Freirean Dialogue: An Effective Pedagogy for Critical Peace Education

Gülistan Gürsel-Bilgin

Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Education, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey

Corresponding Author: Gülistan Gürsel-Bilgin, gulistan.bilgin@boun.edu.tr

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Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Education, Bogazici University, Istanbul, Turkey

ORCID: http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9987-7982

Abstract

Dialogue promises fundamental opportunities for peace education pedagogy even in the hidden culture of war and violence in varying educational settings. However, despite remarkable theoretical literature focusing on critical dialogue, there is a need for reconceptualizing dialogue in the light of Paulo Freire's ideas. This paper discusses dialogue as an effective pedagogy for critical peace education. Towards this goal, it first presents an overview of the concept of dialogue. The second part of the paper provides a discussion of dialogue in critical peace education. In the concluding section, it is suggested that Freirean dialogue is a powerful pedagogy to fulfill the aims of critical peace education. It is also highlighted that research and practice regarding employing dialogue as a transformative pedagogy should be investigated and cultivated by peace educators in ways relevant to various contexts.

Freire Diyaloğu: Eleştirel Barış Eğitimi için Etkili Bir Pedagoji

Öz

Diyalog, çeşitli eğitim ortamlarında gizli savaş ve şiddet kültüründe bile barış eğitimi pedagojisi için temel fırsatlar vaat ediyor. Bununla birlikte, eleştirel diyaloğa odaklanan dikkate değer kuramsal alanyazına rağmen, Paulo Freire'in fikirlerinin ışığında diyaloğu yeniden kavramsallaştırma ihtiyacı vardır. Bu makale, diyaloğu eleştirel barış eğitimi için etkili bir pedagoji olarak incelemektedir. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışma önce diyalog kavramına genel bir bakış sunmaktadır. İkinci bölüm diyaloğun eleştirel barış eğitimindeki yerini tartışmaktadır. Sonuç bölümünde, Freire diyaloğunun, eleştirel barış eğitiminin hedeflerini gerçekleştirmek için güçlü bir pedagoji olduğu önerilmektedir. Diyaloğu dönüştürücü bir pedagoji olarak kullanmaya ilişkin araştırma ve uygulamanın barış eğitimcileri tarafından çeşitli bağlamlarla ilgili şekillerde araştırılması ve geliştirilmesi gerektiği de vurgulanmaktadır.

Introduction

In an attempt to draw attention to the complexities and challenges of dialogic pedagogy, this paper proposes Paulo Freire's dialogue as an essential foundation for teaching peace. Dialogue has been emphasized as the foundation of teaching and learning by Freire himself and several of his followers. Although literature abounds on dialogue as a theoretical notion, there is an undeniable need to further explore the complexities and challenges of critical dialogue practice in varying educational settings (Gürsel-Bilgin, 2020).

This study explores dialogical method of emancipatory education as it relates to critical peace education in three sections. The manuscript opens with an overview of the notion of dialogue. The second section explores dialogue practices in formal and nonformal educational settings briefly. The guiding question for this section is what are examples of educational practices that incorporate dialogue? The third section discusses Freire's basic notions in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) as essential attributes of dialogue practices to raise students' critical consciousness. The goal of this section is to emphasize the unique potential of Freirean dialogue in achieving the goals of peace education. Finally, possible challenges in employing Freirean dialogue in ways relevant to various contexts are briefly discussed as well as ideas regarding promising future directions in empirical research and practice.

Defining the Notion of Dialogue

> In human societies there will always be differences of views and interests. But the reality today is that we are all interdependent and have to co-exist on this small planet. Therefore, the only sensible and intelligent way of resolving differences and clashes of interests, whether between individuals or nations, is through dialogue. (The Dalai Lama, 1997)

With the dawn of the 21st century, human beings are realizing more than ever the indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated nature of all peoples of the world, which creates a unity that is unique to our times. With this awareness, comes a necessity for genuine dialogue. The word *genuine* sounds peculiar when used together with the concept of *dialogue* because the notion of dialogue involves the attribute of authenticity already. However, I am urged to use *genuine* and *dialogue* together due to the most frequent usage of the word *dialogue* with a superficial connotation (e.g., any type of communication between and/or among individuals). Therefore, this section is an attempt to illustrate what dialogue really refers to and its valuable capacity, both as a process and pedagogy, for those who are serious about fostering a peaceful future.

The challenge before us is to make this century a century of dialogue (The Dalai Lama, 1997). However, in order to be able to rise to this challenge, it is essential to acquire what dialogue entails. Deriving from the Greek word *dialogos* in which *dia* means *through* or *across* and *logos* means *meaning* (Bohm, 1996), dialogue refers to both a quality of relationship arising, however briefly, between two or more people, and a way of thinking about human affairs highlighting their dialogic qualities (Cissna & Anderson, 1998). In a dialogic perspective on communication, meaning emerges from the encounter between self and other, necessitating a perception of self as in constant process of *becoming* thanks to and through the relationship with others. In other words, one exists and develops in dialogue with others.

In the vast literature of dialogue, it is difficult to provide a comprehensive overview of the field in the scope of this paper. However, Buber's approach to dialogue is one of the commonly acknowledged traditions in the related literature (Anderson et al., 1994; Baxter, 2004; Cissna & Anderson, 1998; Hammond, 2003). Martin Buber's (1878-1965) dialogical tradition, derived largely from the writings of Buber among other similar minded philosophers, theologians, and psychotherapists, considered dialogue as a form of human relation (Cissna & Anderson, 1998). Buber highlighted three major components of dialogue:

> (a) an awareness that others are unique and whole persons, encouraging a turning toward the other and imagining the reality of the other; (b) a genuineness or authenticity that does not mandate full disclosure, but suggests that dialogic partners are not pretending and are not holding back what needs to be said; and (c) a respect for the other that inclines one not to impose but to help the reality and possibility of the other unfold (Anderson et al., 1994, p. 196).

In Buber's assertion, the fundamental fact of human existence is the interaction between human beings. He put dialogue at the heart of human communication and existence because he believed that dialogue promotes the development of self, personality, and knowledge. In Buber's dialogical philosophy, there are two primary human relations or attitudes: I-Thou and I-It. The I-Thou relationship is dialogical as each communication participant demonstrates particular qualities such as mutuality, open-heartedness, directness, honesty, spontaneity, frankness, lack of pretense, non-manipulative intent, communion, intensity, and love in the sense of responsibility of one individual for another. The I-It relationship, on the other hand, is monological, comprising of impersonal or non-personal communication. In this type of relationship, the individual is observed, classified, measured, or analyzed as an object rather than encountered as a whole person. The attitudes or behaviours of each communication participant are

characterized in varying degrees by self-centeredness, deception, pretense, display, artifice, using, profit, unapproachableness, seduction, domination, exploitation, and manipulation. Thus, I-It relations, although unavoidable sometimes, may become evil, predomination of human life and increasingly shutting out dialogue (Buber, 1958; 1965; as cited in Johannesen, 2000). Buber put forth four main attitudinal dimensions of dialogue: authenticity (being direct, honest, and straightforward in communication), inclusion (attempting to "see the other," to "experience the other side," to "imagine the real," the reality of the other's viewpoint for that person), confirmation (non-possessive concern for the other), and presentness (giving full concentration to bring one's total and authentic being to the encounter) (Johannesen, 2000).

The short sections below display examples of dialogic practices in two different contexts: 1) dialogue practices in societies engaged in intractable conflicts, and 2) dialogue practices in societies that are not engaged in intractable conflicts. In doing so, I intend to underpin particular complexities and challenges related to dialogue practices as well as its benefits in peace education practices in various contexts and point to possible directions for future theoretical and practical dialogue work. The examples of dialogic practices in two different contexts below are not exhaustive in any means, but rather aims at giving a glance of what is being or has been done in the field.

Dialogue Practices in Societies Engaged in Intractable Conflicts

Dialogue is increasingly becoming one of the central methods applied in societies engaged in intractable conflicts, or multicultural societies experiencing tensions among majority and minority groups (Hantzopoulos, 2008). These encounter programs, guided by the principle that face-to-face contact can eventually reduce intergroup tension (Yablon, 2007), generally aim to change the group members' pre-conceived perceptions of each other and consequently develop a sense of mutual responsibility toward the "Other" (and each other); and/or to promote understanding and collaboration, improve equality and co-existence among the group members (Salomon, 2002; Yablon, 2007). In line with Freirean key terms, such as consciousness-raising, democratic teacher-student relationships, and coconstruction of knowledge in encounter groups, dialogue serves as a means towards transforming relationships among conflicting or minority/majority groups by creating spaces in which all parties are ostensibly granted equal voices. The ultimate goal of these contact or encounter programs is that the transformative relations created among the group members will affect the broader society and promote peaceful co-existence in both spheres (Hantzopoulos, 2008).

Despite being a core and fundamental notion in gradually more co-existence programs among groups whose people or nations have been engaged in conflict in various corners of the world, dialogue is a noticeably innocuous and often taken-for-granted notion. Although several researchers (e.g., Abu-Nimmer, 2004; Bar-Tal, 2004; Dahl, 2009; Feuerverger, 2001; Schimmel, 2009) confirm the beneficial effects of these peace education programs by emphasizing their potential to construct peace, other scholars have acknowledged particular limitations of these programs as well.

Hantzopoulos (2008), a co-existence dialogue facilitator, makes a significant point when she emphasizes that the notion of dialogue implemented as a means to building co-existence in the abovementioned programs is contextually bound and often fraught with tension especially when competing interests and larger structural inequalities are at play. She criticizes the general assumption that "micro-level interactions among people in a conflicted area can transform macro-level asymmetries within that broader yet localized contexts (and conflict)" (Hantzopoulos, 2008, p. 24). According to her, this perspective fails to recognize how these micro-level interactions might also be beholden to the macro-level asymmetries. Referring to the co-existence initiatives among Israelis and Palestinians, she quotes two provocative questions posed by a recent *Economist* article, "If so many people are intent on making peace, why hasn't it happened by now? Or more fairly: do such co-existence projects change anything for the good?" (2007).

Drawing from her practical experience, especially in conflicting societies (e.g., North and South Cyprus; Israel and Palestine), post-structural and feminist theories, and participant interviews, Hantzopoulos (2008) underlines the hidden costs of bringing folks together from conflicting sides and asks, "How might dialogue obscure or ignore latent power dynamics among participants in the attainment of 'peace' and co-existence?" (p. 24). Her self-reflection over her practice of co-existence dialogue in South and North Cyprus raises outstanding concerns:

> Questions that complicate how peace is defined, embodied, manifested, performed, and experienced, by whom and for what reason(s), in what locales and at what time are often completely ignored (perhaps even deliberately) in the well-intentioned design of such dialogue programs (Hantzopoulos, 2008, p. 25).

Due to her findings regarding the potential (un)intended consequences of *doing* dialogue (i.e., harm and violence), she proposes a shift from solely running face-to-face intergroup encounters towards mono-cultural affinity spaces in which group members can contest, engage, and challenge more freely. Hantzopoulos' (2008) reflections and findings also point to asymmetrical power relations, and caution dialogue facilitators and practitioners about the potential risks of any attachment to a specific idealistic vision.

The related literature also has findings evidencing particular benefits of intergroup encounters. To illustrate, in a research study considering religion as a possible tool for achieving positive intergroup encounters, Yablon (2010) examines the contributions of religious content of peace encounters between Israeli Jewish and Muslim Arab high school

students. For this purpose, they randomly assign 255 eleventh-grade Jewish and Muslim students into three groups: encounters based on religious content, encounters based on social content, and a control group. The findings of this study using a randomized control trail research design reveal that religion as a common denominator for different national and social groups can be used for enhancing tolerance and understanding between conflict groups. Although religion is often considered a challenging topic to handle especially in encounter practices, the findings of this study are significant in that they can inform future peace education program to promote dialogue practices incorporating religious elements in intergroup encounters and other contexts.

Another empirical study devoted to the complexities and aesthetic of peaceful co-existence program classrooms of an elementary school in a village where Israelis and Palestinians are involved reveals highly innovative discourse of peacemaking through dialogue in a formal educational setting (Feuerverger, 2011). The reflective analysis of the interviews carried out with teachers and students in that elementary school demonstrate the moral dilemmas and complex interrelationships among the villagers at all levels of discourse. This study explores the interconnected settings of the school and village as "a moral community" within a larger social-political setting of intergroup conflict through the researcher's (as the participant-observer) lens (Feuerverger, 2011, p. 53). While presenting the village as a symbol for creating a dialogue between Muslims and Jews in the larger Israeli society, the author illustrates the dialectic relationship between language and thought in practical educational settings portrayed by several distinguished scholars (e.g., Bakhtin, 1981; Dewey, 1938; Vygotsky, 1962). This way, the findings of this study point that the bilingual (multilingual) classroom, especially the ones situated in an intergroup conflict area, must be a space where dialogue is seen as an essential way to relate authentically to one another through collaboration, reflection, and expression (Kaiser & Short, 1998; as cited in Feuerverger, 2011). This kind of "thoughtful" teaching and learning as a transformative process embodies Freire's revolutionary perspective of social liberation and the significance and power of love in educational and all forms of human reforms (Kaiser & Short, 1998; as cited in Feuerverger, 2011, p. 48).

Dialogue Practices in Societies That are not Engaged in Intractable Conflicts
Dialogue as originates back to Socratic method has long been a foundation of Western pedagogical traditions. In this method, the shared dialogue among the individuals in the classroom (i.e., the teacher and students) aims to actively engage learners with critical thinking processes through questioning. The related literature evidences beneficial ways dialogue has and can be employed to practice peace education in various formal educational contexts. For example, interested in possible ways of encouraging critical reflection on violence, conflict and futures, Hutchinson and Herborn (2012) use the landscape as a learning resource in peace, environmental and futures education to open dialogue about alternatives. They criticize conventional imagination to be foreclosed, mono-cultural mappings. On the other hand, creative, enriched imagination, as they maintain, provides useful contexts for cross-cultural mappings. Therefore, in this case study of active learning about urban environments and the future, the authors use the landscape as a resource in peace and futures education to encourage students to get out of the conventional classroom or even outside the virtual worlds of the Internet. By using the urban walk component to facilitate dialogue and reflection, they claim that the emphasis, in peace and futures education, "is on questions rather than answers; dialogue rather than monologue; epistemological pluralism rather than hegemony; sources of hope and resilience rather than despair, denial or fatalism about the future" (Hutchinson & Herborn, 2012, p. 27). The issues emerging in their conversations with their students as part of their learning journeys point to the constructive potential of urban walks as a peace and futures education technique to promote dialogue.

There is also evidence that practicing peace education in public educational settings can be challenging and complicated. To illustrate, drawing on curriculum as a privileged discourse (Apple, 1999), and some educational practices legitimating and reinforcing structural and/or overt violence (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2004; Weinstein et al., 2007; Williams, 2004), Bickmore's (2011) thought-provoking study demonstrates, despite the rhetoric of public schooling affirming democracy and social justice goals, how "actually-implemented anti-violence and conflict resolution initiatives in certain urban Canadian schools emphasized peacekeeping and negative peace far more than democratic peacebuilding transformation" (p. 89). As the author critically probes, the implications of such "peace" education underpin the gendered, racialized social inequalities. In line with several peace scholars (e.g., Bekerman & McGlynn, 2007; Lederach, 1995; Salomon & Nevo, 2002), this study bluntly validates how explicit peace education practice at schools may emphasize disproportionately "negative peace" that means cessation or temporary prevention of overt violence (p. 88). This study sheds light on the enormous challenge that any peace education effort in (at least Canadian) public schools must operate in the context of hegemonic patriarchal structure, while possibly trying to transform it from within.

The examples discussed above show that dialogue, when employed effectively, has the potential to give voice to the voiceless and transform the present realities even in the context of hegemonic patriarchal structures and divided societies. However, the above literature also points to the need for reconceptualization of the theoretical knowledge on dialogue and improved dialogue practice in different contexts. Given the limited, if any, peace-focused education support and training during teacher education and in-service trainings, prospective and practicing teachers are most often

left alone in developing skills for incorporating critical dialogue in their instruction (Carter, 2010). Dialogue practitioners in various contexts are not exceptions to this. Infused throughout teacher education programs and inservice training for dialogue practitioners, Freire's perspective of education as emancipation has a unique potential in empowering dialogue practitioners to raise students' critical consciousness through dialogue. The remainder of this paper discusses Freire's ideas, especially his extraordinary perception of dialogue, as a foundation for dialogue practices in both formal and nonformal peace education settings.

Freire and Peace Education

So long as human history continues, we will face the perennial challenge of realizing, maintaining and strengthening peace through dialogue, of making dialogue the sure and certain path to peace. We must uphold and proclaim this conviction without cease, whatever coldly knowing smiles or cynical critiques may greet us (Daisaku Ikeda, 2005, p.9).

Freire's impact upon peace education, besides adult education, non-formal education, and critical pedagogy, has been immense (Bartlett, 2008). Bartlett (2008) puts a special emphasis on Freire's critique of educational inequalities and remarkable approach to pedagogy and maintains that his philosophy thoroughly informs peace education pedagogy and practice. Freire's concept of conscientization that can be loosely defined as developing critical consciousness through action and reflection provides a rigorous foundation for social transformation that peace education practice strives to achieve. Freirean dialogue that can be created through egalitarian teacher-student relations constitutes a powerful pedagogy to operate the potential of education to create cultures of peace in the world. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire proposes dialogue as a key component of problem-posing education. When individuals come together in dialogue, "mediated by the world, in order to name (or change) the world" (1970, p. 76), they develop critical consciousness of social, political, and economic contradictions so that they can take action against these contradictions. In order to be able to develop critical consciousness, individuals must analyze, interactively and through dialogue, who is and who is not allowed access to resources and opportunities, and how access is not allowed or denied. Critical consciousness further necessitates questioning the status quo rather than considering it as given (Bartlett, 2008).

Freire's remarkable influence is most noticeably felt on the politicization approach (Haavelsrud, 1996, as cited in Bajaj, 2008), which acknowledges that education, along with other efforts towards social change outside of schools, has a constructive role to play in promoting peace. This approach calls for alignment of educational form, content, and organizational structure in order to promote peace education. Highlighting the significance of a close link between research, education, and action in an overall process of social change, this approach to research and practice in peace education echoes Freire's (1970) emphasis on raising students' critical consciousness, reflection and action. As it "calls for action around peace and justice issues, with attention to conceptions based on in-depth knowledge and investigation of local realities," this category is most akin to the reclaimed critical peace education (Bajaj, 2008, p. 2). Bajaj (2008) decisively demands cultivating transformative agency, rooted in Freirean critical consciousness and praxis. As Freire (2013, p. 160) asserts, "Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education." Then, Freirean dialogic pedagogy is crucial for critical peace education. Bajaj (2008) further refers to Freirean pedagogy to foster critical consciousness and providing individuals with opportunities for collective thinking and action. She precisely advocates such a process of education to catalyze transformative agency.

Other peace education scholars linked Freire's educational philosophy to peace education (e.g., Diaz-Soto, 2005; Hantzopoulos, 2011). Relying on Freirean analysis of power with the aim of consciousness-raising, Diaz-Soto (2005) calls for "border crossing," "decolonization," "inclusion," "equitable economic distribution," and a reliance on "love as a paradigm" (p. 96; as cited in Bajaj, 2008). Diaz-Soto's (2005) ideas, especially regarding the role of power, identity, and culture, are significant in order to develop a critical peace education. However, Bajaj (2008) vividly criticizes this perspective of critical peace education due to its failure to acknowledge the need for greater research in the field. The author asserts:

> The prescriptive nature of literature in the field of peace education to date often fails to acknowledge the complex and diverse forms that peace education can and must take—guided by continued investigation in schools and communities globally—in order to effectively address its promise as a field of inquiry and grounded practice (Bajaj, 2008, p. 138).

Similar to Bajaj's suggestion that prescriptive literature does not connect well with peace education, any piece of literature that is prescriptive in nature contradicts with Freirean dialogue and its preconditions.

According to Freire, who strongly opposes the manipulation of pretext, human existence cannot be in silence, but "in word, in work, in action-reflection" (2013, p. 157). Hence, nobody can be considered "as mere activists to be denied the opportunity of reflection and allowed merely the illusion of acting" (Freire, 1972, p. 126). He continued to add,

> The leaders do bear the responsibility for coordination and, at times, direction—but leaders who deny praxis to the oppressed thereby invalidate their own praxis. By imposing their word on others, they falsify that word and establish a contradiction between their methods and their objectives. If they are truly committed to liberation, their action and reflection cannot proceed without the action and reflection of others (Freire, 1972, p. 126).

This is the same for education. "The attempt of the teacher-student to understand a cognizable object is not exhausted in that object, because this act extends to other students-teachers in such a way that the cognizable object mediates their capacity for understanding" (Freire, 1972, p. 129). When applied in the field of critical peace education, Freirean critical pedagogy strongly contrasts with the idea of prescriptive literature. Consequently, it is essential for critical peace education to renew its attention to larger structural realities through engaged and systematic research and practice and affirm diversity and a multiplicity of perspectives (Bajaj, 2008).

Reframing Peace Education: Freirean Dialogue as a Foundation for Peace Education Practice

Critical peace education draws enormously from Freire, the "inaugural philosopher of critical pedagogy" (McLaren, 2000, p.1). Freire's notions of education as a political act, banking versus problem-posing education, teacher-student relationships, and praxis undoubtedly connect well with what critical peace education aims to achieve. Particularly, Freire's ideas provide an exceptional ground to implement dialogue in diverse educational settings. Dialogue has an exceptional meaning in Paulo Freire's view. The Brazilian dialogic theorist considers dialogue a process through which individuals reflect on their reality to (re)make or (re)change it (Freire, 1970). This transformation of the reality is a result of the communication between individuals who go beyond knowing. They can *know that they can know.* That way, Freire emphasizes the social dimension of knowing. Without dialogue, the notion of knowing is limited to the individual only. Dialogue, sealing the relationship between cognitive individuals, creates a co-constructed mutuality that exists in the moment. Therefore, dialogue is historical, and it provides the participants with an opportunity to (re)define and so transform the reality for each of the participants (Cissna & Anderson, 1998).

Such a perspective of dialogue emphasizes human beings' need for each other in order to free themselves from oppression. But it is not limited to that; human beings need each other in order to exist humanly. According to Freire, dialogue is an "existential necessity" (Miller, 1998, p. 76). Human existence cannot be silent; they must be in communication with each other. But in his perception, "Knowing is a social event with nevertheless an individual dimension" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 98). Despite involving separate individuals, dialogue is a non-individualistic process. Knowing that they know is beyond just knowing. This cognitive attribute is an essential dimension of existing as Subjects.

Analysing dialogue as a human phenomenon existing between/among Subjects, Freire presents "the word" as the essence of the whole process of dialogue (p. 89). The word combines two fundamental dimensions (reflection and action), and it is much more than the instrument during dialogue. Reflection and action dimensions of dialogue have a radical interaction in which "if one is sacrificed – even in part – the other immediately suffers" (Freire, 1970, p. 89). Detaching words from action makes them empty, which results in exploitation (Miller. 1998). Likewise, when action is separated from reflection, it becomes activism. In other words, the whole process becomes "action for action's sake," which neutralizes reflection (Miller. 1998, p. 76). In Freire's (1970, p. 88) words,

> An unauthentic word, one which is unable to transform reality, results when dichotomy is imposed upon its constitutive elements. When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; and the word is changed into idle chatter, into *verbalism,* into an alienated and alienating "blah." It becomes an empty word, one which cannot denounce the world, for denunciation is impossible without a commitment to transform, and there is no transformation without action. On the other hand, if action is emphasized exclusively, to the detriment of reflection, the word is converted into *activism.* The latter—action for action's sake—negates the true praxis and makes dialogue impossible. Either dichotomy, by creating unauthentic forms of existence, creates also unauthentic forms of thought, which reinforce the original dichotomy.

Freire emphasizes that a true word is at the same time a praxis. This process is vital in human existence because individuals transform the world by speaking "a true word" (Freire, 1970, p. 88).

According to Freire, existing humanly necessitates naming the world to change it. Once the world is named, it reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming. As a result of this process, individuals transform the world by using true words. However, he cautions us that saying the true word – which is work, which is praxis - cannot be considered the privilege of particular people. It is the right of everyone. Yet, with this right, comes a responsibility for every dialogue participant: "no one can say a true word alone - nor can she say it *for* another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words" (Freire, 1970, *p. 88, emphasis in the original*).

Freire proposes six attributes for dialogue to exist: namely, love, humility, faith, mutual trust, hope, and critical thinking (Freire, 1970; 1972; 1998). These attributes are briefly explained below.

Love: Profound love for the world and beings is the foundation for Freirean dialogue. The naming of the world that results in (re)creation of the reality is impossible for Freire if the whole process of (re)naming is not infused with dialogue. Thus, love is dialogue itself, and it is the task of responsible Subjects to love others.

Humility: Serving as a counter to arrogance, humility is the second attribute of dialogue. According to Freire (1970), individuals lacking humility cannot engage in dialogue because they cannot be partners with other individuals in naming the world. In Freire's words, "Someone who cannot acknowledge himself to be as mortal as everyone else still has a long way to go before he can reach the point of encounter" (p. 90).

Faith: "A priori" condition for dialogue through which humankind seeks to be more fully human (Freire, 1970, p. 90), faith can be considered a facet of profound love for the world (Miller, 1998). Freirean dialogue necessitates faith in the potential of human beings to constantly (re)create their realities. In Freire's understanding of dialogue, the dialogical believes in others even before seeing them.

Mutual trust: Mutual trust is an expected outcome during the process of dialogue that is established on love, humility, and faith. Nourished with the quality of mutual trust, dialogue provides individuals with a climate in which they can be partners in naming the world. According to Freire (1970), the vertical, hierarchical banking concept of education, often resulting in closed relationships or monologues, does not allow for the establishment of mutual trust due to the centralized epistemic authority (Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2010).

Hope: The fifth attribute of dialogue, hope, arises from the incompleteness of human beings and their constant search for wholeness. According to Freire (1970), acceptance of a static and unchanging world is a world without hope and leads only to despair. Freire (1970) described encounters without hope as "empty and sterile, bureaucratic and tedious" (p. 92). Hope, on the other hand, lends purpose to joint action, and moves dialoguers towards praxis.

Critical thinking: Freire described this final attribute of dialogue as "thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them" (Freire, 1970, p. 78). Freire (1970) also contrasted critical thinking with naïve thinking, "For the naïve thinker, the important thing is accommodation to this normalized 'today.' For the critic, the important thing is the continuing transformation of reality on behalf of the continuing humanization of men." (Freire, 1970, p. 92). As such, critical thinking is not a specialized set of skills that some people possess, and others do not. Instead, and similar to the other attributes, critical thinking is a process of transformation and change.

Possible Complexities and Future Directions in Freirean Dialogue in Practice

One of the fundamental goals of peace education is to prevent the suffering of human beings by teaching them alternative non-violent ways of being and doing. This goal inherently necessitates enabling individuals to become agents of change. Freirean dialogue offers a promising foundation to empower individuals so that they can become agents of change (Gürsel-Bilgin, 2016). However, the example dialogue practices mentioned briefly above show that employing dialogue effectively may be challenging. One of the reasons of this might be that Freirean dialogue is an authentic way of being rather than simply a technique (Rule, 2004). Macedo (2005) underlines that Freirean dialogue is a process of continuous learning and theorizing about the world and cautions that when dialogue practitioners disregard this nature of Freirean dialogue, they might fallaciously turn it into a method or technique only. Therefore, any simplistic perspective of dialogue as a mere tactic or technique jeopardizes what dialogue has to offer (Freire & Macedo, 1995).

Another challenging aspect of practicing Freirean dialogue in peace education contexts is that it necessitates a horizontal relationship between individuals. Freire (1970) associated vertical relationships with anti-dialogue which is unloving and acritical. He emphasized that such a communication results in the suppression of the other and its reduction to the status of an object (Rule, 2011). Given the more powerful status of teachers in a typical classroom, practitioners who intend to employ Freirean dialogue may find it difficult to establish an egalitarian relationship with learners. Therefore, teachers might need a well-designed training to unlearn this unbalanced distribution of power among the individuals of a given classroom in the traditional educational settings.

Another challenge; dialogue practitioners might face relates to employing the six attributes of Freirean dialogue, namely, love, humility, faith, mutual trust, hope, and critical thinking (Freire, 1970; 1972; 1998). Although Freire himself and a few other scholars have provided theoretical pieces defining these six notions, the related literature lacks studies that focus on what each notion looks like in practice in varying settings and empirical research. For example, two empirical studies found it challenging to use these six attributes of Freirean dialogue as an analytic tool (Gürsel-Bilgin, 2016; 2020). As the authors state, this challenge might be rooted in the mutually supportive and broadly overlapping connections among the attributes. Due to the possible overlaps in one's definitions and/or perceptions of these attributes, in a particular dialogic interaction, one attribute might imply the other attributes and multiple attributes may be present simultaneously in a given dialogic encounter. For example, faith can be viewed as a dimension of hope or love; hope can be framed as a dimension of trust or critical thinking, and so on. As a result, empirical research is needed in order to examine the meanings, complexities, and challenges of applying these six preconditions in formal and nonformal educational settings. Similarly, teacher educators and the trainers of dialogue practitioners would do well to integrate these notions into their curriculum so that future teachers and dialogue practitioners will have chances to explore these abstract notions through workshops and activities.

The optimism that education can lead to positive social change is one of the common elements that unite peace education scholars and practitioners. In this regard, peace education interconnects with Freirean ideas emphasizing the

necessity for educators to build a critical optimism among learners to promote solidarity and diminish the distance between social groups no matter any ascriptive characteristics. Without a special emphasis on a critical understanding of the social conditions constraining action and diminishing optimism among the marginalized, as Bajaj (2008) cautions, the cultivation of hope alone is likely to be counterproductive. She cites Freire (1998, p. 8), who asserts,

> The idea that hope alone will transform the world, and action undertaken in that kind of naïveté, is an excellent route to hopelessness, pessimism, and fatalism. But the attempt to do without hope, in the struggle to improve the world, as if that struggle could be reduced to calculated acts alone, or a purely scientific approach, is a frivolous illusion.

Hence, the **"**naiveté" or "blind optimism" demonstrated by the scholars and practitioners claiming membership in the field is vital to be countered with the exploration of the contours of optimism (Gur-Ze'ev, 2001, p. 315; as cited in Bajaj, 2008).

Instead of commitment to unproductive forms of optimism, peace education scholars and practitioners would do well to employ Rossatto's (2005), a Freirean scholar, "transformative optimism" as a basis for their work. Transformative optimism, as defined by Rossatto, (2005), "is an expression of a deep sense of emancipatory hope" seeking the formation of collective resistance against social processes that produce alienating realities. Rossatto's (2005) notion of transformative optimism, aiming to transform the present through a consciousness of solidarity and a clear vision of a better future, underlines a sense of agency realized through individual responsibility within the context of collective effort. The transformative optimist who considers him/herself as an essential and viable participant in the collective process of social change illustrates the very agency that critical peace educators strive to nurture among learners. That is, critical peace educators intending to promote learners' critical consciousness can consider this notion of optimism as an organizing principle for their work, aimed at interrogating and analysing the larger structures of inequality often leading to direct and structural violence in the global scale (Bajaj, 2008).

To summarize, this manuscript explores dialogue in terms of its potential to practice critical peace education. Towards this goal, the first section provides an overview of the concept of dialogue. The second section discusses dialogue practice by providing examples from various educational settings. This discussion highlights particular challenges faced during dialogue practices in different contexts. The third section proposes reconceptualising dialogue practice in peace education by considering Freirean dialogue as a basis. This section emphasizes the unique potential of Freirean dialogue in achieving the goals of critical peace education and overcoming the challenges experienced during dialogue practices in various contexts. It is also highlighted that research and practice regarding employing dialogue as transformative pedagogy should be investigated and cultivated by peace educators in ways relevant to various contexts. Based on the ideas presented in this paper, future research would do well to examine potential barriers existing in the cultures of schools and nonformal educational settings for peace educators who intend to employ dialogue. Towards this goal, empirical research is needed on (a) the barriers in the educational structure for peace educators who intend to employ dialogue; (b) the barriers in the educational content for peace educators who intend to employ dialogue; and (c) the barriers in the educational pedagogy for peace educators who intend to employ dialogue.

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