

# CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN A PAKISTANI LITERATURE CLASSROOM

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## *Abstract*

The paper critically evaluates the challenges involved in the contextualization of critical pedagogy tenets. Although critical pedagogy's chief claim is to enforce an informed and committed praxis, yet it has been criticized as a grand narrative (Daneill, 1999). Daneill criticizes critical pedagogy's overgeneralization of repression, as if all students anywhere in the world are oppressed as well as unaware of oppression. The paper tries to probe the issue whether critical pedagogy can practically be implemented in any given situation. Pedagogy of place theories have been taken into consideration to probe further into multicultural educational needs. In this regard, Pakistani context has been chosen to analyze the implications of applying critical pedagogy to a literature classroom by using the method of grounded theory. The results emphasize that the contextualization of critical pedagogy ideals is very important. This can be achieved by first identifying the nature of oppression in any area and then encouraging teachers to become pedagogues, emancipating students from social and cultural bondage. Teachers who successfully transform themselves into pedagogues can lead students towards some sort of transformation in individual as well as social capacity.

*Keywords:* Critical pedagogy, grand narrative, praxis, pedagogy of place, pedagogues

## INTRODUCTION

Critical pedagogy is a diverse ideology due to the multiplicity of its adherents and their viewpoints. While pedagogy is generally considered to be the art and study of teaching and learning (Knowles, 1973), critical pedagogy encompasses the questions of how to teach, what to teach, and how the learning takes place (Giroux, 1997). Paulo Freire is considered to be the father of critical pedagogy because he traces the relationship among education, politics, imperialism, and liberation (McLaren, 2000). The conception of pedagogy or knowledge rep-

resents the values of those who shape and present it (Kincheloe, 2004). Kincheloe traces one similarity in all descriptions and interpretations of critical pedagogy in its vision of socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts of any teaching. Hence, critical pedagogy aims at negotiating and transforming the relationship amongst school teaching and production of knowledge in particular and between institutions, students and society in general. Education must work as a moral project of social transformation (McLaren, 2003). Beginning with the development of critical thinking, critical pedagogy should aim at restructuring oppressive social hierarchies with an aim to transform society into a more just one (Keesing-Styles, 2003).

Although critical pedagogy emphasizes informed praxis, one of the criticisms of it is that it remains a grand narrative (Daneill, 1999). The implementation of the theories propounded by critical pedagogy proponents still remains a key issue (Estes, 2004; Keesing-Styles, 2003). Although Freire encourages educators to attempt the unification of theory and practice (McLaren, 2000), implementation of myriad pedagogical theories still remains a problematic area. The gap between “theories in action” and “theories in use” (Argyris & Schon, 1974) has been highlighted by Kolb as he emphasizes the lack of balance between reflection and action in experiential teaching (Kolb, 1992). The educators may claim to be using learner-centered theories which in actuality turn out to be teacher-centered (Estes, 2004). Critical pedagogy is a wonderful theory but does not guide how actually a pedagogue should implement it (Osborne, 1990). Critical theorists sometimes seem more interested in propounding theories and less in suggesting an actual school model for implementation (Eisner, 2002). Collaboration between school teachers and critical scholars can be one solution for improving classroom practices (Pinar et al., 2002). Giroux (1988) himself highlights the limitations of critical theory in its aim to make the meaning of critical pedagogy substantial. The best of theories give little clue to the strategies teachers should adopt to emancipate students (Gore, 1993).

Praxis is a combination of reflection and action, theory and practice (Freire, 1970). According to Freire, knowledge is in a constant process of becoming and there is no ultimate act of knowing. Praxis begins with an idea and translates it into informed and purposeful action. Praxis, therefore, is an amalgamation of theory, introspection, and creativity on one hand and purpose, context, and social needs on the other hand. Praxis is the only answer to the criticism of critical pedagogy as a mere theory because it can lead to a more socially-just world but the question remains—how? Seeking answers for questions like what is knowledge?, who creates it?, whose interests it serves?, who is given access to it?, how is it distributed within classroom?, and how is the school a microcosm of the power relations of the macrocosm society and world? (Giroux, 1997), can lead to the practice of critical pedagogy ideology in the classroom. These questions are based

on challenging dominant ideology of any kind, be it classroom, teacher, institution, curriculum, or society at large.

The general theory of critical pedagogy can be more praxis-oriented if its spatial aspects of social change are adapted to the place where it needs to be applied. After its application by Freire to the peasants in rural areas of Brazil, the Westerners influenced by Freirean ideals mostly applied it to urban schools and neglected the rural areas (McLaren & Giroux, 1990). Therefore, it is important to develop a critical pedagogy of place by determining the needs of the students in that particular area and the type of injustices that take place there. In this regard, a unique indigenous critical pedagogy may arise which caters to the needs of the chosen place and people. When I selected a Pakistani classroom for the implementation of praxis-oriented critical pedagogy; I carefully analyzed the needs of the students based on the injustices taking place in the institution in particular and the society in general. Some of the challenges that Pakistani society faces are power relations among upper, middle, and lower classes; power relations between genders; and international power relations that directly affect the country in the form of postcolonial cultural imperialism and hegemony. Although geographical colonialism no longer exists, the Pakistani nation continues to experience colonization through the willing idealization and adoption of foreign as well as upper class cultures and lifestyles. The above mentioned aspects made the Pakistani context an appropriate site for practicing praxis-oriented critical pedagogy. I attempted to become a pedagogy of liberation (Elias, 1994), different from ordinary teachers, using Socratic methods of discussion to inculcate critical thinking and trying to inculcate knowledge that might produce lifelong transformation in student's thoughts leading to some sort of social change.

## METHOD

The effectiveness of critical pedagogy cannot be measured in a short span of time; it needs longer observation. Therefore, I chose grounded theory as a method. Grounded theory (GT) is a systematic methodology that works almost in a reverse fashion from traditional research. It aims at generating or discovering a new theory inductively through data gathering (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It may be defined as “the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 2). I chose it because my intent was to observe the outcomes of the application of critical pedagogy in a Pakistani literature classroom according to the contextual needs of that classroom.

To conduct my research, I chose a Masters in English class at National University of Modern languages (NUML), Lahore Campus. Lahore is one of the most developed cities of Pakistan. The duration of the program was two years with each semester spanning over six months. I taught the same group of students for

four semesters i.e., two years. I kept on taking notes of the proceedings, discussions and students' opinions inside or outside the classroom during this span of time. The admission policy of the institution was not age-bound. Therefore, the age group of the students in that class ranged from 25 to 40. The background of the majority of the students was middle class with many students coming from rural areas. A majority of the students were from the province of Punjab with a few from Khyber Pakhtoonkhwah, as well. The program they were enrolled in comprised of linguistics, ELT, and literature subjects. I taught all literature subjects except Essay Writing.

The University is under the Ministry of Defense which takes care of military affairs. All institutions under this ministry are known for following hard and fast rules, and applying a critical pedagogy in such an institution was really challenging. The Regional Director of the Lahore Campus was a retired Colonel famous for his firm and unchangeable decisions. Military intervention has been a major factor in the instability of democracy in Pakistan and the dictatorship spirit could be seen in such institutions, as well. In other words, the implementation of critical pedagogy in such an institution was a war for democracy within the institution, for the voice of the teachers and students to be heard, and for their rights to be recognized. The prescribed syllabus and time frame of classes could not be changed as per university policy. To face this challenge, I devised a pedagogy that did not clash with the given limits apparently, as the prescribed syllabus and timetable for classes was not changed, but comparative studies were added and students were asked to gather together after university timings in various places to fulfill the aim of desocialization from traditional institutional conditioning that interfered with developing critical thought (Shor, 1992).

My focus in devising this critical pedagogy was on raising questions about the inequalities of power determined by society and the internalization of belief systems to the extent that the individuals stop asking questions about hegemony and cultural imperialism (Burbules & Berk, 1999). The aim was to encourage the students to become "transformative intellectuals" (Giroux, 1998), cultural workers (Freire, 1998), agents capable of redressing any type of injustices, inequalities, and myths imposed on them.

I began by introducing the students to the concept of literature in general as produced in any language of the world, and then narrowed down the discussion to English literature. The discussion began when I asked the students the causes of their motivation for learning literature. A majority of them simply expressed their wish to learn English language. When asked why they wanted to learn English, most believed that a reasonable command on the English language could promise better jobs as well as more respected existence in the society. Their motivation was extrinsic only. Language is not only a social practice; it transforms and reproduces society (Stubbs, 1996). Language is a representative of the culture behind it and

can easily inculcate this culture into a student's consciousness. My challenge was to transform that extrinsic motivation into intrinsic motivation — the love for literature written in any language. So the first step was to break the hegemony of the idealization of English language. For this, I used a method of teaching comparative literature. When any text was discussed in the class, the students were asked to compare it with any of the texts of their choice from Urdu, Pakistan's national language, or any other regional language/literature they had read. In this vein, they were also shown an Indian movie *English Vinglish* showing the degradation an Indian woman had to face (even by her daughter) just because she did not know the English language. The movie ends by highlighting that languages do not matter, but love and compassion between humans does. In this way, they got to know that no language/literature is superior to any other as literature is a reflection of human nature and human nature has the same characteristics all over the world.

The students were encouraged to do an institutional “hegemony treasure hunt” (Fawcett, Bell, & Russell, 2002), to explore the power structures of the Campus by visiting the nooks and corners, staff rooms and offices, in order to critically evaluate the power hierarchy existing within the institution. The students were wise enough to observe that the decision-making was altogether done by the Regional Director, with the Deputy Director as the next most powerful position who presented major facts before the Regional Director. The students also observed that teachers were more like pawns with strict checks on teaching, standing in the classroom and maintaining strict machine-like discipline. This was one way of making the students explore the hidden curriculum of the university so that they could also explore how the university was being run on a banking model of education (Freire, 1970).

The prescribed texts were kept as core texts, so that the grades of the students were not affected. However, the methodology was changed to critical pedagogy by adding comparative studies and a focus on collaborative construction of knowledge. Discussion groups were formed and the seating arrangements were changed according to the requirements of the topic under discussion. This was done in spite of the instructions from the Regional Director not to change the seating arrangement, as that was something against discipline, according to him. The seating arrangements were kept in dyads, clusters, or horse-shoes as per need. The students were allowed to bring edibles into the class in spite of the strict policy of the university that banned eating in the classroom. No strictness in attendance was maintained, and in spite of that, almost all students were always present.

In addition to the existing method of assessment based on exams, I used a new method of assessment based on collaborative construction of knowledge. It included students' performance in class discussion, presentation, creative writing, dramatization, and other creative activities.

## CLASSICAL DRAMA

The first text I taught was *Oedipus Rex*. It introduced them to the Greek religion and mythology. Initially it was very confusing for them with their staunch beliefs in Islam; however, the text helped students raise question about religion and led them towards a comparative study of religions. The students were asked to read the Sophoclean trilogy of *Oedipus Rex*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone* and develop critical thinking about the questions of justice and redemption. The students were guided to give a multicultural reading (Nieto, 1992) to the prescribed syllabus. They were asked to read Saadat Hasan Manto's short stories as a comparison. The short story "Allah Ditta," in which the incestuous relationship of a father and daughter is portrayed, was discussed in the class and the theme of imagined and actual incest was discussed in detail. The concept of universal morality made the students relate to different cultures by going beyond place, time, and beliefs. This practice strengthened their beliefs about their religion, but they also developed an acceptance for all cultures, although the degree of acceptance varied from student to student. The researcher guided students to look for cultural similarities rather than differences, as that can lead to more tolerance and acceptance of border crossing and cultures (Geertz, 2000). As a result of these indirect multicultural experiences, succeeded in creating classroom learning spaces where a student could think critically and, going beyond established criticisms, could evaluate even a writer like Shakespeare based on original thinking.

While reading Shakespeare, movies were also played in the class. I chose *Othello's* Indianised version *Omkaara* to be played in the class and the film generated a debate over human nature as the main subject of literature and how, even in a changed context, the same responses can take place. In continuation to this, I encouraged the students to conceive, write and perform Pakistani versions of *Othello* and *King Lear*. It was a great entertaining and learning experience for them as they could not only better relate the stories to their context but also develop skills in performance studies, as well. One group rewrote *Othello* in a postcolonial context and represented a Pakistani diaspora as the protagonist, facing challenges in a western society. Thus the class became aware of the power relations between the colonized other and the colonial center. The students became aware of their postcolonial existence and its implications. The next text I chose to teach was Shakespeare's tragi-comedy *Tempest*. After the first reading, the students were asked to give a postcolonial reading by decoding the characters of Caliban and Prospero by comparing them to Friday and Robinson Crusoe of the novel *Robinson Crusoe*. Based on the reflections of the students on *Othello* and *Tempest*, I selected a Pakistani movie *Khuda kay Liye* to be played in the class. The movie dramatized a Pakistani alleged Muslim terrorist in a post 9/11 scenario. The stu-

dents compared the protagonist to Othello, Caliban and Friday. We drew parallels between modern and classical literature, and the students debated enthusiastically.

The students were supposed to present in the class in a setup where the audience and presenters asked questions from each other. They were supposed to evaluate texts on the basis of the following questions: Who created the text? What purpose the text serves? Is there any hidden agenda behind it? How would students reinterpret it? Thus, it became a dialogic classroom in which students learned from each other's questions and shared knowledge. They were made to read the world through the word (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

## SHORT STORY

The short story class turned out to be even more innovative. While tracing the history of short story, the students came across Indian and Arabian legends, as well. They were already familiar with the "Alf Laila" stories they had listened to and watched on television in their childhood. So they got to know that the art of short story was as old as humanity itself and was found in all cultures. They were asked to reflect critically on whether they had any localized vision of fairies and ghosts or whether it was restricted to the western dramatizations they had previously experienced. To display their vision of the aboriginal supernatural, they were asked to celebrate two days, Fairy day and Demon day, as class activities. The students planned the days and came in the getups of fairies and demons respectively. The days were great fun as they were also asked to perform as Pakistani Fairies and Demons. We raised questions regarding the cultural connotations of myths, fairytales, and legends. The students came up with their narration of local legends. Most of them quoted "Ainak wala Jin," a TV serial they watched in their childhood. They also shared that the Pakistani versions of fairies and demons are more influenced by Alf Laila culture. This gave them ample demythologization of the fixed notions of Western culture-bound fairies and demons and made them reflect on how stories were culture-bound and how a little effort on their part could make them celebrate and glorify their culture.

The power relations within Pakistani society were particularly highlighted while reading stories like Oscar Wilde's "The Happy Prince." A parallel to Victorian society was drawn by highlighting the corruption rooted in Pakistani society. The students drew a parallel in the situation of the rich becoming richer and the poor becoming poorer. We highlighted the hierarchy between elite and popular culture, and the students were encouraged to make efforts to reverse it. The students were guided to present on how this sort of social situation could be eradicated and how they could play their role in that. The students researched and explored the concept of hegemony, indirect control over a marginalized group, and came to know that the middle class Pakistani student should be a critical con-

sumer of the information s/he gets and be able to produce counter information (Gramsci, 1970). The political situation of the country was discussed as a parallel to the themes of exploitation and hegemony. One form of the preservation of hegemony in third world countries is through repression (Althusser, 2001). Repression comes through official documents like legislation laws, corporate by-laws, labour management agreements, etc. These types of documents were seen as hegemonic texts for students to critique, contextualize and ultimately rewrite themselves. The students also critically evaluated the role of mass media like TV, films, radio as sources of deception (Horkeimer & Adorno, 2007) and discussed how to escape the snares of culture industry.

We also read texts in a way that highlighted the gender differences both thematically as well as linguistically. The students worked out the interrelationship between language and gender and the extent to which language serves the interests of a particular group, as well as the reader's role in the deconstruction of meaning (Levorato, 2003). I asked the students to compare the stories of Katherine Mansfield with Urdu short stories written by Asmat Chughtai and Quratul Ain Haider who highlighted gender-related issues. Both male and female students participated in discussions vehemently for human rights irrespective of gender.

## POETRY AND MUSIC

I began the poetry class by playing the famous Nigerian musician and singer Fela Kuti's song "Teacher, Don't Teach Me Nonsense" (see appendix) in order to create awareness both about critical pedagogy and the role of music in that. During the normal course of poetry teaching, I encouraged the students to reflect on issues like power, hegemony, racism, and feminism. While reading Shelley's poem "The West Wind," the students researched about the French Revolution and compared it to the "War of Independence" of 1857 which British colonizers called "Mutiny." They also compared why both the revolutions failed.

The students interpreted poems like "Porphyria's Lover" and "My Last Duchess" by Robert Browning; "This is a Photograph of Me" by Margaret Atwood, and "Phenomenal Woman" by Maya Angelo. They gave a feminist reading to Asmat Chughtai's short stories in comparison and identified the problems of Pakistani women as different from Western women. After the practice, a majority of the students, both males and females, realized that gender is not a set of traits but rather a product of social doing (West & Zimmerman, 1987). While deconstructing the poem "My Last Duchess," in answer to my question of whether the Duke was right, one of the female students vociferously said, "Yes, a woman who is not sincere to her husband should be killed like that." This response was simply surprised me and I went into a long debate with her. However, I failed to convince her. Some years later, after she got married, she called me. I asked her the same



question and she accepted that at that point of time in her life, she could understand the real spirit of the poem. In this case the change in thinking took a few years. However, the background critical thinking practice in the classroom helped the young woman eventually change her mind after real life exposure. Even this slow change was an achievement for me.

## ESSAY WRITING

Essay writing was the class that gave me maximum opportunity to discuss issues related to the power hierarchy of the Pakistani society. The economic deprivation of the people and causes behind that were discussed by the class in a dialogic manner. We openly criticized government policies. We discussed Marxist theories at length whether they were applicable to Pakistani society or not. We discussed the pros and cons of globalization and whether it had potential benefits or was a threat to the individuality of nations. We discussed the Pakistani education system with a huge gap from a “taat school” to lavishly furnished schools. A “taat school” can be translated as “school on mat”, refers to many schools in Pakistan where no furniture or building is available and students study by sitting on a piece of cloth spread on earth. On the other hand there are privately run schools with all facilities from furniture to faculty. In spite of that some students from “taat schools” reach universities for higher education. We emphasized the need to stand up for a uniform education system. One student from Dera Ismail Khan particularly highlighted the sorry state of education there. According to her, there was no concept of girls going to schools after class five and the schools remained locked. She reached the level of university education with great effort and promised to be a beacon of change in the field of education. Others related the backwardness of education and teachers’ exploitation in Punjab village schools. The students also discussed their own university condition with the lack of proper cooling system as they had to study in the noise of fans. They highlighted that the situation continued in spite of recurrent claims and the economic affordability by the administration.

## RESULTS

The students developed critical thinking/consciousness by assessing the ground of their beliefs (Dewey, 1933) and the beliefs of others. It resulted in a better understanding of themselves as well as the development of a more tolerant attitude towards others.

They realized the power of language as a transformative tool and learned to value their own language by escaping the hegemony of the colonizer’s language. However, they still respected all languages as means of communication and the

respective cultures behind them. An extremist hate-culture was diminished to a reasonable extent.

The power relations existing within Pakistani society were understood and students worked on the ways to challenge them. The superiority of rich over poor, one province over other, men over women, were seen critically and challenged in discussions. The intertextuality of various genres helped students better understand not only the multiple genres of literature, music, film but also inculcated deep learning and a wider social and global sensibility.

The students collaborated and started a magazine named “Numlect” where they wrote stories, poems, and essays to express their voices against various injustices. All creative pieces they had written in the classes were also published in the magazine.

The students became courageous enough to go and talk to the Regional Director about the problems they had in the campus. They discussed the cooling system deficiency, the poor cafeteria facility, and a dependence on the main campus in Islamabad for every petty issue to be approved as well as the question papers set by the center and not by the teachers who taught them. The Regional Director had to be considerate when he saw the majority of the students highlighting injustice issues. Some students joined newspapers and took up the task to criticize the injustices in the society. Some of them became teachers and guided the students on the same line. Some of them went to policy making posts and tried to make a difference.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The data I gathered in my practice of critical pedagogy in a Pakistani literature classroom demonstrates that the pedagogy remained quite effective. In this project, I tried to overcome the rhetoric-reality gap by trying to implement the grand narrative of critical pedagogy in the contextually-specific space of a Pakistani University classroom. An attempt at critical pedagogy of place (i.e., context-bound) remained successful to a great extent. However, to bring change is not an easy process. It is slow and time-bound. Critical pedagogy will remain grand theory unless it inspires educational warriors in every part of the world to remain active and busy in adapting critical pedagogy theories to local needs, looking for new methodologies, and reflecting and writing on their results and implications. To bring changes on a large scale socio-political level is a massive task. However, I remained successful in inculcating critical thinking in students to a large extent with the small group of students I had. The challenge remains to implement praxis-oriented critical pedagogy on a large scale. I reached a conclusion that each place should develop its own need-based critical pedagogy to try to resist oppression. Therefore, there should be a term like Pakistani critical pedagogy, not heard

so far, with a lot of Pakistani pedagogues active in the field, researching and implementing the results of their research. Only then, the critical pedagogy of place will turn out to be pedagogy of hope (Freire, 1992). The research encouraged me to probe further how critical pedagogy can be implemented in other subjects at primary level education in Pakistani government schools.

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## Appendix 1: Fela Kuti Song

TEACHER, TEACHER-O NA THE LECTURER BE YOUR NAME  
TEACHER, TEACHER-O NA THE LECTURE BE THE SAME  
MAKE-EE NO TEACH-EE ME AGAIN OH  
AS SOON TEACHING FINISH YES, DA THING-EE IT GON DIE IT  
DEY-O  
AS SOON TEACHING FINISH YES, DA THING-EE IT GON DIE IT  
DEY-O

ME AND YOU NO DEY FOR THE SAME-U CATEGORY  
NA THE SAME CATEGORY-O

Let's get down, to the underground spiritual game  
We all sing together, play music together in happiness  
All you have to do is sing what I play on my horn  
Now Let's go...

A kujuba, A kujuba  
YE-EHHHH!  
Yehhhhhh-Ey!

Ke-re-Ke, Ke-re-Ke, Ke-re-Ke, Ke-re-Ke, Ke-re-ke, Ke-re-Ji-Ke-Ke  
YAA!  
Ke-re-ke Ji Ke-ke  
YAA!  
Ke-re-ke Ji Ke-ke  
YAA!  
Ke-re-ke-Ke Ji Ke-ke  
YAA!

All the wahala, all the problems,  
All the things, all the things they go do,  
For this world go start,  
When the teacher, schoolboy and schoolgirl jam together  
Who be teacher?  
I go let you know

When we be pikin  
FATHA/ MAMA BE TEACHER  
When we dey for school

TEACHER BE TEACHER

Now dey University

LECTURER BE TEACHER

When we start to work

GOVERNMENT BE TEACHER

CU-ULTURE AND TRADITION (\*after each line)

Who be government teacher?

Who be government teacher?

Cu-ulture and tradition

Cu-ulture and tradition

Now the problem side, of a teaching student-ee

I go sing about

I don pass pikin, I don pass school, university, se-fa pass

As I don start to work, na government I must se-fa pass

Da go for France

YES SIR/YES MAAM (\*after each line)

Engi-land

Italy

Germany

Na dem culture

For der'

Be teacher

For dem

Go China

Russia

Korea

Viet Nam

Na dem culture

For der'

Be teacher

For dem

Go Syria

Jordan

Iran

Iraq

Na dem culture

For der'

Be teacher



For dem

Let us face ourselves for Afrika  
 Na de matter of Afrika  
 This part-ee of my song  
 Na all the problems of this world  
 In we dey carry, for Afrika  
 Wey no go ask-ee me

WHICH ONE? (\*after each line)

Problems of inflation  
 Problems of corruption  
 Of mismanagement  
 Stealing by government  
 Nothing we dey carry  
 All over Afrika  
 Na de latest one  
 Na him dey make me laugh

AUSTERITY (\*after each line)

Austeri-  
 Austeri-  
 Na him dey latest one  
 Na him dey make me laugh  
 Why I dey laugh?  
 Man no fit cry?

Who be our teacher na Oyinbo?  
 Who be our teacher na Oyinbo?  
 A na false, the first election  
 And the second election held in Nigeria  
 Na the second election na it was pass

BOBA LA NONSENSE (\*after each line)

Boba la nonsense  
 Boba la nonsense  
 He pass redeem  
 He pass corruption  
 Which kind election be dis?  
 People na go vote  
 Dem come get big big numbers

Thousands to thousands  
Millions to billions  
Which kind election be dis?  
Boba la nonsense

Na dem-o-cr-azy be the deal  
Na dem-o-cr-azy be the deal  
Who don teach us ee dem-o-cr-azy?  
(Bo-ptch!) Oyinbo teach-ee us  
(Yuh-ngh!) Oyinbo for Europe-oh  
Oyinbo teach us many many things-ee  
Many of dem things I don sing about-ee  
Me I no gin copy Oyinbo style  
Let us think say, Oyinbo no pass me  
When Shagari finish him elections  
Wey dem no tell am, say him make mistake-ee  
Say this yo, no be democracy  
Oyinbo dem no tell army self  
Na for England-ee, I me no fit take over  
I come think about this demo-crazy

Democracy  
DEMO-CRAZY (\*after each line)  
Crazy demo  
Demonstration of craze  
Crazy demonstration  
If it no be craze  
Why for Afrika?  
As time dey go  
Things just dey bad  
They bad more and more  
Poor man dey cry  
Rich man dey mess  
Demo-crazy  
Democracy  
Crazy demo  
Demonstration of craze  
Crazy demonstration

If good-u teacher teach-ee something  
And student make mistake

Teacher must talk-ee so  
But Oyinbo no talk-ee so  
I suffer dem, Dey suffer dem  
Dem dey say da teaching get meaning  
Different different meaning  
Different different kinds of meaning  
That is why I say  
That is the reason of my song

That is the conclude  
The conclud-ee of my song

I say, I sing, I beg everyone to join my song (3x)

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