

**Ninth graders' social experiences to promote critical literacy in EFL with project-
based learning**

Claudia Paola Ruiz Sarmiento

20132062011

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas

School of Sciences and Education

Masters in Applied Linguistics to TEFL

Bogotá, Colombia.

2015

Ninth graders' social experiences to promote critical literacy in EFL with project-based learning

Claudia Paola Ruiz Sarmiento

Thesis director: Deyanira Sindy Moya Chaves

“A thesis submitted as a requirement to obtaining the degree of M. A. in Applied Linguistics to the Teaching of English”

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas

School of Science and Education

M.A. in Applied Linguistics

Bogotá-Colombia, 2015

Note of acceptance

Thesis Director _____

Name Deyanira Sindy Moya Chaves. M.A.

Jury _____

Name Diego Fernando Ubaque Casallas. M.A.

Jury _____

Name Eliana Garzón Duarte. M.A.

Acuerdo 19 de 1988 del Consejo Superior Universitario

Artículo 177: “La Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas no será responsable por las ideas expuestas en esta tesis”.

Abstract

The present qualitative action research study aims at describing and analyzing the promotion of critical literacy (CL) in an EFL class through high school students' social experiences. Project-based learning was selected to create the instructional design, which presents the implementation of three-cycled project with ninth graders. This project combines students' interests and needs identified from a needs analysis conducted based on Pineda's (2000) three step model and on curricular objectives of EFL from a public school in Bogotá, Colombia. The results show it is possible to include students' experiences in foreign language classes and by reflecting on them in class, in English, it is possible to promote critical literacy, especially when students are agents and active participants into shaping of their own learning. The project concludes with the idea that teachers are presented with the opportunity of changing the traditional methods of learning a language and also that it is necessary to use the immediate knowledge of young students because it is what they are more interested about and where their knowledge of the world comes from.

Key Concepts: *Students' social experiences, critical literacy, EFL learning, project-based learning.*

Table of contents

Abstract	6
Chapter I. Statement of the Problem	14
Statement	21
Research Question	23
Research Objectives	23
General Objective.....	23
Specific Objectives.....	23
Rationale	24
Chapter II. Literature Review	26
Students' social experience and its role in EFL learning	30
Critical Literacy in EFL	33
Interaction, context and culture in CL	37
Students' thinking and perception of the world	40
Language policies for EFL	42
Chapter III. Research Design	44
Type of Study	44
Setting or context of the study	48
Participants	49
Sampling.....	50
Researcher's role	51
Instruments and Procedures	52
Journals.....	53
Interviews	54
Students' Artifacts.....	55
Ethical Issues	57
Chapter IV. Instructional Design	59
Curricular Platform	60
Vision of curriculum	60
Vision of language.....	61
Vision of learning.....	62

Vision of English classroom.....	63
Pedagogical Intervention	64
Objectives of the pedagogical intervention	64
Methodology	65
Learner's role	66
Teacher's role.....	66
Instructional Unit	67
Chapter V. Data Analysis	71
Super family Analysis	74
SF: Critical Literacy in an EFL Classroom.....	74
Families Analysis	76
CF: Selfness as a Language Learner	76
CF: The Learning Process.....	78
CF: Opportunities to Learn	80
Categories' Analysis	82
Personal Standpoints.....	83
Interaction	84
Learning Awareness: How To	85
Language Awareness: What To	87
Initiative.....	88
Subcategories' Analysis	89
Experiences related to Feelings	90
Experiences related to Self-recognition	92
Experiences related to Issues.....	94
Experiences related to Actors	96
Experiences related to Places.....	99
Experiences related to Opportunities.....	101
Experiences on L1 Transference and Interference.....	103
Experiences on L2 Linguistic Features.....	105
Experiences on Ss taking the Initiative.....	107
Experiences on Decision making	110

Chapter VI. Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications	115
Discussion	115
Conclusions	119
Limitations and Recommendations for further research	122
References	124
Appendices	135
Appendix A. Needs Analysis, Teachers' Survey	135
Appendix B. Results, Needs Analysis Teachers Survey.....	137
Appendix C. Notetaking/Notemaking Sample.....	138
Appendix D. Students' Journal Sample.....	139
Appendix E. Teacher Researcher Sample	140
Appendix F. First Interview.....	142
Appendix G. Final Interview	143
Appendix H. Parents consent form	144
Appendix I. Student Participant Consent Form.....	146
Appendix J. Instructional Unit Sample	147
Appendix K. Instructional Unit Sample.....	150

List of Tables

Table 1. Teachers survey question two	19
Table 2. Sampling selection criteria	53
Table 3. First interview constructs	57
Table 4. Research Design Summary	59
Table 5. Implementation Objectives	67
Table 6. Instructional Unit Model	70
Table 7. Free Codes Groundedness	74
Table 8. Categories (focus codes)	84
Table 9. Open Coding: Subcategories	91
Table 10. Quotes for code Issues	97
Table 11. Coherence in Students' artifacts	108
Table 12. Open Code: Students taking the initiative	110
Table A1. Results, Needs Analysis Teachers Survey	140

List of Figures

Figure 1. Community Mapping – Sports.....	17
Figure 2. Community Mapping – Sports.....	17
Figure 3. Community Mapping – Sports.....	17
Figure 4. Community Mapping – Housing.....	18
Figure 5. Community Mapping – Housing.....	18
Figure 6. Community Mapping – Housing.....	18
Figure 7. Students’ preparation on ethnography basics.....	20
Figure 8. Extract from a student’s note taking.....	21
Figure 9. Extract from a student’s note taking.....	22
Figure 10. Griffie’s (2012) AR six phases’ model.....	49
Figure 11. Critical Literacy Super Family.....	76
Figure 12. CF: Selfness as a language learner network.....	79
Figure 13. CF: The Learning Process network.....	80
Figure 14. CF: Opportunities to learn network.....	82
Figure 15. Category: Personal Standpoints (focus code).....	85
Figure 16. Category: Interaction (focus code).....	86
Figure 17. Category: Learning Awareness (focus code).....	87
Figure 18. Category: Language Awareness (Focus code).....	89
Figure 19. Category: Initiative (focus code)	90
Figure 20. Open Code: Feelings Network.....	92
Figure 21. Open Code: Self-Recognition Network.....	94
Figure 22. C3-Artifact1-Planning the Future. S02OP-903AT.....	95

Figure 23. Open Code: Issues Network.....	96
Figure 24. Open Code: Actors network.....	98
Figure 25. C2-Artifacts1-2-Let's Look Back-Real Life Stories. S02OP-903AT.....	101
Figure 26. Open Code: Places Network.....	102
Figure 27. C1-Artifact2-Mapping Activity-S02OP-903AT.....	103
Figure 28. Open Code Opportunities Network	103
Figure 29. C1-Artifact1-Introduction-S06HB-901AT.....	104
Figure 30. Open Code Transference and Interference Network.....	105
Figure 31. Open Code: L2 Linguistic features.....	107
Figure 32. Open Codes: Ss taking the initiative network, Decision Making and Problem Solving Network.....	109
Figure. 33. 3rd Cycle Artifact-S01MC-903AT.....	111
Figure A1. Notetaking/Notemaking example.....	140

Presentation

This research is created as part of an agreement with Secretaría de Educación de Bogotá to support the postgraduate education of teachers from public sector and thus, improving the quality of education students are receiving. The present study looks into highlighting students' experiences in order to improve their language learning and in doing so, promoting a critical stance through the process or as mentioned by Murrell (2001), understanding that the setting of the language learning is a fabric for human relationships; In that sense, school becomes a relevant factor to address aspects related to equality and seizing opportunities for students to improve their life.

The paper is organized in six different sections that show the stages of a study done between 2013 and 2015. The first chapter is devoted to describe the problem, the research question, and the research objectives. The second part deals with the constructs' descriptions and a presentation of a reviewed literature used to support the theoretical framework. The third section is the research design where I present and justify the methodological decisions made in regards to the type of research selected for this study.

The fourth part presents the instructional design where the pedagogical framework used to implement the project is described; this part also shows the model of classroom used during the intervention. The fifth part addresses the analysis of the data gathered through the implementation; it presents the creation of subcategories, categories, families, and super families that help me to solve the question and achieve the objectives. And finally, on the sixth chapter, I present the conclusions of the research as well as the pedagogical implications it has for the public sector language teachers in Bogotá, Colombia.

Chapter I. Statement of the Problem

When teaching and learning English in Colombia, most English teachers consider that there are several difficulties and problems that converge and affect the good intentions and purposes they might have for their praxis. One of those common issues most English teachers might find when working in public sector schools is incorporating students' experiences and knowledge, not only the one they acquire at school, but the one they have from their own neighborhood or, as mentioned by Murrell (2001), by realizing that the context in which learning occurs is relevant to the value and impact of the learning experience in the promotion of critical literacy in EFL classroom and this can also be applied in a public school in Bogotá, Colombia.

It is important to clarify that for this research, *problem* is not going to have the connotation of *something to fix* but a challenge to explore opportunities and potentialities of this community in order to make it aware of its strengths and also to show what students can achieve with the understanding of their own experiences. This paper is the narrative of an action research study that was carried out from 2013 to 2015 with seventh, eighth and ninth graders from one of the branches of "Colegio Colombia Viva IED" in the afternoon shift in Bogotá, Colombia.

In order to identify the problem addressed in this research, it is necessary to know deeply the people and the context in which the researcher is implementing. The issues mentioned in this section are the steps taken to recognize what problems were relevant to solve for this community. The problem is identified by the help of the following activities: a mapping, a teachers' survey and four students' interview.

A mapping (Kretzmann, 1993) done in the context where the research is carried out, more specifically, Colegio Colombia Viva IED, in Rafael Uribe Uribe (RUU) locality and in its surroundings, with the objective of identifying the funds of knowledge and potentialities this

community has, and it is used as a referential and contextual framework. Then, it also deals with the descriptions of the main results of critical needs analysis implemented in order to find out what is needed. Its objective is to identify the relevant aspects to make all the members of this community participative and active in the EFL process.

First, an ethnographic exercise was carried out for understanding the context and identifying the problem. Thanks to the implementation of a community mapping, it was possible to identify some important key aspects that support the idea for this study to be focused on recognizing students' experiences in the promotion of critical literacy in the EFL classroom through the use of project-based learning methodology. The community mapping was done during the third week of September 2013 and it included the participation of some students who volunteered to carry out the task. This students' escort was necessary because of the security problems surrounding the school's neighborhood: Bochica Sur, Molinos Segundo Sector, Diana Turbay and Ayacucho. Nevertheless, there was a great disposition from some of the students to be participants in this "adventure". Students' offering to assist the research and their collaboration thorough the whole process is, by itself, an important finding in this community mapping and it is also evidence that there is a need for the students to be acknowledged and taken into account. There were five different findings from this community mapping that describe this community's identity and the issues which might be considered in the problem addressed in this chapter (i) youth; (ii) entertainment; (iii) food; (iv) history, and (v) housing.

These aspects show that the most representative distinction in this community is the importance given to youth and there is clearly a wider variety of places destined to be used and for the benefit of the younger ones as shown in images 1 to 3. Because of the previous point, entertainment is very important, specially sports, seen as the most evident architectural element.

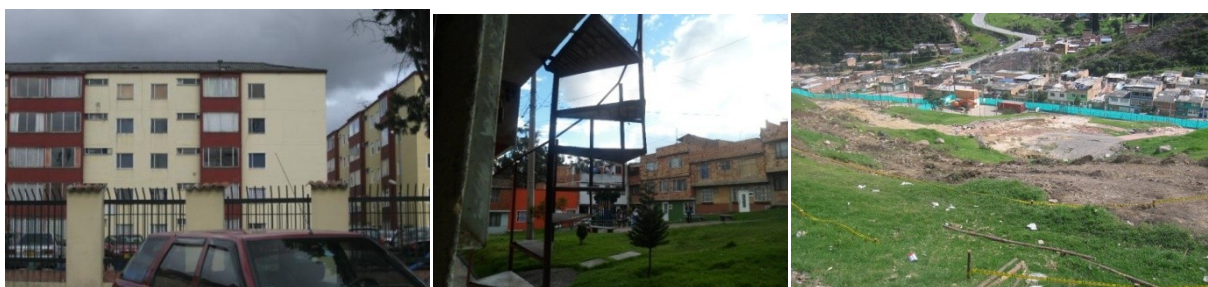
It is shown by the number of parks that surround the A and B branches of the school. There is an ethic code to protect these public places because it is possible to see that despite the differences and invisible lines which might subsist in relation to race, beliefs and social trends, these places are well kept and preserved; they do not show signs of vandalism. During the mapping it was possible to observe that many students of the aforementioned school like to go and spend their free time in these places.

- **Figures 1, 2, and 3. Community mapping – Sports.**



Also, there was a possibility to notice a social contrast: some invisible lines inside the neighborhood due to the fact that there is a big difference of realities just blocks away. The school is divided into three different neighborhoods: Bochica Sur, Diana Turbay and Ayacucho. Life quality and social strata differences are evident among those sectors as it is shown in images 4, 5 and 6.

- **Figures 4, 5, and 6. Community Mapping – Housing.**



These findings presented critical issues that can be addressed during the implementation of the project and let the researcher into comprehending that as much richness as can be found in this community there is a major problem that might be emerging. There are problematic issues in relation to the fact that most of the students do not recognize the relevance of the context they inhabit and the importance of it inside the school processes in order to get better comprehension of their social conditions as a first step into transformation of their realities. All this information can be summarized in the fact that there is diversity within the community and so many assets in particular in this neighborhood that can be included inside the school making students aware of their culture potential. According to Kretzmann (1992) “We can no longer regard city neighborhoods, even the most devastated, as simply hopeless collections of needs, problems and deficiencies” (p.2) but, on the contrary, it is necessary to find the strengths and potentiate them in order to overcome the daily difficulties.

According to what was found in the neighborhood, the *outside* part, the next logical step was to analyze the *inside* part, by recognizing the school deficiencies, potentialities and strengths. And it was done by Pineda’s (2000) three steps needs analysis: *Necesidades, Carencias y Expectativas Personales*. The population involved group 701 (39 students, 2013) from the A

branch of the School Colombia Viva IED in the afternoon shift. They were the selected participants.

A survey for the EFL Teachers (Appendix A) was the first instrument. It was possible to count with a total of five teachers. The survey was designed to identify, from a wider perspective, this school EFL curriculum in theory and practice and, because of that, it was necessary to include teachers from different shifts and branches. The survey was constructed with ten open questions about the teaching process. According to the findings (see Appendix B), the main objective in the EFL teaching process is to make students reach the basic level of competence stated in the national standards.

▣ **Table 1. Teachers survey question two.**

Pregunta #2	Competencia	Respuestas Docentes
¿Qué necesitan saber, hacer y ser los estudiantes para aprobar la asignatura de inglés?	Saber	Contenidos básicos
		Demostrar el conocimiento
		Estructuras gramaticales
		Pronunciación
		Traducir
		Saber Vocabulario
	Hacer	Aplicar en situaciones concretas
		Desempeñarse en las habilidades comunicativas
		Poner en práctica lo aprendido
		Hacer ejercicios
	Ser	Ser personas responsables
		Demostrar Interés

The analysis evidenced that most of the teachers do not take students' interest into account, but the needs of the process. For example, in the second question when being asked about what the students need to know, to do and to be (English competence), four teachers focused only on the first criteria, *to know*, and just two of them mentioned the third criterion given. This information depicts the fact that students need to be active participants in order to change some of these negative attitudes towards the learning of English.

Students' perception of the learning process was vital for the identification of the problem and it was necessary to do a systematized observation by means of an ethnographic tool: Notemaking/Notetaking, (Frank, 1999). In order to try to determine students' disposition and ability to work from a critical perspective, they also worked on analyzing the English class from their own perspective. In Spanish classes they were prepared on some foundations of Ethnography, as shown in Figure 7.

▣ **Figure 7. Students' preparation on ethnography foundations.**



Students were prepared to examine their own role in the EFL class but also to analyze one of their classmates' reactions to the English class (see appendix C) and specially to understand if their experience is being considered when learning English. For the students it was a novelty to be able to reflect upon the actions they do almost unconsciously and to comprehend why they behave in certain way when learning English. This idea reinforces the emerging problem in which it seems that teachers are not considering students as capable people to assume critically their educational process and to take leading role in it.

The most relevant aspects extracted from these instruments, show that the students' perception about their own classmates' attitude toward the class is that they do not demonstrate interest as it is shown in an excerpt of one student's report. For example, the following excerpt

evidenced that for most students learning English is not useful or is not relevant. In another part, it is possible to evidence how students are not attracted by traditional methodologies. That makes unappealing the learning process for some students.

▣ **Figure 8. Extract from a student's note taking.**

A photograph of a student's handwritten note on a grid background. The text is written in blue ink and reads: "pegada al espejo no escribe ni le pone cuidado al profesor y se sigue riendo como el profesor esta volteado de espaldas esta hablando por señas".

“Glued to the mirror, she doesn't write nor pays attention to the teacher and continues laughing as the teacher is turned back she is talking by signs”

Other important data gathered from this exercise was the distinction students made about the class' focus. They realized the most important issue in the class was the topic and not themselves as it is show in the following excerpt: “El profesor entró y saludó y empezó a dar clase como todos los días que nos toca con él y empezó a hablar del tema y de There is, There are y como cambiamos las formas negativas a afirmativas.” (K.P. 701at). Even more, some of the students resort to violence and other unusual behaviors that interrupt the learning process of the majority. It is possible to notice a starting point to awareness and improving the teaching and learning conditions.

▣ **Figure 9. Extract from a student's note taking.**

A photograph of a student's handwritten note on a grid background. The name "Valentina" is written in pink at the top. Below it, the text "la estudiante se puso a pelear con el estudiante Romero" is written in blue ink.

“The student started to fight with the student Romero”

When the student started interpreting the data they collected (note making), there was an agreement that aggression is a very recurrent topic in some classes. They were able to realize that it occurs, specially, when the teacher is absent (he leaves the class) or he is giving his back to the students. They gain awareness of a challenge they have, some of the causes and how they can improve it. This was a key aspect in this process of identifying potentialities because it shows that students might be prepared to work on analyzing those cultural, economic, political and social aspects that need to be considered in order to become critical about their role in the society they live and the first steps to change and transform it.

Statement

The research problem for this project is presented in three specific situations which affect the dynamics in the EFL class and that need to be addressed efficiently to make the English language learning an enjoyable experience.

First, because of the findings from the interview, it is possible to say that some of the EFL teachers are too focused on linguistic issues and seem to forget how imperative students' social experiences are in the learning process and the way they play a relevant role in their engagement and attention for learning purposes (Mollaei & Rahnama, 2012). Students are really focused on what they like; their interests and passions and very often we, teachers, tend to leave those topics outside the class and out of the learning process. It is possible to say that students seek for interaction and communication within the classroom (Sadeghi, 2012). There is a need to transform the teacher centered classroom management and there is a requirement to transform and balance the power relationships in the classroom (Prapai Jantrasakul, 2012) and those empowering situations can be transferred to the society transformation as well.

The second key aspect is that teachers, most of the times, do not present our students opportunities to explore their mental potentialities by focusing English classes only on the linguistics aspects (Li Li, 2011; Dantas-Whitney, 2002). Students may have more positive reactions in class when they are challenged into thinking beyond the boundaries of the school, making connections with their experiences in their community and when it is expected more from them in terms of socio, cultural, and cognitive aspects. Critical literacy might play a relevant role in the EFL classroom by enabling students to transform the traditional ways in which they are supposed to learn English and make a difference in their community at the same time (Yaghoubi, 2013) and their lived experiences can be a trigger for reflection that might help them achieve small scale transformation.

Lastly, it is the issue related to the problem of putting into practice the local, national and international policies of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), for some teachers this is a very delicate issue to address in terms of making it explicit in the class dynamics.

All in all, this research is facing the challenge of addressing two issues. First, it seems to be a lack of challenging opportunities for students to promote Critical Literacy (CL) within the EFL classroom, especially with young students. Prapai Jantrasakul (2012) mentions that “English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and classrooms should make spaces for students to construct and deconstruct multiliteracies in responses to the globalized world” (p, 22). However, because of the complexity of the mental operations involved, it is commonly considered that high order thinking skills are only developed with older learners (Safaa & Halim, 2011). Secondly, language learning is commonly treated as an isolated linguistic aspect that does not take into account the context and the role of interaction (Li Li, 2011); this problematic issue is also

supported by the teachers' interviews done within the EFL classroom at Colegio Colombia Viva IED and the classroom observation instrument.

Because of the evidence gathered through the mapping, the teachers' survey, students' interviews and the class observation, it is possible to state that the problem is that most of the important decisions of the English learning process are made by the teacher without connecting:

- ▣ Students' social and interactional experiences within their communities
- ▣ Students' personal needs for empowerment and critical stances, and
- ▣ The academic objectives of the English class.

One key aspect for this research is the possibility to change the traditional paradigm of classes which is usually focused on the teacher and the standardized contents. As seen in the needs analysis, most of grammar topics are not contextualized neither connected with the student's lives outside the classroom. The different instruments revealed, there is a general request from the actors of the teaching and learning process to transform the practices within the EFL classroom in order to make it more dynamic and meaningful, more communicative.

Research Question

How can critical literacy be promoted when students' reflect on their own social experiences in an EFL classroom?

Research Objectives

General Objective

To describe and analyze how ninth graders' reflection on their social experiences can promote critical literacy in an EFL classroom.

Specific Objectives

1. To observe and understand the role of interaction, context and culture when reflecting on social experiences.
2. To identify the relationship between students' reflection on their social experiences and critical literacy in an English as a Foreign Language classroom.
3. To indicate if students thinking and perception of the world becomes more critical by reflecting upon their social experiences.

Rationale

The objective of this study is to gain an understanding of the role students' experience plays when learning English and how this role contributes to the promotion of critical literacy. I selected this particular topic because, as an English teacher from a school in the public sector, I'm deeply concerned with the apparently lack of interest and enthusiasm to learn English due to the fact that many students do not see this subject as part of their future lives plan.

This project is aimed to any English teacher who wants to transform the passive role most students play when learning English throughout the world and any teacher who understands the educational process can be enriched from the students' experiences. In relation to this, Norton and Toohey (2011) argue that "some contexts and practices may limit or constrain opportunities for learners to listen, speak, read, or write, other contexts and practices may offer enhanced sets of possibilities for social interaction and human agency" (p.6). It means that it is important to understand the importance of the specific context and its people in order to make the learning relevant and successful, as well as to understand and take advantage of the several opportunities the context offers to learn, to take into account students' lives and desires.

The target group is made of teenage students who need to be taken into account and whose voice can reach levels of superior comprehension about the economical, political, cultural,

and historical factors which impact their community and whom are willing to transform those difficulties they face in their daily life.

In order to gain a more profound understanding of their reality, there is a need to work collaboratively among themselves, respecting each other's opinions and beliefs that is why it includes the process of doing a project which involves students' experiences through the discovery of the many reasons which have brought them into the same place, Colegio Colombia Viva IED in Bogotá, Colombia. The project they did was the excuse by which the researcher analyzed the key aspects they found out in terms of the socio-cultural implications their lives have and the way they can prepare themselves to be *literated* from a critical stance thanks to the involvement of the students in their English classes in the aforementioned school.

This project is innovative because it introduces the topic of promoting English at the same time that critical literacy in teenagers which is not frequently worked in a foreign language environment. Thus, there are some implications which are needed to be taken into account that cannot be measured in terms of quantitative research but they suit better from a qualitative stance. This makes it essential as a descriptive-interpretive action research study which may open the path to other researchers with similar concerns in relation to their daily praxis. It is expected that student participants, at long-term, will be able to continue proving they have empowered themselves through this experience and be able to understand they can play an active role in the society they live in, or as stated by Lin (1999): "Understanding existing classroom practices and their socio cultural and institutional situatedness is a first step towards exploring the possibility of alternative creative, discursive practices that might contribute to the transformation of the students' habitus" (p, 411).

Chapter II. Literature Review

The Colombian educational system, as several in Latin America, requires of many opportunities and innovation in order to improve and to help its protagonists: demoralized and tired teachers, students which are underestimated and bored of not being noticed. Most of the social problems in a culture like ours are blamed on the school and its actors. In the specific case of English, not have native speaker teachers, the daily praxis is limited by several factors such as salary, work over load, low self-esteem and a poor recognition of their value from the society in general (Pineda, 2010). In the particular context of the present research study, the needs analysis (see chapter one for more information) shows a current requirement to change the traditional methods of teaching English in order to fulfill the students', families', and school's expectations and also, to involve the participants in a more meaningful teaching and learning process that can make the transformation or improvement of their local reality possible.

For the development of this research study, it is important to clarify and limit some key constructs that are considered as strands that will weave the necessary connections for the pedagogical intervention to work out: students' social experiences, critical literacy improvement, interaction, context, and culture, students thinking and perception. These terms are developed accordingly to understand better the problem in relation to what the academic community has discovered so far about the problem and the possibilities to approach it.

This chapter is divided into two main parts, the state of the art which presents the most relevant research that shares some similarities with this one, and the theoretical framework in which theoretical threads are going to be explained and framed according to the research focus

which deals with describing and analyzing how critical literacy can be promoted when students reflect on their own social experiences in an EFL classroom.

Most language teachers consider that promoting critical literacy (CL) in an EFL classroom is a very difficult thing to do, if not impossible, due to the fact that some researchers considered CL as part of high order thinking ones (Harrigan & Vincenti, 2004). For this reason, there is an assumption of working them only with adults (Reza Hashemi & Ghanizadeh, 2012; Li Li, 2011; Manalo, Kusumi, Koyasu, Michita, Tanaka, 2013). For the present study, CL is considered as the intrinsic opportunity any student has to reflect upon their own existence and the ability they show to transform what they are not content with. In that sense, CL is not frame in limitations of age. In fact, some studies demonstrate it is possible to work CL with young learners, even small children, as Ruiz Niño (2013) presented it in her study with third graders. She concludes that “the structure and nature of project work allowed students to start using their emerging critical thinking skills in the EFL classroom because it encouraged the students’ interest and motivation toward the topic selected during their research process” (Ruiz, 2013:218) and that “students learned and improved their writing through participation, interest, motivation, and experiences” (Ruiz, 2013:218). This study showed that it is possible to promote critical literacy with young learners as long as the teacher takes into account their mental abilities and their interests to engage them in the learning process.

Consulted research, during the process of creating the project, has been categorized according to the similarities and differences found among studies to evidence how this specific research study is innovative in Colombia. For example, some similar studies made throughout the world mention the importance of transforming the practice for teaching English and also, the role this plays in promoting critical perspectives for understanding the society in which English

learners live. Most EFL studies are from countries where English is conceived as a key element in educational systems. For instance, Yaghoubi (2013) mentions that CL is a determining factor in language learning and teaching. This stresses its significance but also, that language scholars should consider that learning-oriented learners can be better at critical thinking and thus, promoting critical literacy. In the same line of thought, Pally (1997) declares that focusing on goals and context content rather than on linguistic features can be beneficial for the learning of a second language. She states that “As ESL classes are often filled by students with wide-ranging goals, teachers who wish to pursue sustained content need to devise curricula that sustain the interest of a wide range of students” (Pally, 1997:300).

Some of these studies with related strands (critical literacy and language education) have fundamental differences which make the results somehow different and could be implemented in the Colombian context obtaining diverse outcomes. For example, from other parts of the world, the Saudi author Alhasan Allamnakhrah (2013) was asking for education reforms to incorporate critical thinking in English education programs. Also, Safaa, and Halim (2011) found out that there is a problem concerning weaknesses in critical reading and translation skills. Other research, in fact most of it, are focused on analyzing the impact of CT in the EFL but with adults or young adults at university level (Grosser & Lombard, 2008; Harrigan & Vincenti, 2004; Bakhtiar, Okechukwu-Lawrence, 2013; Alhasan Allamnakhrah, 2013 and Safaa Halim, 2011).

Research, on the specific topic of literacy from a critical stance, which has been carried out by authors such as Alhasan Allamnakhrah. (2013) states that CL “is about becoming a better thinker in every aspect of your life: in your career, and as a consumer, citizen, friend, parent, and lover. Discover the core skills of effective thinking” (Alhasan, 2013:201). For this author, implementing CL in the reality and context student lives and incorporating it to their own

experience in order to become literate from a critical perspective is necessary. Nasser Rashidi and Faeze Safari (2011) understand that standardized learning materials can also carry a message of inequality and denial of one's culture and experiences and they explained that an important part of the learning process is to form critical approaches that try to increase learners' critical awareness and encourage them to take action against the inequalities of the world around them. Prapai Jantrasakul (2012) research study on an EFL classroom in Thailand showed that there can be some benefits such as, to a certain extent, facilitating and empowering students' language learning. In addition, CL enables the students to rethink about their cultural standpoints: it serves as a space for contextualized language practice within a cultural context, where the students were provided with opportunities to share their opinions.

In terms of social experience, most of the research related to CL deals with highlighting students' experiences and making them explicit inside the language class as main source of knowledge. In this regard, Mollaei and Rahnama (2012), state that language learning is a social situation in which students' perception of the world is mediated and reflected on the process constantly. They confirm that "Experience perse is, therefore, only the first step in the learning process, and for learning to be drawn from it, the experience must be followed by the vital step of reflection. The ability to reflect on an experience, and on initial reactions to the experience, is the "missing link" that defines the relationship between experience and learning" (p, 269).

Supporting the last statement, there are authors such as Nordmeyer (2008), who presents the incorporation of students experiences through language learning class representing diversity and who introduces the term *learning in English* instead of learning English as means to prove that it is important to learn languages with social purposes rather than the academic ones in order to make it more meaningful. Also, Robertson (2015) mentions that the context and culture,

framing students' experience, are relevant to comprehend and understand a foreign language, and that teachers should find ways to help students to retain new information in foreign language by connecting it with their lived experiences in diverse and difficult contexts.

All in all, these studies present very broadly the efforts from teachers - researchers all around the world when trying to reflect on students' language learning experiences to promote critical literacy. Also, it is important to highlight that these studies show that critical literacy is a means that can be achieved in the EFL classroom to make students see the possibilities they have for improving, not just the learning process but also, their life conditions and as Saylag, (2014) states "in the field of pedagogy, it has long been recognized that there is a need for flexible and negotiable learning objectives; the addressing of lack of background knowledge; and the inclusion of students' experiences as resources for learning" (p, 535).

The theoretical framework, in which this project is centered, shows the organization of some key terms that are the essence and foundations which support the following phases of the study and specially the criteria that is going to establish if this methodology for teaching EFL can be successful in the public sector in Bogotá, Colombia. There are five main concerns that are going to be dealt when implementing the intervention (See chapter four) and that are going to be considered as conducting lines in the data analysis and the discussion of the findings (See chapter five): (i) students' social experiences, (ii) critical literacy, (iii) interaction, context and culture, (iv) students thinking and perception, and (v) language proficiency and critical literacy as a broad term which includes critical thinking skills (CTS).

Students' social experience and its role in EFL learning

In the process of understanding the value of students' role in this study, it is necessary to define, clarify and limit key aspects that are at the core of this research study and that represent

the intention of transforming the teaching practices to make language learning more engaging and interesting for the students. In first place, the notion of experience is going to be constructed from Dewey's (1938) and Kolb's (1984) perspective as shown in the following excerpt:

To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill, is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making the most of the opportunities of present life" (Dewey, 1938:6).

This means that experience is something one cannot deny in the classroom and it is a crucial part of the students' learning process because of the assimilation of new knowledge and its integration to the prior one "if an experience arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future, continuity works in a very different way. Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into" (Dewey, 1938:14).

Nevertheless, it is also important to mention that not all the experiences can be relevant for an academic process, as Dewey explains that we need to discriminate between experiences that are worthwhile educationally and those that are not. So, this is a very essential idea for this research topic because the students are the ones who need to learn how to differentiate the kind of experiences that are going to be helpful for them to become more critical. He also states that an experience is a complex intellectual operation which involves observation of the surroundings, knowledge of what has happened in similar situations in the past based on the interaction with

others with wider experience and judgment. This cycle is vital to understand that all the meaningful experience should be based on the relationships created with others.

The second key author for this project in relation to experience is David Kolb (1984), who explains several characteristics experiential learning must have. In first place it is focused on the process rather than the outcomes, and then it must be considered that in experiential theories, learning is believed intrinsically as part of experience and it requires resolution of conflicts in order to be able to adapt new knowledge to the world by reflecting processes and thus producing learning. Experience is, therefore, started as an individual process of the human being and then, through interaction and reflection, it is transformed into long term knowledge.

This understanding of experience implies that learning is a holistic process of adaptation to the world (Kolb, 1984:31) or as he states, “it provides conceptual bridges across life situations such as school and work, portraying learning as continuous, lifelong process” (p.33). This statement supports the idea that it is necessary to make connections between the classroom and students’ real-life experiences so learning can happen. Finally, Kolb clarifies the terms performance (short-term adaptations to immediate circumstances), learning (longer term mastery of generic classes of situations) and development (lifelong adaptations) which are core to the study and specially the conception of promoting critical literacy through language learning. Experiences are considered a cycle in which the experience becomes learning and the latter becomes transformative knowledge as steps of critical literacy.

This perspective of understanding students’ social experiences embedded in the process of language learning to promote critical literacy, focuses the research study on a situated perspective of placing learning as lived experiences and students participating as agents the world (Murrell, 2000). Thus, the teacher is seen as a guide and he/she has the same relevance as the students

during the learning process. In this regard, it is essential to highlight that experience in the language classroom allows students center role in the educational process because their life experiences are considered, at the same time, motivators and reason for learning. Ellis (1989) names this model a humanistic classroom and explains that “[it] is not one where certain rather special kinds of activities take place, but one where learners are valued and nurtured as individuals.” (p.91) and also that “human beings are individuals; they differ with regard to gender, age, motivation, personality, learning style, self-esteem etc. Each person has her own way of going about things with the result that there is immense diversity in both the way learners learn and in what they achieve.” (p.74) By comprehending that each student is a human being and that their subjectivity is transformed thought interaction with others but it is also shaped by their internal processes of individual and collective interpretations of the reality and so, they become *knowing subjects* (Weedon, 2004) that “use language to express meaning. They acquire the knowledge that they convey in language from their socialization, education and experience of life” (p,8). Thus, social experiences would serve students to identify themselves and the world that surround them, it would help them address issues they face daily and understand their own perception of their reality, and teachers all over the world are called to start reflecting upon the ways languages are being taught and learnt through the sharing of experiences.

Critical Literacy in EFL

It is necessary, to frame this research into the applied linguistics discipline. There is no doubt that EFL is an opportunity to expand the view our students have of the world and to be able to help them do it. There are two theoretical foundations for this project. The first one is the Critical Language Awareness (CLA) defined by Fairclough (1992) as attention to the characteristics of language and its use in elements of language education. For Shamim Ali

(2011), CLA “discovers the relationship between language and social perspective. In critical language awareness the focus is on the ways in which language represents the world and reflects the social construction” (Shamim Ali, 2011:30). This author mentions that CLA presents the opportunity to transform the teaching community. Also “critical language awareness approaches can be strengthened by requiring students to develop skills used in sociolinguistic and ethnographic research in order to become proficient at observing, analyzing and evaluating language use in the world around them” (Egan-Robertson & Bloome 1998).

The second critical applied linguistics domain is critical pedagogy and second language education. According to Norton and Toohey (2004), “Advocates of critical approaches to second language teaching are interested in relationships between language learning and social change” (p. 1). This means that learning a foreign language must be included in the life project of the students and, in that way, they are going to be able to transform the society they belong to from a local viewpoint, or as explained by Norton and Toohey (2004:1), “From this perspective, language is not simply a means of expression or communication; rather, it is a practice that constructs, and is constructed by, the ways language learners understand themselves, their social surroundings, their histories, and their possibilities for the future.” (p.1)

This construct is very relevant for the research because it deals with the personal and political stance of what it means to be critical in a globalized world, especially for a language student in a developing country and facing difficulties in life. For a person to gain a critical perspective, it is necessary to focus on “social transformation by seeking social justice and equality among all people rather than merely celebrating differences or assuming a priori that all people are equal” (Kubota, 2004, p. 37) and also to be conscious of “the transformative power of learning and teaching overall and, of course, the state of the world” (Levine & Phipps, 2012, p.6).

For the present study, the word critical means a person's ability to argue and to judge whatever information is given by the means of contact to the world and other people. It involves the notion of being critical just by being in the world and it might not have to deal necessarily with emancipation situations but with small scale transformations and empowerment of students' lives and context.

There are different assumptions in relation to promoting critical literacy in an EFL classroom. According to Luke (2004) the term *literacy* refers, traditionally, to the reading and writing of text but nowadays it can be conceived "as a social practice that is integrally linked with ideology, culture, knowledge and power" (Rassool, 2004:7). It should be also perceived as natural, due to the fact that "it is seen as a cultural activity that involves people in conscious and reflexive action within a variety of situations in everyday life" (p.7). It is mentioned that literacy "takes account of the different forms and functions of written and spoken language within a variety of social and cultural contexts" (p. 13). Hence, as this conception it goes beyond the technical aspects of the language and the skills themselves, literacy is presented more in a communicative perspective within a specific context in which language is purposeful and alive.

The term *critical literacy* might refer to the use of the technologies of print and other media of communication to analyze, critique, and transform the norms, rule systems and practices governing the social fields of everyday life (Luke, 2004). This previous assumption determines the fact that education in general needs to move on to the next steps in learning and thinking processes that can be considered more complex and suitable for the challenges society presents to current population. But, according to Luke (2004), CL also should emerge from culture, society and political discussion and analysis with the examination about the working of texts and their consequences, and especially whose interests are being benefited and why it happens.

This is the background where literacy starts to mean something different from the actions of reading and writing: In Freire and Macedo's words (1987) "critical literacy views readers as active participants in the reading process and invites them to move beyond passively accepting the text's message to question, examine, or dispute the power relations that exist between readers and authors. It focuses on issues of power and promotes reflection, transformation, and action" (pg, 14). This means that critical literacy involves imagining multiple perspectives and possibilities and using the basic skills and the language learnt for carrying out a social change. Or as Luke (2004) states, "the focus would be on naming and renaming, narrating and understanding learners' life worlds, with the aim of framing and solving real problems. Reading and writing are about substantive lives and material realities, and they are goal and problem-directed" (p.3).

Critical literacy, according to Atkinson (2012) goes beyond thinking techniques. It is students' voice and its relationship with texts and the world and history of each person. This understanding of CL is a way to relate knowledge with the world in terms of acquiring a political stand. Halpern (2003) also defines it as "thinking that is purposeful, reasoned, and goal oriented" (p.1).

Critical literacy in EFL in Colombian context has also been promoted through understanding the necessity of awaking awareness in the students through the critical stances of literacy, which is not new in our context. For example, it is well known Guerrero's (2010) efforts to expose the need to transform the pedagogical practice when teaching EFL in Colombia. She mentions it is important to recognize the power given to the knowledge and the implication it has in the students' motivation "because not everybody enjoys these benefits of speaking English and not everybody has access to acquire it" (Guerrero, 2005:295). She describes the subtext and hidden agenda behind most of the educational policies that regulate language teaching and

learning. These economic, politic and social implications affect the way students and teachers, the main participants, feel about the learning process. It is concluded that “the MEN (Ministry of National Education) places English as the magic formula that will solve our economic, social, cultural, and political problems; speaking English grants us “access” to the wide range of advantages associated to this language” (p.305), and that in “a complex, competitive, rich, plurilingual, pluricultural world like the one we live in, it is very narcissist and egocentric to think that speaking an important language like English is the key to solve all our problems” (p, 306). Colombian context needs a social transformation and the public school and its actors are called to start it, which is the relevance of critical perspectives in teaching and specifically in language learning.

Pineda (2004) is also interested in understanding critical thinking in the EFL classroom. She mentions that “Individuals’ critical perspectives and their engagement in economic, social, political, and cultural spheres contribute to the development of nations around the world. In light of the need to provide opportunities for our learners to participate in different environments, it becomes essential to focus on the teaching of English, as it is the language most commonly associated with global processes” (p.47). She found out that “competence and criticality are on-going, never-ending processes. However, teachers can refine them through thought-provoking, stimulating materials” (p, 3).

Interaction, context and culture in CL.

This strand presents the idea that the EFL student is a human being that no matter the age or growth stage he is in, he has a valuable and rich background or previous knowledge that is vital in order to create the connections in the learning process. This route of interaction, conceived from the perspective of relating the academic knowledge, the experiential knowledge

and the one around themselves: the context, can be difficult sometimes due to the fact that not everybody learns in the same way, and that kind of uniqueness makes it hard for the teacher to find learning patterns that can be significant for all the students. From this perspective, Li Li's (2011) study presents some findings that suggest that interactions can facilitate or obstruct opportunities for improving thinking skills through participation, meaning negotiation and co-construction in EFL classrooms. EFL classroom can promote student communication, negotiation, meaning co-construction and participation all of the former are requirements of an interactional theory. This is the main reason why the focus on interaction in EFL classes can help, somehow, to facilitate learning processes as suggested in Harrigan & Vincenti's (2004) study.

Interaction importance when learning a language is conceived from Vygotsky's (1978) activity theory of social cognition for a conception of social knowledge that conceives learning as a transaction between the person and the social environment. Interaction is also relevant in order to improve students' critical literacy. Also it is conceived from Ochs' (2000) perspective on real interactions constructed by society and culture which might help and "conjoin less and more experienced persons in the structuring of knowledge, emotion, and social action" (p.230). This means that interaction, recognized as dialogue, creation, and sharing of knowledge can be the first step into immersing students in critical practices and, at long term, in creating transformations and social changes which are needed to start in the school but also be extended to the close community, because interaction and "ordinary conversation is an informal resource for transforming self and society" (p, 231). This is only possible when communication occurs and language becomes meaningful because the focus is on the person and the message.

Pineda (2004) explains the relevance of interaction from a constructivist notion of learning and its relation to thought. In the constructivist model, a learner draws on his own

internalized cognitive system to actively construct meaning. The process of making sense implies interpreting our reality from a subjective perspective, which is shaped by our history and through interaction with others. For example, in Paulo Freire's work, it is possible to understand that the only way to comprehend and "Read the World" (Freire, 1974) is by exchanging the own experience with others to enrich it and make it more familiar with the reality in order to transform it. In relation to this, Kolb mentions that the "process of naming the world is accomplished through dialogue among equals" (Kolb, 1984, p.29), which is exactly what this study is proposing, that is to say students might achieve better academic results and improve their language learning by the mere fact of sharing, discussing and reflecting upon their own reality, by connecting their daily experiences with the target language.

In that sense, Renkema (2009) mentions culture should be consider "as the deposit of knowledge, beliefs, values and attitudes a group of people share" (p.280). This is what needs to be understood and analyzed in the present study in order to frame the interaction role, which is conceived as dialogue among equals and interchange of experiences because through the scrutiny of the learning process students may understand that there is a possibility to empower themselves creating what Renkema called *social action* and equality in terms of what they can achieve and how to get it. Grundy (1987) also supports the idea of action through reflection by stating that "action follows from theoretical as well as practical reflection. It is the real, and hence uncertain world of human interaction which is the site for such action, not an idealized or objectified world" (p.135). This definitely highlights the importance of recognizing the term of culture as something considered only from a specific location or setting.

Classroom interaction presents the opportunity to make students aware of their own culture and social identity, and in language learning this topic has also been discussed from a

critical perspective; for instance, Starkey (2002) declares that “Whilst language learning by itself does not necessarily reduce or remove prejudices, when accompanied by other well-conceived educational experiences it can be a powerful contributor to a culture of human rights and equity” (p.12). This quote emphasizes the role language learning may have to empower students in complex settings such as the one presented in the public sector in Bogotá Colombia, where the least advantage people study, and it also would help learn a more meaningful process by bonding the foreigner and exogenous part, English, to the closest experiences students have lived on their own communities or, as stated by Ochs (2000), who asserts that interaction is a two-way street, in which the involved people learn from each other by using, in a imaginative way, their linguistic resources to “navigate and construct the human condition” (p.232).

Students’ thinking and perception of the world

This research highlights the role of students and the relevance of being taken into account by deciding vital aspects of a class in the EFL classroom. There have been several researchers dealing with the importance of students’ beliefs and perceptions on the outgoing of the learning process (Eslami-Rasekh & Valizadeh, 2004; Murphey, Falout, Elwood & Hood, 2009) and through it, students’ involvement in the learning process and decision making has been established to be a relevant factor that might alter the outcome of learning a language. As Bernat & Gvozdenko (2005) affirm, “in the classroom context, the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and meta cognitive knowledge that students bring with them to the learning situation have been recognized as a significant contributory factor in the learning process and ultimate success” (p.1). In this regard, it is essential to consider that students, as central part of the process, need to be active participants with an empowered voice that integrate their contribution to the learning

experience. These authors state that when learning is planned, it must “include all that individuals understand about themselves as learners and thinkers, including their goals and needs” (p.2).

For this study, students’ thinking and perception of the world is considered from a contextual approach, it means that while the particularities of students are taken into account, there is also a need to interpret them from their significance in the specific context the students participants inhabit and in that sense, there might be more possibilities to make the language learning process more successful, understanding that “learners hold both facilitative and inhibitive beliefs about language learning,” (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005:8), and the way these factors allow the teacher “to discover what students believe or know about their learning and provide activities that would allow students to examine these beliefs and their possible impact on how they approach learning” (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005:8). In order to make them more self-sufficient learners, capable of interpreting the world on their own account, and empowering them into leading their lives and expectations.

As a teacher researcher, it is important to notice the relevance “of our students’ perceptions and beliefs about language learning in order to facilitate desired learning outcomes in the classroom” (Eslami-Rasekh, 2004), these include the vision of society (or world) they possess and how they perceived it might be transformed to be benefited according to the context possibilities. The author concludes his study by affirming that participants might dialogue and use negotiation as an alternative, which would help into achieving a more positive attitude and response from the student towards learning a language by including students’ lives, concerns and interests in the balance, a more desire outcome might be achieved.

Language policies for EFL

As this research project is framed in action research, it is important to clarify that all the implementation happens in an EFL classroom and the focus of attention, academically speaking, is the description and possible improvement of students learning of English as a foreign language. In this sense, the instructional units are framed within two of the most relevant normative in a national and international framework: the Colombian Basic Standards for Competence in Foreign Language: English (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2006) and The Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2002) which is the one that oriented the standard creation in the first place.

Colombian Basic Standards for Competence in Foreign Language: English were created by the Ministry of Education in order to contribute to prepare Colombian students to face a globalized world by developing communicative competences in another language (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2006:3). This educational organization supports these standards creation on the following stance on the third page:

Tener un buen nivel de inglés facilita el acceso a oportunidades laborales y educativas que ayudan a mejorar la calidad de vida. Ser competente en otra lengua es esencial en el mundo globalizado, el cual exige poderse comunicar mejor, abrir fronteras, comprender otros contextos, apropiarse saberes y hacerlos circular, entender y hacerse entender, enriquecerse y jugar un papel decisivo en el desarrollo del país. Ser bilingüe amplía las oportunidades para ser más competentes y competitivos. (p.3)

The goal of this educational policy was to establish basic guidelines in which English teachers all over Colombia, may support the process and, in certain way, to regulate the learning

experiences in order to get better national results. The ninth grade indicators, provided by the standards guideline, were used to attune the linguistic objectives in the instructional design.

The second language policy taken into account was the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2002). This international framework for the learning of English as a foreign language was created in order to help teachers to design and elaborate language Syllabi. At first, it was created to be implemented in Europe but it has spread throughout the world as one of the reference points to teaching of English as a foreign language. The council of Europe explains that this document can help teachers to understand “what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively” (p.10), explaining specifically the importance of “the cultural context in which language is set” (p.10). This is a very relevant detail which implies the stance that knowledge is not universal, and that it is relevant to keep focus on the particularities of the different contexts in which a language might be learned.

It can be concluded that critical literacy has been formulated by many researchers as a pivotal way to empower language students all over the world as a means to transform the difficulties and hardships of society. This kind of literacy is constructed by interaction among students, families, and communities, but also to the environment and that is the main reason why teachers must adapt it to the particularities of the context in which language is learned. All the constructs mentioned above are key elements within the instrumental design of this action research study. Also, they are going to be explained more detailed and in a practical way in through the implementation and subsequent data analysis.

Chapter III. Research Design

Making explicit the research design led me to select objectively, the instruments that helped me into describing the way critical literacy is promoted while students interacted, shared, and reflected on their social experiences. This section includes the research paradigm, the research approach, and the type of research. It also describes the setting and the participants and the researcher's role. Lastly, it describes the data collection instruments that are used during the pedagogical intervention.

Type of Study

This research project is framed within the socially constructed knowledge claims (Creswell, 2003) because he states it present researcher and participants the idea of comprehending the world that surround them. According to this, it is claimed that students “develop subjective meanings of their experiences-meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views” (pg, 8). This is the main reason why this paradigm suits the essence of the present study because it helps to highlight the relevance of research participants by “rely[ing] as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied” (p.8) and letting them construct the meaning from their own knowledge and experiences which is constructed through interaction with others. Another relevant characteristic is the fact that it tends to focus on the specific contexts in which the research is being carried out and most important of all is that it “acknowledge[s] how interpretation flows from their own personal, cultural, and historical experiences” (pg, 9).

According to the needs analysis [aforementioned in chapter one], students' role in Colegio Colombia Viva IED has been undermined in some cases when decision making is made mostly

from teachers but, through this project, ninth graders from this school are assuming central role in their English classes. It is possible for participants to discuss and actively participate in decision making in relation to methodological aspects for the project and also to include their life experiences from outside the school and incorporate them in the political, economic, social, cultural and historical events of their specific context which will have an impact on their lives.

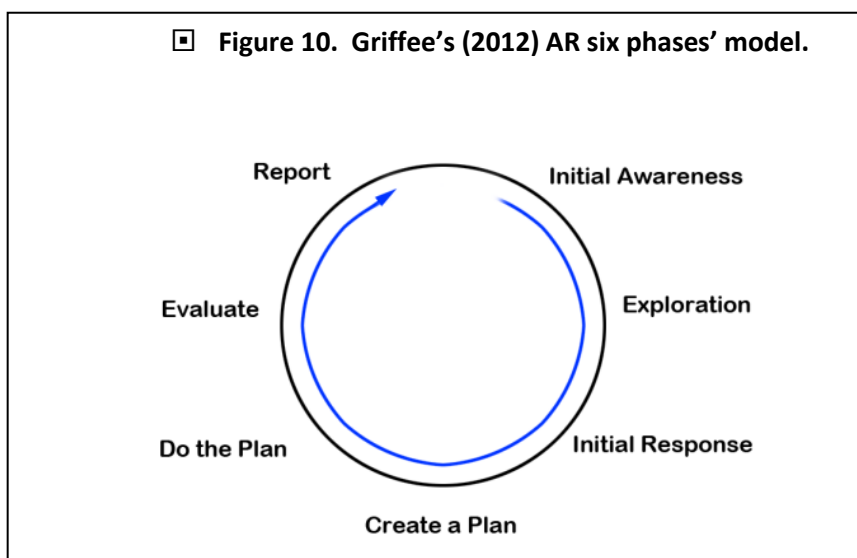
This study is an inductive qualitative action research focused on the researcher's and participants' subjective perspective and understanding of the language learning situation according to the particularities of the context where it has been carried out. In agreement with this approach, Creswell (2003) mentions that in a qualitative study "the researcher seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants" (p.21). In the case of this study, it is important to understand the way EFL learning can become a means in the process and not the target, and how students' lives and experience is a relevant element to promote critical literacy in English.

Qualitative studies are characterized by being set on a natural environment (Creswell, 2003), and a public school is definitively a natural setting in which the lives of all the participants converge and are transformed for the students to learn and to create new links of understanding the society they live in from a broader perspective than just family. The school is a natural setting since there is no manipulation of the situations that are being observed but just mere observation of the interactional patterns that come out when socializing. A second key characteristic for the study is the possibility to use multiple sources of data sources to create the subcategories, categories, families and super families presented in chapter five and also the importance of evidencing contributors' meanings, since according to Creswell (2003), a qualitative research is characterized by "focus[ing] on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem

or issue”. Lastly Creswell’s idea reinforces the need to highlight students’ critical participation into the study throughout active participation in the whole procedure. This participation should make it possible for students to become agents of change in their own communities by giving a positive meaning to all experiences they have had.

Action research (AR) is an important research methodology that helps teacher practitioners to face difficulties in educational settings to transform their praxis in order to address the challenges each particular school presents every day. This research type makes it possible to affect and transform problematic conditions mentioned in chapter one of this study because there seems to be no connection among students’ experiences, the class objectives and the funds of knowledge of their community. For Stenhouse (1983), action research is about emancipation and intellectual, moral and spiritual autonomy that should be “undertaken with rigour and understanding so as to constantly refine practice” (Koshy, 2005: 1). This idea of transforming the classroom dynamics to make it more interactional and participative is coherent with the paradigm that guides the study and it will help to promote the critical perspective through the project in which students will have the opportunity to face their daily difficulties and understand that they have the power to change them or at least to use them into personal growth.

Action Research implies a cyclical process which has been described and implemented in different phases according to different authors (Kemmis and MacTaggart, 1998; Koshy, 2005). For the present study, the cycle’s scheme is focused on Griffiee’s (2012) six phase model that consists of initial awareness, exploration, initial response, creating a plan, doing the plan, evaluating and reporting, and it can be presented in the cycle shown in Figure 10.



This model is really pertinent to this study because this research methodology allows incorporating the implementation of the pedagogical platform [for more information see chapter four], which is project based learning into the cycles or phases within the AR project. It is also significant because it involves students' participants in the decision making process when doing the project. The initial awareness and exploration phases are conducted by the researcher in terms of understanding the context and identifying the problematic situation that is needed to be considered [see chapter one for more information]. This initial awareness is achieved by collecting information with a needs analysis and community mapping, the phase three which is the initial response is designed by the researcher in the first decisions made and the theoretical review of the topics related to the problem.

The following phases are constructed with the contribution of the participant students on the first steps into the implementation, the created plan consists on selection the project objective for each phase and also the order of the topics in relation to the three phases as well as deciding which the product is for each cycle. The implementation itself (see chapter four) is the fifth and

sixth phase which is repeated during the three cycles and the last phase, report, is conducted by the researcher when the process of implementing finishes.

Action research design is the selected type of research because this study complies with the three characteristics Griffiee (2012) states: first, it is teacher oriented in terms of how “the research questions come from the teacher’s immediate concerns and problems” (p.112) and this is observable in the way I am guiding students in the process of learning English as a foreign language; second, it is focused on problem solving and for Griffiee, it could be that “teachers identify a specific classroom problem to address rather than problems derived from applied research theory” (p.112). This last aspect may have some implications on the way the research is carried out and perceived by the fellow researchers. The final characteristic for this action research project is that it has a structured reflection according to the aforementioned six phases of the project. It is important to highlight that despite being structured, there is also a flexible component that will allow the researcher to go back, if necessary, to any phase and redesign the actions that are needed to change.

Setting or context of the study

Colegio Colombia Viva IED is a public school located in the south of Bogotá, Colombia in the Rafael Uribe Uribe locality. This school is formed from four branches and three shifts (morning, afternoon and weekends). It has a population of nearly 4.000 students. Its institutional educative project (PEI) “Seres humanos comprometidos con su desarrollo personal y con proyección social” is under construction since 2013 and is intended to shape leadership and autonomy in the students. In this regard, the present study contributes into the school's philosophy due to the fact that there are several projects which seek to help improving critical thinking and argumentative skills in the students. For example: debating Club, theater club and

LEO (lectura, escritura y oralidad) and PRAE (proyecto ambiental escolar) have been promoting a deep understanding of social problems from their field perspectives and they are very good examples of teachers implementing literacy and critical thinking in students native language. In that sense, students might be more than willing to apply this knowledge they have discussed in their native language so they can improve their English level and transform their reality. Lastly, in relation with the English learning processes, the school has not had any relevant project which aims to improve students communicative competences and also to make English a meaningful experience, there had been several activities such as English day and songs festivals but they are usually not continued or incorporated to the curriculum.

Participants

The participants of this study are 80 ninth graders from a public sector school in the south of Bogotá and they are divided into three groups. There are a total of 38 girls and 42 boys aging between 13 to 19 years old. They are characterized for being a homogeneous group in terms of ages, living characteristics and socioeconomical strata but also, there are several students who have an advanced level in high order thinking skill due to the fact that six of them belong to the school's debating club and it had helped them to improve them. The three groups 901, 902 and 903 which are going to be the population group, are composed of really outgoing students and most of them are not afraid of speaking in public and participating in class. Nevertheless, specifically in the English class, most of them have a tendency to participate less when speaking is concerned because they feel they do not have a good pronunciation level.

Most of these students are one and two socio-economical strata and the majority of them come from a family composed by mother, father, brothers and grandparents; all of them are really committed to the educational process of the students. There are some cases of students who live

with one of the parents (be it mother or father) and some of them live with other relatives and this family diversity represents the predominant situation in this school. There are several cases of students which have been displaced or demobilized and ten students come from different parts of Colombia. There are two African-American students and four others with aborigine ascendance. All of this data is very useful when implementing the project because it shows that there is diversity, inquiry possibilities and desire for knowledge about themselves and the experiences they had had.

Sampling

Participants were selected in a purposive sample (Dawson, K. 2002) because of the possibility they have to bring important characteristics needed for the research process. It is purposive because the selected students are a heterogeneous group in terms their thinking and arguing skills which are determinant to promote literacy, but at the same time, they present interest at improving their English knowledge and level of English. And this is relevant to the project because according to Yin (2012) they are the participants that most likely “will yield the most relevant and plentiful data, given your topic of study” (p.88). On the other hand, this group has some homogeneous characteristics in terms of their age, physical and cognitive development, and the grade they are taking at this moment. So, all these aspects make the population a diverse group which I consider very suitable in order to identify the way their different experiences may converge into getting a critical understanding of the society they live in order to transform the aspects they are not comfortable with and also the improvement of their English level.

In order to make it more pertinent to gather data, it is necessary to focus the observation from a smaller sample than the 80 students. Therefore, 12 students were selected as the main participants to the study (seven boys and five girls), four from each group. They were selected in

relation to their level of English and also their willingness to participate into the study. Some of their key characteristics are presented in the following table.

Table 2. Sampling selection criteria

# Group	Description	Special Features
901 4 students	S05TC (GIRL 15 YEARS OLD) S06HB (BOY 14 YEARS OLD) S07CB (BOY 15 YEARS OLD) S08EL (BOY 14 YEARS OLD)	Two of them belong to clubs (Debate club and PRAE). Three are usually top of the class students and one with socialization difficulties but very good at English.
902 4 students	S03KM (GIRL 15 YEARS OLD) S04YR (BOY 14 YEARS OLD) S09WM (BOY 13 YEARS OLD) S10EV (BOY 16 YEARS OLD)	One top of the class student. Two sociable students with no very good English level but hard workers and one with good level but not apparent interest in the class and disciplinary problems. They all belong to different extracurricular activities (debate team, PRAE and soccer club)
903 4 students	S01MC (GIRL 15 YEARS OLD) S02OP (BOY 16 YEARS OLD) S11PP (GIRL 16 YEARS OLD) S12VV (GIRL 16 YEARS OLD)	One boy, three girls. Most of them are new in the group. The four present good English level. One top of the class student, one student with academic difficulties. One student is homosexual.

Researcher's role

The researcher's role in this study is going to be participant observer (Guest, Namey and Mitchell, 2013) because I am a teacher in the school where the project is carried out and it means that I know deeply the context and the participants. According to Guest et al. (2013), this is important in the research process for the reason that "doing participant observation means being embedded in the action and context of a social setting" (p.76)

By considering myself a participant observer, it can be assumed that there is a previous knowledge of the whole problematic situation to be addressed due to the possibility I have had to work in this school for over seven years and with this group of students since 2012. The rapport built already with the participants is a vital element which made the project less intrusive, or as Guest et al. (2013) stated it "a successful participant observer has to inspire enough trust and acceptance to enable her research participants to act much as they would if the researcher were not present" (p.76).

This model of researcher's role is really relevant for this study because according to Guest et al. (2013), it will allow the discovery of those socially built rules that most of the times are taken for granted or that happen in a very subtle way and have a tendency to pass undermined or are totally negated or neglected. Since this project deals with analyzing and reflecting on students' social experiences I consider that this method of data collection is articulated to the reality. The researcher is another source of valuable information for the reason that in this project I am addressing issues that are difficult to get without the perception from an insider. Guest et al. (2013: 81), claim that

For many types of human experience there are no books, official sets of rules, or formal training (...) how we make our living, how we grow and develop to be a member of our various social groups. We learn these things by doing them, and if you want to learn about them, there is often no substitute for doing them yourself, as a participant observer.

The retrospection a teacher-researcher can gain when participating in a research project is important to improve the quality of learning and knowledge it can be produced in a classroom and especially if the subject is a language which needs to be considered as a living entity that can be transformed by the context where it is spoken but also, at the same time, it transforms the world in which is used too.

Instruments and Procedures

In order to be able to solve the research question *how can critical literacy be promoted when students' reflect on their own social experiences in an EFL classroom,*, it is necessary to think of the data collection instruments that are suitable for the task. Griffiee (2012) agrees by stating that "Data is the lifeblood of research. Data connects theory (ideas about the world) to

practice (the world).” And in order for that connection to be truthful and authentic, it is necessary to select three instruments in concordance to the research question and its objectives.

Journals

The research main objective is to describe and analyze how ninth graders’ reflection on social experiences can promote critical literacy in an EFL classroom. This is a descriptive endeavor of observing students in the natural setting, the English classroom, and analyzing the interaction that occurs during the implementation process, in order to find traces of critical literacy in the process of EFL learning. Journals allow evidencing the impact the process is having on each one of the participants’ minds and their improvement of critical perspectives born from the reflection on their own experience. They are written as homework assignment and are used throughout the process, but they are only collected via email at the end of the design (see appendix D).

Participants (teacher and students) are supposed to carry on writing a journal in which they express and analyze altogether their feeling and attitudes shown throughout the process. The goal of this instrument, as mentioned by Sharan (2009), is that it “can give us a snapshot into what the author thinks is important, that is, their personal perspective” (p.142) and these documents “can tell the researcher about the inner meaning of everyday events or they may yield descriptions of highly unusual or idiosyncratic human experiences” (p.142) .

Students’ journals are a very important source of information because they feel more confident expressing their point of view in written form rather than speaking and, by this they can convey their “personal attitudes, beliefs and view of the world” (p.143) which are three key elements to be considered in the promotion of critical literacy in the participant students. It is important to mention that because of students’ English level, it is expected, at first, that they

might not be able to write this instrument completely in English, but the process itself will prove it a valuable source of information. Teacher researcher also created a journal (See appendix E) in which there is a space to reflect on the classes and whatever happens in the process of implementation that on second sight might give light to help to solve the research question and accomplish the objectives.

Interviews

Two interviews were designed. Their main purpose is to explore and identify the relationship between students' experiences and critical literacy in English as a Foreign Language classroom. This means that the research results need to evidence that there is a profound comprehension about personal topics that only the participants were able to answer and this instrument presented the best way to do it. The interview is a data collection instrument that evidences the perception students participants' have acquired through the research experience. Two different interviews were designed: one at the very beginning as recognition of what of the students' story might be incorporated to the implementation and one at the end of the process which has the objective to give closure by giving the student participants the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences.

The first one is a qualitative interview (See appendix F), which tries to determine, at first, the participants' insights on their own educative process, what they expect to get from studying and how it may be more accurate to their needs and interests. To be able to identify, in a trust environment these perceptions, it was necessary to design a qualitative interview that "follows a conversational mode, and the interview itself will lead to a social relationship of sorts, with the quality of the relationship individualized to every participant" (Yin, 2003:134) with ten open ended questions (see annex D), which allow me as researcher to categorize their possible answers

in the constructs I had developed in the research objectives (social experience, EFL learning and Critical Literacy) as it is showed in the following table.

▣ **Table 3. First interview constructs.**

Interview focus constructs	Data to collect during the interview
Linguistic/Language perspective	Narrating facts and past and present events from their own experience.
Thinking Skills/ Critical perspective	Using high order thinking skills such as describing, interpreting, analyzing, contrasting and inferring to understand the world surrounding them.
Social practices perspectives	To be able to associate other students' events with the ones. Sympathy and team work.

The final interview is a considered as a life story interview (Atkinson, in Gubrium & Holstein, 2002) done in group mode (See appendix G). The goal for this interview is to give students-participants a moment of hindsight in which they share their own experiences in a narrative perspective and they could relate their research understanding to the process of becoming aware of the reality. As Atkinson (2002) mentions “life storytelling give us direction, validates our own experience, restores value to living and strengthens community bonds” (p. 122) and that “stories can affirm, validate and support our own experiences socially and clarify our relationships to those around us” (p.122). This interview could be interpreted as evidence that there is a learning experience and the very first transformative actions are starting to appear in the student-participants' minds and lives.

Students' Artifacts

Artifacts are going to be considered in this study as “things that societies and cultures make for their own use” (Norum in Givens, 2008:25) and “(objects) in the social setting chosen for study” (Marshall, 2006:98) which implies the classroom is part of students live and what is done inside it, students' production, needs to be conceived a foundation for information for the

research. Those students' creations during language class, might take many forms: written text, drawings, and oral production and they are important sources of data gathering. The main goal of selecting, creating and analyzing some of the many artifacts designed by the students is to evidence if students' thinking and perception of the world becomes more critical through the reflection on their social life experiences. These artifacts have two main characteristics. First, they are selected by students, as one of the key aspects in the project is to empower them. Second, the pedagogical methodology, project-based learning, demands a project's production that is selected for the students and they hand in (a book, a presentation, a painting, etc). The purpose of these artifacts is to determine, based on the whole experience, if the process is enough to start understanding their lives from a critical stance and the artifacts evidence the adjustment of their thinking process in relation to all their life events that need to be considered as critical subjects. The recollection process is at the end of the pedagogical design but with previous agreement with the participant students.

Pictures used by the students in the first and second cycle of the project are considered artifacts. These pictures from their community mapping (first cycle) and their families (second cycle), guide participant students into understanding the reasons why they are here, in this particular setting and then into analyzing the implications it has in their present lives and opportunities toward their future. The photos and images are important to the project because, according to Sharan (2009), "photos alone can tell the story of what the photographer thought was important to capture, what cultural values might be conveyed" (p. 145) and they are a source for students reflection and introspection on their experiences.

All of the instruments are necessary to be able to solve the research question completely and keeping in mind those linguistic (language learning), pedagogical (project based learning)

and research constructs (critical literacy) are relevant to understand the process. The following table summarizes the previous mentioned information in relation to the research instruments and the connection with the implementation of the curricular platform (see chapter four for more information on this regard).

▣ **Table 4. Research Design.**

Research Questions	Research Objectives	Data Collection Instrument	When to use them
How can critical literacy be promoted when students' reflect on their own social experiences in an EFL classroom?	General To describe and analyze how ninth graders' reflection on social experiences can promote critical literacy in an EFL classroom.	Journals	They are used throughout the process but collected at the end of the research design.
	1. To observe and understand the role of interaction, context and culture when reflecting on social experiences	Observation audio recording Note/taking	Alternating each one in every class I designed.
	2. To identify the relationship between students' reflection on their social experiences and critical literacy in an EFL classroom.	Interview	At the very beginning of the intervention and one at the end of the process.
	3. To indicate if students thinking and perception of the world becomes more critical by reflecting upon their social experiences.	Artifacts The project's production the students agree to hand in (a book, a presentation, a painting etc)	Recollection at the end of the pedagogical design but with previous agreement with the students –participants

Ethical Issues

The present study is dealing with describing ninth graders' social experiences in project based learning to identify if ninth graders' social experiences can promote critical literacy in EFL, and because it has, as main participants, twelve underage boys and girls, it is necessary to request permission from several people. First of all, it is essential to ask for permission to the school's principal. In second place, it is needed to speak with the parents and students participants in order to present the project to them and to perceive their willingness to participate. For this purpose, a presentation letter was designed to the school and two consent forms: one for the students (see annex I) and one for their parents or legal representatives (see annex H).

In the case of the students, they are asked to choose if the researcher could use their real name and if they feel comfortable with the video recording and the interviewing process. They

are given the chance to refuse or leave the research at any moment. The parents' consent form also gives them the opportunity to decide if they want the students' name to be used and also they are assured that students will not come to any physical harm during the implementation because they are part of the English class. They are informed that throughout the implementation it is necessary to talk about personal experiences students have had, and that parents help is going to be required, especially in the first cycle, in which students need to use their family as information source. Some of the topics that will come out of this experience might be subject to polemic and discussion but they are not regarded as a negative knowledge but quite opposite, they are the foundation to start understanding problematic issues from a critical stance and recognition was the first step to transformation.

This chapter presents briefly the design phase of the study in which most of the decisions are made from a theoretical perspective, keeping as axis the research question and the research objectives. In the next chapter, it is presented the practical form of these decisions when implementing, as well as the instructional unit designed for the pedagogical purposes.

Chapter IV. Instructional Design

This chapter presents the planning and organization of the instructional design for the research project which aims at describing and analyzing how can critical literacy be promoted when public school students' reflect on their own social experiences in an EFL classroom through the implementation of a classroom project, based on the integration of students' personal and social experiences and the learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In order to achieve that objective, this study was carried on three cycles during 2015. The exploratory interpretive research methodology, action research, is used in this project with ninth graders because, according to Boog (2003),

Action is 'intentional action' (Weber) and transaction (Dewey), which means that it is embedded in a social context, an intersubjective social cultural space. Action is learned in the transactional processes of socialization. Human beings' lives consist of socio-cultural performances that are controlled by the possibilities permitted by the social system they are part of (p, 433).

The implementation combines students' interests, needs, and social experiences while they interact and discuss economical, cultural, political and social topics related to the context they share and live every day. For this part of the research, it is important to highlight the double role of the teacher-researcher in order to achieve the expected ends of this study. To be able to answer the research question, a curricular platform is created which can enhance students' learning process and decision making. The curricular platform is divided into two parts that relate to each other in a very inherent way. First, the theoretical constructs in which the instructional unit is supported: vision of curriculum, vision of language, the vision of learning, and the vision of classroom. Secondly, the pedagogical intervention in which I describe and justify the goals,

the language goals, the learners and teacher roles, the set of activities that were implemented with my students during the involvement and the methodology used for it. Finally it is necessary to present the Instructional Unit which illustrates the project to be implemented in a specific way. Before moving further on, it is necessary to make clear that this action research project is carried out with the participation of twelve ninth graders from the public school Colegio Colombia Viva located in the south of Bogotá, Colombia.

Curricular Platform

The curricular platform is the first part of the design and it presents the theoretical constructs in which the instructional unit will be supported: vision of curriculum, vision of language, the vision of learning, and the vision of classroom.

Vision of curriculum

For the present study the term *curriculum* is understood according to Richards' (2010) definition where it is seen as “the overall plan or design for a course and how the content for a course is transformed into a blueprint for teaching and learning which enables the desired learning outcomes to be achieved” (p.6). As a result, this perspective is the guideline to all the design and implementation for this instructional design.

Curriculum is considered from a critical perspective in which the focus is on the students, the message and the context rather than the linguistic content. That is the main reason to use the critical curriculum (Grundy, 1987) and liberating education (Freire, 1972) as orientation principle. In this specific curricular view the learning process is considered as thinking and cognitive acts, not transferals of information. In this perspective, the teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches and that possess all the knowledge, but her role is guide dialogue and meaning construction with the students, who in turn, while being taught also teach.

By deciding to work on emancipation curriculum it is important to understand that all the decisions that are made must consider the implications within the context in a meaningful way for all the participants of the education process. “Critical pedagogy goes beyond situating the learning experience within the experience of the learner: it is a process which takes the experiences of both the learner and the teacher and, through dialogue and negotiation, recognizes them both as problematic” (Grundy, 1987:105). It is necessary to clarify that *problematic* is not considered here with a negative connotation but it is rather seen as an opportunity to create knowledge through interaction, recognizing that meaning is socially constructed, not absolute.

Critical curriculum is constructed from a praxis perspective, it means that when designing the goals it must be taken into account the action and reflection steps, in that particular order. This shows that according to Richard’s (2013) approaches of curriculum, a central design curriculum is created where participants select activities (action) and methods first and then the linguistic components are adjusted to what is needed to learn (reflection). Or as Grundy mentions it, action follows from theoretical as well as practical reflection. Teachers are endeavored to recognize the language classroom as part of the real world in which interaction is found. This means that students need to understand the particularities of their own world in order to transform and change what they considered needs to be improved.

Vision of language

Language will be considered for this pedagogical intervention as a means of expression from which students can learn about the difficulties and challenges the society they live in and of course, about their own culture, which is a merging of several traditions, beliefs and customs from all over the country. Because of that, the vision of language is going to be assumed from two different aspects. First of all, Tudor’s (2001) language as culture and ideology in which

language involves the understanding and comprehension of the ability to interact with the culture and the image of the world they live in. It is important to recognize the self, as person in a society, and the value and implications of living in a community. When learning EFL, students are able to see not only their culture but a new culture for them: English language culture. This previous aspect broadens and gives meaning to the learning of a language. The second aspect from which language is going to be recognized is within an applied linguistics domain: critical language awareness. Pennycook (1999) mentions that awareness is an initial step in the process of change and language learning, teaching and analysis could be considered the best scenario for that transformation.

In the same line of thought, Hammond and Macken-Horarik (1999) stated that “language and other social semiotic systems work together to construct the cultural and social realities within which people live” (p.529); and also that “within every culture an interplay of social ideologies, identities, and power relations work systematically to advantage some people and disadvantage others” (p, 529). Fairclough (1989) summarized this key aspect by mentioning ESL is one instance where the idea of constructing a critical consciousness is basic for ideological struggle and debate and it helps students to empower themselves. This is a key element to be considered on the research objective for this study.

Vision of learning

This research vision of learning is going to be based on Mezirow’s perspective of transformative learning (2003) in which the teacher researcher can “foster the development of the skills, insights, and especially dispositions essential for critical reflection—and self-reflection—on assumptions and effective participation” as “essential components of democratic citizenship” (p, 62). This statement means making the learning process and the linguistic aspects meaningful a

coherent in relation to the students' needs, interests and hopes, also delimiting what they learn within the context (community) they inhabit. The transformative notion is considered from two perspectives: students' internal process of growth and small scale decisions that change and improve their lives, families and communities and ideally having as outcome "individuals who think globally and critically about their present conditions and who decide to take action for change. These people are able to merge critical thought with critical action to effect change in their lives" (Kitchenham, 2008:108).

For achieving goals during each project students' experience is going to help to identify the organic connection between education and personal experience so that EFL could be acquired instead of memorized, or as Pineda (2004) puts it "becoming a critical thinker is a life-long task that is only develop and sharpened through time and learning experiences" (p. 52). Also, experiential learning considers Tudor's (2001) conception of exposure and use of the language with communicative purposes. It implies that students are going to see a purpose in learning English due to the fact that it would be necessary to achieve some of the objectives they themselves propose for the projects they are going to do or as Tudor proposes it "message conveyance and communicative practice are effective means of stimulating the learning process and of helping learners to develop their communicative skills" (P.80).

Vision of English classroom

The classroom is conceived from a nontraditional perspective in which socialization, interaction and recognition of other people are the essential aspects when learning a language. Also the students are expected to be aware, not just of the learning process itself (metacognitive learning), but the social, economic, political implications of learning a language in a globalized world because "Education has social goals (...) and these goals frequently relate to the

inculcation of the belief and value systems of the society” (Tudor, 2001, p.124). In this sense, the EFL classroom is going to be a space for students to construct meaningful and contextualized knowledge, reflecting from a critical stance what role they play in the society and how to transform it, if needed, in order to improve their life quality and the concrete context where they live from a local vision to a broader social perspective.

In addition, there is also a need to conceive the classroom as a place for student to show they can be autonomous enough to make their own decisions. This is supported by Tudor (2001) “language learners are thinking human beings who bring with them to the classroom a variety of knowledge, experience and insights which can allow them to play an active role in their language learning” (Tudor, 2001:117). This means that language learning can be used to “evaluate and call into question virtually any of the assumptions about language, learning, or the classroom which are put forward by teachers, materials writers, or educational authorities” (Tudor, 2001. p.122) and that in an experiential and transformative classroom (Taylor, 1998) is necessary for the teacher to “significantly reduce the influence of power, the deficit model associated with instrumental learning, and win-lose discourse” (p, 12) so students can express and recall their experiences in a carefree mode, taking advantage from the interaction and co-constructing knowledge about language and language learning.

Pedagogical Intervention

This second section presents the pedagogical intervention in which the research and language goals are justified, the methodology, learners and teacher’s roles and the set of activities with the correspondent timetable are describe as well.

Objectives of the pedagogical intervention

For this pedagogical intervention, there are several objectives that need to be considered, keeping in mind the research topic and specially the research question that needs to be answered. The objectives are going to be presented into the different kinds of participants of the process as it is shown below on Table 5.

▣ **Table 5. Implementation Objectives.**

Participant	Objectives	Role
Students	To reflect upon their role in society and society itself within the time and place they are.	Critical EFL Student
	To be able to express in English their thoughts in regards to how their lives are connected to the community they live in.	
	To be able to 1. Organize a “show and tell” about the things he/she likes the most right now. 2. Hand in a product (e.g. booklet with their life history), reflecting who they are from the past events in their life and family. 3. Present (in oral or written form) how they see themselves in their future and their contribution to society.	
Teacher	To guide the students during the decision making phase of each project and also during the implementation and evaluation phases.	EFL Teacher
	To provide the students with the English requirements for reaching the project goal and also following the program stipulated for ninth graders in the school.	Teacher Researcher
	To observe and collect the information needed to solve the research question	
	To systematize the information gathered during the process.	

Methodology

The methodology to be implemented is project-based learning which is appropriate to promote critical literacy in an EFL because students are able to take control of the aspects they consider relevant to achieve their goal and also to connect the information they have from both inside or outside the classroom. Stoller (2002) asserts that when using project-based work [learning] in an EFL classroom “educators create vibrant learning environments that require active student involvement, stimulate high level thinking skills, and give students responsibility for their own learning.” (p. 107). For this study, the methodology is student-centered approach. It means the ninth graders are the ones deciding most of the relevant aspects from each of the three

projects starting from the product (or final presentation) for each one and the best route (steps) to achieve it.

Learner's role

Students are the center axis of this project and also the main constructors of their own learning. Most of the important decisions made during the construction and implementation processes are product of the student's interaction and participation among themselves, with the teacher and especially with local society they live in: their families and communities. This is part of empowering the students through the EFL learning process and, at the same time, promoting critical literacy in order to be conscious of the role in society, or as mention by Pennycook (2001) language learners have the potential to be active agents and co-authors of their learning. To follow students' progress in a more intimate way, it is necessary to make students conscious about what they feel, perceive and how they react to the project development and it is followed through the use of reflective journals the students are going to write about what this experience meant to them.

Teacher's role

Teacher is consider a leader in terms of not ordering but guiding students in the process of learning how to learn and how to become critical from the situations they face every day in their lives. Despite that the teacher is the one who knows the path in which students achieve an outcome, it is important to let them be and decide for themselves in order to be autonomous learners as one important characteristic from a critical perspective. Teacher's role is segmented into two different but relevant visions in order to validate the research: first, as *language teacher*, the main characteristic is to be a language model and helper, clarifying, guiding and providing the language knowledge needed for the students to achieve the goal of each project. The second part,

as *teacher-researcher*, the main duty is to monitor the implementation's key aspects and also to understand and trace the promotion of critical literacy in EFL class and throughout the study.

Instructional Unit

This final part illustrates one of the cycles implemented in a specific and very detailed way. There are a total of three cycles in the implementation of this instructional unit. Each cycle represents one part of the project the students carry out. The cycles are interrelated among themselves by connecting students' past, present, and future plans for life and personal expectations. Each one is carried out in a month (four weeks) time.

As one of the main characteristics in this project is the opportunity to empower students in order to become more critical, it is necessary to clarify that there are not fixed lesson plans (just the first one in each cycle) until the learners are able to decide what the project's outcome will be. Nevertheless, the teacher role would be crucial in order to guide them into doing so. For example, the following schedule is the teacher proposal to the activities that are needed to complete the study but it could be necessary to understand that flexibility is the main characteristic in this study due to the fact that students opinions are going to be essential to the implementation.

The three phases of the instructional design are divided into five sessions each. Each session consists of two hour time and the activities (for more information on this, see an example of the lesson plans in appendix J) for each cycle are presented in table 6.

Table 6. Instructional Unit Model

STAGE	LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVE	SOCIAL OBJECTIVE	SESSION	TOPIC	TASKS	COLLECTED DATA	DATA INSTRUMENTS
Initial Interview							
First Cycle. This is my Time and Place ¿Do I know it? Discovering the World I live in!	To narrate facts and present events from their own community	To analyze the facts and present circumstances which are around each one of the students	1	My Home	Teacher presented her house and neighborhood mapping and encouraged students to do the same.	Students' attitudes and perceptions toward the topic.	Artifacts, Journals, Observation, Audio/Video Recordings
			2	Comparative	Students presented their own houses and map their neighborhoods.	Students' reactions and socialization of their own homes.	
			3	Social Conditions	Students reflect upon living conditions according to social strata.	Students experience of inquiring on community issues.	
			4	Reflection and discussion	Language strengthening, guiding and reflecting upon ongoing difficulties. Final preparation of products.	Students' attitudes and perceptions toward the topic. Reactions to face problems, teamwork.	
			5	Production and Evaluation	Presentation of products and reflection and final considerations on the experience.	Artifacts, Journals, Observation, Audio/Video Recordings	
Second Cycle. Why Am I Here? Let's Look Back! The path I have walked through	To tell short stories about their lives and families	To identify social experience and interaction role when promoting critical literacy.	1	My Family	Teacher presented her family tree and encouraged students to do the same.	Students' attitudes and perceptions toward the topic.	Artifacts, Journals, Observation, Audio/Video Recordings
			2	Family Tree	Students present their own family tree.	Students' reactions and socialization of their own families	

my Ancestors			3	A picture, Description.	Students select one of the pictures and trace the lifeline of one relative.	Students experience of researching their own family tree.	
			4	Reflection and discussion	Language strengthening, guiding and reflecting upon ongoing difficulties. Final preparation of products.	Students' attitudes and perceptions toward the topic. Reactions to face problems, teamwork.	
			5	Production and Evaluation	Presentation of products and reflection and final considerations on the experience.	Students' written reports on how students perceive familiar and social issues.	
Third Cycle. Transforming my Reality. What can I do? Making Plans Come Truth!	To present future plans in a coherent way.	To be able to interpret and put into action first steps to future plans and projections of one's objectives which will help to transform the reality	1	What I wanted to be.	Teacher presented her own version of what she wanted to be.	Students' attitudes and perceptions toward the topic.	Artifacts, Journals, Observation, Audio/Video Recordings
			2	Make a plan	Students presented their own future plans.	Students' reactions and socialization of their own life expectations.	
			3	Presentations and Feedback	Students present their plan to other classmates and they give them realistic feedback about possibilities.	Students experience of researching their options in future life.	
			4	Reflection and Discussion	Language strengthening, guiding and reflecting upon ongoing difficulties. Final preparation of products.	Students' attitudes and perceptions toward the topic. Reactions to face problems, teamwork.	

			5	Production and Evaluation	Presentation of products and reflection and final considerations on the experience.	Students' written reports on how students perceive familiar and social issues.	
Final Interview							

Each phase is connected to reflection processes based on the inquiry students made outside the classroom to connect personal and social experiences with the language learning task. At the end of each cycle there are processes of evaluation in which students have the opportunity to evaluate and help to improve the process.

Chapter V. Data Analysis

The present chapter provides the data analysis for this study, which is focused on giving meaning and establishing connections. Data were collected in situ for a period of four months in which the implementation was carried out in a public school in Bogotá, Colombia, and the resulting information was gathered through the use of instruments such as interviews, students' artifacts, students' journals, and a teacher/researcher journal, also described deeply in chapter three. The outcome data were transcribed, processed and analyzed with the help of the data analysis software Atlas Ti version 6.2 in order to address and discuss the problem and to achieve the research objectives.

The main objective is to describe and analyze how critical literacy can be promoted when reflecting on ninth graders' social experiences in an EFL classroom. For this one, all the primary documents' data were used because they contain information related to how students connect the EFL learning with their CL development. The specific ones are: to observe and understand the role of interaction, context and culture when reflecting on social experiences; to identify the relationship between students' reflection on their social experiences and critical literacy in an English as a Foreign Language classroom; and to indicate if students thinking and perception of the world becomes more critical by reflecting upon their social life experiences. These objectives are kept in mind while analyzing the data and its constructs highlighted in order to start creating patterns which help achieve them and solve the question.

In order to answer the research question, it is necessary to identify a group of open codes that emerge from data; this is the first step in the data analysis process, creating 34 free open codes which help to build up constructs by organizing the data in its characteristics. Those codes are born from the analysis on the 71 primary documents from the three cycles of the

implementation and also from the interviews done at the beginning and the end of it. Later, the most grounded ones are turned into focus codes (Medina, 2013) from which eleven subcategories come into view. This process started outlining the categories, axial codes, and thus creating three families and a super family that might solve the research question by this analysis process.

All primary documents were read several times and its information classified in terms of finding pieces of information that might be meaningful to solve the research question. After finishing this process, the resulting codes groundedness is shown in the following frequency list on table 7.

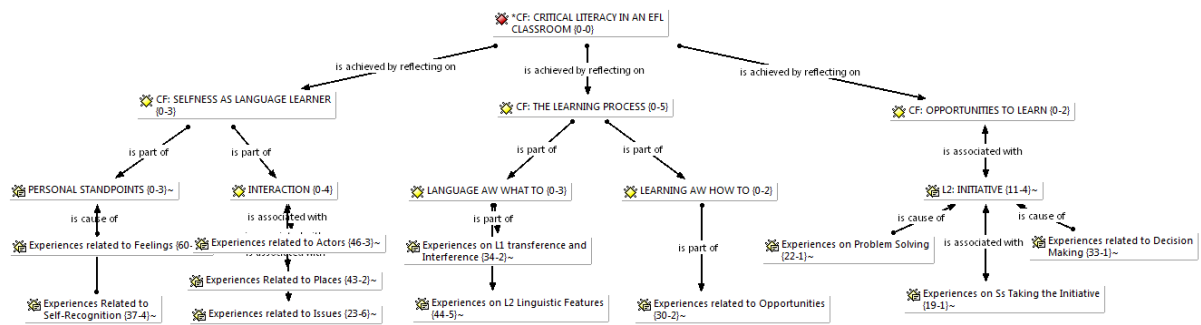
□ **Table 7. Free Codes Groundedness.**

CODE	RESEARCHER'S DEFINITION	 GROUNDEDNESS
Feelings	The emotional side of someone's character; emotional responses or tendencies. They can be positive or negative	60
Learning Awareness	Perception toward the learning process. It might not be connected to the language itself but with methodology and personal choices to learn how to learn	57
Actors: Family Role	Positive and negative situations related to students' families and their role on learning	57
Actors	People who are involved whereas in the learning process or the meaning construction when learning English	46
L2 linguistic Features	Set of linguistic rules and functions students give to the L2	44
Places	Description of the locations which are relevant for the participants for making meaning and generating knowledge.	43
Self-Recognition	A person essential individuality, whatever action, thought or knowledge who helps the student to shape his/her existence.	37
L1 Transference and Interference	Students applying knowledge from one language to another language. It is the transfer of linguistic features between languages in the speech repertoire.	34
Self-Recognition: Group Identity	The characteristics given by a group of people which help them determining what they are and which image they transmit to others.	33
Decision Making	The action or process of resolving a situation in terms of doing something about it. To resolve taking action.	33
Social Interaction	Reciprocal action or influence when two or more people are communicating effectively in a social context.	32
Opportunities	A set of circumstances that makes it possible to do or gain something positive from a delicate topic.	30
Personal Opinions	A belief, view or judgment formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge	28
Issues on Community	Discussions on students and their families deal with community issues and their implications.	25
Issues	students' description of a behavior involving problematic situations	23
L2: Argumenting	Students giving reasons in support of an idea or action maybe with the aim of sharing their view.	23
Language Awareness	Actors' perception toward the First or Second language and its relevance in their own lives.	23
Problem Solving	To use cognitive processing to find a solution to a difficult question or situation; to use deep thought to solve a difficulty.	22

Ss taking the initiative	Students decision to use L2 by their own purpose without the teacher's indication.	19
L2: Coherence and Cohesion	Participants speech quality of being logical, consistent, and unified whole	19
Time Perception	The way in which students regard, understand, or interpret time when sharing their experience.	18
Place-Issue Relationship	Problems that are recognized in determined places around the participants	14
L2: Word Usage	Students misuse of L2 vocabulary in order to achieve communication	14
Self Recognition Relationships	The way the self is shaped by connecting and behaving to other people	14
L2: Sequence words	Use of connectors made by the participants	13
Issues on politics	Students' recognition of activities related to the government and the state.	11
Tech Implication	Situations described in Ss experience in which they include technological related issues	11
L2 Initiative	Students willing to use L2 by their own criteria	11
Issues on Economy	Money related situations students face, mentioned or deal with	10
Issues on School	School as a problematic environment.	9
Actors: Teachers' role	Participants perception on the role of the teacher, whether the actual one or the one students think should be.	9
Self Recognition: Gender Issues	Students perceptions of genre and sexuality situations which shape their identity	9
Issues on Religion	Students system beliefs which are mentioned through the implementation	8
L2: Listening Involvement	Participants' errors related to the recognition of words by their pronunciation rather than their written form.	8

The relationship analysis among free codes gives place to the creation of the sequence of data examination: i) open codes: subcategories, ii) focus codes: categories, iii) axial codes: families and, iv) super families which are the main constructs used to solve the research questions and to achieve the objectives. The following data analysis is presented from a top-down perspective; this means, the super families are presented first and then the analysis becomes more specific and information related to families, categories and subcategories is presented.

□ **Figure 11. Critical Literacy Super Family**



Super family Analysis

Super Families (SF) are considered the consolidation of the theoretical process done throughout the analysis. In the case of the three categories created, there is a possibility to combine the two statements, which relate the research's question and main objective. The super family created and its relations with the concepts obtained from the data gathered are presented on figure 11 which summarizes and presents the hierarchy of the concepts from super families on the upmost, going down to families, categories and the subcategories on the down most part.

SF: Critical Literacy in an EFL Classroom

Data shows that it is possible to promote a critical stance when students start becoming aware of the relevance of their experiences from an individual and group perspective. Also, when they reflect on the construction of knowledge on a foreign language and the best way to learn it, and finally, when they become aware that critical processes can be reached by small daily actions such as taking the initiative, making decisions and most important, when they start solving problems that affect their personal, familiar and social lives. This process of becoming aware might improve, not only the language learning itself, but also students' social conditions. It can have an effect on their life experiences. Figure 11 presents the relationship of this first construct with the families, categories, and subcategories that have some relationship to it.

This critical literacy in EFL must be considered from the interactions, actions and reflections made by students about the many topics all around them but specially, on the constant reflection on how to learn, methodological issues, and what to learn, the cultural and linguistic features of both languages L1 and L2. This finding is confirmed by Scarino and Liddicoat (1999) who state that

When teachers work with ‘absolutely everything (students) bring’, students develop both as language users and as language learners who become aware of how they learn and of the power of language over others. In this way, over time, they develop awareness of themselves as communicators across diverse languages. (p.53)

This idea emphasizes the fact that students can be responsible for their learning process. By taking the initiative and having a central role in their own language learning, students are empowered and the evidence presents examples that there are many opportunities students can make use of to improve their personal conditions and facing their reality, but also opportunities of problem solving from their complex communities.

Reflecting on social experiences can promote critical literacy in an EFL classroom with ninth graders by understanding that there is necessity to establish a social experiences literacy that merges students own construction of their world (selfness) by means of personal and individualistic standpoints and group interactional situations they face among themselves, with their family, school, and community. The social concept in creating literacy in L2 implies that students perceive the language learning as an empowering activity that recognizes students’ previous experiences and the language learning process in which they use L1 as main source of knowledge. Languages are described as means to achieve the communication purpose rather than the main topic of discussion.

Critical literacy from a social standpoint implies that “students and their teachers are ‘social beings’ who interpret the world through their own social and cultural perceptions and values.” (Scarino & Liddicoat, 1999:50) and language classes need to provide students with moments to reflect upon language, experiences, and the possible issues they face daily, in order to become aware of the relevance of knowledge. Another revealed datum is role of the reflection process in the English class as a way of empowering students into a method to change their position in society by taking the initiative, making the right decisions for themselves, their families and communities. Most important of all, language learning should help students to face problem solving situations they usually have to deal with by means of the many disadvantages they have. Norton (2000), supports the previous idea by stating that “The social network represents power” (p.64) and those social interactions create a new model of literacy that modifies the construction of self, shapes the linguistic features in which L1 and L2 cohabit and balance, and prepare the language student to become agent within the context they live.

Families Analysis

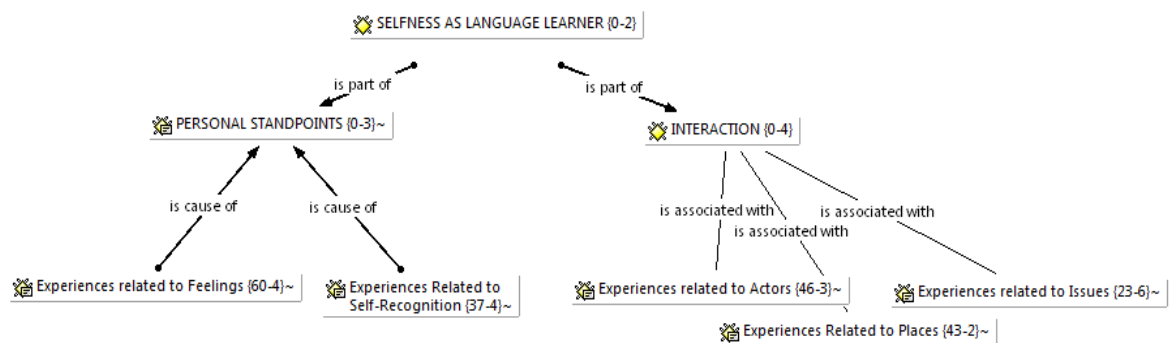
Created Families (CF), according to Böhm (2004) are “theoretical framing concepts” (p. 273) that encapsulates and condenses key and the most vital concepts in the data analysis process. In the case of the present research, five families are created from open and axial code analysis.

CF: Selfness as a Language Learner

The first two categories *personal standpoints* and *interaction* are combined into the creation of the first family Selfness as a Language Learner shown in figure 12. This category

deals with the learning process and how it must be focused on a learner-centre perspective; students need to be aware of their contribution and central role in the language learning process because when a student is committed to discover his/her essence *selfness*, more meaningful outcomes in learning can be expected. This conception of highlighting students role in the learning process is defined as learner-centredness approach (Richards & Schmidt, 2010) which means that any language and general process of education “should address the individual needs of learners, the role of individual experience, and the need to develop awareness, self-reflection, critical thinking, learner strategies and other qualities and skills believed to be important for learners to develop” (p.163). Figure 12 presents the construction of the family.

Figure 12. CF: Selfness as a language learner network.



Because of the collected data which served as evidence related to the relevance of the selfness, it is possible to assert that being aware of the value of students experience and their ongoing construction of their identity and existence, is an ideal way to start building up the path to improve the English learning, but also the involvement of students on critical literacy processes that might help them shape their existence into their liking and reaching goals that can improve their reality and their communities. This process of constructing selfness needs to be considered from two perspectives: personal standpoints and social interaction. The first one includes students’ feelings and opinions as well as self-recognition through gender issues and

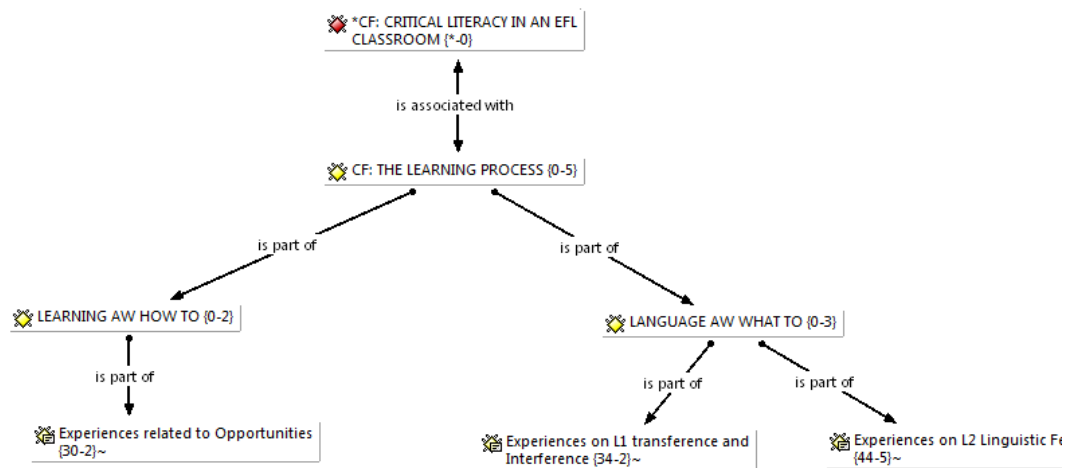
group identity; the latter one is related to the people, places and special conditions of time, violence and technology which are all around students' experiences.

Thus, selfness is relevant in the EFL classroom because students' identity is transformed when learning another language and its culture. This process creates an intercultural identity for language students that according to Scarino and Liddicoat (1999) "involves learning to understand how one's own culture shapes perceptions of oneself, of the world, and of our relationship with others." (p.21). Selfness construction is a metacognitive act that cannot be unlinked from the language classroom and it affects the shaping of students experiences.

CF: The Learning Process

The second family consists on students being aware of the learning process. Two categories became relevant in the analysis of information process, each one describe the way in which the learning is conceived. Learning Awareness, feed by 57 quotes, and language Awareness with 23 quotes but related at the same time with four open codes that are part of it. These relationships and the resulting network are represented on Figure 13. Those codes are also connected by relevance and by meaning association with other open codes that complemented their meaning and established connections and hierarchy among them. By continuing this part of the analysis process, it is possible to create a second family called The Learning Process.

Figure 13. CF: The Learning Process



These codes become focuses and subcategories themselves by founding connections to other open codes. For instance, language awareness is caused because students seize opportunities to learn in a more meaningful way. While language awareness is supported by several codes in relation to the role of L1 in transference and interference with 34 quotes and the role of L2 linguistic features (44), L2 arguing, and L2 coherence and cohesion (19).

In order to solve the question on how CL can be promoted when students reflect on their own social experiences in an EFL classroom, it is important to follow participants' use of L1 and L2 in the language classroom. Most of the evidence in this regard is accomplished by the analysis of students' written activities in English (students' artifacts) and also by discussing the importance they give to learn a language in their future aspirations. This aspect was openly argued on the interviews and in some cases on students' journals. By analyzing these data, it is possible to establish that participant-students became conscious of their responsibility on outlining the learning process by participating on the construction of *how* to learn (learning awareness), and *what* to learn (language awareness). These two themes were conceived in different ways before and after the implementation, and it made a distinction in the mode participants understood English language learning. Norton (2000) explains it as follows

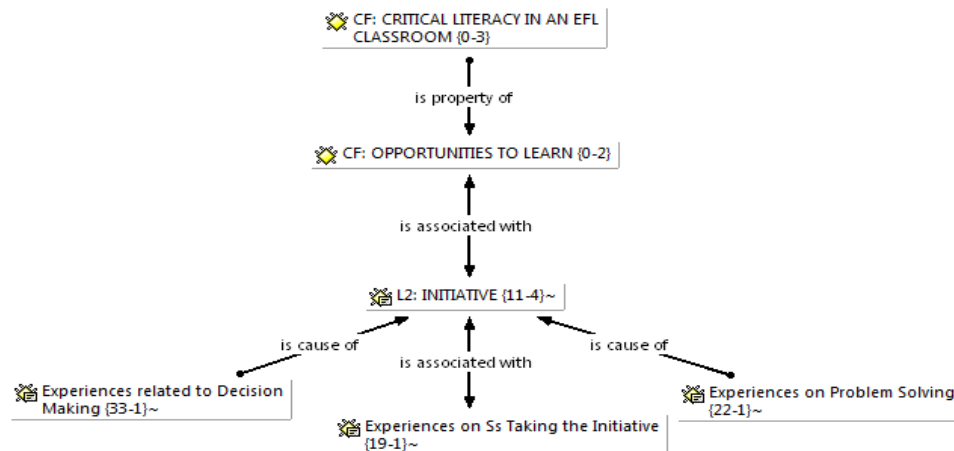
it is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person gains access to – or is denied access to – powerful social networks that give learners the opportunity to speak. Thus language is not conceived of as a neutral medium of communication, but is understood with reference to its social meaning (p. 5).

The learning process in a language classroom with teenagers should consider approaches that help students to express themselves in a free and open way. Moreover, Richards & Schmidt (2010) also support the idea that the teacher role needs to regard the importance of students' thoughts, expression, and opinions as part of the construction of selfness. This construction is a natural means for the interaction that occurs in the classroom, or as stated in Flutter (2007) who cited the National Strategy for Key stage 3 "Reflection is important if pupils are to understand more fully what and how they have learned. It is one way in which pupils can language for learning. With this awareness they are more likely to become independent learners, better equipped for lifelong learning" (p.350)

CF: Opportunities to Learn

The final group of categories which served as starting point to create the third family where *decision making* with 33 quotes, *problem solving* with 22 quotes and, *students taking the initiative* (19) which, at the same time, is connected with L2 *initiative* (11 quotes). The discovered relation in the analysis is presented in the network Figure 14. When establishing the relationship among the codes, it is evident that there is a natural order in which the codes convey and the family Opportunities to Learn is conceived as a process into achieving, in part, a critical literacy conscience. The natural order in which this process convey is, first taking the initiative, and L2 initiative, the second step is decision making and the final part would be problem solving.

□ **Figure 14. Opportunities to learn network.**



This category deals with the ability students showed through the implementation phase to start considering their life experiences from critical stances and also to connect these first steps of criticality with the relevance of education as a means to overcome the disadvantages they face on daily basis (Freire, 1970). This category relates to the prospect that participant-students have started a process to considerate the positive implications of making changes in their lives, no matter how small, or as stated by Flutter (2007), these opportunities are framed in a “broader principle of pupil participation, a term which embraces strategies that offer pupils opportunities for active involvement in decision-making within their schools” (p.344), which starts as first steps into placing education and students’ positioning in critical stances. Data illustrates that transformation is relative to students changing their attitude towards essential aspects of their own lives that they are not comfortable with.

Three phases of early stages in critical literacy were identified: Ss taking the initiative, decision making and, problem solving. This process of constructing critical knowledge, for their lives, in the language classroom from sources that are part of the context of the students’ experiences is pivotal to make students become aware of the potentialities they have and also, to

take action into transforming the aspects they are not comfortable with. Flutter (2007), supports that idea by claiming that “pupils who are less articulate and who have difficulty in discussing their learning will gain particular benefit from opportunities to develop these abilities through being encouraged to reflect on what they learn” (p.350).

Categories' Analysis

Eleven subcategories are used, according to the existing connections and their properties, to create five categories that help into the creation of the three families mentioned before. Böhm (2004) mentions that when coding and categorizing information “what is of particular importance is the development of relationships between the axial categories and the concepts that are related to them in terms of their formal and content aspects” (p. 270). In order to maintain the logic of the analysis five subcategories are created in order to start supporting and evidencing theoretical constructs that might carry the answer given to the research question. Those subcategories are presented in relation to the open codes mentioned in the first step of the analysis in the Table 8.

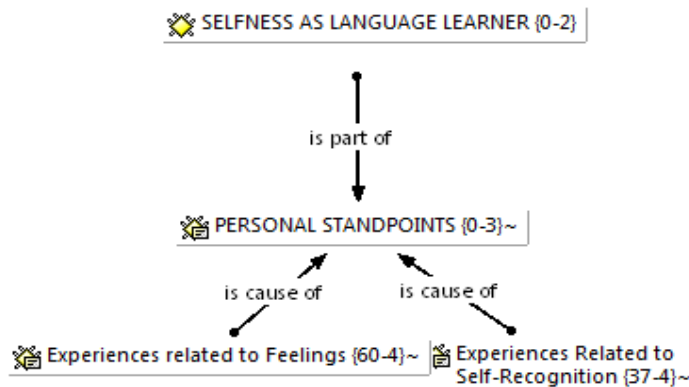
□ **Table 8. Categories**

CATEGORIES	Sub-categories
PERSONAL STANDPOINTS	Feelings (60)
	Self-Recognition (37)
INTERACTION	Issues (23)
	Actors (46)
	Places (43)
	Opportunities (30)
LEARNING Awareness (HOW TO)	
LANGUAGE Awareness (WHAT TO)	L1 Transference and Interference (34)
	L2 Linguistic features (44)
INITIATIVE	Students taking the initiative (19)
	Problem solving (22)
	Decision Making (33)

Personal Standpoints

The first focus code created is Personal Standpoints. It has a density of two of the five codes explained before. Standpoints are conceived in this research as the students' attitude toward a situation they face. This position or standpoint can be modified according to students' feelings and their own recognition which, at the same time, is constructed by their participation on relationships they build with others as shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15. Category: Personal Standpoints Network. (focus code)



First of all, the data showed the way students place themselves in any give position when learning, they are able to decide what, when and how to learn according to their own particularities. This is shown in the following extract of one of the participants' journal

Yo puedo decir que me ha gustado todo las explicaciones de la profesora son buenas son muy bien especificas con las explicación que ella da queda el tema claro pero aun así algunos estudiantes pierden la materia por desjuiciados porque no es nada del otro mundo que no puedan hacer [sic] (C1-SsJournal-S08EL901AT. 18th-04-15)

The last quote presents an example of a learning style preferred by one of the participants who likes more traditional methods, while there are other participants who depend much more on their classmates to improve their language learning and it was shown in their journal

mis compañeros he aprendido mucho por que me han ayudado a aclarar algunas definiciones que no sabia y en algunas veces hasta en la pronunciación , en mis compañeros puedo encontrar mucho apoyo para aprender mas de ingles así como se que yo también les puedo ayudar a muchos a mejorar su nivel de ingles , es muy interesante trabajar en grupo ademas descubrí que muchos de ellos tienen sueños parecidos a los míos [sic] (SsJournal-S05TC-901AT.31st-05-15)

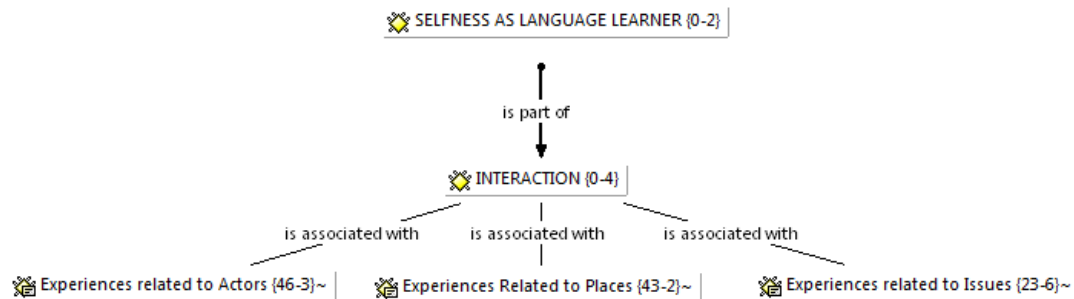
Participant-students were able to express themselves throughout artifacts. They incorporated their feelings, and opinions in what they did, most of the times, which made the activities a little more meaningful for them. This opportunity for the teacher researcher to get to know them in a different level than the academic is supported by Moll (2001), who states that “Each exchange with relatives, friends, and neighbors entails not only many practical activities (everything from home and automobile repair to animal care and music) but constantly provides contexts in which learning can occur” (p.134). Participants’ standpoint is constructed to the extent that they are allowed to “reflect on the objects of consciousness and attempt to comprehend their significance, and we can experience insight and understanding” (Schmidt, 1990:132), in relation to understanding their context and life experiences inside and outside the classroom. In that sense, in order to construct this category, it was possible to observe connections in regards to vital, and much grounded codes which are feelings, opinions and preferences as shown in Figure 15.

Interaction

The second category created is Interaction which is an umbrella concept that encapsulates the *issues*, *actors* and *places* subcategories that explain when, why, and where interaction occurs

and the ways of it, due to the fact that those codes and their meanings might shape the interaction process. This mental concept is presented in Figure 16.

▣ **Figure 16. Category: Interaction (focus code)**

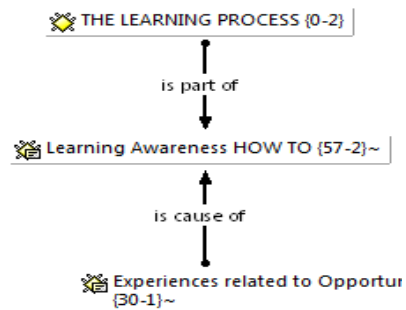


This notion represents an intrinsic part of language learning because it is the means through which language is used and also the way real learning occurs. For Warayet (2011), in his doctoral thesis, interaction needs to be considered “when participants are led by the teacher who tries to facilitate the process of participation by providing students with appropriate opportunities. These opportunities may also be provided by other students as they work collaboratively, assisting each other in their classrooms” (p.34). This reinforces the idea that interaction is constructed in relation to the other people involved in the learning process and to the many situations students face in their context. Interaction provides students opportunities to learn from others and also to improve their L2 linguistic and communicative skills.

Learning Awareness: How To

The third category is Learning Awareness and its connections are shown in Figure 17. From the vision of learning raised in the design, it is established that learning is conceived from Tudor’s (2011) perspective on experiential learning which is based on classroom practices focused on communication as an effective means of making learning process more stimulating and meaningful.

□ **Figure 17. Category: Learning Awareness (focus code)**



The previous conception is complemented through the experience students have, because of the relevant role students play, they started assuming some decisions on what they needed or wanted to learn and how. In this sense, awareness is understood as a person's perception toward the learning process. It might not be connected to the language itself but with methodology and personal choices to learn how to learn.

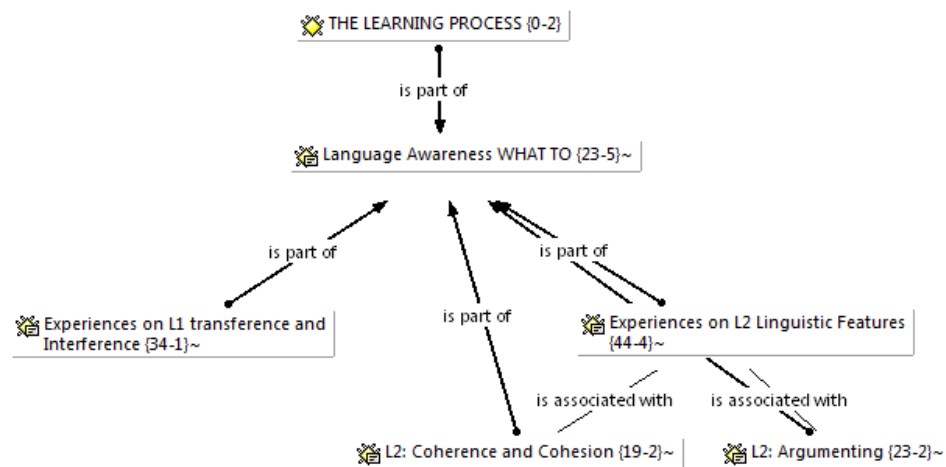
The transformation of students thinking about their role on the learning process is noticed in several stages of the implementation because students started assuming a more participative role on the process. Students were presented with opportunities to reflect about their experiences and they are more sensible to identify the reason why they learn and specially how to learn better according to their unique features of personality. According to Hamilton and Kleeba (2011), reflection is a concept that needs to be recognized as intrinsic in the learning process and it “can be used to promote student's awareness of their own learning and thinking processes” (p.6).

Learning proved to be a process of discovery for participant-students and the teacher-researcher in which language became a means to make or say something rather than just the class main objective, and that made a difference on students dedication towards the language learning itself because participants constructed more meaningful connections to learning a foreign language and the use it has or will have in their lives.

Language Awareness: What To

The fourth category shown in Figure 18 presents the nexus between the ability to speak on another language, getting confidence to do activities that place them in better terms to their classmates, and also facing the language issues found by the students during their reflection in class and outside of it. This category describes how students analyze the language learning from a more critical perspective.

Figure 18. Category: Language Awareness How To network.



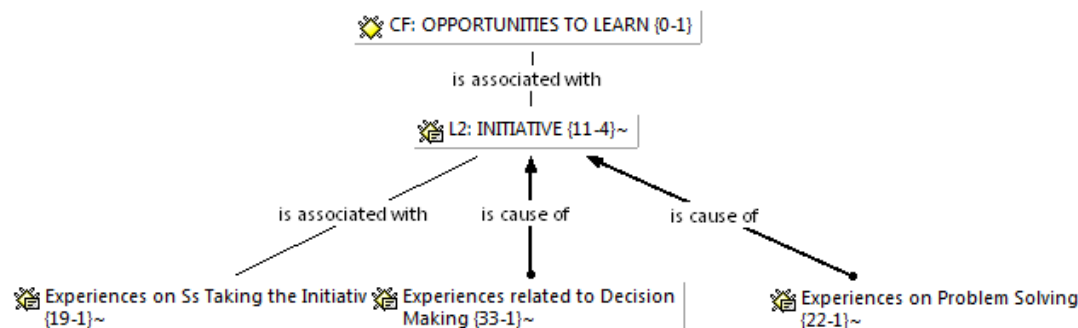
Language is recognized as communication instrument in this study, it is a means of expression from which students can learn about the possibilities, the difficulties and the challenges they confront in the society they live in. The instruments are focused on finding participants' perception toward the First or Second language (L1 and L2 from now on) and its relevance in the construction of experiences on their own lives. Despite that English language is considered a written expression mechanism, there were some opportunities in which students assumed a positive reaction toward speaking in English and they include English phrases or words in the discussions that were carried out mostly in Spanish. The language vision considered in this study discuss the fact that language is a means of expression and not the learning objective itself, its use should provide students opportunities to represent their beliefs, customs

and own culture to the benefit of growing up their body of knowledge. Kubota (2004) mentions what the role of language should be in a classroom “second language classrooms can potentially provide learners with opportunities to understand and explore a multiplicity of expressions and interpretations.” (p.48) Not just about the language itself but of the different meanings they can give to their lives and the social context where it happens.

Initiative

The final category is Initiative which is conceived as the ability students have to be inclined to act by themselves, taking advantages as soon as they are presented in the EFL classroom. This category and its relations are presented graphically in Figure 19.

Figure 19. Category: Initiative (focus code)



This notion of initiative is discussed by Hamilton and Kleeba (2011) as one of the most relevant final steps in experiential learning where “Students apply their own initiative and decision making skills in dealing with an unstructured, real [business] problem” (p.8) which is something evident in the data interpretation process because most of the documents where this code appears are from the final stages of the implementation. Initiative needs to be constructed in terms of how it can create relations among the group of students and help to promote cooperation to reach goals in a community of people. Initiative, in this way, directs to create leadership

characteristics in the students and the research methodology, Action Research, helps to generate initiative on the participants of the process (Lewin, 2006).

Subcategories' Analysis

Free codes are given relevance according to the groundedness and the relationships among themselves in order to obtain the subcategories. For example, feelings (67), learning awareness (57), places (43), L2 linguistic features (42), actors (46), language awareness (23) are reiterative concepts that provide patterns to the collected data. The program Atlas Ti, allows me to achieve a more in-depth analysis by creating codes as a first step of visualizing the data, then it lets me merge some codes or to establish the relationships among them or according Friese (2014), Atlas Ti “helps you to explore the complex phenomena hidden in your data” (p.10). In order to reduce and categorize the data, it is necessary to find the truly relevant data that helps me achieve the research objectives. After defining, categorizing and ranking the codes and merging some similar concepts, there is a possibility to continue the analysis with eleven of the open codes, or subcategories, shown in table 9. These eleven strong and recurrent ideas have intrinsic relationship with others less grounded.

▣ **Table 9. Open Coding: Subcategories.**

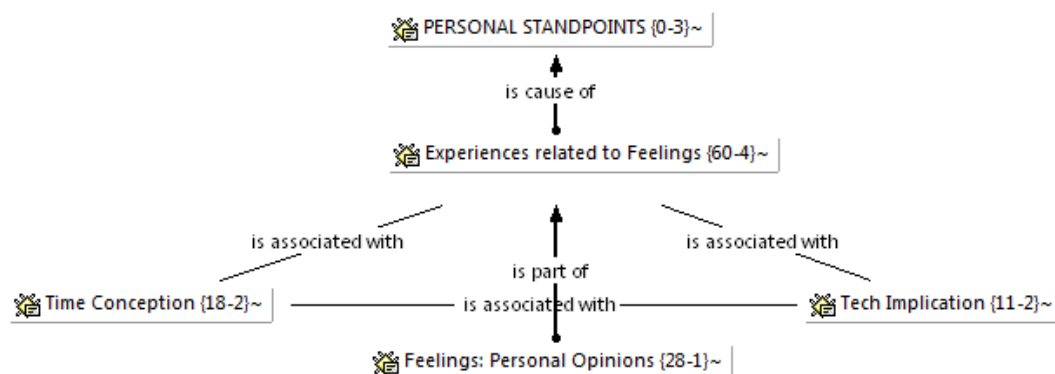
CODE	DEFINITION	GROUNDEDNESS
Exp. Related to feelings	The emotional side of someone's character; emotional responses or tendencies. They can be positive or negative	60
Exp. Related to Self-Recognition	A person essential individuality, whatever action, thought or knowledge who helps the student to shape his/her existence.	37
Exp. Related to Issues	students' description of a behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something	23
Exp. Related to Actors	People who are involved whereas in the learning process or the meaning construction when learning English	46
Exp. Related to Places	Description of the locations which are relevant for the participants for making meaning and generating knowledge.	43
Exp. Related to	A set of circumstances that makes it possible to do or gain something positive from a delicate topic.	30

Opportunities		
Exp. on L1 Transference and Interference	Students applying knowledge from one language to another language. It is the transfer of linguistic features between languages in the speech repertoire.	34
Exp. On L2 Linguistic features	Set of linguistic rules and functions students give to the L2 language	44
Exp. on Ss taking the initiative	The power or opportunity to act or take charge before others do or an act or strategy intended to resolve a difficulty or improve a situation; a fresh approach to something.	19
Exp. on Problem solving	To use cognitive processing to find a solution to a difficult question or situation; to use deep thought to solve a difficulty.	22
Exp. Related to Decision Making	The action or process of resolving a situation in terms of doing something about it. To resolve taking action.	33

Experiences related to Feelings

The feelings concept, the most grounded one, as it is shown in Figure 20 is connected to personal standpoints and time conception. It can be associated, as well in some quotes, to technological implications that affect the personal feelings in a student. It is possible to deduce that language learning is an emotional process for students. This finding is supported by Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia (2014), who state that “emotions are results of appraisal of academic success and failure, of pleasant or unpleasant personal and social experiences in educational encounters” (p.36).

Figure 20. Open code: Feelings Network.



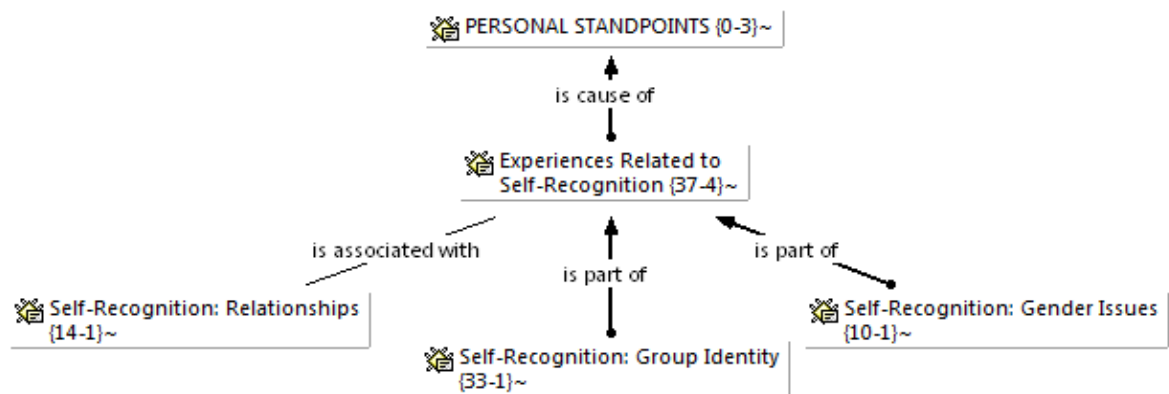
Participants are very likely to invest in the language learning by several reasons related to their feelings. For example they are likely to “love” or “hate” what they learn according to the numerous factors involved in the learning process. In the initial interview students were asked

for their opinion about English and some of them answered in relation to the teacher's role, the methodology used and the importance English has for them and their life project. For instance, a participant-student mentioned she liked her previous teacher because "o sea le explica a uno como con cariño, con amor" (Initial Interview S03KM-902AT) and that feeling helped her to commit to learn English; it seems that this experience in an English classroom with that particular teacher changed her perception of language learning as she stated it later on the artifact "Porque o sea... uno no... no... o sea no puede estar eh... todo el tiempo hablando en español y entonces necesita conectarse con más gente y eso" (Initial Interview S01MC-903AT); This finding is supported by Atchade (2002), who states that "The way the learner feels about learning the language and in a particular course and from a particular teacher can lead to the rejection or the acceptance of learning" (p.46). And also, the emerging data shows that learning is influenced by expressing feelings related to students' lives outside the classroom. For example, during the first cycle of the project one of the participants was not working as hard as usual. When analyzing the data I understood that what was happening because of one of her artifacts in which she states "I hope to my parents come to a play and talk with them [*us*]" [sic] (C1-Artifact1-Introduction-S12VV-903AT). This quote illustrates the fact that some students' feelings might affect the learning process and its outcomes. Arnold (1999) suggests that through the classes "language learning activities can focus on working through affective problems encountered in the process of adapting to the new culture and language"(p.23), but the data presents that language learning can also be a catharsis procedure for students to express their feelings and their own cultural and contextual issues without fear.

Experiences related to Self-recognition

The second identified subcategory is self-recognition which is constructed by gender and group identity and it is shaped by social relationships. This is presented with 34 quotes and a density of four as presented in Figure 21.

▣ **Figure 21. Open Code: Self-Recognition Network.**



Self-Recognition is understood as the way a person wants to be accepted by others. But in a broader perspective it can be described as “assessing one’s feelings, interests, values, and strengths; maintaining a well-grounded sense of self-confidence” (Brackett and Rivers, 2014:5). This concept is fed by codes that are related to topics about gender, group identity, and relationships. In relation to gender, for example, there was one participant, OP, who belongs to the LGBTI community and for him; life has been a quest to find himself. This issue is constantly presented during his work on the English project.

OP eh... un chico alegre, bueno, aparentemente alegre... Uno puede tener la cabeza hecha un ocho pero siempre tiene que tener una sonrisa para los amigos o para quien la necesite... ayuda a reflexionar un poquito sobre lo que estoy haciendo y está pasando, como estoy enfrentando estos problemas, qué me está pasando por la cabeza... (0-Initial Interview S02OP-903AT)

As it is possible to observe, at the beginning of the implementation this participant had a very negative perception about who he is and how to face those difficulties. But through

registered information in the several artifacts compiled, he was able to express himself in terms of his gender and how to use his life and experiences to transform negative issues and to get to know himself better as it shows the following artifact in Figure 22 where he shares his short term plans for the future.

Figure 22. C3-Artifact1-Planning the Future. S02OP-903AT.

Handwritten notes on a blue background listing future plans:

- I'm going to get an tattoo of The phoenix and The symbol of socialisam in 13 months
- I'll bein the LGBTI Coletive.
- I'm going to have my other expansion
- I'm going to have my other piercing.
- I'm going to have many hats and pashmina
- I'm going to have books of the harry potter

- *I'm going to get an tattoo on the phoenix and the symbol of socialisam in 15 months*
- *I'll bein [begin] the LGBTI coletive*
- *I'm going to have my other piercing.*
- *I'm going to have many hats and pashmina*
- *I'm going to have books of the harry potter*

There is also evidence of gender issues in other participants' voices, as it is shown in the following excerpt of the focus group interview:

EV. Por ejemplo yo tengo un primo que... yo tengo un primo...

KM. O sea yo no digo que que... no digo que esté mal... pero yo tampoco digo que esté bien.

EV. O sea es que... por ejemplo hay gente que ya llega y como se da como garra, yo tengo un primo que él ver un gay, para él eso es lo peor... él...

PP. Son cómo se llaman...

VV. Homofóbicos...

HB. Racistas

PP. Racistas son de negros.

EV. Yo me acuerdo él tenía una frase que decía es que usted a mi primero me ve calvo que con trenzas y a él ahorita el hijo le salió gay y entonces ahorita si...

Todos se rien

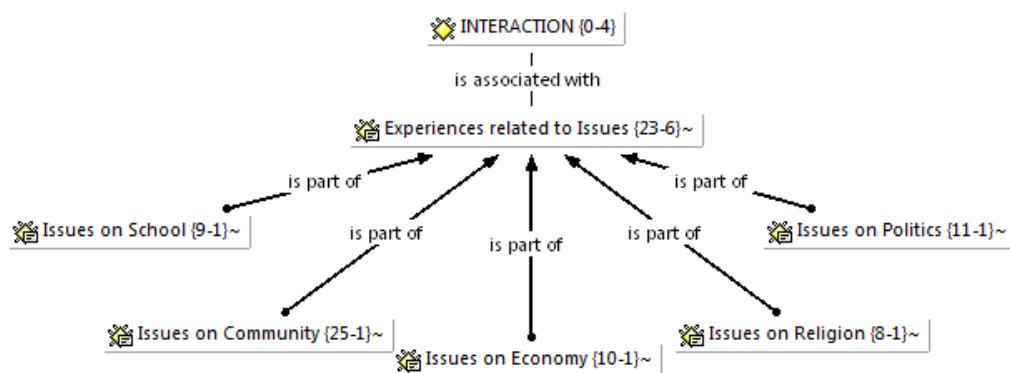
VV. Eso se llama karma

In that sense, OP was able to understand that there are people who are facing the same situations and some are very close to him because they are on the same classes. These participants' examples show that even though students start constructing their selfness from their individuality, they also establish relationships and make associations when they interact in groups. This interaction shapes their own identity, because they describe themselves in terms of how others recognize them or as named by Taylor, Busse, Gagova, Marsden & Roosken (2013) by “strategic identity display in the classroom” (p, 4). This explains that the perception of one's reality is mediated by confronting believes with other people and with their own point of view about the same phenomena.

Experiences related to Issues

Figure 23 presents the net data for the Issues subcategory. Issues are found in most of the primary documents and instruments. This category explains that there are several classes of problematic situations that have an effect on the EFL learning such as school issues, and community issues which include the family, politics, religion, and economy issues. These issues play an important role during interaction, that is, they are framed within students' language interaction.

Figure 23. Open Code: Issues Network.



Participants' data shows several types of problematic situations students face related to their families and neighborhoods, to society and institutions. Some of the most significant quotes were categorized as such in Table 10.

□ **Table 10. Quotes for code Issues**

Type of Issue	Quote	Q. Information
Personal	My story is that one day we were going with my friend and my brother walking down an alleyway were with some friends then they went to buy ice cream so we were sitting there and spend 3 boys and were looking at us because we did not give them importance when they were returned and we [they] stole a watch and silver mp3 and that one story on a robbery we that made us.	C1-Artifact3-Reflection Activity-S10EV-902AT.rtf - 58:4
Familiar	Four years ago, in front of my resident area, a men was killed by two men hooded and was fired by the back. I didn't saw when the killed, I alone saw the corpse	C2-Artifacts1-2-Let's Look Back-Real Life Stories. S11PP-903AT.rtf - 70:4
School	To arrive of school there was one fight between gangs with throw and knife.	C1-Artifact3-Reflection Activity-S01MC-903AT.rtf - 53:8
Community	I see to news and they show many kill, killers many sad families, kills young because they are other soccer teams, this I see all mornings, after and nights this very sad.	C2-Artifacts1-2-Let's Look Back-Real Life Stories. S01MC-903AT.rtf - 65:9
Institution: Policies	The topics considered pandemic include: the guerrilla, paramilitaries, the jubeniles gang, microtrafficking and all ace harm society	C2-Artifacts1-2-Let's Look Back-Real Life Stories. S09WM-902AT.rtf - 72:2
Institution: Religion	The world is not going to exist in the 2050 because God has already come! The end.	C3-Artifact2-Reflection Activity. 903AT.rtf - 85:9
Institution: Economy	The obstacles that us put in the live are: what not accept our courses university. Not have the resources.	C3-Artifact2-Reflection Activity. S09WM-902AT.rtf - 102:2

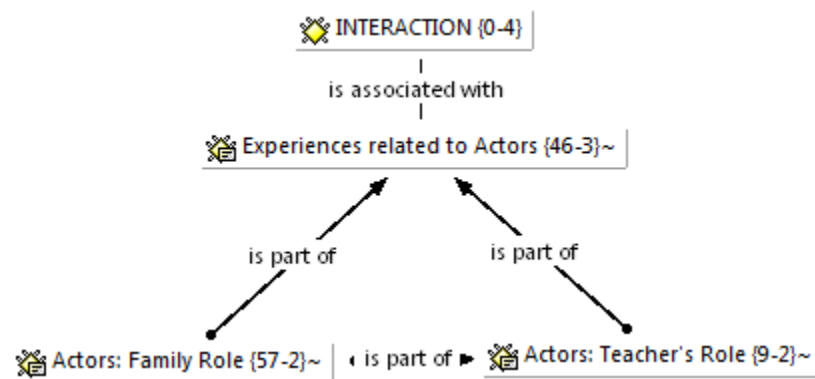
Despite the fact that students portray a pessimistic view of these issues, the problematic situations they face are conceived as generators of knowledge and as tools to promote students' participation and to get them to make links with their life in order to reach the desire language output. Norton and Toohey (2011) support this statement by affirming that "learning is a social process in which culturally and historically situated participants engage in culturally-valued activities, using cultural tools" (p, 419). The novelty result of this analysis is the fact that issues in the EFL classroom are not conceived with a negative connotation but contrary, they are

sources of knowledge and experiences that should be used as motivators to participate and express themselves in foreign language.

Experiences related to Actors

The next network created is actors' subcategory, which is one of the most grounded one with 46 quotes. This category includes people students mention or recall in the experiences and they are part of meaning conveying in the EFL class. When analyzing the data, there is a recurring pattern in which the family actors and the teacher's role come to be highlighted as shown in Figure 24.

Figure 24. Open Code: Actors network.



Across the three cycles of the project, students were able to relate their experiences to actors (Family-Teacher-other actors) who are part of their lives; they need to construct the EFL knowledge. These themes were the first steps for the students to start analyzing their world from critical stances.

Therefore, the role of family members as providers of personal experience for the students as well as supporters of the learning process in the creation of a family literacy (McCoy, and Cole, 2011) is determinant in order to get progress through the learning. This concept shows

the relevance of the students' life at home in the literacy growth. This factor is shown from the excerpt from a class in which participants were supposed to describe their present lives:

My mom is a little afraid because fears all. She is very happy and merry, she likes travel. My step father is wild sometimes and he is funny. He make laugh. My brother is very mad too. He is serious sometimes he likes to play soccer and xbox and I happy with my family [Sic] (C1-Artifact1-Introduction-S01MC-903AT).

This participant was able to incorporate personality features to her family description rather than just describing facts and by doing so she was able to extent her vocabulary range. This phenomena was given in both, L1 and L2, because it was by the recognition of what they know in L1 that it was possible to construct new knowledge in L2, or even backwards as it is presented on a reflection made by a participant in a journal:

descubrí que conozco mejor a la familia de mi mama que la de mi papa , aprendí que mi mama tiene un tío muy estudiado y que adopto a dos sobrinos , aprendí como se llaman mis bisabuelos , aprendí que mi abuelo por parte de mi mama le gustaba mucho el trago , aprendí que de que murió mi abuelo por parte de papa y descubrí muchas cosas nuevas he interesantes que no sabia de mi familia [sic] (C2-SsJournal-S05TC-901AT, 31-05-15)

The relevance of family in language learning was stated several times during the intervention, and this confirms the idea that “A child’s family and home environment has a strong impact on his/her language and literacy development and educational achievement” (McCoy and Cole, 2011:2). One of the most valuable references to family was one informal interview I was able to make with a parent who mentions the experience of helping her son to accomplish the research task as shown as follows:

It was also possible to get one mother perspective, who told me by an informal conversation that her son was pestering her to get the information about her family but

the most difficult aspect was to get information about her husband who does not live with them and their relationship is not good but according to that mother, the student called him and got the information because it was important to him to know that information from his life. (Teacher-Researcher Journal#02 may 31st, 2015)

In this actors' subcategory, it is also possible to find patterns in regards to the teacher's role and the need to transform it in order to fit new generations' ways of learning. For example, a participant from the group 903, in the initial interview, describes the role of the English teachers she had had in the past "Eh... No pues la verdad todos me enseñaron lo mismo y pues de todos aprendía lo... la mayoría de veces lo mismo" [Sic] (Initial Interview S01MC-903AT). This quote shows that she has not meaningful relationships with her language teacher. According to Nagaraj (2009), "the basic principle of the [*community language teaching*] methodology is to establish interpersonal relationships between the teacher and learners to facilitate learning" (p.179). The need to establish interpersonal relationships between teacher and learners has been seen in the collected data.

Students are feeling more relaxed in class due to the fact that I am focusing the feedback I gave them on the communication goal (to make themselves understood and to be able to finish) rather than the linguistic details that are common in students with their level, by doing this, they are more confident on the process and what they are learning. (Teacher-Researcher Journal #02. May 31st, 2015)

Finally some other actors need to be considered to promote learning in a language class. For example, one participant uses a boyfriend story to develop one task as it is shown on the next excerpt on Figure 25.

Figure 25.C2-Artifacts1-2-Let's Look Back-Real Life Stories. S02OP-903AT

+ *Falling Love: FIRST SIGHT LOVE*

4 years ago I knew to fercho my first boyfriend (*^w^*). He was first sight love <u~u>. He stood on the sport center a round school. After that I spoke with him. And was mach beautiful, because we liked each other and tha liking became a 15 months relationship.

- *Lonelines*

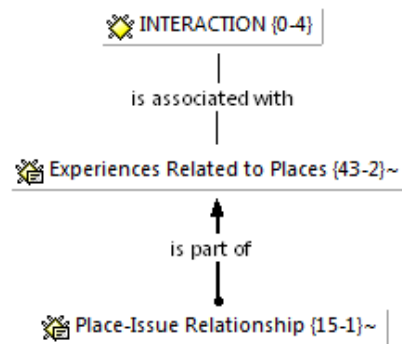
I was much alone because I didn't like to socialize and loved was alone and this made me vere depressed. and me sheared the arms (T_T)

Other actors were mentioned several times during the implementation, like people with personal relevance such as friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, but also institutions such as police, and groups like gangs, sports teams, celebrities, among others.

Experiences related to Places

This subcategory joins two codes by terms of association: the *places* code with 43 quotes, which includes the recollection of relevant places for the students in their construction of their experiences in EFL and the code *place issue relationship* which is not as grounded, it only has 15 quotes, but it presents the relationship of issues and some of the most meaningful places for the students. Figure 26 illustrates the resulting analysis which is part of a subcategory called interaction.

▣ Figure 26. Subcategory: Places Network

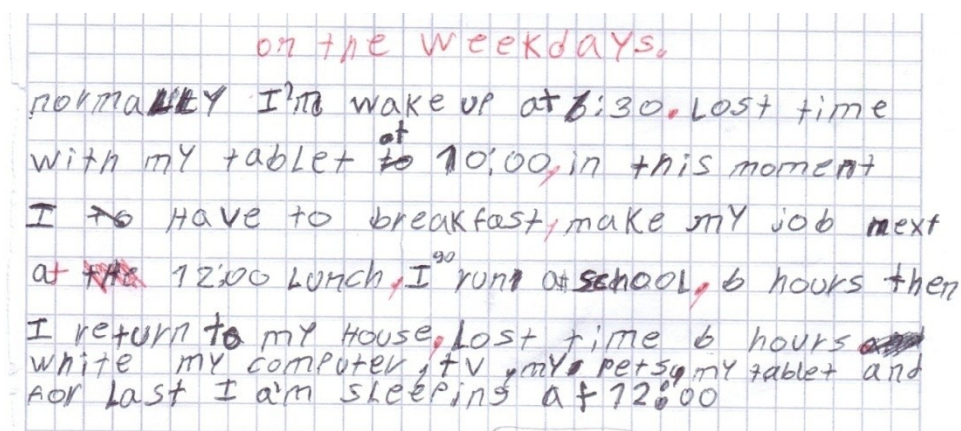


According to the findings, places have a relevant significance for students. Places have to be considered as funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992) because they are a source of primal information and experience for students. Genzuk (1999) states that “Knowledge is therefore obtained by the children, not imposed by the adults” (p.10) and this is the value of places revealed by the data that places give context to language learning and thus makes it meaningful.

There is an important discovery in regards to the appreciation students have from their community and despite they are able to identify all the problems there are; e.g., “The portal, the hollow, around to school and park Diana Turbay, because have much thief” (C1-Artifact3-Reflection Activity-S07CB-S08EL-901AT) or “My block is dangerous because there is much vicious” (C1-Artifact3-Reflection Activity-S10EV-902AT). They are also aware they have some assets and history to be proud of as shown from the following passages “The billiards because we had fun with my friends” (C1-Artifact3-Reflection Activity-S10EV-902AT) and “The courts because there we play football with friends.” (C1-Artifact3-Reflection Activity-S10EV-902AT), which illustrate students feelings towards the place where they live; there is a relevance to highlight nature in this community. They love the green areas during the mapping participants made, the natural parks from the area, the natural streams and the Hacienda los Molinos. All this funds of knowledge made it more significant to the participants to learn English as shown in Figure 27 in which a sample of a participant’s mapping is presented.

continuing growing. English language is an opportunity for them to express freely what they feel, believe and think of the world around them. Also, it should be part of the learning process to be faced to opportunities to discover new linguistic aspects and vocabulary as Scarino & Liddicoat (2009) claim: “a professional stance that understands language as a social practice, teachers need to ensure that students are provided with opportunities to go beyond what they already know and to learn to engage with unplanned and unpredictable aspects of language” (p.17). This process is illustrated in the following excerpt in Figure 29.

▣ Figure 29. C1-Artifact1-Introduction-S06HB-901AT



on the weekdays,
 normally I'm wake up at 8:30. Lost time
 with my tablet ^{at} 10:00, in this moment
 I ~~to~~ HAVE to breakfast, make my job next
 at ~~12:00~~ 12:00 lunch, I ^{go} run at school, 6 hours then
 I return to my house, lost time 6 hours ~~and~~
 while my computer, tv, my pets, my tablet and
 for last I am sleeping at 12:00

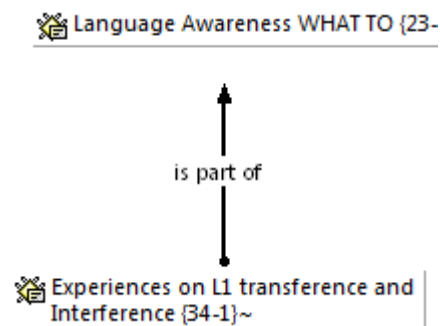
Despite the artifact presents something the participant does most days, it is something he considers a waste of time which was a topic for discussion with his classmates and something he was more comfortable expressing in English and the topic open a series of opportunities in which new vocabulary was introduced into class.

This concept of seizing opportunities is supported by Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011) who state that “language learners are not only communicators and problem-solvers, but whole persons with hearts, feelings, beliefs, identities” (p.955) which can only be expressed in a non threatening environment and taking advantages of topics for discussion.

Experiences on L1 Transference and Interference

To comprehend the L1 Transference and Interference phenomena, as seen in Figure 30, in the data it is necessary to mention that Language is part of culture, but culture is also constructed by language; this dual and reciprocal system in which language constructs meaning and knowledge is the main reason why L1 (referring to Spanish) has a significance in the process of learning another language: if a language student's previous experience is constructed on L1 grounds, the teacher cannot expect the student to start from nothing to approach and use the second language.

□ **Figure 30. Open Code Transference and Interference Network**



Data shows that most students tended to use L1 in class and that way they learn more, and do the activities in a more relaxed way because there are topics which are common to their lives and experience and that connect what they lived (previous knowledge), to the English learning (new knowledge). Norton and Toohey (2011) confirm this statement when they mention that “pedagogical practices have the potential to be transformative in offering language learners more powerful positions than those they may occupy either inside or outside the classroom” (p. 417). The following journal entry is evidence of the way students’ relate what they do in class in English language to the interpretation and reflection in Spanish after class:

Supé cosas que no sabía de mis compañeros de clase que las actividad me hizo descubrir como por ejemplo que *JH* quiere tener una finca grande igual que yo son cosas actividades que dan más de conocer a las personas que uno casi todos los días como por ejemplo *EL* le gusta proteger a su familia, (C2-SsJournal-S07CB-901AT, May 31st, 2015)

L1 was valued in the classroom during the implementation and though interference and transfer situations were common, they were not considered negative or were punished, the center of using L2 was to achieve communication and to convey meaning. Cases of transference were very common in the artifacts “She have 34 years old.” or “his name is Rocio” (C1-Artifact1-Introduction-S05TC-901AT), and also in relation to word order “I will buy stuff important, I will create a manufactures and I would go to see a match” (C3-Artifact1-Planning the Future. S09WM-902AT), but they were regarded as part of the learning process. At the very early stages, these errors made by the participants were not pointed out with the objective that students gain more confidence on their communicative skill, so they were able to focus more on the message than the linguistic limitations they have.

It is possible to comprehend also that learning processes in general need to be unveiled from the shame and failure that usually had been used as well as the prohibition of L1 or the negative connotation it has in traditional methods in which there is a division between good and bad students given by L1 use. The analysis demonstrates that there are alternatives in which a low achiever student can get better results and start feeling better to participate in class if L1 is partially used, as it is shown on the next quote from the teacher journal:

Another key discovery through this experience was the partnership and help ties that were evident in the presentations, most of the students that were audience behave and supported each other for achieving the communication. It was interesting that most of the students were attentive and didn't mock others when they made mistakes. Moreover,

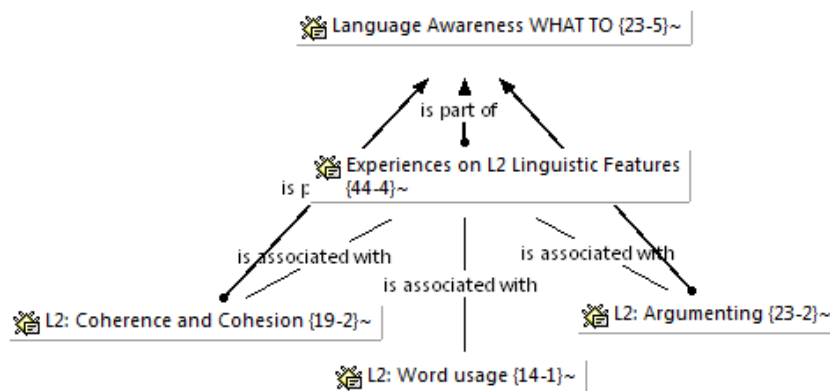
some of them helped each other by giving the needed words so they can convey the message (Teacher-ResearcherJournal#01. April 15th, 2015).

Norton and Toohey (2011) state that “it is through language that a learner gains access to, or is denied access to, powerful social networks that give learners the opportunity to speak” (p.417) and teachers must be aware of this fact and be willing to transform their own role and the traditional one of their students.

Experiences on L2 Linguistic Features

L2 value is established by the desire that participants have on improving their English level because most of them plan to take advantage of knowing a foreign language in order to improve their living. The language network is presented in Figure 31.

▣ **Figure 31. Open Code: L2 Linguistic features**



Artifacts demonstrate that students improved, somehow, their English level and were able to communicate among themselves. The texts students created were analyzed from a broader perspective (macrostructure) and then, to the specifics. For example in regards to text coherence and paragraph structure it was possible to notice that some of the texts were very well constructed and the meaning was easily transmitted despite the transference and interference issues as shown on Table 11.

□ **Table 11. Coherence in Students' artifacts**

Cycle	Artifact
C1-Artifact1-Introduction-S07CB-901AT	My name is CBR, I am large, I have black eyes, black hair and my skin color is white. I wake up at 8:00 am, next I eat my first meal, then I order my bedroom, later I take a shower, next I brush the teeth. After I leave out of shower, at 11:00 am then I wear my uniform. Later I eat my second meal, have my lunch, next I leave of my home and I next go to school, I later study and then return at home. After I wear my sleepwear next I eat my third meal, have my dinner after I brush the teeth and I lay down to sleep.
C2-Artifacts1-2-Let's Look Back-Real Life Stories. S01MC-903AT	Hi! I'm M and I go relate my story about travels. I remember I was traveling to Melgar when my brother was traveling and we pursue to there we was to Cafam this was in 2006. I was to Granada with Jairo's family my stepfather this travel was very funny. I know many places all are very beautiful.
Artifact1-Planning the Future. S09WM-902AT	I will work in architecture, I will buy a car, I will buy a house, I would work in administration of enterprise, I would buy a TV, I would work in BMX, I will travel to France, My family and I will travel to Mexico, My friend and I will travel to Canada.

Students were carefully expressing their ideas and they tried to applied punctuation marks as well as using sequence and connection words which give the text a certain level of fluency. It is possible to notice that students presented a reasonable range of vocabulary, and despite some parts are somehow repetitive in terms of structure usage, it was because of the given tasks requirements. Students were creative when expressing in L2. It is possible to assert this because some features were very well described and by the use of synonyms; e.g., “next I eat my third meal, have my dinner” (C1-Artifact1-Introduction-S07CB-901AT) and by including their own personality in greetings and writing style.

In relation to sentence construction, some participants' artifacts presented circumlocution sentences in the sense of clarifying the information they were sharing such as this case “things I discovered my family they are that they are very respectful respected friendly. Friendly compassionate tolerant those are the things I learned and I discovered my family” (C2-SsJournal-S09WM-902AT. May 31st, 2015), and also they presented some errors related to the type of word. This process was made consciously or not by the participants who did not wanted to lose

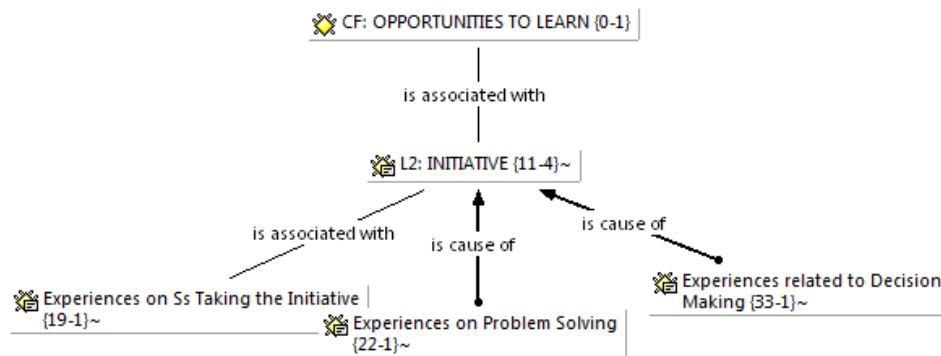
time and miss the idea they were expressing. For example “I would graduation of the university,” (C3-Artifact1-Planning the Future. S01MC-903AT). In this case the participant did not remember the verb *graduate* and instead use the noun *graduation*. In relation to words, it was possible to notice that students gain vocabulary because of the synonym usage, but they still need to improve the way they use the vocabulary as a tool, some texts included words that made difficult to convey meaning; for instance, the sentence “He is burly” (C1-Artifact1-Introduction-S06HB-901AT).

Despite all these errors and misconceptions students achieve the goal of communicating their ideas on L2 and most of them did not affect seriously the outcomes of the implementation, quite the opposite, they serve to the purpose to reflect upon the many and varied ways students learn a foreign language.

Experiences on Ss taking the Initiative

In order to revise the data, initiative is considered as the power or opportunity to act or take charge before others do or an act, or also as an strategy intended to resolve a difficulty or improve a situation; a fresh approach to something which participants have not considered before and initiative is related to promoting critical stances on participants in L2 node, as seen in Figure 32.

- ▣ **Figure 32. Open Codes Ss taking the initiative network, Decision Making and Problem Solving Network**



Participants' data from artifacts show tendency of their desire to contribute to solve one difficult situation they have face on their experiences. That fact was identified in several of the students' artifacts as shown in Table 12.

□ **Table 12. Open Code: Students taking the initiative**

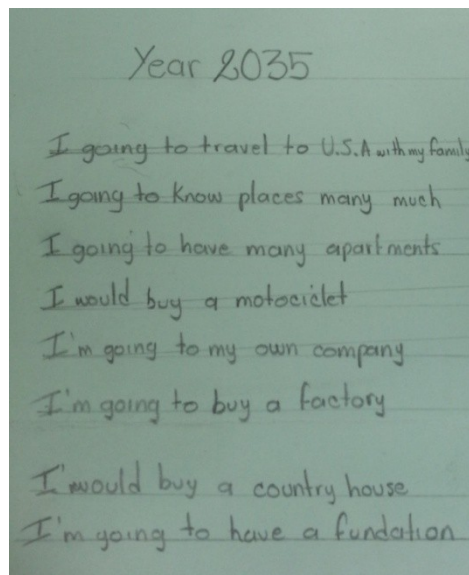
Activity/Participant	Quote
C3-Artifact1-Planning the Future. S10EV-902AT	I am going to give money to a fund
C3-Artifact1-Planning the Future. S11PP-903AT	I'm going to do a foundation the animals in the year 2024
C3-Artifact1-Planning the Future. S12VV-903AT	I'm going to help to the people of my country, I would like to have a animal's foundation,

Despite the fact that the participants started showing traces of critical thinking towards issues they have face, they still did not give tangible ways to solve them, but it was relevant to know students begin an internal and very personal process of deciding the best was to accomplish a goal. Most of them considered that foundations are a good way to help the others and also, because of the community problems they identified in the first cycle of the project, some of them wanted to do something for straying animals too because that is a very recurrent problem they see day by day.

Another revelation in terms of initiative and its process, was that students family history made some participants aware of the difficulties faced by their parents and grandparents and how to solve them. One girl, whose mother had her at very young age, decided that it had been very

difficult for her mother to raise her and her sister alone. She reflected upon it with classmates and presented it in an artifact that says “I am going to married and I am not going to have sons before the thirty years old” [Sic] (C3-Artifact1-Planning the Future. S12VV-903AT). These experiences were shared during the classes and some students were able to find commonalities that made them aware that they are not alone to face those difficulties but most important was the fact that they could start to find solutions to those issues in group, by contributing from one’s understanding to reach a single action which does not require more that students’ willing to do so, but that in long term, will help her to made her other plans come true. Figure 33 presents the long-Term plans from a student participant.

Figure. 33. 3rd Cycle Artifact-S01MC-903AT



Year 2035

- I going to travel to U.S.A with my family
- I going to know places many much
- I going to have many apartments
- I would buy a motociclet
- I'm going to my own company
- I'm going to buy a factory
- I would buy a country house
- I'm going to have a fundation

Students showed they are able to identify opportunities from hardships they have encountered in their lives and the lives of their ancestors and that despite the circumstances, it is up to them to make it possible to do or gain something positive from those delicate issues, something that is beneficial not just for them but also for their families and communities.

Experiences on Decision making

It has been observed from the project early stages, since the moment students agree to participate in the study and the methodological decisions they made. One example of this was given by a participant on his first cycle journal “yo quiero ser abogado y si llega un cliente que no es de Colombia y si no se hablar en inglés y no se ni mis datos personales perdería” [Sic] (C1-SsJournal-S08EL901AT, April 18th, 2015)

Decision making, shown in Figure 32, is more evident in the final cycle of the project because students were able to discuss their plans for the future as well as the perception they may have of the world 40 years from now. This topic was suitable to get data in relation to how students decide to act and why as main steps into any critical literacy process. Participants had shown that for young students the present is more important than other times, and future is uncertain and they seem to show they do not care about it; at least, they do not want to know what their old age is going to be like. Plans for the next five years had more solid decisions than those of longer time frames. For example one participant presented in a very clear way his plans for the next five years “I will graduate myself from a bachelor in 2017, I will study in the university Andean Area in 2018, I will put meantime survey [*resume*] in 2018 to work” [Sic] (C3-Artifact1-Planning the Future. S08EL-901AT)

Supporting the previous statement, the following artifact shows that some students had already given a thought to the topic and they have short-term plans and they expressed it clearly

I would like to study art and design, I'm going to have two sons, I'm going to have a husband, I'm going to my own house, I would live to Villavivencio/Meta, and I'm going to buy a pet, I would buy two cars, I'm going to work in an office and I don't know the name of my enterprise [Sic] (C3-Artifact1-Planning the Future. S01MC-903AT).

But if they are asked to give long term plans, most of them had never thought about it and they took too much time from the classes to do so, but it was possible that they do not look as confidence for the future as a ninth grade students should be.

I'm going to study to be a translator, I would follow living whit my family, I would have a boyfriend, I would graduation of the university, I would start to work, I would live in a apartment alone, I'm going to parties with my friends, I would celebrity the Christmats with my family, I would celebrity the mundial soccer and I would sell shirt for the mundial. [Sic] (C3-Artifact1-Planning the Future. S01MC-903AT)

Decision making is presented also as giving back to their community and the different ways to do it. This topic, is shown in this excerpt

Prof. Y ese cambio grande como se haría?

EV. Pues los ricos, o sea en este país...

CB. Profe yo... tratando de repartir las riquezas

KM. Si usted pasa y ve a alguien, un niño ahí botado y usted está comiendo algo dígame a ver si usted no le va a dar

EV. Ah, pues sí. Pues claro porque es que...

YR. Ahh ahora todos quieren contestar al lo bien

VV. Ahí es que le está ayudando

PP. De esa forma le está ayudando. (D-Group Final Interview)

These conversations among students started to be charged with expressions which illustrate students' desire to change things and make the best of every situation, and again they are evidence of students' understanding of their power to transform their reality with small actions that can help themselves and others too.

Problem solving is perceived by the participants in different levels: in personal grounds and communal solutions. Data confirmed that both are necessary for achieving change at any level. At the first cycle, students identify their own ways to solve a problem from the personal perspective and also giving traces of their personality characteristics to those solutions as it was expressed on the following passages from some participants' initial interview when discussing

how other classmates treated him: “no me gusta la guerra, no me gustan los golpes, cien por ciento en contra de... de actuar con golpes. Cero violencia en el proceso” (Initial Interview S02OP-903AT). A girl also gave indication on how she resolved difficulties with her classmates in her interview: “Las niñas? No sé, eso es darle importancia a los hombres, como ya pues si se quedó con la otra ya dejarlo” (0-Initial Interview S03KM-902AT). Students were giving indications that they are able to handle difficult situations but the main concern was that at the beginning it was more a role of avoiding the issue rather than face it.

As the project continued, at the end of the first cycle, the data demonstrated that participants’ attitude towards problematic situations was slightly improved as they started to reflect upon community issues their families or themselves face regularly. For instance, in group 903, it was discussed what to do with the problem of insecurity outside the school and some students reached to simple but effective solutions that might be used to lessen up the situation. They stated in an artifact that it is important to “Avoid places dangerous, street lonely, bridges, parks. Speak with the police for what they offer more security to the students” [Sic] (C1-Artifact3-Reflection Activity-S01MC-903AT) or “Leave the school in groups and go home on groups” [Sic] (C1-Artifact3-Reflection Activity-S12VV-903AT). In group 902, some participants offer a similar opinion “They have more police in the neighborhood” (C1-Artifact3-Reflection Activity-S03KM-S04YR-902JT). Some of these solutions were implemented as students started to realize that they were very simple to do and they worked out.

Finally, in the latest stages of the project, students discussed more general topics which they tried to approach from broader and more complete perspectives. This topic was specially perceived on the final interview when participant started debating in which way it was possible to help people in need, as it is shown in the following excerpt

Prof. Entonces CB, empezamos por ti. Qué dijiste sobre la comunidad

CB. Pues ayudar a los niños que lo necesitan como en fundaciones y armar proyectos que pues... que no sean difíciles como... o sea que sean como fácil así como... que sean algo que se haga habitualmente para ayudar y que se sepan que todos los que lo necesitan sepan que tienen dificultades y que se pueden pasar. (**D-Group Final Interview**)

This student's participation was interesting from a critical stance because the student is not just talking about providing them things but also to make them know that those difficulties are moments and that they can be changed. This student is transmitting the idea of awareness to other people as the first step into problem solving.

Subcategories' data analysis demonstrates the necessity to start a learning process, especially those of languages, by including and considering within the pedagogical model the importance of seizing students' feelings, opinions and experiences as essential elements that shape the learning process and as main source of promoting critical literacy growth on the EFL classroom.

This research has as main objective to describe and analyze how critical literacy can be promoted when students reflect on their social experiences in an EFL classroom, and it has been established that the role of interaction, context and culture is very essential when reflecting on social and personal experiences participant students shared. It is vital to clarify that experiences are transported from school to community and vice versa which made it significant to the people involved in the process, or as stated by Tenenbaum (1959), "what better way can a person learn than by becoming involved with his whole self, his very person, his root drives, emotions, attitudes and values" (p.300) which has been corroborated throughout this study as an initial approximation on promoting critical literacy in an EFL classroom.

The selected research method, action research, also allows the exploration and identification of the relationship between students' reflection on their social experiences and the

beginning of a construction of critical position in English as a Foreign Language classroom. It is possible to show that students thinking and perception of the world became more critical by reflecting upon their social life experiences and reconstructing their own identities because of the process. Bargal (2006), explains this issue as “a process of effecting change in self-perceptions and enabling individuals to overcome inner resistance” (p, 379) and supports it by adding that “changes in values, in the self, and in one’s social perceptions can only be effected if the individual is part of a small group” (p.379). This is illustrated in several of the given examples from the data collected on the implementation.

It is important to contrast the finding I get from the project to the literature overview that deals with similar topics the same topics that are subjects of the investigation process. The chapter six discussion starts from reconstructing and highlighting the most relevant findings on the shadow of the existing theoretical framework, but also placing it on a context of praxis and particularities that Colombian culture presents.

Chapter VI. Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

Discussion

Throughout the process of reflecting on students' social experiences and how they can promote critical literacy in an EFL classroom, it is necessary to classify the three phenomena under observation. The implementation allowed inquiring about the nature of students' social experience which is conceived as the background knowledge a person possesses and shares to create new perspectives to see the reality. Therefore, experience in EFL class is constructed by recognizing the essential individuality of students which help them shape their own existence and his or her righteous place on the society. Experience has been identified in the results of the study as the main ingredient for language students to structure their selfness in the learning process. But it as it was presented on the previous chapter, experience is by nature a socially constructed event which students recall their previous knowledge and when recalling it, it is perceived differently according to students' feelings and the meaning given through other people.

Language learning selfness is constructed firstly, from the individual but then, it needs to move on to an interaction process where it is nourished by other people experiences. That interactional process itself creates bonds among students which are grounded on feelings and opinions. It is possible to conclude that experience and, in a bigger frame selfness, is shaped and expanded by several external conditions that are part of the context in which students are placed. Family, friends, the school, the neighborhood, the community and aspects such as money, time, property and possessions play a relevant role in facilitating the progress of the language learning selfness and giving students positive and negative experiences.

The literature on the matter has been explaining experience as social phenomena, since the last century with authors such as Dewey (1938) and Kolb (1984). Most of the scholars have focused their research on understanding the experience field from a personal point of view and individualistic process of assimilations of new information. For instance Kolb (1984), states that learning should be conceived as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (p, 41). However, this study concludes that experience is constructed not just internal processing of knowledge, but also by interaction with others, with the environment and in that sense, critical learning occurs and transformation starts. Kolb (1984), agrees that in order to be prepared for the future, the first steps into a critical perspective is to make and identify opportunities in present life by reflecting on their own social experiences.

Adams, Kayes and Kolb (2000), identified that there are different styles in which experience needs to be included in learning. They state that “some of us perceive new information through experiencing the tangible qualities of the world, relying on our senses and immersing ourselves in concrete reality. Others tend to perceive, grasp, or take hold of new information through symbolic representation or abstract conceptualization” (p, 8).

What this project contributes with, is the fact that students started showing evidences of understanding that all experiences are necessary to become a better prepared language student and also a more aware human being as way of promoting critical literacy in foreign language. Teachers and students need to understand that their lives inside and outside the classroom can be helpful as educative experiences and the language teacher duty must include tools to identify the appropriate way to include those experiences in the curriculum. Teacher’s role must include, also, guiding students into finding their own personal style while interacting with others or, as

described by Bargal (2006), “changes in values, in the self, and in one’s social perceptions can only be effected if the individual is part of a small group” (p.379), which is fundamental part of the school which is a place for students to socialize to equals. This study confirms Kolb’s (1984) idea that experiences are conceived and processed socially because “learning transforms experience in both its objective and subjective forms” (p,38). It is subjective because it starts as an individual process of the human being and then, through interaction and reflection, it is transformed into long term knowledge that transforms the environment and society in which that experience occurs and this empowers the all people involved in the learning process.

As an EFL teacher, I have had the opportunity to change the traditional methods of learning a language and this has been the most challenging part at the beginning of the project but there is enough evidence to support the idea that project based learning helps students to improve their language competence as well as to make them reflect upon the role languages have in their lives. Tenenbaum (1959), explained the need to transform the language teaching in order to make it more humanistic and student centered by affirming that its importance “goes beyond the classroom and extends to every area where human beings communicate and try to live with one another” (p.302). This is an accurate description of a public school in Bogotá and more specifically of a language classroom where L1 and L2 are considered a means of communication and less the object of study for the academic purpose. This view of language helps to achieve a critical consciousness and small scale transformation, in the community where the school is. This process is also supported by Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) when they state that

People use language for purposeful communication and learning a new language involves learning how to use words, rules and knowledge about language and its use in order to communicate with speakers of the language. This understanding of language sees

a language not simply as a body of knowledge to be learnt but as a social practice in which to participate (p. 16)

The role of L1 was examined, discussed and clarified through the implementation and data analysis. It has been shown that it is not advisable to use only English in a language class but quite the opposite: their native language should be included since it was possible to notice participants started to appreciate the effort they make by keeping the use of both languages on a balance in terms of one serving the other's purposes. Students' native language must be considered and appreciated as main source of knowledge acquisition and expression for students in early stages of learning a foreign language or as confirmed by Scarino and Liddicoat (2009), "all human beings are shaped by their cultures and that communicating across cultures involves accepting both one's own culturally conditioned nature and that of others and the ways in which these are at play in communication" (p.22). This concept of learning a language as learning the culture is relevant to support the idea of not excluding L1 from the language classroom because otherwise we, as teachers, could be banishing students own culture, experiences, and knowledge which could be negative to the learning of the foreign language.

The concept of CL been developed by many different authors (Atkinson, 2012; Ellis, 1989; Fairclough, 1989; Freire, 1974; Grundy, 1987) but being conceived as a three phase process such as the one described in the present investigation and being able to promote it with young learners is something that is not present in most of the literature. Students started to show leadership characteristics and to make decisions based on facts as well as to plan ways to solve problems from a particular perspective which at the same time proved that critical literacy is always present in education. Problems started to be conceived as knowledge generators rather than class disruptors and the second phase to get changes. Grundy (1987) supports this idea by

claiming that by “recognizing the problematic nature of existence, it becomes possible to address questions about the root causes of problematic aspects of life and address possibilities of change” (p.104).

As long as the teacher is ready to point out the route for the students, they can identify the opportunities which are presented inside the classroom and all the participants on the educational process might identify the school as a natural place which is not exogenous from their lives but such place makes it meaningful and knowledge constructing for learning. Grundy (1987) supports the previous ideas by claiming that “critical pedagogy goes beyond situating the learning experience within the experience of the learner: it is a process which takes the experiences of both the learner and the teacher and, through dialogue and negotiation, recognizes them both as problematic” (p103) and contextualized knowledge is a key aspect to learn, specifically in big groups of students, such as the ones in a public school in Bogotá. Promotion of critical literacy and students’ empowerment can be achieved in EFL when students are given moments to reflect on the value and importance their experiences (both inside and outside the class) and the way those social experiences are co-constructed and re-comprehended when sharing them with other people with academic purposes. The experiences become knowledge only when they are shared and expressed in the light of other people, and languages are the expression system in which students rely to generate social changes on their communities.

Conclusions

Language is learned by using the immediate knowledge of young students because it is what they are more interested about. By using students’ own funds of knowledge (Moll, et al. 1992), they are able to take action into shaping their own reality to take advantage of the daily situations they face, as well as projecting their lives into the future they want for themselves,

their families and communities. By considering students' experiences a vital part in the language learning process, students' social conditions that surround them are highlighted, Moll (1992) states that there is a difference in considering the student as a whole person rather than a recipient of knowledge and the distinction is the fact of "the multiple spheres of activity within the child is enmeshed" (p. 134). Student social networks and their households are relevant parts of the learning as main sources of students' experiences and they cannot be relegated from the classroom and interacting inside and outside the school leads to construct selfness, understanding that it is "as in process, 'becoming', and stresses that identity is 'not an essence, but a positioning'" (Norton and Toohey, 2011:418) which confirms that learning is, by itself, a critical process.

Project Based Learning (PBL) is very helpful to Language Learning and CL because: (i) It focuses the class on project goals rather than linguistic ones and this makes students more engaged into acquiring the language; (ii) Cooperation among students made them learn better and to their pace. And, (iii) it made it possible to work with authentic materials from students' lives which is an advantage in a low resources school. The most relevant aspect discovered through the implementation of this study was the fact that PBL allowed students "the transformation and construction of knowledge (by definition: new understandings, new skills) [*original on parenthesis*] on the part of students" (Thomas, 2000:4) which is stated as one of the main characteristics of a project in this methodology.

Sharing personal and social experiences in the EFL classroom can strengthen teacher / students / language bonds. According to the results of the present study, language learning is directly connected to humanistic approaches of learning and teaching and the role of the people involved in the process need to be open to interaction and participation to contribute to the

potentialities of the ones involved. For example, for Arnold (1999) “attention to affective aspects can lead to more effective language learning” (p.2), which was demonstrated in some cases where students were deeply connected. Arnold states a goal to teach beyond the language by claiming that “we can also educate learners to live more satisfying lives and to be responsible members of society. To do this, we need to be concerned with both their cognitive and affective natures and needs” (p, 3). But it was not just a personal journey for students but also for the teacher researcher who became part of the group in a more personal terrain, teacher needs to be considered a role model by: (i) sharing personal information and experiences in order to make bonds and motivate students into do so and, (ii) language needs supplier all of this should be framed on the affect that need to seal the whole academic process. There is not real learning without affect.

Finally, context and culture have been presented as core concepts that mediate the meaning students give to the experiences they have shared and lived. Both concepts are conceived as socially constructed through interaction to peers, families and also by media. Learning mediates in this construction as Norton and Toohey state it “learning is a social process in which culturally and historically situated participants engage in culturally valued activities, using cultural tools” (p, 419). Culture also can be considered as motivator in promoting critical stances with language students because some relations of power can be constructed culturally and reinforce the powerful connotation language learning has in a third world country. Definitely, students’ beliefs and world conception are the main ingredients to start any critical process because they are the outcomes in reflecting on social experiences. Those beliefs are represented, first, on the interaction process by feelings and opinions students express; secondly, on decisions on how to learn, in this sense it is possible to use the term *metacognitive beliefs in*

language learning (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005) in which students are aware on their preferences on language learning and finally, on the decisions students make to change their reality so they can learn from a critical stance and achieve transformations.

Limitations and Recommendations for further research

There is a really important consideration for teachers and English practitioners in relation to time: class time must give students opportunities to think, discuss and reflect upon the activities done and topics brought within the class. Three hours a week, which is the usual time for public schools in Colombia, is not enough to develop an English program, and especially when dealing with low level students. Another key consideration is the fact that students' perception of time is very different from the teacher and it affects the language learning. During the implementation, students were more receptive and it was easier for them to express in present than in past, because they don't mind it, and there were difficulties to express in future because they tend to be afraid of it. They needed more time specially on the final stage of the project when using other periods of time and grammar tenses.

An important recommendation is to design a flexible curriculum because the method used through the study needs to consider and acknowledge the differences in students pace and ways to learn. As teacher, it is necessary to consider the differences in outcomes you are going to get, according to students perceptions of the reality. Also, when teaching and learning a language it is relevant to regard carefully the fact that the number of students might affect the process, the present project worked very well with small groups of 25 students which is not very common for public education in Bogotá, Colombia.

Finally, when thinking about the teacher's role, there is evidence that shows the opportunity to reflect on the need to transform everyday praxis. To develop a language class based on students experiences with project based learning is very demanding, and because of that there is a need for a more demanding and committed teacher in both physical and mental processes and especially for a teacher that has to be willing to share real-life experiences with his/her students.

References

- Adams, B., Kayes, D.C., Kolb, D.A. (2000). *Experiential Learning in Teams*. The George Case Western Reserve University, Department of Organizational Behavior, Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University. Working Paper *ORBH 12/13/0*
- Alhasan Allamnakhrah. (2013). Learning Critical Thinking in Saudi Arabia: Student Perceptions of Secondary Pre-Service Teacher Education Programs. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 2(1). Canada.
- Arnold, J. (1999). *Affect in Language Learning*. Cambridge University Press: New York.
- Atchade, M.P. (2002). The Impact of Learners' attitudes on Second or Foreign Language Learning. *REV CAMES – Serie B Sciences Sociales et Humaines*, 4.
- Atkinson, D. (1997). A Critical Approach to Critical Thinking in TESOL. *Tesol Quarterly* (31)1.p 71–94. DOI: 10.2307/3587975
- Bakhtiar, N., Okechukwu-Lawrence, E. (2013). Assessing the Level of Reflective Thinking in ELT Students. 2nd World Conference on Educational Technology Researches – WCETR 2012. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 83. p, 266 – 271
- Bargal, D. (2006). Personal and intellectual influences leading to Lewin's paradigm of action research. Towards the 60th anniversary of Lewin's 'Action research and minority problems' (1946). *SAGE Publications* 4(4): 367 – 388. London. DOI: 10.1177/1476750306070101
- Bernat, E. & Gvozdenko, I. (2005). Beliefs about Language Learning: Current Knowledge, Pedagogical Implications, and New Research Directions. *TESL-EJ*. 9(1).

- Böhm, A. (2004). Theoretical Coding: Text analysis in Grounded Theory. In U. Flick, E. Kardoff & I. Steinke (Eds.), *A companion to qualitative Research*. (pp 270-275). London. SAGE publications.
- Council of Europe. (2002). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Cambridge University Press: Strasbourg.
- Creswell, J. 2003. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. California, Sage Publications.
- Dantas-Whitney, M. (2002). Critical reflection in the second language classroom through audiotaped journals. *System* 30, 543–555
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and Education*. Kappa Delta Pi Ed. NY.USA.181 pages.
- Dawson, C. (2002). *Practical Research Methods, A user-friendly Guide to Mastering Research*. Wiltshire, England: Cromwell Press.
- Egan-Robertson, A. & Bloome, D. (Eds.) (1998). *Students as Researchers of Culture and Language in their own Communities*. New Jersey, Hampton. Cresskill.
- Ellis, Rod. (1989). Second Language Learning and Second Language Learners: Growth and Diversity. *TESL Canada, journal/revue TESL du Canada*, 7(1).
- Eslami-Rasekh, Z. & Valizadeh, K. (2004). Classroom Activities Viewed from Different Perspectives: Learners' Voice and Teachers' Voice. *TESL-EJ* 8(3). Retrieved from <http://www.tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume8/ej31/ej31a2/?wscr=> on October 10th, 2014. Hour: 12:58 pm.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. Longman Inc., New York.
- Fairclough, N. (Ed). (1992). *Critical Language Awareness*. London: Harlow.

- Flutter, J. (2007). Teacher Development and Pupils Voice. *The curriculum Journal*, 18(3), p. 343 – 354
- Frank, C. (1999). *Ethnographic Eyes. A Teacher's Guide to Classroom Observation*. Heinemann. Portsmouth, NH.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Trans. M.B. Ramos. New York. Continuum.
- Freire, P. (1974). *Education for Critical Consciousness*, London: Sheed and Ward Ltd.
- Freire, P. & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm. Publishers.
- Friese, S. (2014). *ATLAS.ti 7 User Guide and Reference*. ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH, Berlin.
- Gensuk, M. (1999). Taping into Community Funds of Knowledge. In *Effective Strategies for English Language Acquisition: Curriculum Guide for the Professional Development of Teachers Grades Kindergarten through Eight*. p. 9-21. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project / ARCO Foundation.
- Given, L.M. (Ed.) (2008). *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods. Volumes 1 & 2*. SAGE Publications Inc. California.
- Griffiee, D.T. (2012). *An Introduction to Second Language Research Methods. Design and Data*. TESL-EJ Publications, California.
- Grosser, M.M. & Lombard, B.J.J. (2008). The relationship between culture and the development of critical thinking abilities of prospective teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 24 (2008) 1364–1375. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2007.10.001
- Grundy, S. (1987). *Curriculum: Product or Praxis?* The Falmer Press. Sussex, England.

- Gubrium, J.F. & Holstein, J.A. (Eds.). (2002). *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 981 pages. ISBN: 0-7619-1951-1.
- Guerrero, C. (2010). Is English the key to access the wonders of the modern world? A Critical Discourse Analysis. *Signo y Pensamiento* 57 p.294-313
- Guest, G., Namey, E. & Mitchell, M. (2013). *Collecting Qualitative Data: A Field Manual for Applied Research*. Sage Publications, Inc. USA.
- Halpern, D.F. (2003). Critical Thinking Handout, Critical Thinking Workshop for Helping our Students Become Better Thinkers. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 80. Jossey-Bass Publishers
- Hamilton, J., Kleeba, J. (2011). Experiential Learning: A Course Design Process for Critical Thinking. *American Journal of Business Education – December 2011*. 4(12).
- Hammond, J. and Macken-Horarik, M. (1999). Critical Literacy: Challenges and Questions for ESL Classrooms. *TESOL QUARTERLY*. 33(3), Autumn 1999.
- Harrigan, A., Vincenti, V. (2004). Developing Higher-Order Thinking Through an Intercultural Assignment: A Scholarship of Teaching Inquiry project. *ProQuest Education Journals*. 52 (3) pg. 113.
- Kemmis, S. and MacTaggart, R. (Eds.) 1998. *The Action Research Planner*. 3rd Ed. Geelong Australia: Deakin University Press.
- Kitchenham, A. (2008). The Evolution of John Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. *Journal of Transformative Education* 2008 6:104. DOI: 10.1177/1541344608322678
- Kolb, D.A. (1984). *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- Koshy, V. (2005). *Action Research for Improving Practice. A Practical Guide*. Paul Chapman Publishing. London.
- Kretzmann, J. (1992). Community-Based Development and Local Schools: A Promising Partnership. For: Council for Community-Based Development. Extracted from <http://www.abcdinstitute.org/publications/downloadable/> Date: September 2013.
- Kretzmann, P., McKnight J. (1993). *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*. Chicago, IL: ACTA Publications.
- Kubota, R. (2004). Critical Multiculturalism and Second Language Education. In B. Norton & K. Toohey (Eds.), *Critical pedagogies and language learning* (pp. 30-52). Cambridge University Press.
- Levine, G. S., Phips, A. (Eds). (2012) *AAUSC Issues in Language Program Direction 2010: Critical and Intercultural Theory and Language Pedagogy*. Heinle, Cengage Learning. Boston, MA.
- Lin, A. (1999). Doing-English-Lessons in the Reproduction or Transformation of Social Worlds? *Tesol Quarterly*. 33(3).
- Li Li. (2011). Obstacles and opportunities for developing thinking through interaction in language classrooms. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*. 6, 146–158
- Luke, A. (2004). Two takes on the critical. In B. Norton & K. Toohey, Eds., *Critical pedagogies and language learning*, (pp. 21-31). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Manalo, E., Kusumi, T., Koyasu, M., Michita, Y., Tanaka, Y. (2013). To what extent do culture-related factors influence university students' critical thinking use? *Thinking Skills and Creativity*. 10 (2013) 121– 132

- McCoy, E, Cole, J. (2011). *A Snapshot of Local Support for Literacy: 2010 survey*. London: National Literacy Trust.
- Medina, R. (2013). *Community based projects as literacy resources in an online EFL course*. (Unpublished Master's thesis). Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Colombia.
- Mezirow, J. (2003). Transformative Learning as Discourse. *Journal of Transformative Education*. 1(1), p. 58-63. DOI: 10.1177/1541344603252172. Sage Publications
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional República de Colombia. (2006). *Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Inglés. Serie Guías N°22*. Imprenta Nacional: Colombia.
- Miu-Chi Lun, V., Fischer, R., Ward, C. (2010). Exploring cultural differences in critical thinking: Is it about my thinking style or the language I speak? *Learning and Individual Differences* 20 (2010) 604–616. doi:10.1016/j.lindif.2010.07.001
- Mohammad Jawarneh, Waleed Iyadat, Sadeq Al-Shudaifat, Lana Khasawneh. (2008). Developing Critical Thinking Skills of Secondary Students in Jordan Utilizing Monro and Slater Strategy, and McFarland Strategy. *IJAES*. 3(1) Pg. 82-91
- Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., Gonzalez, D. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*. 31(2), spring 1992.
- Mollaei, F. & Rahnama, H. (2012). Experiential Education Contributing to Language Learning. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 2(21) November 2012.
- Murphey, T., Falout, J., Elwood, J., Hood, M. (2009). Inviting Student Voice. *Asian EFL Journal*. May 2009.

- Murrell, P. (2000). Community teachers: A conceptual framework for preparing exemplary urban teachers. *The Journal of Negro Education*. 69(4), p. 338-348.
- Murrell, P. (2001). *The Community Teacher: A New Framework for effective urban Teaching*. New York. Teachers College.
- Nagaraj , P. (2009). Application of Community Language Learning for Effective Teaching. The Modern Journal of Applied Linguistics. *MJAL* 1(3) May 2009 ISSN 0974- 8741
- Nasser R., Faeze S. (2011). A Model for EFL Materials Development within the Framework of Critical Pedagogy (CP). *English Language Teaching*. 4(2); June 2011
- Nordmeyer, J. (2008). Delicate Balance. ELL students struggle to balance language and content, while educators need partnerships and specific professional learning. *JSD 29(1)*. National staff development council. Winter 2008.
- Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and Language Learning*. Pearson Education Limited 2000. England
- Norton, B &Toohey, K. (2004). *Critical Pedagogies and Language Learning*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge UK.
- Norton, B &Toohey, K. (2011). *State-of-the-Art Article Identity, language learning, and social change*. Cambridge University Press 2011. doi:10.1017/S0261444811000309
- Nunan, D. (1992). *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge University Press. NY, USA.
- Ochs, E. (2000). Socialization. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 9(1-2): 230-233. American Anthropological Association.
- Oroujlou, N., Vahedi, M. (2011). Motivation, attitude, and language learning. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 29. Pg. 994 – 1000

- Pally, M. (1997). Critical Thinking in ESL: An Argument for Sustained Content. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 6 (3), 293-311.
- Pekrun, R., Linnenbrick-Garcia, L. (Eds) (2014) *International Handbook of emotions in Education*. Fiedler, K., Beier, S. Chapter 3, The experience of Emotions During Goal Pursuit. Routledge, New York, NY.
- Pennycook, A. (1999). Introduction: Critical Approaches to TESOL. *Tesol Quarterly*. 33(3), Autumn 1999.
- Pennycook, A. (2001) *Critical applied linguistics: A critical introduction*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Pineda, C. (2000). *La Enseñanza del Inglés con Propósitos Específicos: Fundamentos y Conceptos*. Universidad Externado de Colombia. Bogotá.
- Pineda, C., Núñez, A., Téllez, M. (2003). *Searching for Improved EFL Classroom Environments: The Role of Critical Thinking-Related Tasks*. Universidad Externado de Colombia. Bogotá D.C.
- Pineda, C. (2004). Critical Thinking in the EFL Classroom: The search for a Pedagogical Alternative to Improve English Learning. *Íkala*, Vol. 9 (1).
- Pineda, C. (2010). *La Voz del Estudiante: el éxito de los programas de retención universitaria*. Bogotá, D.C. Universidad de la Sabana: UNESCO-IESALC. ISBN 978-958-12-0282-9
- Prapai Jantrasakul. (2012). Utilizing critical thinking-based EFL lessons: A means to improve language skills and encourage student engagement in Thai EFL classes. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 3(6), 2012.

- Rassool, N. (2004) *Literacy in search of a paradigm*. In: Soler, J., Wearmouth, J. and Reid, G. (eds.) *Conceptualizing difficulties in literacy development: exploring politics, culture, ethnicity and ethics*. Routledge, London, pp. 17-46.
- Renan S. (2014). Culture Shock an obstacle for EFL learners. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 114 (2014) 533 – 537
- Renkema, J. (2009). *Introduction to Discourse Studies*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Philadelphia. USA.
- Reza Hashemi, M., Ghanizadeh, A. (2012). Critical discourse analysis and critical thinking: An experimental study in an EFL context. *System* 40 (2012) 37e47.doi:10.1016/j.system.2012.01.009
- Richards, J.C., & Schmidt, R. (2010). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. Fourth edition. Pearson Education Limited. Great Britain.
- Richards, J. (2013). Curriculum Approaches in Language Teaching: Forward, Central, and Backward Design. *RELC Journal*. 44(1) 5–33.DOI: 10.1177/0033688212473293
- Ruiz-Niño, S. (2013). Working by projects: A way to enrich critical thinking and the writing process in a third grade EFL classroom. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*. 15 (2) Bogotá, Colombia. p. 205 – 220
- Safaa M., Abdel Halim. (2011). Improving EFL majors' critical reading skills and political awareness: A proposed translation program. *International Journal of Educational Research* 50 336–348
- Saylag, R. (2014). Culture Shock an obstacle for EFL learners. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 114, 533 – 537

- Scarino, A. & Liddicoat, A.J. (2009). *Teaching and Learning Languages: A Guide*. CH2 Language culture and learning. Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. ISBN: 978 1 74200 081 7
- Schmidt, R.W. (1990). The Role of Consciousness in Second Language Learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 11(2). Oxford University Press.
- Shamim Ali. (2011). Critical Language Awareness in Pedagogic Context. *English Language Teaching*, 4(4); December 2011.
- Sharan B.M. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco.
- Starkey, H. (2002). Democratic Citizenship, Languages, Diversity, and Human Rights. *Guide for the development of Language Education Policies in Europe. From Linguistic Diversity to Plurilingual Education*. Reference Study. Language Policy Division. Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education. DGIV. Council of Europe, Strasbourg.
- Stenhouse, L. (1983). *Authority, Education and Emancipation*. London: Heinemann.
- Stoller, F. (2002). Project Work: A Means to Promote Language and Content. In Richards, J. and Renandya, W. (2002). *Methodology in Language Teaching: an Anthology of Current Practice*. Ed. Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, E.W. (1998). *The Theory and Practice of Transformative Learning: A critical review*. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Washington, D.C.
- Taylor, E.W. (2008). Transformative Learning Theory. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no. 119, Fall 2008 Wiley Periodicals, Inc. DOI: 10.1002/ace.301

- Taylor, F., Busse, V., Gagova, L., Marsden, E., & Roosken, B. (2013). Identity in foreign language learning and teaching: why listening to our students' and teachers' voices really matters. *ELT Research Papers* 13(2). British Council 2013, UK.
- Tenenbaum, S. (1959). *Carl R. Rogers and Non-Directive teaching*. Educational Leadership Conference, February 1959.
- Thomas, J. (2000). *A review of research on Project-Based Learning*. The Autodesk Foundation. San Rafael, California.
- Tudor, I. (2001). *The Dynamics of the Language Classroom*. Cambridge, UP. 2001
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Edited by M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner and E. Souberman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Warayet, A. (2011). *Participation as complex phenomenon in EFL classroom*. Newcastle University, Thesis, UK.
- Weedon, C. (2004). *Identity and Culture*. Open University Press. Mac Graw Hill Education. England.
- Yaghoubi, A. (2013). Critical thinking and goal orientation among English language students. 3rd World Conference on Learning, Teaching and Educational Leadership (WCLTA-2012). *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 93. p.77 – 82
- Yin, R. (2011). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2011.

Appendices

Appendix A. Needs Analysis, Teachers' Survey



UNIVERSIDAD DISTRITAL FRANCISCO JOSÉ DE CALDAS
FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
MAESTRÍA EN LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA



ENCUESTA #1

OBJETIVO: Contextualizar el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera en el Colegio Colombia Viva desde la perspectiva del docente.

Nombre: _____ **Cargo:** _____ **Fecha:** _____

1. ¿Cuál es el propósito u objetivo general de la enseñanza de inglés en el Colegio?

2. ¿Qué necesitan saber, saber hacer y ser los estudiantes para aprobar la asignatura de inglés?

3. ¿Qué fortalezas encuentra en el currículo de inglés del colegio?

4. ¿Qué debilidades encuentra en el currículo de inglés del colegio?

5. ¿Cuál considera que es la actitud general de sus estudiantes en clase de inglés?

6. ¿Qué tendría que cambiar en los estudiantes para obtener mejor desempeño en inglés?

7. ¿Qué tendría que cambiar en el currículo para obtener mejor desempeño de los estudiantes en inglés?

8. ¿Qué tendría que cambiar en los docentes para obtener mejor desempeño de los estudiantes en inglés?

9. ¿Considera que las políticas institucionales, distritales y nacionales limitan la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera?

10. ¿Cuál considera que es la mejor estrategia o método para enseñar inglés en el colegio?

Otros Comentarios:

Firma y Fecha

Appendix B. Results, Needs Analysis Teachers Survey

QUESTION	ANSWERS	
	MAIN	SECONDARY
1	* EFL COMPETENCES (X3) * EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT	*MOTIVATION * Standards and Policies *It is not clear
2	* Practical knowledge (x2) * Theoretical Knowledge * Contents (Vocabulary, Grammar, Structures, Pronunciation, Listening, Translation)	* Improving Skill's exercises * Using communicative Skills * Interests Being responsible and respectful. * Communicative contexts
3	* Focus on comprehension * Cohesion of subjects	* Flexible (2)
4	* Grammar topics are repeated (No sequence) (x4) * Too hard for the students level	* Too much grammar.
5	* Some disinterest Apathy (x2) * Students do not find its use (x3)	* Mostly effort, interest * Laziness
6	* Motivation * Topics (not grammar based but topic Based) * Need for the learning Working on Interests (x2)	* Real use of English for studying or working articulation * Didactic Material?
7	* Student's Topics and Interests based curriculum based on communication * Standards based curriculum taking into account the real school context	* Pragmatic Curriculum articulation with university Levels of learning process * It is right and consistent to the needs of the students.
8	* Teacher Development, (x2) * Taking into account students' interests and more meaningful topics.	* One level per teacher to optimize work * More commitment and use English all the time. *Use of material and resources
9	* Not enough hours a week (x2) * Policies don't matter as much as the internal work (x2)	* Need for Resources Smaller groups * Automatic promotion make Ss lazy and apathetic
10	* Meaningful learning (x2) * Semantic – Communicative	* Specialized classrooms * EFL learning through gaming

Appendix C. Notetaking/Notemaking Sample

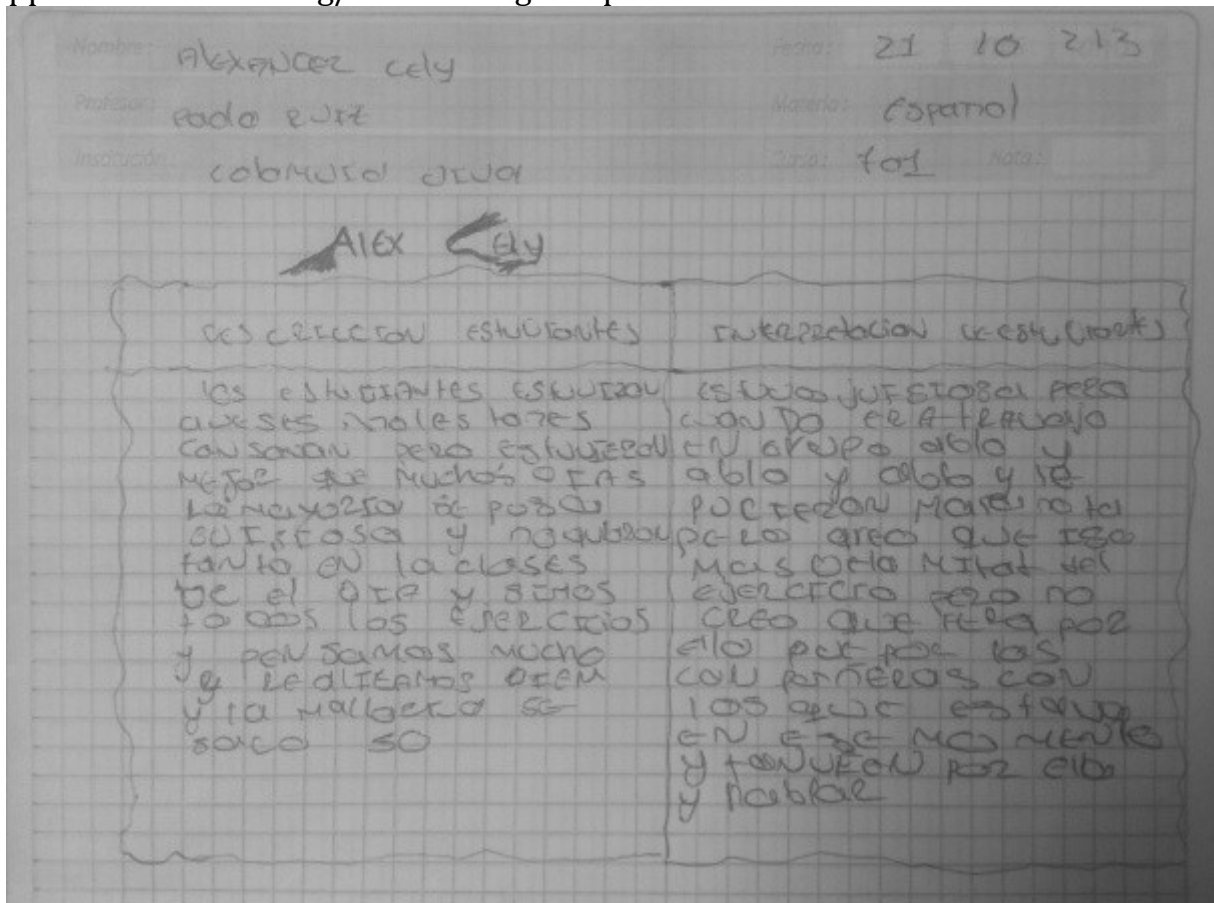


Figure A1. Notetaking/Notemaking example.

Appendix D. Students' Journal Sample

Journal S05TC-901AT

solución

1. descubrí que conozco mejor a la familia de mi mama que la de mi papa , aprendí que mi mama tiene un tío muy estudiado y que adopto a dos sobrinos , aprendí como se llaman mis bisabuelos , aprendí que mi abuelo por parte de mi mama le gustaba mucho el trago , aprendí que de que murió mi abuelo por parte de papa y descubrí muchas cosas nuevas he interesantes que no sabia de mi familia

2.de mis compañeros he aprendido mucho por que me han ayudado a aclarar algunas definiciones que no sabia y en algunas veces hasta en la pronunciación , en mis compañeros puedo encontrar mucho apoyo para aprender mas de ingles así como se que yo también les puedo ayudar a muchos a mejorar su nivel de ingles , es muy interesante trabajar en grupo ademas descubrí que muchos de ellos tienen sueños parecidos a lo míos

3.pues en estos momentos no recuerdo lo que escribí en la hoja pero se que hay muchas situaciones difíciles de compartir pues por que de alguna u otra manera nos causa un poco de dolor y pues no es fácil decir o contar lo que nos causa dolor y en muchas ocasiones nos somos tan abiertos para contar nuestros problemas o situaciones complicadas

4.pues se que mi familia no es perfecta pero también se que no es la peor así que trato de agradecer lo que tengo por que hemos compartido varias situaciones : discusiones , peleas , altercados y desacuerdos , felicidades , tristezas , alegrías . Son demasiadas coas eso en cuanto ala familia de mi mama y pues no he compartido mucho con la familia de mi papa pero igual agradezco que sean mi familia en otras palabras me gusta mi familia tal como es y no la cambiaría a pesar de todo los quiero

5.pues todavía no tengo muy claro que es lo que quiero estudiar , pero creo que todo es posible y creo que puedo lograr todo lo que me propongo si lucho por ello. No tengo muy claro como lo voy a lograr mi pensado es estudiando y trabajando , tal vez muchos de mis planes a futuro no se cumplirán pero por lo menos tratare de luchar por las cosas que para mi son prioridad y por lo menos que mis mayores deseos y sueños se cumplan sin importar lo mucho que me cueste

Appendix E. Teacher Researcher Sample

Teacher Researcher Journal Entry #1 First Cycle- april 15th, 2015

First Part. Personal and Family Description

It was very difficult to present the idea of a Project to the students and it was necessary to do it several times in Spanish to make it clear. When it was understood most of them were excited by the challenge. But it was possible to observe a small group of students from each group (but especially in 902) very nervous about it. Most of the students are afraid to speak in English but it was surprising that they decided to work the first cycle production by doing an oral presentation.

On the first activity descriptions, students started creating their own bullet lists on the linguistic needs they have about the task and in small groups of four people they started helping each other. But it was also interesting to notice Ss were comparing themselves. Some aspect that was concerning was the fact that they started mocking themselves as it is presented in the next audio recording excerpt:

Excerpt 1 (AR1.1 902-1)

Ka: cuadrada? Cara cuadrada?

Teacher. Si hay hombres que la tienen así

Cr: Da. la tiene cuadrada. Si como una papaya

Todos: Risas

Da: Ay qué asco.

There are also atypical situations that can emerge in the classroom that affect the development of language competence and students concentration and focus on the academic task, for example S04 started joking to S03 and he make her cry and from that moment she stopped working and some of her friends too. It was necessary to take some time from the class to talk with the involved student to solve the problem.

Third Part Reflection and Evaluation.

When students are faced to present what they have learned so far there were several situations which made it easier or difficult to achieve the goal. First of all, the seriousness in which they worked on the topics, and the feedback they received through the process (which was

requested by the very same students) It means that the students who asked for more feedback were better prepared to face the final activity. Second, it was difficult for students with family problems to speak about them. For example, families with one paternal figure, students who were raised by grandparents, aunts, and uncles are common among them. Some students still feel ashamed or embarrassed for having these classes of families. So it was possible to notice that even though some students had the language proficiency to do well in the task, they were not conformable because of their feelings towards the topic.

Another key discovery through this experience was the partnership and help ties that were evident in the presentations, most of the students that were audience behave and supported each other for achieving the communication. It was interesting that most of the students were attentive and didn't mock others when they made mistakes. Moreover, some of them helped each other by giving the needed words so they can convey the message.

Appendix F. First Interview

1. ¿Qué piensas sobre la forma en que se tratan en el curso?
2. ¿Por qué crees que eso pasa?
3. ¿Cuál es la situación más complicada que se ha presentado en el curso este año?
4. ¿Cómo consideras que se puede mejorar dicha situación?
5. ¿Piensas que el grupo está dividido? De qué forma?
6. ¿Cómo afecta esa división el normal desarrollo de las clases?
7. ¿Y en la clase de inglés qué sucede?
8. ¿Consideras que en las diferentes clases de inglés se tiene en cuenta las experiencias de los estudiantes? ¿Por qué?
9. ¿De qué forma se puede involucrar más su vida fuera del colegio con el aprendizaje del inglés?
10. De qué forma se podría mejorar el aprendizaje del inglés en el curso?

Appendix G. Final Interview

- 1. Cuál fue su experiencia al hablar de ustedes mismos en la clase de Inglés?**
- 2. Qué cosas nuevas descubrió de usted mismo y de sus compañeros en estos meses?**
- 3. Qué dificultades se presentaron durante las clases y cómo las enfrentaron?**
- 4. De qué forma el aprendizaje de estos meses ha contribuido en su proyecto de vida, el de su familia y la comunidad en general?**
- 5. Algo que quisieran agregar?**

Appendix H. Parents consent form



UNIVERSIDAD DISTRITAL FRANCISCO JOSÉ DE CALDAS
Facultad de Ciencias y Educación
Master Programme in Applied Linguistics to TEFL
Informed Consent
Parent Permission Letter

Formato de Consentimiento Carta de Permiso de los Padres

Septiembre 16, 2014.

Querido padre de familia o acudiente,

Este tercer periodo, estoy conduciendo una investigación titulada “**NINTH GRADERS’ SOCIAL EXPERIENCES WITH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING TO PROMOTE CRITICAL LITERACY IN EFL.**” (Experiencias sociales de estudiantes de octavo grado con aprendizaje en proyectos para promover literacidad crítica en clase de inglés como lengua extranjera) con los estudiantes de octavo grado de la sede a en la jornada tarde del colegio Colombia Viva IED. Estoy interesada en examinar el desarrollo de pensamiento crítico en la clase de inglés a través del trabajo por proyectos. Fundamentalmente, se espera obtener un mejor desarrollo de pensamiento crítico en los estudiantes así como mejorar el nivel de inglés que en este momento tienen. Bajo el seguimiento de la Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas y con la autorización del rector del colegio, estoy solicitándole que le permita a _____ participar.

Los participantes en este estudio continuarán asistiendo y participando en sus clases de inglés normalmente, solo que algunas de ellas serán grabadas. Después, se les pedirá que describan sus opiniones, sugerencias e ideas en relación sobre cómo mejorar el aprendizaje del inglés, para ello participarán en entrevistas y discusiones en clase. Los participantes también completarán una breve encuesta sobre su percepción de la clase y del proyecto. El tiempo total para participar en el estudio será aproximadamente de cuatro meses y se realizará dentro del horario de clases de inglés. (No habrá pérdida de otras clases y no tendrán que asistir en horarios adicionales.)

No hay riesgos previsibles por participar en el estudio. Como agradecimiento, todos los estudiantes que participen serán recompensados con una unidad extra en la nota del último periodo.

Si así lo desea, no se utilizará el nombre del estudiante en ninguna parte del estudio, así que toda la participación será anónima. Nadie en el colegio tendrá acceso a la información recogida. Toda la información será guardada en una ubicación segura bajo llave que será accesible únicamente para la investigadora.

La participación en el estudio es totalmente voluntaria y no habrá sanciones por no participar. Sólo los estudiantes que quieran participar recibirán el formato de consentimiento. Además, los participantes están en libertad de abandonar la participación en la investigación en cualquier momento.

La maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés de la Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas ha aprobado este estudio. Si tiene alguna duda sobre la investigación por favor contacte a Claudia Paola Ruiz Sarmiento en el 3012386871. Por favor dé su permiso al firmar el formato adjunto y haciendo que el estudianteme lo entreguen la próxima clase de inglés.

Atentamente,

Claudia Paola Ruiz Sarmiento
Estudiante Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés

Consentimiento de Participación

He leído la carta adjunta de consentimiento y estoy de acuerdo con que mi hijo participe en el estudio titulado “**NINTH GRADERS’ SOCIAL EXPERIENCES WITH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING TO PROMOTE CRITICAL LITERACY IN EFL.**”

Nombre del Estudiante

Si No deseo que el nombre de mi hijo/a sea utilizado.

Nombre del Padre de Familia o Acudiente

Firma y número de documento de identidad

Fecha

Appendix I. Student Participant Consent Form

Iniciales de los Participantes _____

Formato de consentimiento para el Estudiante-Participante

Estás siendo invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación. Estoy haciendo esto para aprender más sobre el desarrollo de pensamiento crítico en la clase de inglés a través del trabajo por proyectos. Si estás de acuerdo en participar en este estudio, se te harán preguntas sobre lo que piensas de la clase de inglés y se espera que compartas tus ideas, sugerencias, y experiencias personales con tus compañeros y profesora. También será necesario que participes en algunas entrevistas y encuestas que podrían ser grabadas. Después de que esto termine, tú tendrás un mejor desempeño académico en la asignatura de inglés.

No hay riesgos previsible por participar en el estudio. Como agradecimiento, todos los estudiantes que participen serán recompensados con una unidad extra en la nota del último periodo. Si así lo deseas, no se utilizará tu nombre en ninguna parte del estudio, así que toda la participación será anónima. Nadie en el colegio tendrá acceso a la información recogida. Toda la información será guardada en una ubicación segura bajo llave que será accesible únicamente para la investigadora.

Si estás de acuerdo con participar en el estudio, pero aún tienes cualquier duda puedes preguntar a la profesora Claudia Paola Ruiz Sarmiento quien está conduciendo este estudio. No tienes que estar obligatoriamente en el estudio, pero si decides participar, puedes dejarlo en el momento que desees.

Consentimiento del estudiante: Me han informado sobre el estudio, porqué se está haciendo y lo que tendré que hacer. También sé que no tengo que hacerlo si no quiero. Si tengo preguntas, puedo preguntarle a la profesora Claudia Paola Ruiz Sarmiento. También sé que puedo dejar la investigación en cualquier momento.

Mis padres o Acudientes saben que voy a participar en esta investigación.

POR FAVOR FIRME SI ESTÁ DE ACUERDO EN PARTICIPAR.

Firma del estudiante

Fecha

Si _____ No _____ Estoy de acuerdo con que se utilice mi nombre en el estudio.

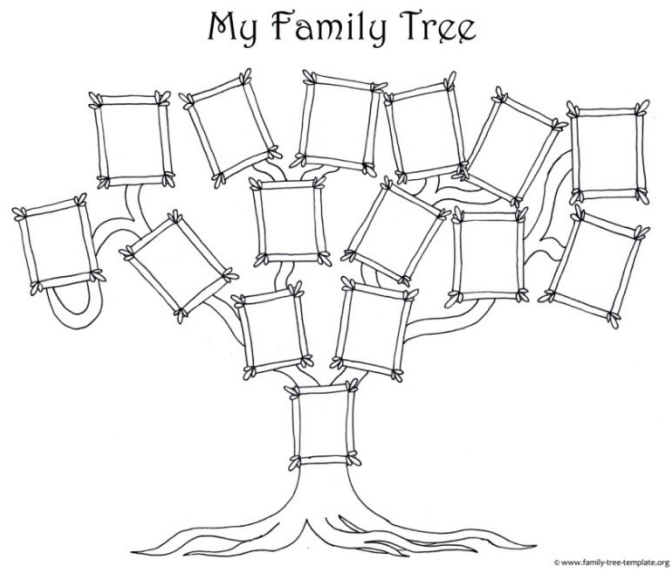
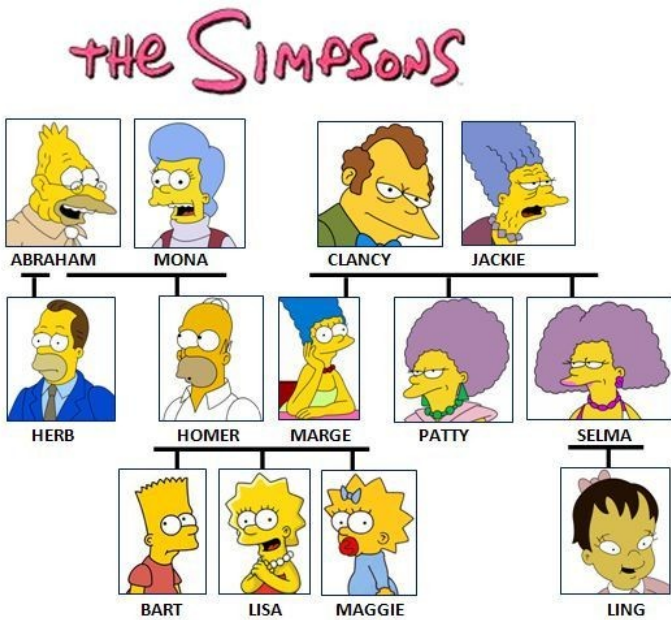
Appendix J. Instructional Unit Sample

First Cycle: Why Am I Here? Let's Look Back III

First project: the Path I Have Walked through my Past Ancestors
WORKSHOP

Linguistic Topic	Discussing your previous family members.
Critical Literacy Skill	Explanation, Interpretation.
Level	39 Ss. 801 Branch A. Afternoon Shift.
Time	1 hour and 40 minutes.
Linguistic Objective	To learn how to describe past actions and previous experiences.
Research Objective:	To guide the students, by example and reflection, into finding the best method to start organizing the project.

1. Observe the Simpsons Family Tree. Then Write your own.



2. Answer the questions in relation to the PPP.

Did the pictures show any difference in social strata? How do you know?	Which Topics could be considered polemic? Why?

Which is the later family member you have a picture of? Which year is it?	Were there any similar cases in your family?

3. **Mention who is the relative you would have liked to know based on what you have talked with your family members.**

4. **Mention the different places your family comes from? Have you travelled to them?**

5. What stories would you like to share about your family?

Thanks for your honest reply!!!!!!



Appendix K. Instructional Unit Sample

Second Cycle: This is my Time and Place ¿Do I know it?

Discovering the World I live in!!!

WORKSHOP

Linguistic Topic	Expressing location and places, comparing.
CL Skill	Describe, Compare,
Level	36 Ss. 801 Branch A. Afternoon Shift.
Time	3 class hours
Class Obj.	*To be able to analyze the facts and present circumstances which are around each one of the students. *To guide the students, by example and reflection, into finding the best method to start organizing their life experiences.
Research Obj.	*To observe the promotion of critical literacy in the EFL classroom. *To identify social experience and interaction role when promoting critical literacy.

1. Observe the teacher's house plans. Then draw and prepare your own presentation.
2. Organize groups of four people and present the information to your classmates.
3. Write 10 sentences about the similarities and differences that you notice in the houses when listening to your classmates.
4. Answer the questions in relation to the PPP.

Did the maps show any difference in social strata? How do you know?	Which economical strata do you consider each one? Why?

--	--

5. Discuss and select who is the student with *the best home* and explain the criteria in which you base the decision.

6. Now draw a map from a house which you consider is the ideal one and explain why is it

Thanks for your honest reply!!!!!!!

