

# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EFL COURSE MATERIALS DEVELOPED ON THE GROUNDS OF CRITICAL LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY AND THE PLURILITERACIES TEACHING FOR DEEPER LEARNING APPROACH

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**Abstract:** A review of literature that underpinned the theoretical framework for materials design presented in this study contributed to the development of English language course through the lens of Critical Language Pedagogy (CLP) and the Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning approach (PTDL). The purpose of the study was to gain initial knowledge on the effectiveness of such an approach for materials design, which could provide the basis for further questions related to the actualized learning potential of educational materials. With this purpose in mind, an interpretive content analysis of the Scenario-based Assessment for Learning Experiences questionnaires was conducted upon the course completion with university students from Spain and Poland. The obtained results suggest that educational materials prepared on the grounds of CLP and PTDL have the potential to support language learning in linguistically diverse educational contexts and can be characterized by their actualized learning potential. It is noteworthy that 30% of participants reported that the experience of working with the course led to personal growth and development. Nonetheless, as this research shows, such a process requires a change in the role of the teacher and a shift in the perception of learning goals in favor of the contextualization of learning materials, which is what future research should further examine.

**Keywords:** Critical Language Pedagogy, Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning, English language materials design, university students

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## Introduction

This study is part of a larger research project where a thorough and critical analysis of the literature on materials design has been conducted to bring new knowledge to light, concerning broadly understood language education. The initial analysis revealed a lack of evidence-based language learning materials for adult learners, notably, materials that would be designed through the prism of Critical Language Pedagogy (CLP) (Crawford, 1978; Crawford-Lange, 1981; Auerbach, 1990; Crookes, 2012) and the Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning approach (PTDL) (Coyle & Meyer, 2021). The objective of the broader research was to know whether combining the two named above perspectives in language materials design could set the ground for the development of learning materials facilitating participatory learning, social understanding, promoting diversity and inclusivity in language education. This research has contributed to the development of English language course materials<sup>1</sup> written by Barbara Muszyńska (2020) who is also the author of the preliminary study described in this article. Its goal was to gain initial knowledge, which could provide the basis for further questions related to the actualized learning potential of educational materials (Bundsgaard & Thomas, 2011) to establish the relevance of the information obtained. With this purpose in mind, the Scenario-based Assessment for Learning Experiences questionnaire (Haynes, Spence & Lenze 2009) was used among students from different cultural backgrounds to validate this research and to verify the correctness of the formulated research questions concerning: (a) aspects of potential learning opportunities and their actualization; (b) verification whether the selected learning materials work in different cultural contexts; (c) in what respect the learning situation was successful. Throughout the research process, the authors of this study were reflecting on Stenhouse's concept (1983, p. 192), asserting that teachers need to be involved not only in the development of the educational programme but also in the evaluation and subsequent adaptation of teaching materials in order to improve educational programmes, as they are used in the classroom in their educational context (Hammersley, 2004).

The research questions which guided this research are as follows:

- 1) How did the students assess the appropriateness of the educational materials used in class?
- 2) What were the students' reactions to the change in the paradigm of teaching and learning?
- 3) What were the effective and ineffective learning opportunities?

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1. The title of the course is 'Inclusive, Plurilingual and Pluricultural Learning Environment for English language Learning' (2020). The course is compatible with the WCAG 2.0 standards for students with disabilities and is available online for a free download.

The literature review in this article encompasses Critical Language Pedagogy, Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning, and materials design. The research methodology implemented in this study includes interpretive content analysis, scenario-based assessment for learning experiences questionnaire, and the actualized learning potential of the learning materials. The analysis presented shows that students from the University of Malaga in Spain and the University of Lower Silesia in Poland, appreciated working together during the course, organizing their learning, and using their language repertoires to communicate and construct new meanings, however, not always without perplexity. The approach of combining CLP and the PTDL shows promising results in materials design and its actualized potential of learning. It can facilitate participatory learning, and contribute to critical reflection in learners and self-management of their learning process. However, it requires a change in the role of the teacher and a shift in the perception of learning goals in favor of the contextualization of learning materials.

## **Literature review**

### ***Critical Language Pedagogy***

Crookes (2010) represented the view that the application of the practicality of critical pedagogy to second language education and the development of sample second language education materials for teachers could contribute to increasing diversity in lessons and help teachers become familiar with theories concerning language education. Moreover, Canagarajah (2015) believes that critical pedagogy, in the context of language education, should be oriented towards practical action and is not a set of ideas, but rather a way of “doing, learning, and teaching” (p. 932). Such practice is motivated by a different attitude towards school and society. Within this perspective, both students and teachers bring their real-life experiences and needs to the educational process to operate a change in it, including changing the means and purposes of learning to create a more ethical, educational and social environment for learning (Canagarajah, 2015, p. 932). The development of social and linguistic competence enriches our sense of respect, tolerance, sensitivity to race, gender, disability, environment and social problems (Bulut & Arikan, 2015, p. 19). Languages are learned through participation in social practices where learners use their language repertoire to communicate and learn. Hence, the role of the teacher should be to create a scaffolding between the educational process and students as independent language learners. It is through language that we perceive the world, and it is through the language of the school/university that students have access to subject/academic knowledge. The ability to understand and express complex linguistic concepts orally and in writing (in the mother tongue, or a foreign

or second language) as well as metalinguistic competence, i.e., the ability to understand and express linguistic differences, is crucial in education<sup>2</sup>.

### ***Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning***

The Pluriliteracies Approach to Teaching and Learning (Meyer et al., 2015) develops learners' ability to read, write, understand, use and engage with written texts in more than one language, thereby contributing to deeper learning and the development of transferable skills. This approach focuses on supporting learners in mastering subject content or topics and enabling them to understand them effectively through the lens of different cultures and languages (Meyer et al., 2015, p. 2). This approach is built on the idea that education should contribute to the development of learners. Therefore, subject content learning is not about listing facts, but rather deepening students' conceptual understanding, which ultimately contributes to the acquisition and development of both universal skills and new ways of thinking. In this approach, language is recognized as the key to developing and increasing conceptual understanding. It is this focus on language that ultimately leads to deeper learning, which can be described as the ability to take what has been learned in a specific situation and apply it to another. By supporting students in pluriliteracy skills, we can enable them to construct and communicate content purposefully and effectively across languages and cultures, and prepare them for living and working in the modern world (Meyer et al., 2015, p. 3).

The Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning (PTDL) is complementary to the above. It is based on a revised understanding of language and its role in learning, especially where language is seen as a means of knowing the world and learning as a process of meaning-making (Meyer & Coyle 2021). The pluriliteracies approach shows that progress in learning is based on the successful activation of two key processes: the internalization of concepts and the automation of relevant skills. Learning cannot be separated from language, so the progress learners make is reflected in their ability to communicate and demonstrate their understanding. Critical reflection by the learners themselves and self-management of their learning is also crucial in this process.

### ***Materials Design***

The approach educators adopt to educational materials design reflects not only their perceptions, values and knowledge but also their views on school and society. The ways in which languages are used in education, the design

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2. Council of Europe (2020). *Education begins with language. Thematic report*. Publications Office of the European Union. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6b7e2851-b5fb-11ea-bb7a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

of teaching and learning materials and the organization of learning are social constructs in specific cultural settings. They may favor inclusion or exclusion of certain groups and individuals, as learning is deeply rooted in society and culture (Vygotsky, 1978) and power is deeply embedded in the notions of culture and language (Fairclough, 1999). Developing social and linguistic competences could make us enrich our sense of respect, tolerance and become more sensitive to issues related to race, gender, disability, environmental and social problems (Bulut & Arikan, 2015, p. 19). This requires a shift from passive to active learning, in which learning would involve a meaningful organization of experiences so that it could be more easily transferrable and applied to other situations (Taba, 1962).

Learners respond to the educational programmes in different ways, depending on their cultural interpretations and previous life experiences. Therefore, when planning the course, author 1 has decided to draw from problem-centered design. This approach is represented in Critical Language Pedagogy (Auerbach, 1990; Crawford, 1978; Shin & Crookes, 2005; Crookes, 2012; Canagarajah, 2015). The problem-centered design, based on reconstructionism and reconceptualism, considers learners' life situations and social problems (inequality and social injustice). Educational programmes and materials based on this model are prepared beforehand and are adapted to the problems and (life) situations of the learners while learning. Problem-based learning supports active learning. It empowers learners to conduct research, links theory with practice, and applies knowledge and skills to solve particular real-life problems posed by the students (Savery, 2006).

### *The course*

The fundamental element of building the language course and educational materials in this study was social responsibility. The authors of this article advocate designing educational materials that are adaptable to cultural contexts, students (life) situations, and language levels. The activities in the course are diverse and inclusive, fostering participatory and plurilingual learning environments. Since the language in this approach is not solely seen as a medium of communication, but also as an instrument for thinking, this course exercises the idea that meaning-making, problem-solving and being creative in more than one language is the right of every student. The goal of the course is to approach teaching and learning as social processes in which learners are active co-constructors of knowledge with teachers (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001), and where language learning is seen as a process not a product (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989). Therefore, the goal of this course is not only the focus on language learning but also facilitating participatory learning, encouraging social understanding and creating opportunities to voice students' perspectives and engage in society matters through activism (the course content includes cultural biographies,

narrative accounts, society and community matters, among others). The above can be achieved by creating mutually negotiated pathways for learning with the students, which is the reason why the content of the course is adaptable to various cultural contexts. Every Unit of learning includes information about the Unit (theme, aims, genre for writing and assessment). Students can find functional language boxes and learning strategies embedded in the Units. The assessment sections comprise of reflection activities, writing a learning log, mentoring of learning (in groups or individual, in person or on a Forum online), and learning sets (working in a small group on an assignment) as well as individual assignments. As a result, learners should feel encouraged to reflect on their language work and to self-direct it through mentoring of learning, where they assess and reflect upon their learning process. The teacher is able to assess students' actual learning strategies through retrospective interviews and conversations about completing tasks during the course. The main genres in academic writing are introduced with an emphasis on empathy writing for social purpose (Nesi & Gardner, 2012).

Barbara Muszyńska's aim was to promote diversity and inclusivity in education, to advocate critical language awareness, deeper learning, transferable knowledge and skills through connection to the real world. Language learning in this course is viewed through the lens of the concept of interlingual grammar<sup>3</sup> and the idea of multi-competence<sup>4</sup> (Cook, 1999). The goal was to give learners an impulse for discussion and a space for active participation in preventing injustice, inequality and exclusion.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

An interpretive content analysis (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Wester et al., 2004) of the Scenario-based Assessment for Learning Experiences questionnaires was conducted during this research. It served both as a method and a research procedure for arriving at answers to the questions posed (Noga, 2014). The content analysis in this study supported the development and interpretation of empirical data from the questionnaires collected from participating students. This type of analysis recognizes the text-bound nature of interpretation, as qualitative research design is more sensitive to context and flexible in incorporating new emerging themes (Ahuvia, 2001; Elbardan & Kholeif, 2017). Content analysis is

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3. Interlingual grammar relates to or occurs between two or more languages.

4. Multi-competence is knowledge of two or more languages in the same mind. See also more recent publications to get a better idea: *Knowledge of two or more languages in the same mind*. <http://www.viviancook.uk/Writings/Papers/MCEntry.htm>



used to make inferences from the text, which relate to the sender(s), the message itself, or the receiver of that message (Weber, 1990). The primary inferences concern the decoding of information that the questionnaires contain. The texts were coded into categories and then frequencies of occurrences within each category were scrutinized. The decoding of information occurred through the assignments between the text fragments specified by the analysis and the non-text elements based on the rules of semantics.

We have embraced Berelson's concept (1952, pp. 4-25) affirming that content analysis should fulfill the following conditions:

- the condition of objectivity (precise definition of the categories of analysis),
- systematicity (content should be analyzed in terms of all corresponding categories),
- the condition of quantitative approach (determines the frequency of appearance of certain categories in the content, the emphasis that is placed on it, or the degree of its omission),
- the condition of openness of the analyzed content (elimination of hidden content from the research),
- the condition and the need to strive (in order to reveal the remaining elements of the communication process),
- the condition and postulate of studying not single contents, but a set / stream of messages
- the postulate of comparative analysis.

The above suggests that content analysis should lead to objective conclusions, which in practice means that the procedures for arriving at any findings must be open and transparent (Holsti, 1969).

The following three approaches are usually used in content analysis (Pisarek, 1983):

- analysis of the features of the content itself or the forms of its delivery (focus on the layer of content study, the analysis of the content of the message);
- studying the authors of the content (focusing on the intentions and other characteristics of the content creators);
- searching for information in the texts about the recipients and the effects of the content, to then revealing the centers of interest by relating the content analysis to the found and evoked materials.

The research has concentrated on the third approach mentioned above.

In the study, we have asked about the meaning of particular words and forms of text by resorting to semantic analysis, as content analysts examine data to understand what it means to people, and what the information conveyed by them does (Krippendorff, 2004). The analysis of the data thus took on a semantic character, using the meanings contained in the message. The detailed analysis of the texts in this study was feasible on the grounds of the use of computer assistance. The Atlas.ti v.8 software was used to discover complex phenomena hidden in the analyzed text, which, for the reason of researchers' familiarity of the subject matter, might have been disregarded otherwise. The use of this program allowed us to better manage data and maintain greater objectivity when dealing with it, also enabling comparative and interpretative analysis which became more systematic. Thus, it allowed us to come closer to meeting the conditions for content analysis purposefully designed by researchers.

For the purpose of this study, analysis at both formal and meaning levels has been conducted. First, the content and meanings in the students' questionnaires were identified and classified by assigning codes to them (syntactic, formal analysis), and then conclusions were drawn about non-linguistic variables (meaning-level analysis was used). The advantage of such a research procedure allows for intersubjective, verifiable reading of the content of messages and the intention of their senders (Krippendorff, 2004).

### ***Scenario-based Assessment for Learning Experiences***

The Scenario-based Assessment for Learning Experiences questionnaire used in this study rests on the Scenario-based Assessment for Learning Experiences model proposed by Haynes, Spence and Lenze (2009, p. 3), which can be used to evaluate and (re)design learning activities during a course with learners. It helps to understand the effects and outcomes of learning activities and how to improve them. In this questionnaire, participants gave feedback on the learning activities conducted during the course to help assess the actualized learning potential of the course.

### ***The Actualized Learning Potential of the Course***

When introducing learning materials into a specific situation, some aspects of the potential of the learning materials are actualized through their integration with the historical constellation of artifacts of a given situation. Students and teachers more or less deliberately choose to supplement the learning material with tools and materials, and these phenomena comprise the design for learning, which constitutes the actual learning potential.

The three-step framework composed of a holistic evaluation of learning materials as proposed by Haynes, Spence and Lenze (2009) comprises of:



- a. the potential learning potential, that is, the affordances and challenges of the learning material, and the competences supposedly supported when working with the material;
- b. the actualized learning potential, that is, the potential for learning when the design for learning is enacted by integrating the learning material in a situation in a given context;
- c. the actual learning, that is, how the participants actually develop their competences through working with the learning material or enacting a design for learning.

The authors of the framework suggest that it is not conceivable to interpret all three aspects of the evaluation process at one given time. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the authors have decided to focus on the actualized learning potential of the above-mentioned course as the focal point of this research was to analyze participant students' perspectives. When evaluating the actualized learning potential of learning materials, the authors were oriented towards the constitution of the situation, that is, the contextualization of the learning materials. Therefore, in this study, we have attempted to use and validate the Scenario-based Assessment for Learning Experiences questionnaire, which was used as a data collection tool to verify the correctness of the formulated research questions. The analysis focused on:

- (a) aspects of potential learning opportunities and their actualization;
- (b) verification whether the selected learning materials work in various cultural contexts;
- (c) the respects in which the learning situation was successful; and
- (d) whether the participants felt engaged and motivated to work.

The research questions which guided this research are as follows:

- 2) How did the students assess the appropriateness of the educational materials used in class?
- 2) What were the students' reactions to the change in the paradigm of teaching and learning?
- 3) What were the effective and ineffective learning opportunities?

### ***Participants***

A group of 41 international students participated in this study. There were 34 female and 6 male students. Participants were gathered from two universities:  
a. the University of Lower Silesia (ULS) in Poland (n = 10), a sub-group formed by 6 students from Poland plus three students from Spain and one

from Germany; b. The University of Málaga (UoM) (Spain) (n = 31) was also mixed, as it was made up of 24 students from Spain and one student from each of the following countries: Italy, Ukraine, Palestine, Russia, and China, plus two students from Germany. The sample was purposively selected to represent cultural and linguistic diversity. Students from both universities were in their first year of their Master programme. The participants from the ULS were studying at the Faculty of Education. Whereas one sub-group of students (n = 13) from the UoM studied intercultural linguistics, the other one (n = 18) did English philology with a teaching profile. Moreover, these specific groups were chosen as researchers' previous experience told them that these courses attract international students due to the subject matter. This is especially interesting for this research, as international students from these two courses (we refer to those students neither coming from Poland or Spain, who are considered as 'national' by the researchers of this study) (n = 11) have learnt English by using published materials for language learning, so their answers to our questions were judged as highly valuable by the researchers because their cultural and educational perspective offers a kaleidoscopic view of the coursebook under analysis herein.

All the participants provided appropriate informed written consent to participate in this study. The consent forms were constructed with the rules and regulations of the respective universities where the research was done.

### ***Context***

Units 4 and 5 from Module 2 from the aforementioned course were implemented at the UoM and the ULS in the spring semester of 2021. The authors of the study, both researchers and academic teachers, were aware of the advantages of undertaking new explorations towards building new forms of language education. The researchers had different cultural experiences and were open to new roles of teachers, learners, and language communication in the classroom.

The remote learning context in which the initial research was conducted changed the daily educational practice and the rules that guided it. The use of digital tools was not a problem, as everyone had acquired the skills to operate within them by the time the research started during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the fact that the students of both research groups were weary of studying online was clear, which might have affected the level of engagement during the classes. During the study, authors tried to exploit the potential of the online tools in teaching and learning by, for instance, creating channels on MsTeams (ULS) and Zoom (UoM) where students could connect in small groups and where the teacher could join to provide support and engage in conversation.

## Results

The purpose of this preliminary study was to answer the research questions posed and to make inferences about the actualized learning potential of learning materials selected in two cultural contexts, in Spain and Poland.

An interpretive content analysis of the Scenario-based Assessment for Learning Experiences questionnaires was conducted. The authors maintain that the idea of using a scenario-based learning experience evaluation questionnaire is a valid one because the questionnaire was simple in its form in terms of language and structure, and all students declared that it was easy to follow.

In response to the first research question (RQ1): *How did the students assess the appropriateness of the educational materials used in class?*

18 participants described the activities as “having a real purpose” (S1-3) and as something “not normally taught in class” (UKR1, S3), or something that (PL1) “never thought about”, (RUS1) “didn’t know about before”, or (PAL1), (S4-8) “never asked themselves about those issues” and, for that reason, they felt that the activities were “purposeful and engaging” (S9-10) and “thought-provoking” (S11-14).

The word cloud below (Fig. 1) represents the most frequent words used by students in answer to RQ1.



Figure 1. Word cloud of most frequent words for RQ1

As for the second research question (RQ2): *What were the students’ reactions to the change in the paradigm of teaching and learning?*

Since the sessions were multilingual and multicultural, and the goal of the course was to promote diversity and inclusivity as well as critical language awareness, a lot of classroom time was devoted to issues regarding culture and language. The most common comments from students’ questionnaires concerned the fact

that they had often used language or specific terminology in various classes without reflecting on it, whereas they had an opportunity to reflect on concepts of language more deeply. According to the students, our classes have given them the opportunity to (PL2-3) “investigate”, (S16-24) “reflect”, (I1) “keep an open mind”, (S25-27) “learn about and discover”, (PAL1, G2) “enrich their knowledge and understanding” about issues concerning the culture and language, but also their own identity, which was (PL5-7, S29) “inspirational”, (CH1) “effective”, and helped to (RUS1, S30-31) “clarify concepts and believes [sic]”, (UKR1) “understand certain aspects of self”, and was (G1, S28) “valid and relevant in everyday life”. Thus, data indicate that students’ reactions to the change in the paradigm of teaching and learning English were positive. They were willing to experiment with different forms of learning.

As for the third research question (RQ3): *What were the effective and ineffective learning opportunities?*

It is noteworthy that 12 of the participants, while describing the effectiveness of the activities, did not refer to the activities per se, but rather to their personal development.

See examples of student comments below regarding the way they reflect on the learning opportunities that these materials have offered to them, having to do with ‘language identity’ and how the learner relates language, culture and the understanding of one’s body (PAL1), learner’s awareness on the relationship of language and culture, finding themselves as representative of one specific culture (R1), and language awareness (S17) related to the context (S5):

PAL1: “The activities have given me an opportunity to reflect on my own language identity and were effective because they tell a lot about the connection between language and body and how you relate culture with language.”

R1: “I have never thought about language in that way, and it made me think about my relationship with different languages and how they define me as a person as a representative of the particular culture.”

S17: “Definitely, the sessions have made me to reflect on my own experience and to think about my perspective on these topics.”

S5: “We could learn about our surroundings but also about ourselves.”

29 of the participants referred to the effectiveness of the activities directly. See examples of student comments below, where they speak about the efficiency of practical lessons (U1), video (P9), classroom organization (S10), and theoretical learning (CH1):

U1: “In my opinion the learning process was effective, because it was a very practical lesson. The practical approach made me aware of important cultural concepts.”

P9: “I think the most effective lesson was when we worked on decoding the video, because then I could work at my own pace.”

S10: “The way the classes were organized has been good and effective as in each of them we had to read, listen, write and speak, so we have been able to improve in these aspects and learn new things.”

CH1: “Generally speaking is effective because I acquired some interesting theories which are beneficial for my dissertation and the tasks are enjoyable.”

Nevertheless, 2 students (I1 and G1) also mentioned that working online with these materials proved challenging, as the pace of work was too quick on times, and they would prefer to have had more time to dwell on some of the topics and issues a bit longer, as they were important in their lives:

I1: “I think we should have spent more time on it because it required a lot of thinking.”

G1: “I would have wished to have more time to become more aware of cultural differences and how to spot prejudices or stereotypes on myself and especially why I may have them.”

Only 3 students (G2, S29 and P8) described one of the activities done during the course as ineffective:

G2: “It was non-effective for me because I did not understand what exactly was the connection to it.”

S29: “I feel it is a little less effective, because not everyone gets to answer as there is no time for us all to speak, and there is no guide or explanation to judge our own results.”

P8: “The most stressful and ineffective lessons for me are the lessons when we have to present the effect of our work, because I can’t speak or write in English so fast.”

## **Discussion and conclusions**

The approach to language teaching and learning described above has helped researchers to question and reveal assumptions underlying materials’ design, language course development, and use of these materials in online lessons in terms of the role of learners, teachers, learning goals and other important issues that should be considered during planning (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018, p. 20). This research has investigated the actualized potential of learning materials through adapting them to different cultural contexts, to then analyze learners’ reactions to such materials in the Scenario-based Assessment for Learning Experiences questionnaire. During this study, the authors were committed to the contextualization of the learning materials and have observed how deeper

learning encourages different outcomes in the classroom that cannot be fully predicted. This is in line with Tochon's (2010) research on meaningful learning, which supports the view that language education needs to emphasize meaningful learning based on personal experience, social interaction and reflection.

As mentioned in the Results section above, a few students participating in this study felt that they needed more time to think about the issues that were important to them, 30% of participants described the activities as purposeful and engaging, and 70% of them saw the activities as effective, which may indicate that learning a language through participation in social practices, promoting social understanding, diversity and inclusivity by changing the means and purposes of learning may be effective. There was a visible shift from passive to active learning during the course. Learners were engaged in their process of learning while using their linguistic repertoire, which may indicate that bringing real-world issues and experiences into the process of learning helps to build a learning community, construct and share knowledge (Meyer et al., 2015), create a more ethical, educational and social environment for learning (Canagarajah, 2015), and provide access to higher levels of participation (Repo, 2022). We have observed that when learning involves a meaningful organization of experiences it can be more easily transferred and applied to other situations (Taba, 1962), and this is something that participating learners were genuinely interested in. Such a process also requires the activation of all communication channels to obtain a personal understanding of the acquired knowledge, moving from knowledge to action (Gołębniak, 2019), which was rather challenging for us to achieve in an online course. Nevertheless, the development of learners' self-awareness of how to learn relating to one's values, beliefs and dispositions remained crucial for us throughout the course, and the result of having 30% of learners reporting that the experience led to personal growth and development rather than to the activities per se is indeed very promising. Therefore, it may be assumed that the role of the language teacher is not only to teach the language and move from one activity to another, but also to act as a mentor in the process of developing the students' critical language and cultural awareness. In order to be able to take on this role, teachers need to develop critical language awareness and sensitivity to language issues (Fairclough, 2001; Reagan & Osborn, 2002). Educators who are not reflective, generally do not provide opportunities for students to reflect on issues of linguistic diversity or critical language awareness (Reagan & Osborn, 2002, p. 84). Students' comments in this study have indicated that developing social and linguistic competences could enrich our sense of respect, tolerance and become more sensitive to issues related to race, gender, disability, environmental and social problems of their own, as well as of other cultures, which is consistent with Bulut and Arikan's research (2015, p. 19).

At present, one can observe a shift in the approaches to educational materials design by including practices that have been scientifically validated. Evidence-

based curricula and educational practices may not only help to improve educational attainment, they also contribute to the professionalization of teachers by empowering them to initiate actions that improve the quality of education, and they bridge the gap between research, theory and practice (Petty, 2009). Nevertheless, to the best knowledge of the authors of this study, there are very few studies concerning systematic procedures of materials development and adaptation (Garton & Graves, 2014). This study is an attempt to add to this pool of knowledge. Creating evidence-based learning materials is a long-term process that includes research, inquiry, design, production, adaptation, use, and evaluation of materials (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017). Regrettably, there is not much research related to the development and evaluation of educational materials based on the principals of critical pedagogy (Crookes, 2010) and CP in foreign language learning (Jordão & Fogaça, 2012).

The limitation of this study was the fact that it was conducted online during the COVID-19 pandemic. Future research should concentrate on the above issues in a face to face context, and apply additional measures to validate the results, such as (non)participant observations, the analysis of students' learning logs and students' assessment of learning outcomes.

The results of this study provide a springboard for further inquiries related to the design of the language learning materials and shed new light on alternative ways of constructing evidence-based language education materials and evaluating their learning potential. The obtained results suggest that educational materials prepared on the grounds of Critical Language Pedagogy and the Pluriliteracies Approach to Teaching and Learning have the potential to support language learning in linguistically diverse educational contexts and can be characterized by their actualized learning potential.

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