

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of Education

**PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES: ADAPTING CRITICAL  
LITERACY IN EFL COLLEGE WRITING USING A VIDEO-AUTHORING  
PROJECT**

A Dissertation in

Curriculum and Instruction

by

Sunyoung Park

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

August 2010

The dissertation of Sunyoung Park was reviewed and approved\* by the following:

Jamie Myers  
Associate Professor of Education  
Dissertation Advisor  
Chair of Committee

Roger Shouse  
Associate Professor of Education

Bernard Badiali  
Associate Professor of Education

Ladislaus Semali  
Associate Professor of Education

Glendon Blume  
Professor of Education  
Graduate Coordinator in Curriculum and Instruction

\*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a critical action research to explore the pedagogical challenges and possibilities by adapting a critical literacy in an EFL college writing class supported by a video-authoring project. Mainly, it focuses on three parts of the study; 1) How will develop the theoretical notions of a critical literacy in an EFL classroom, in particular, EFL writing classroom?, 2) What are the struggles and conflicts in an EFL critical literacy classroom?, and finally, 3) Are EFL students empowered and emancipated in their EFL writing tasks supported by a video-authoring project?

With these main questions, the data findings indicated although the Korean EFL students did not want to disrupt their social conformity by supported by a critical literacy discourse. However, as the students got exposed to the critical discourse, they started to identify, question, and reflect their subjectivity in relations to objectivity. In the process, the students see their subjective knowledge and norms valuable with authorship. In addition, the students' participations in class projects of a video-authoring project and EFL academic writing were increased, rather than acquiring English language skills in traditional classrooms. By building their own knowledge in their projects, the students are also empowered with a sense of responsibility.

Therefore, although it was to take a risk to adapt a critical literacy to EFL teaching and learning contexts, the data findings presented the pedagogical possibilities such as building authorship and students' own knowledge production in the learner-centered approach.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Acknowledgements.....	viii
Chapter 1. Background.....	1
Introduction.....	1
The dominant conceptions of the traditional ESL/EFL writing.....	7
The traditional dominant educational conceptions on EFL/ESL writing.....	7
<i>Linguistic accuracy: Grammar correction</i> .....	7
<i>The focus on writing process</i> .....	12
Exclusion from the traditional EFL/ESL writing class.....	15
The purpose of the study.....	18
Chapter 2. Authorship and knowledge production: using a video-authoring project in an EFL writing class.....	20
Authorship as learners' ownership.....	21
Why is authorship necessary?.....	23
Needs of tension in objectivity and subjectivity: based on a critical literacy perspective.....	26
Knowledge production.....	29
Power.....	30
Language.....	31
History.....	32
Culture.....	34
Critical literacy practices as social actions: EFL critical academic writing and a video-authoring project.....	35
Academic EFL writing as one's reflective knowledge production.....	36
Sign System for Argument development process in EFL academic writing .....	39
Video-authoring project as a sign system to practice a critical literacy.....	41
Chapter 3. Methodology.....	46
Intodiuction.....	46
Critical Action research of qualitative research inquiry.....	46
Data Collection.....	49
Class Description.....	50
Participants.....	51
The students.....	51
Main Instructor.....	52

The Participant Researcher and co-instructor .....	52
Data Collecting Sources.....	54
Site description.....	54
Field notes: My Observations.....	54
Students' interview and group discussion.....	55
Students reflection note.....	55
Video-authoring project.....	56
EFL academic writing.....	57
Data Analysis.....	58
Chapter 4. Authorship through tension between subjectivity and objectivity.....	63
Identifying subjectivity in relation to traditional English learning and teaching....	65
Questioning subjectivity in relation to objectivity.....	75
Contradiction in tension.....	78
Social norms and stereotypes: How we think vs. What we do.....	83
Positioning who they are in authorship.....	88
Chapter 5. Knowledge production as critical literacy practices.....	99
Power: Devil's Temptation.....	104
Language: Alcohol Culture.....	107
History: Korean comfort Women.....	113
Culture: Gender Role.....	116
Chapter 6. Contextualizing critical literacy in EFL pedagogy.....	120
Authorship in EFL academic Writing.....	123
Authorship with students' experiences as cultural production.....	123
Student-led pedagogical practices with students' motivation and self-confidence.....	126
Knowledge production as critical social action.....	130
A critical media literacy by using a video-authoring project.....	131
A critical media literacy with a video-authoring project.....	133
Limitation and implications of a critical literacy in a Korean EFL context.....	135
Conclusion.....	138
References.....	140

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1. Video-authoring project descriptions.....	102
Table 2. Commercial images and themes.....	108

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Our everyday lives 1.....	103
Figure 2. Our everyday lives 2.....	103
Figure 3. Representation 1.....	104
Figure 4. Representation 2.....	104
Figure 5 Advertisement.....	106
Figure 6 Commercial 1.....	108
Figure 7 Commercial 2.....	108
Figure 8 Commercial 3.....	109
Figure 9 Commercial 4.....	110
Figure 10 Commercial 5.....	110
Figure 11 Spirit.....	112
Figure 12 Korean flag.....	112
Figure 13 Japanese Flag in 1941.....	112
Figure 14 Comfort women.....	113
Figure 15 The current time in 2007.....	113
Figure 16 For what?.....	114
Figure 17 Why?.....	114
Figure 18 Babies 1.....	115
Figure 19 The definition of gender.....	115
Figure 20 Babies 2.....	116
Figure 21 Babies 3.....	116
Figure 22 Non-cultural assumption.....	117
Figure 23 Changed gender roles.....	117
Figure 24 Reconceptualization.....	118

## Acknowledgements

My dissertation was a long journey in my doctoral program. While developing the dissertation was important, what I learned through the dissertation writing was how I would plan my long journey. Now this whole process will become my life nutrition for a new start of another phase.

My study would never have been completed without the support and encouragement of any people. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my advisor, Professor Jamie Myers. He has helped to shape and direct the perspective of my thesis with invaluable comments and suggestions. Expecially, I thank him for being patient when I was in long dilemma. He always supported and encouraged me to go through some struggles in my doctoral program. I will keep his teachings and be my role model for my teaching life. I am also very grateful to my committee members, Professor Roger Shouse, Professor Bernard Badiali, and Professor Ladislaus Semali who supported me to make my dissertation done with their unfailing intelligence. I deeply thank my committee members for being patient with me.

My appreciation also extends to my friends at Pennstate Korean Buddhist Organization for being there for me whenever I was trouble. Without their encouragement, it would have been impossible to complete my thesis. I also thank Jong-Hee Kim and Jung-Yi Suh who always supported me.

I would like to show my deep gratitude to my parents, Dong-Woo Park, and my mother, Young-Ja Kang, who always supported and encouraged me warmly at all times. Also my brothers, Jihong and Chulmin deserve my deep appreciation for their love and concern.



## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Background**

#### **Introduction**

While in the doctoral program, I have read a lot of wonderful language and literacy education theories and applicable ideas for critical consciousness. Although I used to have a hard time to understand the philosophical educational theories from critical, postmodernist, poststructuralist discourses and notions, they helped me to think of myself and my educational aim as a future educator. The critical, postmodernist, and poststructuralist theories provided me rich discourses to identify and explore myself in relation to the others. This was a powerful experience for me to be an active learner while valuing my knowledge, social values and beliefs, and even my social cultural biased assumptions. No matter how those discourses as being myself are biased with a certain perspective, they made me understand and analyze myself as an integral production, constructed through power relations to different other factors in society. Thus, based on my educational experience rooted from critical awareness, I have sought to find, for my future academic life, how I would develop the theoretical notions in English learning and teaching to the Korean educational context in an accessible way. In particular, I have specifically paid attention to EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students' empowerment and emancipation against the traditional emphasis on mechanical skills and drills for English learning where most students take a passive attitude in their learning and in their classrooms.

With my main interest in EFL students' empowerment and emancipation in an EFL learning classroom, Freire in a conversation with Macedo (1994) argues that

“language should never be understood as a mere tool of communication” (p. 120). While one of the primary educational goals in learning a language is to cultivate linguistic skills, Freire (1994) highlights that, beyond that linguistic issue, language should be understood as cultural production and reproduction packed with ideology. Therefore, according to his understanding of language, a biased view of a linguistic focus from a traditional language learning and teaching approach, acts to reduce students’ perceptions and various possible language learning approaches to a single emphasis on a language focus per se by ignoring the questions of cultural productions and reproductions of language. In a similar perspective against the biased concept of language and language learning from the traditional linguists, Ives (2004) refers to Gramsci’s notion of ‘language’ which provides how we consider language and what we excessively emphasize and what we neglect in language education. According to the notion,

Gramsci understands language as intricately connected to how we think about and make sense of the world. Thus, language is central to politics and hegemony. As we saw in the previous chapter, he argued against the tradition of the historical linguists especially in the extreme form of the Neogrammarians, who viewed language as a collection of words, sounds, and phrases that change over time. He found such views too narrow and incapable of answering the important questions of how language and different languages function within society, politics and culture. (p. 73).

As with Freire’s concerns on the fixed definition of language, Gramsci’s perspective of language further clarifies that the dominant emphasis on linguistic acquisition has generally marginalized social, cultural, and political features and insights of language politics. In contrast, the traditional linguistic view of language defines it as an abstract, self-contained system with a fixed set of structural components and a fixed set of rules

for their combination (Hall, Vitanova, & Marchenkova, 2005). That is, language from the traditional point of view is understood as working in isolation, not in society and culture. In part, this concept of language legitimates language learners as passive recipients who are required to master linguistic knowledge such as ‘a fixed set of structural components, a fixed set of rules for their combination’, or literary comprehension of a written text. In this perspective, it was not a necessary part that learners bring their own social cultural knowledge to a traditional language class, other than the given knowledge of English acquisition. In relation to the ramification of students’ passivity from the traditional language education, Freire and Macedo (1987) warn that ignorance of the importance of students’ knowledge, experiences, values, and social practices discourages students’ participation with their learning practices, when those practices lay a stress on knowledge acquisition of language system.

On the one hand, it ignores the life experience, the history, and the language practice of students. On the other, it overemphasizes the mastery and understanding of classical literature and the use of literary materials as “vehicles for exercises in comprehension (literal and interpretative), vocabulary development, and word identification skills.” Thus, literacy in this sense is stripped of its sociopolitical dimension; it functions, in fact, to reproduce dominant values and meaning. It does not contribute in any meaningful way to the appropriation of working-class history, culture, and language (p. 146)

As shown in the quote, a biased learning practice of the mechanical skills and drills does not provide any possibilities to value students’ sociopolitical dimensions of ‘the life experience, the history, and the language practice’, which they bring to their learning. In other words, it discourages that students speak out their own voices which empower them to have active participations, as an owner, in their learning practices. In this way, Freire

and Macedo (1987) are concerned that students might keep following dominant values and the meaning given to them, as the neutral, no matter what the sociopolitical dimensions are that students brought to classes. As a result, students become passive in their learning practices and marginalized in their classrooms where they, as autonomous learners, are supposed to be centered. Likewise, back to my main interest of EFL learning and teaching, EFL students' passivity is generated in a similar educational way as mentioned above. The majority of English learning approaches emphasize technical reading and writing skills which do not consider EFL students' personal sociopolitical dimensions. From the traditional dominant view of EFL education focusing on English acquisition, rarely discussed are pedagogical possibilities which empower and emancipate EFL students' voices, against the fixed conceptions rooted from the traditional learning practices, by encouraging students' knowledge, history, experiences, and values which they bring to an EFL classroom. In this regard, Freire, Macedo, and Gramsci's notion of language and language education provide a crucial point of how English language learning in EFL classrooms, in particular, in Korean EFL classrooms, should be designed for cultivating the EFL students' active participation supported by their empowerment and emancipation in their English learning practices.

Therefore, my study begins with the central premise that language, that is English, should not be understood as merely a tool for communication (Freire, 1994), but as central to politics and hegemony and simultaneously as an analytical tool to explore the politics and dominant conceptions through their English language use (Ives, 2004). This understanding makes it possible that English language in an EFL class is defined as a powerful tool demystifying a fixed conception of a certain dominant social value or

knowledge. In other words, it signifies that English language is a pedagogical tool or a language for EFL students to explore sociopolitical dominant assumptions as intellectual knowledge producers. With this perspective of English language in EFL classrooms, English acquisition for good English proficiency and accuracy cannot be an ultimate goal anymore. In such English learning practices, the noteworthy pedagogical value is that students are able to participate in inquiring about the conditions of sociopolitical dominant assumptions by using their own discourses rooted from the students' knowledge, experiences, social values, and belief (Beach & Myers, 2001). By meaningfully inviting their own discourses into English language classrooms, students "can develop their own voice, a prerequisite to the development of a positive sense of the self-worth" (Macedo 1994, p. 133), which links to students' empowerment and emancipation as autonomous learners. By identifying and exploring the dominant social values and knowledge in relation to their own social assumptions of the issues in EFL classrooms, for example, how the dominant conceptions function in a society and culture for constructing people's biased social values and ideas or deconstructing them, EFL students establish a critical awareness that English language can be an analytical tool to deconstruct the dominant social assumptions and reconstruct and develop their own interpretations of the social values and knowledge, beyond the traditional understanding of English language learning merely as a communicative tool to master linguistic skills.

With the understanding of English language as a powerful analytical tool, in the study, I mainly focus on the issue of EFL learning practices for demystifying the biased reality prepackaged by the dominant cultural social values and knowledge and also on the issue of EFL students' empowerment and emancipation through the English learning practices.

Therefore, the two principle issues are overarching throughout the study as primary concerns. In particular, the main research questions were explored in a Korean EFL college writing classroom. While the particular traditional EFL writing, teaching and learning conceptions and methods have strongly dominated, as if they are an EFL writing formula for EFL students to perceive for their EFL writing development, the EFL writing classroom can be an excellent space for EFL teachers to attempt new pedagogical challenges. These classrooms possess a lot of potency for teachers to design various possibilities as my main research questions of EFL learning practices, to deconstruct dominant social assumptions and the students' empowerment and emancipation through the learning practices, will suggest. Before focusing on my research issues, in this first chapter, I will review what the traditional EFL/ESL writing conceptions and approaches are and what their main ideas with the particular approaches emphasize and exclude in EFL/ESL writing classrooms. The clarification of the traditional conceptions of an EFL writing class will not only provide the opportunity to identify what are the dominant assumptions of an EFL/ESL writing class that are foregrounded, but also clearly show how my research intentions in this study are defined against the traditional points, and the key conceptions and in what ways my arguments are different from them. Then, I will illuminate how the notions of a critical literacy can deal with the excluded educational conceptions from the traditional EFL writing approaches and what they pursue as an educational promise. Finally, I will refer to my purpose of the study of what the specific research questions are and how I will plan the study.

## **The dominant conceptions of the traditional ESL/EFL writing**

Since English language is a foreign language (EFL) to Korean students, most Korean students and teachers tend to think that their first priority in any English classroom is to master proper English linguistic skills and related knowledge such as grammatical rules and reading comprehension ability, through translation from English to Korean or to help students to do them (Park, 1992). This is the primary way in which most Korean EFL learners have been educated for English learning. Focused on this conception of English acquisition, EFL students and teachers are always busy enough learning and teaching English language itself. The EFL traditional educational approach to master a certain linguistic knowledge has yielded, in a way, a legitimization of EFL students' passivity. Accordingly, with this pervasive conception of the traditional EFL learning and teaching, I will address two pivotal EFL/ESL writing approaches: linguistic accuracies of writing and writing process as cognitive strategies. In the review of the two traditional writing approaches, I will address what they emphasize for EFL/ESL writing development.

## **The traditional dominant educational conceptions on EFL/ESL writing**

### ***Linguistic accuracy: Grammar correction***

One of the dominant EFL/ESL teaching and learning approaches is the grammar-translation method. In this method, English learning is started in a bottom-up process which proceeds "from sounds, into words, into grammatical relationship, lexical meaning, and finally composites meaning of the message" (Morley 1991, p. 87). For EFL/ESL learners, it is believed that the grammatical competence is essential to read and translate English written texts and to communicate in a more advanced way (Hill & Parry, 1988).

This has been applied for fragmented English learning activities such as reading, listening, speaking and writing.

To consider the functions of English grammar in EFL/ESL writing, according to Olshtain (1991), “while the global perspective of content organization needs to be focused on and given appropriate attention, it is also most important to present a product which does not suffer from illegible handwriting, heavy spelling errors, faulty punctuation, or inaccurate structure, any of which may render the message unintelligible” (p. 236). In other words, the fundamental concept of an EFL/ESL writing class legitimizes that most EFL/ESL students put a strong interest in grammar corrections in developing their writing, rather than considering what the students want to say with their authorship. In fact, Chin (2007) in her recent research refers to the findings that regardless of the students’ writing proficiency, a large number of the EFL students felt that they were just fair writers, exhibiting low confidence and high anxiety of English linguistic skills. Chin (2007) further indicates that most Korean students who participated in the research perceived that grammar and vocabulary were the main features that determined good EFL writers. In this way, Kim (2005) also points out that more than 50% of the Korean EFL students in her research recognized that English writing is the most difficult part in their English learning practices and felt especially pressured in dealing with grammatical errors. As shown in Chin and Kim’s research, most EFL students’ primary concerns in English writing class are caused from the lack of linguistic competence which is strongly associated with the students’ frustration in building their English writing. Even the advanced EFL students are not comfortable, and are concerned with their English writing when the focus is on linguistic competence.



With this concern, EFL/ESL teachers and students take the importance of feedback on the students' grammatical errors in writing for granted, as a necessary part of improving their grammatical competence. Chin (2007) also points out in her findings that the Korean EFL students believed that teachers' feedback contributed to the development of their English writing skills because it helped them apprehend what to improve or avoid in the future, acquire better English usage, and correct their errors. In a sense, Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) mention that although students may be much better at idea generation and revision than they used to be, if there are excessive grammatical and lexical inaccuracies in EFL/ESL student papers, it is difficult for the student writings to be accepted by the standards of academicians. The traditional conception of EFL/ESL writing leads most ESL/EFL writing curriculum to stipulate the importance of grammar feedback and strategies training which cultivate EFL/ESL students to gradually become self-sufficient in editing their own writing (Ferris and Hedgcock, 1998). Needless to say, Korean EFL writing curriculum has been also designed by emphasizing the grammatical accuracies in English written works. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the fundamental focus on the Korean EFL students' writing is mainly to pursue English linguistic perfection as the standard to be a good writer of English. In part, it is not exaggerating to deem that the Korean EFL students' perception and understanding of EFL writing have been structured by the traditional definitions of EFL/ESL writing. It might be corollary to suggest that this method is so institutionalized, that is, has become the norm and it is even difficult to question it (Mills, 2003).

Therefore, there has been a lot of disputable research against the heavy focus on grammar, word choice, punctuation, or spelling in EFL/ESL writing activities. Despite

disputes, Taylor (1976) illustrates that even a native speaker of English who, theoretically, has mastery of the syntax and the common vocabulary of English language, is not necessarily be even a fair writer. He implies that “the ability to write a clear, concise, logical, and convincing paragraph or essay involves more than just the ability to be able to write a grammatical sentence” (Taylor 1976, p. 310). In short, writing is not about verifying grammatical errors, it is more than grammatical accuracies or inaccuracies. If this is the case, how should the grammatical accuracies or inaccuracies be understood in EFL/ESL writing?

According to many EFL/ESL writing experts and researchers who have been skeptical of the focus on the effectiveness of grammatical correction (Semke 1984; Kepner 1991; Sheppard 1992; Truscott 1996, & Gray 2000), a biased focus on grammatical competence and correction to EFL/ESL writing actually discourages many EFL/ESL students. In addition, the researchers raise a question of a pedagogical failure, that grammar correction is ineffective for developing EFL/ESL students’ writing. In particular, Truscott’s (1996) strong refutation has been quoted by many EFL/ESL writing researchers and teachers who are against the habitual EFL teaching practices focusing on grammatical correction in EFL/ESL writing.

Consider what is probably the standard view of correction: Learners find out that they are wrong in regard to a particular grammatical structure and are given the right form (or directions for finding it); they then have correct knowledge about that structure, so they should be able to use it properly in the future, assuming only that they understand and remember the correction. This view has great intuitive appeal; if correct, it provides a compelling argument for grammar correction. But it is not correct. Its falsity is revealed by a simple observation made by Long (1977; 1991)), an observation repeatedly confirmed by research and that any teacher or learner can verify: Language learning rarely, if ever, works

the way that this simple view says it does. The acquisition of a grammatical structure is a gradual process, not a sudden discovery as the intuitive view of correction would imply. One important implication is that favorable intuitions about correction are not to be trusted, because they are based on a false view of learning. Of course, more sophisticated views of correction can be and have been purposed, but the gain in sophistication is accompanied by a loss of intuitive certainty. (p. 342-343)

In the quote, Truscott (1996) critiques against the simple view of language learning, that effective grammar correction functions with a preplanned process in EFL/ESL students' writing development. In such habitual EFL/ESL learning practices, it is not difficult to imagine how EFL/ESL students would develop their attitudes toward English writing. As a general example which is easily shown, in most EFL writing classrooms, the EFL students shorten and simplify their writing due to the concerns on grammatical inaccuracies (Truscott, 1996). In other words, the burden of linguistic incompetence prevents EFL/ESL students from performing the writing task successfully (Chin, 2007).

With this view, it seems that it is impossible to expect that ESL/EFL students think of the complexity of the meaning-making in their writing. It blocks off student's extension and enrichment of their critical thinking on the writing issues by merely focusing on the linguistic accuracy. In such a writing classroom, as a result, Truscott (1996) warns that ESL/EFL students can neither develop a favorable attitude toward English writing activities, nor even think of authorship of their own written works. Consequently, the traditional EFL/ESL writing education systemically seems to impel EFL/ESL students to be passive recipients and learners in English learning classrooms where the EFL/ESL students always recognize their lack of English accuracy, rather

than their possibility in English learning practices, and thus are required to accept pre-given linguistic knowledge.

### *The focus on writing process*

Since the 1960s, there has been a most important pedagogical shift in writing classes from a focus on product to a focus on process. The emphasis of product in writing neglects the cognitive complexity in the process of how writing is produced (Murray 1968, 1978; Perl 1979; Taylor 1981). For instance, as I mentioned in the previous section, EFL/ESL writing concentrates primarily on teaching language form and on the correcting of students' written language inaccuracies by focusing on product. In a sense, Taylor (1981) critiques that the focus primarily on form is an insufficient emphasis on content which rarely provides the opportunity for students to experience the process of discovering meaning and then of struggling to give it form through revision. Instead, Taylor (1981) urges that EFL/ESL students should be given an opportunity to immerse themselves totally in the writing topic, in order to find what they want to say and to have an opportunity to communicate ideas of serious interest to them.

From this perspective, Flower (1981) further refers to the rich descriptions of a process-based approach to writing. She illustrates how students develop their writing by performing the particular processes to complete writing. While centering on the cognitive orientation, Flower (1981) states that writing is a thinking process to solve a problem. According to her,

In order to solve such problems, people draw both on their past knowledge about the subject and on a set of problem-solving strategies. Good problem solvers - such as

master chess players, inventors, successful scientists, business managers, or artists – typically have a great deal of knowledge and a large repertory of powerful strategies to use in attacking their problems. Good writers are the same. They are people who have developed better ways of attacking the problem of writing (p. 3).

The assumption is that it is important to provide a set of problem-solving strategies for students to deal with their writing. That is, Flower (1981) states that writing is created by the cognitive intellectual process. Here, the problem-solving strategies in the writing process would be imparted to facilitate students' coping with the problems of writing at each point. The key concept of the problem-solving principle for developing writing strategies is simple: "break the large, complex problem of writing down into a set of smaller subproblems that you can concentrate on one at a time" (p. 45). From this conception, the set of steps and tasks are predefined in a systematic way as distinctive parts of the writing process, such as planning discourse, generating and organizing ideas, and designing and editing students' prose for a reader. Through the cognitive thinking strategies to carry out the students' tasks, Flower (1981) argues that students actively experience the power of knowing alternative ways of coping with the problem of writing.

As one of the dominant writing approaches, a process-based approach to writing has been pervasively adapted in EFL/ESL writing contexts as well. Suh's research (2003) investigated the effects of the process-based writing activity in Korean EFL context. It was designed with the frame of CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) and its effects on both EFL learners' attitudes toward writing in English and their writing proficiency. In the study, although the students were not able to fully succeed in improving their writing ability in the certain aspects of English writing which Suh (2003) tried to pursue, they did show the promotion of writing skills such as fluency,

organization, and mechanics. According to Suh, this helped the students to take a positive attitude for the improvement of their writing ability in EFL classrooms. While such a process-based approach is widely practiced as the dominant conception for designing a writing class, I want to point out that, in some sense, Flower (1981) is apt to oversimplify the 'process' over entire writing strategy orders in which students engage. Of course, Flower (1981) warns that each composing process is not as straight as going from the step A to the step B. To quote her,

The normal process of a writer is not a linear march forward; it is recursive. That is, writers constantly return to earlier steps such as planning in order to carry out later ones...It is important to remember that these strategies are not rules or sure-fire formulas for writing. Instead they are simply an organized description of some of the things good writers normally do when they write (p. 50-51).

I maintain Flower's point, opposing a simple-minded model of the composing process which regards writing as a linear, straightforward set of steps. However, while Flower (1981) considers the recursive cognitive processes of developing writing according to individual differences focusing on certain writing strategies, she does not allude to the complexities and engagements of social political features which students bring into the class and which function as positive or negative variables in their writing development. For this, Myers and Sung (2002) illustrate by quoting Vygotsky that the mechanical strategies for higher cognitive functions are set up from social interactions. That is, "all higher mental functions are internalized social relationships" (p. 153). Back to Flower's idea, it might be necessary to consider that while the process-based approach supported by problem-solving strategies is a cognitive practice, it should be understood as

“internalized social relationships” through identifying social practices or social interactions constituted within the transaction between the individual and society (Myers & Sung, 2002) for writing learning and development. Otherwise, with the understanding of the strategic writing processes as value free practices, students are asked to accept the ‘formulas’ for writing, although Flower (1981) refuses to name the writing process ‘formula’ through the preplanned practices.

From this perspective, Flower’s cognitive orientation of the preplanned writing strategies which lead to a ‘successful’ writing is in a way confronted with the pedagogical limitation, which devalues students’ hidden social complexities, one of the critical factors in writing practices. The exclusion of the social political complexities from writing is able to cause writing learning to be treated as a value-free practice. Lastly and the most importantly, it legitimizes that students are generalized as unitary subjects, not as situated ones who include different social political complexities and affairs in their specific lives.

### **Exclusion from the traditional EFL/ESL writing class**

According to Mills (2003), Foucault points out that “in the process of thinking about the world, we categorize and interpret experience and events according to the structures available to us and, in the process of interpreting, we lend these structures a solidity and a normality which it is often difficult to question” (p. 56). To adapt the Foucault’s thought to the EFL/ESL traditional writing orientations and approaches, it is assumed that ‘a solidity and normality,’ as the way most EFL/ESL students have been exposed to the traditional fixed conceptions of particular English writing skills, have restricted further processes toward attempting different EFL/ESL educational challenges

and possibilities. That is, to focus on the Korean EFL context, the particular pedagogical orientations and approaches in relation to all the activities about English learning categorize and regulate Korean EFL students' learning experiences and conceptions to the limited definition of English acquisition. The process and fixed understanding of English learning and teaching are circulated and distributed as a form of constraints and restrictions, but as 'authentic' ways, rather than encouraging pedagogical challenges and possibilities which EFL/ESL students should take, as productive risks, in an English classroom. Within this fossilized educational 'solidity and normality', while students become skillful and familiar in accepting knowledge as its instrumental value, they perceive a certain indisposition to make meaning for themselves and to form their individual values with their own cultural social experiences and knowledge (Giroux, 1983), other than using textbooks. That is, such students' attitudes seem originated from the constraints and restrictions, such that the EFL/ESL students do not feel worthy of their own experiences and knowledge as the appropriate ones or as the authentic ones to be used in English classrooms.

In a sense, the traditional pedagogical writing paradigm with the focus on linguistic accuracies or a problem-solving approach from cognitive orientation has emphasized the mastery of writing skills and related writing strategies and viewed the learners as "object" (Macedo, 1991), not as the situated subjects. According to Macedo (1991), although such a cognitive approach in learning practices stresses the construction of meaning whereby students engage in a dialectical interaction between themselves and the objective world, it is stressed by how learners construct meaning through focusing on cognitive problem-solving processes. As Macedo (1991) questions, in favor of the



development of cognitive structure which can enable students to move from simple to highly complex learning tasks, reading and writing are merely understood as a cognitive intellectual process, “through a series of fixed, value-free, and universal stages of development” (Walmsley 1981, P.82).

The issue of the traditional writing paradigm is that the dominant EFL/ESL writing paradigm has paid little attention to the questions of students’ sociopolitical dimensions as their cultural capital and as “a history curriculum which may consist of giving voice to the students’ own personal histories” (McLaren & Giroux, 1990, p. 157). Likewise, Macedo (1991) critiques, by quoting Freire (1978), that since students’ cultural capital, i.e., their life experience, history, and language, is ignored, they are rarely able to engage

through critical reflection, regarding their own practical experience and the ends that motivate them in order, in the end, to organize the findings and thus replace mere opinion about facts with an increasingly rigorous understanding of their significance (Freire 1978, p.25)

By less focusing on the cultural capital which makes students’ positions subjectively unique, the traditional dominant EFL/ESL writing paradigm has devalued the sociopolitical factors, which are essential to cultivate EFL/ESL students’ ‘authorship’ to be active learners. In addition, Willinsky (1991) insists that “the encouragement of the written organization of thought and feeling simply constitutes a cognitive capacity without context or moral imperative – a rhetoric without commitment” (p. 265). Therefore, Willinsky (1991) claims that writing programs have to provide pedagogical opportunities for students to make their own way into literacy. That is, against the

traditional EFL/ESL writing development approaches in which EFL/ESL students are systematically required to accept various mechanical writing skills and strategies by taking a passive attitude, a new EFL/ESL writing program should encourage EFL/ESL students' authorship that gives the students empowerment, by valuing their own knowledge and cultural capital. Willinsky (1991) articulates that this invites more active participation for students' writing development. To develop the ideas for EFL/ESL students' learning practices, it is inevitable to call for the reconceptualization of a new EFL/ESL pedagogical paradigm for English learners. In this way, the educational notions from a critical literacy provide various potencies for how we consider the EFL education and enable EFL students who have been silenced or marginalized by fixed English learning practices to reclaim the authorship of their own lives (Giroux, 1987). Therefore, it is necessary to address some of the important theoretical notions in a critical literacy, paying attention to the issues of students' authorship and knowledge production toward building EFL/ESL students' empowerment and emancipation in their learning practices.

### **The purpose of the study**

Accordingly, the purpose of the study is to examine pedagogical challenges and possibilities in order to see how EFL students are empowered by attempting the notions of critical literacy in an EFL classroom, in particular, in an EFL college writing classroom. To perform the new pedagogical tasks in EFL classrooms, in class practices, students need to be exposed to a new pedagogical conceptualizations and practices in EFL writing classrooms. In other words, it is necessary to attempt new pedagogical promises and practices in an EFL writing classroom. While the major educational aims in

the traditional EFL writing lay emphasis on English writing accuracies and writing skills and strategies in order to mainly improve EFL students' writing proficiency, the EFL writing class which will attempt to perform the new pedagogical conceptions rooted from a critical literacy, would put its primary focus on raising EFL students' authorship of their English learning and engaging in their knowledge production through participating in EFL writing tasks. This is in order to carry out the pedagogical promises in which critical literacy has advocated against students' passivity and dehumanization in EFL education. To fulfill the pedagogical purpose in an EFL writing class, the introduction of an alternative definition of EFL writing, and accompanying possible practical tasks to conduct the notions of a critical literacy, is inevitable in this study. Therefore, in the following chapters, I will specifically describe what the primary conceptions of authorship in students' learning engagement and knowledge production signify, and how the educational conceptions are practiced in the pedagogical tasks of college English writing supported by technology of a video-authoring project.

Research questions:

1. How will best be developed the theoretical notions of a critical literacy in an EFL classroom, in particular, in an EFL writing classroom?
2. What are the struggles and conflicts in an EFL critical literacy classroom?
3. Are EFL students empowered and emancipated in their EFL writing tasks supported by a video-authoring project?

## CHAPTER 2

### **Authorship and knowledge production: using a video-authoring project in an EFL writing class**

In Chapter 1, I have reviewed the traditional educational issues in EFL/ESL writing class and briefly suggested the importance of understanding the pedagogical possibilities of a critical literacy in Korean EFL educational contexts. Thus, in this chapter, I want to elaborate the theoretical notions of pedagogical challenges and possibilities in a critical literacy.

First of all, my main focus in this chapter goes to EFL students who take passive attitudes of self-esteem and self-confidence in their own knowledge and values in an EFL classroom. This concern leads me to consider the notions of ‘authorship’, which is a necessary concept for most Korean EFL students devaluing their voices and own knowledge. Second, by identifying and understanding the role of authorship in English learning practices, students need to experience how authorship in their learning is fulfilled through constructing their own knowledge by means of critical discourses of the core four factors: power and knowledge, language, history, and culture. Finally, I want to provide possible educational devices to perform the theoretical notions of authorship and knowledge production. I have paid attention to reconceptualizing how EFL writing should be understood to meet the pedagogical aims of students’ empowerment and emancipation in a critical literacy. To do so, I want to investigate how the use of a video-authoring project functions to facilitate EFL students’ writing, as a practical application to realize a critical literacy in a Korean EFL writing classroom. These clarifications would help to understand how a critical literacy provides pedagogical promises to raise EFL students’ empowerment and emancipation in their EFL learning and leads EFL

students to reflect themselves and position who they are. In doing so, we can expect that EFL students become critical thinkers, able to problematize what they have believed, as the taken-for-grantedness in their everyday life.

### **Authorship as learners' ownership**

With the rise in global economic competition, English has increasingly become the language of communication for the international marketplace. These trends of globalization and English as an international language have impacted the lives of Koreans in real ways. Particularly, Korean EFL teaching and learning have reinforced the relevant educational policy and curriculum to enrich national economic development, since English is highly valued in professional life as well as in the current schooling. In a way, this conception has been consistently rooted in the social consensus of economic access through the apoliticizing impacts on English curriculum and instruction. Korean English educational curriculum has mainly focused on teaching and learning English language as merely a neutral tool for economic access without the understanding of any political, social, or cultural considerations of English learning and teaching. Therefore, various English proficiency scores and ratings by official English testing organizations such as TOEIC, TOEFL, GRE, or Korean University Entrance Exam become the barometer to evaluate reliability of Korean students' current English language level. This Korean social educational situation brings about universal validity to advocate English skill-based teaching and learning first, which facilitate Korean EFL students to reach the socially-accepted norms of English proficiency. These underlying dominant perceptions

of English education legitimize that English teaching and learning should be centered with the focus on development of English linguistic acquisition as a prime concern.

For this situation, according to Higgins (2003), many researchers (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Norton, 1997; Pennycook, 2001; Peirce, 1995; Widdowson, 1994) in ESL/EFL educational areas have critiqued the traditional ESL/EFL learning and teaching approaches as merely pursuing an apolitical single norm for acquiring standard English which a ‘native English speaker’ speaks. The researchers concur with the pedagogical implication rooted from the single definition of English acquisition, which “sets up barriers to success, particularly for those who speak a variety different from the Standard English of a center nation such as England or the United States” (Higgins 2003, p. 617). That is, with emphasis on the fixed sets of Standard English of native English speakers, ESL/EFL students’ own ideological stances in English learning participation are rejected as non-legitimate parameters. Going back to the present Korean English educational circumstance, what draws my attention is how the status of Korean EFL students has been positioned in this EFL context. To put it another way, how have Korean EFL students positioned themselves in links to dominant segments of the preplanned educational objectivity? Are students able to feel that English learning, which has already determined what they have to acquire for English acquisition, is still their own? For this, I am hesitant how to respond to the questions as an EFL learner and simultaneously as an English instructor.

*Why is authorship necessary?*

Widdowson (1994) describes that the dominant conception of 'English' in traditional English teaching and learning is assumed as the authentic and naturally occurring language, used for communication spoken in native speakers' contexts of use. Thus, real newspaper reports, real magazine article, real advertisements, or cooking recipes have been used as the actual norm in the authentic English occurring contexts for English teaching and learning. However, Widdowson (1994) persuasively indicates what English learners have misunderstood. According to him, the access to the meanings in the authentic English occurring contexts "is limited to those insiders who share its cultural presuppositions and a sense of its idiomatic nuance. Those who do not, the outsiders, cannot ratify its authenticity" (p. 386). To put it another way, although English learners and instructors attempt various authentic English teaching materials in EFL classrooms to acquire its authenticity of English language, they cannot engage with the authentic English learning, since "it does not relate to their world but to a remote one they have to find out about by consulting a dictionary of culture" (p. 386). In addition, Widdowson (1994) continues that this conception of 'authenticity' formed only from naturally occurring English contexts reinforces a privileged status of native speakers who acquire the Standard English and proper culture as insiders with integrated experiences and identities.

If this is the thing, on the contrary, Widdowson (1994) suggests that English learning and teaching need to be designed for establishing authenticity where English students can share the cultural and social meanings in the context of their own world. In this way, English students participate in English learning processes with their own reality

and worlds, where they can be the insiders, that is, ‘owners’ of their learning. Moreover, while English native speaking teachers, working with the outsiders have a better position to teach “what is appropriate in context of language use, and so to define possible target objectives” (p. 387), non-native speaking teachers are in a better position to understand what is appropriate in the contexts of language learning necessary to achieve such objectives. To sum up, Widdowson (1994) argues that English teaching and learning curriculum should be designed with a familiarity with the students’ particular socio-cultural situations in which teaching and learning take place. In doing so, English students make the English their own and identify what they learn with English, without imposing authority upon the students in the form of an alien pattern of behavior (Widdowson, 1994).

In a sense, Norton (1997) states that English students should claim ownership of English language so that they consider themselves legitimate English speakers and users. To do so, Higgins (2003) stresses that “the determining factor in owning the English language is whether the speakers view the variety they use as being a legitimate variety in a social, political, and economic sense” (p. 621). To put it another way, students need to appreciate how their own subjective knowledge and norms are essential so that they become legitimate English learners over what they learn and use. For the opportunity of students to understand the values of their own social and cultural knowledge and experiences, Giroux (1986) emphasizes that students need to consider how a single norm of understanding socially-accepted knowledge and values is constructed and to question the roots about how the current Korean EFL students’ subjectivity has been structured and regulated with the ambiguous ‘authenticity’ ratified from the outsiders.



...His appeal is to forms of pedagogy that enable students to master skills and specific forms of understanding with respect to predetermined forms of knowledge. In this view, knowledge appears beyond the reach of critical interrogation except at the level of immediate application. In other words, there is no mention of how such knowledge is chosen, whose interests it presents, or why students might be interested in acquiring it. In fact, students in this perspective are characterized as a unitary body removed from the ideological and material forces that construct their subjectivities, interests, and concerns in diverse and multiple ways (Giroux 1986, p. 51).

Giroux (1986) implies that students have been systematically positioned as unitary beings to be included into the mainstream society which values the particular 'predetermined forms of knowledge'. That is, the power of particular dominant knowledge and norms impacts how students position their own subjectivity to be a part of the mainstream society. Needless to say, it means that students establish their social values and beliefs and position their subjectivity with the dominant social objectivity which is predefined. To borrow from Widdowson (1994), the authenticity provided from the 'artificially' occurring English contexts imposes upon the students a social objectivity in the form of an alien pattern of behavior.

Thus, the dominant concept of 'objectivity' as dominant social knowledge and norms treats one's situated cultural capitals as "other" to signify "deviant, underprivileged, or uncultured" (Giroux 1986, p. 54). Why this can be problematic is that students have to follow what dominant social objectivity provides, not to be "deviant, underprivileged, or uncultured" against the mainstream social norms. This has constructed critical contradiction between what is suggested for students within the ivory tower and what is actually fulfilled in a classroom. In the current educational atmosphere,

students rarely have a chance to consider language learning meaningfully from learner-centered purposes and their own perspective of language learning (Freeman & Freeman, 1998). In addition, students are not able to engage in meaningful English learning activities in ownership as English users. In this way, students are understood merely as knowledge consumers in passivity, not the knowledge constructors in authorship. As a result, students' success or failure in schooling or social life, in some way, is determined whether students acquire the given content and curriculum of 'predetermined forms of knowledge' (Giroux, 1986). Similarly, to adapt the idea to EFL educational context, most Korean EFL students do not question what they learn and how they learn. Instead, they merely follow what the given English educational curriculum and instruction ask of them. In this way, Korean EFL students are treated as unitary beings who share dominant social educational conceptions without any conflicts between individual subjectivities and educational objectivities. Under the coincidence between subjectivity and objectivity, students do not need to think about any tension from discordance between them.

*Needs of tension in objectivity and subjectivity: based on a critical literacy perspective*

In a critical literacy, it is important to provide 'tension' for students to challenge the current situation, that their subjectivity is functioning in passivity, regulated by the hidden curriculum of objectivity. While *tension* in the Korean traditional educational situation means nearly negative conceptions as abnormal, resistant, deviant, or bad-mannered, against the existing social values and manners, Freire and Macedo (1987) encourage *tension* as a fundamental step where students can experience empowerment against students' passive learning involvements. The important pedagogical point of

*tension* which Freire and Macedo (1987) advocate is to recognize and already assume that since each student possesses their own cultural and social capital, the occurrences of conflicts and tension in classrooms become natural with valuing differences and diversity in a classroom. With the undergrounded notion, Freire and Macedo (1987) urge students to be aware of how the tension between the individual students and social practice is occurring and how they deal with the relationships.

First of all, Freire and Macedo (1987) question the dominant consensual discourses that are structured without allowing students' tension to negotiate individual conflicts and struggles in connection between one's subjectivity and objectivity. However, here what we should carefully understand is that although the dominant social consensus is the object which students need to question, Freire and Macedo (1987) bring up the important point that "one should neither deny the social, the objective, the concrete, the material, nor emphasize only the development of the individual consciousness" (p. 48). This is because the social objectivity and individual subjectivity are connected with each other and are constructed in their discursive relationships. From this perspective, Freire and Macedo (1987) mention that

Students begin to understand that the more profound dimension of their freedom lies exactly in the recognition of constraints that can be overcome. Then they discover for themselves in the process of becoming more and more critical that it is impossible to deny the constitutive power of their consciousness in the social practice in which they participate....This behavioral difference leads one to become more and more critical; that is, students assume a critical posture to the extent that they comprehend how and what constitutes the consciousness of the world (p. 49).

If this is the thing, the essential point in this statement is to understand what "the recognition of constraints", as a key point for students to become critical, implies. This

statement points out that students' conformity and stability, rooted from the connection between their subjectivity and social objectivity, might be mystified with 'freedom' maintained within the certain boundary of dominant social norms and knowledge. For this, Freire and Macedo (1987) bring attention to the idea that if students do not recognize the hidden regulations and restrictions structured by the boundary of dominant social norms and knowledge, they would never be out of the constraints, which are mystified as social harmony and conformity. Then, how can students start to build the tension to recognize the constraints?

From the question, Giroux and McLaren (1986) insist on the pedagogical importance of student experience as the starting point in two aspects. According to them, one is that student experience is a sort of pedagogy which "encourages a critique of dominant forms of knowledge and cultural mediation that collectively shape student experiences" (p. 234). From this perspective, Simon also (1992) illustrates that student experience refers to "a process that builds configurations of subjectivity, that is, the conscious and unconscious thoughts and feelings, images and memories that realize one's sense of self, others, and our material environment in such a way as to constitute possibilities of existence" (p. 59).

The researchers concur with the point that student experience has a significant implication in understanding the relationships between subjectivity and objectivity. Therefore, Giroux and McLaren (1986) suggest, as a second aspect, that students explore, with the critical perspective such as "recognition of constraints" of dominant social objectivity, "their own particular lived experiences and subordinate knowledge forms" (p. 234). That is, while students can be in conflict with the recognition of social objectivity

as constraints and restrictions, this tension can be the students' intellectual power to deal with the oppressions in the recognition of the social objectivity. Thus, student experience is a central factor through which students can contextualize the tension from the recognition of constraints

In sum, as students get exposed to the political stance of relationship of subjectivity and objectivity, they can gradually recognize how they are educated and structured to the current 'who they are'. In the process, students can explore in what ways they can be 'a unitary being', what their subjectivity is and how it functions, how objectivity and subjectivity are connected. These questions and tensions would be the crucial process for students to appropriate the concept of *authorship*. In this way EFL students build ownership that legitimizes themselves over English learning, and use English language to solve problems as the inquiry process to build their own knowledge by negotiating the tension between objectivity and subjectivity.

### **Knowledge production**

I have reviewed the possibilities of 'authorship' with critical means of 'tension'. The main aim to raise the tension in a language classroom is to empower students through the process of understanding the complexity of knowledge and social relations. However, in addition to the understanding of tension for building authorship in their learning, it is necessary that students should understand critical discourse to initiate their identification against some oppressive forms of social objectivity and questions of their current 'who they are'. Although students recognize the importance of raising tension between subjectivity and objectivity, how do they question the dominant social norms

and knowledge? In other words, at the least, students need to be given critical languages to expand their questions and resistance of their experiences in relations to social objectivity.

Thus, Giroux and McLaren (1986) suggest the four important areas of power, language, history, and culture that should be central to a critical literacy and the educational programs in the orientation of a critical literacy. In what follows, I review the four areas as a mode of analysis for students to demystify the dominant cultural discourses and to make it an object of political analysis. With exposure to the critical languages and discourse of critique and demystification against dominant culture, students are able to encounter the opportunity to cultivate critical consciousness in empowerment through the process of identifying, interrogating, and resisting against the dominant political, social and cultural assumptions. Accordingly, the four critical factors of power, language, history, and culture which Giroux and McLaren (1986) suggest, are essential notions so that students participate in a critical literacy in EFL classrooms, and EFL educators and practitioners design and develop the curriculum in the orientation of a critical literacy.

### *Power*

According to Giroux and McLaren (1986), within the dominant curriculum, knowledge is merely treated as something to be mastered in a technical manner, not in the issue of power. This makes teachers and students never consider that “knowledge is always an ideological construction linked to particular interests and social relations” (p. 230) in language education. However, Giroux and McLaren (1986) point out that the

understanding of the knowledge and power relationship bestows important opportunities for students to consider what kinds of particular knowledge are centered as the authentic one and how the particular knowledge is originated in power relations. By exposure to the political relationship between knowledge and power, students understand that knowledge is able to misrepresent or mediate social reality by power relations. The awareness leads the students to reflect their knowledge and experiences and raise questions of the impacts of power relations in their lives. The important point of understanding the relationship between the knowledge and power is that the critical consciousness directs that students decide their actions with the kind of courage to change themselves or to resist against the social injustices.

### *Language*

In a critical literacy, it is necessary to clarify how language should be understood. In short, for Giroux and McLaren (1986), in traditional educational approaches to reading, writing and second-language learning, language is defined as a primary tool for communication. Accordingly, the basic goal in language education is to facilitate students to read and write in a certain language. The main concept and goal of language are directly reflected in designing language curricula and teaching methods. However, Giroux and McLaren (1986) warn that while the traditional understanding of language is important, mainstream language courses ignore “how language is actively implicated in power relations that generally support the dominant culture” (p. 230). That is, by quoting Antonio Gramsci’s notion of language, Giroux and McLaren (1986) articulate that

language education should not be reduced to the traditional definition of it. Instead, they urge realization that through the medium of language,

we come to consciousness and negotiate a sense of identity, since language does not merely reflect reality, but plays an active role in constructing it. As language constructs meaning, it shapes our world, informs our identities, and provides the cultural codes for perceiving and classifying the world (p. 230).

An understanding of the political features of language in language education is that students gain the critical perspective of “how language functions to “position” people in the world, to shape the range of possible meanings surrounding an issue, and to actively construct reality rather than merely reflect it” (p. 231). By identifying the politics of language against defining language as a mere institutional communication tool, it is possible to design a language teaching and learning curriculum in diverse approaches. In addition, it would provide a significant pedagogical opportunity for students to consider that language education is not only for reading and writing in technical concerns, but also for exploring and understanding their subjectivity and the world around them.

### *History*

The understanding of history is an indispensable aspect so that students explore the dominant taken-for-granted assumptions in historical perspectives. In other words, in a critical literacy, the role of a historical aspect to examine a certain social issue helps students to consider how dominant social and cultural assumptions have been inherently constructed in a particular society or culture, and what kinds of knowledge have been included and what excluded throughout the different historical periods. Giroux and McLaren (1986) explain that such an inclusion and “exclusion is not politically innocent



when we consider how existing social arrangements are partly constitutive of and dependent upon the subjugation and elimination of the histories and voices of the (those) groups marginalized and disempowered by the dominant culture” (p. 231). They further speak out that this concept of history helps students to see what kinds of knowledge and dominant cultural traditions are construed as legitimate in various authentic texts, throughout time and space. Therefore, Giroux and McLaren (1986) appeal to language educators to practice the theoretical idea of history in links to language and reading. According to them, language is “the bearer of history” and history is a social construction which can be analyzed by critical discourses. History can be understood as two points. One is that a particular history shaped in the political relationship between knowledge and power is melded in given readings (texts). The other is that the point of integration of reading practices is always converged to the reader (student). (Giroux and McLaren, 1986). That is, it is impossible to perceive the practice of ‘reading’ without history and readers, who possess different histories and reproduce various understandings through the integration of reading and particular histories. As a result, students get to recognize how dominant cultural social knowledge and power are constructed as the unchallengeable through “the opportunity to examine critically historical contexts and interests as work in defining what forms of knowledge become privileged over others, how specific forms of authority are sustained, and how particular patterns of learning become institutionalized” (Giroux & McLaren, 1986, p. 232).

### *Culture*

Culture is one of the most frequently defined terms in a critical literacy. Here, Giroux and McLaren (1986) define that culture is signified as a set of practices and ideologies from which different groups live out and draw to make sense of the world. In addition to that, Giroux and McLaren (1986) stress that to understand the concept of culture is the starting point for learners to be critical in the links between culture and power. In short, rather than assuming culture as the given circumstances and conditions of a particular group of people's life, Giroux and McLaren (1986) argue that learners need to realize how the given cultural conceptions are reproduced and manifested in the wider social orders from the links between culture and power. By the critical awareness of the conception of culture, students can understand the following three political insights illustrating cultural and power relations.

First, the concept of culture has been intimately connected with the question of how *social relations are structured* within class, gender, and age formations that produce forms of oppression and dependency. Second, culture has been analyzed within the radical perspective not simply as a way of life, but as *a form of production* through which different groups in either their dominant or subordinate social relations define and realize their aspirations through asymmetrical relations of power. Third, culture has been viewed as *a field of struggle* in which the production, legitimation, and circulation of particular forms of knowledge and experience are central areas of conflict (p. 232-233).

Therefore, Giroux and McLaren (1986) assert that it is possible for students to question and resist about the ways in which dominant social construction interwoven in political interests among particular knowledge, power, language, and culture are maintained and challenged. By exploring relationships of the factors, we can provide self-

reflection opportunity so that students reconsider how their subjectivities and their own voices are understood and how they negotiate dominant social constructions around them. In this way, students' critical consciousness is cultivated in empowerment. Finally, students might become secure enough to allow themselves authorship of knowledge which they produce in learning practices.

### **Critical literacy practices as social actions: EFL critical academic writing and a video-authoring project**

I have reviewed the critical discourses with which students can be exposed to the understanding of the political and pedagogical practices for the construction of forms of authorship and their own knowledge production. Those critical discourses are the theoretical frameworks to guide how students investigate oppressive social objectivity by reflecting their everyday life. However, in reality, it might be difficult to expect productive results regarding how students engage in critical literacy when teachers use only a lecture format with students thus merely accepting critical discourses. That is, it is necessary to design the appropriate curriculum to meet the goal of critical literacy concepts for actual language learning and teaching practices.

To strengthen students' engagement in appropriating the discourse of a critical literacy, it is essential to make students' understanding visible and real with their critical inquiry. Such a way is by their directly participating in knowledge production to practice the critical discourse. For this task, English academic writing and technology use, a video-authoring project provides useful pedagogical tasks for students to apply their understandings of a critical discourse as social actions.

*Academic EFL writing as one's reflective knowledge production*

In traditional EFL writing class, most EFL students have some fear of writing in English. They are mostly reluctant to take an EFL writing course of their own accord. The students' fear of English writing leads the EFL students to feel and experience frustration on their unimpressive/unremarkable writing improvement, or disappointment in themselves, in spite of their effort. Although nobody expects that the students would improve their EFL writing fluency to a remarkable extent over the course of a semester, their anxiety and concerns of writing in English still exist as factors contributing to their passivity and frustration. Therefore, EFL writing is usually categorized as one of the mandatory courses, since most students are reluctant to take an English writing course.

As mentioned in the Chapter 1, the mainstream teaching method for EFL writing is still focused on reducing the students' English language inaccuracies and is exclusively dominated by cognitive writing strategies along with the preplanned writing procedures. In this regard, the major focus in EFL writing practices is to help students to improve their writing skills and techniques in such aspects as grammar errors, spelling mistakes, and any other mechanics for EFL students' writing. Thus, the general pedagogical aim of EFL writing seems to be to improve the students' English grammatical accuracy, not English writing fluency (White & Arndt, 1991).

In keeping with this theme, Lensmire (2000) warns that in a traditional EFL writing classroom, whether spoken or written, students have too often been reduced to lifeless, guarded responses - responses to the questions and assignments of powerful others, responses formed in the shadow of teacher scrutiny and evaluation. (Lensmire, 2000). Here it is demanded of EFL students to passively perform the preplanned English writing

practices and class requirements. Of concerns about English writing classes, Lensmire (1998) refers to Willinsky (1990) in pointing out that the traditional writing practices diminish the potential for individual meaningfulness in students' work and this is a denial of their basic subjectivity. That is, Lensmire (1998) claims that understanding the functions of students' voices is a crucial element "to humanize writing pedagogy through the acceptance and encouragement of students' assertions of 'I am' in the classroom" (p. 266). Following this line of thinking, it would be possible to expand the pedagogical aim of EFL writing in a way to develop students' own meaning-making based on their own knowledge and convictions in relation to the world. In this way, it could be possible to treat the issue of encouraging the students to have active participation in their English writing works.

Consequently, Lensmire's points converge into a fundamental strategy "to grant students ownership over their own literate activities" (p. 12) in order to enrich their interest in and commitment to building their own voices with authorship in performing English writing processes. In this respect, it is inevitable to redefine EFL academic writing from the focus on writing English with grammatical accuracy to a meaning-making focus, strengthening EFL students' authorship over their voices, which has been one of the weakest points in their endeavors.

Being consistent with the main theoretical framework of critical literacy of Freire and Macedo (1987), the concept of 'Reading the word and the world' helps to expand how EFL academic writing should be redefined for EFL students' empowerment in the process of building their own English knowledge production in authorship over their own voice.

Reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world. As I suggested earlier, this movement from the word to the world is always present; even the spoken word flows from our reading of the world. In a way, however, we can go further and say that reading the word is not preceded merely by reading the world, but by a certain form of *writing* it or *rewriting* it, that is, of transforming it by means of conscious, practical work. For me, this dynamic movement is central to the literacy process. (p. 35)

To refine the idea of how to write in an English language classroom, Freire and Macedo (1987) refer to an important notion that can expand the definition of EFL academic writing to include social interactions by means of recognizing what reading the world and reading the word mean. Freire and Macedo (1987) mention that as stated above, “Reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world” (p. 35).

My understanding for this theoretical notion is that when we encounter a certain world and read it, we adjust our understanding of the world and the words in accordance with our own subjective assumptions such as individual social values, beliefs, knowledge, and particular political stance. To clarify one’s negotiation, understandings, resistance, or transformation in the process of reading the words and the world, Freire and Macedo (1987) claim that one has to have time to refine the discursive reflections through ‘a certain form of writing’. In this perspective, it can be understood that students’ writings are developed from their reflections between reading the worlds and reading the words. That is, the students’ writing can be a reflective product through students’ social interaction with their subjectivity in relation to objectivity.

Similarly, Giroux (1997b) also emphasizes the importance of writing as a pedagogical practice. He attempts to “develop a notion of writing as a form of cultural production forged among the shifting borderlands of a politics of representation, identity, and struggle” (p. 164). More specifically, it is helpful to view why Giroux (1987) uses writing as a critical pedagogical practice. He mentions that writing is closely linked to leading students to theorize their own experiences rather than the meaning of other people’s theories. Thus, students’ writing practices are centered to get students to explore how representations signify and position students through institutional and ideological authority that is carried in the dominant culture. In this way, it can be understood “as a rupturing practice, as an oppositional pedagogy in which one pushed against the grain of traditional history, disciplinary structures, dominant readings, and existing relations of power” (p. 172).

Consequently, Freire and Macedo (1987) and Giroux (1997b) share the fundamental notion of *writing* as a critical pedagogical practice stimulating students’ reflective knowledge production through reflecting students’ subjectivity via their experiences in relation to dominant social knowledge and norms of social objectivity.

#### *Sign systems for argument development process in EFL academic writing*

Samway (2006) claims that reading and writing are interconnected in terms of process, development, and instruction. Through the meaning-making processes grounded in reading and writing, students symbolize experience and knowledge. What I want to make a point of here is that to provide students with reading material in a writing class is essential because, according to Samway (2006), students can share their meanings and

consequent effects when they talk together about readings such as books, newspaper articles, or short stories. In addition, Samway (2006) further illustrates that the connection between reading and writing benefits students to engage with their own actual experiences and values in relation to the particular interests in the readings, rather than with truncated and artificial experiences, such as one finds in reading content.

At this point in a critical literacy writing practice, another important issue is what kinds of reading investments are helpful for EFL students to identify their interests in a particular topic and to reflect their subjectivity through the related experiences and values for their EFL writing development? Moreover, is class discussion of the assigned readings or creating clustering enough as writing activities to develop the students' arguments? With this question Samway (2006) borrows Taylor's (1990) research of low-level English language learners' writing. Taylor (1990) enlarges the rigid views of providing reading investments and of stipulating a writing genre. Taylor (1990) states that English learners use invented and borrowed symbols to express some unique ideas that their English proficiency does not enable them to communicate effectively (Samway, 2006). Further, Taylor (1990) claims that "these symbols were simply "pictorial clichés", such as hearts and flowers, but at other times they allowed the writers to convey more complex thoughts than they were able to express in English" (Samway 2006, p. 35). Taylor and Samway's claim of using symbols in English writing releases the dominant conception from the rigid views of English writing development, particularly, argument development

In this way, the traditional rigid teaching approach to writing in English has been critiqued against self-referential reading and writing: recall of details, paraphrase,



summary, categorization of genres, and formalistic analysis of verbal techniques (Rosenblatt, 1986). For this, Harste (2000) points out that “failing to understand literacy as a multimodal event results in restrictions and reduces options for the learners” (p. 7). Therefore, he argues that it is necessary to expand the notion of literacy based on inquiry and multiple ways of knowing so that students are helped to clarify their ideas and to create artifacts, to make choices and to have a voice. To do so, he suggests the use of a “sign system”, composed of tools such as pictures, music, images, and language, as well as literary works. He sees the use of such a system in literacy as an indispensable pedagogical resource since it is comprised of forms of representation and conventions in reality. By identifying a sign system in dominant representations and conventions, and questioning it in pedagogical ambiguity, students are participating in a multimodal event based on inquiry and multiple ways of knowing.

In this perspective, an English writing curriculum can be designed with various pedagogical attempts for encouraging students’ critical reflective idea development. In particular, the alternative English writing practice of using different sign systems might be suitable for the EFL students who are afraid of expressing their arguments through their unrefined English writing. Accordingly, for my study, I want to combine the resources of sign systems with technology by using *a video-authoring project*, wherein EFL students try to develop their argument with a certain topic. I will elaborate the idea in the next section.

#### *Video-authoring project as a sign system to practice a critical literacy*

I want to expand the rigid notion of traditional English writing into using sign systems to facilitate students’ writing argument development, focusing on meaning-

making processes, rather than maintaining the writing skills and techniques for EFL writing with grammatical accuracy. With the pedagogical focus on EFL students' meaning-making construction through English academic writing, this critical EFL academic writing should be a reflective process that students explore themselves as socio-culturally constructed beings (Ivanič, 1998) in relation to dominant social knowledge and norms of social objectivity. Many researchers have suggested the pedagogical potency of using sign systems of cultural representations with connotation of dominant social norms and knowledge. While the cultural representations impose dominant social values and beliefs on people and regulate their perceptions in seeing the world, they are also the pedagogical medium for people to explore how cultural representations are mystified, functional in actual everyday life, and educative of one's particular subjectivity.

Regarding this fundamental and critical question of moving a critical literacy theory to practice, Beach and Myers (2001) propose how a critical literacy can be applied in an actual classroom by using the technology for a video-authoring practice as an inquiry project. They have developed possible practical models, for implementing a foundation for a critical literacy, which are linked to challenging certain knowledge and dominant social beliefs and values in relation to cultural and social representations from media culture for students' learning practices in English language arts classrooms. According to Myers and Beach (2004), in English language arts classrooms, "as students learn to use technology tools to build representations of a social world's characteristics, they generate reflective critical thought through their analysis and critique of the identities, relationships, and values constructed by the cultural practices and discourses in that social world" (p.258).

In other words, through creating media content, students identify social objectivities of the dominant cultural belief systems and values, contextualize how those underlying ideologies are embedded in reality through media practices, and challenge how the media practices and discourses educate students by legitimizing cultural belief systems and values. Similarly, Giroux and Simon (1989) emphasize that it is necessary in a critical literacy to articulate how underlying ideologies such as social beliefs and values actually function in media culture, since the politics of media culture never work without an ideological mediation.

From this perspective, Beach and Myers (2001) argue that it is important to understand signs that are used in everyday life as mediations to show conventions of a particular culture. According to them, “a sign stands for a meaning only within a cultural discourse practice, in which that meaning has been conventionalized, or coded, through ongoing interaction between people using the sign” (p. 89). Therefore, if people use a specific sign in their discourses, the significant relation between people and the specific sign is already formed. Likewise, specific signs are used in media content, as social consents which already exist in order to communicate cultural beliefs and values between signs and people.

With this in mind, in a critical literacy classroom, signs such as words, symbols, and objects can be used as the tools to analyze underlying social beliefs and values inscribed in media practices. Therefore, Myers (2004) writes that in the video-authoring inquiry project, students juxtaposed hegemonic representations and images, using words, symbols, and objects, from media culture and their own life experiences, to question, resist, and reinterpret stereotypes, distortions, and manipulations of the underlying

cultural beliefs and values. Through their past research, Beach and Myers (2001) point out that “students learned how to combine signs, images, and sound with language and narrative to communicate meaning. This further supported their ability to deconstruct media messages and critique underlying ideologies (p. 185). Furthermore, the inquiry processes led students into an awareness of contradictions, tensions, and negotiations to provide a site for positioning themselves between the self and others.

In addition, a video-authoring project takes a role to bridge a gap between a critical literacy and the traditional EFL writing. In fact, it is inevitable to face students’ pedagogical struggles and resistance on the way to applying a critical literacy in an EFL classroom, since most students are not familiar with a critical literacy from their English learning experiences. However, a video-authoring project encourages an opportunity for students to use their familiar cultural representations in their everyday life for developing their own arguments against/toward a certain social issue. In other words, to borrow Widdoson’s (1994) concept for this, the tool of a video-authoring project helps the EFL students as insiders to acquire authenticity, of their English learning, formed from naturally occurring cultural, social contexts.

In fact, one of the major concerns in EFL writing class is that EFL students make their own argument in English academic writing. Since descriptive style writing skills, which mainly focus on accurate descriptions of people, objects, or events within structured details to explain what students see, feel or understand, are popular in EFL writing, the traditional EFL writing classes dominantly deals with teaching and learning English grammatical accuracy in order to reach the accurate descriptions of a certain writing topic. With this pedagogical focus on language accuracy in English writing,

relatively few students have had an opportunity to consider how to develop their own argument as a meaning-making process in writing works. Rather, students merely write descriptive details of their writing topic by the preplanned writing strategies and processes.

Due to this reason, a video-authoring project can be a useful pedagogical practice to intercross two different pedagogical approaches to language. These approaches are, providing a critical literacy and teaching EFL writing and learning. In creating a video production students try to build their own perspectives toward or against a social issue which they choose. In this way, critical language discourse, supported from a critical literacy format, helps them to identify and question some contradictions of the issue as a part of knowledge construction and deconstruction. By negotiating their understanding of a certain social issue with various sign symbols of cultural representations used in creating a video production, students gradually develop their unique knowledge as an argument in a video project and in EFL academic writing.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

This main aim of the study is to investigate the application of a critical literacy in the Korean EFL context. To do so, I conducted a critical action research study using qualitative research inquires designed to facilitate the exploration of the critical pedagogical challenges and possibilities in an EFL College writing classroom, supported by a video-authoring project. In this chapter, I focus on the methodology of the study. First, I will address how I designed the critical action research to be responsive to my research questions. To reiterate, the research questions are: 1) How will the theoretical notions of a critical literacy in an EFL classroom, in particular in an EFL writing classroom, best be developed? 2) What are the struggles and conflicts in an EFL critical literacy classroom? 3) Are EFL students empowered and emancipated in their EFL writing tasks supported by a video-authoring project? Above all, the research questions 2 and 3 were focused in data collection and analysis. Second, the data collection methods will be provided. Finally, I will provide my data analysis based on the research questions.

#### **Critical Action research of qualitative research inquiry**

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) describe qualitative research as an interpretive and naturalistic approach to its subject matter. In addition to being a research method only conducted with things in their natural setting, qualitative research also interprets phenomenon and the meanings people bring to them. It involves “the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials- case study; personal experiences;

introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and production; observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts- that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives" (p. 5). Therefore, qualitative research pays attention to research participants' perceptions, interactions, conflicts, or reflections by exploring the empirical materials.

Along with the general concept of qualitative research methods, critical action research helped me to design my study from the body of critical theory which pays attention to and "challenges the notions of truth and objectivity on which the traditional scientific method relies" (Mills 2007, p. 6). Thus, as Githens (2007) points out, this research project "often starts as apolitical problem solving efforts, but evolves into efforts that examine larger social and political concerns" (p. 486).

Therefore, critical action research focuses on the exploration of process for enlightenment, liberating individuals from the dictates of fixed truth and objectivity, and participatory democratic processes for reform (Mills, 2007). In a sense, as an example of critical action research, Brown and Tandon (1983) state that Paulo Freire applied this research technique in adult education among the urban and rural poor. In observing and participating in the adult education in his study, Freire engaged individuals in critical analysis and organized action to improve their situations (Brown & Tandon, 1983).

As implicated in Freire's research, the idea of self-reflection is central in critical action research. It is designed for people to become involved in thinking carefully about what they know, do, or how they behave. Through self-reflective practices it inspires people to explore the relationships between subjectivity and objectivity and to question their power relations. Thus, McNiff & Whitehead (2002) state that it has the intent of

explaining and encouraging people's interaction in an educational setting to help them to deal with certain dominant oppressed situations critically, as an active agent.

In addition, McNiff & Whitehead (2002) further point out that critical action research defines knowledge as a living process. According to them, knowledge is never fixed or complete. Instead, it is in a constant process of development or evolution in people's personal lives. It signifies that people can generate their own knowledge from their experience of living and learning (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002). This concept of critical action research provides the room for people to question the dominant fixed social objectivity which regulates their own subjective knowledge and norms. Therefore, in fact, critical action researchers examine the social inequalities or oppression generated by the social political mechanism of the dominant social knowledge, and question many of the basic assumptions on which people's lives are based (Mills, 2007). In a way, critical action research requires continuous reflection and observation on the ongoing processes in order to investigate how people negotiate social mechanisms between their subjectivity and objectivity.

From this perspective, this study began from problematizing the current Korean EFL educational situation where the Korean EFL students were treated as unitary beings. The Korean EFL students merely accept the given objectivities of the pedagogical knowledge and values during their schooling without any skepticism for or against the given objectivity. Such an apolitical situation helped me to extend the concept that knowledge is never fixed, but in a constant process of changing. Based on the basic concept of critical action research, the Korean EFL students were required to identify, question, and



resist their fixed concept of the social objectivity. This process led the students to self-reflection while participating in the critical discourse.

Critical action research, originated from postmodernism and critical theory, led me to design how I managed and structured the entire process of the study. It was my base when I struggled to decide and adjust the parameters of how I envisioned the research plans, and also for analyzing the data.

### **Data Collection**

I collected data during the spring semester in 2007. The main goal in the EFL academic writing class in which I conducted this study was to focus on critical meaning-making in the students' writing. To perform the class goal, it was necessary for the students to be informed specifically of the class description, since the course's aim was quite new to them. While Robin, the lead teacher, described what academic writing should look like, he emphasized that the students were supposed to do 'reading' and 'thinking' in the class.

In this sense, my data also were collected by the process of examining how the students were exposed to the critical practices as evidenced through performing the class requirements. For the first month, March, Robin and I introduced critical perspectives from the class readings. With the critical terms of 'contradiction', 'representations' or 'social norms and values', the students got to experience non-traditional pedagogical challenges in identifying 'who they currently are' by reflecting their life experiences. The conflicts and tension generated in the students' class requirements were collected to

explore how the students processed the tension and how they negotiated with it in relation to their subjective values and knowledge.

For the second and third months, with the implicit understanding having critical eyes on social issues, the students were required to build their own argument in video-authoring projects. These idea developments were refined in their EFL academic writings. Their main class requirements led the students to participate in their own knowledge production. During these processes I could collect different kinds of data from the video productions, EFL academic writings and the student group talks, or interviews. In particular, I recorded the students' dialogues outside class as well as inside class because they shared their ideas over the class tasks or their conflicts and tension to the class freely. These collecting processes made it possible for me to explore and look closely at the students' challenges and possibilities.

### **Class Description**

The course, Studies in Contemporary Issues, is an academic writing class designed to explore cultural implications of contemporary social issues and to construct an argumentative EFL academic writing. This course does not focus on learning English writing skills and techniques as main learning activities. The major activity is to examine and understand a sense of the identity, worth, and values accepted in a contemporary society and culture. This helps EFL students to see the different viewpoints of the world, identifying social contradictory expressions of culture such as gender, class, and race in a society, questioning them in relation to their previous experiences, and producing their own arguments against/for contemporary issues. Through the process to develop their

own knowledge and arguments, EFL students understand that English writing is the production of social practices as well as English linguistic acquisition. Moreover, English learners, who value and respect their knowledge and experiences, can take part in a writing class in an active way. In participating in project tasks involved in video productions and essays, EFL students

- Identify the mythical functions of social values and beliefs from contemporary issues
- Question dominant social values and beliefs in everyday life
- Cultivate critical thinking in a college English writing course
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of social values through developing Video-authoring projects and academic essays

## **Participants**

### *The Students*

The students who participated in the course were 15 college juniors consisting of 12 males and 3 females. Most students were majoring in English Language Communication (ELC). However, two male students were not from the ELC major. Since one of the two students planned to go study abroad in the next year, his participation in the course was very impressive. All students were Korean and had experienced similar EFL educational environments focusing on English language acquisition. In this alternative college writing class, the students experienced how to make their critical arguments in a different perspective from the traditional pedagogical aim.

*The main instructor*

The professor, who was a white-male, had received a doctoral degree in the field of curriculum and instruction from a university in the USA. He had been in South Korea after completing his doctoral program and taught both Korean EFL undergraduates and the graduates in the area of English education almost for seven years. Thus, he understood Korean particular EFL systematical contexts and participated in academic debates on contemporary English educational issues. His educational belief was that the mastery of specific bodies of knowledge not only prepared students for the career decisions they make in life, but also made them thoughtful and capable participants in society. Although the course syllabus was set up in advance of the semester, the main instructor and I discussed and adjusted lesson plans whenever it was necessary, before or after the class, in order to provide the students a situated teaching method, class management, and class activities. It was valuable to have such discussion of alternative educational possibilities and challenges facing the current EFL writing class. In particular, since this alternative academic English writing course was oriented from critical literacy pedagogy which were alien from what the students had experienced on a regular basis at that time, the meeting was necessary to find the appropriate lesson plan for the Korean EFL college academic writing class.

*The Participant Researcher and co-instructor*

I have been an EFL learner since my middle school years. When I was in my secondary school, I did not like English because it was a quite boring subject for me. The class requirements were all mechanical drills to memorize English vocabularies, interpret

the English written textbook, analyzing the sentences by grammatical stances, and many times taking various tests for confirming if I performed the assignment or not. That is, for me, English was just one of the critical subjects to influence my entire grades. It was not a language for me. However, when I was in university years, there was an opportunity to encounter English as a tool to interact with people and to present even abstract ideas in one of the courses in relations to a critical pedagogy. This was one of my enlightening moments of my life. From the opportunity, I could decide what I wanted to do with English language for my future. It helped me to release my regulated definition of 'English' language. Finally, my decision to study language politics further in the doctoral program was pivotally drawn from the time when I struggled with the mechanical English learning experiences and habits. In other words, my English learning experiences were struggles in my life, but at the same time they were the opportunities that riveted my attention on alternative English learning and teaching.

Therefore, I have studied the theoretical notions of English language and literacy education. My interest is to develop pedagogical applications of a critical literacy in EFL contexts. I believe that English language learning and teaching should be connected not only to the teaching of English language skills and techniques, but also to the understanding of the critical role of language in fostering students' subjectivity in relation to social structures of culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This would be one of the ways to educate students to become active social agents in ownership and authorship over their learning participation.

## **Data collecting sources**

### *Site description*

The context in which I gathered my research data is a college site in Daejeon, the central part of Korea. This area is well known for its high level of education among habitants because of the community's distinctive feature of collective national research institutes, corporate research institutes, and several colleges and universities. My sample university was located within that community.

### *Field notes: My observations*

I used the field note technique of 'quick note during' (Johnson, 2008). Since I, as the researcher, participated in teaching the course as a co-instructor I became, by definition, a participant in the observation procedure (Borg & Gall, 1989). Thus, during teaching, I could not become an objective observer describing all details of class events. Therefore, all classes were tape-recorded for 15 weeks so that I could generate rich descriptions of ongoing classroom events which I wanted to analyze further. Additionally, with the technique of 'quick note during,' whenever something interesting occurred during class talks or activities and even outside class, I made a quick note on the paper with the necessary information such as the date or students' files (Johnson, 2008). This technique was effective "to hold the idea, then to revisit it (the interesting point) after class or after school whenever I was ready to record and write more fully (Johnson 2008, p. 85). My field notes usually occurred when the students had some conflicts and challenges from identifying a critical discourse via reflection of their subjective norms and knowledge.

*Students' interviews and group discussion*

The border between students' interviews and the recorded data from group discussions is not explicit in this study because my participation in the students' own group meetings for the class projects naturally led me to ask some questions or to give some advice to them during the meeting. It is elusive to distinguish a boundary of which data belonged to student's interviews or which did not. In the study, I wanted to use the students' interviews and group discussions interchangeably.

Therefore, the interview strategy of informal ethnographic interviewing was conducted in the study (Mills, 2007). Informal ethnographic interviewing allowed me to join in and inquire during students' conversations as an opportunity to learn how the students were performing (Mills, 2007). However, to protect from the loss of a question that had been naturally generated in conversation and which would help in understanding what was happening in their group discussion, I tried to keep my questions to asking: 'who'; 'what'; 'where'; 'when'; 'why'; and 'how' (Agar, 1980), although my question of 'why' was mainly asked in the students' interviews or group discussions. Such a close watch through the students' interviews and group discussions provided me the opportunity to observe what the students' difficulties, challenges, or empowerments were in connection to a critical literacy.

*Students' reflection note*

The students submitted written papers when they were required to read newspaper articles or a short story book during the semester. The assignments were not given weekly, but randomly performed. The students had to post their reflection notes so that other classmates could read and reply with some comments. Each student was required to

post two comments after reading whole postings. In the class activity, the students shared whether they agreed with a certain issue or disagreed. This also generated another communicative space for the students to interact regarding their understandings, as well as in the regular classroom.

### *Video-authoring project*

Myers (2001) states that signs and symbols are crucial tools to investigate how students engage in critical literacy development. As class requirements, students were required to develop two short video productions. From the critical literacy perspective, the students created their own arguments surrounding a particular social issue which they chose. The students used critical discourse of power, language, history, and culture in order to theorize their own idea development. In the processes in which they dealt with building their argument in their video-projects, the students encountered various struggles and tension in negotiating the issue and theorizing it in relations to their own voices. Through participation in work on their own video production, they became exposed to more profound dimensions of reflecting their “recognition of constraints” (Freire & Macedo 1987, p. 49).

This helped them to uncover the ideological subtext in cultural representations implicated in media texts. Accordingly, the video-authoring project was a valuable pedagogical tool by which I could observe and collect data on how the students’ learning was being processed by them and how they identified their positions and conveyed ideological messages via critical discourse on the ways of seeing, attributing meaning, and understanding social relationships.



*EFL Academic writing*

The EFL academic writing class was designed as an alternative EFL writing class, different from focusing on English writing techniques and skills in the Korean EFL educational mainstream. This academic English writing class mainly focused on the students' meaning-making process as their reflective knowledge production. Mostly, the students were requested in their writing development to be critical in the connection between their subjectivities, and the dominant social knowledge and values as the objectivity. In this way, the writing tasks in this class not only were valuable in developing the students' critical arguments in their English academic writing, but also provided opportunities for the students to reflect their own current subjectivities and voices on the way to explore how those were constructed or regulated in relation to the social dominant objectivity. In this way, the students' English academic writing helped me to track how their tension from the contradiction between the subjectivity and the objectivity were developed and processed throughout the writing practices.

Accordingly, this EFL academic writing class did not provide the students a full range of English writing skills and strategies. Instead, Robin and I decided the situated goals for these particular students by considering what was best for the students for the one semester. In terms of English writing skills, we decided to narrow down the boundary to teach essential writing skills for the students. Rather than providing a full range of English writing skills for the one semester, Robin and I designed the course such that in the EFL writing, at least, the students would understand the essential writing skills of how to develop a paragraph including a topic sentence, supporting sentences, transition words and conclusion, and how to organize the writing elements in a paragraph.

Therefore, the students were given assignments that required writing reflection notes after each new reading. These essential English writing skills were extended to two English academic writings which consisted of 3 to 5 paragraphs.

### **Data Analysis**

I analyzed the data from a critical literacy perspective. My theoretical framework is grounded from Freire and Macedo's (1987) notion of the relationships between subjectivity and objectivity to explain how social conformity and tension from the relationships regulate one's perception or empower one's oppression. The theoretical notions from Freire and Macedo (1987) helped me to connect how the students construct their own knowledge in relation to the critical discourse of power, language, history, and culture.

As the first step of data analysis, I used the strategies of pattern matching. According to Yin (1994), pattern matching emphasizes locating patterns in the data and exploring how they compare to the researcher's informed prior predictions. That is, the patterns categorized in the study are directly developed by the theory facilitated to design the study (Yin, 1994). Therefore, Fetterman (1989) points out that it is crucial to construct matrices as tools for comparing and contrasting pieces of data for organizing and managing pattern analysis. To build my own track to explore the students' critical discourse from their English production, I borrowed Beach and Myers's (2001) inquiry strategies into social worlds.

In my study, it was an important process to identify patterns because it allowed me to see how the students got gradually empowered and transformed, in a visible manner, by involving in some critical discourse of power, language, history, and culture in their

knowledge production. The analytical processes of research data are a quite complex journey with “living it(the data) together, by returning to it again and again and looking at it from all sort of different angles and perspectives” (Richards 2003, p. 197). In particular, this study pays attention on the students’ intellectual empowerment and emancipation through their non-traditional English learning experiences. To explore the complexity of their participation, it is necessary to investigate one’s knowledge, particular experiences, cultural, social, political beliefs and values, and their unique voices. In this respect, Beach and Myers’s (2001) inquiry strategies into social worlds were the suitable matrices to identify patterns for me to extend the understanding of the data (Richards, 2003). Beach and Myers (2001) develop the critical inquiry strategies into social worlds as follows.

1. *Immersing*. Entering into the activities of a social world, experiencing the social world as a participant, or observing a social world
2. *Identifying*. Defining concerns, issues, and dilemmas that arise in a social world, or from conflict across multiple social worlds
3. *Contextualizing*. Explaining how the activities, symbols, and texts used in one or more social worlds produce the components of a social world-identities, roles, relationships, experiences, norms, beliefs, and values
4. *Representing*. Using symbols tools to create a text that represents a lived social world or responds to a represented social world
5. *Critiquing*. Analyzing how a representation of a social world privileges particular values and beliefs; analyzing how particular literacy marginalizing other possibilities
6. *Transforming*. Revising one’s meanings for the components of a social world, changing one’s actions and words within a social world to construct more desirable identities, relationships and values (p. 18)

Beach and Myers (2001)'s critical inquiry processes provided the touchstone of how I could find the pattern to closely examine the students' academic productions in a critical literacy perspective and code them, according to the main inquiry to explore Freire and Macedo's (1987) notion of the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity. As the first level of data analysis, I sorted the students' video productions and academic writing data in terms of the six inquiry stages of critical discourse engagements. Here, rather than using exact inquiry strategies of Beach and Myers, I adjusted them in accordance with the particular students' English project engagements; questioning a certain dominant issue, identifying dominant representations, connecting to everyday life, how to be educated by dominant representations, encountering the contradiction between what we do and what we think, and finally, reconceptualization/redefinition of the social issue. This first level analysis led me to theorize the findings of how the students got to position themselves in the critical inquiry processes.

- 1) *Identifying subjectivity in relation to traditional English learning and teaching.* I analyzed the Korean EFL students' assumptions about English language learning and what their English learning experiences and expectations were. In addition, a fundamental understanding of the students' traditional assumptions of English language learning helped me to find how the EFL students' pedagogical conflicts could be raised between the traditional English writing and the critical alternative academic writing;
- 2) *Questioning subjectivity in relation to objectivity.* I attempted to see the students' process of idea development by identifying and questioning the dominant social objectivity in relation to their own subjectivity;

3) *Positioning who they are in authorship*. I mainly focused on the students' appropriateness in how they contextualized critical discourse into building their argument, and ideologically how they negotiated a position through tension rooted between their subjectivity and objectivity.

Based on the first level analysis, I could develop the second level analysis focused on coding and organizing the processes of how the students were gradually transformed from a traditional perspective to a critical perspective. For this, each paragraph of the content codes included each principle, and presented how the students dealt with the required activities and tasks (Patton, 1990). In addition, the first level of data analysis allowed me to describe the connection of how the students got to understand and reproduce the critical discourses. In other words, the first level of analysis led me to find the second level of analysis in accordance with the four critical discourses of power/knowledge, language, history, and culture. In the second level of analysis, in particular, students' project developments were analyzed in order to see how the students constructed and deconstructed their own knowledge in relation to the critical discourse.

For *Power*, the video production and the students' writing were investigated with a focus on how the students understood power and knowledge, and investigated the social function of the dominant power and knowledge as the authentic one. For *Language*, I mainly focused on how the students developed their projects by identifying the political feature of 'language' in a society. For *History*, the main point was to recognize how dominant social assumptions have inherently constructed and maintained a society. Thus, I analyzed the students' projects with this concept of 'history'. Finally, for *Culture*, I

examined how the students interpreted Culture with the understanding of it as a set of practices and ideologies from different groups' lives. The second data analysis through the students' video projects and their EFL academic writing provided to find how the EFL students demystified biased realities prepackaged by the dominant cultural social ideologies, and how they reconstructed their own knowledge.

The names of the students were pseudonyms to protect their privacy. The students' interviews and group discussions in Korean were translated into English. They are presented in *Italic* in the excerpts.

## CHAPTER 4

### **Authorship through tension between subjectivity and objectivity**

In this chapter, I will pay particular attention to the issue of how the students had formed and positioned their authorship in relation to the understanding between objectivity and subjectivity. Students' struggles and conflicts in class tasks were explored through disturbing what they believed to be a neutral stance toward their fixed social knowledge and norms. This tension in contradiction provided an opportunity in which students reflected their subjectivities in links to social objectivities. The opportunity to explore who they were and what they believed or did not believe was a necessary part to legitimate their authorship in participation of 'learning'.

Therefore, in this chapter, first of all, I explore the students' assumptions and experiences of EFL learning and their expectations of the English writing class in order to articulate what the students' current positions of an English class are, and what their dominant representations of English learning and teaching are. Further, this clarification would help me to examine how their knowledge and experiences, as their subjectivity, are constructed in relation to the world, as dominant values of objectivity (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Second, I examine the students' challenges and resistances in tension to taking risks to question what they have believed as 'Truth'. Actually, most of the students rarely have the opportunity to problematize how their knowledge and norms are structured, as pedagogical practices, in traditional English classrooms. However, the priority for this critical study into English writing is that the EFL students get exposed to the critical discourses to raise tension, as a necessary process, to question their subjectivity in relation to social objectivity. This is not only to provide the chance for

students to experience alternative English teaching and learning approaches out of the dominant skill-based English education, but also to disturb the students' neutral conceptions of their rigid knowledge and norms constructed by a single form of social 'objectivity'. In this way, the students are continuously asked to find the gap between what they think and what they do in their everyday life. The students often resist the uncomfortable processes of identifying their individual contradictions or social contradictions, since they are comfortable with following dominant social knowledge and values as the fixed objectivity. However, the students' struggles and conflicts in those discontinuous pedagogical exposures to a critical literacy from a traditional skill-based approach, provide pedagogical challenges and new definitions of 'learning' that reflect how social objectivities "educate us (the students) how to behave and what to think, feel, believe, fear, and desire- and what not to" (Kellner 2003, p. 10). Thus, finally, I will conclude, in those processes, with how the students understand their subjectivities in relation to objectivity and position their authorship by respecting who they are.

To do so, I will analyze the students' various participations in and outside the class through examining the data of class talks, group discussions shared in each group conference, student interviews, and short writing assignments of reflection notes. The dialogues where the students interacted with teachers and peers in and outside the class reflect how the students participated in the class tasks and discussions and made a meaning in tension. Moreover, the dialogues helped me to track why the students' tensions were raised when they became involved in a critical literacy and how they dealt with, negotiated, and positioned (pedagogical) struggles as part of building authorship and their situated subjectivity. Freire (1993) illustrates that dialogue is the united



reflection and action of the dialoguers to the world which is to be transformed and humanized. That is, the dialogue cannot be reduced to merely a social act for the students to consume, but to praxis for the students to identify their authorship and to produce their own knowledge through the reflection and action from their discursive dialogues. With this in mind, I will extend the students' dialogues in three dimensions: 1) Identifying subjectivity in relation to the traditional English learning and teaching; 2) Questioning subjectivity in relation to objectivity; and 3), Positioning who they are in authorship.

### **Identifying subjectivity in relation to traditional English learning and teaching**

#### **Excerpt 1**

##### **Course Description/Objectives:**

The course is designed to explore cultural implications of contemporary social issues, written in English. This course does not focus on learning English writing skills and techniques as main learning activities. The major activity is to examine and understand a sense of identity, worth, and values accepted in a contemporary society and culture. This helps you to see different point of views of the world, identify socially contradictory expressions of culture such as gender, class, and race in a society, question them in relation to your previous experiences, and produce your own arguments against/for concepts in contemporary issues. Through the process to develop your own knowledge and arguments, you will understand that English writing is the production of social practices as well as English linguistic acquisition. Moreover, English learners, who value and respect their knowledge and experiences, can take part in a writing class in an active way. There will be reading and discussion in the class. You will complete video productions and essays.

- Identify the mythical functions of social values and beliefs from contemporary issues
- Question dominant social values and beliefs in everyday life
- Cultivate critical thinking in a college English writing course
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of social values with English writing and video-authoring projects

In planning the alternative EFL academic writing course, as stated in Excerpt 1, my concern was how I would clarify the pedagogical characteristics of this critical EFL academic writing class for the students. Typically, most students in the EFL writing course expect the acquisition of the traditional English writing strategies and skills and

demand teachers' feedback of grammatical corrections for their writing, for the students' English language writing fluency is assessed by the definition of the dominant educational norms and values in EFL writing, learning and teaching. However, in this EFL academic writing class from a critical literacy perspective, I planned the pedagogical disruptions against the students' current conceptions of a typical English language writing class.

In the class orientation, it went smoothly without any resistant questions of the alternative class. To be honest, at this point, the students did not seem to recognize what this course looked like throughout the whole semester. The principle instructor, Robin (Teacher 1, T1), introduced the course description, the objectives, and expectations in the writing class, as usual.

**Excerpt 2**

- Robin(T1) :You are university students. You are supposed to work. You are supposed to study. We don't feel sad about that. That's No. 1. You are supposed to do readings. We don't feel sad about that. These readings are not that long. Okay? Uh.. Second, we expect you to think. Well~ that's what university students are supposed to do, think. We realized in most of your classes or many of them, maybe you don't think so much. Maybe you do just speaking and listening activity. But, this is supposed to be a writing class and in writing class you are suppose to think. That's what writing is about.
- Students : Right.
- T1 :..... Since this is a writing class, you have to start writing. So, maybe some assignments, like this. Not all assignments, but some. You read, then WebCT, then type in a little bit about what you thought. It doesn't have to be good English. I don't care about grammar. It doesn't have to be formal writing. On WebCT, write whatever you think. You can say, I thought it sucks. That's okay. You can write whatever you want. But, once a week, you write one paragraph. That's too much?
- Ss : No.

(Class observation, 3/13/2007)

In accordance with the class plan, Robin requested students to positively participate in thinking development in their reading and writing. At the same time, he tried to get the students to see a different pedagogical orientation between this critical

English language writing class and other typical EFL classes, which most EFL students would experience in public schools. In describing the class aims and requirements throughout the semester, the students listened to Robin without any particular questions or resistance of the class, other than the questions of how to deal with a video project and the length of English language writing assignments in the regular requirements.

However, as time went on, although the students tried to adapt the main aims of the critical English language writing class in the course objectives, they could not avoid the conflicts from the two different pedagogical groundings of English language learning, between the familiar traditional one of language focus and the alternative alien English language class of critical meaning-making focus. Above all, Hyung's questions and comments of the critical English language academic writing class, he was one of the hard-working students and one who participated sincerely in all of the class tasks, are notable enough for me to follow his tracks in order to scrutinize how he had understood English language learning and teaching. In particular, his questions were crucial because they helped me to analogize how most EFL students would use a certain understanding to define an English language class.

### **Excerpt 3**

Hyung

: 근데 writing 을 해오라는게요, 저는 writing 을 배울때 에세이 식으로 배웠거든요. 한국에서 하듯이 서론, 본론, 결론하고, 서론에는 어찌고 저찌구하고, 본론에는 첫째 둘째 셋째 이런식으로 가고, 그리고결론에는 주제한번 얘기하고. 하는식으로 배웠거든요.

*By the way, for the writing assignment, when I learned about English writing skills, it was a kind of 'essay'. As we do in a typical English writing class, there are three parts of intro, body, and conclusion. For introduction, it needs something. Body needs the first, the second and the third supporting ideas. Finally, in conclusion, restating the main theme is necessary. This is what I learned in a previous class.*

(Group discussion, 4/13/2007)

As shown in the Excerpt 3, Hyung had a certain understanding of English language writing skills which were learned in prior English writing classes. I do not try to underestimate the traditional EFL writing techniques, because those writing skills are obviously necessary strategies which EFL students have to acquire for their English accuracy and fluency. I do not intend to suggest which approach is better. What I want to do is raise an issue through Hyung's static conception of English language writing. The issue is how the EFL students' fixed definition of English language writing acquisition functions as constraints or possibilities for their English writing development. With this in mind, Hyung consumed the definition formed by the traditional English language writing techniques, as 'authentic' norms, when he was required to join critical pedagogical practices for the alternative English language writing.

#### **Excerpt 4**

Hyung :질문이 있어요. 근데요, 제가 이걸 통해서 얻고자 하는게 뭐예요?  
*I have a question. What do I get through the video project in the English writing class?*

T2 : 그러니까 내가 알고있는것에 대해서 question 해보라는거죠. 과연 내가 알고있는게 과연 맞는건가? 사람들이 맞다라고 하는 지식이나 value 에 나도 역시 동조하며 살아왔는데, 사실 또 다른 시각으로 생각해보면, 그렇지 않을수도 있다는거지. Question 해 보라는거지. 그걸 그렇게 question 한걸 writing 으로 쓰라는거지.....이런 프로젝트나 아이디어, 이렇게 하는 approach 들이 생각하는 방법인거지. 자기 주장을 만들어가는.  
*To have an opportunity to question what you have known. Is what I have believed always true? So far, we agreed with social knowledge and values with which most people agree. However, in a different view, it might not. So, the class asks you to question them. The questions are developed in your writing. The video project and idea development are sorts of tools to help you to experience different thinking approaches to making your own argument.*

For Hyung, who was familiar with the typical English language writing techniques such as organizing structure or refining grammatical errors, the new attempts to use a video-authoring project in an EFL writing class generated Hyung's skepticism of the pedagogical validity of EFL writing with the question, 'what I get through the video project in the English language writing class'. His question was continued right after my response of the use of a video-authoring project in the class.

Hyung : 제가 생각하는거는요, question 을 하는건 좋은데, question 을 해서 그러니까 뭐가 달라지는건가요? 그러니까, 솔직히 그런 의문이 생긴게요, 이런얘기 하면 그런데요, 제가 영어 수업이지 철학 수업은 아니잖아요. 너무 그런쪽으로 하는거 같아서. 그러니까 뭐 이렇게 develop 해서, 영어적으로 어떻게 평가를 하실까 하는 생각도 들고.

*I like the idea of the need to 'question', though, what is changed by a 'question'? I don't know how you think of this, but this is an EFL class, not a kind of philosophy class. It seems to me that this class focuses too much on that (thinking development). If you do the class in this way, how can you evaluate our development in English acquisition?*

T2 :그러니까 이 수업 목표도 언어적 실력향상에 초점을 맞추기보다, Robin 도 항상 강조하듯이. 이 수업에서 가장 중점적으로 포커스 잡고 있는건 meaning-making 이다. 비디오 프로젝트를 통해서, 자기 주장, 즉 meaning-making 을 하는것이지. 그래서 writing 에서 그 주장을 기본적인 영어 에세이 형태에 맞게 정리하는거지.

*That's why, as Robin often mentions, the main aim in this writing class is to develop your 'meaning-making' in your English writing, rather than focusing on English language skills. You gradually develop your own argument, that is, meaning-making, in participating in a video-production. Then it is refined in your final writing.*

(Group discussion, 5/4/07)

It was quite understandable that Hyung raised a question of the identity of the alternative English language writing class in relation to his understanding of English language writing strategies and norms. In particular, the pedagogical intentions for students to develop their critical perspectives in this writing class made Hyung perceive that this English language class was a sort of philosophy class, which tossed students a

question of abstract complexity such as one requiring to consider their life values and beliefs, to become aware of who they are. That is, the unfamiliar English language writing practice focusing on students' critical argument development by using a video-authoring project, led him to encounter some pedagogical conflict from his subjective definition of English writing built by dominant objectivity of the traditional English language writing experiences. Similarly, Nam also backed up Hyung's question of the identity of this alternative English writing class.

**Excerpt 6**

- Nam :사람들이 혼동하는 이유가 영어과라서 그런거 같애요.  
*Why most students feel confused about the class is that this is English Class.*
- T2 :영어과라서요? 무슨뜻이야?  
*Because it is an English class? What do you mean by that?*
- Nam :영어과니까 영어나 해야지, 영어하는 사람이 영어 안하고 다른거 하고 있으니까.  
*Since the class is an English class, it should be focused on English learning itself. But the students are doing non-English learning tasks.*
- T2 :그렇게 생각할수 있죠.  
*It could be.*
- Nam :따라오기 힘들죠  
*That's why it's difficult to follow the class.*

(Student interview, 5/29/2007)

Although Nam did not specifically describe his own definition of an English language writing class, he seemed to possess a certain perception that English language classrooms are to help students' English linguistic acquisition itself. Hyung's conflicts and Nam's dialogue of this English language writing class revealed how the students considered the English language writing class, and constituted their understanding of English education. However, in another perspective, as Freire and Macedo (1987) point out, Hyung and Nam did not even think of themselves, that is, their perception was

conditioned by accepting a single form of objectivity which predominantly defines English language learning and teaching. Rather, Hyung and Nam “passionately speak of their freedom” (Freire & Macedo 1987, p. 48) within a traditional pedagogical boundary, within a conditioned situation where they have been educated.

In other words, seemingly, it was seen that the students were in conformity with the traditional English language educational dominant ‘objectivity’, and further this corresponded to the students’ subjectivity in considering why and how they need to learn in this way. In a sense, the students did not have conflicts and struggles between their own knowledge and norms, and the preplanned objectivity in actual EFL classrooms. Rather, the students’ conformity was threatened by the critical pedagogical English language writing class, which I attempted. That is why the students were dubious of the critical pedagogical emphasis on the meaning-making processes. They were basing their reactions on their own subjective knowledge and values in English language learning, since this class did not represent the traditional English learning skills and practices.

With this in mind, at this point, it would be appropriate to raise an issue implicated in the students’ fixed understanding through their English learning experiences and habits. While Hyung and Nam had found educational, social conformity in the dominant objectivity, the ubiquitous conformity brought on legitimation of a value-free English language curriculum, merely focusing on English language acquisition. Furthermore, the most critical concern under this systematic legitimation of value-free English language curriculum was that students viewed themselves within the systematically conditioned conformity of the dominant social, educational objectivity.

In what follows, I will address some of the important indications of how the students' conditioned conformity functions with the complexity of reflecting the students' subjectivity in relation to their English learning tasks.

### Excerpt 7

- Kyu : 여기 우리대에요, 서울대가 아니라.  
*This is a local university, Woolee University, not a prestigious university such as Seoul National University.*
- T2 : 무슨말인지 아는데, 그 대학교 학생도 이런 영어작문 수업은 생소하고 어려운건 마찬가지야. 아마 개네도 너희랑 똑같이 느낄거다.  
*I know what you mean but this kind of critical English writing class is also new and difficult to the students in such universities. They would feel in the same way as you have.*
- Kyu : 아니에요. 절대 아니에요.  
*No way. Never.*
- T2 : 그것도 stereotype 이야.  
*That's another stereotype.*
- Kyu : 저희랑 서울대 영어과 학생들이랑 비교해보세요. 저희는 따라가지도 못해요.  
*Just compare us majoring in English at Woolee University with the students in Seoul National University. We cannot say that we are on a same level with them.*
- T2 : 영어적인 skills 면, 그러니까 단어, 문법, 또는 읽기 이해력 같은것에는 더 나올지도 모르지. 근데 이 수업의 목표는 그들이 잘해왔던 것과는 다른 접근방식을 유도하고 있잖아.  
*It might be better in terms of knowing English linguistic skills such as vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension and so on (which are stressed for evaluation when aiming for university entrance). But the educational purpose of this course is a little bit different from what they have been used to.*
- Kyu : 물론 그런데요, 개네는 기본적으로 우리보다 해야 될걸 더 많이 해서 간거고, 우리는 안해서 여기 있는거죠.  
*Of course, it is, but they basically studied more English skills and knowledge than what we did in our secondary school years. That's why they are in there and we are in here*
- T2 : 그렇다고 너희들에 날카로운 생각 개발까지 개네들 못다 못하다고는 말할수 없지.  
*Even if so, it does not mean that your critical meaning-making for an argumentative English writing class is less insightful than what they do.*
- Kyu : 개네가 더 나아요.  
*They are better.*
- T2 : 어떻게 확신하는데?  
*How are you sure?*
- Kyu : 아베야! 서울대하고 우리하고 누가 더 똑똑하냐?  
*Abe! Who is cleverer, are we or students in Seoul National University?*
- Abe : 개네가.



Kyu        *They are.*  
               :  뵈쑤?  
               *See?*

(05/31/07, Group discussion)

Before the analysis of the dialogue, English writing class is almost a fear for most Korean EFL students. They are reluctant to join an English writing class autonomously rather than other fragmented English classes such as reading, speaking or listening. The reason most Korean students feel afraid of English writing is usually observed in their English linguistic barriers. When the main focus is on English writing accuracy, students remain frustrated by their poor English writing accuracy. Thus, although nobody expects that EFL students would improve their EFL writing accuracy and fluency to a remarkable extent within a semester, their anxiety and concerns to write in English still exist as a factor, promoting the students to be passive and frustrated by themselves.

Kyu also presented his concerns in correspondence with this Korean EFL writing educational situation. When the students and I talked about the class requirements and tasks, in particular, Kyu stressed his peers' and his lack of English writing proficiency to perform the class requirements. He did this by pointing out that they are in a local university, which has a less prestigious name value among Korean universities. The interesting point from Kyu's dialogue is when Kyu appealed the students' difficulties with class tasks to me, rather than presenting their lack of English accuracy and proficiency in their unskillful ability itself, he underestimated their current English ability in comparison to other Korean students, who were in one of the so-called Korean prestigious universities. That is, his point was that since the students in Seoul National University had already acquired necessary English linguistic skills and knowledge

beyond what Kyu and his peers did, Kyu just assumed that needless to say, they would be better even in this critical English writing class focusing on meaning-making writing processes. Although I explained the different pedagogical foundation of this critical writing class, and tried to encourage Kyu to enable him to perform a better job than the students in other universities, Kyu's conception was quite fixed on what he believed and he did not try to accept any flexibility in his understandings.

To consider Kyu's behavior toward his fixed conception, Kyu named his English level as being a relatively poor proficiency and reflected his current English knowledge and norms in relation to the 'world' of the dominant social objectivity. Although Kyu merely accepted the dominant objectivity, which silenced his subjectivity toward English language acquisition by focusing on language use, and marginalized him via the dominant definition of traditional English proficiency. He did not have any clue that he might question if and how he was conditioned and oppressed from the dominant objectivity. This situation fundamentally deterred students from challenging the dominant objectivity. Instead, they obeyed the objectivity, in passivity. Further, this made it possible for students to think of the dominant social objectivity in isolation, not in power complexity.

Thus, most Korean EFL students as well as Kyu often have blamed themselves for not reaching the objective. In the situation, Kyu not only regarded himself as the poor English learner in terms of the dominant definition of English acquisition proficiency, but also positioned himself in passive attitudes in English learning participation, devaluing what he had to offer himself other than his subjectivity in consensus with the dominant objectivity. Consequently, most students did not respect

their intellectual capital in the English writing classroom. The fixed objectivity maintained throughout the students' English learning experiences, and their habits had been circulated and distributed in the form of constraints and restrictions rather than encouraging pedagogical challenges and possibilities which EFL/ESL students should take, as productive risks, in an English classroom. In this way, it would be obviously illogical that we attempt to encourage EFL students' active learning participation with 'self-confidence and motivation', that we encourage their ownership as legitimate English users, or even their authorship or responsibility for their own knowledge production.

Freire and Macedo (1987) claim that "educators should never allow the students' voice to be silenced by a distorted legitimation of the standard language. The students' voice should never be sacrificed, since it is the only means through which they make sense of their own experience in the world" (p.152). In this vein, Giroux and McLaren (1986) also illustrate that through their voice, students position themselves as active authors of their world. Thus, in what follows, I will illustrate how I attempted to provide the students an opportunity to bring out their unique subjectivities and to find their voices through the class activities and tasks.

### **Questioning subjectivity in relation to objectivity**

Foucault points out that "in the process of thinking about the world, we categorize and interpret experience and events according to the structures available to us and, in the process of interpreting, we lend these structures a solidity and a normality which it is often difficult to question" (Mills 2003, p. 56). As Foucault mentions, one names one's

experiences and events by the structures in power relations and he or she consumes the dominant structures as the fixed social norms and values, which they have to follow. In this way, it is assumed that the structure comprises necessary dominant objectivity for maintaining solidity and normality in a society. Likewise, the students in the critical writing class adapted their subjectivities to the dominant objective structure as the fixed norm and they named their experiences and events by the definition of this objectivity.

From the context, Freire and Macedo (1987) claim that, an alternative educational attempt is called for, to build a profound comprehension of reality under analysis. The important initiation should be started with the attempt and development of an attitude of curiosity to stimulate students' critical capacity as subjects of knowledge, who are challenged by the object to be known. Therefore, Robin and I tried to provide appropriate critical discourse with which the students could contextualize their own familiar experiences and events, those representing the dominant objectivity. In doing so, Robin and I expected to encounter some tension in the process where the students would identify, question toward or against the dominant fixed objectivities, and negotiate them in reflection on their subjectivities through using their prior experiences.

For beginning the class with those preplanned pedagogical aims of disrupting the students' solidity and normality, Weedon (1987) provides an important clue, that "fiction has long been seen as a powerful form of education in social meanings and values, as an effective purveyor of beliefs about gender, race, and class" (p. 166). More specifically, Weedon (1987) points out that through fictive discourse, we can see how power is exercised, how oppression works and where and how resistance might be possible. This means that fictive story books would be great examples for exploring how the dominant

discourses are saturated in the stories with relation to social meaning, values, and beliefs about gender, race, and class.

From this perspective, it was an appropriate approach that novice students, who feel foreign to a critical literacy, read one of the classic fairy tales such as *Cinderella*, *Snow White*, or *Sleeping Beauty*, which well-describe and reflect traditional dominant social values and structures. Although those fairy tales are usually for children, it was not a crucial matter in this specific course, since the main purpose of reading the story book was not to judge how effectively EFL college students translated English texts with the focus on language use, but to use the easy story book as a medium to stimulate the students' fixed social knowledge and values. Therefore, in the first class with me, the students read *The Paper Bag Princess* (Munsch, 1980), one of the popular English children's books, in the class to explore what kinds of social dominant values were implicated within. To provide a brief storyline of the book, I will use Davies's (2000) description.

This is an amusing story about a princess called Elizabeth who goes to incredible lengths to save her prince from a fierce dragon. At the beginning of the story, Princess Elizabeth and Prince Ronald are planning to get married, but then a dragon comes along, burns Elizabeth's castle and clothes, and flies off into the distance carrying Prince Ronald by the seat of his pants. Elizabeth is very angry. She finds a paper bag to wear and follows the dragon. She tricks him into displaying all of his magic powers until he falls asleep from exhaustion. She rushes into the dragon's cave to save Ronald, only to find he does not want to be saved by a princess who is covered in soot and only has an old paper bag to wear. He tells her to go away and to come back when she looks like a real princess. Elizabeth is quite taken aback by this turn of events and says, "Ronald your clothes are really pretty and your hair is very neat. You look like a real prince, but you are a bum." The last page shows her skipping off into the sunset alone and the story ends with the words: "They didn't get married after all." (p. 103)

As described in the storyline, the book does not follow the story plot from traditional fairy tales such as *Cinderella*, *Snow White*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. It raises a question against what we have perceived as taken for granted in our everyday life. According to Davies (2000), Munsch intends to challenge a stereotypical female position through presenting Elizabeth's multiple and contradictory encounters in the process saving Ronald. In spite of being a very short storybook, the book's pedagogical implications were identical with the course objectives, in that they challenge what students had inherently assumed, without any question, as natural.

In addition to reading *The Paper Bag Princess*, the students also had to have an opportunity to contextualize the critical pedagogical implications and discourse in relation to their everyday lives. This experience is one of the most critical moments, where a critical literacy has tried to prompt students to identify dominant representations in their everyday lives which they have overlooked because of social and self-conformity. This exercise helps students to reflect their lives from the dominant symbolic discourses and shape critical eyes to explore them. As a corollary, the students were also given a reading assignment of a short newspaper article to present the current social atmosphere of gender issues.

#### *Contradiction in tension*

In the first group discussion, the students worked out how to develop their understandings in the connection between *The Paperbag Princess* and *77% of Women Favor Cosmetic Surgery*, a newspaper article on the issue of cosmetic surgery and looks in Korean society. When I requested the students to make a group of three or four and to

develop their own understandings from the connection of the two readings, the students looked uncomfortable with the class activity.

### **Excerpt 8**

- T2 : 가서 쓰세요.  
*Please, write down your sentences on the board.*
- Youngbae: 이거 다 써야합니까?  
*Do we have to write down this messy sentence?*
- T2 : 네, connection 이 되나요?  
*Yes. Do you find any connection?*
- Daesung: 저희가 토론한거 썼어요. 근데 긴가민가 해요.  
*This is what we discussed. By the way, I'm not sure if this is the right response or not.*
- T2 : 그거 좋은거네요. 답은 없고 그냥 쓰면되요.  
*That's good enough. Just write it down.*

For the students who were familiar with merely listening to what teachers say in English classrooms, my request was quite an annoying thing for it required the students to participate actively in an idea development procedure, to produce something to show their own understanding from the readings. For them, silence in the class implies some conformity. It means they are not taking a risk by presenting their inappropriate responses or knowledge, which they perceive might be contrary to the response teachers want to get. Since to create their reflection from the readings was a class task to complete, the students tried to build their ideas of how the two main themes were connected. That class task was out of conformity with their traditional English learning experiences and caused them confusion in what they were doing in the English writing class.

### **Excerpt 9**

- T2 : 어떻습니까?

- Daesung : *How are you going on?*  
: 기분이 좀 그래요.  
*I feel bad about the story.*
- T2 : Why?
- Daesung : Ronald 가 배신해서요.  
*Ronald betrayed her.*
- T2 : Ronald?
- Youngbae : 살려줄려고 갔는데,  
*She went to save him but,*
- Daesung : Ronald 가 와서 모양새가 이게 뭐냐하고.  
*Ronald critiqued her outfit (although she saved him.)*
- Youngbae : 더 이상 공주가 아니라고.  
*He critiqued that she is not a princess anymore.*
- Daesung : 그래서 좀 화가 났어요. 내용이 그게 아닌가요?  
*That's why we feel bad about Ronald. Our understanding is right?*
- T2 : 맞아요. 전에 읽었던 신문기사하고 어떻게 연결 시킬수 있을까요?  
*Right. Then how can you find some connection between the story and the newspaper article?*
- Youngbae : 그냥요, 여자친구가 성형수술을 했는데, 뭔가 수술 부작용 같은 문제가 생겼을 때, 남자가 그 외모만으로 여자친구를 무시할때같은거요?  
*Well, let's think that my girlfriend undertook a cosmetic surgery. But she gets worse due to some side effects. Then her boyfriend considers her cheap as he is only concerned with her appearance.*
- T2 : 그렇게도 이해될수 있죠.  
*You can say that.*
- Youngbae : 그럼 이거죠. 사람의 외형적인게 다가 아니라, 내면적인것을 봐야한다고.  
*If so, we can say that appearance is not all; we need to consider one's inside.*

(March 13, 2007, Class observation)

In the group discussion, Youngbae and Daesung critiqued Ronald's attitude toward the Princess, Elizabeth. Since they were male students, their attention was paid more on Ronald rather than Elizabeth. When I talked with them of Ronald's attitude, they strongly expressed a disgrace to Ronald's mean manners by critiquing his attention only on Elizabeth's inappropriate appearance. According to this thinking process, they smoothly developed their connection between the two different readings without much struggling or tension, although they still felt uncomfortable to discuss their ideas with peers. Thus, the students critiqued a deep attachment to looks in the Korean society by contrasting it with valuing the importance of the inside.



In the dialogue, I did not find any tension from the conflicts raised in agreement or disagreement in terms of judging Ronald's behavior. They all agreed that Ronald's stereotypical masculine attitudes need to be critiqued. In addition, this idea was extended to question the current Korean youth trend of lookism. That is, Youngbae and Daesung's subjective norms and values that they use to read the world did not raise tension between their subjectivity and the social objectivity. The students' conformity with the social consensus was also observed in the other groups' idea developments as well.

### **Excerpt 9**

Group 1. Even if women's hearts are really beautiful, if their appearance is not favorable to others, women can't appeal to others. That's why women want to have plastic surgery.

Group 2. After reading... We discussed this story.

Conclusion... Actually, outward appearance is very important and most people look at just outward appearance. But the most important thing is the inside of people.

Group 3. Appearance is not more important than people's minds and thoughts. Do not measure people with their appearance.

Group 4. When women's cosmetic surgery rates go up, then people will only focus on women's appearance.

(March 13, 2007, Notetaking)

As Youngbae and Daesung did, the students in other groups also touched on the issue that Korean people were too much attached to the interest in having a good-looking appearance, no matter whether they are a woman or a man, just as well as Ronald clings to the idea that Elizabeth should wear a feminine outfit. In Excerpt 9, although the students belonged to four different groups, their responses converged on the social, ethical and moral values and beliefs that they believed to represent traditional virtue. Although the social trend of lookism in the current Korean society had strongly impacted youths' lives and became the dominant social values for youth to follow, the students' arguments returned to the objectivity of the traditional cultural virtue that people's mind over their appearance is more important. The student groups' similar argument

development implies how they collectively feel, hear, see, smell, and reflect a certain social issue in relation to social objectivity.

With identifying this indication of how the students generated their arguments within the conformity of the dominant social values, Robin (T1), a main instructor of this course, asked a question of the students' arguments so that the students could reflect for themselves if there is a difference between what they think in their minds and what they actually do in their everyday lives.

### **Excerpt 10**

T1 : Let's take a look. Let's take a look at these responses. This is what you wrote and responded just before the end of the class. ...Do you see anything similar between what the four groups said? See anything similar between what everybody was saying.

Kyu : 뭐야?

*What is that (to himself)?*

T2 : These are four different groups but there's some similar idea.

Lee : 알겠다.

*I see.*

Kyu : Appearance?

T2 : Appearance.

Kyu : Woman.

T1 : What else? Anything else there?

Students: ... (no response)

T1 : There is also a 'big contradiction' in here. Do you, anybody, see it? Do you understand the 'contradiction' in here? Contradiction is where two things don't agree, a difference, saying something different. There is a big contradiction in here. Well, most of the ideas here are saying that what's more important is what's inside. (Writing the word, 'contradiction' on the board) But still you have this, an idea that is in all the responses, that everybody thinks that your appearance is very important but at the same time, not important. Contradiction!

...Another contradiction easy to think of would be, 'well money is not the most important thing in life, or money is not so important, but I want a new fast expensive car,' right? Contradiction. Right?

T2 : So, in this class, you should think about that kind of contradiction. That kind of conflict.

T1 : Through contradictions, hopefully, you will be helped to see what's really happened with people and this world.

Bon : 모순 (contradiction, speaking in Korean)

(March 15, 2007, Class Observation)

With the students' short statements built by *The Paperbag Princess* and *77% of Women Favor Cosmetic Surgery*, Robin tossed out a question asking for some similarities among the ideas which the students developed. The students easily picked up the topic, 'appearance'. While the students focused on the traditional virtue of the internal growth over appearance, Robin provided a different point of view from what the students passionately argued. He described what contradiction signified and how we live full of contradiction in daily life.

Likewise, the students' reflections from the two readings maintained the ideas which the students had learned from their parents, teachers, or communities. However, his point encouraged the students not only to value the traditional virtue of the internal growth over the appearance, but also to identify and question what happened between these two contradictory concepts, the value of internal growth and external appearance. In fact, while the students kept a close watch on the current fashion trend and the social youth values of lookism in their actual lives, they also critiqued the current excessive social attention on lookism, which took lightly the growth inside. Using a different approach from merely accepting the value-free answer without question, as would be done in a traditional classroom, Robin disrupted the students' learning habits and attitudes of how they dealt with a certain issue by illuminating the two contradictory stances.

*Social norms and stereotypes: How we think vs. What we do*

With the introduction of a critical discourse of 'contradiction', Robin and I helped the students to contextualize the concept of contradiction in relation to their experiences in

daily living. To do so, we imported politics from other spheres of people's lives, from familiar social representations as well as from the students' own lives (Fine, 1989). This was a good strategy for facilitating the students to identify the complexities of social contradictions from the stand point of being the insider who could endorse its authenticity (Widdowson, 1994).

To understand the critical term of contradiction, first of all, it was necessary to identify what the fixed dominant social norms and knowledge were and how they functioned in daily lives. Since we had talked about the issue of 'appearance' in the students' idea developments, Robin and I let them identify what kinds of social stereotypes of appearance they had, consciously or unconsciously, encountered in their lives.

### **Excerpt 11**

- T2 : What do you mean by 'beautiful'? What is 'handsome'? We have some very deterministic standards and norms. Do you know what 'norm' means?
- Ss :....
- T1 :n.o.r.m. comes from the word, normal. Normal you understand, right? It means usual. So, norms are what people consider to be what's normal for people.
- T2 :What's a similar words? Standard. Norms and standards.
- Bonryun:Usual
- Kyu :Average
- T1 :Common
- T2 : Then, what are the norms of Korean women's appearance?
- T1 :That means what should women look like?
- Bonryun:Skinny?
- T2 :Skinny? Right.
- Moosub :보통 그래야 이쁘다고 생각하잖아.  
*Then, people usually think the woman is pretty.*
- Soo :Dark skin
- Donchul:Miniskirt
- T2 :Okay
- Moosub :Long hair
- T2 : What did you say?
- Kyu :Long straight hair
- Hyung :Thick makeup
- T2 :And how about men's appearance? Did you mention about men's appearance?

T1 :What do men look like?  
 Ss :Men? Masculine?  
 Moosub :Tall?  
 Daesung :Money?  
 T2 : Men should have money.  
 T1 :That should show in how they dress. Expensive clothes.

(March 15, 2007, Class observation)

When the students responded to Robin's question, they described certain features to be 'beautiful' or 'handsome'. However, with this dialogue, it is not easy for the students to find some contradiction from their descriptions, since the described features came naturally to them. For the students, there was not a point to disagree or question. The dominant social objective norms to be beautiful or handsome were exactly identical with their subjective values and beliefs. Robin again addressed the students,

### **Excerpt 12**

T1 : Why? This is my question. What is really normal? If I walk outside, on a street in Korea, might I see a lot of women who satisfy all the conditions? No!  
 Ss : No.  
 T1 : They are all different. Guess what? What this is really causing is a contradiction. Why do we as men think pretty women to be really pretty? Where is the reality? What do we see? Why is that? What are these ideas that make us think in these ways, make us think about things, and where do they come from?  
 A lot of difference places, but the point is, we go through our life like a horse. Some horses have blinders put on them, right? So, they only walk straight ahead. Walk (as) other people want you to walk. And see only what other people want you to see. Many, many things in life are like that. How do we think about women? How do women think about men? How do we think about ourselves? We never think about it because in our classrooms, we do not talk about how to think, we talk only about how to read and take a test.

(March 15, 2007, Class observation)

That is, according to Robin, the contradiction of the students' described features of 'beautiful' or 'handsome' is revealed between the dominant fixed social objectivity of

‘beautiful’ or ‘handsome’ and the actuality of people’s features in their everyday lives. The dominant social objectivity of ‘beautiful’ or ‘handsome’ makes people think within the boundaries of this knowledge or norm, they do not value beyond this objectivity. In a sense, Giroux (1983) stresses the importance of understanding how sociopolitical arrangements influence and constrain individual and collective positions, to construct knowledge and meaning. Consequently, Giroux (1983) further mentions that these arrangements would play an critical role in how one thinks, behaves, and positions their subjectivities. If people are not free from the dominant social objectivity, why do the students still need to understand the concept of contradiction?

As Fine (1989) claims, this helps the students to engage in lively, critical discourse about the complexities and inequalities of prevailing economic and social relations. That is, students can be critical by recognizing the contradiction present to both one’s social conformity and to the constraints. To elaborate the concept, Robin’s example of ‘puppet’ was useful for the students to understand the roots of social constraints and conformity.

### **Excerpt 13**

T1 : People are conditioned, socialized, brainwashed into not thinking about things, perhaps. They are also conditioned in being satisfied with what they have. So, people like Sun and I or other educators try to get people to start looking underneath. Why? I can’t draw very well but perhaps you get something like this. (drawing a puppet) What people really are, are a puppets. Here people are educated. And they did think and believe in a certain way. We are dancing around on the stage being managed by other people. We don’t even question very much why we want to buy things, why we feel we have to do certain things, why we have to believe in certain ways. Yet, who benefits? It’s not us. It’s other people. That’s easy enough to see. Again, who goes to Seoul National University?

(April 5, 2007, Class Observation)

Adding on to Robin's last question, I pointed to the puppet drawing. Then, I asked the students to give examples for the top and the bottom. They started to talk about what they understood.

#### **Excerpt 14**

- T2 :무슨그림인지 이해가요?  
*Do you understand the picture?*
- Kyu :네.  
*Yes.*
- T2 :What can be this one?
- Dongcul :사회 실력자?  
*People who have power?*
- T2 :Okay, it could be a government. And it could be what?
- Kyu :The rich people?
- T2 : Rich people. Probably a dominant class who creates these kinds of dominant images. What or who could be this?
- Kyu :Powerful country.
- T2 :Yeah, powerful country. It could be a powerful country. And this one?
- T1 :Slower country.
- T2 :Yeah, poor country.
- T2 :It could be America and Korea deciding a big trading fact, right? But you can also look at Korea as a larger country. Could be.
- T2 :What else? What do you say?
- Bonryun : Authority
- T2 :Authority, 어떤 권위 적인거.
- Kyu :Parents
- T2 :Yeah, parents. This could be us. Right?
- T1 :Uhum.

(April 5, 2007, Class Observation)

The puppet drawing helped the students to clarify how power relations were functioning by hierarchical relationships, how the dominant social knowledge and values of objectivity could be determined by power relations, and finally how the dominant people, institutes, or knowledge oppressed the slow countries or people. In particular, in the process, the students' implicit understandings of dominant social objectivity, social

norms and knowledge, and people in power were visualized with the puppet's movement by power relations.

Accordingly, students got to understand that dominant knowledge was also constructed by one's certain ideas and values. That is why all knowledge and objectivity could be unstable and discontinuous, in particular, not fixed but changeable. In other words, that means the students' unique values and knowledge to form subjectivity were valuable and should not be in silence.

*Positioning who they are in authorship*

Simon and Dippo (1992) argue that critical pedagogical practice has to be considered with the educational and political tasks of constructing new forms that would expand the available range of social identities and possibilities. Likewise, in spite of conceptual chaos in exactly following Robin's critical discourse, the students were required to participate in critical pedagogical practices to create the two video-authoring projects and the two English writings in the critical literacy perspective. The actual critical practices made the students experience various ideological and pedagogical challenges and possibilities through the process where they actually recognized a contradictory point of a certain issue and dealt with the tension between their subjectivity and the dominant social objectivity.

To do so, Robin tried to keep disrupting what the students believed as the natural or the true in their everyday experiences.

**Excerpt 15**

T1 :That's the common way we talk about it. The real world for this, what's really happening, is, the real world is (writing something on the board) you're socialized into something. 'Social' means society, right? Because these things



happen for you from education. You first go to school, these ideas about men and women start then, but it's not just education, is it? It's your parents, it's your relatives, it's your friends, and it's the media. All of these give you messages, nonstop. So, who you are people, you could say, socially constructed. What you believe, what you don't believe comes from some place. Most people never think about it. Give you another example. Uh..Gay people, do you understand 'gay'?

(April 12, 2007, Class observation)

Although Robin's critical statement is quite true, it was too abstract for the novice students to a critical literacy to contextualize what 'socialized' really meant in relation to their close lives. Thus, with the students' implicit concept of 'socialized', Robin chose one of the student's reflection notes, where the students posted their short comments after an assigned reading before the class. Rather than providing a third person example irrelevant to the students' lives, Robin presented to the students how they had been socialized into a certain fixed perception through the impacts on their discursive social relations.

### **Excerpt 16**

First of all, I'm not a racist. But my cognizance is being afraid of black people. In my esteem, media and TV show black people or foreigners making trouble, some like sexual violence or drunken frenzy. So, almost, these people have a bad effect. But it is just a prejudice, in my opinion, about nonwhite face discrimination...

(April 12, 2007, Moosub's reflection note)

Robin showed the students Moosub's reflection note about critiquing people's biased eye on the nonwhite. For the students, although English grammatical inaccuracies were frequently seen in his reflection note, they could not point out what Robin wanted them to get from it. Because Moosub's understanding was also what they had seen, heard, felt, and learned so far. That was too obvious to them. However, Robin continued his explanation.

**Excerpt 17**

T1 :Yeah, these too, right here, big contradiction. What that means is, in analysis, look at these two, that means the speaker is what? No! That's pointing the finger at you, oh, you are a racist. But I will tell you something. Uh, before I came back to Woosong, I worked at a University in America that was a black university. Almost all students were black. I stood up in front of the class there. It was a class in the department of education, teaching multicultural education. And what I told them was (writing on the board, 'how we think vs., what we do), I told them, I am a racist.

Kyu :Wow! Really?

T1 :Cuz I am. So, I'm not just pointing the finger at you. This is really important to understand because you say, I'm not a racist. Most people, anybody, would say, I'm not a racist. But it's a difference between how we think and what we do. ....I am a white American, right?

(April 12, 2007, Class observation)

When Robin called himself 'a racist' in a black university, in a moment, most students were very shocked with his unexpected statement. As far as they had known, nobody would say what he did, although that was true in reality. However, Robin let the students confront their two faces by using the critical concept of contradiction, 'how we think' and 'what we do'. Robin drew the students' attention to face the substance, whether they blinked consciously or unconsciously. Robin's critical discourse kept bothering the students' conformity and forcing the students to verify the uncomfortable truth, which they never considered before.

However, the uncomfortable discourse which disrupted the students' subjective values and beliefs that were almost identical with the social objectivity, paradoxically infused some self-confidence into the students' voices and encouraged speaking out, even with their shaky responses or opinions. Although the students might not even recognize what that was, implicitly, the students might see some hope from that discomfoting discourse. That is, the students had poisoned themselves as if they were derelicts or social failures by defining themselves by the dominant social objectivity. Because, as shown in

the first section, ‘Identifying subjectivity in relation to the traditional English learning and teaching’, many times, the students relatively underestimated themselves in comparison to the students who attended at Seoul National University (SNU). With the fixed assumption that the students at SNU were better in everything than them, the students in the local university positioned their current knowledge, experiences, values, and social beliefs such that they were skeptical to speak out with their voices toward or against a certain issue.

For such students who had assumed they were excluded from the mainstream, however, Robin kept asking them to open their eyes by claiming that the dominant social objectivity that had been socially constructed could, at the same time, be challenged and changed. To put it another way, this perception made the students think that they might not be a social failure anymore. By ceasing to define themselves with the dominant social objectivity, they could define themselves by their own subjective knowledge and values.

In fact, the indications that the students participated in the class with the possibility of empowerment were observed in their dialogues. The students started to problematize that the social objectivity influenced their positions their perceptions of seeing the world.

### **Excerpt 18**

- Donchul : 연예인 따라서 이뻐질려고요. 연예인이 미의 기준이잖아요.  
*One follows celebrities to be pretty like them. Celebrities are the social standard of 'beauty'.*
- T2 : 왜 연예인이 미의 기준일까?  
*Why are the celebrities the standard of beauty?*
- Dongchul : Stereotype
- T2 : Social stereotype? 그러면 너는 사회적 representation 이 고정화 되 있다고 보냐 아니면 다양화 되었다고 보냐?

*Social stereotype? If so, do you think that the social representation is fixed or diverse?*

Dongchul : 어떤 사람들에겐 다양한 사람도 있겠죠. 그런데 대부분 고정화 되있는거 같아요.

*For some, social representations can be diverse, but for most people, it seems that they are fixed.*

T1 :어떤면에서?

*In what ways?*

Dongchul : 이뻐려면 우선 말라야 한다. 날씬해야 한다. 쌍꺼풀이 있어야 한다는 거요.

*To be pretty, first of all, be skinny. Be thin, Have a double eyelid. Something like this.*

(April 23, 2007, Group discussion)

The Excerpt 18 helped me to track how Dongchul's thinking process was occurring, the connection of celebrity as social standard, stereotype, and the fixed social representations such as 'skinny', 'thin', or 'a double eyelid'. Although the topic of questioning of the dominant concept of 'beauty' was the same as we did in the very first class in the semester, Dongchul was reproducing his own logical understanding of the issue in his video-authoring project. His tone was quite confident of what he addressed. I could find he made the theoretical critical discourse, which we dealt with, visual with his own topic.

In another group, Moosub and Youngbae actively shared their thoughts about the issue of FTA (Free Trade Agreement) between South Korea and the USA

### **Excerpt 19**

Moosub : 미국에서 소고기나 쌀을 수입한다고 해도, 한국소비자들이 선택을 안할수도 있잖아요.

*Although beef and rice from the USA are imported to Korea, Korean customers might not choose American beef and rice.*

T2 : It could be..

Moosub : 광우병 같은 사회적 현안도 있었잖아요. 정치적으로 필요해서 정부와 미국이 FTA 를 체결한다 해도, 선택은 국민들이 하는거니까 괜찮을거 같은데요.

*There have been many issues and concerns of mad cow disease. Although the Korean government politically concluded the FTA with the USA, Korean customers can decide if they eat or not.*

Youngbae : 그럼 식당에 쌀이 들어오는데, 두가마니랑 한가마니 가격이 같애.  
그럼 어느거 살래?

*Then, most Korean restaurants spend a lot on rice. If the price of the two rice bags, one imported from America and one rice bag produced in*

*Korea*

*is same, which one do you want to buy?*

Moosub : 너같으면 외국쌀먹을래? 한국쌀 먹을래?

*Then, if you were to eat rice, do want to eat foreign rice or Korean rice?*

Youngbae : 미국쌀이 더 싼데?

*Are you sure? American rice is cheaper.*

Moosub : 한국쌀도 뭔가를 품질적으로 개선하거나 해야지.

*Korean rice should make a specialty of something competitive.*

Youngbae : 어떻게 따라가냐고. 개네는 기계로 농사짓고, 우리는 손수작업이잖아.  
게임이 안되.

*Since America uses farm mechanization, their price competitiveness is more than a match for Korea.*

Moosub : 근데 들여오는데 높은관세나 운송비 이런것도 있잖아.

*That's why there is a high-tax system and also expensive shipping fee.*

Youngbae : 근데 그걸 FTA 로 낮추겠다잖아.

*The purpose of FTA is to decrease the tax between the two countries.*

(April 19, 2007, Group discussion)

As shown in the two students' dialogue, Youngbae clearly positioned his place about FTA with his voice to see the issue, while Moosub had vague points of the issue. With their dialogue of FTA, the students developed the contradiction between the concept of Free Trade Agreement delivered through a positive literal term [unsure what you mean here] and actual social consequences occurring in Korean farm market. Rather than merely agreeing or disagreeing with the issue, they negotiated the issue in a critical perspective in order to develop their own argument of who had more benefit.

For this discussion, Daesung, the other member of the group of three, spoke his reflection after listening to Youngbae and Moosub's.

### **Excerpt 20**

Daesung : 우리 기준에서는 미국이 너무 하는부분이 있으니까 그런거 같아요. 그리고 사실 또 재미있는건, 저희는 정말 그런거 관심도 없고, 술먹고 놀기만 좋아했는데, 이런 프로젝트를 통해서 detail 하게 들어가는게 좋은거 같아요. 차를 사는 빈도수보다 한국에서 싸지만 쌀을 주식으로 하는 것에서 오는 차이같은걸 말하는것도 생각하지 못했던 부분인데, 그런것도 굉장히 좋은거 같아요. detail 하게 자꾸 발전되가는거 같아요.

*In some way, America seems to have more benefits than Korea does, from our Korean perspective. The interesting thing is, actually we have not been interested in an issue such as FTA, but just hung out with friends for drinking. By the way, I like that we go in depth to understand the details of FTA. For example, as we talked I realized that although we sell cars to America, cars are purchased once every several years. However, in the case of rice, although it is cheap enough, Koreans spend money for rice everyday as a staple food. This is what I never thought of before. I really enjoyed exploring this in detail.*

(April 19, 2007, Group discussion)

Regarding Daesung's comment, when I had explained my purpose of this project I had not intended to listen to their evaluation of this class, the students shared their thoughts of the class freely.

### Excerpt 21

T2 : 프로젝트를 많이 만들수도 있지만, 어떻게 좋은건지는 모르겠어요. 둘다 장단점이 있는데, 프로젝트를 하나 만들 경우엔, 많은 생각을 할 수 있는 시간을 줄수 있다고 생각해. 근데 사실 그게 중요한 다리 역할이 되거든. 그러면서 다른이슈에 대해서도 그 생각하는 방법을 적용할수 있게 되는거지.

*We can create many projects, though I'm not sure which one is better for students. Although they both have advantages and disadvantages, one project would give more time for you to think in depth by focusing on a issue. Actually, that can be the bridge to develop more in the next project. You can adapt the thinking approach to the next new issue.*

Moosub : 다른수업에서도 movie maker 를 하거든요.

*We do movie making in other classes, too.*

T2 : 그래? 몰랐네.

*Really? I didn't know that.*

Moosub : Internet English 에서요. 근데 그 수업은 토픽을 하나 미리 정해놓고

해오라는 식이거든요. 그냥 하나만 잘 만들고 끝나는 수업이에요. 근데 이 수업이 다른건, 이건 어느정도 지금처럼 많이 들어가서 생각하게 한다는거예요.

*In the course of Internet English. The topic is preplanned and we are supposed to make a movie with it. Our requirement is to complete the project. That's all. Where this class is different from that class is that it asks to think of an issue as we did today.*

T2 :책임감이 좀 필요하지 않아요?

*Probably, responsibility would be required.*

Daesung :그게 가장 크게 느껴지는 부분이에요. 사실.

*That is what I seriously feel, actually.*

T2 :아마 Internet English 수업은 좀 더 clear 하게 학생들이 해야 할 일들이 미리 정해져 있었을거예요. Step by step 이 분명해서 학생들이 문제없이 잘 따라갈거예요. 반며에 이 수업은 정신이 없죠 (웃으면서).

*I guess, in advance, Internet English would provide some clear direction of what students should make so that they can follow step by step without any problem. On the other hand, this class is quite messy for students to follow(laughing).*

Moosub : (웃으면서)네, 맞아요. 어려워요

*(laughing) That's true, but it's difficult.*

T2 : 하지만 어떤 한 이슈에 대해 깊이 생각하게 만드는 책임감이 있어요. 학생들을 풀어주는거 같지만, 여러분들만의 방식으로 해결해야하는 과제가 있죠.

*However, this class requires responsibility, for students to think deeply. It might look to liberate the students from the strict class requirements or rules, though, there is a task you have to go through on your own.*

Daesung :네 맞아요.

*That's true. Right.*

T2 : 어떤면에서는 수업이 더 부담되고 책임감이 느껴질거예요. 자유롭게 풀어준다고 그게 자유로운게 아니죠. 자유는 더 많은 책임을 요구합니다.

*In some way, this class might give more burden in terms of students' responsibility toward their task. Although your freedom is given, that does not mean that you are really free. Rather, you get more sense of responsibility.*

Students : 맞아요.

*I agree with it.*

(April 19, 2007, Group discussion)

From the students' understanding of the class, I could see ways in which the students authorized themselves for developing their own argument for creating their video-authoring project, because we had talked about their sense of 'responsibility' in the class. In class, Robin and I had not argued that the students should feel their

responsibility to complete the class requirements. The students just started to feel their own responsibility over what they had been doing. In other words, this seems to mean that the students did not participate in their class requirements merely to get a good grade for the course, but they truly engaged in their own knowledge production in authorship with heavy responsibility. They felt liberated to speak out their voices in the class and at the same time, took a heavy burden of completing their class tasks in ownership and building their own arguments in authorship.

In a sense, the conversation with Kyu and Hyewon also provided some possibilities and challenges for the class.

### Excerpt 22

- Kyu :선생님 설명이 길어지다 보면 포인트가 뭐였나 헛갈려요. 짧고 간단히 무엇을 해야하는지만 설명해주시면 더 쉽게 이해가 가지 않을까요?  
*If your explanation gets longer, we lose what your point is. Please tell us what we need to do in clear and short description. Wouldn't it be better?*
- T2 : 한문장으로 설명하기엔 너무 많은 내용이 함축되어있어서 그게 더 어려울거 같은데.  
*However, it might give more confusion with a short explanation because it implies too much meaning.*
- Kyu :여기 우리대학교예요. 학생들 너무 복잡해지는거 싫어해요.  
*We are Woolee university students. We do not like some complex things.*
- .....
- T2 : 나 하나 질문이 있는데, 이 수업이 사실 쉬운 수업은 아니잖아. 어려운 수업이잖아.  
*I have a question for you. This course is not easy, but a quite difficult course.*
- Kyu : 어렵게 생각하면 어렵고. 쉽지는 않아요. 절대로.  
*We can say that. It is never easy. Never.*
- T2 :머리가 아프지.  
*It gives you headache*
- Kyu : 오히려 재미있죠. 이런 수업이 더.  
*Rather it's fun. This kind of class is more fun.*
- Hyewon: 네, 이런게 더 나아요. 이런수업 재미있어요.  
*True. This style is better. Such a class is fun.*
- Kyu :더 정확히 말하면, 재미있다고 보단, 이런 수업을 다른 교수님이 무비메이커처럼 만드는게 아니고, 그냥 페이지로만 했더만 아마 절대로 어려워서 못했을거예요.  
*To speak properly, if other professors teach this kind of class (to require a critical argument development with a critical discourse) without using like a*



*video-authoring project, other than doing only paperwork, I would never decide to take the course.*

(May 31, 2007, Group discussion)

I could see Kyu still continued to underestimate his classmates' and his intellectual ability. According to him, it was a challenge for them to follow what I explained. Yet, when I intentionally asked a question of this class in order to listen to their thoughts, Kyu and Hyewon spoke in a positive way about participating in the class tasks. In particular, according to Kyu, the critical pedagogical practice of a video-authoring project was helpful, encouraging him to contextualize what a critical discourse asks him, rather than using the regular brainstorming activities such as clustering or outlining used in a traditional English writing class. Although Hyewon had not participated actively in class talks or her group's idea development, she reflected that the class was difficult, but fun. I was glad to hear from Hyewon. My understanding from Hyewon's comment was that although she sat in the class mostly in silence, at least the class was not reluctant to participate with her.

In sum, since this course was a 'non-traditional' English writing class, different from the kind which most EFL learners have participated in and experienced so far, the students took time to appropriate particular educational features of the alternative English writing course. In other words, this EFL writing class was able to expose the Korean EFL students to the particular educational aim under the new educational grounding of a critical literacy, with the unfamiliar learning approach supported by a video-authoring project. These new educational attempts for the Korean EFL students led them into pedagogical chaos as they encountered the different educational foundation of the critical literacy pedagogy paradigm.

However, encountering discord between students' assumptions and expectations of an EFL writing class and the alternative EFL writing class, where critical literacy notions are advocated, was definitely full of challenges for the students and even for me as a practitioner. It was a productive process to discover the students' concerns, struggles, and expectations with the aim of authorship development in their own knowledge production.

## CHAPTER 5

### **Knowledge production as critical literacy practices**

Giroux and McLaren (1986) provide four important areas of power, language, history, and culture, a single mode of analysis, to reveal the dominant social discourses and to make them an object of political analysis. In this study, the students' critical engagements analyzed in the Chapter 4 allow me to explore how the concepts of power, language, history and culture are deconstructed and reconstructed within the students' class projects. In the Chapter 5, under the main codes of power, language, history, and culture, the three critical inquiry processes stated in the previous chapter are discursively melted as the analytical mediations to identify how the students deconstructed and reconstructed their own definitions of power, language, history, and culture from engaging in their video projects.

Therefore, by coding the students' (critical) literacy practices in accordance with 'power', 'language', 'culture', and 'history', I will examine the sign system of still images, particular English phrases, music, and the students' reflection notes, which the students used and created during their video productions in order to investigate how the students engage in their own knowledge deconstruction and reconstruction (Beach & Myers, 2001).

For the data analysis, Barton and Hamilton's (2000) ideas helped me to organize the relationships between the students' texts produced in the class and their ideological implications. More specifically, Barton and Hamilton (2000) use the terms: literacy events and literacy practices, in the framework of the metaphor of ecology to describe the symbiotic relationships between empirical activities and their ideological implications.

According to them, literacy practices are the general cultural and social ways of ‘reading the words’ which people draw upon in their lives, that is, in their worlds. Thus, by analyzing what people do with literacy, it is understood how they “conceptualize the link between the activities of reading and writing and the social structures in which they are embedded and which they help shape” (Barton & Hamilton 2000, p. 7).

However, Barton and Hamilton (2000) state that *literacy practices* are processes internal to the individual such as values, attitudes, feelings, awareness, and social discursive relationships. In other words, while literacy practices can be a critical clue to analyze how people are constructed by, regulated by, or dealt with by social objectivity, literacy practices themselves are not observable without the mediations to present people’s internal complexities of values, attitudes, feelings, awareness, and so on. Therefore, according to them, it is necessary to have a mediated tool. Such a tool can be *literacy events*, consisting of text, practical activities, or talks around the texts, which are observable. In particular, Barton and Hamilton (2000) illustrate that texts are a crucial part of *literacy events* and *literacy practices* are the analysis of texts to explore how they are produced and used. In this way, Barton and Hamilton (2000) develop the notion that “literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these are observable in events which are mediated by written texts”. (p. 9).

With this in mind, in this chapter I will explore the literacy events which were dealt with in a class for helping shape the students’ knowledge production. Hamilton (2000) articulates that the function of *literacy events* is to facilitate researchers to examine the literacy practices. To be specific, Hamilton (2000) employs photographs as an interview stimulus and as catalyst in research.

They (photographs) can be part of a systematic record of evidence. They may function as a reflective tool for developing theory; to create visual narratives of particular aspects of cultures, as data themselves or to set a context for other data collection. They can be used to explore image making within communities of interest to the researcher - for example creating photo stories with members of those communities, discussing existing images such as family albums, wedding pictures, holiday snaps (p. 19).

As Hamilton (2000) describes, I will investigate visual images and students' written texts, on video productions, as reflective tools of how the students participate in literacy practices. In what follows, I will address the main ideas and brief story plots of what the students in this class attempted to convey through their video-authoring projects. To do so, I will briefly summarize the contents of the video-authoring projects and provide the sequential written comments on the videos, which the students develop with their own intentions to support the arguments. Since the streaming video-projects which the students developed cannot be shown due to the limitation to written text format in this report, I believe that providing a brief story plot, by using their own written comments stated on their video productions, still images and music, is the way I can reduce interruptions caused by my own perspectives, which can distort the students' main ideas and intentions in the video projects. Therefore, I will first briefly introduce the main arguments of the eight video projects. Then I will examine the projects to illustrate the four factors of power, language, history, and culture. This is an examination which I want to make in considering the relationships involved in the students' building, with their own voices and own authorship, of knowledge production and of forming empowerment.

### The Eight Video-Authoring Projects: Brief descriptions

	Title	Content
The 1 <sup>st</sup> video-authoring project	Korean comfort women	During the Japanese colonial period, Korean young women were forced to be comfort women for the soldiers who served in the Japanese army. The comfort women remembered they lived in hell. In recent times, the living elderly women who endured the harsh time have gone on a sit-down strike for a Japanese apology. However, now they have passed away leaving the apology behind. Because of this, the students question of their rights, aspirations, and freedom.
	Obscenity of entertainment : How far it will go?	This group raises a question on the social issue of the influences of entertainers' obscenity. Many celebrities such as Mariah Carey, Britney Spears, or Paris Hilton promote this kind of fashion trend. In daily life, people try to mimic their fashion styles to be like celebrities. However, the students point out how the fad of obscenity generates serious social side effects such as cosmetic surgery or excessive diet. Finally, the students say that people have to think of what real beauty means.
	Necessary evil	People live in their own life with a joy, happiness, or peace. However, in this world, bad things such as de-humanizing, riots, oppressed women, or prostitutes have been justified with the power of money. This group develops contradiction between what we believe as the ideal life in a society and what happens in reality.
	Cosmetic surgery	These days, Korea has a fad that many people undergo a cosmetic surgery. They attempt a cosmetic surgery with the dominant assumption that cosmetic surgery makes one perfect in their life. The students critique the standardized beauty and claim to develop one's own beauty.
The 2 <sup>nd</sup> video-authoring project	Devil's temptation	The ordinary people yearn for the entertainers' lives which look luxurious and full of abundance. Their lives through the mass media are represented with expensive cars, clothes, or a lot of

		money. However, the students critique the images of celebrities as being fantasy. In particular, teenagers who dream to become an entertainer have to understand that the media shows them the idealistic images only, not the whole. Thus, teenagers need to face the reality and plan an achievable dream.
	Alcohol culture	In everyday life, people live in the flood of commercials. In particular, it is interesting to see how commercials of alcoholic drinks attract people. While the negative effects of alcoholic drinks are hidden, the positive, good, fresh images of the drinks are mainly presented to people. The students try to demystify the constructed good images of the commercials.
	Gender roles	People are born as a boy or a girl biologically. Although biological sex is determined with one's birth, the gender roles are not fixed with the birth. They are socially constructed. That is how we judge that women should be womanly and men should be manly. This idea can be also socially deconstructed.
	FTA: Free Trade Agreement	What is FTA? The students present how FTA influences the Korean economy. Who has benefits and who has not? Different cases of FTA are introduced in order to decide how Korea positions itself in the FTA agreement.

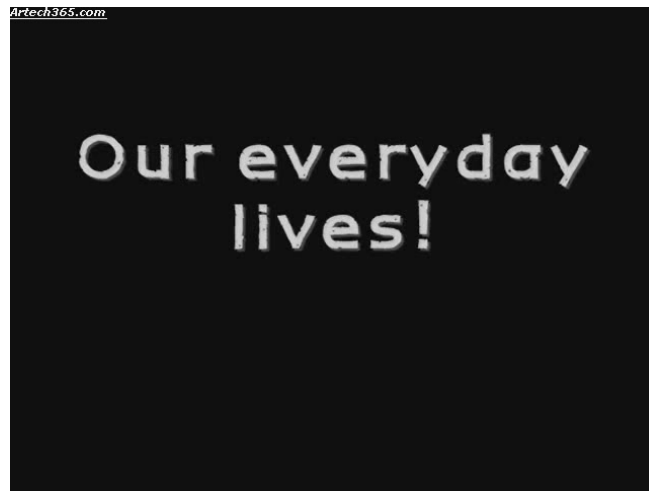
**Table 1. Video-authoring project descriptions**

In what follows, I will demonstrate how the students were involved in their knowledge production via a video-authoring projects and English academic writing. To do so, literacy events are analyzed according to the critical discourse of power, language, history, and culture in order to explore literacy practices to explain how the students' invisible knowledge deconstruction and reconstruction are negotiated and extended

during the class projects. Therefore, I chose the four video-authoring projects out of the eight, to illustrate the points I want to make.

To examine each video-authoring project and English academic writing, as a first step, I followed their story plot by sequential orders on the video.

*Power : Devil's Temptation*



*Figure 1. Our everyday lives 1*



*Figure 2. Our everyday lives 2*



With an easy-listening background music, the students in the group showed daily lives, that ones encounter everyday, such as people walking in the crossroad, school, students, smiling, family, winter, and



*Figure 3. Representation 1*

friends. Given the general perception

of daily life, they ask, “what about entertainers?”. Mentioning “entertainers”, the students provide the celebrities’ images with the question, “What kinds of images do they represent to us?” Showing

images such as “Riding in expensive cars, wearing designer cloth, having fans all over the places, earning so much money, being on TV, ad, movies, magazines”, they question, “how do youth think



*Figure 4. Representation 2*

about celebrities and what kind of

influences do young generation receive?” In the clip, the fixed knowledge of the representation of celebrities was reflected in the students’ experiences and their definition of celebrities (Giroux & McLaren,1986). Finally, power of the fixed knowledge

influences people's lives. The students illustrate that, "Now a days people of young generation want to resemble the big celebrities on TV or magazines'. They show how ordinary people mimic the celebrities' images and representations in everyday life.

By identifying the social dominant representations, the students critique that, "these images of celebrities satisfy the fantasies to live like big stars. Teenagers, who easily lose controls, simply want to become like big stars". That is, the students conceptualized that youth accept dominant images of celebrities as social 'knowledge' with the desire to be like celebrities. They showed how these influences were directly reflected in youths' everyday lives. With challenging youths' distorted desire, the students described that, "this kind of future planning of teenagers is tempting but very dangerous tempting". They continued that, "how celebrities appear to be on TV is only fraction of their life style". While the students identified the distortion of the celebrities' images, they encountered the hidden political strategies of how the dominant fixed knowledge in power is distributed by distorting and educating people without their being aware of it.

The students' English writing, as another literacy event, further referred to rich literacy practices in presenting how the students reflected the critical discourses of 'power' and 'knowledge' through researching their topic.

*Language: Alcohol culture Song*



*Figure 5. Advertisement*

This group starts with the main question of “What is the purpose of these advertisements?...” Then, the students show the representative images of television commercials of alcoholic drinks. Thirteen commercials use familiar images

and concepts which most Korean people like.

The language shown from the still images, as literacy events, which the students provided in their video construction illuminated how the particular implicated social codes and meanings can be constitutive of one’s individual construction of self and society (Giroux & McLaren, 1986). That is, the students got to appropriate the politics of ‘language’ that , as Giroux & McLaren (1986) say, “As language constructs meaning, it shapes our world, informs our identities, and provides the cultural codes for perceiving and classifying the world” (p. 230).

Therefore, in what follows, I provide the translated contents shown from each commercial that the students used in their video production. This will help to provide understanding of the students’ intentions in using certain commercial images and representations, and on what they want audiences to reflect when watching certain traditional codes and meaning.

### Commercial images and themes

Images and cultural codes	Main copy in each commercial
1. Traditional familiarity	"In this world where there are a lot of misunderstandings among people, and troubles, when we get together, is there any better choice beside SOJU?"
2. Images of the concept of well-being from alkaline drinks	Aligning the product with customer's needs. Still there are images of a young pretty girl and the idea of pureness by using the color white.
3. Cheerful, happy hour	My Sunshine day in my life is just today [Today my life is full of sunshine?] (with Sansa-Chun). With a girl in white, it represents....
4. Fresh, young, vivid	Another version of Sansa-Chun. It appeals more to people similar in age to the model. Target on young people....
5. Pureness, clearness with colors of green and white.	I like oxygen! It is better because it is pure!
6. Pure Lin (SOJU)	Pure Lin (SOJU) fills you with oxygen!! The female model always is showing a beautiful smile and holding a shot of SOJU.
7. Great enough! It's pure!	Great enough! It's pure! With images of purity in a female dressed in white.
8. Sharing pureness	Let's share together! Sharing pureness!
9. Charm SOJU	Charm SOJU supporting Pure victory in the Worldcups.
10. Green and white.	'Uplifting feeling is good'. The model is stylish and modern. Her [?] looks seems to talk to us so that we also taste it.
11. Some friendliness with customers.	'Please give me a shot of SOJU. I like to get together with people'
12. Emphasis on young and fresh images	Emphasis on young and fresh images of the model Jang, Nara [Nara Jang?]. Still target is on youth.
13. Friendship	'Let's get together, later.. This is just nothing meaningful, but if you really miss your friend, 'Shall we drink SOJU, today?' The model's facial expression looks glad to meet her friends with a feminine shy smile.

**Table 2. Commercial images and themes**

Shown in Table 2 are very representative images emphasizing pureness, freshness, and happiness with friends or good people. Moreover, these commercials dominantly used a



certain 'language' of literacy events such as the color of white, blue, or green with the traditional cultural codes and meanings of youth and freedom.

By showing commercial images

Figure 6. Commercial 1

and concepts of alcoholic drinks, the students attempted to connect the familiar images of the commercials with their daily life. 'Since we were a child we have seen many drink



Figure 7. Commercial 2

commercials'. They continued "Time went fast and our city could have a subway but,

also those commercial occupy too much space”. By identifying that drink commercials occupied their everyday life and were as natural/familiar as possible, the students realized that “We naturally accepted the commercials as true through the media”. The students told their own stories along time sequences from their secondary school life to their university one. “And after graduate from high school, we thought it will be O.K. to drink alcohol for our body. But.....”

Here, the students described that those fresh, pure images of alcohol commercials did not encourage young university people to question the drinking of alcohol. Rather, they

encouraged the youth to join in and enjoy their privilege of being in a youth culture, where most young university people participate for the purpose of socialization in their



university life. The traditional, cultural

*Figure 8 Commercial 3*

codes of an alcohol culture were represented as the codes of the youth culture. Therefore, the people’s sense of the cultural codes were perceived and mediated by language practices in commercials.

In the next scene, the students tried to show their intentions of how many contradictions there were in reality by analyzing the commercials. The reality with alcoholic drinks is shown in kind of a deviant way such as drunken peers, sleeping on the ground, being out of self control. All examples are starkly different from the commercial images of pureness, freshness, and familiar social gathering, which languages in commercials have represented to people. To show clearly the contradiction, the students keep juxtaposing pictures of reality between and the images of the commercials, one after the other. Then, the students add a comment that “If you are not a fool you can see what



Figure 9. Commercial 4



Figure 10. Commercial 5

are the differences between these pictures. Advertisements are always showing us good images of drinking”.

By critiquing commercial languages and images developed with the hidden social implications, the students produced a new question, “By drinking alcohol who has a benefit and what do you get it through it?” With this question, they talk of “alcohol intoxication”. They specify the alcohol intoxication with the critical questions, “Why are commercials do not show us these side effects straightly?, Why are they trying to exchange our lives with money and their benefits?” As a conclusion in the movie, in re-showing one of the commercial images, they confirm again, “We can't find any bad things from this picture!”. But with the very next image of an alcoholic girl who takes the cure in retreat, they ask, “what made her into alcoholic” . It seems that the students assumed the alcohol drink commercials could be one of the core causes for one to be alcoholic. Then, they warn, “Stop...! and break your fantasy about alcohol!! and continue, “Don't believe what you see, since the fact might not be true”.

The students in this video-authoring project experienced how a certain biased conception of commercial languages were incribed through good commercial images. The experiences helped the students to investigate that commercial languages can be a powerful tool in a neutral manner to construct one’s stereotypical conceptions. According to Giroux and McLaren (1986), it is to “position people in the world, to shape the range of possible meanings surrounding an issue, and to actively construct reality” (1986, p. 231).

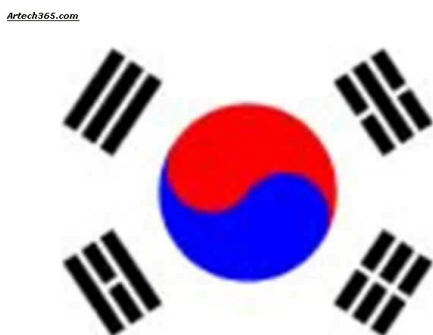


*History : Korean Comfort women*



*Figure 11. Spirit*

The students in this group presented their main theme of 'spirit', as a historical issue during Japanese colonial period, in their video-project. In the next image, juxtaposing two different flags of Korea and Japan, audience's emotional upsurge in Japanese



*Figure 12 Korean Flag*



*Figure 13 Japanese Flag in 1941*

colony was intended. Then, the students specified 'spirit'. "We were deprived of everything. Japan deprived Koreans' of their rights, aspirations and freedom."

With the general representative images in colonial time, the students went in-depth and explored specifically 'comfort women' which was started in 1941. During the colonial period, "They(comfort women) who were very poor had to work in order to earn money". With the images that Korean women were packed in a truck, the students



Figure 14 Comfort women

describe that “they believed that Japan's companies hired them but, it was not true. Japan forced them to be comfort women. Korean's women were deceived by Japan”.

Continuing the images of comfort women who were exploited as sexual

objects, the students added “This was

how they lived in hell”. The students kept presenting the facts that the comfort women's rights, aspirations and freedom were trampled under the Japanese foot. “After the end of

World War 2, the defeated

Japanese army once again brutally crushed the victims. In order to conceal the existence of comfort stations, the Japanese army either abandoned or killed them”.

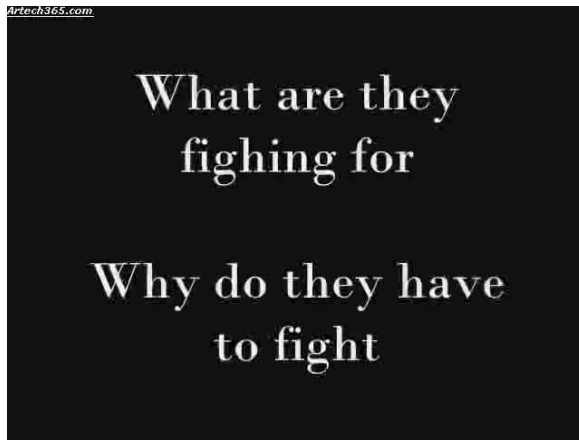
Then, the students returned to the present time, “And, March 2007..”



Figure 15 The current time in 2007

Here, the students questioned the past tragedy which had been still continued to

the present time throughout the comfort women's whole life.



*Figure 16 For what?*

apology, justice, human rights, the students put a question, "What are they fighting for... Why do they have to fight...?"

From the images of the elderly, who were comfort women in colonial period, they go on a sit-down to strike for Japanese



*Figure 17 Why?*

To attain the students' view of Japanese historical fault, they provided two different parties from the Japanese official statements and other opposite voices.

'Comfort women were common as Korea has many Gisaeng house. There is no evidence of forced recruitment' said by Japanese Prime Minister, 'Abe'.

'It is regrettable that the comfort women resolution is not based on facts' said by Japanese Foreign minister, 'Aso'.

'The Japan government don't accept the reality of what they did to our women. And they are just making an effort to conceal their shame history'. 'However, many people who are the leaders of their country demand to apologize to who were a comfort women forcibly at the war'.

'Japan should take historical responsibility and teach their young generation the truth' said Australian Prime Minister, 'Howard'.

'There is no doubt concerning the coercion of comfort women by the Japanese army' said Formal Japanese Prime Minister, 'Murayama'.

By critiquing the Japanese irresponsibility, the students mentioned that “they are saying that there is no evidence. But...they really don't have a conscience”. Then, their term, “conscience” is offered to more specific term as “tragic youth”, “Our people need apology of Japanese government. It is not just for the property. The thing that they really want to be apologized by Japan is their tragic youths”

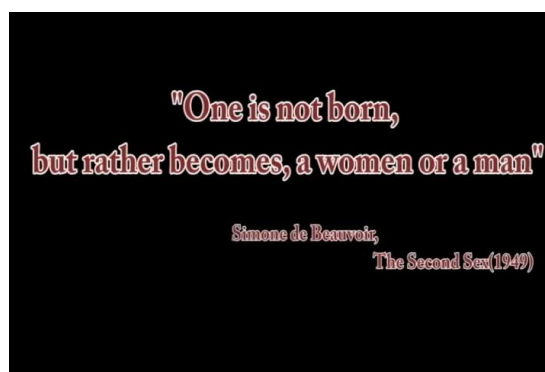
*Culture : Gender role*

The students show two babies in the naked. Although they are born as a boy or a girl biologically, the students speak that the babies do not have any certain social values and knowledge of gender roles. They are born without any biases toward/against a certain



*Figure 18 Babies 1*

social value and belief. With the image of the naked babies, the students describe the biological sex is given since ones are born. However, by using the quotation, they showed interests in socially constructed gender roles, which seems to be different from the definition of biological ‘sex’ given to ones who are born.



*Figure 19 The definition of gender*

To question of the concept of ‘gender’, first of all, the students provided audiences a familiar images of a naked baby girl and a baby boy in order to



identify ordinary person’s gender perception. “Can you distinguish the pictures? Who is a boy or a girl? Probably you can distinguish them as a boy or a girl. But

*Figure 20 Babies 2*

them(they) have another

sex...Gender” .

With the non-cultural perception of gender from the quotation, the students tried to question and identify how one’s gender perception to be a man and a woman gets constructed within a certain community such as parents, peers, school, and society. To do so, they showed dominant cultural images of a boy and a girl, a man or a woman who are familiar in everyday life.



*Figure 21 Babies 3*

“Is a girl and a boy just wearing their clothes or the cloths show a girl and a boy? (You that they are) what makes them look like boys or girls(?). Who influence on them?” By

connecting to everyday life and identifying the inherently dominant cultural representations such as pink for a girl and blue for a boy, the students critiqued that the fixed social dominant objectivity of gender roles makes it clear that a boy should wear a certain color of blue and a girl of pink. For the dominant cultural and social perception, they question who makes the children in that way.

The question helped the students to see how most people as well as children are educated by parents, peers, and society culturally and socially. Juxtaposing two different images about being a girl and a boy, the students got exposed to the critical discourse of



how the communities in power influence their gender identities and in them how children get to grow in the mainstream culture. That is, the dominant images of cultural objectivities of gender perceptions, which the students provided, were a strong mediation to stimulate the students' questions

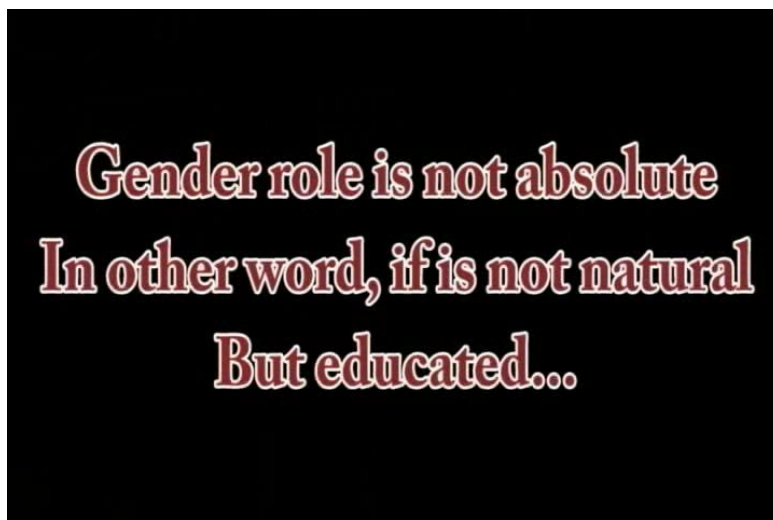
*Figure 22 Non-cultural assumption* of how we become a man and a woman in communities. Then the students tried to see a non-majority culture with the assumption, "if gender role changed..". They again juxtapose two images on a same scene, which offer to switched gender roles from the dominantly



*Figure 23 Changed gender roles*

expected ones. “A woman soldier vs. A man making Kimchi, a man nurse vs. a woman politician, a boy in female attire in a movie vs. a successful woman in a society, a transgender to a woman vs. a woman football athlete”.

The students show various images in reality which break up the dominant cultural values and knowledge of gender roles.



*Figure 24 Reconceptualization*

Although we are educated by a certain cultural, social values and knowledge, those values and knowledge are changed and adjusted by some reasons. By showing the contradiction between what we have learned and what we have seen in reality, the students gradually understood how they had been exposed to binary perceptions of gender. Finally, the students conclude their argument and resistance against the fixed perception of dominant gender role. “Gender is not absolute. In other words, it is not natural, but educated”. By analyzing the power relations of how the students are educated in different communities, they contextualized that gender roles are educated by dominant cultural objectivities.

## CHAPTER 6

### Contextualizing critical literacy in EFL pedagogy

In the Chapter 5, mainly I investigated the students' video-authoring data in order to explore how the students tried to adopt a critical discourse of power/knowledge, language, history, and culture. The students' video productions provided various pedagogical implications which the traditional EFL teaching and learning approaches had rarely invested and valued other than English linguistic acquisition skills. In this Chapter 6, I will examine how the students' critical literacy perceptions supported by a video-authoring project were contextualized when the students developed their argumentative English writings. Then, I will discuss some pedagogical implications which a critical literacy provides in the Korean particular educational context.

These evidences discovered from the EFL students' academic writings would provide both pedagogical possibilities and challenges in EFL classrooms where a critical literacy discourse is offered. Moreover, the practical contextualization of a critical literacy through students' English writing tasks would help EFL instructors to identify what a critical literacy tries to pursue, rather than merely emphasizing English language acquisition for communicative only.

From the traditional English educational perspective, the students' writing documents might be meaningless, since there are still lots of grammatical errors and inaccuracies. However, if the course aim of an EFL writing classroom is understood in the both students' English writing accuracy and their argumentative content development, this alternative EFL writing classroom might be a tentative example for EFL instructors



to be able to consider the pedagogical possibilities of a critical literacy approaches in EFL educational contexts.

From the perspective, in what follows, I explored how the students actually developed their argumentative academic writings through engaging in critical inquiry processes that the students deconstructed and reconstructed a certain social objectivity by developing their own understanding toward/against it.

### EFL academic writing 1: What is the purpose of an advertisement?

There are many commercials in our society. We can easily get information through the advertisements. On the other hand, there are many bad points regarding it. I would like to talk about the commercials' bad points. Especially I will focus on the advertisements of drinking. We can fluently see lots of drinking commercials. When we are taking a walk and watching TV so we naturally accept these as true.

Commercials are embossed with image of their products and make an effort to establish to consumer concerning their good image. Many entertainers who are very popular women appear on the drinking commercials, because they give us desire to drink. Why are the beautiful women appeared at the drinking commercials? Who is most likely to be interested in the advertisement? And who is the advertisement targeting?

..... They do not show us bad points and side effect from their goods. It's becoming a serious problem. Many children who are can't discriminate between right and wrong just believe what the commercials say. They are influenced by advertising.

There are a bunch of ads for alcohol in this big drinking country. We can see there are so many ads for alcohol on TV and street. Even of there is a law that alcohol ads have to broadcast after 10 p.m. are there any teenagers that go to sleep before 10p.m.? Also, if you see the ads you can see that they make the drinking person look very cool. They make the better drinker look like a better person so they are offering to you to drink. Many people watch TV, and sensitive teenagers watch it so I wish that they ads were produced more carefully. I want to inform you that Do not believe what you have seen since the fact might not be true.

(June 3, 2007, Bon's English academic writing)

By analyzing commercial images and language, Bon deconstructed the roots of commercial, strategical language uses and revealed the politics of knowledge production. From the writing, Bon is not a passive learner who silences their voices in English classrooms, but an active knowledge producer. What is important in this short writing is, although grammatical inaccuracies are frequently witnessed, Bon himself tied to build his

own understanding on a certain issue or knowledge in authorship. As a result, this can induce students active participation against traditional EFL classrooms.

### EFL academic writing 2: Gender role

Every people are born with sex, so a person's sex can be distinguished as a male or a female. But, people are not born with gender; accordingly gender role can not be distinguished as a man or a female. Because sex and gender are different. Simone De Beauvoir, Biography French writer, on *The Second Sex*, in 1949 said that 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman or man' It means that gender role is not coming from sex. If so, what makes people look like male or female? Who influence on gender role?

Firstly, parents make their children educate to be a boy or a girl. People have a fixed idea that boy should be masculine and girl should be feminine as they have lived. For example, parents give their boys robot and give their girls doll as a toy. Besides parents oblige their boys to have hair cut short and their girls to have hair cut long. It is that parents not just have their children wear clothes and have hair cut but teach them gender role.

Secondly, peers influence on gender. People live with peers. People mock a person who is different with themselves. If a man is wearing a skirt or his long hair or woman's boots and vise versa, probably other people feel so funny with that. Because appearances are different from themselves. However, almost people want to get along with many peers so people just follow invisible rules.

Finally, society obliges people to play gender role. There are some cases that career is classified by gender in society. For example, security guards are almost made up of man, and nurses are almost made up of woman. But people just adapt to society not to be alone.

In my conclusion, people are educated by such as parents, peers and society, while they are living. Gender role starts with fixed idea that women are weak but delicate and men are strong but not delicate. However, gender role is not absolute. In other word, it is not natural but educated.

(June 3, 2007, Hyung's English academic writing)

Most people do not question what they have assumed as the natural in their everyday life. What people have ignored, as Weedon (1987) points out, is that 'power' comes from its claim to be natural, obvious and therefore true. Here, Hyun pointed out that the social objectivity of gender roles is socially constructed through the discursive relations among power and various discourses from parents, peers, and social communities in their everyday lives.

### **Authorship in EFL academic writing**

#### *Authorship with students' experiences as cultural production*

Drawing upon Freire and Macedo's (1987) notions of tension to demystify one's social conformity in the relationships between dominant social objectivity and one's subjectivity, I have investigated how the Korean EFL students' subjectivities had been structured and how the students dealt with the tension in the EFL academic writing classroom. In this way, the students were exposed to critical discourse such as 'tension', 'contradiction', 'social stereotypes', and 'social norms and values'. The critical discourse helped the students identify how their personal features of experiences, histories, particular social values and beliefs, and knowledge were marginalized from the dominant social norms of objectivity.

The more problematic issue here is that the students did not even recognize that they might be left behind from the social dominant objectivity, as they encounter it in their everyday lives, through merely devaluing their situated individual ideas, attitudes, or knowledge. It seems that there is no exit for the Korean EFL students to get out of the dominant conceptions of objectivity, either educationally in their EFL learning strategies or ideologically in their everyday life. Consequently, the students are getting passive and are treated as the deviant from the objectivity.

Thus, a critical literacy urges us to consider how EFL students' cultural productions, which they bring to an EFL class, are able to be implemented to get them involved in 'authentic' literacy practice. Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanič, 2000 argue that life experiences are a repertoire of resources to contribute to each person's overall identity. It means that students' concrete reality and experiences are indispensable factors, to quote

Shor (1980), “as a means to develop literacy and consciousness” (p. 128). According to Shor (1980),

In a language project, reading and writing are legitimized as human activities because the class study turns towards daily life in a critical and dialogic fashion. The students are not lectured about the meaning of their reality, but rather engage in a self-regulating project through which they discover and report that meaning to each other (p. 196)

As Shor mentions, it is assumed that students are authentic knowledge owners regarding the meaning of their reality. By taking students’ life experiences and their knowledge in EFL classrooms, a critical literacy provides a critical discourse for students to identify and question the relationships of how their subjectivities, through their life experiences, are constructed and how social dominant codes of social knowledge and belief systems impact on their particular experiences and knowledge constructions. In this same way, Giroux (1987) clarifies that how students’ experiences function as a means for building a critical literacy.

human beings (as both teachers *and* students) within particular social and cultural formations are the starting point for analyzing not only how they actively construct their own experiences within ongoing relations of power, but also how the social construction of such experiences provides them with the opportunity to give meaning and expression to their own needs and voices as part of a project of self and social empowerment. (p. 7)

In this process, students understand the politics that explain how dominant social values and knowledge are permeated in society and in their everyday life. They reflect on themselves as social beings, and position their existences as situated beings, not unitary subjective ones.

Therefore, Giroux (1987) points out that developing a cultural politics of a critical literacy becomes a necessary starting point for enabling students, who have taken passive attitudes and positions and have been silenced from even their knowledge production, to reclaim the authorship of their own lives. In addition, a critical literacy helps to attempt various pedagogical challenges and possibilities for building students' empowerment and emancipation in their learning practices in a different way from traditional educational approaches. In doing so, Giroux (1997) illustrates that students understand how to challenge socially dominant knowledge that arises due to "the reductionism and mechanism of the quantitative measures of thinking that permeate the school" (Kincheloe 1993, p. 60). They recognize how power works differently as both a productive and dominating force, enabling them to see the world from different point of views, and question fixed social values and knowledge that are regarded as the neutral in everyday life.

In a similar vein, drawing a 'puppet' in my study was an appropriate example for the students to identify and to recognize how power could work and how they could be constrained by the fixed social values and knowledge in their life. Through disturbing the taken-for-grantedness in their everyday lives, including their educational experiences, students gradually built their critical consciousness. leading them to perceive "how his or her political opinions, religious beliefs, gender role, racial self-concept, or educational perspectives had been influenced by the dominant culture" (Kincheloe 1993, p. 109).

With this perspective, a critical literacy helps traditional EFL educators to identify what they are rarely considering in their English teaching practices. That is, a critical literacy suggests that Korean EFL learning and teaching should be designed as human

activities, centered on Korean EFL students' experiences and knowledge in order to demystify biased realities prepackaged by the dominant cultural social values and knowledge. Seemingly, it might still sound irrelevant to EFL teaching and learning because it does not talk about English linguistic acquisition. However, this skepticism is still due to the traditional definition of English learning and teaching. Although the progress with which the students improve in their English learning practices is shown very slowly, this slow progress will facilitate the students to authorize what they are doing in creating their work.

In other words, by participating in English inquiry projects, EFL students take an active attitude toward building their own knowledge production with authorship by using their own cultural production, as the students in my study did in their video-authoring projects and English academic writing. Here, this makes it possible to think English language can be defined as a powerful analytical tool for reading the world as a construction of the texts students consume and produce (France, 1994), by going beyond a biased focus on English language uses. This understanding of English language legitimizes EFL educators to attempt their EFL pedagogical applications in various ways.

#### *Student-led pedagogical practices with Students' motivation and self-confidence*

In the previous section, I paid attention to the pedagogical values of students' cultural production in a critical literacy practice. The cultural production is invisible; instead, it is reflected through students' experiences. In other words, one's experiences have a lot of pedagogical implications depending on how they are implanted in class.

At this point, it would be appropriate to consider students' 'authorship' in depth, in relation to practicing students' experiences as cultural production. The term

‘authorship’ is not a quite familiar term in the Korean EFL educational field. Instead, EFL teachers and students are well-acquainted with the notions of students’ motivation and self-confidence as one of students’ learning factors and strategies for effective English acquisition. There is a lot of research about the pedagogical functions and impacts of students’ motivation and self-confidence in EFL/ESL education. Many of the findings from research have provided significant contributions to effective teaching and learning in current EFL/ESL areas. Mostly, those studies have paid attention to examining how EFL/ESL students’ motivation and self-confidence are incorporated into EFL/ESL acquisition. More specifically, they primarily investigate how effectively certain pedagogical activities and particular teaching assistance cultivate students’ motivation and confidence and as a result, how such students’ motivation and confidence affect EFL/ESL acquisition. For this, most EFL/ESL research employs certain devices to explore the pedagogical effectiveness for raising students’ motivation and self-confidence.

In a similar vein, Kil (2004) examines how team-teaching by a native English teacher and a Korean English teacher increases positive influences on students’ motivation, self-confidence, risk-taking, and anxiety. With a special teaching device of ‘team-teaching’, Kil (2004) refers to the effectiveness of team-teaching in a Korean English classroom, which elicits students’ motivation and self-confidence as well as anxiety. In addition, Kim, Lee, and Cho (2006) present that English language learning enhances individual students’ learning progress in performing their jobs. They analyze the data along with an ARCS Model in which Keller (1983) develops four major steps of motivational design (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction). As they mention in their findings, students showed high levels of “instrumental motivation”

(Gardner & Lambert, 1972), which emphasizes practical functions and extrinsic results for improving students' test scores. Thus, Kim, Lee, and Cho (2006) claim that English language learning is a crucial motivational device and positively understood as an effective assistance for acquiring English language skills. As briefly shown in the two different examples of Korean research, much of the EFL/ESL students' motivation and confidence are mostly concerned with the examination of pedagogical tools or a device's effectiveness for improving students' English acquisition.

The question which I want to raise here is that while the two studies greatly introduce particular teaching and learning practices for boosting students' interests and further their learning motivation and confidence, they rarely focus on the issue of how students' motivation and confidences are built when English teachers use particular motivational approaches. Especially, it is crucial to provide information on the reasons students' motivation and confidence are activated with a specific pedagogical tool. Otherwise, the studies of students' motivation and confidence cannot avoid the following questions: Does it mean that if students do not continue taking the course or they do take other courses using different kinds of teaching assistance, the students' motivation and confidence are not guaranteed or even decreased?, Do teachers always need to provide new teaching assistance tools and activities for students to boost and keep their motivation and confidence in language learning? This superficial understanding of students' motivation and confidence makes a lot of EFL/ESL teachers merely try to look for new, fresh teaching activities and practices for temporarily stimulating students' motivation and confidence.



However, what we incessantly face is that although the pedagogical effectiveness of specific teaching activities and practices is monitored to some extent by EFL students' English acquisition and achievement, the students' passive attitudes and poor participation still remain. What does this signify? Merely providing alternative teaching and learning activities and practices for English acquisition might not satisfy a rationale that would explain why EFL students participate in their learning practices in authorship. To put it another way, while traditional motivational approaches of using a specific teaching aid in EFL education can support students' instant interests and motivation for acquiring some English skills, these approaches still pay little attention to understanding how students become empowered by using their own experiences as a specific motivational tool. Connecting students' experiences to their motivation for learning exhibits how teachers could apply EFL students' cultural production to building their learning interests. It also addresses how a teacher can promote students to shape their own subject position and motivation in authorship, through active participation in the motivational approach.

Rather than merely regarding students' motivation and confidence as effective factors for amplifying EFL/ESL acquisition, the prerequisite for using a specific motivational tool is to understand the complexity of how students' motivation and confidence are generated, and further to recognize the generation of students' motivation and confidence from the process, so that students experience authorship shaped by identifying their own values and voices in their learning progress. In addition to that, EFL teachers might discuss how they would design a learner-centered EFL classroom, which

most EFL teachers have always stuck to as a dream classroom, but one they could not make.

*Knowledge production as critical social action*

By inviting a critical literacy notion and the practical application of video-authoring project in an EFL writing class, various pedagogical implications were revealed in the processes which the students had participated in. Through participating in the process which they deconstructed the fixed conceptual social values and belief of what they have believed in an EFL writing classroom, the students' positive learning attitudes were gradually observed with the understanding of how their voices of the social values and knowledge could be authored with their intellectual power, not within passivity of their own voices. In particular, when the students produced the second video-authoring projects, their participation for creating their own meaning-making of certain knowledge or a social value took up positive attitudes with respecting their knowledge. Rather taking up a passive participation in their own group discussions, the students positively contributed their various understandings of a certain issue which they wanted to develop in the video-authoring project and essay.

In the process of building the students' own knowledge, their gradual critical awareness against/toward the fixed conceptual social values and belief was revealed through identifying and exploring how their understandings have been structured and regulated by both the traditional educational EFL structures and dominant conceptual social norms. Although it is elusive to define clearly if students are empowered in the aim of building a critical awareness, the struggles and conflicts, raised on the way the students

participated in their own group/class discussions and practices originated from a critical literacy discourse, are the noticeable points that help me to investigate how the struggles and conflicts disrupted the students' conceptions toward/against what the students have believed and how they impacted the students' critical positions and actions on a certain issue.

In this way, the students experienced the discontinuity in the process where the students negotiate and reconstruct the dominant social, cultural conceptual structures of what the students have strongly assumed as the taken-for-grantedness. That is, the discontinuity through struggles and conflicts formed between the traditional fixed conception of pedagogical and social assumptions and a critical discourse awareness leads the students to consider 'contradiction', which they never questioned and recognized before, in their alternative English learning experiences and knowledge production in the alternative EFL writing classroom. The constant attempts to disrupt the fixed social conceptual structures and dominant assumptions of English learning elicit the students to question their status quo which is inherently structured by dominant social values and even themselves. At the issue here is that by exposing to the new conceptualization against the dominant educational social values and belief, the students authorize what they develop as their own knowledge and their voices.

### **A Critical Media Literacy by using a video-authoring project**

With its theoretical grounding in a critical literacy, the study focused on teaching strategies and practices for how the Korean EFL students can apply the critical perspectives in their English writing class. As one of the pedagogical practices for this EFL academic writing class, the integration of technology, via a video-authoring project,

into the classroom proved to be an excellent critical inquiry tool for the Korean EFL students to contextualize critical discourse by producing their own arguments in the video projects. In a Korean EFL academic writing class, the alternative pedagogical practice of a video-authoring project helped Korean EFL educators to reconsider the possible pedagogical applications for eliciting EFL students' inquiry learning. That is, rather than maintaining the traditional EFL teaching and learning approach merely focusing on English language acquisition, EFL educators need to develop an English inquiry curriculum for EFL students so they can take part in English literacy practices by actively using their own subjective knowledge and values in English language classrooms.

According to the findings from this study, when the students become authorized by themselves to value their subjectivity, their class participations were actively increased with them taking responsibility on their own, although the instructors did not ask this in their requirements. This implies that although EFL students find it critical to acquire English linguistic skills and strategies for good English proficiency, I believe their prerequisite requirement to achieving English acquisition would be that they find, by themselves, the validity of English acquisition as a necessary tool for their knowledge presentation. To do so, the current Korean EFL teaching and learning paradigm might struggle to reach that aim, since the ultimate goal in current English education is mainly focused on merely mastering English language skills. In particular, of most concern is that it give EFL students a preplanned goal and meet the needs of why they participate in English learning in Korean society. Thusly structured, the traditional English classrooms can hardly find the pedagogical opportunity for the students to speak out from their own voices and knowledge.

Therefore, to extend EFL students' active participation with their subjective cultural production in their English language classes, this study shows that it is valuable to consider how to effectively integrate a critical literacy and a video-authoring project as alternative English language instruction. For this, the study provides some pedagogical possibility for how to combine a critical literacy and a video-authoring project. In particular, while the students develop their own knowledge as the argument for their English academic writing, the use of media representations helps the students contextualize and visualize how the dominant social norms and values provided by cultural media representations of beauty, gender, race, or social class regulate and constrain the formation of their subjectivity. Thus, the curriculum development of a critical media literacy and the use of the technology of a video-authoring project could be expanded to apply to connecting EFL reading, speaking, listening, and writing as I did in this study.

*A critical media literacy with a video-authoring project*

Media is one of the most powerful resources for belief and value construction today. Kellner (2003) describes how the media culture is closely tied to people's everyday lives, consciously or unconsciously.

The media contribute to educating us how to behave and what to think, feel, believe, fear, and desire- and what not to. The media are forms of pedagogy that teach us how to be men and women. They show us how to dress, look, and consume; how to react to members of different social groups; how to be popular and successful and how to avoid failure; and how to conform to the dominant system of norms, values, practices, and institutions. (Kellner 2003, p. 10)

According to Kellner, media culture might be strongly involved in the formation of people's perceptions regarding what is appropriate or what is not. It means that media is a powerful knowledge bank; it educates people into certain social beliefs and values. It also signifies that it is necessary for educators in educational institutions to consider media culture as a pedagogical pathway, so that students are able to explore the politics of media culture and how media culture teaches people with a certain purpose, how it familiarizes people with this purpose, and how to become aware of the hidden politics of media culture. From this perspective, it has been suggested that media culture is a genre of literacy in schooling (Giroux & Simon, 1989; Kellner, 1993; McLaren, Hammer, Sholle, & Reilly, 1995).

Hammer (1995) argues that we need to stress the relationship of one subject to another, and the relationship of subjects to everyday life, not merely teaching certain knowledge by itself. This is also the way for an ideological act to be visualized, through exploring the discursive relations of one subject to others. Furthermore, this is the way students come to understand how their subjectivities have been constructed in relation to institutional social beliefs and values in their everyday lives. This provides students pedagogical tension and awareness between subjectivity and objectivity.

From this perspective, Steinberg and Kincheloe (1995) urge that educators and cultural workers must consider the complex politics of media representation in their teaching curriculum if they are interested in who students are and how their subjectivities are formed. Steinberg and Kincheloe (1995) suggest the pedagogical possibilities of how ideological acts constructed by underlying social beliefs and values are produced in media representations and how people's subjectivities are formed by and against them.

In order to provide students an opportunity to explore the politics of media culture in their everyday lives, Beach and Myers (2001), in particular, have proposed a reconceptualization of English literacy: why and how such a critical media literacy, including many social cultural worlds and topics, is formulated in an English language classroom. According to them, students should learn that worlds are constructed through language and texts. In addition, since outside the classroom students are highly engaged with using language, signs, and texts to build relationships, develop a sense of belonging with others, and navigate the competing demands of institutions, they need to understand how language and texts are used within everyday life to construct meaning. Likewise, Giroux and Simon (1989) argue that it is well to give “consideration [to] how the symbolic and material transactions of the everyday provide the basis for rethinking how people give meaning and ethical substance to their experiences and voices” (p. 237).

Consequently, a critical media literacy implies dynamic pedagogical possibilities and challenges for EFL students to explore and use English language and texts in authorship by inviting their subjectivity in the Korean EFL classrooms. EFL students’ English use as a social interactive tool would help EFL students to authorize themselves as legitimized English users in ownership.

### **Limitation and implications of a critical literacy in a Korean EFL context**

Stringer, Angello, Baldwin, Christensen, Henry, Henry, K., Katt, Nason, Newman, Petty, and Tinsley-Batson (1997) claim that language teaching and learning should be a dynamic process that contains broad dimensions of human experiences related to social lives and to the “whole person”. In a critical literacy, the fundamental theoretical

framework leads the alternative conception of language learning and teaching to developing multilayered pedagogical possibilities and challenges by inviting students' experiences in their lives. However, while theoretical notions of a critical literacy insightfully point to which educational issues the traditional language classroom has ignored, what has been less focused upon, and also what possible educational directions language educators should consider, these notions have been researched and applied within limited educational contexts. Thus, if the theoretical notions of a critical literacy are applied in EFL educational contexts, it would be vital to consider what kinds of concerns and struggles are expected in a particular situation of EFL learning practices. Accordingly, it is valuable to touch the pedagogical concerns which can be raised when a critical literacy is applied in an EFL classroom.

Although there are a lot of advocates for attempting the theoretical notions of a critical literacy, teaching practitioners who face an actual language teaching practice have been in trouble with applying and developing the practical applications suitable to a particular teaching context. More specifically, the attempts to apply a critical literacy will inevitably encounter various challenges and struggles in an EFL educational context like a Korean EFL classroom. Most theoretical frameworks illustrated in a critical literacy have been mainly developed from the particular social, cultural and political contexts in North and South America with their controversial social issues such as race, gender, class and so forth, which have been produced from the particular dominant social values and belief systems. Needless to say, the pivotal theoretical notions of a critical literacy in relation to the social issues of race, gender, or class provide a meta-analytical discourse to question and explore similar issues in the world. However, rather than following the steps



of the previous findings from the researches conducted in the particular Western contexts, it is necessary that EFL educators and practitioners invest the effort to consider how they adapt the notions of a critical literacy to their EFL educational contexts by understanding and examining the particular local features and contingencies raised within EFL teaching and learning.

In fact, in considering local features and contingencies expected in EFL educational contexts, most Western advocates for a critical literacy deal with the politics of literacy as language with their mother tongue. For instance, English language as the first language in North America, or a particular local language in South America, is regarded as a pedagogical tool to encourage language teachers and students to develop their critical consciousness on social dominant ideologies. In this perspective, Freire (1985) claims that the idea of literate people does not merely refer to people who are able to just read and write a written text, but to the ones who understand who they are in relation to reality. Since they use their own mother tongues for cultivating critical consciousness in critical literacy classrooms, it is rarely described how a critical literacy is applied for the students who do learn a foreign or second language. In the EFL educational context, where EFL students should take part in two pedagogical challenges of raising a critical consciousness and improving English linguistic skills, EFL students cannot help facing a double-burden to meet the goals of critical literacy. Accordingly, it is an urgent issue and a major concern for EFL educators and practitioners to examine how the local contingencies in EFL educational contexts are dealt with in EFL learning and teaching practices in order to apply a critical literacy in this context.

However, although there are the expected considerable challenges to inviting a critical literacy in EFL educational contexts, the pedagogical possibilities implicated from a critical literacy overwhelm the challenges expected in an EFL classroom. With the particular pedagogical orientation of a critical literacy toward language learning and teaching, against the excessive traditional linguistic focus, my research attempted to apply a critical literacy in an EFL classroom has yielded many productive opportunities to discover educational possibilities for filling the gap between concerns raised from the traditional EFL educational conceptions and the issues of practical applications of a critical literacy.

### **Conclusion**

Drawing upon critical literacy and pedagogy, this study was designed to engage the Korean EFL students who participate in English learning practices merely to master English linguistic skills and knowledge. I wanted to adapt this alternative English language learning opportunity to the current Korean EFL context. Although it was taking a risk for me to apply a critical literacy in the context of EFL educational research, I believed this would provide valuable pedagogical challenges for EFL students who have been collectively taught with a focus on English linguistic acquisition. This research also suggested the pedagogical possibilities and challenges of students' identification with and questions about the ways their lived experiences may have been influenced by the dominant media culture and fixed social knowledge. The students' engagement in critical inquiry processes led them to see socio-cultural contradictions, tensions and negotiations, and provided a site for positioning themselves between the self and others.

Furthermore, it is necessary to recognize that while a reconceptualization of English education is mainly focusing on challenges and possibilities of English language, it also produces other constraints and restrictions by defining a particular meaning for English education. A notable point here is that students might be educated and structured under the recognition of what the features are of language. That is, this reconceptualization is another constraint and restriction for EFL students, yet at the same time, it is not. Rather, as Freire points out, it is just continuous tension. Although I argue the need of a new perspective of Korean EFL education, this is not a terminal point I will pursue forever. Tensions raised from the different views of pedagogical paradigms should be continued as a dialectical dynamic.

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# VITA

## Sunyoung Park

### EDUCATION

- Current      Doctor of Philosophy  
Language and Literacy Education, Curriculum and Instruction  
The Pennsylvania State University, College of Education, University Park,  
PA
- 2000 -2002    M. A. in Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Language –  
Multimedia Assisted Language Learning (TESOL-MALL)  
Woosong University, Daejeon, South Korea
- 1996-2000    B.A. in English Language Communication  
Woosong University, Daejeon, South Korea

### WORK EXPERIENCE

- Instructor, *ESL academic writing I*, Fall 2008, Pennsylvania State University, PA
- Instructor, *Studies in contemporary issues for EFL writing*, Spring 2007,  
Woosong University, Daejeon, Korea
- Instructor, *English reading/English communication*, 2003-2004, Woosong  
University, Daejeon, Korea
- ESL/EFL Teacher, 2001-2003, Boston English Language Institute, Daejeon,  
Korea
  
- Teaching Assistant for Jamie Myers: *Language and Literacy Education  
411*(LLED secondary block 411: Area-Critical media literacy and technology),  
2005 – 2007
- Consultant for student teachers, 2005 -2006, The Pennsylvania State University,  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Professional Development  
Schools (PDS) secondary English education program