Reimagining ELT in Pakistan: A Critical Analysis of Integrating Culturally Responsive Teaching in Undergraduate Curriculum Reform

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KEY WORDS	ABSTRACT
Culturally responsive teaching, ELT, Curriculum design, Pakistan, Multilingual competencies, Project-based learning	The focus of this article is the curriculum design and content development of a national-level undergraduate education reform project in Pakistan that incorporates culturally responsive teaching (CRT) into English language teaching (ELT). This comprehensive reform project aims to revamp all discipline curricula, including sciences, social sciences, and language teaching. In a collaboration between the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and the Regional English Language Office of the US Embassy, the ELT part of the project involves the development of three course books and a teacher manual, as well as the training of 25 Pakistani master trainers in a US university to assist in teacher preparation for the implementation of the new curriculum. The project aims to transform ELT education in the country from a delivery-based approach to autonomous project-based learning that integrates the multilingual competencies and cultural resources of undergraduate students. The article critically analyzes examples of activities from the second course, "Cross-cultural Communication and Translation," which includes multilingual advertisements, translation, multilingual project description, and the use of local folklore from students' communities to raise their awareness of their linguistic and cultural assets. The article concludes by discussing the implications of the current analysis for similar contexts where a culturally-responsive approach to foreign/second language teaching is required.

Introduction

In recent decades, scholars have explored how teachers can incorporate students' cultural identities and experiences as a tool for academic success. This teaching approach, often referred to as asset-based pedagogies, is quite intricate. To understand this research area better, we can examine three terms: culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012). Culturally relevant pedagogy focuses on connecting students' cultural backgrounds to the curriculum, while Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and addressing students' cultural differences in the classroom. Culturally sustaining pedagogy goes a step further by promoting and sustaining students' cultural identities and practices. These terms can be thought of as a tree with roots, a trunk, and branches (Herrera, 2022). When these approaches are combined, they work towards a common goal of creating schools that value students' cultures in a way that ultimately empowers all learners who come from different socio-economic, ethnic, racial, and regional backgrounds and have different gender and socio-sexual orientations. This holistic approach is known as CRT and it aims to create a safe and inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued and respected (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2006; Taylor & Sobel, 2011). By acknowledging and celebrating diversity, culturally responsive teaching helps to promote academic success and social-emotional well-being for all students.

CRT approach helps students recognize and honor their own cultural beliefs and practices while acquiring access to the wider culture (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 36). It aims to create an environment where all students feel welcome and can thrive in their learning. CRT moves beyond multicultural education, which simply represents students of all backgrounds in course topics and materials. Instead, CRT focuses on strengthening students' sense of identity, promoting equity and inclusivity, engaging students through relevant topics and materials, and developing critical thinking skills. It recognizes, respects, and uses students' identities and backgrounds as meaningful sources for creating optimal learning environments. In ELT classrooms, CRT can help students develop intercultural awareness and sensitivity by providing opportunities for them to analyze issues through a cultural lens. English teachers can make sure that students from all linguistic, social, and regional backgrounds feel equally welcome, respected, and engaged in every lesson by utilizing culturally-responsive teaching practices. This approach helps teachers to appreciate the diverse cultures that students bring into the classroom environment so that no student feels marginalized.

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In the context of ELT in Pakistan, the use of CRT is crucial. Unlike subject-based teaching, language teaching necessitates a more experimental and innovative approach (Ali, 2121). The effectiveness of the selected methodology can be influenced by factors such as the learners' proficiency levels and class size. Previous ELT practices overemphasized exposing language learners to the target culture, resulting in the neglect of their cultural identity. As a consequence, learners can develop a negative self-image (Jiang et al., 2009; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). To remedy this issue, scholars shifted from imposing the target language culture to integrating learners' culture, leveraging cultural diversity for language learning and teaching in multicultural classrooms. This shift in approach led to the emergence of CRT, which emphasizes the development of students' academic skills, cultural competence, and socio-political consciousness (Muñiz, 2019). In CRT, teachers play a critical role by utilizing the cultural knowledge and performance styles of culturally diverse students to make learning meaningful and relevant (Siwatu, 2007). However, CRT is not widely practiced in the Pakistani context, as English is often taught as a subject rather than a language (Ali, 2021; Manan, 2016).

Against this background, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and the Regional English Language Office of the US Embassy are currently in partnership to develop and implement a comprehensive undergraduate reform project in Pakistan. As part of this broader project, the partners seek to revamp ELT education in the country by switching from conventional delivery-based teaching to autonomous project-based learning that is based on CRT. When implemented, it affects more than 2.5 million undergraduate ELT learners and 30 thousand teachers in the country. In the first phase, three course books and a teacher manual have been developed; in the second phase, 25 nationwide master trainers have been trained to help in preparing teachers to implement the new courses.

As participants in both phases mentioned above, the first author reports the rationale, challenges, and opportunities while designing content that explicitly foregrounds the multilingual competencies and cultural resources of English learners. Specifically, the article reports sample activities from the second course in the project titled "Cross-cultural Communication and Translation" and analyzes how multilingual project description, translation, and indigenous folklore were incorporated into activities designed to raise students' awareness of their linguistic and cultural assets while using it to scaffold their acquisition of English as a foreign language. Getting feedback on their multilingual project description, doing thick translations and glosses, and translating folklore into English, students are immersed in a multi-culturally charged environment while they learn the lexico-syntactical aspects of a new language. The article analyzes the implications of this

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curriculum revamping project for other similar contexts where multilingual and cultural resources and identities of language students need to be incorporated explicitly into teaching contents and pedagogical approaches.

Specifically, the current article seeks to answer the following research questions through a critical analysis of the new undergraduate ELT curriculum in Pakistan:

RQ1: How can the ELT curriculum be restructured to promote critical thinking and social justice awareness, as per the principles of CRT?

RQ2: How effective is the culturally-responsive approach to English language teaching in the Pakistan national undergraduate education reform project?

RQ3: To what extent does the implementation of the culturally-responsive approach in Pakistan contribute to the development of a more inclusive and egalitarian society?

Literature Review

Culturally relevant pedagogy is a method of instruction that esteems the abundant knowledge of pupils from their community. Gloria Ladson-Billings introduced this pedagogy in the 1990s after examining how teachers effectively taught African American students (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2006). Its major elements encompass prioritizing students' mental progress, establishing a milieu where learners acknowledge and cherish their cultural heritage while also understanding various cultures, and instructing them to recognize, scrutinize, and resolve real-world issues, predominantly those linked to societal injustice. Culturally responsive teaching termed by Geneva Gay employs pupils' diverse cultural traits, experiences, and outlooks as instruments for better classroom education (Gay, 2002, 2013, 2015, 2018). Its components comprise comprehending different cultural principles and practices, matching multiple perspectives with context, authenticating cultural individuality, and adapting the classroom to conform to different communication styles.

Over the last three decades, CRT has gained significant attention in education research and language teaching. Key areas of interest in CRT research include investigating the impact of culturally responsive teaching practices on students' academic achievement, examining how CRT can be implemented in different educational contexts, and exploring the relationship between CRT and social justice (Aceves, 2014). Other research areas in CRT include understanding how teachers' cultural backgrounds and beliefs impact their classroom practices, analyzing the role of student voice and identity in CRT, and exploring the intersection of CRT with other pedagogical approaches such as critical pedagogy and anti-racist education

(Brown, 2007; Ebersole et al., 2016). Additionally, there is a growing interest in examining the impact of technology on culturally responsive teaching practices and how CRT can be adapted to meet the needs of diverse learners in online and hybrid learning environments (Leonard et al., 2018). Culturally sustaining pedagogy, coined by Django Paris twelve years later, is another branch on the tree of culturally relevant pedagogy that builds on Ladson-Billings' (1995) original research (Paris, 2012). This framework supports teaching that celebrates multiculturalism and decenters superiority and racial/ethnic purism in the classroom. Cultural differences are not only respected and acknowledged but they are also nurtured.

Even though each of the above terminologies has its distinct features preferred by various scholars, they all strive to accomplish a common objective of establishing a school where the knowledge of disadvantaged communities impacts the way instruction is delivered. This approach to education encourages students to develop their critical thinking skills throughout their lifetime. In essence, CRT is an instructional method that acknowledges and esteems the different cultural origins and experiences of learners and endeavors to integrate their cultures and experiences into the curriculum to foster an immersive and encouraging learning environment that promotes academic achievement.

The need for CRT in education arises in the context of globalization as it gathered pace during the last few decades. Growing concern about cultural dominance and its impact on cultural and linguistic diversity necessitated the need for CRT. A significant body of research has been conducted on CRT, which has helped in understanding the complexities of cultural and linguistic diversity and its impact on society. Villegas and Lucas (2002; 2007) argue that teacher preparation programs need to adopt a comprehensive approach to cultural responsiveness to effectively teach culturally and linguistically diverse students. The authors propose a framework that includes four domains of knowledge and skills for teachers' CRT skills development: sociocultural consciousness, knowledge of students, culturally responsive instructional skills, and critical reflection. Their work offers practical guidance for teacher educators and others interested in developing effective teacher preparation programs. The authors' framework provides valuable insights into how teachers can better meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Analogously, Brown (2004) focuses on teachers' CRT development and explores the classroom management strategies of urban teachers and the extent to which they reflect the principles of CRT. The study found that teachers' classroom management strategies were influenced by their beliefs and attitudes toward their students, as well as their experiences with diverse cultures. The article offers valuable insights into the challenges of implementing CRT in the classroom,

particularly in urban settings, and highlights the need for teacher education programs to provide ongoing training and support in culturally responsive classroom management strategies.

Other studies offer valuable insights into the importance of culturally responsive teaching practices and highlight the need for educators to value and incorporate the cultural and linguistic diversity of their students. Ware (2006) examined "warm demander pedagogy," a culturally responsive teaching approach that combines high expectations with a supportive and nurturing classroom environment to promote academic success among African American students. The study found that teachers who used this approach had students who were more engaged, motivated, and successful in their academic work. On the other hand, Campano's (2019) research explored the literacy practices of immigrant students and highlighted the importance of valuing and incorporating their cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the classroom. The study found that when teachers acknowledged and incorporated students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, students were more likely to feel engaged and empowered in their learning. Other influential works focusing on developing a reflective CRT approach include Herrera (2022), Kieran & Anderson (2019), Vavrus (2008), and Conway & Hayes (2011).

Several articles highlight the importance of implementing culturally responsive teaching and social justice in curriculum design to address issues of equity and inclusion in education. Moon (2011), for instance, explored culturally responsive teaching in the context of curriculum studies and policy. The author argued that culturally responsive teaching needs to be rethought to create new possibilities for curriculum design and policy. The article discussed the limitations of current culturally responsive teaching practices and suggested alternative approaches that can better address issues of diversity and equity in education. Moon recommended that educators should develop an understanding of the complexities of cultural diversity and design curricula that challenge dominant cultural norms and recognize the diverse backgrounds of students. More recently, Gonzalez (2021) investigated the curriculum design of social justice and culturally responsive teaching in a high school English language arts classroom. The study focused on how a teacher incorporated culturally responsive teaching and social justice into her curriculum design and what effects it had on students' learning outcomes. Gonzalez found that the teacher's approach to curriculum design, which included integrating students' cultures and experiences, providing opportunities for critical thinking, and emphasizing social justice, was effective in promoting students' engagement and learning. These research studies and others have stressed the importance of adopting innovative and non-traditional approaches toward curriculum design and

implementation to better address issues of inequality and adopt a CRT approach in classrooms.

Despite the benefits of CRT and its salience in the international education systems, in Pakistani, it is not common to build on students' heterogeneous cultural and linguistic backgrounds and promote empowering identities through the validation of students' diverse backgrounds. Consequently, research studies on the use of CRT are few and far between. As Ali (2021) points out, the few studies that are available deal with primary school-level studies and are often confined to small-scale surveys. The study by Ali focuses on exploring the implementation of CRT in a multicultural ELT classroom in a public-sector Asian university. The research was conducted through a case study approach, and data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The study finds that the implementation of CRT led to the development of intercultural competence and a positive learning environment for the students. It recommends the incorporation of CRT in ELT pedagogy and teacher education programs. On the other hand, a study by Manan (2016) aims to propose a socio-culturally responsive pedagogy for English language teaching in Pakistan. The study argues that Pakistani classrooms should be transformed from monolingual to multilingual, with an emphasis on using students' linguistic resources in the classroom. Data were collected through classroom observations and interviews. The study suggests that teachers should engage students in activities that reflect their culture and language, and create a supportive classroom environment that respects students' identities and cultural backgrounds. The study recommends that teachers undergo professional development training to adopt the proposed pedagogy.

The present study is designed to make a contribution to the existing research on CRT in the analysis of curriculum, particularly in the context of Pakistan. The research gap that exists in the output of research on ELT in Pakistan is the primary motivation behind this study. Based on a critical analysis of curriculum revamping for higher education in Pakistan, this research aims at addressing this gap by analyzing how the curriculum revamping integrated CRT into the curriculum of English language teaching in Pakistan. This will help to expand the knowledge base of ELT research in Pakistan and provide recommendations for improving the effectiveness of English language teaching practices in the country.

Methodology

The current article adopts a qualitative case study approach to investigate a national curriculum reform project in Pakistan that seeks to promote CRT in English teaching at the undergraduate level. The qualitative research

approach is suitable for current analysis as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the curriculum aims and design which is essential to understand the complex and nuanced nature of implementing a nationwide curriculum revamping initiative in English language teaching (Hennink et al., 2020). Additionally, this approach enables the researcher to analyze rich and detailed qualitative data that can provide insights into how CRT is being conceptualized, and interpreted in the Pakistani context and what potential challenges may emerge keeping in view the existing features of ELT in Pakistan as it is mostly based on explicit grammar teaching and a lecture-based pedagogy (Khan et al., 2022, Manan, 2016).

The current analysis is based on data collected from document analysis including the new students and teacher manuals analyzed in conjunction with a critical review of existing literature around approaches and frameworks for incorporating CRT into language teaching, teacher training for implementing a CRT-based approach, and the challenges of implementing CRT in ELT contexts analogous to the multilingual context of Pakistan. The article, therefore, conducts a thorough review of the international literature on CRT and its implementation in ELT contexts and presents an analysis of the new teaching manuals in light of this literature to provide insights into the potential effectiveness of a CRT-based approach in Pakistan.

Although documents analyzed in the current article include all three students' manuals and one teacher's manual, the analysis is predominantly based on the analysis of activities and tasks in the second manual as it provides rich data for the aims of this article based on promoting CRT through translation practices, translation of local folktales, engagement with the community members, and critical reflection about cultural and linguistic differences and similarities. The document analysis aims to provide insights into how the second manual utilizes these activities and tasks to promote CRT in language learning classrooms and offers a critical evaluation of the curriculum in terms of achieving its aims and objectives.

To analyze the data, the current article uses a thematic analysis method by Braun and Clarke (2012). Thematic analysis is a widely used method in qualitative research that allows for the identification of patterns and themes within data. By using this method, the article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how CRT is integrated into language learning classrooms. To achieve this goal, the article employed a systematic coding process, categorization, and interpretation of the data (Terry et al., 2017). In the first step, relevant data from the documents were collected. The second step involved the creation of a coding framework to organize the data into meaningful categories for analysis. Finally, in the third step, the data

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was analyzed using the coding framework to identify patterns, themes, and sub-themes. The coding scheme was revisited iteratively as new themes/sub-themes emerged from the analysis. Reflexivity was a key component of the research process as the researchers engaged in ongoing reviewing, consultation with one another, and reviewing and comparing each other codes and themes/sub-themes to ensure consistency and safeguard the validity of analysis (Clarke et al., 2015). The results of this analysis were then used to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the findings. This approach ensured the accuracy and validity of the research findings, as well as allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the data collected.

Findings and Discussion

In the context of a comprehensive undergraduate curriculum reform project in Pakistan, the current article critically analyzes the design and approach of the English courses that encourage CRT by incorporating cultural diversity, critical thinking, and 21st century skills, and by foregrounding the plurilingual resources of the students. As part of a nationwide curriculum reform initiative, the project also promotes CRT through linguistic inclusivity and translation practices, and by raising students' critical cultural awareness as they gather local folklore and myths from the community. The courses are based on a project-based learning approach and aim to promote learner autonomy and experiential learning. As the course content developer in the project, the first author, in collaboration with other Pakistani and international course-content developers, utilized a project-based approach to creating three courses and a teacher manual for entry-level undergraduate students that feature a range of immersive and experiential activities to address the diverse needs of students across Pakistan. Specifically, the second course in the series, "Cross-cultural Communication and Translation," exemplifies how the new curriculum incorporates CRT by engaging students' diverse ethno-linguistic resources. The course aims to equip students with the ability to communicate effectively across cultures in both English and local languages, while also emphasizing the importance of valuing and respecting languages beyond English. The following lines critically examine the approach of the course toward CRT and analyze some activities from a CRT perspective.

Translating Local folktales/myths

The purpose of this assignment is to enable English language students to appreciate and own the living heritage of their local folklore by translating it into English. This assignment aims to enhance students' knowledge of the meaning, form, and language used in folklore, and positive creativity alongside safeguarding the oral tradition of their community. Students will analyze and review Pakistani folklore, select and transcribe local folklore,

and then translate it into English using the steps of 'thick' translation. The steps of 'thick' translation include:

- Translate literally at the word level and then at the sentence level.
- Gloss and annotate the specific terms and phrases.
- Prepare a 'rough' draft with idiomatic and figurative addition.

These steps require the students to start the steps of 'thick' translation after selecting and transcribing local folklore in their assigned group. They will also gloss and annotate specific terms and phrases, peer-review and refine the draft, rehearse the story in a group, and finally present it to the class.

In Session 1, the teacher manual guides teachers to conduct a discussion on cross-cultural awareness. Students are asked to read articles in advance and prepare for the discussion. The teacher is provided with some questions and key phrases to lead the discussion. The aim is to sensitize students about the importance of cross-cultural awareness. In Session 2, students are asked to read a chapter on "Folklore, Culture, Language, Language and Translation" in groups. The teacher is instructed to guide the students to define different phrases and characteristics of folktales. This activity aims to help students understand the concept of folklore and its connection to culture and language. In Session 3, the teacher is instructed to carefully select Pakistani folklore for analysis and review. Students are sensitized to the importance of these cultural stories and their translation into English. The teacher is also encouraged to refer students to well-known websites on Pakistani and other regional and international folklore. The activity aims to highlight the functions of language learning while translating from students' mother tongues into English. In Session 4, the teacher is guided to discuss an article on translation with the students. The teacher is instructed to highlight different aspects of translation applied to local stories, including the principle of translation, false friends, contextual translation, grammatical construction, and problem areas of cultural differences. The aim is to sensitize students about the importance of translation as a means to preserve cultural heritage.

In Session 5, the teacher is instructed to form groups of students and assign them specific folklore from their local cultures to transcribe. The teacher is encouraged to guide students on the steps involved in this activity. The selection of stories is a careful activity. The aim is to engage students in the process of transcribing and translating local folklore. In Session 6, the teacher is guided to lead students to use the steps of 'thick' translation. Students translate their selected folk stories literally at the word and sentence level. The teacher guides students on the steps involved and allows them to do their 'thick' translation in groups. The aim is to help students understand the importance of using 'thick' translation to preserve cultural heritage. In Session 7, the teacher is instructed to lead students to gloss and annotate

specific terms and phrases in their selected folk stories. The teacher guides students on the steps involved and allows them to do their 'thick' translation in groups. The aim is to help students understand the importance of glossing and annotating specific terms and phrases in preserving cultural heritage. In Session 8, the teacher is instructed to guide students to review and refine the rough draft of the translation prepared in the last session. The teacher asks students to provide peer reviews for other groups. The aim is to sensitize students about the importance of honest review and the percentage of marks allotted to this step. Finally, in Session 9, the teacher is instructed to guide students to present their translations to the class. The teacher highlights the importance of preserving cultural heritage through translations. The aim is to showcase the importance of translation in preserving cultural heritage and raising cultural/intercultural awareness of the students.

This long assignment spans several contact hours/classes with the students depending on the teacher's discretion. It achieves its purpose by providing clear guidelines for the tasks that the students need to complete and the deadlines for submitting the work. The assignment also provides information on what students should consider while completing the assignment, including the cultural values of the source terms and adding footnotes and endnotes for an explanation if unable to come up with the best possible translation. Additionally, the assessment criteria are clearly defined and explained to the students, which will enable them to focus on their strengths and weaknesses while working on the assignment. Finally, the assignment includes instructions on how to format and submit the final work. All these instructions are thoroughly given in the Teacher Manual to scaffold them in switching from a more traditional delivery/lecture-based language pedagogy toward CRT in a project-based learning environment in the classroom.

This set of activities can contribute towards transitioning from traditional language teaching towards culturally responsive teaching in the language classroom by introducing the students to the importance of cross-cultural awareness and the value of intangible cultural heritage. The activities focus on analyzing and reviewing Pakistani folklore, transcribing and translating local stories and glossing and annotating specific terms and phrases. These activities aim to sensitize students about the importance of cultural stories, their translation into English, and the functions of language learning. By engaging students in these activities, language teachers can promote cultural responsiveness in the language classroom.

The rubric provided to the teacher for grading assignments keeps in view several considerations including the variability of teaching contexts across Pakistan and students' differentiated language proficiencies. This assessment rubric has four criteria with corresponding levels of achievement: Thick

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Translation, Peer-review and Refining, Final Translation, and Class Presentation. Each criterion has specific features that are expected to be met for a student to receive a certain level of achievement. For the Thick Translation criterion, students are expected to demonstrate a clear understanding of the word/sentence level translations, glossing, and annotating with end/footnotes. In the Peer-review and Refining criterion, students are expected to provide clear and strong evaluations of the text. For the Final Translation criterion, students are expected to accurately reflect the meaning of the source text without any unwarranted alterations, omissions, or additions, and the translation should meet the intended function and target readership expectations/requirements. Finally, for the Class Presentation criterion, students are expected to demonstrate storytelling techniques, including pausing, eye-contacting, body language, and high voice quality. At every stage of the assignment, teachers are encouraged to adapt the rubric to their own specific teaching and socio-cultural context.

These features scaffold the teacher in conducting classroom activities in a learner-centered and project-based environment by providing clear and specific expectations for each criterion. It allows the teacher to assess the student's progress at each stage of the project, from Thick Translation to Class Presentation and provides feedback for improvement. By scaffolding the teacher, the rubric supports the students in their learning and provides a framework for their success in learning English using their local folktales and myths as subject matter.

Multilingual project description

The purpose of this assignment is to raise the cultural/intercultural awareness of the students while critically discussing product descriptions. Like the previous assignment, it spans several contact hours/classes with the student depending on the teacher's decision. The first activity, "Critically Discussing the Product Descriptions," is designed to engage students in analyzing product descriptions in both Urdu and English using a given example of a product description from authentic real-life material. The teacher is guided to conduct this activity by first asking students to identify the categories of information and visuals included in the descriptions and then noting the differences between the two languages. This step is intended to help students understand the impact of cultural differences on product descriptions. The teacher is advised to facilitate this activity by introducing relevant examples that students find more interesting and engaging, including those from both local and foreign contexts. Students are then encouraged to discuss their answers in groups, with the teacher playing the role of a facilitator, ensuring that students respect each other's views and express disagreements politely.

The second activity, "Get Ready to Read," requires students to skim and scan an article on writing product descriptions and compare it with the information found in the previous activity. The teacher is advised to train students in fast-reading techniques, like skimming and scanning, and to teach them how to master all three levels of comprehension while reading. In the third activity, "Get Ready to Listen," the teacher is asked to present a lecture on multilingual product descriptions, defining and explaining concepts like duplicate content, SEO translation, and localization. The teacher is advised to include examples from students' native languages and ask them to provide input on different product descriptions shared in the class. The activity is designed to promote cultural diversity and engage students in intercultural dialogue. In the final activity, "Plan Your Project," students are divided into teams and asked to select an interesting product description in English to translate into Urdu and vice versa. The activity is intended to encourage students to develop their linguistic and cultural competence and create an opportunity for them to work collaboratively.

The guidelines provided in the text emphasize the importance of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the classroom. The teacher is guided to use both Urdu and English to facilitate critical thinking and discussion while promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity. The teacher is expected to evaluate students' performance based on their participation in class discussions, the quality of their project, and their ability to identify and discuss differences between the Urdu and English versions of product descriptions.

Like the previous assignment, the teacher manual provides an assessment rubric that is meant to be suggestive. The teacher is encouraged to use their discretion and modify the rubric according to their local needs and students' proficiency. The rubric for the assessment of product description has four criteria - organization, content, visuals, and mechanics. Each criterion has four levels of performance with corresponding descriptions of the expected level of student achievement. The rubric is designed to scaffold teachers in conducting classroom activities in a learner-centered, project-based environment that sensitizes them to multilingualism and the difference between languages in terms of the product description. By providing clear descriptions of what constitutes exemplary work and what does not, the rubric enables teachers to communicate expectations to their students and guide them toward meeting these expectations.

In terms of organization, the rubric expects students to present information in a logical and interesting sequence that the audience can follow. This criterion encourages students to structure their presentations in a way that is easy to understand and engaging. Teachers can use this criterion to help students develop their storytelling skills and enhance their ability to

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communicate complex ideas clearly and concisely. The content criterion evaluates students' knowledge of the product they are describing. It expects students to demonstrate full knowledge of the product with explanation and elaboration. This criterion encourages students to research their topic thoroughly and develop a deep understanding of the cultural heritage and significance of the product description they are translating. Teachers can use this criterion to guide students towards more in-depth research and encourage them to think critically about the cultural contexts in which the product description originated.

The visuals criterion evaluates the use of visuals to support the presentation. It expects students to use visuals that reinforce screen text and presentation, which can enhance the audience's understanding of the topic. Teachers can use this criterion to encourage students to think creatively about how they can use visuals to enhance their presentation and engage their audience. The mechanics' criterion evaluates the student's ability to present their work without errors. It expects the presentation to have no misspellings or grammatical errors. Teachers can use this criterion to encourage students to revise and edit their work carefully, helping them develop their skills in written communication. Finally, the rubric emphasizes that it is meant to be indicative and auxiliary in scaffolding teachers to assess the tasks. Teachers are encouraged to adapt it according to their teaching context. This flexibility allows teachers to tailor the rubric to the specific needs and abilities of their students and to be resourceful and creative to meet the specific needs of their teaching-learning context.

Conclusion

The Pakistani national undergraduate program focuses on promoting self-directed learning through an activity-oriented syllabus, as evidenced by the exemplary activities discussed earlier. These activities encourage students to explore and contemplate their own cultural and linguistic heritage, as well as that of their classmates. Therefore, the higher education reform project in Pakistan is a commendable step forward in language education. This framework recognizes the diverse sociolinguistic realities of learners and emphasizes the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity. Such an approach is vital in promoting inclusive and equitable language practices in education, which is a crucial aspect of developing a healthy and inclusive society (Ware, 2006).

Learner autonomy is a key aspect of promoting democratic classrooms and social justice (Nunan, 2014). The new curriculum promotes learner autonomy through the use of an activity-based syllabus, as demonstrated by the previously discussed sample activities. By critically analyzing the

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differences and similarities between languages, students can develop their translingual competence (Canagarajah, 2012). The curriculum includes various assignments, such as translating local folktales and creating multilingual project descriptions, to encourage students to consider differences in style, diction, idiomatic expression, collocation, and semantic features between languages. These assignments foster a greater understanding of the cultural and linguistic diversity present within the learning context, contributing to the development of a more inclusive and egalitarian society.

The curriculum not only focuses on promoting cultural responsiveness but also fosters collaborative learning in a project-based environment (Wang, 2009). This approach allows students to engage in peer reviews, class presentations, and draft revisions of each other's work. This feature of the curriculum corroborates what Wang stresses that in sharing leadership roles among students, the teacher is not the only source of knowledge and feedback in the classroom. Instead, students are encouraged to work together, promoting cooperative learning and preparing them for democratic participation as responsible members of their local communities. However, despite the potential benefits of this approach, it is not widely implemented in the Pakistani context, where English is often taught as a subject rather than a language (Ali, 2021: Manan, 2016). Therefore, it is essential to promote this type of curriculum design to prepare students for the increasingly interconnected and multicultural world they will be entering upon graduation.

Adopting a CRT perspective in the classroom can lead to long-lasting positive impacts on the expressive competence and self-assurance of learners as multilingual speakers of the English language (Allaman, 2012). By incorporating diverse languages through the use of local folktales, plurilingual teaching materials, classroom activities, and pedagogical strategies, the classroom can become an inseparable part of the multilingual social reality that students face every day (Khan et al., 2021; Rafi, 2021). This shift from a focus on "acculturation" (Jian et al., 2009) towards "native language ecology" (Khan et al., 2022) has significant implications for both individuals and communities. By dismantling monolingual ideologies in ELT policies and practices in Pakistan and other similar contexts, a CRT approach can pave the way for more inclusive and diverse language practices that reflect the socio-linguistic reality of learners (Ladson-Billings, 2006). It is high time to embrace this innovative approach to language education, acknowledging the fundamental role of the community and highlighting the multilingual resources of students.

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The current article's analysis suggests that there can be implications of adopting a CRT approach in the language classroom that extends beyond Pakistan, particularly in similar contexts where multilingual students with specific cultural identities need facilitation and accommodation in the language classroom. To achieve this, a CRT approach to teaching foreign/second languages is necessary. This means that language teachers need to be aware of and sensitive to the cultural backgrounds and experiences of their students and incorporate them into their teaching methods (Moon, 2011). By doing so, language education can become more inclusive and effective, as students will feel more connected and engaged with the material. Further, a shift towards CRT has far-reaching implications for teacher training in terms of developing a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and social justice issues and incorporating this knowledge into their teaching practices to better serve their students from diverse backgrounds (Siwatu, 2007). Additionally, it may require reevaluating traditional teaching methods and curricula to ensure they are culturally responsive and relevant.

While the article presents an argument for the benefits of a CRT approach in English language teaching in Pakistan, one limitation of the research article above is the potential challenge of implementing CRT in practice, particularly due to the lack of teacher preparation and resistance to adopting new approaches (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2009). The article highlights the need for teacher training to support the implementation of CRT but remains to be seen to what extent rigorous and ongoing training accompanies this curriculum revamping project and how the teacher trainees respond. Additionally, the article does not address potential challenges or barriers to teacher adoption of CRT, such as conflicting teaching philosophies, resistance to change, or a lack of resources. Therefore, it remains to be seen in practice how effectively CRT can be integrated into the language curriculum in Pakistan and whether it can successfully address the linguistic and cultural needs of diverse student populations.

Based on these limitations, further research could investigate teacher training for the new curriculum plan and its effectiveness in various parts of Pakistan. This could include identifying hurdles and challenges in these contents and teachers' perceptions about switching to this changed mode of teaching EFL in Pakistan. Secondly, the impact of this new project-based experiential learning and CRT-based pedagogy on students needs to be evaluated after implementation to identify students' perspectives and the tangible impact of this approach on their learning outcomes such as language learning motivation and academic grade points. Thirdly, research studies could be conducted from a curriculum development perspective to analyze the success of this revamping project and identify any gaps between the expected educational benefits of adopting a CRT approach and its tangible observed outcomes in different educational contexts in the country.

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