe because of

this group session that we were having… a session we had… I felt

that we are a few who think this way.

The impact of this bottom-up approach with smaller groups leading others was a

common reason for hope, despite the challenges. It also provided participants

with *teacher agency* and empowerment that is critical to this study. The hope is

that such agency will allow teachers to resist current norms in PD (Riveros et al.,

2012).

Finally, I would like to conclude this chapter with feedback I received

about the value of these sessions as a whole. One of the participants sent this

message to the group after the sessions had ended:

I have included all the details of the sessions in my CV under

"Teacher Development Training Received," for I consider these as

crucial encounters in helping me shape my language teacher

identity within my community by interacting with other

language teachers. The reflections I have written have helped me

assess my positionality and my understanding of how much power

and authority we wield and how we can empower one another

within our communities and contexts.

This description of the community of practice we built together, over only a few

weeks, helped me evaluate the importance of these sessions. The model used in

the intervention, despite the initial challenges, allowed participants to feel a

unique sense of community while working on their individual identity. This is in line with the original purpose for similar CoPs. According to Wenger (1998), whose influential work helped introduce this term, "we define who we are by the ways we experience ourselves through participation" (p. 145). The hope is that such a community could be replicated, allowing participants to 'grow in trust and mutual respect' (Mercieca, 2017, p. 10).

5.3 Conclusion

The findings in this chapter have allowed me to reach certain conclusions relating to the assumptions that language teachers in Lebanon hold and whether an intervention like the 'reflexive practice model' I designed could allow a shift in perspective and practice. Additionally, the value of dialogic inquiry in creating praxis has been an essential factor. The impact of this study on the field and recommendations for more PD opportunities will be discussed in the final chapter.

CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize significant findings pertaining to both my main research question and its two sub-questions. In the second section, I will focus on the implications of my study for English language teaching in general before expanding on suggestions for PD opportunities in Lebanon. The third section summarizes the contributions of my study within the field of CALx and PD. I also briefly discuss the challenges and limitations of my work before suggesting future research opportunities. In the last section, I will share my personal reflections on this doctoral journey from inception to completion.

6.1 A Summary of Findings

My first sub-question focused on whether the perspectives of English language teachers in Lebanon towards language teaching and PD would be considered mainstream or critical. In order to answer this question, both phase one and two included initial data collection to identify preliminary attitudes and assumptions. In general, some attitudes would be labelled mainstream, especially pertaining to English language teaching. For instance, most participants were convinced that it is important to start learning English early, demonstrating a clear preference for the 'early start' fallacy. Additionally, most participants also stressed the need for 'maximum exposure', where English is used as a medium of instruction at school while also trying to provide as much exposure to English beyond the classroom. They believed such exposure was also necessary in the English classroom itself, with most participants in favour of only speaking in the target language. Hence, many participants clearly showed a

preference for monolingualism in the classroom. The impact of such strategies on a student's L1, in this case Arabic, was noted throughout the survey responses and the preliminary interviews; however, the general attitude was that Arabic language teachers were responsible for a solution. In many survey responses, the 'duty' of the English language teacher was mostly restricted to the teaching of the English language, without necessarily trying to support L1 acquisition in the process and adopt any other critical agenda. While many participants in both the survey and the interview voiced their concern about the Arabic language and student attitudes towards learning Arabic, they did not equally relate this decline to the advances made in English language teaching. Concerning English being oppressive, the majority were either neutral or disagreed with this point, believing that English was necessary and important. Most responses showed an unambiguous preference for needing English in today's world, especially in Lebanon when many of our students leave the country. However, while many responses would be placed under a mainstream umbrella, participants showed some criticality towards practices such as 'nativespeakerism'. Many of them advocated the need for a 'good' knowledge of English, showing a bias for a certain 'standard' that would probably belong to Kachru's (1997) inner circle. Many also believed, though, that non-natives were qualified to teach the English language and acquire this standard. They also stressed that language teaching is about mastering specific strategies, regardless of accent or near-native fluency. This made them highly critical of administrative practices that might place less value on Lebanese teachers in

favour of American or British nationals. In general, many of the more experienced teachers also sought greater flexibility pertaining to teaching strategies and resources. They were more likely to adapt the required textbook to their needs and to supplement with additional resources. However, the majority remained convinced that teaching resources should focus primarily on material from the 'target culture' – mostly British and American sources – while leaving some room to integrate the local experience to motivate students. One critical viewpoint, though, would be their awareness that textbooks were not always ideal. Many were also willing to experiment with lesser known publishing houses and radical material, as long as this would not be critiqued by their administration and, in the case of school students, the parents themselves. A few participants also favoured creating their unique compiled textbooks. When asked to reflect upon their teacher identity, though, many showed a more mainstream attitude to their work, claiming that their primary role was to teach a language. This might be why many of them were also satisfied with their educational background, which they described as mostly 'technical'. Those who wished they had had a different educational journey mostly sought 'practical' skills that allowed them to teach the language class. When asked about their PD, though, more participants were interested in critical topics and reflection, providing space for the type of intervention in my study.

As my study was critical with an emphasis on AR, my second question was on the impact that my intervention would have on the attitudes and practices of the participants, and whether this would result in any *transformation* or shift in

perspective and/or practice. In general, participants discussed the challenges they faced as language teachers, especially pertaining to powerlessness or hegemony. For instance, when discussing specific assumptions and problematizing givens, like the use of L1 in class or selecting radical texts, participants were in favour of adopting different strategies, but did not always feel empowered to do so. They also mostly concluded that the type of knowledge they had been exposed to, whether in their formal education or PD, was mostly top-down, professional knowledge from an 'expert' in the field. They also focused extensively on the need for collaboration on both the individual and institutional levels.

During the focus group sessions, a change in assumptions and a call for action was palpable in certain discussions. For example, the term 'linguicism' motivated some participants to take on more responsibility to protect the Arabic language. This led to immediate action, as one group decided to conduct their discussions in Arabic and continued to use some Arabic for the duration of our sessions together. Another change in attitudes was clear in the session where we discussed translanguaging. This 'new' teaching strategy that offers a blended and more fluid approach to language learning appealed to all participants, most of whom had not heard of it. They were now actively willing to integrate Arabic in their English classrooms, and one participant even began doing so while we were still conducting our sessions. One important change also focused on the need to support teacher knowledge and create a platform for teachers to form CoPs. Similarly, our sessions took the form of Lieberman's (1996) 'intentional

learning communities'. Participants continuously shared their renewed sense of empowerment and support simply because of sharing their experiences with a small group of faculty. Even though they might not always agree on the same points, the act of sharing without any hierarchy or judgment created that sense of security and faith in their agency as teachers (in line with research by Mercieca, 2017). One participant was also willing to discuss current school policies with other language coordinators and the school principal, a direct result of our sessions together. Additionally, many felt empowered to share their insights, either through informal means such as blogging or through conducting formal academic research. This is similar to the CPD strategy offered through Slimani-Rolls and Kiely's (2019) LTR projects, with teachers working together and researching their local context, generating their particular knowledge in the process.

6.2 Implications for English Language Teaching Practices in Lebanon

The attitudes and assumptions that my study revealed have not only permeated the English language-teaching field in Lebanon but have also affected the practice of language teaching and learning. This need to revisit certain assumptions on a systematic level, focusing on teacher education, has been discussed in a previous study in Lebanon. Diab (2009), who worked with 30 in-service teachers, concluded that teacher education programs should 'encourage prospective teachers to explore their attitudes, pay attention to any unrealistic assumptions or misconceptions prospective teachers may hold, and confront such givens with new information and knowledge' (p. 30). This call for reflection

and critical awareness is in line with the findings in my study, which further highlights the need to move beyond the technical knowledge provided by these training programs to critically 'problematize givens' (Pennycook, 2001). This further supports the need to move towards the three different types of knowledge developed by Kumaravadivelu (2012), allowing teacher training programs to acknowledge the post-method era.

While teacher-training programs could actively discuss specific practices, it is also worthwhile to investigate our awareness of the type of English we are also choosing to adopt. My research shows, similar to previous research in Lebanon, that many teachers still harbour notions of a 'standard English' and a 'nativelike' accent (Diab, 2009). One implication would be the need to further discuss these assumptions while also focusing on EIL, WE, and the ownership of the English language.

As such, I propose that teacher-training programs should include at least one course on critical pedagogy, which provides an opportunity to analyse current assumptions in the field. This would include discussing perspectives such as those espoused by Cook (1999) on moving beyond the native language speaker and strategies proposed by Baratta (2019) on teaching varieties of English in the classroom. This should also include some of the fallacies we discussed, along with CT as a whole and its impact on teacher identity. This course should also allow pre-service teachers to reflect upon their role beyond the classroom.

Moreover, this study has shown the importance of the relationship with the parents, which could create its own injustice. The role of parents and their expectations pertaining to their students' language proficiency would also need to be explored. To my knowledge, very few studies have explicitly examined parental influence and the inequity pertaining to language proficiency. While some recent studies like the work by Banat (2020) have discussed the active role parents play in their children's education in Lebanon, his research does not include empirical evidence from the parents themselves.

Additionally, the political nature of English as a foreign language should be discussed on a broader level, preferably with the ministry of Education. A national debate is necessary to discuss the impact of EMI on the Arabic language and means through which teacher-training programmes could work alongside the ministry to support L1. As such, one implication of my study is the need to identify our impact on the loss of the Arabic language, and whether language teachers could play a larger role in this discussion. This would allow deliberations on language policy in Lebanon to move beyond 'lip service' to the Arabic language (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1996). Such conversations should necessarily embrace dialogic inquiry around the fallacies that might accompany language teaching policies (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) and more recent strategies that embrace *translanguaging* (Garcia, 2019). My study showed the popularity of such fluid approaches to language among the small group of teachers who learned about these methods, consistent with research by both Bahous et al.

(2014) and Bou Ayash (2013). These national conversations could reflect these deliberations and include changes to the curriculum, teacher training, and PD.

Implications on the textbooks currently in use and the publishing houses involved would then further need to be highlighted, to revisit current practices relating to target culture, standard English, and the role played by L1 in the bilingual classroom and its resources. Similar considerations should be placed on the teaching strategies adopted by Arabic language teachers as well. While my study did not focus on this point explicitly, many participants shared their thoughts on the 'traditional' (and demotivating) strategies and resources used to teach Arabic, in line with research by Bahous et al. (2011). These are the conversations and debates that could change not only the way foreign languages are taught in Lebanon but also provide necessary reform to Arabic language teaching as well.

6.3 Recommendations for Critical PD

After the final phase of AR involving critical reflection, the following section of my thesis provides recommendations for additional interventions and a new AR cycle. This includes recommendations pertaining to continuing and critical PD, inter-institutional collaboration, PR, and virtual CoPs.

6.3.1 Continuing and *critical* PD

While the term CPD mostly refers to continuing PD and the need to move beyond a sporadic approach where participants attend the odd session or two for specific skills or shared 'wisdom', my model highlights the need for communities that could discuss lived experience, beyond one issue or one theme. Instead,

these communities would provide teachers with access to a platform and human connection, allowing for critical dialogue and *conscientization*. Even if pre-service teacher education were to include a critical module or critical assignments, a critical discussion remains necessary for in-service teachers as well. This call for more cyclical sessions was highly discussed in the focus groups in my study, and it is in line with calls for reform by Nabhani and Bahous (2010) and Kotob (2007) to replace the current approach. Such a long-term strategy could then incorporate a CoP. It would allow teachers to discuss topics that matter to them and would give them ample time to reflect and build concrete strategies to evaluate their assumptions. This could include attempts at action research within their context.

6.3.2 Inter-institutional Collaboration and Teacher Identity

Traditionally, most PD occurs within specific institutions and among peers. However, one recommendation is to deliberately form communities that are inter-institutional, including participants from different teaching contexts. Fraser et al. (2017) highlight the importance of sharing with organizations beyond the teacher's own school or university. The sessions I conducted allowed teachers from different contexts to share and interact, bringing one another into their 'lived experience' without any hierarchical structure. This places more value on personal knowledge and sharing experiences (Kumaravadivelu, 2012) in the formation of a dynamic teacher identity.

6.3.3 A Level Playing Field

As my participants mentioned, their first interaction with critical thinking and pedagogy was at a postgraduate level. My recommendation is to hold these sessions for teachers from different educational backgrounds, allowing the critical reflexivity to occur at an earlier phase in their careers, creating equity. Research and dialogic inquiry, as seen in the 'reflexive practice model', provide room for teachers to share experiences without judgment or hierarchy. In my study, participants cherished this particular point, their ability to talk to one another from different institutions without any 'prescriptive' tone from one 'expert' or one institution sharing their 'expertise' with others. This is also in line with recommendations by Nabhani et al. (2014) for collaboration without any power structures. In my model, all participants are on an equal footing, with each contributing to the discussion (Fraser et al, 2017), and such a platform could also include administrators and teachers.

6.3.4 PD Content and Practitioner Research

As I have previously stated, it is important for PD and training opportunities to move beyond the sporadic topic or pre-packaged session to gauge participant needs and context. This is consistent with Orr's (2011) findings that 'development projects would arguably be better if they started with an understanding of the contexts and experiences relevant to the career progression of teachers rather than utilizing pre-existing methods and materials' (p. 2). Canagarajah (1999) also spoke of the power of personal and collective empowerment. The value in sharing voices and dialogue can also be amplified through publishing personal

knowledge. My study showed the motivation participants had to share their experience beyond the PD sessions themselves. This is consistent with Arayssi et al.'s (2020) needs analysis pertaining to PR in Lebanon, providing an opportunity for teachers to support one another. Discussions of AR have also described 'the transformative experiences of professional development' and impact of such reflexive research strategies on the participating teachers (Burns, 2019, p. 1000).

6.2.5 A Virtual Platform

While our virtual platform for the focus group sessions was born out of necessity due to the COVID-19 lockdown, such an online community is recommended in a number of studies (Fraser et al., 2017), especially when connecting participants from different schools and universities. As such, one recommendation is to consider virtual platforms to maintain connection in a continuous manner, with in-person meetings when necessary to build rapport in the community. According to Mercieca (2020), these Virtual communities of Practice (VCoPs) could allow participants to develop a sense of community using online technology. This would necessarily need to follow a deliberate structure, as working online might be more daunting. This includes selecting a practical platform that all teachers could easily access, in addition to optimizing the tools to create an initial feeling of camaraderie.

6.4 Contributions of the Study

The section below identifies the contributions of this study in terms of both the PD reflexive practice model and pedagogical considerations in the classroom.

6.4.1 'Reflexive Practice Model' for Critical and Continuing PD

My study has contributed to the discussion on language teacher attitudes and PD sessions through designing an intervention model that is both concrete and transferable. The comprehensive preliminary interview and survey allowed researchers to create a baseline, identifying participant assumptions and assumptions. The specific structure for designing the 'reflexive practice models', beginning with sharing lived experience and trust-building exercises, before moving to structured and continuous critical discussion allowed participants to create a rapport and slowly transitioned to more 'radical' issues. The design of each session also built an intimate environment that embraced both 'expert' and personal knowledge. Emphasis on dialogic inquiry through the design itself also provided an explicit opportunity for collaboration. Finally, the journal at the end of each session allowed for additional reflexivity.

This model is necessary in Lebanon as only a few studies have specifically focused on language teacher development and, to my knowledge, no study has attempted to create an intervention model. Some have covered attitudes toward *existing* continuing PD (Nabhani & Bahous, 2010; Orr, 2011). Others have approached reflective practices to PD (El Ashi Shabeeb & Karami Akkary, 2014; Arayssi et al., 2020). To my knowledge, though, no research has explicitly focused on creating platforms for critical teacher development and problematizing givens, where such discussions could be held. Additionally, no research in Lebanon appears to have explicitly focused on the process through which critical dialogic inquiry could be used as a platform for PD. In the region,

however, some recent scholarly publications (Aktekin, 2019) have attempted to create such critical spaces, but they do not provide a design or detailed structure for these sessions and mostly cover matters related to one specific teaching context.

This RPM can also be transferred beyond Lebanon. Its structure can serve as a template for similar opportunities in the future. To facilitate this process, I have also shared all the articles discussed during the sessions, though each practitioner or groups of practitioners would need to review these to ensure criticality and awareness of their unique teaching context.

6.4.2 Pedagogical Contributions

While an in-depth review of pedagogy is beyond the scope of this study, the findings from phases one and two lend themselves to certain contributions at a pedagogical level. I will outline a few of these here.

Primarily, any discussion of WE and non-native varieties of English could be transferred to a teacher's classroom through the resources in use. Teachers could identify different international authors and speakers and integrate them into their classrooms. I argue that a teacher should identify a quota for authors from different countries, for instance, ensuring an array of texts from Kachru's Three Concentric Circles. This would also support student ICC and introduce them to the critical debate over standard varieties and claims of language ownership.

One more contribution relates to the nature of the sources themselves and the topics covered in class. Our sessions show that while students are willing to connect with radical or controversial texts, this could be challenging due to

parental resistance and, in some cases, retaliation from the students themselves. Thus, teachers could select material that engages students in debates pertaining to social justice, equity, and academic policies while remaining cognizant of their specific context. The degree of personal involvement in the discussion should also be examined, as teachers might prefer to remain 'neutral' in certain cases.

Finally, the major contribution I would like to propose is one related to adopting translanguaging within our classrooms, both as an individual manner of teaching and a political statement against the *status quo*. However, in many cases, *consciously* adopting other languages in a classroom might be defiance of institutional rules, which could place a teacher's livelihood in jeopardy. However, teachers who have certain privileges and can afford to take minor risks could lead the way on this front and publicly share their experiences, both in inter-institutional conversations and in published research, thereby eliminating the stigma and 'shame' involved in any form of code switching.

I also wish to emphasize the need to debate the dominant narrative – the assumption that our need for English necessitates focusing on English alone while ignoring or even killing other languages. Quite the contrary, it is essential that we highlight the need for additive bilingualism, the notion that we could learn English while promoting our first language and any other languages. This demands a strong front against the misconception that learning English is the only pragmatic option available, where it is just as likely that we could learn English and Arabic simultaneously. While the world is moving toward the

multilingual turn, we cannot passively accept these impositions on our linguistic human rights.

6.5 Limitations of My Study

While the first phase of this study was completed on time and without any major challenges, the second phase was delayed by a few months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I had begun communicating with potential participants and had also shared a preliminary schedule for the focus group sessions before the lockdown measures. After the delay, and once I realized that moving online would be inevitable, I had to resubmit my ethics approval documents, stating the new online platform that will be used. After securing ethics approval from both LAU and Exeter, I reconnected with participants. Some of them remained committed to the study while a few could not continue due to prior engagements and the new transition to online teaching.

While the online sessions using Webex Training Center presented an efficient online platform for both the full session and the separate breakout rooms, the internet infrastructure was also a challenge. One minor challenge was the length of some of the reflexive journals. A couple of participants did not always develop their entries, but I was still able to identify relevant details to a lesser degree.

One limitation of my study, though, is its short time span. While the sessions were carefully planned and had a clear trajectory, I only managed to conduct five sessions for the intervention. As such, it is difficult to ascertain the long-term value of this PD model. Additionally, while the aftermath of the focus

group sessions clearly showed a shift in perspective and/or practice, the hegemonic practices in place in diverse educational contexts might affect this 'newfound' awareness. It was beyond the scope of this research to follow up with participants after the intervention. Further research could re-connect with the same participants to share long-term impact.

6.6 Recommendations for Further Research

Primarily, recommendations for further research would necessarily include continuous sessions with longitudinal attempts at reflection. Creating CoPs should involve a cyclical approach similar to that used by action researchers, where participants could reflect on the first sessions, identify lessons learned, and improve upon the next group of sessions. This model does come with certain challenges though. The lack of institutional support, identified by participants in my study, is common. Johnston (2009) emphasized the resources needed for collaborative teacher development, in addition to 'significant investments of time and energy on the part of the overworked teachers' (p. 246). Some research into the motivating factor of involving institutions as a whole would be needed to gauge effectiveness. Another factor which needs extensive research is a thorough examination of the different stakeholders, from the national level at the ministry of education, to administrative bodies at schools and universities, the teachers themselves, the students at the heart of any learning process, and the parents who are responsible for making language-based decisions. Parental involvement is a relatively understudied area, especially pertaining to their knowledge of foreign languages and its impact on their children's academic

journey. This is a critical matter of equity and social justice. The assumptions that students may hold would also need to be reviewed. For instance, students might believe they want to sound like 'natives' (Cook, 1999), and such attitudes should be examined as they could impact what a critical teacher might accomplish in the language classroom. Students might internalize the monolingual ideology themselves, believing that their L1 should only be used at home while academic pursuits are better suited for the foreign or second language (Wei & Lin, 2019). This is also a reflection of their educational and social backgrounds (developed in section 2). Thus, to create meaningful change, it is important to both study the mechanism for teacher training and development and to identify any perceived obstacles.

6.7 Personal Reflections

This journey has been one of awareness and empowerment. My first critical issues module in the EdD programme allowed me to clearly label and categorize the context within which I worked. I was able to identify my agency as an English language teacher first as well as my role in the field. Prior to that, I had been asked numerous times to describe my teaching philosophy, but my description was lacking, as I had been looking at my role through a narrow lens. Teaching, to me, happened inside the classroom, and my role as a teacher focused mostly on language with some attempts at critique that remained within the 'acceptable' realm. The critical issues module empowered me to look beyond the curriculum at the forces that had a direct impact on our pedagogical choices. I also became aware of my personal role as both a course coordinator and a

dedicated member of the institution where I worked. While I had always tried to create and/or support a collegial environment, I had also 'enforced' certain requirements that created a power imbalance. This research primarily allowed me to detect my role within this power structure and the means through which I had enforced the *status quo*.

Upon embarking on my dissertation, I also began to question certain assumptions I had held without prior reflection, assumptions such as monolingualism and fallacies such as maximum exposure. Those are all attitudes I had espoused at one point, in varying degrees. My readings and reflections on linguicism and the ownership of the English language were also pivotal in transforming my perspective. I had always been aware of the power of a language, especially since I had grown up in Nigeria, where the use of Pidgin English had been a means of rebelling against the colonizer. I had just never consciously reflected upon my role in this process, from my humble position as an 'instructor' of Academic English. Even the word 'instructor' became a label I debated.

Currently, this research has also changed the manner in which I share my personal knowledge. While writing my thesis, I started using my personal page on Instagram (Reine's Organized Chaos @reineazzi) – a social media platform – to share content related to critical pedagogy, language, and research. With over 2000 users interacting through polls and direct messages, this page has allowed me to discus critical pedagogues, attitudes toward education, and other issues related to teaching and learning language. In a way, this has helped me achieve

the democratization of knowledge on a small scale, while focusing on the specific context I work in. I also plan on conducting sessions following the RPM with larger networks in the country. It is my hope that such contributions to the field are essential at the moment due to the current economic situation in the country, which has left many teachers torn between accepting unfair wages that negatively impact their quality of life or losing their positions as the unemployment rate continues to rise. In a country desperately trying to maintain its larger institutions, education, and the faculty it depends on, can easily fall behind. My hope is that forming communities of practice, critical ones that discuss the *status quo*, would offer empowerment and support at all levels.

The final point I wish to reflect on is the ease with which engagement might be achieved. We speak of PD as if it were a difficult mission that one might attempt.. In reality, creating collaboration across different institutions mostly involved humility and openness. My participants were not expecting to create such meaningful connections, but reality offered a platform that allowed them to renegotiate their positions, as they embraced others from different contexts and enjoyed the mere act of sharing experiences. This process was not difficult to achieve, but it needed a conscious decision, a structured plan, and a simple platform. What I have realized is that it takes an initial spark and a few individuals who truly want to listen and share. The rest would follow and true collaboration becomes within reach. In our currently fragmented world, where we spend most of our lives online behind a screen, this sense of 'togetherness' becomes even more necessary, to be reminded of our humanity and our ability to impact the

world we inhabit. I hope these are lessons I can take with me beyond this dissertation as I look towards a future of teaching and research in this critical field.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Revised Ethics Application Forms

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

Ref (for office use only)

D1920-022 (04-20)

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

All staff and students within SSIS should use this form; those in Egenis, the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies, Law, Politics, the Strategy & Security Institute, and Sociology, Philosophy, Anthropology should return it to ssis-ethics@exeter.ac.uk. Staff and students in the Graduate School of Education should use ssis-gseethics@exeter.ac.uk.

Before completing this form please read the Guidance document which can be found at http://intranet.exeter.ac.uk/socialsciences/ethics/

Applicant details	
Name	Reine Azzi
Department	Education
UoE email address	ra416@exeter.ac.uk

Duration for which permission is required
Please check the meeting dates and decision information online before completing this form; your start date should be at least one month after the Committee meeting date at which your application will be considered. You should request approval for the entire period of your research activity. Students should use the anticipated date of completion of their course as the end date of their work. Please note that retrospective ethical approval will never be given.

Start date:07/01/2020	End date:12/12/2020	Date submitted:02/04/2020

Students only
All students must discuss (face to face or via email) their research intentions with their supervisor/tutor prior to submitting an application for ethical approval. Your application **must** be approved by your first or second supervisor (or dissertation supervisor/tutor) prior to submission and you **MUST** submit evidence of their approval with your application, e.g. a copy of an email stating their approval.

Student number	660054038
Programme of study	**Other** EdD in TESOL – Part-time (Thesis)
Name of Supervisor(s) or Dissertation Tutor	Dr. Salah Troudi
Have you attended any ethics training that is available to students?	No, I have not taken part in ethics training at the University of Exeter I have **attended training sessions at the Lebanese American University**. *Three sessions during Fall 2018* I completed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) web-based course 'Protecting Human Research Participants'.

Certification for all submissions
I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given in this application and that I undertake in my research to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research. I confirm that if my research should change significantly I will seek advice, request approval of an amendment or complete a new ethics proposal. Any document translations used have been provided by a competent person with no significant changes to the original meaning. I also confirm that I have read and will abide by the BERA Ethics Guidelines.

Reine Azzi

Double click this box to confirm certification ☒

☒ confirm that if I travel outside the UK to conduct research I will:

   (a) Obtain International Travel Insurance from the University of Exeter. (b) Monitor Travel Advice from Worldaware and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) and (c) Complete an International Travel Risk Assessment

Submission of this ethics proposal form confirms your acceptance of the above.

TITLE OF YOUR PROJECT

Attitudes towards Teaching English in Lebanon: An exercise in Critical Applied Linguistics

ETHICAL REVIEW BY AN EXTERNAL COMMITTEE

No, my research is not funded by, or doesn't use data from, either the NHS or Ministry of Defence.

MENTAL CAPACITY ACT 2005

No, my project does not involve participants aged 16 or over who are unable to give informed consent (e.g. people with learning disabilities

SYNOPSIS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT
Maximum of 750 words.

Lebanese schools and institutions of higher education have increasingly focused on the use of English as a medium of instruction over the past two decades, with a language curriculum embracing English as the language of social and economic advancement (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1999). Whether writing research papers, Facebook posts, or love letters, Lebanese of all ages are beginning to value English over all other languages, including Arabic (Esseili, 2017), and English language teachers in Lebanon have both embraced the teaching of English and 'target' British or American culture or actively sought to include the 'local' in their language classroom (Diab, 2009; Esseili, 2014). Phillipson (1999) would attribute this phenomenon to the vast economic and political power of the English language as teachers work within a network of mostly British and American publishing houses and institutions, and this affects the way we approach the teaching (and learning) of the language. This also impacts other languages. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) warns of language death, and even 'language genocide', as English comes to monopolize the way we view all languages. In the case of Lebanon, this involves diverse attitudes relating to the value of the Arabic language in light of this heightened dependence on English (Al Assad, Hazoury, & Saab, 2019).

In light of this context and the fluctuating status of foreign languages in Lebanon, I choose to focus on the awareness and preparation levels of English language teachers in Lebanon. The theoretical framework of this study is governed by the principles of Critical Applied Linguistics (CALx), which highlight its primary mission: critiquing current assumptions relating to language through identifying and 'problematizing givens' (Pennycook, 2001). There is a need to continuously question our body of knowledge, especially those we, as teachers, might have accepted as 'true'.

As such, this study seeks to create a framework for participatory teacher training sessions, which focus on reflexive criticality and critical *praxis* (Freire, 2005). Emphasis is placed in equal parts on whether EFL teachers in Lebanon are critical of their practice and agency. Through guided critical exercises, in-service teachers will participate in 'critical' pedagogy sessions relating to their particular context(s). These sessions would foster a professional learning environment encouraging 'problematization' through inquiry-based learning and discussion.

Some of the areas of focus will include a critical discussion of 'givens' in the following areas:

- *Assumptions regarding EFL learners*: native speaker fluency (Bacon, 2017), proficiency level (Hall & Egginton, 2000)
- *Assumptions regarding EFL teaching practices*: the monolingual fallacy (Cook, 1999), use of Arabic (Ismail, 2012), the maximum exposure fallacy (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), translanguaging (Garcia, 2019), cultural awareness (Bhaba, 1994), particular language contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 2001; Troudi, & Al Hafidh, 2017)
- *Assumptions regarding English as an International Language*: Standard English vs. World Englishes (Canagarajah, 1999; Kachru, 1997), neutrality of English (Phillipson, 1992;

Richards, 2009), Language and power (Fairclough, 1989; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Wierzbicka, 2014)
- *Assumptions regarding teacher knowledge, training and development*: Types of teacher knowledge (Kumaravadivelu, 2012), micro vs. macro objectives (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Giroux, 2015)
- *Assumptions regarding EFL resources and classroom material*: economic agendas and publishing houses (Leistyna, 2000; Giroux, 2011), inclusivity and social justice (Harman, 2018)

Through this study, I plan to create a space for in-service teachers to discuss their assumptions or myths associated with the changing nature of English. Their discussions would be inquiry-based and would rely on both research-based discussions along with their own specific experiences. Throughout this process, I will be observing whether such an 'intervention' would lead to any change in attitude/assumptions.

Hence, my research question is:

Does an explicit and critical discussion of current assumptions and myths pertaining to TESOL affect a teacher's awareness and approach to their role as language teachers?
In order to provide an accurate answer relating to this question, the following focusing questions will be pertinent:
a) What set of perspectives do in-service language teachers in Lebanon hold about the nature and impact of TESOL?
b) Does an intervention, such as the one proposed in this study, affect and/or change a teacher's perspective?
c) And, most importantly, does an intervention, such as the one proposed in this study, affect and/or change a teacher's practice?

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

My research will take place in my country of residence, Lebanon. I will seek ethics approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the Lebanese American University, as this step is necessary before I can conduct the preliminary survey among English language teachers in various institutions in Lebanon. I will also conduct the participatory teacher training sessions and individual interviews on campus, which will also require ethics approval from the IRB.

The following sections require an assessment of possible ethical consideration in your research project. If particular sections do not seem relevant to your project please indicate this and clarify why.

RESEARCH METHODS

The theoretical framework of this research is grounded in the principles of critical theory (focusing on the work of Habermas), with the central tenet that postmodernism heralded a move away from certainty, towards a renegotiation of knowledge and the explanation of the world around us (Cohen et al, 2011; Higgs et al, 2010; Lather, 2006; Pring, 2000). The postmodern view of education is one that has also lost its innocence, leading many to question the power dynamics of education and creating the need for a critical pedagogy (Freire, 2005; McLaren, 2009; Giroux, 2009).

Under critical pedagogy, emphasis on *praxis* (Freire, 2005) and its associations with reflective teachers who embrace their roles within the classroom as facilitators who help students negotiate their role in the world (Kincheloe, 2008), who connect the classroom to the social world beyond. This interest in the 'politics' of teaching does not include politics of a partisan nature, but what Popkewitz calls 'critical intellectual work'.

As such, the purpose of this research is to create an environment for this form of 'critical intellectual work', where in-service teachers of English in Lebanon can reflect upon their particular teaching context

and experience and negotiate their assumptions and body of knowledge, thereby leading to reflexivity and a connection between theory and their practice.

Methodology: I will adopt action research which involves 'enquiry with people, rather than research on people' (Altrichter, Kemmis, McTaggart, & Zuber-Skerritt, p. 130). The process I will adopt follows the guidelines of Action Research design and implementation outlined by Troudi (2015), with a cyclical pattern from rationale to intervention, reflection, and finally preparation for another cycle.

My initial research assumption is that language teacher development in Lebanon is, for the most part, a more mainstream pedagogical model, and an introduction of critical participatory reflective sessions could provide an effective intervention model.

Throughout this process, and though I will be heavily involved in the design of each tools and focal point, I will aim to achieve the principles of action research where participants have a role in data gathering, problem-posing, and 'power-sharing'. Additionally, my choice of in-service teachers is determined by the need to create an environment of 'situated cognition', which begins with experience and specifically 'problematic experience'. Experiential learning theorists (including Dewey and Piaget) maintain that this form of learning is most effective and most likely to 'lead to behavioural change' (Osterman & Kottkamp, 1993, p.20). More details about sample size and methods will be discussed in the section on 'participants'.

The three stages (and their corresponding data collection tools) are the following:

Stage 1: Initial survey of English Language teachers in Lebanon
Purpose: To gather data from a large number of in-service language teachers in Lebanon pertaining to their teaching context, attitudes towards EFL teaching, learning, and classroom resources, and attitudes towards their teacher training, agency, and professional development opportunities.

Data Collection Tools:
1) An internet-based survey in English (to reach the largest number of participants in different schools/institutions and allow them to freely share their opinions anonymously) which includes 6 different sections focusing on their specific context, English language learners, English language teaching, language teaching resources, the current status of English, and teacher training/development in Lebanon. In general, most questions are Likert-scale format to accurately determine attitudes, with some multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions.

2) Individual interviews (either online using Skype or in-person) with the in-service teachers who will be participating in the teacher training sessions. These will take on the format of semi-structured interviews in English, which will allow me to focus on the same 6 sections as the survey but would also allow an intimate look at their perspective and ideally more clarity regarding their current assumptions and teaching context.

Sensitivity: While most of the questions are not particularly sensitive in nature or deal with sensitive topics, I kept in mind the fact that most practitioners would be deeply attached to their specific worldview, and kept the survey balanced in terms of questions and perspectives. I also deliberately did not ask for details that could make the participants wary of information sharing. Instead, I preferred to preserve participant anonymity through identifying the nature of the institution instead. As such, the general background questions include a description of their institution's values and nature of the teaching environment, without a need to identify the institution by name.

Analysis: While I will analyse how the specific teaching context influences participant responses, especially in terms of their agency and perspective on their teaching role, the survey questions will also allow me to analyse and classify participants based on their adherence to a more mainstream look at language vs. a critical outlook. Throughout the data analysis at this stage, I will categorize responses

based on their general acceptance of what many deem to be 'myths' pertaining to language learning and teaching (Ex. The maximum-exposure fallacy, the subtractive fallacy, the monolingual fallacy, the native speaker fallacy). I will also group answers relating to teacher agency and development based on Giroux's (2009) discussion of micro and macro objectives and Kumaravadivelu's (2003) exploration on teachers as reflective practitioners vs. 'technicians'.

Stage 2: Online participatory teacher training sessions (Using WebEx Training Center)
Purpose: These five sessions will provide an opportunity for inquiry-based teacher development sessions, where each session would focus on one of the aspects of our body of knowledge, to be actively critiqued and discussed by a diverse group of in-service teachers. Kumaravadivelu's (2012) KARDS approach to teacher development (with emphasis on Knowing, Analyzing, Recognizing, Dialogic inquiry, and Seeing) will play a guiding role in these sessions. In essence, this is the basic intervention part of the Action Research cycle. My intervention will consist of selecting the topic, sending a relevant article as mandatory reading ahead of the session, and providing the location for an open discussion of this article and the themes it espouses. My role in these sessions will be as both a participant who has her own particular context and relevant knowledge and as a facilitator who ensures all participants are given the room to present their perspective and experience. Thus, I have created my own framework for this 'Reflective Practice Model'. Sessions will cover the following themes:

- Session 1: Trust-building and criticality (identifying assumptions and givens)
- Session 2: Standard English and Native Speaker fluency
- Session 3: *Languaging* and the monolingual fallacy
- Session 4: Course material and Target Culture
- Session 5: Critical 'political' teacher training and development
- Session 6: Optional – to focus on one assumption that I might not have covered, which would make these sessions even more participatory.

Breakdown (90-minute sessions)

- 15 minutes: warm-up activity inspired by the reading and/or topic (MCQs, a short case study, etc.)
- 30 minutes: Discussion within the group
- 30 minutes: Sharing/discussion among all participants
- 15 minutes: Writing the reflection journal

Power-sharing format:

- Participants sit in diverse groups (insuring a mix of 4-6 school/university teachers in each group and different experience level) – I will observe these group dynamics and change them accordingly.
- Facilitator sits in one of these groups (different group every time)
- Each group is given a set of questions/guide for the discussion, but without any additional interference

WebEx Training Center is an application that can allow me to create dynamics similar to face-to-face focus group sessions. I plan to create a common room for all participants and subsequence breakout rooms for the pair/small group discussions. I will also use other features in Training Center, such as polls, reactions, and individual journal writing as well.

Data collection tools: During these 5 sessions, my focus would be on both participating in and observing the power-sharing dynamics and the insights generated through these inquiry-based learning sessions. I will use the following two tools to report on the findings generated through these sessions:
1) My reflective journal entry will always include the following sub-points:

- Engagement level: Attendance and participation level (how engaged were they with the material?)
- Criticality level: Were they passive consumers of the article who simply adopted the claims? Or did they debate even those critical claims?
- Conclusions: What conclusions were drawn? Would any of these conclusions go against the prevalent 'mainstream' attitudes?

- What should I change next session? *(which maintains the cyclical nature of Action Research and the reflective nature of critical practice even during the research study, and not just at the end of the study)*

2) Participant reflective journal entries will generally guide them to answer the following questions:
- What was the topic they covered during the session?
- Had they actively thought about this topic before? Or was this the first time?
- Did they feel that they learned something new?
- Did they change their mind about this specific area or body of knowledge?

Sensitivity: I am aware of two potential challenges at this stage that might affect the power-sharing dynamics. Teachers' level of experience and their institution could play a role in whether everyone at the table gets a 'voice'. As such, my first session will focus on the general principles of critical theory and pedagogy, allowing participants to feel a sense of empowerment as to their contribution, regardless of their individual experience level. Additionally, giving participants the reading ahead of time is a deliberate attempt to empower them with the knowledge needed so they can feel better prepared. The breakdown of the session into small group discussions first and then the general discussion is also meant to give more people a voice. This is why I will also change these groups at the beginning of every session to avoid any 'toxic' group dynamics.

Thematic Analysis (following grounded theory): Opting for grounded theory would allow me to identify 'emerging patterns' (Creswell, 2009) in order to collect data and conduct 'comparative analysis' (Howell, 2013). Following an emic model of bottom-up research, participant words and interactions are the starting point. Using Nvivo, I will analyse both my reflective journal and the participant journals. Through the coding, analysis, and reflection tools, I will be able to develop common themes and emerging patterns. I will also identify any preliminary 'change' in attitude brought about by the intervention model.

Stage 3: Reflection
Purpose: Essential in Action Research and critical theory as a whole is the need for continuous reflection. As such, the final stage involves a discussion of the intervention model itself: its strengths and weaknesses and its room for improvement.

Data collection Tool: Online follow-up semi-structured interviews via Skype with the participants that will cover the following sub-points.
- Their experience as a whole
- Any change in attitude or belief
- Any proposed change in their teaching practice
- Feedback on the whole process of Action Research and the model used
- Attitudes towards the future of this type of intervention in Lebanon

Sensitivity: As a teacher at a university level in Lebanon, I am aware of my own presence in these interviews, as some teachers might not be comfortable in sharing their opinions regarding their institutions and whether they foresee any obstacles in the future. However, I am hoping that our shared experiences over the past few sessions would allow a more open discussion.

Thematic Analysis: I will follow the same principles of grounded research and look for emergent patterns using Nvivo. My focus at this point is to identify any 'change' in attitude brought about by the intervention model as this would validate the critical Action Research model.

This would help me answer these questions relating to evaluating a critical research project:
- Catalytic validity: Has it brought about positive change?
- What was the impact of my intervention? How can I measure it?

Project outputs: In addition to the final dissertation presented to the University of Exeter, I will be presenting some sections related to this research in local conferences in Lebanon. This is part of the 'outreach' element that I firmly believe in, to increase awareness pertaining to these critical issues. Additionally, some of the strategies implemented in this study could be re-examined and adapted to different contexts in the future.

PARTICIPANTS

I will divide participants into two groups: those who will participate in the initial survey and those taking part in the reflective teacher training sessions.

Group 1: These participants will include teachers from diverse teaching backgrounds working in diverse contexts.

Diversity: teaching experience (from 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and more than 10 years of teaching experience), teaching context (primary school, middle school, high school, university, language centre), language priorities at their teaching institution (this reflects the complexity of the situation in Lebanon with value given to either English, French, or Arabic as mediums of instruction), and teacher training (participants will generally be expected to have a BA/MA/PhD in Education, English, or Literature or a language teaching certificate from a centre).

Sample size: There is no accurate data as to the population size of English language teachers in Lebanon. However, the aim of this survey is not to generalize but to *understand* diverse teacher attitudes. As such, there will be no need for a probability sampling to ensure representation. My aim is to collect information from a 'smaller group or subset of the population under study' (Cohen et al, 2011, p. 264) that will only represent its own views. The size of that group will depend on the response rate. A size of 30 participants would help me analyse preliminary quantitative data but ideally I should aim for a larger number to identify teachers from the different subgroups or strata. The variables relating to teaching context, years of experience, and teacher training necessitate a larger number of respondents and this is why I will aim to have 100 participants complete the initial survey. A combination of Convenience and Quota sampling will be used to ensure a larger response rate and participant from each stratum.

Group 2: These participants will need to commit to the initial interviews, the 5 reflective sessions, and follow-up interviews. As such, they need to be motivated to invest in the process.

Sample: These sessions should, by nature, be small enough to create an environment of inquiry-based sharing and reflexivity. My aim is to have 8-15 participants from different school and university levels, along with diverse experience levels. I will resort to purposive sampling to select these participants. This would allow me to identify people knowledgeable about their teaching contexts and motivated to undertake this exercise. My aim is to create maximum variation sampling (Cohen et al, 2011) insuring participants have different characteristics and experiences.

To the best of my knowledge, my participants will not have any special needs.
There will be no financial compensation provided.

THE VOLUNTARY NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

Group 1 Recruitment: Participants will be recruited through a number of different means. I will be contacting different departments of English and Education to send the survey online to their alumni. I will also reach out to various contacts in schools, universities, and language centres to disseminate the survey online as well. I will also reach out to organizers of various conferences relating to TESOL and TEFL in Lebanon so they can forward the survey to their mailing lists.

Written consent: The doctrine of valid consent will govern the entire data collection process. The first section of the online survey includes a consent form (See online survey here: https://forms.gle/1b1sDsy6ks1mjy8z8), ensuring that participants are fully aware of the research

objective, my institutional affiliations with the Lebanese American University and the University of Exeter, and sufficient detail to inform them of the nature of the study. Participants cannot proceed to the survey question without giving written consent first, and the detailed consent form clarifies their right to withdraw from the research at any time, along with their anonymity and confidentiality.

Group 2 Recruitment: I have a number of acquaintances in higher education among a number of different institutions. Thus, identifying university-level teachers is not a foreseeable challenge as I can just contact them personally. However, reaching out to school teachers will be more difficult so my aim is to contact the English coordinators and obtain their assistance in contacting the teachers.

Written consent: Each participant will sign a written consent form (See Appendix A) before the initial interview, which will stipulate the full intervention along with the necessary requirements for maintaining anonymity and confidentiality. This is especially important that these participants will be actively engaged in a large section of the data collection process. Their names will remain confidential and I will be using pseudonyms while reporting any results. As the 5 participatory sessions necessitate a discussion among participants, I will also ensure that any reporting of their feedback does not contain any details that might reveal their identity (Ex. Name of institution).

There are no additional foreseeable risks involved, as I will not be working with potentially vulnerable populations or conducting any perilous activities.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

There are no foreseeable additional arrangements. Our campus is fully accessible, and this is why I chose to have all the participatory sessions on campus, as this would allow me to cater to any requirements. I have not, as of this moment, identified any need for other special arrangements.

THE INFORMED NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

Please see Appendix B for the information sheet. This will be sent to recruit potential participants via email.

ASSESSMENT OF POSSIBLE HARM

My research focus is the need to 'do no harm'. I am fully aware of the ability to influence participants in similar group settings, where some individuals might not wish to divulge any details relating to their teaching context. This is why the reflection journals will remain completely anonymous, encouraging participants who do not wish to speak in front of the group to still share their experiences. This will be made clear to all as I do not wish to coerce any of the participants.

Any additional obstacles will immediately be communicated to my supervisor and members of the Research Ethics Committee to ensure the necessary guidance in following best practices.

DATA PROTECTION AND STORAGE

Data will be stored on the University U-drive and a secondary copy will be stored on my work laptop as its highly secure. Another back-up will be stored on the One Drive.
Data will be anonymised for the entire process and there is no foreseeable need to share participant details. Participants will be given a pseudonym and cannot be identifiable. The key used will be stored on the university drive and it will be password-protected.
Minimal personal data will be collected, as this will be irrelevant to the research objective.
After my research is complete, I will apply to The University of Exeter institutional repository, Open Research Exeter, to store the anonymised data.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

In the consent form, I made it clear that there is no other institution involved in funding this research, and there is no foreseeable conflict of interest. Participants will also be made fully aware that their data will only be used to advance the academic purpose of this study and research in this field.

USER ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK

Group 2 participants will be heavily involved in the data collection process. They can request access to their interview transcripts (included in the consent form to ensure their awareness). The reflection journals will be anonymous though (submitted through google form) and therefore cannot be accessible to individual participants.

INFORMATION SHEET

Participant Information Sheet

Title of Project: Attitudes towards Teaching English in Lebanon: An exercise in Critical Applied Linguistics

Researcher name: Reine Azzi

Invitation and brief summary: As a faculty member at the Lebanese American University who has been teaching English within the Lebanese context of higher education for the past 10 years, I am interested in identifying and discussing our current attitudes to the teaching and learning of English in Lebanon. My doctoral thesis will focus on the current attitudes that teachers hold and their body of knowledge, along with the need to create spaces for inquiry-based teacher development, where we actively discuss these assumptions and shared experiences. These sessions, which I will facilitate and hold at the Lebanese American University campus in Beirut, will necessitate the presence of motivated teachers from schools and universities who will discuss and reflect upon language issues relevant to our particular context.

Please take time to consider the detailed information below carefully and to discuss it with colleagues or ask me any follow-up questions.

Purpose of the research:
The status of English in our globalized world is in a state of constant flux, and my research will attempt to create a space for in-service English teachers, in both schools and universities in Lebanon, to critically discuss the impact of English as a medium of Instruction (EMI) and as a foreign language along with their own attitudes, beliefs, and experience in the field. A secondary research objective involves the need to discuss teacher preparation and professional development programs in Lebanon.

Why have I been approached?
You have been approached as a member of this large (and diverse) professional community of English language teachers in Lebanon, to share your unique experience. If you consent to taking part in these inquiry-based reflection sessions, you will be joining a small group of 8-15 participants from different school and university levels. The emphasis would be on your willingness to discuss your personal assumptions to language learning and teaching in Lebanon and to draw upon your particular teaching experience. Your shared experience, along with the evidence-based participatory discussions during the sessions, will ensure greater criticality and reflexivity.

What would taking part involve?

Your part in the study will involve the following the phases:
1. Completing an initial interview online and/or in-person (approximately 40 minutes)
2. Participating in five online group sessions (approximately 90 minutes each on Saturdays)
3. Reflecting on your experience through short guided journal entries after every group discussion (less than 300 words and anonymous)
4. Completing a final online interview (approximately 30 minutes)

Each participatory session will include the following stages:
- An assigned pre-reading from an academic source
- 15 minutes: warm-up activity inspired by the reading and/or topic
- 30 minutes: discussion within the group

- 30 minutes: sharing/discussion among all participants
- 15 minutes: writing the reflection journal

All the data collected with remain anonymous and pseudonymised. No personal information will be reported or any additional detail that could allow anyone to infer your identity.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
There are no immediate tangible benefits involved in taking part in this research. It will involve a high commitment level on your part. The discussions we will participate in, though, are of immediate relevant to your teaching practice.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
There are no foreseeable risks involved in this research. As with any 'created community', though, one limitation would be an ability to speak openly and discuss shared experiences in a judgment-free space. This is an obstacle I am fully aware of and will address in the first group session.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?
You can withdraw from this study at any moment during the process. However, some of your data will be included in the final results. As the process is anonymous, for example, I would not be able to selectively remove your 'reflection journal entries' or any observations I made during the focus group sessions, as they would be anonymous even to me. However, if you prefer to remove your initial interview data, then I will delete those records and not include them in the final report.

How will my information be kept confidential?
The University of Exeter processes personal data for the purposes of carrying out research in the public interest. The University will endeavour to be transparent about its processing of your personal data and this information sheet should provide a clear explanation of this. If you do have any queries about the University's processing of your personal data that cannot be resolved by the research team, further information may be obtained from the University's Data Protection Officer by emailing dataprotection@exeter.ac.uk or at www.exeter.ac.uk/dataprotection.
Your data will be stored on the university drive (which is the default protocol) and it will be pseudonymised. Any additional use of your data will be used anonymously and only to inform any future research in this area. It will not be used to report or publish additional academic work.

Will I receive any payment for taking part?
There will be no reimbursement for participating in this research.

What will happen to the results of this study?
The results of this study will be disseminated as part of my doctoral thesis dissertation and could be discussed partially or as a collective in academic conferences and meetings.

Who is organising and funding this study?
This study is self-funded. No external agency is paying my tuition at Exeter.

Who has reviewed this study?
This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter (Reference Number....) and the Institutional Review Board at the Lebanese American University (Reference Number ...).

Further information and contact details
For any additionally inquiries, please contact me on reine.azzi@lau.edu.lb or via my personal phone on +96171012191.

If you wish to have additional information, you can also contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Salah Troudi, University of Exeter: s.troudi@exeter.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest in this project.

CONSENT FORM

Participant Identification Number:

Name of Researcher: Reine Azzi

There are no known risks, harms or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life. The information you provide will be used to complete my doctoral thesis. You will not directly benefit from participation in this study. Those who consent and take part in the study will not have their personal details shared, and their anonymity will be maintained throughout the process. If you have any questions about this research and would like to know more, please contact me via email: reine.azzi@lau.edu.lb

By choosing to participate in this study, you agree with the following statements:

Ple
e
initi
box

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated.................... (version no.............) for the above project. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without my legal rights being affected.

3. I understand that my refusal to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which I otherwise am entitled to.

4. I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study, may be looked at by members of the research team, individuals from the University of Exeter and the Lebanese American University, where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records, but I will not be identified by name or any other information that could be used to infer my identity.

5. I understand that taking part involves anonymised interview transcripts and reflection journal records to be used for the purposes of the report published in the final thesis dissertation. I understand that some of these data collection tools could influence future research projects.

6. I understand that my answers will not be released to anyone and my identity will remain anonymous. My name will not be kept in any other records. I can request access to any of my interview transcripts at any point in the process.

7. I have been informed that the research abides by all commonly acknowledged ethical codes and that the research project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics committee at

the University of Exeter and the Institutional Review Board at the Lebanese American University.

8. I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can ask the research team listed below.

9. I have read and understood all the statements in this form.

10. I agree to take part in the above project.

Name of Participant	Date	Signature

Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

Further information and contact details
For any additionally inquiries, please contact me on reine.azzi@lau.edu.lb or via my personal phone on +96171012191.

If you wish to have additional information, you can also contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Salah Troudi, University of Exeter: s.troudi@exeter.ac.uk

When completed: 1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher

Appendix 2: Survey Deployed in Phase I

Teacher Attitudes toward English Language Learning in Lebanon
I would like to invite you to participate in my doctoral study by completing the following consent form before responding to the survey questions. I am a faculty member at the Lebanese American University, and this research project is part of my doctoral thesis at the University of Exeter, United Kingdom.

Title of Project: Attitudes toward Teaching English in Lebanon: An exercise in Critical Applied Linguistics

Name of Researcher: Reine Azzi

My research question is the following: What set of perspectives do in-service language teachers in Lebanon hold about the nature and impact of teaching English?

There are no known risks, harms or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life. The information you provide will be used to complete my doctoral thesis. You will not directly benefit from participation in this study. Those who consent and take part in the study will not have their personal details shared, and their anonymity will be maintained throughout the process.

By choosing to participate in this study, you agree with the following statements:

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project.
2. I understand that my answers will not be released to anyone and my identity will remain anonymous. My name will not be kept in any other records.
3. When the results of the study are reported, I will not be identified by name or any other information that could be used to infer my identity. Only researchers will have access to view any data collected during this research however data cannot be linked to me.
4. I understand that I may withdraw from this research any time I wish and that I have the right to skip any question I don't want to answer.
5. I understand that my refusal to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which I otherwise am entitled to.
6. I have been informed that the research abides by all commonly acknowledged ethical codes and that the research project has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the Lebanese American University and the Ethics committee at the University of Exeter.
7. I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can ask the research team listed below.
8. I have read and understood all statements on this form.
9. I voluntarily agree to take part in this research project by completing the following consent form.

If you have any questions about this research and would like to know more, please contact me via email: reine.azzi@lau.edu.lb.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or you want to talk to someone outside the research, please contact the:
Institutional Review Board Office,
Lebanese American University

This study has been reviewed and approved by the LAU Institutional Review Board (Ref: 33827957).

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Exeter Ethics committee (Ref: D1920-022).

Completing this survey should take around 20 minutes.

1. I confirm that I am currently teaching English in Lebanon and agree to take part in this study through answering the following questions.
   o Yes
   o No

Section One: Teaching Background
2. Choose the statement(s) that best describes you.
   o I currently teach at a primary school English level.
   o I currently teach at a middle school English level.
   o I currently teach at high school English level.
   o I currently teach at a university English level.
   o I currently teach at a language center.
3. Sex
   o Female
   o Male
   o Non-binary
   o Prefer not to say
4. Years of Experience
   o 1-5 years
   o 6-10 years
   o More than 10 years
5. Choose the statement that best describes your teaching institution.
   o In my institution, we value French more than other languages of instruction, including Arabic.
   o In my institution, we value English more than other languages of instruction, including Arabic.
   o In my institution, we value Arabic for the most part, while English and/or French are taught as additional foreign languages.
   o In my institution, we place equal value on Arabic, English, and French.
   o Other:

6. Please respond to this statement: My students are proficient in English and can use the language effectively. (Think of the students you most commonly encounter.)
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

Attitudes towards the English language learner
7. The ideal language learner is one who can master Standard English.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

8. English learners who depend on nonstandard varieties of English cannot express themselves well.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

9. When a student uses nonstandard varieties of English in academic writing, I should decrease their grade accordingly.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

10. Native speakers of English have a better grasp of the language.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

11. English language learners should try to master a form of English that is very close to a native speaker's.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

12. Students should be reprimanded for using Arabic or French in the English language classroom.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

Attitudes towards language teaching in English language classrooms

13. The ideal English language teacher is a native speaker.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

14. Why or why not?
_____

15. Language teachers should expose learners to skilled non-native speakers.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

16. The earlier English is introduced, the better the results.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

17. It is better to only use English in the English language classroom, without resorting to any other language.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

18. The standards of English will improve if other subjects (like Math, Biology, History, etc...) are taught in English as well.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

19. Schools prefer to hire native speakers of English even if they don't have the proper credentials.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

20. There is no need to teach American and/or British culture in the English language classroom.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

21. English language teachers who use Arabic (or any L1) in the English language classroom do so because they are not very proficient in English.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

22. There is a growing movement to teach other varieties of English ('World Englishes' such as Indian English, Nigerian English, etc...) in the English language class. How open would you be to exposing your students to other varieties of English in your classroom?
- o Yes
- o No
- o Maybe

23. English language teachers should be able to use Arabic in the English language classroom. (Select all the options you agree with):
- o When the task can be conducted more efficiently in Arabic
- o When using Arabic helps students learn English
- o When a code-switching environment feels more natural to the students
- o When it's more relevant to their use of English beyond the classroom
- o Never. A teacher should avoid L1 no matter the circumstances.
- o Other:

English language teaching resources and classroom material

24. I am generally satisfied with the books and classroom material I've been using.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

25. Can you elaborate on these resources briefly? Why are they (un)satisfactory?

_____

26. When I am given a course book, I prefer to follow it without making any changes.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

27. I find myself picking and choosing what I like from a given course book, even if the material is on the syllabus.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

28. I usually add material relevant to my students' specific experience, resorting to articles and other resources about issues that matter in Lebanon.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

29. Course books have been created by knowledgeable individuals who are experts in the field. I should follow their guidelines.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

30. I am willing to use a textbook from a lesser-known publishing house if its content is more relevant to my students and their lives.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

31. I am willing to experiment when it comes to course material and use 'radical' texts on LGBTQIA+ rights and other current issues.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

32. I prefer to have classroom material and clear guidelines given to me by a class coordinator.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

33. I prefer having the freedom to search for and explore my own class material.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

Status of English as an International Language

34. Anyone who knows English right now has no need for any other language.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

35. All relevant resources and scholarly output are in English.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

36. English is currently oppressing all other languages.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

37. The English language offers a means of economic advancement and students should achieve optimal fluency for their personal benefit.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

38. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) claims that EFL (English as Foreign Language) teachers are killing their mother tongue and participating in linguistic genocide. To what extent do you agree with this statement?
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

39. Do you consider it your duty, as an English language teacher in Lebanon, to promote Arabic?
- o   Yes
- o   No
- o   Maybe

40. Why or why not?

_____

English Language Teacher Agency, Training, and Development

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

41. I am an English teacher. My role is to teach a language, not to have a political or revolutionary agenda.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

42. I feel that the curriculum gives me a lot of room for freedom and decision-making in my class.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

43. Teaching is always a political activity. A teacher cannot teach a class without being aware of external social power struggles.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

44. The role of the language teacher should be restricted to teaching the material in the books and the syllabi.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

45. A language teacher's role is more transformative and has global consequences.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

46. Choose the statement(s) that best describes your teacher training program.
- o   I completed a BA in Education (Focusing on TESOL or a similar field).
- o   I completed a BA in English (Focusing on Linguistics).
- o   I completed a BA in English (Focusing on Literature).
- o   I completed an MA in Education (Focusing on TESOL or TEFL).
- o   I completed an MA in English (Focusing on Linguistics or a similar field).
- o   I completed an MA in Literature (or Comparative Literature/similar field).
- o   I completed an MA in Education (Focusing on TESOL or a similar field).
- o   I completed a PhD or EdD (in a relevant field).
- o   I completed an external teacher training course (Ex. CELTA or anything similar).

47. Choose the statement that best describes what you studied during your undergraduate teacher training program.

- We mostly focused on the technical knowledge needed in teaching English (Ex. Syntax, Phonetics, History of the English Language, etc...)
- We focused on technical knowledge but also worked on understanding societal issues that could inform our teaching practices, so we could solve potential challenges.
- We focused on technical knowledge and practically understanding our society, but also made time to actively critique our agency as English teachers and the power of a foreign language teaching classroom.

48. I am satisfied with my educational training as a whole and the knowledge received.
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

49. Why or why not?

_____

50. While pre-service training is very important, language teachers also receive professional development opportunities after they begin working. Have you been satisfied with your professional development opportunities so far?
1 2 3 4 5 (Generally disagree - Generally agree)

51. Why or why not?

_____

Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form (Phase II)

Participant Identification Number:

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Attitudes towards Teaching English in Lebanon: An exercise in Critical Applied Linguistics

Name of Researcher: Reine Azzi

There are no known risks, harms or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life. The information you provide will be used to complete my doctoral thesis. You will not directly benefit from participation in this study. Those who consent and take part in the study will not have their personal details shared, and their anonymity will be maintained throughout the process. If you have any questions about this research and would like to know more, please contact me via email: reine.azzi@lau.edu.lb

By choosing to participate in this study, you agree with the following statements:

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated 26/01/2020 (version no 1) for the
   above project. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time
   without giving any reason and without my legal rights being affected.

3. I understand that my refusal to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which I otherwise am entitled to.

4. I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study, may be looked at by members of the research team, individuals from the University of Exeter and the Lebanese American University, where it is

relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records, but I will not be identified by name or any other information that could be used to infer my identity.

5. I understand that taking part involves anonymised interview transcripts and reflection journal records to be used for the purposes of the report published in the final thesis dissertation. I understand that some of these data collection tools could influence future research projects. ☐

6. I understand that my answers will not be released to anyone and my identity will remain anonymous. My name will not be kept in any other records. I can request access to any of my interview transcripts at any point in the process. ☐

7. I have been informed that the research abides by all commonly acknowledged ethical codes and that the research project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics committee at the University of Exeter and the Institutional Review Board at the Lebanese American University. ☐

8. I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can ask the research team listed below. ☐

9. I have read and understood all the statements in this form. ☐

10. I agree to take part in the above project. ☐

Name of Participant	Date	Signature

Reine Azzi	April 17, 2020	RA
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

When completed: 1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher

Further information and contact details
For any additionally inquiries, please contact me on <u>reine.azzi@lau.edu.lb</u> or via my personal phone on +96171012191.

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If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or you want to talk to someone outside the research, please contact the:
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This study has been reviewed and approved by the LAU IRB: Reference Number D1920-022
This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee at Exeter: Reference Number 33827957

Appendix 4: List of Interview Questions

Research Questions and Initial Interview Questions

Research Question	What set of perspectives do the participating in-service language teachers in Lebanon hold about the nature and impact of TESOL?
Interview Questions	
Can you describe the 'ideal' language learner in your given context? *(Further probing: accents, knowledge, motivation)*	
Can you describe the 'ideal' language-learning environment within your context? *(Age of student, teacher knowledge, medium of instruction, use of other languages)*	
Which culture should be taught in the English language classroom? *(Target, outer circle, local?)*	
Can you describe the current teaching resources in your institution? What are their advantages/disadvantages? Do you feel you have flexibility while using this material? *(Do you want this flexibility?)*	
Do you believe English is oppressing other languages? And what is your role as an 'agent' teaching this language? (*In relation to quote by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) on language genocide and the role of the foreign language teacher)*	
Were you satisfied with your pre-service education? What could have been improved? *(Type of knowledge studied, opportunity to critique assumptions)*	
Are you satisfied with your PD opportunities? What could be improved? *(Themes, focal areas, participatory approach?)*	

Appendix 5: Coded Interview Sample in NVivo

Transcript: Interview with Wendy
Date: February 7, 2020
Duration: 1 hour and 11 minutes

R.   First of all, I'm interested in your current and previous teaching context… where you taught before… was it at school or university level… and any difference between them, and especially if you can connect it to the values you were learning regarding how to teach English.

W.   Ok… that's a big question. In terms of context, I taught middle school for a very long time. I taught high school in a French school, but then middle school in an Anglophone context, for around 15 years, and then for a couple of years, high school. And then high school in an American program, so different contexts. Then I shifted to universities and I taught in different universities, where I taught both communication courses and others are more academic. At this other university, it's a program like intensive. Totally different programs. At school, you feel that you are really educating… as you say in Arabic – تربي - you actually feel that you are involved in making them better people. It's not about the English. It's about the whole individual. The way you do things becomes more important than the course itself, especially since you're with them 6-7 hours a week, so it's a lifetime. By the time you 'pick them up' so to speak in the next grade, so you see them grow and you get involved. It's a family. At university, you have no such connection at all, and you focus on mainly, the course and the content, and although they say that at school you teach for the test … not so at middle school level… maybe more so at high school, but not in my class, because at English they don't care about English, so you want them to want it more, and you want to make them feel how important it is as a medium … they take it with them wherever they go… in preparation for their SATs and other university preparation, so it's valid. But at university, as I have experience it, I was not able to establish that connection and the context was different.

R.   This is very interesting because I've heard a couple of university teachers who took the survey who actually felt that some of the material was not relevant to their classes, and I wonder if it's because of that same assumption, that at a university level, we shouldn't be worrying about these things. We need to teach technical content, and anything else is sidelined. I'm wondering if it comes from that same place of university being less about motivation or making it interesting and more about what we need to learn.

W.   I think it depends on more than just the variables you mentioned. It's many things. If you are teaching grade 7, and you have this textbook. Most textbooks at this level cater to this age group, and it's streamlined. And textbooks are chosen more or less carefully. When it comes to college, the way I saw it, there's a bit of booklet, textbook, outside material… and you miss a plan, you this streamlining, which is important. You don't have enough time to fix it unless you're teaching the same course for the second and third time and you start being more of a decision-maker, even to suggest one thing or another. For example, the way I teach intensive now is not the same, not anymore, and I can anticipate. And I can fix some things. But not with the academic courses. I think this is very important. If you want to change and make it more relevant, more authentic, you need to understand the people that you're teaching and where they're coming from. The more you get experience, the more you can fix that.

R.   Definitely. Because from experience comes reflection…

W.   Yes… and trial and error. Sometimes when you want to dare to let go of the textbook, you want to know where you're heading, what you're doing with this material, and that it's ok … that you're might not be completing a chapter in the syllabus, but you're still keeping the objectives in mind. And you're still making it relevant.
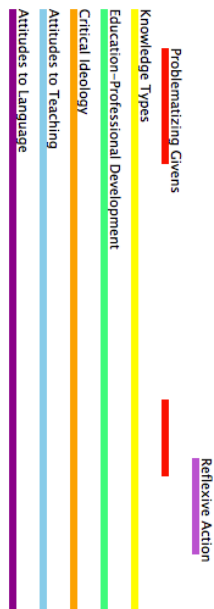
Appendix 6: Participant Guided Journal Prompts

Reflexive Journal Entry

Reflexivity is at the core of critical pedagogy and research. In the journal entry below, attempt to respond to the following prompts pertaining to our session together:

- What was the topic covered during the session?
- Have you actively thought about this topic before? If yes, in what way?
- Do you feel that you learned or discussed something new?
- Did you change your mind about this specific issue? Will you be able to take any relevant action either way? Or do you feel that the issue is out of your hands?

Journal Entry

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Appendix 7: Coded Participant Journal Entry

The session today was particularly rich today. The article we had to read was thought-provoking and set off an interesting discussion on the topic of teacher knowledge - professional, procedural and personal. As an active practitioner, I have thought about and worked through these issues. One of the things I enjoy about working at LAU is the easy atmosphere and collegial nature of the English department there. I spend a lot of time discussing "teacher stuff" with other colleagues - usually that conversation ends up with us sharing resources, talking about our experiences in class - sometimes this discussion veers towards classroom management strategies. As a relative newbie to the field, I find myself often deferring to the experience and knowledge of the more experienced teacher. I think this is an assumption that I've also shared for a long time - a few family members are also teachers who have been working for 30+ years in the field (this has definitely influenced my development and growth as a novice teacher). I think this is a fair assumption to have as there is a lot of truth in it but we can do better by encouraging more collaborations between experienced and less experienced teachers. Those could be valuable learning experiences and opportunities for professional/personal development and growth.

One other issue that came to mind that I thought was relevant to the discussion had to do with my own training. I recalled the gaps in my own educational/professional training. Having been trained in linguistics, I like to think I've got a solid grasp of the what-knowledge (language and its structure: at the level of language as a system of sound and meaning as well as the larger level of discourse) as well as an adequate understanding of quantitative research techniques (we had to take statistics as a required elective. I always thought it was a funny difference between the language and the literature cohorts). It was also an undergraduate course that we had to take at the graduate level. I should also note that in my research methods seminar, we did not spend much time going over qualitative research methods. The assumption here is that we were all expected to more or less conduct quantitative research. The Department generally looked down on students who wanted to conduct qualitative research - reflected in the low number of theses that actually used these methods!

I think of these sessions as opportunities for reflection (we don't get much of those these days!) and a chance for a fruitful exchange with other teachers about the problems that concern us. Initially, I had thought there wasn't much to be done - short of entering into (verbal!!!) boxing matches with administration - but the readings so far have inspired me to think and reflect on how we can actually make a difference. I've been under the impression that part-time faculty really had no power - that we couldn't be as creative and inventive as we really wanted to be - thanks to the very rigid top-down structure at most institutions of higher education. But I think now I have some ideas...

Coding Density

Problematizing Givens

Knowledge Types

Education-Professional Development

Critical Ideology

Attitudes to Teaching

Attitudes to Language

Reflexive Action

Appendix 8: Qualitative Codebook

Classification	Labels (Codes)	Definition/Purpose	Example from Excerpts
Knowledge Types	Professional Knowledge	This is the 'received wisdom' from experts – mostly theoretical – will be used to identify such trends in both participant educational background and professional development sessions they attend.	*I felt that they're just telling us some information to memorize and have good grades. I felt that way.*
	Procedural Knowledge	This includes classroom management strategies and hands on approaches to teaching - – will be used to identify such trends in both participant educational background and professional development sessions they attend.	*I took the TEFL course, online… for four hours to be able to teach English. And I'm taking, and I'm buying some books on Kindle to see the lesson plans for beginner English speakers, intermediate and advanced. These books are really helping me.*
	Personal Knowledge	This refers to 'unexplained' teacher insight – generally not considered as 'valuable' – will be used to identify whether such knowledge was considered useful in both educational background and professional development sessions.	*This is what I call community of practice, because you actually talk about things that you did in class and somebody… it clicks somewhere. Somebody might feel… I could have done that extra thing and it would have made a difference.*
	Reflective Knowledge	This label will be used whenever participants discuss coursework/workshops that were particularly challenging or included components of a critical or social dimension.	*He was literally the only professor that actually wanted to hear our opinion. He told us straight up. What do you think about this? Do you agree with this? Do you hate this? Do you think this guy is right?*
	Technical Knowledge	This will be used to refer to how participants describe the courses they took or the material they are given in workshops – whether they consider it to be	*So all the skills that I learned, didn't really like I remember everything, of course, like Piaget and all of it and all of these things, , but like, in terms of coming to apply all of*

		specific to certain skills or theoretical.	*that as a fresh graduate, I didn't feel like I was equipped like one enough for that to be completely frank.*
Attitudes to Language	Standard English	This refers to the myth of a 'proper' English that we should all aspire to learn – To what extent do participants espouse such ideals?	*Like accent is a bonus, but what I cannot tolerate is bad grammar. And I want my students although maybe they might not have a good accent I want my students to be fluent in English what speaking so I believe that speaking fluently and good grammar are the most important key points.*
	English Neutrality	This label will include any statement that refers to English 'uncritically' as the sole language for the future or as a language devoid of any political agenda.	*…the English language is a worldwide language and without it, our students won't be able to survive the outer world. If that means that we are killing our own native language, I feel that our Arabic teachers should put in some more effort*
	Native Speaker Fallacy	This refers to the assumption that native speaker fluency is the 'golden standard' and an English teacher's resolve to achieve this standard.	*The second thing is getting rid of this notion that you have to be native speaker for you to be a good English teacher. This is incorrect.*
	Preservation of L1	This will be used whenever participants discuss the need to protect L1, Arabic in this case.	*I feel that our Arabic teachers should put in some more effort to protect the language and we as teachers should always tell our Students how important our Arabic language is.*
	Monolingual Fallacy	Closely connected to the use of L1, this label will be used whenever participants appear critical of the use of L1 or believe that it is better to only use target language.	*I always tried to redirect them to speak the English language only. I didn't really have that issue at the private school.*
	Early Start	This refers to the need to	*I have been corrupted in this*

	Fallacy	start learning language at a very young age to gain proficiency.	*sense because I read a study… a long long time ago that talks about how the brain's capacity to learn languages starts dying off at the age of 16 months. So before 16 months, all the neurons in the brain that are responsible for learning a new language are lit … and somehow they start dying later…*
	Maximum Exposure Fallacy	This label refers to any notion regarding teaching all subjects in the target foreign language in addition to trying to expose the learner to that language constantly.	*From a very young age, they were able to speak English. And their exposure to social media was higher, and their parents actually understood them when they spoke English. So they could have, you know, communicated with their parents, or maybe their parents are reinforcing that at home.*
	Linguicism	This will refer to the oppressive nature of some languages and their ability to affect other native languages. It will also delineate any attitudes towards some languages as having a higher value than others.	*I saw from the private schools that students preferred English rather than Arabic and they spoke it better and between one another, they were speaking English.*
	Ecology of languages	In contrast to linguicism, this strategy calls for languages to survive alongside each other, without the need to 'subtract' from any one language. This will lead to preservation of linguistic human rights.	*…even being an English teacher. I would like my students to speak both languages equally*
	Language and Power	This label will be used when participants connect the notions of language and power and actively discuss how language	*I think that's a pretty prudent problem in terms of globalization. I think it's much bigger than that. Because English is the language that is*

		could be used (and abused) to gain power.	*spoken the most in the world. I don't know if it's Chinese took over, but English is spoken in almost every country around the world. So I think there's more of a political aspect to that, perhaps I'm not sure.*
	Language Learning Assumptions	This label will be used for any other language learning assumptions that might not strictly follow any of the categories above.	*For our engineering students in particular, it is very important that they develop their writing skills… and their speech skills but… I don't feel there is that much pressure even though the university or the school of engineering received a grant and they're using a big sum of that money to develop their students' ability to write better and speak better…*
Attitudes to Teaching	Target Culture	This refers to the readings and teacher resources used, and to what extent teachers might be focusing on American/British culture as deliberate choices. The reverse can be used in an attempt to 'resist' dominant culture, where teachers attempt to diversify teaching resources to be more inclusive.	*I mostly am fond of, or the thing that I'm interested in the most in terms of literature is American literature. So that's what I would personally use as my main source for teaching literature because that's what I like personally. That's what I know most.*
	Language Resources	This will be used to refer to any comments regarding teaching material, not necessarily focused on target culture.	*I don't think they served any of the curriculum goals at all. And they weren't well-aligned.*
	Use of L1	This label will be used to identify whenever participants talk about their use of L1 in class and the purposes behind it.	*I have to… it's almost every English teacher that teaches in public school. If they tell you that they do not speak Arabic, they will be lying to you. There is absolutely no way they don't use Arabic.*

			Trust me on this.
	Radical Pedagogy	This is the critical ideal, where teachers actively seek to promote a conscious and deliberate political agenda of emancipation.	*With high schoolers, I'm ready to go radical, especially when it comes to feminist articles. However, when it comes to the university, I kind of am a little bit wary. Because there is a line you cannot break in the university.*
	Language Teaching Assumptions	This refers to common practices used in the classroom, or practices teachers are expected to use.	*If a student makes a grammatical mistake, for example, and that grammatical mistake is an Arabic translation. Okay? Now, sometimes I do explain that you did this mistake because in Arabic you say that so but in English we say something else. I'm not destroying the Arabic language. That's what I think. And yet if I, as a teacher, or as an English department, if I ridicule… if I state that it's a difficult language… if the way I project my native language as something really horrible bad, then I am destroying it… but to be honest I'm not.*
Critical Ideology	Problematizing Givens	Will generally be used whenever participants appear to critique a common assumption or practice. This will be an essential code in identifying participant attitudes.	*I don't know… I think it's because, as an English teacher, I would assume that you know, that's how it's always been necessarily. But this is your assumption. You never really know.*
	Reflexive Action	This will refer to moments were action and reflection work together simultaneously to identify any change in practice – This will be used when participants refer to any changes they plan to work	*…so we're always coming back and sharing information… and then we share conferences when we come back… we don't have to but we have the option of sharing. This kind of dialogue is ongoing. And then they*

		on after reading and reflection.	*placed us recently in a building where we're all on the same floor and have a beautiful lounge area. We're always hanging out together so these conversations are continuously happening.*
	Dialogic Inquiry	This will refer to instances where participants explicitly discuss their relationship to each other, as this attempt at dialogue is crucial to the focus group sessions, where the researcher only exists as one participating member of the discussion.	*I learned a few things from this session, namely the need to have a conversation about these assumptions; a conversation that is not rooted in "who knows best" but rather something where egos are not allowed.*
	Hegemony	This label will refer to any power imbalance and any moment of powerlessness that teachers might describe. Different agents could enforce this hegemony: upper administration, publishing houses, coordinators, and even the stronghold that empirical/quantitative data is of higher value in academia.	*I believe that at a public school because you don't have a lot of inspectors going into your classrooms and you can be as flexible as you want, but by law you're not allowed to. By law, you're not allowed to bring in a lot of extra materials.*
	Hope	In critical pedagogy, discussions of hope are very important as they presume a position of positive change, where participants feel that they can have an impact on their surroundings. This also refers to a participant's belief in the transformative power of the language classroom which can actively seek the democratization of language learning	*They're 12, 13… It's amazing. They're angry and shouting above each other, and the teacher is angry too. To me, this is an opportunity … a learning opportunity.*

			processes.
	Teacher Agency	Closely connected to hope, this will be used whenever participants discuss issues of empowerment and degree of control pertaining to their own classes/context.	*I had access to what the previous teacher taught, so I tried to choose different materials, different lessons, different themes from the ones that were already taught. Okay, remind them of the previous themes, but just try to try to do things that they haven't done before.*
	Powerlessness	In contrast, this will be used to denote a general feeling of despair, where participants feel that they lack the power to make any change.	*Tell me what you need me to do… I'll just do it.*
	Dominant Ideology	This refers to a more traditional or mainstream view of education and the role of an educator, as one who needs to focus on transmitting knowledge and teaching 'pre-specified' material. Also referred to as the 'banking model' of education.	*We as teachers, as educators, we do not teach nationally. It's very much the international thing… we have that … I don't want to call it a preconceived idea… It's not a preconceived idea. We want to create a global citizen because we believe that's an added value*
	Critical Perspective	This label refers to educators who are aware that knowledge can adapt and change based on the social, local, context and deliberately bring this complexity into the classroom.	*…this discussion has happened in many of my classes in my PhD program, brought to the table not just by me and my colleague from Lebanon, but also by our professors who were wondering what the future of English was… and what about world Englishes… and to what extent is this accepted … what's the future of English and English teaching instruction?*
Education and Professional Development	Teacher Education	This label signifies any reference to their previous educational background, courses they might or might not have taken, and	*Honestly, the best classes were the most challenging ones for me, going from the university in the North to the one in Beirut, I didn't have*

		topics they may or may not have covered.	*that…you know, a strong research base.*
	Professional Development	This refers to their feedback regarding teacher development sessions both in general and to refer to specific instances.	*At the private school, we had workshops, but it was like… they were free. But it wasn't very wasn't beneficial.*
	Intervention	This will refer to any attitudes expressed toward the current intervention (the focus group sessions they attended as part of this study).	*When you go to a professional development workshop, and I want to call them workshop, not professional development, when you go to workshop, it's a one time thing and you just do it and that's it. This one is a little bit different. The themes made me say, wow, I don't know anything about this. Let me try and see what it is about.*

Appendix 9: Full list of Nodes in NVivo

Attitudes to Language		
Early Start Fallacy	5	8
Ecology of Languages	7	9
English Neutrality	5	6
Language and Power	6	13
Language Learning Assumptions	8	12
Linguicism	6	10
Maximum Exposure Fallacy	8	20
Monolingual Fallacy	7	14
Native Speaker Fallacy	3	3
Preservation of L1	8	19
Standard English	9	23
Attitudes to Teaching		
Language Resources	9	30
Language Teaching Assumptions	5	8
Radical Pedagogy	5	7
Target Culture	9	24
Translanguaging	0	0
Use of L1	9	16
Critical Ideology		
Catalytic Validity	0	0
Critical perspective	3	6
Dialogic Inquiry	1	2
Dominant Ideology	4	11
Hegemony	9	20
Hope	2	2
Powerlessness	3	10
Problematizing Givens	5	9
Reflexive Action	3	3
Teacher Agency	8	18
Education-Professional Development		
Educational Background	9	18
Intervention	3	5
Professional Development	9	30
Teacher Education	5	9
Teaching Context	8	25
Knowledge Types	9	58
Personal Knowledge	3	3
Procedural Knowledge	5	8
Professional Knowledge	6	12
Reflective Knowledge	8	24
Technical Knowledge	7	11

Appendix 10: Participant Information Sheet

Title of Project: Attitudes towards Teaching English in Lebanon: An exercise in Critical Applied Linguistics

Researcher name: Reine Azzi

Invitation and brief summary: As a faculty member at the Lebanese American University who has been teaching English within the Lebanese context of higher education for the past 10 years, I am interested in identifying and discussing our current attitudes to the teaching and learning of English in Lebanon. My doctoral thesis will focus on the current attitudes that teachers hold and their body of knowledge, along with the need to create spaces for inquiry-based teacher development, where we actively discuss these assumptions and shared experiences. These sessions, which I will facilitate and hold at the Lebanese American University campus in Beirut, will necessitate the presence of motivated teachers from schools and universities who will discuss and reflect upon language issues relevant to our particular context.

Please take time to consider the detailed information below carefully and to discuss it with colleagues or ask me any follow-up questions.

Purpose of the research:
The status of English in our globalized world is in a state of constant flux, and my research will attempt to create a space for in-service English teachers, in both schools and universities in Lebanon, to critically discuss the impact of English as a medium of Instruction (EMI) and as a foreign language along with their own attitudes, assumptions, and experience in the field. A secondary research objective involves the need to discuss teacher preparation and professional development programs in Lebanon.

Why have I been approached?
You have been approached as a member of this large (and diverse) professional community of English language teachers in Lebanon, to share your unique experience. If you consent to taking part in these inquiry-based reflection sessions, you will be joining a small group of 8-15 participants from different school and university levels. The emphasis would be on your willingness to discuss your personal assumptions to language learning and teaching in Lebanon and to draw upon your particular teaching experience. Your shared experience, along with the evidence-based participatory discussions during the sessions, will ensure greater criticality and reflexivity.

What would taking part involve?

Your part in the study will involve the following the phases:

1. Completing an initial interview (approximately 40 minutes)
2. Participating in five group sessions (approximately 90 minutes each on Saturdays)
3. Reflecting on your experience through short guided journal entries after every group discussion (less than 300 words and anonymous)
4. Completing a final interview (approximately 30 minutes)

Each participatory session will include the following stages:
- An assigned pre-reading from an academic source
- 15 minutes: warm-up activity inspired by the reading and/or topic
- 30 minutes: discussion within the group
- 30 minutes: sharing/discussion among all participants
- 15 minutes: writing the reflection journal

All the data collected with remain anonymous and pseudonymised. No personal information will be reported or any additional detail that could allow anyone to infer your identity.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The discussions we will participate in are of immediate relevance to your teaching practice. There will be no other tangible benefits involved in taking part in this research. It will involve a high commitment level on your part.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no foreseeable risks involved in this research. As with any 'created community', though, one limitation would be an ability to speak openly and discuss shared experiences in a judgment-free space. This is an obstacle I am fully aware of and will address in the first group session.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

You can withdraw from this study at any moment during the process. However, some of your data will be included in the final results. As the process is anonymous, for example, I would not be able to selectively remove your 'reflection journal entries' or any observations I made during the focus group sessions, as they would be anonymous even to me. However, if you prefer to remove your initial interview data, then I will delete those records and not include them in the final report.

How will my information be kept confidential?

The University of Exeter processes personal data for the purposes of carrying out research in the public interest. The University will endeavour to be transparent about its processing of your personal data and this information sheet should provide a clear explanation of this. If you do have any queries about the University's processing of your personal data that cannot be resolved by the research team, further information may be obtained from the University's Data Protection Officer by emailing dataprotection@exeter.ac.uk or at www.exeter.ac.uk/dataprotection.

Your data will be stored on the university drive (which is the default protocol) and it will be pseudonymised. Any additional use of your data will be used anonymously and only to inform any future research in this area. It will not be used to report or publish additional academic work.

Will I receive any payment for taking part?
There will be no reimbursement for participating in this research.

What will happen to the results of this study?
The results of this study will be disseminated as part of my doctoral thesis dissertation and could be discussed partially or as a collective in academic conferences and meetings.

Who is organising and funding this study?
This study is self-funded. No external agency is paying my tuition at Exeter.

Who has reviewed this study?
This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter (Reference Number 33827957) and the Institutional Review Board at the Lebanese American University (Reference Number D1920-022).

Further information and contact details
For any additionally inquiries, please contact me on reine.azzi@lau.edu.lb or via my personal phone on +96171012191.
If you wish to have additional information, you can also contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Salah Troudi, University of Exeter: s.troudi@exeter.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Appendix 11: NVivo Analysis of One Node

Appendix 12: NVivo Word Frequency Query