


# Chapter 5


## Uncertainty and Positive Psychology in Critical Pedagogy: Critical Thinking and EFL Students' Learning Outcomes

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### ABSTRACT

*An educational system based on positive psychology techniques might facilitate making correct decisions in an uncertain situation and thinking critically. The present research aims to investigate the correlation between critical thinking, learning outcomes, and uncertainty. On the other hand, this study intends to explore Iranian English teachers' perspectives on uncertainty and positive psychology. To this end, this study followed an explanatory mixed-methods design. An adapted uncertainty questionnaire was administered to 250 EFL students. A semi-structured interview was conducted with 20 EFL teachers to provide data on their perceptions of uncertainty and positive psychology. The Pearson correlation coefficient indicated a*

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*positive correlation between critical thinking, learning outcomes, and uncertainty. The grounded theory approach was followed to analyze the qualitative findings. The findings might affect teachers, students, material developers, and the educational system.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Critical pedagogy has become one of the most important theoretical approaches in education, emphasizing the analysis and transformation of power relations for the eradication of social inequalities in schools and learning contexts. Education allows students to explore themselves, their relationships, and the world, influencing their personal growth. In building educational systems, incorporating critical pedagogy is vital to developing critical learners and teachers (Dulun & Lane, 2023). Critical pedagogy is a developmental educational attitude that highlights the role of education in challenging social injustices and encouraging democratic merits. It extracts from vital theory and looks to equip learners by enhancing critical thinking and recognizing societal value changes. This pedagogical structure is extremely rooted in the efforts of prominent philosophers such as Paulo Freire and Antonio Gramsci, highlighting the political aspects of education and its ability to label issues of power and inequality (Aybar & Bingöl, 2023). According to Sanjakdar and Apple (2024), critical pedagogy pinpoints the significance of challenging ideologies, organizations, and institutions in a critical investigation to provoke social justice and democratic results, emphasizing the need for political and social activism. The development of critical pedagogy as a universal issue indicates a historical and recent dedication among experts, authors, and practitioners to follow emancipatory and free educational use, which questions authoritarians in teaching and learning contexts.

The essential role of education is to nurture active students who are motivated to play a role in shaping the education context according to their preferences and needs. Giroux (2009) suggested that critical pedagogy empowers learners to become active agents of change. It connects classroom learning to real-world action, enabling individuals to analyze societal power structures and challenge oppression in all its forms. This approach is important for countering the growing global threat of authoritarianism. As cited by Soleimani, Aerabi, et al. (2024), EFL teachers understand critical pedagogy as the questioning of traditional methods of education and as a road map to increase critical thinking and diminish the traditional roles of teachers and learners alike.

Pauzi (2024) explains the theoretical framework of critical thinking rooted in epistemology, logic, and methodology. It highlights the philosophical views that make educational aims develop intellectual and moral evolution through the de-

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