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## Integrating Critical Multiliteracies Pedagogy in ESL/EFL Teaching

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There is urgency in education to situate literacy instruction in practices that are responsive to the globalized, multilingual world in which we live (Vasquez, 2017). This goal is significant in classrooms in the United States and internationally with students striving to become bilingual and biliterate in English language teaching (ELT) settings (Huang, 2012). Underlying an appreciation in pedagogical practices that focus new perspectives on literacy learning in ELT is the need for teacher educators to embrace new perspectives on 21<sup>st</sup>-century literacy.

Two approaches that reflect these new perspectives are critical literacy and multiliteracies pedagogy. Critical literacy draws attention to issues of social justice and equity through focusing on unequal power relations as reflected through language in any text (Janks & Vasquez, 2011). Critical pedagogy aims to empower people to develop and exercise agency to challenge the dominant power hierarchy in their sociocultural and political world (Janks, 2014; Luke, 2012). This pedagogy has its roots in the notion that literacy education should emphasize the critical consciousness of learners through reading not just words but reading the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987). From these roots, critical literacy pedagogy has contributed to raising and addressing issues of power, language, and identity through critical engagement with and redesign of texts (Janks, 2014; Luke, 2014; Rogers et al., 2009).

Likewise, multiliteracies pedagogy, by recognizing and drawing on multiple ways of *doing* literacies through multimodal communication channels and participatory approaches, has advanced critical pedagogy in the highly mobile and connected transnational world (New London Group, 1996; Smith et al., 2018). While scholars have advocated for critical literacy approaches that challenge and disrupt inequities through text deconstruction and redesign through multimodality (e.g., Janks, 2010; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; McKinney, 2016),

critical literacy has taken a long while to enter teacher education (Rogers & Wetzel, 2014). Education in ESL/EFL contexts has an even more limited history of adopting critical and multiliteracies, mainly due to the prevalent focus on skill-based literacy instruction and the entrenched belief that beginning levels of language proficiency prevent engagement in cognitively challenging tasks (Bacon, 2017; Huh, 2016; Park, 2011).

In this paper, we argue for enacting a synthesis of critical literacy pedagogy and multiliteracies pedagogy, which we would call *critical multiliteracies pedagogy* (CMP), in ESL/EFL classrooms. Enactment of CMP can enhance English language teaching and learning in global contexts. These meaning-based practices that reflect new ways of inviting learners to engage with language and literacy are relevant in UNITED STATES and international classrooms with bi-multilingual learners. We discuss ways to introduce CMP in ESL/EFL settings through documenting how an international professional development (PD) program aimed to enhance and promote these practices with Korean English teachers working with adolescent multilingual learners. Our overarching research question was: How have Korean English teachers' perception and practice of critical multiliteracies pedagogy changed during and after PD?

We expand the notion of critical literacy pedagogy by integrating visions and practices of multiliteracies pedagogy for ELs around the world. In this expanded conceptualization of CMP, we highlight how the increasing availability of new media has shifted the traditional print-based notion of literacy towards multimodal and participatory approaches to literacy education (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Kim, 2018; Kress, 2000; New London Group, 1996). Next, we describe how we designed and implemented our PD to enhance the Korean English teachers' understanding of CMP. We share participants' perceptions and implementation of CMP during and after the PD

and discuss implications for teachers of English in ESL/EFL contexts as well as for integrating CMP into TESOL teacher education programs.

### **Critical Multiliteracies Pedagogy in Transnational Era**

Literacy is not merely about reading and writing but is defined as a social practice of building identities, relationships, and world views (Gee, 1990). Thus, critical literacy provides opportunities to identify, reflect on, and transform current practices towards more equitable practices with new ways of *being* and *doing* (Vasquez et al., 2019). This pedagogical approach seeks to empower students to become critical consumers and producers of texts, and to engage in transformative efforts to address issues of inequity (Janks & Vasquez, 2011). Ultimately, critical literacy supports “reconstructing and redesigning texts, images, and practices to convey different and more socially just and equitable messages and ways of being that have real-life effects and real-world impact” (Vasquez, 2017, p. 19).

With the advancement of new information technologies and varying textual forms, critical literacy has evolved to mean “the use of the technologies of print and other media of communication to analyze, critique, and transform the norms, rule systems, and practices governing the social fields of everyday life” (Luke, 2012, p. 5). Through this expanded notion of ‘text,’ critical literacy pedagogy and multiliteracies pedagogy intersect seamlessly. In other words, literacy as reading and writing of text has pluralized towards multiple *literacies* through new modes of creating texts, connecting to the world, and collaborating with others (Luke & Dooley, 2011). The concept of *multiliteracies* refers to such critical abilities to negotiate diverse text forms and discursive practices (Lam, 2009). In their seminal work, the New London Group (1996) made the pivotal connection between multiliteracies pedagogy and critical literacy by emphasizing *critical framing*, that is, the process of denaturalizing, critiquing, re-evaluating, and

eventually innovating what is normalized and taken for granted. Critical framing, then, leads to *transformed practice* through creative appropriation and expansion of meaning for the new context, the final stage of multiliteracies pedagogy. Multiliteracies pedagogy incorporates multiple meaning-making means—linguistic, audiovisual, digital, and spatial tools—into the literacy classroom. Through this multimodal process, learners can access more challenging content concepts and reconstruct and design meaning creatively (Janks, 2010).

Multiliteracies pedagogy goes beyond adding diverse semiotic resources for classroom learning and interaction. This pedagogical approach connects and builds on the diverse life experiences, cultural identities, and ways of communicating in an increasingly diverse and globally connected world (New London Group, 1996). A wide spectrum of linguistic, cultural, and technological resources have allowed students to engage with and create texts in new ways through “selective appropriation of literacy resources” (Lam, 2008, p. 459). Mode, “the name for a culturally and socially fashioned resource for representation and communication,” has become a matter of choice in crafting and delivering meanings (Kress, 2003, p. 45), enabling one to represent the complexity of their experiences in a higher dimension than what language alone affords (Lemke, 2002). “Reading texts” in the multiliteracies framework is viewed as an active process which involves supportive or oppositional interpreting of the given text through creative modal representations in a solo mode or across modes (Morgan & Ramanathan, 2005). Multimodal combinations or transmodal shifts can create an expanded meaning potential.

Thus, use of diverse modal materials in classroom such as books, photos, audiotapes, videos, or gestural activities can “engage identities and the imagination in provocative ways unmet through other textual resources” (Morgan & Ramanathan, 2005, p. 158). As such, multiliteracies and critical literacy pedagogy can be seamlessly merged in the literacy classroom.

The combined approach to literacy teaching and learning, namely CMP, has never been more relevant and powerful than in the contemporary transnational world.

### **Critical Multiliteracies Pedagogy in ESL/EFL Classrooms**

Critical literacy pedagogy has been widely adopted in English education, mainly in English-speaking countries, but has slowly entered the ESL/EFL classroom context (Abednia & Crookes, 2019; Ko, 2013). Particularly in EFL settings, critical literacy is often framed as an add-on component to skill-based instruction for reading comprehension and basic communicative skills (Huh, 2016). The prevailing notion that English learners (ELs) first need to develop language proficiency before pursuing critical topics is a main reason for the lack of critical literacy curriculum in the ESL/EFL context (Bacon, 2017; Lau, 2012, 2013; Park, 2011). English has gained global dominance as the language of prestige, power, and access to resources and opportunities around the world with implications such as an elevated social status or stigma for a lack of proficiency (Norton & Toohey, 2004). Thus, ELT is inherently intertwined with issues of power, equity, and discrimination (Bacon, 2017; Canagarajah, 2007; Huang, 2012; Luke & Dooley, 2011).

Multiliteracies pedagogy has also arisen out of concerns that the dominant ideologies and norms of ELT that favor English monolingual and print-based literacy curriculum have obscured diverse voices, identities, and communication styles across global educational contexts (Stein, 2007). By incorporating diverse ways of doing literacies including multimodal and multilingual discourse practices, multiliteracies pedagogy recognizes that texts are malleable social designs and thus can be reshaped and redesigned to represent alternative versions of the world.

Critical multiliteracies pedagogy can be implemented in diverse ways. Park's (2011) study presented how EFL students practiced critical inquiry from a social justice perspective

using a news article to promote discussions on the social issue of taking a medical pill called a “neuroenhancer.” The teacher sought to build linguistic capacity and critical ideas despite the curricular constraints of English education in South Korea. Other studies (Ko, 2013; Silvers et al., 2010; Zhang & Zou, 2020) have converged to lend support to the idea that CMP can work in ESL/EFL classrooms with carefully designed supports such as working with topics relevant to students’ experiences, balancing activities between language learning and critical thinking/discussion, drawing from students’ first language resources, and providing innovative technologies. Through the critical multiliteracies approach, teachers can increase students’ potential to become critical readers, creative designers of varying texts, and active social agents for transformative changes.

The present study responds to the professional development opportunity gap for teachers to understand and enact CMP (Alford & Jetnikoff, 2016; Janks, 2014; Luke, 2014). Despite the growing interest in critical literacy, for example, guidelines for professional development are less systematic (Iverson et al., 2004; Lesley et al., 2020; Paesani & Allen, 2020), primarily targeting general educators (Calderwood et al., 2010; Crawford-Garrett et al., 2020; Lewison et al., 2002). There is even less research on the integration of critical literacy and multiliteracies for ESL/EFL teachers’ professional development. To fill the gap, the present study utilized the context of a professional development seminar series with a group of Korean English teachers that included a focus on critical multiliteracies pedagogy. In this paper, we explore the question *How have Korean English teachers’ perception and practice of critical multiliteracies pedagogy changed during and after PD?*

## Methods

### Study Context and Participants

This study took place in the context of an extensive professional development and cultural exchange program envisioned and implemented by various stakeholders—department of education leaders in a South Korean province, an educational exchange organization with previous experience coordinating cultural and educational programming for Korean teachers, the school of education of a large, public university near Washington D.C., and administrators and teachers from one of the university’s key school district partners.

Through a competitive selection process in Korea, 20 middle and high school English language teachers were invited to participate in the month-long program. All teachers had at least six years of teaching experience in addition to the first level teacher certification training which is provided to teachers who successfully complete three to five years of teaching. These teachers also participated in different teacher education programs including overseas professional development. These teachers varied widely in age (20s to 50s), gender (six males and 14 females), years of experience (six years to more than 30 years), school size and location, and grade-level curricular focus (eight middle school teachers and 12 high school teachers). Table 1 shows the six follow-up interview participants’ information.

**Table 1***Follow-up Interviewees' Profile*

Participants (Pseudonyms)	Gender	School	Age (Year)	Teaching Experience (Year)
Hajin	m	High school	43	16
Inho	m	High school	39	10
Noyoon	f	High school	29	6
Hye	f	High school	42	15
Eunmi	f	Middle school	38	15
Kyeong	f	Middle school	38	15

The six interviewees were purposefully selected for a range of experiences and perspectives from participants with varying profiles in terms of gender, levels of school (middle/high), age, and years of teaching. For example, Eunmi was teaching in a small-sized middle school in a rural area. In contrast, Kyeong was teaching in an urban middle school that served a large student population. Hye was working in a high school specializing in teaching foreign languages. Noyoon, who used to teach high school students, was working on designing teacher PD programs. Inho and Eunmi were interested in promoting Global Citizenship education. Hye was also active in multiple teacher professional communities and working towards her master's degree in education. Hajin had a Ph.D. degree with a focus on vocabulary instruction. Overall, the interviewees were members of varying secondary school contexts, aspiring to impact the professional community in Education.

The 20 English teachers participated in a series of 12 three-hour PD workshops at the university. The workshop content was informed by a needs assessment prior to travel to the United States, which indicated that the Korean teachers considered themselves to be knowledgeable regarding English language teaching theory and desired to learn up-to-date

practices through active learning. In particular, the needs assessment indicated the teachers' interest in learning and applying innovative, current instructional frameworks and strategies that could be used to create relevant, meaningful lessons for adolescent English learners. Thus, the workshops offered the teachers opportunities to engage in practicing the kind of pedagogical strategies that could be used in their teaching as well as to dialog with one another and workshop facilitators about these practices. One major theme of workshops was critical multiliteracies pedagogy.

The two-week PD seminar included cultural excursions to Washington D.C. and New York City and was followed by two weeks of classroom observations in local schools, daily engagement with a U.S. teacher peer, and an opportunity to design and deliver at least one lesson. In this manuscript, we focus on the opportunities for the participating teachers to enhance their understanding and practice of critical multiliteracies pedagogy.

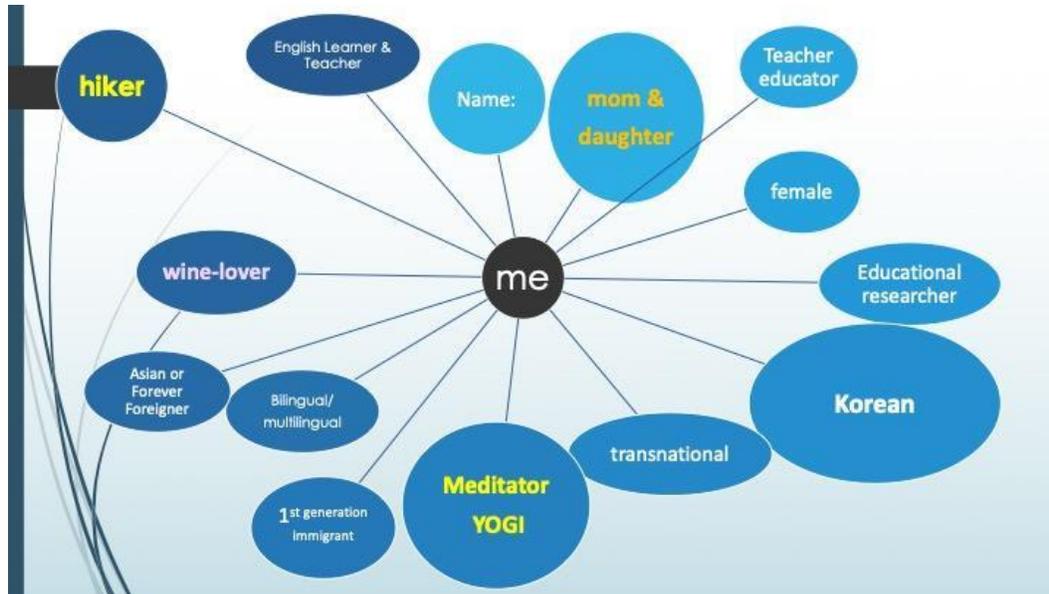
### **Engaging in Critical Multiliteracies Practices**

To illustrate the way that we engaged the participants in CMP, we share the key experiential learning activities. We started by engaging participants in critical reflection on their socio-culturally situated identities and pedagogical practices. For example, the opening workshop prompted teachers to explore the intersection of contexts, identities, and teaching practices. This initial activity was designed to activate teachers' cross-cultural perspectives across different ELT contexts in Korea and the United States and also to understand shared goals and visions from the standpoint of critical pedagogy. In another reflection activity, the teachers shared their "multicultural self" chart (see Figure 1 below for a sample) in which they highlighted names and labels that were particularly constraining or liberating. The teachers

shared the personal meaning such names and labels held and how their identities interacted/intersected with learners' identities in their classroom.

**Figure 1**

*Multicultural Self Chart*



To model the way that CMP can spark meaning-making with a focus on the intersection of language and power, two activities centered on the theme of refugee experiences, a relevant topic in both the United States and South Korea. As Vasquez (2017) argued, “issues and topics of interest that capture learners’ interests, based on their experiences, or artifacts with which they engage in the material world . . . can and should be used as text to build a curriculum that has significance in their lives” (p. 7). Our intention in these activities was to engage the teachers in CMP and to spark thinking and dialog around ways that this pedagogical approach could be adapted and integrated into their own teaching practice with adolescent ELs. Teachers working with bi-multilingual English learners in the United States and international contexts can enhance

learners' language and literacy development through learning and applying critical multiliteracies pedagogy.

### ***Photo Juxtaposing and Multimodal Text Creation***

The first activity in which we engaged the teacher participants was photo juxtaposing, a critical literacy strategy in which two photos illustrating different perspectives on the same theme are examined from a critical stance. We shared one photo portraying a large crowd in a pro-refugee demonstration. The other photo conveyed a smaller crowd of anti-refugee marchers (see Figure 2 below). After viewing the photos side-by-side, the teachers engaged in small-group discussion about the viewpoints represented in the photos. What they noticed about how the people, facial expressions, language on signs, and surrounding scenery contributed to conveying messages and what they interpreted those messages to be. The teachers also interrogated the way that the photos may have conveyed the photographers' perspectives and discussed why and how the marchers might come to hold distinct viewpoints about refugees.

In the second activity, the teachers listened to and read along with a short excerpt from the introduction to a YA novel, *A Land of Permanent Goodbyes* by Atia Abawi (2018), a journalist who witnessed the refugee crisis resulting from the war in Syria firsthand. The author introduces Destiny as a personified narrator in the novel. The teachers considered why the author may have chosen to foreground Destiny as a narrator in the beginning of this story and were invited to work with a partner to create and share a visual depiction of this text excerpt. Using markers, pens, and paper, the teachers re-designed this text excerpt to reflect their own thinking about the author's choice to position Destiny as a narrator in this story of refugees fleeing Syria.

## Figure 2

### *Examples of Photo Juxtaposing Activity*



Through direct engagement with these critical multiliteracies practices, we provided the teachers an opportunity to practice the way that CMP could be applied in their own teaching. We also opened a space for discussion around the benefits and challenges of integrating CMP with their specific learners in distinct teaching contexts.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data for the present study were collected in January, February, and later in September of 2020, including 1) initial need assessment survey; 2) focus group discussions with all participants during the program; 3) participant-generated artifacts such as memos, activity posters, and lesson plans; 4) observational field notes; 5) final surveys for program assessment and self-reflection; and 6) follow-up interviews with six teachers. The initial need assessment survey included items asking teachers' comfort level with integrating CMP in classroom instruction. The first focus group addressed the teachers' prior assumptions about language teaching, teacher identity, and the specific contexts of ELT in South Korea. Artifacts served as evidence of participants' perceptions, practices, and prospects of change. Observational field notes reflected the day-to-day activities in the workshops. The final focus group discussion and survey data provided documentation about how participating teachers responded to the program.

The follow-up interviews conducted with six teachers explored the way our program may have influenced their teacher identity and language ideologies, what kinds of instructional modifications have occurred since the PD, and what further changes they envision as an English teacher. Altogether, the data suggested the immediate and subsequent impact of the PD in teachers' understanding and application of new pedagogical frameworks and strategies, one of which was CMP.

For data analysis, we used a constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2010) to generate a list of initial open codes with analytic memos across data sets. The initial codes rooted in the data were developed into two thematic categories around how the participants contextualized ELT toward CMP and how teachers expanded and exercised CMP during and after the PD. Particularly, we showcase an exemplary teacher practice through describing how one participating teacher implemented CMP in his ELT classroom during and after the PD. Collectively, our analysis revealed teachers' prior and changed perceptions of CMP as well as practices and prospects of CMP in the context of the EFL classroom in South Korea. All participant-identifiable data sources were marked with pseudonyms.

## **Results**

### **Critical Framing: Contextualizing ELT Toward CMP**

Data analysis shows that teachers' moves towards CMP started at the perceptive level by recognizing and reflecting on the situated context of their ELT in South Korea. Through cross-cultural stances, they made a critical inquiry into their teaching practices. The majority of teachers shared that ELT in the secondary school in South Korea has been geared toward students' success on KSAT (Korean Scholastic Aptitude Test) for college admission. This focus led teachers, especially in high schools, to heavily emphasize reading comprehension for KSAT.

Participants pointed to the system-wide emphasis on preparation for successful college entrance as their main rationale to choose the teacher-led grammar translation method (GTM) over student-centered approaches.

Despite such social and institutional constraints, some teachers incorporated collaborative and communicative activities through peer work, grouping strategies, and critically-oriented tasks (e.g., debate) to offset the overly GTM-focused instruction. However, follow-up interviews indicated that the teachers were not confident enough to push against the predominant norms of ELT. For example, Hye shared that she was torn between the imposed view of ELT for college preparation and ELT for identity exploration and communication with the world. Hye explained that prior PD experiences focused on the technical aspect of teaching English linguistics. Through our PD, Hye started to re-examine her philosophy of teaching and ways to engage students in reading both the word and world (described in the next section).

Another opportunity for teachers to challenge their ELT lens came from direct observation during school visits. They noticed a range of differences between Korean and U.S. classrooms. One salient difference was the inclusive culture that supported diverse students' needs through participatory and collaborative activities. Eunmi, for example, shared that she was first surprised at the classroom diversity then impressed with the teachers' skillful response to diverse learners.

After the school-based experience, the teachers emphasized the growing diversity of the student population and lack of responsive training in teacher education in South Korea as an emerging social issue. For instance, one participant expressed her challenge in teaching newcomer students from Vietnam:

I am going to have new students who only speak Vietnamese. He won't speak English nor Korean. We cannot communicate, then, how can we teach? (Focus Group)

While discussing the emerging issue of teaching the new student population, labelled as “multicultural students” in Korea, teachers began to question the predominant ELT norms and methods in Korea from a more critical perspective. For example, one teacher shared how her “multicultural students’ identities” were often devalued or denied in the classroom space by the lack of culturally and linguistically relevant learning resources and supports. It appeared that teachers took their cross-cultural encounter with the U.S. classroom diversity as an opportunity to re-examine and address current perspectives toward diverse learners in Korea, particularly questioning how prevailing viewpoints perceive “multicultural students” as “problems” for society at large and for education. Eunmi noted that she wanted to adopt the multiliteracies pedagogy of approaching literacy as identity work to understand and connect with her multicultural students. We appraise these moments of *critical framing* as pivotal in reshaping participants’ perceptions and frameworks of ELT towards CMP.

### ***Responses to CMP Activities***

Activities of interpreting photo juxtaposition and multimodally representing a short story around refugees also contributed to teachers’ conceptualization of CMP. After viewing the photos of pro- and anti-refugee marchers, participants’ discussion reflected multiple themes. The comments included that one might believe that pro-refugee sentiments were more widespread given the larger size of this crowd but that this may not necessarily be so. Others commented on the way that the pro-refugee immigrant crowd seemed to be more multiracial and more animated based on physical characteristics and facial expressions. Another comment centered on the absence of the U.S. flag in the pro-refugee march and its prominence in the anti-refugee photo.

One participant raised a poignant question of whether the “US” in the sign “WHY PUT US IN DANGER?” referred to the United States in general or to the sign-holder’s more personal belief that refugees posed a threat to her and other citizens. All participants were surprised to learn that the pro-refugee march took place in England, not in the United States, which opened a space for discussion around assumptions that we make based on language usage as well as the fact that the refugee crisis is a global issue of concern for people in many countries who hold polarized views on whether refugees should be welcomed or excluded.

Although there were limited time and materials for creating multimodal representations in response to the YA novel excerpt, this activity also provoked thoughtful comments and discussion. For example, in describing their sketches, a few pairs focused on the way our individual experiences shape our beliefs about destiny and that these beliefs are influenced by religion, which in turn is influenced by culture. These comments opened a dialog about the way that not everyone in a cultural group holds the same religious beliefs, that these beliefs often change over time, and that assumptions should not be made about one’s religious beliefs based on one’s cultural identity.

Both of these activities seemed to provoke the teachers’ thinking around the ways that CMP can afford adolescent ELs with opportunities to learn language through meaning-making tasks around relevant sociopolitical issues. For example, Noyoon mentioned:

When teaching English, we shouldn’t only be focusing on language. We did the activity where we saw photos that depicted one occasion differently and thought about the photographers or the media’s intentions for the images. From the activity, I felt that a good lesson is one that makes learners think. I also thought that English teachers do not

only teach English; language is only a medium that carries thoughts. (Follow-up Interview)

At the same time, it was clear that taking a critical stance around a text was a new experience for some teachers. In the self-assessment survey, one participant reflected in writing that she “learned how to view something from critical and varying perspectives.” The CMP activities seemed to have sparked new ways of thinking for at least some participants. Next, we share examples of participating teachers’ expanded thinking and practice of CMP.

### **Transformed Vision and Practice: Expanding CMP**

With the expanded conceptualization of ELT as inclusive of identity building and *world* reading, teachers made a deeper connection between ELT curriculum and students’ identities.

Noyoon shared how her perception of ELT has changed:

During the workshop, I continually thought that in our environment of EFL [in Korea], **we have kept focusing on language only**. So, we had students memorize vocabulary, learn grammar, and do translations. We emphasize communication, but in reality, it was difficult and I kind of gave up [the communicative approach]. But then I started thinking that it would be great if students can learn the target language with more meaningful content and design such as **reflecting on their identities, or using the materials that carry multiple perspectives and critical thinking** as we did in the critical literacy workshop. Even though the current situation is tough, I thought I would put my effort. And the result was the last semester’s writing lessons. With the influence from the workshops, **I had classes that students wrote about controversial topics, whether they agree or disagree**. (Follow-up Interview, **emphasis added**)

Eunmi shared a similar trajectory of change towards CMP that incorporated diverse identities and experiences of students, cross-cultural and global issues, and “social and historical topics into the English classroom” (Follow-up Interview).

Hye shared how she has advanced her ELT framework and practices after the PD. To the question of what has changed in her instruction, she responded:

Now, I have confidence. The biggest change is reflected in the test items. Whereas the previous test had more items that checked English grammar and KSAT-style reading comprehension, the current test has about 75% essay questions so that students can engage in a deeper thinking process. Everyone responded differently to the questions. It was interesting. During the follow-up session, I asked why they thought the way they wrote in the test. (Follow-up Interview)

To further enrich her curriculum, she was exploring ways to integrate ELT and literature, particularly about minoritized people and their rights. She also planned to collaborate with social studies teachers to create cross-curricular lessons. For a long-term goal, she wanted to establish a like-minded teachers’ community for an extensive interdisciplinary collaboration. In terms of language identity and ideology, she added that an empowering view of bilingualism that does not pursue native-like English fluency but acknowledges varying degrees of bilingualism can foster greater self-esteem among her EFL learners.

In addition to the follow-up interviews, teachers noted in the survey and final focus group discussions that they would make lesson topics relevant to students’ experiences, use daily objects/realia “to cultivate students’ capacity of critical thinking,” apply the photo juxtaposition activity to the classroom, and use language critically “for communication and delivering various themes,” “utilize many topics and themes for multiliteracies development,” and build on their

“various competences” through providing “diverse learning materials and ways of representation.”

However, we also noted that some teachers, especially those teaching in upper grades in high schools, continued to face the pressure of preparing students for KSAT. Hajin admitted that while the critical approach can afford opportunities to explore multiple perspectives and move away from the knowledge-transmission model, he did not feel that his school and classroom were ready to adopt the approach. Pointing to the different ELT circumstances between Korea and the United States, he found CMP less practical and viewed his students as far less proficient in English than what engaging in CMP tasks would require. While this is a typical misconception about CMP, we find his comments valuable as an indication that we fell short of our goal for all participants to uptake CMP as a viable pedagogy. Thus, we are tasked with re-designing our future PD to illuminate how CMP can be applied with learners whose proficiency levels and imminent needs vary.

### **Critical Multiliteracies Pedagogy in Action**

This section shares a sample CMP lesson designed and implemented by one participating teacher, Inho, whom we selected for the following reason. During the workshop, we identified that Inho had already been practicing CMP in his English classroom and extracurricular English club prior to joining our program. From the interview, we also noted how the PD had expanded and solidified his vision and practices of integrating CMP into ELT. Thus, by sharing the lessons he conducted with young adolescents during the school visits, we hope that teachers can visualize and transfer the exemplary CMP strategies into their contexts.

Inho’s lesson about global citizenship involved a series of multimodal activities. First, he showed a video about plastic waste and had students think of one “meaningful, interesting, or

shocking” idea from the video. Then, students were guided to form a circle. While sharing one reaction to the video, they tied their finger with a thread, then tossed it to another student to share. A web of thread was created with students’ fingers tied and connected to each other. Then, Inho asked students to sit down or step back with his prompts as cues; for example, “if you used a plastic bottle yesterday, please sit down.” The connected thread tightened from the movement of other students, causing increasing tension around their finger to the point that everyone shouted, “It hurts!” After this gestural activity, Inho engaged students in exploring the analogy of “thread” symbolizing the “ecosystem,” to discuss how the chain reaction caused by a remote action can cause suffering in distant places, stressing the interconnectedness of the entire world. Finally, students were guided to engage with a text titled “plastic attack” to answer critical questions about environmental issues and generate solutions in writing.

Inho aimed to build students’ capacity to *read the world* both textually and multimodally using written text, audiovisual media, bodily gestures, sensory feeling, and oral speech, inviting learners to *recognize global inequities* and *share solutions* orally and in writing. The critical agenda of raising awareness on global issues was executed through transmodal activities of transferring ideas into diverse modes of representation. Students progressively developed their understanding of complex concepts through critical framing, a process of revealing the hidden and problematizing the taken-for-granted while moving towards transformation at the perceptual, and potentially actionable, level. Inho reflected on this experience of engaging U.S. children with global issues as “when I saw students positively responding to my lesson and message, I gained greater confidence in the direction that I was taking as an English teacher” beyond the knowledge transmitter role (Follow-up Interview).

Back in South Korea, Inho has expanded his CMP repertoires, although not fully deliverable yet due to the COVID-19 challenges. He envisions using infographics as an innovative representational tool, Google Classroom for a collaborative space, and varied group configurations for interactive peer work. The flipped classroom, which he had already implemented before the pandemic, has become more essential to his online instruction. However, what was notable was his reasoning that the flipped classroom approach could move ELT beyond teaching grammar and reading comprehension. In order for an English classroom to be engaging, inquisitive, and interactive beyond teaching of grammar and reading, he argued that a space for creativity, critical thinking, and communication should be established. He explained,

By flipping the class, I have my student read and understand the topic first by watching my “springboard lesson” via uploaded videos so that they can actively engage with text to be inquisitive and ask questions, like about why do we have more female teachers but have more male administrators in higher positions? So, the regular class time can be filled with critical thinking, question, discussion, and collaboration. The ability to ask “why” is the future competitiveness. And such an ability comes from engagement in critical thinking. (Follow-up Interview).

Inho shared that he has been incorporating global education goals into his English classroom with secondary school students. He noted the importance of changing the ELT direction:

I think global citizenship education is the direction that English teachers should take... We need to practice value-oriented lessons. When I designed such a lesson during my practicum in the United States, I felt American students also responded with great interest. My class was about [use of] plastics. I tried to convey the message that a wealthy

country like the United States should set a good example about issues of trash and plastic use to establish the value of coexistence in the world. (Follow-up Interview)

Inho stressed that the world outside the classroom is rapidly changing and ELT should respond by inviting students to be critical thinkers and communicators to meet future-oriented and globally minded goals. Thus, for Inho, English proficiency was not the end goal of ELT; instead, English was viewed as an important “tool like a hammer” to accomplish greater goals such as “character education” or “global citizen education” (Follow-up interview).

### **Discussion and New Directions**

Today’s world demands that ELs become critical consumers of information, meaning-makers, and producers of knowledge through collaboration and creativity (Mirra et al., 2018). TESOL professionals in the United States and around the globe are charged with cultivating critical literacy and multiliteracies practices with multilingual learners (Molle et al., 2015; Vasquez, 2017). These approaches align to new perspectives on literacy and how to teach literacy in a multilingual, transnational world (Smith et al., 2018; Vasquez, 2017). This topic is highly relevant for English language teachers in all contexts given that implementation of critical literacy approaches is limited in EFL/ESL contexts (Huang, 2012) and that multiliteracies skills are vital in today’s globalized world (Mirra et al., 2018). These approaches can also foster learners’ capacity to transform and create knowledge in socially relevant ways around issues of local and global importance, contributing to a more critically informed and just world (Janks & Vasquez, 2011; Janks, 2014; Vasquez, 2017).

Given the increasing dominance of English in the world, adopting CMP in ESL/EFL classrooms can also address power dynamics and inequities that language learners face at the intersection of language, culture, race, and their associated identities (Canagarajah, 2007; Flores

& Rosa, 2015). With the prevalent assumption that ELs in U.S. classrooms as well as those in EFL contexts are not ready for the more critical and deeper engagement with texts due to their perceived language barriers, these bi-multilingual learners are often denied critical literacy experiences in education (Bacon, 2017; Lau, 2013). Moreover, educators in ESL/EFL settings have had minimal access to professional development around how to shape curriculum to encompass transformative goals of literacy (Abednia & Crookes, 2019; Alford & Jetnikoff, 2016).

As TESOL teacher educators and scholars, we are keenly aware of the need for robust professional learning opportunities that can shift teacher practices and that teacher mindsets are influenced by their own identities, philosophies of teaching, teaching contexts, and experiences. We embrace the urgency of this work and encourage other TESOL teacher educators to respond to the call to find new ways to engage current and future ESL/EFL educators in CMP learning through multimodalities and new technologies. Smith et al. (2018) have even argued for an expansion of critical and multiliteracies pedagogy that moves from recognizing and responding to the diversity of communicative forms and learners in today's classrooms to taking up a *pedagogy of transliteracies*. These scholars explained that “Educators today must also support young people in developing a critical perspective on the ways those multiple people, media, and objects *connect, relate, and intersect* while on the move” (p. 21) through a *pedagogy of transliteracies*, which includes “opportunities for, and critical analyses of, learners’ use of diverse resources in making meaning while attending to inequities” (p. 21). Such *trans-*perspective in literacy education has never been more important than now due to the many *links* we build across boundaries, spaces, languages/modes, and identities in our transnational, transcultural, and translingual world.

Inspiring ESL/EFL teachers in the United States and around the world to integrate CMP experiences in their teaching is a tall order but one to which we are dedicated as TESOL scholars. Our work with 20 Korean teachers of English demonstrates that EFL teachers can critically reframe their vision of ELT and envision and enact new ways of teaching English through CMP despite challenges at the systemic level. Changes start with awareness, and a PD like ours, even with its short duration, can provide a pathway for teachers to embark on this journey. We hope that this manuscript contributes to sparking dialog and exchange of ideas among TESOL professionals from all contexts about the urgency of providing abundant affordances for bi-multilingual learners to uptake powerful new ways to create knowledge and communicate ideas that can contribute to their pursuit of imagined futures.

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