

Running Head: CRITICAL LITERACY DEVELOPMENT WITH THE USE OF
NARRATIVES

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CRITICAL LITERACY DEVELOPMENT WITH THE USE OF NARRATIVES

“La universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas no será responsable de por las ideas expuestas
en este trabajo”

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ABSTRACT

Critical Literacy aims at developing students' consciousness of their experiences to approach the understanding of the world through language. Our project centers on visual narratives to allow learners to use their individual experience to help them reflect on themselves and on the world around them. In a qualitative action research study, we explored narratives for critical literacy development with a basic-level English class in a university in Bogotá. A survey, teacher's journals, interviews and students' artifacts looked into visual narratives and their influence on the development of Critical Literacy. The data analysis suggests that the pedagogical intervention awoke awareness of language use as a vehicle for students to understand themselves as individuals and as members of a community. Moreover, the development of critical literacy seemed to foster a critical approach to the social topics proposed.

Key Words: *Critical Literacy, EFL, Literacy, Narratives, Visual Narratives.*

RESUMEN

La alfabetización crítica busca concientizar a los estudiantes sobre sus experiencias para entender el mundo a través del lenguaje. Nuestro proyecto se enfoca en el uso de narrativas visuales permitir a los estudiantes utilizar sus experiencias y ayudarles a reflexionar sobre sí mismos y sobre el mundo que los rodea. Por medio de una investigación cualitativa, exploramos las narrativas para desarrollar pensamiento crítico en una clase de inglés de nivel básico, en una universidad en Bogotá. Una encuesta, diario de campo, entrevistas, y artefactos de los estudiantes, evidenciaron la influencia de las narrativas visuales en el desarrollo del alfabetismo crítico. El análisis de datos sugiere que la intervención pedagógica generó conciencia sobre el uso del lenguaje como vehículo para que los estudiantes se entiendan a sí mismos como individuos y como miembros de la sociedad. Además, el desarrollo del pensamiento crítico promovió un enfoque crítico hacia los temas sociales propuestos.

Palabras clave: *Alfabetización Crítica, EFL, Narrativas, Narrativas Visuales.*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to trace the development of Critical Literacy in basic level English students with the use of narratives in the EFL classroom. Social relevant topics as feminism, social justice and environment were addressed from a Critical Approach to enhance students' empowerment and participation in the classroom in order to create an adequate environment for sharing personal experiences and relating them to their contexts and the relations of power within those contexts.

We decided to do research on Critical Literacy because, as teachers, we have noticed that most English learning and learning in general is not designed to prompt or elicit personal and social growth from a critical perspective and students do not have the opportunities to ask, analyze and discuss about the topics given in class. On the contrary, students tend to learn the vocabulary and grammar structures related to topics that are only conceived as vehicles for language learning and not as personal and social elements for transforming realities into the classroom. We consider that the use of narratives will contribute in this effort to convey a critical view of pedagogy because these narratives inform students about relevant social phenomena that affects them and the reality they live in.

We researched on three main concepts during the development of the project: Literacy, Critical Literacy and Narratives. In the literature review chapter, the reader will encounter the definitions we took into account and the specific theories and propositions we selected from the literature regarding these topics. There, we described the recent evolution of the term Literacy

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and the different types of literacies that can be developed by a person. We also discussed the vision of pedagogy and Critical Literacy stated by Freire (1972, 1976) and Freire and Macedo (1987) as well as main principles and dimensions regarding Critical Literacy. In regards to narratives we reviewed the benefits of working with them in the classroom and how these narratives can help to solve identity problems in students that are learning a foreign language and feel rejected or marginalized.

The pedagogical intervention consisted of six classes in which we used visual and audio-visual narratives to prompt students' analysis and dialogue about personal and social experiences relating feminism, social justice and environment. The activities included discussions, workshops and written papers in which students' critical approach to these topics could be evidenced. We considered critical pedagogy and its urge to transform society through education as a fundamental element in the students' Critical Literacy development as teachers and students worked as guiders and critical thinkers respectively to achieve the proposed instructional objectives.

To carry out the investigation we used Action Research to plan, act, observe and reflect constantly upon the activities and procedures implemented in class and to locate our project as one that creates pragmatic solutions and awareness on behalf of personal growth and social advancement (Bradbury & Reason, 2001). We implemented a survey to diagnose the situation and the participants and three instruments (students' artifacts, teachers' journals and interviews) to triangulate the information and make the results plausible.

The analysis of the information gathered led us to conclude that Critical Literacy development was positively affected by the use of narratives. The participants developed abilities to analyze

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from a critical standpoint audio-visual and visual texts. Furthermore, they submitted proposals and solutions for daily life problems and reflected about feminism, social justice and environment from their specific contexts, helping to create a critical environment in which assessed use of concepts, the skills of remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating, and the application of the theories, principles and dimensions proposed by Freire (1972, 1976) Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys (2002) and McLaughlin & DeVoogd (2004) constituted the initial step in Critical Literacy.

RATIONALE

The relevance of developing this research is supported on the need to reflect and describe the process that students carry out when developing critical literacy with the help of narratives, mainly because this can modify the approach of EFL teachers in the lessons they develop. Besides, it provides an opportunity to understand the background, challenges, and goals that students have outside the classroom through the narratives that are proposed and the way students interpret such narratives.

Likewise, this research study urges language teachers to become aware of their role in the classroom and give students the opportunity to create meaningful discussions since, as expressed by Ko (2013), “language learners need to understand the social effects of texts and take a critical view to them to uncover the social inequalities and injustices imbedded in the texts and in this way they can transform themselves into critical agents and promote for a more equitable and democratic society.” (p. 1)

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In this sense, it is relevant to consider that although there are many approaches to the teaching of the English language, we noticed that aspects such as social issues and students' experiences were hardly ever considered as important elements to be addressed in the classroom. In this way, this study had a direct impact on the participants since they had the opportunity to develop critical literacy, that is, to read texts critically taking into account different points of view and to feel empowered to promote change. Thus, students were able to recognize that the narratives they encounter can be interpreted in a critical way and that their voice matters because they are a part of society and their actions can have an impact.

To conclude, we consider this study is relevant for the educational field because it allows students to be active participants in their learning process and to perceive that the educational context is part of a wider social context. We also consider that the educative community benefits from our study, since it was applied with participants who pursue a degree in the field of English teaching, and therefore, they can reflect upon their practice and implement critical literacy in their approach to education.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The present study focused on the development of critical literacy in Basic-level English students with the use of narratives. It was conducted during the second semester of 2017 in a public university, where we wanted students to find a way to communicate their thoughts and perspectives, share with others and think critically as they related personal narratives to their prior knowledge and context. The participants filled out a survey (Annex 2) in which we were able to analyze the extent to which they wrote about themselves, reflected upon the texts they

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read, and expressed and listened to others' opinions in class. The results obtained from the survey gave us insights, from the students' point of view, on texts that are used in the EFL class. This survey also enabled us to analyze the relation and perceptions students had of the language in terms of developing a critical thinking mindset through the language and their ability of using it to carry out activities in the EFL classroom. The conducted survey analysis suggested that there was a need for students to develop the confidence and skills needed for communication and interaction in the classroom from a critical point of view.

In order to address this issue, we chose to introduce the contents to our students through videos, images and workshops connected with feminism, social justice, and environment. The reason we decided to apply such contents is that as asserted by Akbari (2008), "educational systems are reflections of the societal systems within which they operate, and since in all social systems we have discrimination and marginalization in terms of race, social class, or gender (Giroux 1983), the same biases are reproduced in educational systems" (p. 276). Thus, these topics can be used in the classroom to approach the target language from various perspectives and to create an adequate environment for discussions and debates to take place in the classroom effectively, as a reaction to the input provided. Linguistically, narratives or stories presented vocabulary, grammar and structures within a meaningful context that supports comprehension of the narrative world and the content the story is related to (Glazer & Burke, 1994). Consequently, students were able to apply the purposeful language given in the EFL class to understand and produce meaning in the narrative world.

The use of narratives in this project to develop students' critical literacy skills is crucial. In regards to its benefits, Campbell (2001) asserts that language skills, cultural heritage and

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personal development are improved by the use of narratives. We considered that developing these three aspects was important for the development of critical literacy. For that reason, we used fictional and real narratives that were selected for their relevance in students' lives and contexts. Those narratives were presented in multiple formats (i.e. photos, videos, songs, paintings, documentaries) and encouraged students to tell their own personal experiences, and to connect those experiences to the topics seen in class.

Moreover, discussing the use of narratives into critical pedagogy and literacy, Goodson & Gill (2014) value narratives as a helpful element to establish critical engagement in students' individual reflection and group-based learning as narratives are humanizing and prompt empathetic listening and analysis. These narratives can also lead students to transformation and reconciliation which are two fundamental components of learning in a wider sense that implies to 'become more fully human' (Freire, 1976, p. 37).

In addition, narratives provide to the narrator and the narratees information about their own lives, stories, identities and the connections with others. This information can be analyzed critically to determine the source of many beliefs, traditions, actions and transformations. Furthermore, the use of narratives not only has an impact in the students' cognitive evolution process but also in the interaction with foreign cultures, as mentioned by (Garcia, 2015) when she asserts that using narratives in education can facilitate not only the cognitive development and effective acquisition of the curriculum, but also communication in another language and learning from other cultures.

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To conclude, our assumption was that if regular classroom teachers implemented activities based on the analysis and production of narratives that provided students with the opportunity to develop a critical point of view, such as critical literacy, then learning English would be meaningful and effective in the EFL classroom. Based on the constructs of Critical literacy and narratives, as well as the gathered information from the selected population, our research question is stated below, followed by the objectives.

Research Question

- How may Basic English level students develop critical literacy with the use of narratives in the EFL class?

General Objective

- To trace the development of critical literacy in an EFL classroom through the students' use of narratives.

Specific Objectives

- To identify the role of narratives in promoting critical literacy.
- To foster students' social empowerment in the EFL classroom.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the theoretical basis that guided our research project which includes the constructs that support our study as well as research-based studies that allowed us to better understand the scope of our project. We begin with the definition of the broader concept of Literacy from the perspective of several authors (Edelsky, 2006; Fiske & Hartley, 1979; Kress & Trew, 1978; Goodman, 2003; Petterson, 2000; and Freire, 1972). Then we focus on the term of Critical Literacy as proposed by Freire and Macedo (1972, 1976, 1987) and its application in the EFL classroom, and finally, we look into the definition of narratives (Baldick, 2008). We discuss the application of these concepts into our project, as well as how reading studies related to our interests informed our project.

Literacy

There are numerous definitions about the meaning of Literacy in which diverse aspects, characteristics, and elements are considered. In this sense, we mention the authors who supported our understanding of Literacy. Traditionally, literacy has been considered as the ability to code, decode, read and write texts which were printed. (Gee, 2004; Baynham, 1995; Freire & Macedo, 1987) but this definition of literacy contains little if any consideration about the social factors and the advent of new technologies and devices for communication. As we are facing a new era full of technological resources and social problems, a different conception of literacy should be

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appropriated in order to design effective methods and practices to provide the students with opportunities to read the world in its multiple representations.

Therefore, it is important to bear in mind the transition and expansion of the concept of literacy. From the 70's and before, many scholars thought about literacy as a single concept related to reading and writing printed materials (Edelsky, 2006). However, this conception has evolved through the pass of time along with the emergence of new technologies and devices which allowed the possibility of new ways of reading and writing the world. Furthermore, academic and artistic fields began to take possession of the term as work in semiotics, cultural studies and semiology make scholars implement the term to other media (Fiske & Hartley, 1979); (Kress & Trew, 1978) while public in general started to use the term in other fields. Then, "multiple literacies" is a term that not only refers to culturally diverse printed materials but also to other non-printed resources (Edelsky, 2006). We adhere to these principles as we also consider that nowadays texts do not only come in written form, and therefore, narratives used in our pedagogical implementation will not only come in a written form.

Regarding its social aspect (Goodman, 2003) considers literacy as more than the ability to read or to write. Instead, he involves culture and social environment as essential factors for a person to understand all types of narratives. Following his thread of thinking, (Pettersen, 2000) affirms that literacy is a big concept which cannot be reduced to narrative literacy but engage other literacies as television literacy, information literacy, computer literacy, and others. Thus, a person with the ability to read, write, code and decode the world through the different literacies and considering cultural and social environments, will be able to take part in their responsibility and right to read the reality and then interpret and change the society (Freire, 1972).

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These definitions of literacy, helped us to understand the term as the ability to not only being able to read and write, but also to include the cultural and social context involved in written, visual, and audio-visual texts. Understanding this was essential for stepping into our next concept.

Critical Literacy

Critical literacy is a key construct for our project as it involves the active participation of the students in the process of interpreting and changing the world by problematizing every type of text provided to them.

Freire and Macedo point out the importance of Critical Literacy development in terms of considering learning and teaching as a two-way interaction, which cannot happen in a neutral context, but will necessarily be influenced by each individual's personal context. (Freire & Macedo, 1987) Moreover, they also state that Critical Literacy is the set of cultural practices that promotes democratic and emancipatory change, and it does not only consist of being able to critically read and write, nor is it an instrument or skill that can be acquired and serves for reproducing the existing social information. Rather, "it begins with the fact of one's experience as part of a historically constructed practice within specific relations of power", as Freire & Macedo explain:

That is, human beings (as both teachers and students) within particular social and cultural formations are the starting point for analyzing not only how they actively construct their own

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experiences within ongoing relations of power, but also how the social construction of such experiences provides them with the opportunity to give meaning and expression to their own needs and voices as part of a project of self and social empowerment. (p.7).

Based on these affirmations, Freire & Macedo invite us as teachers to break the conventional model of classroom lectures and turn it into a more dialogical space, where both teachers and students acknowledge the other's' knowledge and experiences and use that as a means for constructing knowledge and learning. As they explain, "teaching and learning are dialogic in character, which depends on the awareness of oneself as a knower" (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Moreover, Freire poses that the Critical Dimension of learning is what we do when we negotiate meaning, mediate activity, and make culture. Adding: "it is not something that can be inculcated, but rather developed and formulated as an essential activity of all learning". He makes an invitation for teachers to consider recognition and reinvention, recognizing means reading and understanding the world, as well as acknowledging the learner's knowledge and respecting such knowledge. And to evaluate, to interpret the interpretations and reflect upon one's own reflections, that is, to approach teaching and learning with criticism (Freire & Macedo, 1987)

In this sense, our own approach to the language classroom should focus not on the students' lack of knowledge, but in their already acquired knowledge as a building tool for seeing the language not as a foreign, completely unknown object, but as a cultural feature to be analyzed and understood and, in the way that Freire proposes it, criticized. It is not so much about what teachers teach but also as the productive meanings that students, in all of their cultural and social differences, bring to the classrooms as part of the production of knowledge and the construction of personal and social identities.

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In a similar way, (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002) propose four dimensions to define critical literacy. The first one is Disrupting the commonplace and relates to interrogating the texts by asking questions such as: “What position does this text want me to defend?” The second dimension is Interrogating multiple viewpoints by trying to understand texts and experiences from our own perspective and the perspective of others. The third dimension is Focusing on socio-political issues, as, for example, analyzing the relationship between language and power in political discourses or paying attention to specific words which can reflect the author’s point of view. The fourth and last dimension is taking action and promoting social justice and represents the last step in the process of developing critical literacy abilities, in which the person takes action into processes to change the world.

McLaughlin & DeVogd (2004), introduced four principles of critical literacy. These principles are: (1) critical literacy is focused on issues of power and promotes action, reflection and transformation. (2) It focuses on the problem and its complexity. (3) Techniques which promote it adapt to the context in which they are used and are dynamic. (4) Examining multiple perspectives is an important aspect of critical literacy.

These dimensions and principles allowed us to design and apply a project regarding students’ context, background and social environments, where students feel comfortable answering questions, reading situations, interpreting intentions, thinking about transformation and reflecting about current texts and their responsibility when approaching them critically.

Critical Literacy in the EFL classroom

The result of implementing Critical Literacy in the EFL classroom can be a tool for both teachers and learners to approach learning and knowledge where the language “can function either to silence and marginalize students or to legitimate their voices in an effort to empower them as critical and active citizens” (Freire & Macedo, 1987). In this way, a foreign language classroom should serve as a means for getting students to know a different culture and then based on the differences and similarities, take a critical stance and a political stand, where they see their culture and vision as part of themselves and themselves as part of a cultural, political context.

To achieve this endeavor, we can turn to Freire & Macedo’s “unquiet pedagogy” which consists of problematizing the format and function of meetings, or in our context, classes and lessons. To turn from problem solving to problem posing and start questioning the practical use of the information that is presented to us, and to challenge its source. As Berthoff (cited by Macedo, 1987, p. 12) best explains it, “how your theory works and what it changes will best tell you what your theory is”. That is, to “consider the worth of an idea by asking what difference it would make” (Macedo, 1987, p. 12).

In order to be able to successfully achieve this in our classrooms, we need to be careful not to fall in the classic mistakes and to know the differences that make humans either literate, illiterate, or functionally literate. As Freire & Macedo (1987) explain: “There is a difference between being illiterate and being functionally literate, which means being able to read and write, rather than to take a position in society regarding one’s context”. (p. 12) Literacy can be viewed from two angles according to Freire, as a tool for enabling people to understand and

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transform their society as an active participant, or as a way of giving learners the functional skills they need in order to be a working member of society. The literacy that Freire & Macedo propose, serves as “a vehicle for examining how cultural definitions of gender, race, class, and subjectivity are constituted as both historical and social constructs”. Not to forget that since all voices are being heard in a classroom, the teacher’s voice is also to be analyzed and put under the lens, in order to understand the way in which it is also affected by a certain, personal context, and in this way, encourage students to do the same and exercise their own voices through their narratives, as a way towards students’ empowerment.

In an English language classroom, it might be easy to fall into the mistake of merely exposing learners to the language as something that needs to be learned and, in a way, memorized. Nevertheless, the difficult task is to follow Freire’s principle of radical literacy. Radical literacy is suggested as a response to merely limiting critique to the analyses of cultural products such as texts, books, films, and other commodities. Which would obscure the relational nature of how meaning is produced. Instead, a radical theory of literacy needs to “incorporate a notion of ideology critique that includes a view of human agency in which the production of meaning takes place in the dialogue and interaction that mutually constitute the dialectical relationship between human subjectivities and the objective world”. (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 7)

As asserted by Freire and Macedo (1997, p. 7) “knowledge is produced in the process of interaction between the writer and the reader at the moment of reading, and the teacher and the student at the moment of classroom engagement”. In this sense, curriculum also needs to be transformed. Where the starting point is the students’ needs rather than the teachers’ interests or ideals of needs. As Roger Simon says: (cited by Freire, 1987, p. 21).

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Teaching and learning must be linked to the goal of educating students to take risks, to struggle with on-going relations of power, to critically appropriate forms of knowledge that exists outside of their immediate experience, and to envisage versions of a world which (...) is “not-yet” -in order to be able to alter the grounds on which life is lived.

According to these ideas, education in the classroom cannot be limited to the transmission of ideas from a teacher to the students but, on the contrary, needs to involve them actively to question realities and interactions with others, establishing the necessary bases to alter the reality in which they live. The need for these changes highlight the importance of Critical Literacy in the EFL classroom.

Narratives

Since it is our purpose for this study was to develop critical thinking by means of the foreign language, we used narratives as a tool for introducing the language. Narratives, according to Baldick (2008) are some fictional or true events told by a narrator to a narratee in a specific order that is established by the narrator. More in depth, Ryan (2007) asserts that the definition of narratives should be focused on the story within a discourse. She mentions that “As a mental representation, story is not tied to any particular medium, and it is independent of the distinction between fiction and nonfiction. A definition of narrative should therefore work for different media (though admittedly media do widely differ in their storytelling abilities), and it should not privilege literary forms.” (p. 26). Therefore, we conceived narratives as stories within a discourse that are not tied to a particular medium. For this reason, we selected visual and audiovisual

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narratives to work with the participants. Below, the reader will find the benefits of using narratives in the classroom as well as their importance in identity construction for a foreign language learner.

In his book, Campbell (2001) discusses the importance of narrative and quality books to develop children's literacy. According to him, narratives provide a means of organizing the way experiences are thought of, and made meaningful (p.32). In this way, we can use narratives applied to a different context and emphasize on this aspect in order to develop literacy drawing from students' experiences by studying stories and reacting to them on a personal level.

Furthermore, Campbell reports the discussion maintained by Whitehead (1987, cited by Campbell, 2001), where she mentions three main narratives benefits: skills, cultural heritage, and personal development. The former, allowing children to understand the structure of a story and being able to copy it in their own creations. The second, allowing children to "develop a richer mental model of the world" (Wells, 1986, p. 152). And the latter, where the author cites Kirby (1995), who numbers the many benefits stories can bring to students' narratives on a personal development level:

The power of narratives lies in the opportunities they provide for extending people's thinking and feeling in numerous ways including:

- their beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, values about life, situations and people;
- their thinking and responses to everyday life and complex issues;
- their concerns, fear, pain, growing up, feelings and compassion for others;
- their relationships with other people;

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- their knowledge of and responses to both their own culture and the culture of others;
- their imagination, enjoyment and satisfaction;
- their abilities to predict, question, hypothesize about situations and people;
- the power to create and shape through their own stories;
- the opportunity to talk to adults and peers about stories in an atmosphere which is collaborative, supportive and “risk free” (pp. 7-8)

Although these elements are meant for children’s literacy development, every single one of them can be applied to a greater, much deeper level on a more mature student and in a classroom, where the students have the opportunity to reflect on their personal development up to that point, and enrich it by discussing and analyzing their partners’.

One of the most important problems when a student is learning a foreign language, according to Pavlenko (2001), is that Non-Native Speakers tend to think that they need to access the foreign community to apprehend the language and to validate their professional and personal identities. Consequently, most learners tend to feel marginalized and rejected in the process. Regarding this issue, Schiffrin (1996) mentions that “narrative, self, identity, gender, family, and speech all act as a resource for the display of self and identity” (p. 167). Thus, the opportunity to define identity through narratives is crucial to overcome this complication.

2.1. Review of the research on Narratives and Critical Literacy

During the review of state of the art, we paid special attention to the research reports and the thesis that appear in Table 1.

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Table 1. Comparison of research reports on Narratives and Critical Literacy

Author, year	Problem or issue	Population and length of study	Research method	Results
Megawati, Anugerahwati. (2012)	The implementation of comic strips in teaching writing.	31 students from a language program of MAN Bangil. Applied in four sessions between July the 15th and July the 25th.	Action Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students' abilities to write narrative texts improved through the implementation of comic strips in the classroom. - Students' skills to select proper grammar, vocabulary and punctuation increased.
Fatemeh Mohammad Jafari, Alireza Ameri, Ghafar Tajalli, & Parhoon Rajeian. (2013)	The Effect of Critical Reflection on EFL Learners' Narrative Writing.	Five Iranian teenagers pre-intermediate EFL learners. Four months.	Ethnographic analysis of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learners became more autonomous. -Students' scores generally increased and they became aware of how powerfully they could manifest their thought in their narrative writing.
Mansoor Tavakoli, Salva Shirinbakhsh & Mohsen Rezazadeh. (2013)	The effect of cultural background knowledge on reading comprehension at inference and literal levels.	Sixty intermediate level EFL learners. (Length not specified)	Experimental study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students showed a better literal comprehension and inference when reading a foreign text with nativized words.

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Ghazanfari, Mohammad. (2011)	The role of visualization in reading comprehension and recalling of short stories.	Fifty undergraduate, junior, EFL students. (Length not specified)	Experimental study	- Students who participated in visualization activities as drawing characters or settings, showed a better level of understanding and recall of short stories.
(Fahim&Kamali, 2011)	The Relationship between Critical Thinking Ability of EFL Learners and Their Resilience Level Facing Unfamiliar Vocabulary Items in Reading.	63 male and female students. Intermediate English level. Above 18 years old. Seven sessions	Empirical investigation. Control groups.	-The levels of critical thinking had significant effect on the scores of the subjects on resilience scale. -The levels of critical thinking had significant effect on the subjects' reading ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items. -The levels of resilience had significant effect on the subjects' reading ability of texts with unfamiliar vocabulary items.
Fahim, Mansoor, & Sa'eepour (2011)	The Impact of Teaching Critical Thinking Skills on Reading Comprehension of EFL Learners	60 intermediate students. 8 sessions.	Experimental and control groups.	-A significant difference between the two groups on reading comprehension tests. However, difference on critical thinking test was non-significant. -Teaching critical thinking skills in EFL context can improve language learning

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<p>Faber, Günter (2012)</p>	<p>Measuring self-perceptions of oral narrative competencies and anxiety in the EFL context.</p>	<p>256 EFL students. 9th graders aged 14 - 15 years old. (Length not specified)</p>	<p>Qualitative study.</p>	<p>-Self-perceptions of narrative competencies could be clearly differentiated from the overall English self-concept variable.</p>
<p>Mohammad Reza Hashemi, Reza Zabihi. (2012)</p>	<p>Does Critical Thinking Enhance EFL Learners' Receptive Skills?</p>	<p>Ninety-six female Intermediate EFL learners. (Length not specified)</p>	<p>Mixed research</p>	<p>-Critical thinking is a crucial factor in explaining EFL learners' high proficiency levels. -Logical interpretation may be of prime importance for developing receptive skills like listening and reading.</p>
<p>Zuluaga Cifuentes, Yaneth. (2009) M.A. thesis</p>	<p>To encourage students to set up their life project through critical literacy classroom practices.</p>	<p>10th grade. IED Costa Rica (Bogotá) 32 students. Aged 15 - 18. 8 months.</p>	<p>Qualitative Study.</p>	<p>-Students progressively moved to a deeper analysis and finally they used extrapolation. -Students became aware that all texts convey values and ideologies. -Students were more conscious about their potential for social consequences.</p>
<p>Quintero Dueñas, Arianne. (2011) M.A. thesis</p>	<p>Development of visual literacy skills through movie-forums.</p>	<p>37 basic level female students. (Length not specified)</p>	<p>Descriptive - interpretative study</p>	<p>- Movie forums addressing social issues is a complete tool in EFL classrooms to provoke emotions and spark students to address socio critical discussions, comparisons and reflections.</p>

2.2. Discussion

The analysis of the articles above and research-based studies, enabled us to see the connections between the two topics that we want to inquire in. Furthermore, they allowed us to eliminate any bias or preconception we may have had. The results obtained by the reviewed authors gave us insights of how the topic of our interest has been worked on, and how to take into account several variables in our study. Displaying the information that will guide our research project in an annotated bibliography format, enabled us to arrive to conclusions based on the facts, and to link the information in an accurate way that helped us see how to build our construct in a proper way. Reading through these studies also helped us to identify the patterns and discrepancies that often take place in EFL studies on our subject of interest. Reflecting on such discrepancies helped us redirect some assumptions and errors we were overlooking in the past and have put us in the right direction.

As previously stated, we have discovered that our purposes are closely related to those exposed in the projects mentioned above but regarding our own context and participants. This allowed us to think that our objectives and intentions are part of a global issue within the context of TEFL and our contribution may help researchers, teachers and students from diverse contexts to advance in the pursuit of new knowledge and modern debates.

The research methods mentioned in the studies (action research, experimental study and group discussions) helped us to decide developing our project on the action research method. Moreover, the techniques used to apply narratives and critical literacy in the classrooms were also helpful as they provided us with ideas to implement in the sessions, which lead to more data

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collection instruments during the process. This data needed to be analyzed properly, so we could apply the mechanisms and tools used by the authors of the cited projects to get accurate and reliable results.

Finally, results shown above demonstrate that both narratives and critical literacy could be essential elements to enhance students' abilities to think critically and communicate in English as well. This information motivated us as we realized that we could intervene and generate positive effects in our students' learning process to later on expose those results to other researchers or teachers who could use our work as their basis to help more students, contributing to the perpetuation and renovation of concepts and applications within the English classrooms.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter, we discuss the type of research we chose to develop our project, namely, Qualitative Research. We also describe the research method applied, Action Research, and the general and specific objectives we wanted to achieve at the end of the study. The reader will also find the procedures and instruments that were used during the intervention, and the setting and participants of our study. Finally, we discuss the theories that supported the validity and reliability as well as the ethical issues of our investigation.

Type of Research

This project followed a qualitative type of research, commented by Creswell (2007) as one that includes the paradigms, set of beliefs and worldviews of the researchers to conduct the study. We chose this type of research because we consider that the development of Critical Literacy requires the analysis and interpretation of students' opinions, comments, reflections and proposals about their personal experiences and from their unique perspectives. In relation to this, Shank (2002) remarked that in this type of research the researchers try to understand how others make sense of their experience, this characteristic of qualitative research coincides with our vision of what a research should address. A qualitative research approach, allows us to understand how students develop Critical Literacy when analyzing the instruments for data collection, namely, teachers' journals, students' artifacts and interviews.

3.1 Type of study

The type of study we decided to use for the purpose of this project is action research. (Bradbury & Reason, 2001) define action research as a participatory and democratic process which aims to generate practical solutions and knowledge on behalf of personal growth and social flourishing, by the use of theory and practice as well as action and reflection. This type of study allows the researchers to seek for relevant knowledge which can be used for individual and communities' well-being and the pursuit for social changes. John Shotter (2009) asserts that research in fields as education cannot be developed in a value-free way as it occurs with natural sciences. Then, action research has the potential power to enhance participants in the creation of answers for problems related to their specific contexts and lifestyles (Stringer, 2004). This type of project would be not possible by individual efforts; the contribution of multiple participants is mandatory to achieve the proposed objectives. Referring to this characteristic, Kasl (2002) mentions that collaboration is a key element to obtain greater results. Their fieldwork demonstrated that individuals got to appreciate how their interaction with others created a greater power than the one emerging from individual endeavors.

We selected this type of study because reading and writing of narratives, and Critical Literacy development are tightly connected to social changes, democratic decisions and active involvement of the participants. Learners with Critical Literacy skills question themselves about the texts they read every day and the purposes they have in order to criticize them and respond accordingly to their thoughts and ideas. Action research is also appropriated as it focuses in small communities and their contexts. This project was developed with a specific group and most of the activities were proposed for students to reflect about their experiences and the contexts in

which they grow up. Therefore, the justification for this work, the constructs integrated and hence the objectives presented throughout this paper were approached using an action research design.

3.2 Research Method

The methodology of application of the action research design varies depending on the author and the model proposed. Lewin K. (1946, 1948) proposes a four stages model for action research which include planning, acting, observing and reflecting. (Ebbutt, 1985) adds an important contribution highlighting the importance of feedback between every stage of the process. From a similar point of view, (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002) proposes an eight-step model for the method:

1. Review your current practice.
2. Identify an aspect that you wish to improve.
3. Imagine a way forward in this.
4. Try it out.
5. Monitor and reflect on what happens.
6. Modify the plan in the light of what has been found, what has happened, and continue.
7. Evaluate the modified action.
8. Continue until you are satisfied with that aspect of your work (e.g. repeat the cycle).

We took the decision of following the models presented above (Lewin in general and McNiff in depth) because they fit the needs of our project for analyzing thoroughly the type of texts and activities we presented to the students and how they had to be improved for the following lessons.

3.3 Research Question

The research question we wanted to approach in this project is “How may Basic English level students develop Critical Literacy with the use of narratives in the EFL class?” This is a qualitative question in which we used a *wh* starter to highlight our focus on the development process of the students. We also included the population and the two main constructs of the proposal. We modified the question several times to make it clear, not biased and interesting for the readers and manageable for us, avoiding overgeneralizations and style errors. The question was approached during the entire process of investigation and it is closely related to the main and specific objectives of the inquiry.

3.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this project were selected according to the purposes and motivations which started the investigation. Thus, they attempt to promote personal and social changes in the participants besides generating practical knowledge for academic communities. The objectives were a fundamental part of the process; a great portion of the rest of the work was deduced from them. They have a direct connection to the research question and the research design, and they also have a participant oriented approach, it means that teachers and students were the members of the community who developed the process to accomplish the aspirations.

3.4.1. General Objective

Our general objective is to trace the development of critical literacy in an EFL classroom through students' personal narratives. We want to be informed about the information we collected in regards of learners' Critical Literacy development using narratives to wonder about themselves and the world surrounding them. Moreover, we wanted to highlight the importance of the action research model and how it guided our work in the classroom.

3.4.2. Specific Objectives

The two specific objectives that we selected were chosen under the idea of them as partial elements to achieve the general objective but also because they remain as independent and important issues which should be approached to prompt personal and community growth. These two objectives are to identify the role of narratives in promoting critical literacy and to foster students' social empowerment in the EFL classroom.

3.5 Research Procedures / Instruments

In the following table we present the work schedule we followed, the instruments we used, the participants in each section, the issues we approached and the frequency of each procedure:

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Table 2. Procedures/Instruments for Data Collection

Date	Instrument	Who	What	How Often
Sept	Survey	13 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Personal experiences · Analysis of texts 	Cycle 1
Oct	Design of three units	Teacher-researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Feminism · Social Injustice - Environment 	Cycle 2
Sep - Nov	Artifacts	10 - 20 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The Hero's Journey · The Bechdel Test · Personal Experience · Posters · Group discussion · The Garden of Earthly Delights · Before the Flood Movie 	Cycle 3
Sep - Nov	Journals	Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Description of experiences in the classroom. 	Cycle 3
Apr - May	Interviews	6 Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Pilot Interview · Five interviews of 11 questions 	Cycle 4

Table 2 presents the description of the procedures and instruments we used for collecting our data and the way in which we used them to gather the data. These are: A survey, the design of the classes, students' artifacts, teacher's journals and interviews.

According to Burns (2010) a survey or questionnaire is ideal for gathering data from several participants in a short amount of time. Moreover, Burns mentions three types of information that

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a researcher can obtain from this tool: *factual or demographic, behavioral, attitudinal*. In the case of our study, both behavioral (what the population does, or did in the past) and attitudinal (attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests and values) factors were looked into, allowing us to understand students' initial position regarding writing and critical literacy. With the purpose of offering our participants a broad range of responses, we applied a Likert Scale, which is the most common and allows the participant to state the extent to which they agree or disagree with something (Burns, 2010). This instrument was applied at the initial stage of our study.

Subscribing to the Action Research method we undertook, another instrument selected for data collection was the teacher's journal. This instrument helped us record the events that happened in the classroom (Burns, 2010) and "they are extremely useful though as a way of capturing significant reflections and events in an ongoing way" (Burns, 2010, p. 89). Moreover, the teacher's journal enabled us as teachers-researchers to capture the reflections, ideas, insights, etc. about the teacher's practice (Burns, 2010). For such reason, complementing the information obtained from the students' point of view with our perceptions on the development of the classes provided a bigger, more detailed picture of the phenomena.

Finally, in order to gather evidence on the students' process from beginning to end, collecting students' artifacts such as written pieces, played a major role in the process of gathering and analyzing data, since as Burns (2010) asserts, these kinds of documents can also become a means to identifying key issues or provide surprising feedback. These were collected each class as students developed workshops and/or answered questions based on a text.

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This research project attempted to generate practical knowledge about students' Critical Literacy development with the use of narratives and aimed to prompt participants' reflection and active participation in processes of social change for better conditions for every individual.

3.6 Setting

This proposal was carried out in the public university Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, located in La Macarena neighborhood, in the center of Bogotá. The mission of the university is to democratize the access to knowledge in order to guarantee, in the name of society and with participation of the State, the social right to a Superior Education with an excellence criterion, equity and competitiveness through the generation and diffusion of knowledge with autonomy and vocation towards a sociocultural development in order to contribute to the progress of the city, the region of Bogotá, and the country. In addition, the university's vision is to be recognized both nationally and internationally for its excellence in the construction of knowledge and high-impact research for the solution of human development issues and sociocultural transformation (Universidad Distrital, n.d).

We consider that the mission and vision of the university are parallel to our study, since our purpose was also to foster the generation of knowledge so that students could contribute to society as agents of change.

3.7 Population and Participants

The population selected for this project was a group of students attending the Basic English II subject from the second semester of the Bachelor in Arts, Major in English program of

the Faculty of Sciences and Education, during the afternoon shift. There were 18 students in total: 8 females and 10 males, whose ages ranged from 17 to 23 years old. However, the classes had an average attendance of 12 students each class. In order to select the participants for the study, we took into account the students who had attended most of the classes, and therefore provided a complete source of data for a thorough analysis, and those who agreed to sign a consent form in which they gave us authorization to use their answers and artifacts on condition that we do not disclose their names and personal information.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

In order to avoid biased conclusions, we verified that each instrument could reflect properly the results of the implementation. As Yin claims, “in research, the principle pertains to the goal of seeking at least three ways of verifying or corroborating a particular event, description, or fact being reported by a study.” (Yin, 2011, p. 81). In this way, the selected information sought to have a description of the event from a global point of view (teacher’s journal), to have an insight to the students’ views on the event (students’ artifacts), and to corroborate the interpretations made on the students’ point of view through their work by interviewing them. Yin follows this idea by commenting:

If you saw an event with your own eyes (a direct observation), and it was reported to you by someone else who was there (a verbal report)—and it was described in a similar manner by a later report written by yet someone else (a document)—you would have considerable confidence in your reporting of that event. (2011, p.81)

The procedure described above is known as triangulation, this is a navigation principle in which the precise location of an object is calculated by using the intersection of three different reference

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points (Yardley, 2009, p. 239, cited by Yin, 2016, p. 87). Thus, by comparing the three sources of information collected with each instrument, we were able to triangulate our data in order reach plausible conclusions. As Golafshani (2003) explains, “triangulation is typically a strategy (test) for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings” this is complemented by Mathison (1988, cited by Golafshani, 2003, p. 603) when he asserts that “triangulation has risen an important methodological issue in naturalistic and qualitative approaches to evaluation [in order to] control bias and establishing valid propositions because traditional scientific techniques are incompatible with this alternate epistemology.” Since we carried out a qualitative type of research, we found it necessary to triangulate our data in order to achieve reliable results.

Additionally, as Stenbacka (2001, cited by Golafshani, 2003, p. 603) stresses, “the quality of a research is related to generalizability of the result and thereby to the testing and increasing the validity or trustworthiness of the research”. Therefore, providing a detailed description of our population and using material that is readily available was a matter of importance in this project in order to provide the reader with the necessary information that would enable them to implement this project in a different context. This is further analyzed by Yin (2011, p. 78) when he affirms: “the validity issue is not limited to a study’s findings. The issue even pertains to the sheer description of a field event or of a participant’s views.” For this reason, we described in detail the events of the classroom in the teachers’ journals, and kept an account of students’ views through their artifacts and interviews.

3.9 Ethical Issues

In regards to the ethical issues, we developed the entire process taking into account the participants' wellbeing. For that reason, their names were not revealed as we used pseudonyms in the transcriptions of the interviews and the data analysis. Moreover, we carried out a reliable and valid research project using three instruments to compare and contrast the obtained information. This process of *triangulation*, as an internal validity resource, allowed us to carry out an accountable investigation.

We had the opportunity to talk to the participants' English teacher about the objectives of the project as well as the procedures, instruments and activities involved in the intervention. Additionally, we discussed with the students about the classes and the topics that were going to be approached, and the informed consent they agreed to sign and comply (See annex 1). The informed consent included the rights to use anonymously the answers from the interviews and the artifacts in published papers as well as in dissertations or conferences along with their rights to withdraw from the process or to erase any information provided if they wanted to do it. The participants had also the right to ask us about the study at any moment looking for further clarification and information. Thus, the researchers' contact numbers and emails were written at the end of the informed consent.

CHAPTER IV

PEDAGOGICAL DESIGN

This chapter describes the pedagogical intervention that we implemented, focusing on the approach, methodology and objectives, as well as the description of the activities developed in each class. Besides, it describes the teachers' and learners' roles, the achievement indicators, and the assessment principles.

In order to understand how basic-level English students develop critical literacy with the use of narratives, we designed three topics for implementation: *Feminism, Social Justice* (divided in: economic inequality, police abuse, and forced displacement), and *Environment*. Two classes were invested in each topic throughout six sessions with a frequency of two times a week. The theory that supports our pedagogical intervention is Critical pedagogy, which seeks to transform society through education and take steps towards social change (Akbari, 2008). Likewise, Baynham (2006) relates the classroom context to the wider social context as he believes that what is learned in the classroom should have an impact outside of it. These principles of Critical pedagogy were taken into the EFL classroom and served as a guideline to carry out our practice when designing and implementing our intervention.

Furthermore, according to Freire, Critical Pedagogy is closely related to dialogue, as he claims: "dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing." (Freire, 1972). This idea is also supported by Hones, D (2002. p. 163) when he suggests that "Dialogical process uses students' linguistic and cultural understanding as sources of knowledge and motivates social participation. As an integral part of critical pedagogy,

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dialogue can engage teachers and students in an interactive exchange about their lives, where social, economic, political and cultural issues are addressed critically and an opportunity to challenge the power relationships within the community is provided”.

Bearing these definitions of Critical pedagogy in mind, we designed an intervention that addressed social issues that were relevant for the students, and promoted dialogue within the classroom, with the intention of encouraging students to take action outside the EFL classroom and not only participating in a class debate.

4.1 Instructional Objectives

Learners worked with narratives and they were able to:

- 4.1.1 Formulate their thoughts and ideas through writing from a personal point of view.
- 4.1.2 Explore others' ideas and generate opinions.
- 4.1.3 Analyze theories regarding the same topics and compare their perspectives.
- 4.1.4 Expand their understanding of concepts through the analysis of different kinds of narratives.
- 4.1.5 Articulate their ideas in a written form using and understanding English expressions.
- 4.1.6 Construct rich narratives in which they express their ideas in a critical way.

4.2 Instructional Design

The objective of this instructional design was to give students a meaningful content in the EFL classroom with the intention of promoting critical literacy by encouraging students to take and defend a position in and outside of the classroom. The material used for the lessons consisted of short narratives which were not necessarily written narratives, but mostly visual and/or audio-visual narratives, the follow up activities were designed with the purpose of tracing how basic-level English students could develop critical literacy with such narratives.

We focused on three topics in our study: Topic 1: Feminism, Topic 2: Social Injustice (divided in: economic inequality, police abuse, and forced displacement), and Topic 3: Environment, for each topic we designed two classes. As this was an action research study, the stages of the implementation were designed based on the results obtained from the previous stage, with the feedback that the implementation of the first topic provided, we made improvements to the consequent topics in order to improve the quality of our information gathering process. The following table mentions the topics, objectives, and activities that were carried out in each class:

Table 3. Pedagogical Implementation Topics

	Session	Topic	Objectives	Activity
TOPIC 1 FEMINI SM	Session 1	Concept of Feminism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand the meaning of feminism. - To express and adopt ideas on feminism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing about feminism with no previous information. - To use English expressions such as Opinion Sentence Starters. - To watch and analyze a video about feminism in the workplace. - Sharing personal opinions on the topic.

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	Session 2	Film Analysis: -The hero's journey. -The Bechdel test.	- To determine the nature of a story through <i>The hero's journey</i> . - To analyze feminism in media.	- Explanation about the theory of a hero's journey and the Bechdel test. - Explanatory video about the hero's journey. - Workshop about both topics. - Discussion about the Bechdel test.
TOPIC 2 SOCIAL JUSTICE	Session 3	Social Justice: -Economic inequality -Police abuse -Forced displacement	- To identify different manifestations of social injustice. - To relate social injustice to a familiar context.	- Drawing and explaining cases of Social Injustice - Interpreting and analyzing cases of social injustice: Economic inequality, Police abuse, Forced displacement.
	Session 4	Social Justice: - What, How, When, Where, Why	- To analyze different points of view regarding social injustice. - To provide solutions for these issues.	- Presenting the answers to different questions about each type of Social Injustice - Evaluating each case of social injustice in order to provide solutions.
TOPIC 3 ENVIRONMENT	Session 5	Environment: - Disturbed: Another way to Die - The Garden of Earthly Delights	- To accurately describe a certain narrative. - To interpret narratives by drawing connections to the real world.	- Observing the lyrics and video of the song Another way to die by Disturbed and giving an interpretation. - Observing the painting 'The Garden of Earthly Delights' in detail and interpreting its meaning. - Establishing a relation between the painting and real life by answering guiding questions.
	Session 6	Environment. - Documentary: Before the Flood (2016).	- To watch the presented narrative from a critical point of view. - To provide solutions to environmental issues.	- To write an informed paper providing solutions to environmental issues.

The first topic that students developed consisted of two classes. The first class was about understanding the concept of feminism and the students' point of view on the matter. This was carried out by having students work individually on a worksheet with several questions about the

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meaning of feminism and the students' experiences with it, and then sharing and discussing their answers with their classmates. Additionally, this activity aided us in understanding how students consider feminism is portrayed on media. This lesson provided us with the first impressions students had about this concept before developing material that would allow them to better understand the concept. Finally, students analyzed a video about gender inequality in the workplace and answered some questions that sought to explore their thoughts on the video.

The second lesson about feminism was designed with the objective of expanding on the discussion about female representation in mass media, which was one of the topics that caught students' attention during the first lesson. In order to complement their knowledge and skills for the analysis of narratives, students studied a template for understanding tales called *The Hero's Journey* (Campbell J., 1949). It traces a path that most main characters in fiction follow in order to fulfill the plot of the narrative. This path consists of three stages that a character goes through in order to become a hero: an initial stage in which we get familiar with the hero's setting (i.e, his home, town, family, friends), a second stage in which the hero faces a sudden threat (i.e. a villain threatening his setting, an upcoming catastrophe) that forces him to go on an adventure and fight several obstacles in order to become a better person and defeat the threat, leading him to the final stage in which the hero returns home transformed because of the journey.

Additionally, students wrote their opinions about *The Bechdel Test* (Bechdel, 1985) which states that a movie should have at least two women who talk to each other about something different from a man to be worth watching. After solving the workshop, we carried out a discussion regarding the different viewpoints of students on a video exemplifying *The Hero's Journey*, and the student's opinions about the role of females in mass media.

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In the third class, the topic was Social Justice. Students were asked to make groups and think of examples of social injustice, each group chose one case of social injustice and drew it in a poster. The posters were later described and interpreted by the students. Then, students were shown a number of pictures and were asked to describe them, each picture portrayed a case of social injustice. After having students discuss each picture, the teachers asked a number of questions about the pictures in order to arrive to a deeper analysis of each presented scenario.

For the fourth class, which was about Social Justice as well, students made groups and chose one of the three cases of social injustice dealt with in the previous class (i.e. economic inequality, police abuse, forced displacement). Then, a worksheet with several questions for taking a critical perspective on social issues was given to the groups. Their answers to the questions were shared in PowerPoint presentations and discussed in class. Finally, students were asked to discuss each issue in groups with the objective of coming up with solutions that can be applied in order to address social injustice in their contexts. The answers were registered in a piece of paper.

The fifth class had to do with the topic of environment. The participants were asked to see the music video of the song *Another Way to Die* by Disturbed and analyze the possible meaning of its lyrics. Then, we showed the class the painting *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Hieronymous Bosch, which represents the transition of humanity on earth from paradise to hell. Students described it and interpreted its meaning and connection to the topic. After this exercise, students developed a workshop in pairs about the painting which sought to allow students to share and discuss their partner's opinion about the meaning of the painting, the role of humans and animals, the contrasts and similarities of the painting with our reality and the intentions of the author when painting it. Then, based on the documentary *Before the Flood* (2016), directed by Fisher Stevens, about global warming, students were asked to write a paper in which they

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addressed the environmental issues and gave solution to them. The students had to write the paper individually by following the rubrics handed by the teachers, and hand it for a group discussion during the final class.

Critical Approach

The need for developing Critical Literacy in the EFL classroom is discussed by Farrallelli (2009) when she highlights the need for a critical way to approach reality in the globalized, 21st century world. One of the objectives of Critical Literacy is to question power relations, in which language, and more specifically discourse, are not neutral but rather assist the reproduction and conservation of such power relations (Farrallelli, 2009). Therefore, “dissecting meaning and deconstructing representations are possible ways in which power relations can be analyzed” (Farrallelli, 2009. p.27). Moreover, according to Pennycook, (2001, cited by Akbari 2008. p. 277) “any language is part of the wider semiotic system within which it was shaped and is infused with ideological, historical, and political symbols and relations”. This view of language encouraged us to adopt a critical approach in the EFL classroom.

Farrallelli (2009) argues that the analysis and deconstruction of texts -literary, but also audiovisual, photographic, advertising and even TV commercials-, are to be seen as “biased entities which offer just a partial interpretation of reality” (p. 27) and therefore students should analyze the assumptions behind the texts they are presented with. In order to engage our students in this endeavor, we brought into the classroom a variety of meaningful texts (photographs about police abuse, economic inequality and forced displacement; movies, commercials and T.V. Shows extracts about feminism and a song, a painting and a documentary about environmental

issues) that could be analyzed from different points of view, promoting dialogue and tolerance in the educational environment.

4.3 Teacher's Role

In the planning stage of our pedagogical intervention, we kept in mind that a critical approach should contemplate pedagogy as transformative and looking for social changes. It should also highlight the importance of teachers and students' social investigation and critique while challenging the preconceived paradigms and problematizing thoughts, behaviors and practices as not believing entirely in "givens".

Freire & Macedo (1987) invite teachers to break the conventional model of classroom lectures and turn it into a more dialogical space, where both teachers and students acknowledge the other's' knowledge and experiences and use that as a means for constructing knowledge and learning. As they explain, "teaching and learning are dialogic in character, which depends on the awareness of oneself as a knower" (Freire & Macedo, 1987: p.12).

Moreover, they make an invitation for teachers to consider *recognition* and *reinvention*. Recognizing means reading and understanding the world, as well as acknowledging the learner's knowledge and respecting such knowledge. On the other hand, reinvention means to evaluate, to interpret the interpretations and reflect upon one's own reflections, that is, to approach teaching and learning with criticism (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

In this sense, our own approach to the language classroom should focus not on the students' lack of knowledge, but in their existing knowledge as a building tool for seeing the language not

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as a foreign, completely unknown object, but as a cultural feature to be analyzed and understood and, criticized (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Language learning is not only about what teachers teach but also about the productive meanings that students, in all of their cultural and social differences, bring to the classroom as part of the production of knowledge and the construction of personal and social identities.

Thus, our role as teachers consists on providing students with the necessary tools and an appropriate environment to carry out discussions and identity constructions in the English class. Topics such as Feminism, Social Justice, and Environment, promote dialogue and urge students to share their thoughts and opinions, and reflect on them. By presenting these topics in the class, we guided our students towards a critical approach in their educational and social contexts.

4.4 Learner's Role

Critical pedagogy switches the role of teachers and students as it allows students to empower themselves and take action working actively and collaboratively in dialogic environments for achieving common-interest objectives. The projects and activities proposed in the course were locally-situated and socially-mediated as the context and the particular traditions regarding linguistic, social and cultural factors conceded the students the opportunity to gain meaningful knowledge. These projects and activities also provided students with strategies for learning English and for taking a critical stand in their lives. The possibility of writing their own narratives, according to their unique experiences, broadens the perspective of students as it legitimizes individual identities and enables them to reflect constantly about their use of the language for communicative purposes and the critical skills apprehended during the intervention.

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A foreign language classroom should serve as a means for getting students to know a different culture and then, based on the differences and similarities with their own culture, take a critical stance and a political stand, where they see their culture and vision as part of themselves and themselves as part of a cultural and political context. To achieve this, students participated in activities of reading and questioning sources of information, they used the language to analyze relations of power and to consider multiple perspectives over the same event or situation. Thus, language was used to express opinions, feelings and ideas as well as to tell experiences, anecdotes and life events to build their personal narratives.

Students worked with the readings, workshops, images and videos proposed in class, using their different skills in the target language while focusing on the development of their critical literacy with the use of narratives. Thus, students were active critical thinkers seeking for a change in their reality.

4.5 Assessment

We assessed the learners based on their pieces of writing and their participation during the classes in which they showed their use of English expressions, vocabulary and their level of involvement and interest in the task being developed.

Moreover, evaluation considered quantitative and qualitative aspects since the head-teacher required us to give several grades to students in each term of the semester and qualitative assessment was required for students to identify, analyze and correct their mistakes and reinforce

their strengths. Therefore, elements such as participation, punctuality, responsibility, individual and group work were essential to assess their processes.

4.6 Indicators of achievement

It is important to recall the indicators that guided our deconstruction of students' learning process. In terms of the language, students were able to demonstrate use of forms within their narratives for stating opinions, addressing others' ideas by agreeing or disagreeing, connecting ideas, understanding others' use of the language and their intentions behind certain forms, and using the concepts seen in class.

Other criteria for evaluating achievements had to do with the critical component of the students' comments and written tasks. These were analyzed in terms of students' understanding and use of the appropriate concepts in the analysis of the narratives, their application of critical thinking skills, and their employment of the principles, dimensions, and overall conception of critical literacy. We also evaluated students based on their involvement and interest in sharing their thoughts, and acknowledging the importance of developing critical literacy not only for EFL class purposes, but for other contexts as well.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, we will describe the analysis of the information gathered during the data collection process which sought to answer the main research question of the study, namely: How may Basic Level English Students develop Critical Literacy with the use of narratives? This chapter will be presented in the following order: The process of data collection, the procedures for data analysis and the identified categories.

Process of data collection

The process of data collection was carried out at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, in the Basic English II course, during six classes with a frequency of three hours a week. Using an action research methodology, data was collected from the application of the following instruments: Students' artifacts collected from the activities carried out in each lesson, teacher journals which were collected and written respectively during the six interventions, and interviews which were applied, recorded and transcribed after the conclusion of the sessions.

Procedures for data analysis

Based on the information gathered from the instruments mentioned above, we were able to triangulate the data by comparing, contrasting and complementing evidences in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomena. The procedures we followed in this analysis were based on the grounded approach (Corbin and Strauss, 1990), because this methodology allowed us to

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assume an inductive posture and to attempt to derive meaning from the data, as well as to address questions about the participants' actions and consequences.

We decided to use three folders to organize the information gathered from the three instruments, namely: 1) Students' artifacts, 2) Teacher journals and 3) Interviews. This strategy allowed us to develop the division, analysis and comparison of the results efficiently. We searched in the students' artifacts and interviews the main concepts used in the classes to analyse how they used and understood them. We also used the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy to track the development of the six critical thinking skills proposed by the author (remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate and create) in each of the three topics addressed in class and finally, we compared the information with the revised theories, principles and dimensions of Critical Literacy.

Categories

Due to the amount of information from the instruments, we decided to categorize it into smaller sets. During the process of analysis, by reading and re-reading we realized that phenomena could be grouped into three different categories that helped us to answer the inquiry question. The categories resulting from the grounded data analysis are presented in the following table:

Table 4. Categories for Data Analysis

QUESTION	CATEGORIES
<p>How may Basic Level English Students develop Critical Literacy with the use of narratives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Assessed use of concepts. · Building up a critical world. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feminism - Social Justice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic Inequality - Police Abuse - Forced Displacement - Environment · Achieving Critical Literacy.

Category One: Assessed use of concepts

We named the first category after realizing that students used specific concepts in order to express their ideas. Those concepts were related to the topics we dealt with in class. *Assessed use of concepts* is about the conscious and reflective use of concepts to avoid their distortion and the ulterior purpose of maintaining a particular viewpoint, position, or to control or manipulate the thinking of others (Paul, R. & Elder, L., 2007).

This assessed use of concepts helped students to:

- Identify the meaning of a concept, understand it and exemplify it.

For instance, when one student was asked to define the term feminism, he said:

“I think the feminism is making the women equal to the men, it means both have the same opportunities. On the other hand, the people nowadays think the feminism is think they are superior than men.”

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(Students' Artifacts, Feminism worksheet)

This was the definition given by the student, which was later discussed and shared with his classmates' definitions to gain a better understanding of it. Furthermore, students were asked to think of examples of feminism, which were also discussed later. The student mentioned above made the following remark on the media:

“Nowadays in the social media there are women that put photos naked supporting the movement. I think this is not the way to do this.”

(Students' Artifacts, Feminism worksheet)

This and other examples were socialized and analyzed under the perspective of feminism and its definition. By doing this, some misinterpretations were addressed and students were able to settle the foundations for a more accurate viewpoint on the subject.

- Identify the main ideas used in a speech made by them or others

When approaching the environmental topic, students were asked to identify the main ideas used by Hieronymous Bosch in his painting “The Garden of Earthly Delights”. The comments made by the students were depicted in the teachers' journal as follows:

“As asserted by students, in the first panel humans are cohabitating with animals and god-like figures and there are just a few of them not much is happening. In the second panel, humans are overpopulating the Earth, and strange structures appear in the setting; humans appear to use animals as a means of transport and as food; students also stressed the odd relationships and interactions among humans. For the last panel, students expressed that it represented a sort of apocalypse where animals rebelled against humans and extra-terrestrial beings invaded the Earth.”

(Teachers' Journal N. 5)

Students also had to analyze different aspects of the painting and give these aspects an interpretation, with questions like:

1. What are the role of the animals?
2. What are the roles of the people?

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Two of the students answered:

1. "In the first stage they are company for us, in the second one they become like an object, and in the end they are like taking revenge."

2. "The people are like a destruction object."

(Students' Artifacts, The Garden of Delights workshop)

By doing this exercise, students had the opportunity to share their ideas with a classmate and arrive to an agreed conclusion in order to provide an answer referring to the motivations behind Bosch's work.

- Reflect about the concepts they use in any situation

When doing the interview, we asked the participants "Do you feel that you use terms such as feminism and environmental issues in a more confident way after the classes?" And one of them answered:

"Yes, of course I do, because we went beyond and it was not only about mentioning the topic and that's it, but we carried out debates and debates in English, most of the class was developed in English. The fact that it was in English made us ask ourselves about words such as women (although it is basic). That made us keep the language in mind because we were looking for the definition in both languages and likewise, it gave us a better judgment when using them."

(Interview N. 4)

This answer allowed us to realize that students were reflecting upon the terms they used in relation to their meaning in order to give an informed position during the debates. The situation of the class being mostly in English represented a challenge that made students look for the terms they usually use in their mother tongue but not as much in English, helping their memory and reinforcing their awareness of such concepts.

- Analyze and compare related but different concepts

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In the first session in which we presented the topic of feminism, the distinction among the terms misogyny, misandry, and feminism was explained, analyzed and compared as reflected in the teachers' journal:

“When talking about the difference between misogyny, misandry and feminism, we asked them if they knew why the terms in Spanish and English were different. For example, in Spanish, the term used for feminism is “Igualdad de género”. They answered that the term feminism portrays the fight of women for equal rights and opportunities whereas in Spanish it doesn't convey the same meaning.”

(Teachers' Journal N.1)

This was an important discussion that led students to distinguish the commonalities and differences that feminism encloses within its related terms.

- Use terms with care and precision

We were able to confirm that this aspect was fulfilled when asking one of the participants of the interview about the definition of feminism. He answered:

“Well, regarding feminism, it could be said that I learned basically that it is a fight not so much for achieving a superiority, but rather equality for women and we saw the disadvantage in terms of jobs or salary that many women get in countries like ours, so I think it is a fair fight”

(Interview N. 3)

Here we can see that the student was able to provide a precise definition he gained during the interventions.

- Recognize distortion of concepts to maintain a particular viewpoint or a set of beliefs.

Some students were capable of recognizing the distortion of the concept of feminism, arguing that it has been purposely misinterpreted to favor some interests. As some students stated:

“I think that that ideology is good, because the ladies are searching for equality, however there are some of them that confuse the [term] and search to be superior to men.”

“I think that is a good movement that has a reason to be, because the woman has been always denigrated in one way or another; the worst thing about this is the bad interpretation of the purposes of the feminism.”

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“In my opinion the feminism nowadays has lost its sense, it isn’t looking for equality, it is looking that the women are above men.”

(Students’ Artifacts, Feminism worksheet)

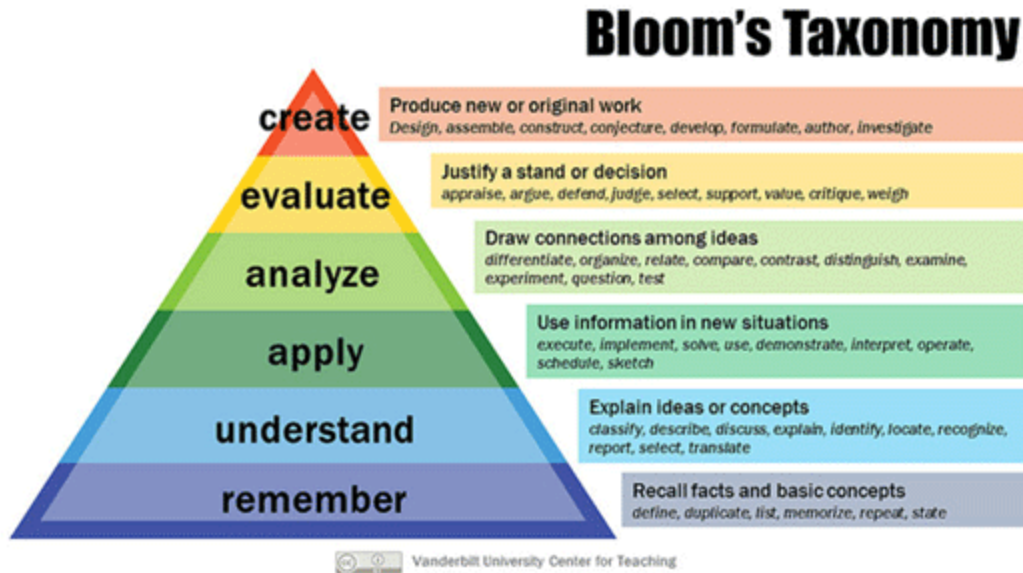
If we review the idea of Critical Literacy as the language use that questions the social construction of the human being, as said by Shor (1999), then the identification, understanding and use of concepts is essential to comprehend language and its social influence.

The use of this technique provided students a meaningful resource to analyze critically any given written or oral text and assimilate it in order to generate an opinion using accurate concepts to transmit their ideas.

Category Two: Building Up a Critical World

The second category has three sub-categories, namely: Feminism, Social Justice and Environment. We decided to create this category based on the students’ responses using concrete skills which are necessary to achieve Critical Literacy. Each sub-category corresponds to the topics that were addressed during the intervention. It was based on identifying the critical thinking skills of the revised taxonomy of Bloom (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) in the students’ artifacts. The next illustration provides a definition of each skill in a pyramid figure:

Figure 1. Bloom's revised taxonomy. (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)



In the following section, we will explain how each of the skills were addressed and developed during the interventions in the three units, namely, Feminism, Social Justice, and Environment. As shown in the illustration 1, each skill is built upon the previous one to consolidate the pyramidal figure. Although it may not be observable during our intervention, the last skill to achieve is to create and it involves the acquisition and control of the other five skills. We focused on them with the purpose of giving the students the grounds to create new or original work which is the ultimate skill proposed by Bloom (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Considering that autonomy is a key element on the Critical Literacy development, we expected students to apply the previous five skills to construct new ways of addressing these issues in their life, contributing to social problems' solutions.

Feminism

Students had the opportunity to dive into the concept of feminism and its nuances misogyny and misandry. *Feminism* referring to the defense of women's rights to achieve equality of the sexes, *misogyny* to the superiority of men over women and *misandry* to the superiority of women over men. We did this with the purpose of reflecting upon the current conception and interpretation of the movement taking into account what mass media (i.e. movies, T.V shows, commercials) presents and the subsequent points of view that it prompts.

According to Bloom's revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), the first skill to achieve is to **Remember**. In our intervention students had to write about previous experiences related to feminism. Participant 1 mentioned that:

"Lots of times when I lay back on a seat and I'm tired, a woman asks for the seat but I'm not talking about the seat for disabled or pregnant women because I just sit down on the red ones and they feel angry if I don't stand up but I think the gender equality is in all of the sense".

(Students' Artifacts, Feminism anecdote)

Here, participant 1 recalled a repetitive situation, which he related to feminism and shaped the vision he had of it. In this case, he saw it as an unfair use of the ideology by some people to benefit women and not to seek for equality. Likewise, Participant 3 when asked during the interview which of the Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) skills were applied during the intervention, commented the following:

"Remembering, with the topic of feminism at the moment of telling experiences where we could evidence it or identify inequalities."

(Interview N. 3)

The next skill is **Understand**. In order to address this skill, we explained the meaning of feminism and different but related terms such as misogyny and misandry. Participant 4

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answered during the interview that he knew the concept of feminism so we asked him to explain it. He said:

“Well, regarding feminism, you could say that I basically learned that it is a fight not so much for achieving superiority but equality for women and we saw the disadvantage when it comes to work or income that a lot of women receive in countries like ours so I think it is a fair enterprise (...).”

(Interview N. 4)

This statement allowed us to confirm that this participant had understood the concepts that we dealt with in class regarding feminism as we defined it as the defense of women’s rights to achieve equality of the sexes.

The third skill is *Apply*. Although our main aim with the intervention was to generate a shift of attitude and action in students towards real life situations so students could apply what they learned in the classroom. We needed to obtain students’ artifacts to ensure the application of gained knowledge in order to obtain tangible data of this skill. However, this endeavor did not give us the expected evidence. Afterwards, we corrected this issue in the second and third topics of the intervention, following the Action Research process that allowed us to evaluate results and make arrangements as needed, in this case, to collect evidence of the *Apply* skill.

The fourth skill is *Analyze*. Regarding feminism, students had to differentiate the terms feminism, misogyny and misandry, recognizing their particular characteristics. They had also to compare the ideas of the movement with the actual conceptions and practices that are commonly associated to feminism. In this regard, students mentioned several times throughout the course that women looking for benefits and privileges, like a seat in the public transportation, do not represent the original ideas of feminism. On the contrary, it is a current misconception of the movement and its objectives. For example, participant 4 mentioned:

“In my opinion the feminism nowadays has lost its sense, it isn’t looking for equality. It is looking for women being above men.
(Students’ Artifacts, Feminism worksheet)

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Here, we can see that the idea of feminism has been replaced with the one of misandry and it is harmful to all people. Participant 3 examined her familiar context to analyze a particular situation that represents precisely one of the major issues that feminism tries to solve: unequal salary. She mentioned:

“My aunt works as an engineer and her salary wasn’t equal to her work partners even when she works in the exact same thing than men. She talked to her boss and claimed that she had the same rights than her co-workers. They started to pay her the same”.

(Students’ Artifacts, Feminism worksheet)

This situation reflects an issue that many women face during their professional lives and the students were able to evidence it through their personal experiences.

The fifth skill is *evaluate*. After knowing the concept of feminism, the concerns about current society, their practices and beliefs regarding women and some of the particular situations that reflect the main problems, students were able to take a reflective position about it, considering their thoughts, the information provided and their partners’ opinions. For example, some students commented that feminism is only taken into account when a violent event occurs. As one participant mentioned:

“Feminism is a topic that nowadays not only affects women but also men and even more if we are in an environment like the Colombian one that is characterized or known for being somehow violent. Thus, I saw feminism superfluously because there was not a case of femicide. I think that when we see a femicide case is when people start talking about feminism, defending female rights. But before, when things are normal, we don’t see that and we don’t empower ourselves about this topic. Thus, the course helped us to keep it in mind and realize that we don’t need something transcendental to be taken into account.”

(Interview N. 5)

Therefore, we can see that the student took a clear position about feminism and reflected upon its relevance and exposition in today’s society, criticizing the fact that it is only important when a femicide takes place, arguing that it affects women and men and valuing the course for helping them to be aware and empowered over feminism.

Social Justice

Concerning this second unit, the topic of Social Justice was approached by analyzing three specific cases of Social Injustice, namely, Economic inequality, Police abuse, and Forced Displacement. Therefore, this section focuses on the activities and discussions that took place regarding each category.

Students were able to *remember*, state and define examples of social injustice by designing and drawing posters in which they portrayed their vision of particular situations which they thought were unfair. The class was divided into three groups. Each group had to choose and explain their drawing. The first group's poster portrayed a pacific social demonstration being aggressively intervened by the ESMAD, which is an anti-riot public force.

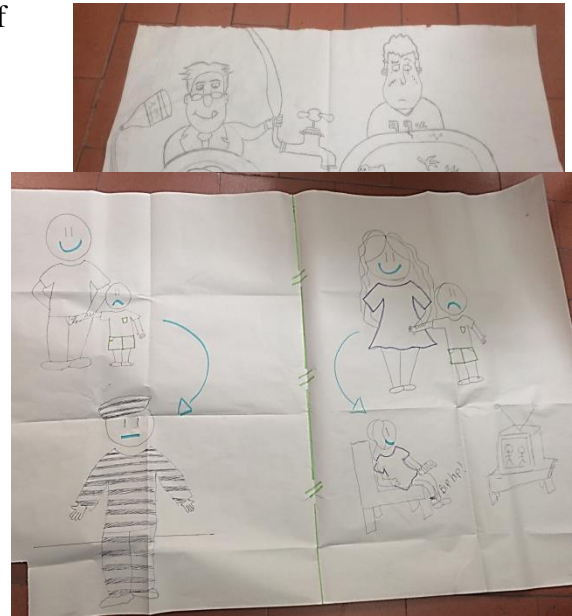


The second group's poster represented economic inequality by showing two men side by side, representing two opposite economic realities. One man is dressed up in a suit having a full roasted chicken and a glass of 'Casillero del Diablo' wine. In one of his hands, he is shortening the poor man's water supply. Next to him we can appreciate a poor man with the rich man's

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leftovers on his plate. He also has an almost empty glass of water. He is wearing a t-shirt with a 99% sign on his chest that represents the percentage of population that is in his situation.

The third group's poster rendered the unequal treatment that women and men receive by the system of justice in terms of the sentence. On the left side of the poster, students drew a man in prison due to child abuse, while on the right side of the poster, the students drew a woman sitting at home with no legal consequences for committing the same crime.



After designing and executing their ideas in the posters, each group came to the front of the classroom and explained in detail what they wanted to communicate with their drawings. In such ways, the other students were able to express and interpret the reason why such situations may be considered unjust, and then these ideas were confirmed and complemented by the authors of the poster. All of these posters resembled situations that students had seen in their lives and were recalled at the moment of addressing the topic of social injustice.

To strengthen the ability to *understand* students had to look at three images, each representing a type of social injustice. Students had to describe the picture and give it an interpretation. To propel the readers' comprehension of the three types of social injustice dealt with in class (economic inequality, police brutality and forced displacement), we decided to begin with the analysis of each picture giving them a definition.

Economic Inequality

We addressed the following definition in class: economic or income inequality is “a situation in which there is great disparity in income within a society” (Collins dictionary, n.d.). The selected picture for this issue was taken for a photographic contest against inequality named *Contrast* carried out by *Oxfam*, a charitable organization.

The picture portrayed a man carrying fruits in his bike, wearing low-cost clothes. In the background there is a billboard advertising a businessman in a suit flying



in first class. There was a discussion about this picture that was recorded in the teachers’ journal as follows:

“One student said that the man with the fruits could aspire to be in the position of the man in the airplane by hard work. Another student said that it looked like a meme in which two case scenarios are portrayed: Expectation vs. Reality. The expectation was the luxurious life of the man on the plane and the reality the harsh life conditions of the man carrying fruits. We asked students where they believed the situation was taking place and they answered that it was most likely to be India.”

(Teachers’ Journal N. 3)

Within the carried discussion we were able to compare and contrast the students’ opinions to arrive to the same conclusion about what the picture represented, achieving the understanding of the meaning of Economic inequality. Students recognized the different elements in the picture: the watermelons, the bike, the clothes both men were wearing and the billboard. They were able to describe the situation, explaining their point of view and discussing their interpretations with their classmates. They were also able to locate the possible setting of the scene recognizing the features of the characters and the setting.

Police Brutality

Police Brutality as explained by Reiss (1968) is usually understood as “the use of abusive language and seemingly unjustified field interrogations, but ‘the nub of the police-brutality issue seems to lie in police use of physical force’”.



Therefore, we decided to use an image from The Guardian Newspaper gallery about a protest of garment workers in Dhaka, Bangladesh, published in June 30 of 2010.

The next image showed a poor child being hit by a police officer while laying on the sidewalk. The picture was addressed as students had done before, a description and interpretations of the image were given. According to our entry in the journal, students participated:

“When interpreting this image, students said that the kid was being hit because he stole something. After getting this answer, we asked them if the situation was the child’s fault and they replied that it wasn’t because the kid was starving and he wanted something to eat.”

(Teachers’ Journal N. 3)

Students identified the situation and from there they were able to explain the possible reasons behind it, to recognize the different people and the roles they were playing in the image.

Forced Displacement

We approached this topic using the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (1999) definition of a displaced person. It is “(...) anyone who has been forced to migrate within the national boundaries, leaving aside her residence or her habitual economic



activities because either her life, her physical integrity or her freedom have been either violated or threatened by situations such as armed conflict, generalized violence, violation of human rights, and any other situation that may alter public order.”

The chosen image was taken from the online newspaper *Vanguardia.com* in an article concerning the forced displacement in Colombia.

The last image presented a group of four dark skinned people (a woman, a man and two children) walking down a muddy unpatched road in a rural area, carrying several bags. we were able to identify students’ understanding of the image by asking them to describe and interpret it as reported in journal:

“The first interpretation that students gave to this image was: “that is forced displacement, teacher”. The students guessed that the previous images were located in India whereas this image was situated in Colombia. They interpreted that this group of people was, in fact, a family that was forced to leave their home and the bags they were carrying contained their personal belongings. We asked them who could have been the responsible for their situation and they mentioned three possible options. The guerrillas, the “paramilitares” or the government. We also asked them were they thought the family was headed to and they concluded that probably they were going to Bogotá.”

(Teachers’ Journal N. 3)

Thus, students did describe correctly the happenings in the picture, identified the family members, located the setting in which the case was taking place. They also explained the

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possible reasons and agents involved in this particular event of social injustice. Therefore, we can conclude that students followed the appointed steps to develop the *Understanding* skill.

The third and fourth skills, *Apply* and *Analyze*, were undertaken by students when asked to answer a number of critical thinking questions. Students were divided by groups and asked to choose a set of questions in order to provide answers for each case of social injustice.

The group that addressed the issue of Economic Inequality, sought to answer the questions of *When* and *How*. As stated in their Power Point presentation, the answer to the question “When has [economic inequality] played a part in our history?” was:

“Economic inequality has always been a characteristic of nations throughout history, the fight for economic powers has caused that some people always have more [resources] than others.”

(Students’ Artifacts, Economic Inequality presentation)

As for the question of “How is this similar to our context?”, students argued:

“Colombia is one of the most unequal countries in the world. It has a tributary legislation that increases inequality more and more.”

(Students’ Artifacts, Economic inequality presentation)

The answers to these questions allowed us to ensure that the skills were developed by students as they demonstrated an implementation of their previous knowledge about these issues to answer the questions. Moreover, students were also able to compare economic inequality globally to their current Colombian context, examining the local legislations that contribute to the aggravation of the problem. Likewise, we could notice in the answers that students distinguished two opposite types of people according to their wealth, they identified that some people always have more resources than others and this generates a division amongst nations, frequently leading to conflict.

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The next group discussed the issue of Police Abuse, by answering the *What* and *Where* Critical Questions. The presentation given by the group allowed us to analyze their use of the *Apply* and *Analyze* skills. The answer to the *What* question: “What’s another perspective?”, was that police forces do not always use their power to harm people but they can use it to help. With this answer, the students demonstrated that such complicated issues always have different perspectives to be taken into account. Furthermore, students were able to examine different sources of information to rely on when answering to the question “Where can we get more information?” and their presentation encouraged the audience to do so.

The final group decided to address the topic of a Strike of public universities against the cut of resources for superior education in the country. Students answered to the question of “How do we know the truth about this?” by questioning the information given by mass media, as they stated:

We cannot trust what the national media says because they often manipulate information to the convenience of the government, so in this case we must trust on the means that students use to inform what really happens.”

(Students’ Artifacts, Public universities’ strike presentation)

Furthermore, the question of “Why is this the best/ worst scenario?” was addressed by the group when they established a relation among the budget given to public universities, the lack of places for students and the low salary received by public university teachers in comparison to private universities. They mentioned:

“Now we see an inequality between public education and private, while the private universities receive all the best students of Colombia the public universities are staying out of money to pay teachers and offer more places for students.”

(Students’ Artifacts, Public universities’ strike presentation)

The fifth and final skill before *Create* is *Evaluate*. We applied an activity in which we could evidence the use of this skill. The activity consisted of forming groups for giving solutions to

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four issues regarding social injustice. Those issues were Economic Inequality, Police Brutality, Forced Displacement and The Public University Strike for the Misuse of Public Budget.

Regarding Economic Inequality, they proposed to:

“Abolish private property, guarantee that the rights are the same for the public and private sector.”

(Students’ Artifacts, Social injustice: group solutions).

Here, they criticized private property and supported the idea of keeping the same rights for the private and public sectors. Referring to Police Brutality, students claimed that

“The main cause of this problem is that the public servers aren’t qualified for this position. So the solution for this is to choose better the people who join in this institution.”

(Students’ Artifacts, Social injustice: group solutions)

In this excerpt students argued against the qualifications of the public servers to be in this position and they also valued the meticulous selection of individuals entering the police institution.

In relation to Forced Displacement students commented that one solution could be

“To generate public policies that guarantee the land’s labor force and control.”.

(Students’ Artifacts, Social injustice: group solutions)

Thus, they supported the implementation of public policies to contribute to the solution and defended the displaced people’s right to work in a land of their own.

The last issue, The Public University Strike for the Misuse of Public Budget, had several solutions including the following:

“The resources for the “SerPiloPaga” program should be taken to invest in schools, public universities and also private universities.”

(Students’ Artifacts, Social injustice: group solutions)

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This answer indicated that students weighed the investment of the “SerPiloPaga” program with the possible use of that money for schools, public and private universities deciding that the second option was more suitable.

Environment

During the implementation of the classes regarding Environment we decided to focus on narratives that exposed several environmental problems such as pollution, global warming, climate change, human intervention, animal abuse, the roles of industries and factories and the call for change.

In applying the first skill, **Remember**, students listed a series of elements they recognized in the painting of The Garden of Earthly Delights by Hieronymous Bosch - 1500 AD, according to their previous knowledge and experience. This was carried out when students answered to two leading questions, as recorded in the teachers’ journal:

“Who is in the painting?” Students recognized human figures, animals, and god-like figures, the god-like figures appeared in the first panel of the triptych whereas animals and humans appear in all the panels. They also recognized odd buildings and nature elements like lakes and trees.

What is the setting? Students said that the setting of the painting was the Earth in different stages, beginning with an unadulterated environment in the first panel, in the second one students mentioned that humans had grown exponentially seizing the land and described this panel as being a transition to the third panel in which Earth is nearly destroyed by human action.”

(Teachers’ Journal N. 5)

In the above comments, we could evidence the students’ effort to recall basic concepts such as *human, animals, nature, buildings, lakes, trees, Earth, and painting*. These concepts allowed them to carry out the latter discussion about the meaning and interpretation of the images in the painting, and set the grounds to develop the other Critical Thinking skills in this topic.

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The next skill that students were able to work on, was *Understand*. By listening to and the song *Another Way to Die* by *Disturbed*, and watching its video. Students answered what they thought about it, this was indicated in the Journal as follows:

“One student said that he liked the video because it portrayed accurately the future of our planet. Most of the students agreed with his opinion but another one said that she didn’t like it because she didn’t want that future to occur, and said that we must do something right now if we want to stop it. As response to her comments, one student said that although we made small changes like turning off the lights and recycling, it wouldn’t make much difference if the companies and factories didn’t commit to the enterprise, she also added that many of the CEOs are also important politicians and they wouldn’t accept laws that would damage their businesses. Another student highlighted that in the video fruits were still growing, but the public forces didn’t allow people to cultivate them, showing that the government didn’t care about the common people, and their attempts to solve environmental problems.”

(Teachers’ Journal N. 5)

As recorded in the journal, students described what they watched in the video, and explained their interpretation of the occurring events. Afterwards, they were able to carry a discussion with their classmates about the different interpretations they had. In this process, students achieved a collective understanding of the narrative.

During the interviews, we could notice how students developed the skill to *Apply*. They used what they learned about environmental issues during the intervention to implement it in their daily lives with the purpose of solving such environmental issues with their actions. As stated by one participant during the interview:

“Interviewer:

- Do you feel that you use with more confidence terms such as feminism or environmental issues after the classes?

Interviewee:

-After the interest that the class gave me, and the research I did (...), about environment, I could see a more direct perspective and understand certain things about climate change like the excessive use of plastic, bags, and the misuse of trash, etc. For example, now I don’t ask for straws and I question myself more about the environmental policies that are being implemented.”

(Interview N.5)

Participant 3 followed the same line of thought:

“Interviewer:

- Do you think that writing about your experiences helped you to reflect upon them?

Interviewee:

- Yes, very much, overall in the case of environment, because I realized that I made a lot of mistakes and with time, I have tried to leave them behind and to improve in this aspect.

Interviewer:

- Could you tell us something specific that you remember?

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Interviewee:

- Well, let's say: the fact of leaving the water running, I used to do that when brushing my teeth, or throwing garbage [to the street] ... Things like that, the cigars... So I have tried to put aside these habits that I had.

(Interview N. 3)

Here, the participants stated the different ways in which they are applying the knowledge acquired in the intervention to make a positive change in their immediate contexts.

To *Analyze*, students answered a set of questions about the painting *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Hieronymus Bosch - 1500 AD in order to draw connections among ideas. The following excerpt demonstrates this:

“What are the roles of animals in the painting? In the first [panel] they are free, in the second [one] they are being used by the people and in the third [one] they are taking revenge. What are the roles of people in the painting? In the first [panel] they are living quietly, in the second [one] they are having a noisy and luxurious life, and in the third [one] they are dying.”

(Students' Artifacts, *The Garden of Delights* workshop)

Here, the students differentiated the roles of animals and humans in the painting, and distinguished their respective impact in the three panels.

Finally, students *Evaluated* current environmental issues with the objective of providing solutions for their immediate context after watching an audio-visual narrative: the documentary *Before the Flood* (2016) by the director Fisher Stevens. The document presented by participant 3, asserted:

“(...) the media has to empower itself because if it communicates and makes people aware of measures for this to stop happening, it would be a great contribution to the protection of the environment and prevention for climate change.”

(Students' Artifacts, Environmental issues paper)

This fragment, let us identify the participant's appraisal of the power that media has over informing people, which could lead to a change. Moreover, the participant added:

“[The change] starts with my own awareness and then, by letting people know how we can contribute. (...) When people are already informed, [we have to] make plans together so that everyone changes their way of seeing things and realize that change is in the hands of everyone”.

(Students' Artifacts, Environmental issues paper)

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We could notice that this participant valued the importance of small actions, and the jointly responsible efforts to help solving this problem. In addition, participant 1 argued:

“The group of people who refuse [climate change] are not just common people, there are also politicians and important people like the president Donald Trump, and although some scientists who have studies about this problem show them this is a real and dangerous problem, those people keep thinking that it is not. Why? Simple, because they earn money with this problem. If this problem finishes, also their businesses, and for that [reason], they do not want new ways to stop this problem.”

(Students’ Artifacts, Environmental issues paper)

The student criticized the refusal of the issue and the interests of people who prioritize money over nature. Likewise, when referring to alternative fuels, the participant stated:

“(…) The sun and the wind as alternatives to produce energy are a really good idea because with these, the CO₂ and the harmful gases are going to be reduced, improving the planet Earth’s atmosphere.”

(Students’ Artifacts, Environmental issues paper)

This statement shows the participant’s support to alternative energy sources to fight the problem of CO₂ emission.

Finally, participant 1 wrote about the actions we can take to help with climate change:

“**Recycle:** The excessive production of garbage produces a big damage in the environment, if we do not produce that quantity of garbage, it would be reduced and also the damage produced by these. It is easy, we just have to reduce the quantity of garbage produced, reusing and not using a new one each time we need it. And finally, dividing the garbage. With this, it could have the necessary treatment.”

(Students’ Artifacts, Environmental issues paper)

In this excerpt, the student weighed the cons of the current practices regarding the use of garbage, and the pros of changing to an alternative way of treating waste.

Category Three: Achieving Critical Literacy

In this final category, we are going to describe the extent to which students were able to develop critical literacy in the EFL classroom with the use of narratives, with the help of the different instruments that were used in our study.

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For our intervention, we took into account the concept of literacy found in the theoretical framework which affirms that literacy should be seen not only as the ability to read and write, but should also take into account a cultural and social environment that could serve as a means for understanding all types of narratives (Goodman, 2003).

With this concept of literacy in mind, we took the first step in the EFL classroom by focusing in more than merely the language and its understanding, but using it as a means for communication in a more culturally and socially content centered intervention. Therefore, the content used in the classroom featured not only language forms, but mainly social and cultural aspects that would enrich the experience and engagement of the participants.

Now, in order to complement the concept of literacy mentioned above, to its critical counterpart and achieve Critical Literacy in the classroom, we subscribed to Freire and Macedo's (1987) assertions which attribute great importance to each individual's experiences as a beginning point that should eventually lead to an empowerment. Thus, the development and achievement of Critical Literacy in the EFL classroom can be tracked through the instruments as explained below.

In the first class, the topic of feminism was considered. In addressing this topic, the first step that students took, was to understand the definition of feminism and related concepts (i.e. misogyny and misandry) through images that illustrated the difference between misogyny and misandry, and explained the meaning of feminism as a social, political, and economic equality of the sexes. Students also saw a video about the gender inequality in the workplace, and developed two workshops related to the video, the definition of feminism, and anecdotes related to it (Annex 3). After understanding the definition of feminism, students deepened and further

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explored the topic during a critical debate in which students shared their anecdotes about feminism, as Journal 1 reads:

“One student gave an example about how her aunt found out that her salary was lower than the one received by a male colleague for the same position. In order to be paid the equal amount she had to express her unconformity with the situation. Another student commented about Transmilenio and women asking for a seat demanding men to be gentlemen. All students who joined the discussion agreed that it was not fair because women are not weak and men get tired too. One student also highlighted that if a man refuses to give the seat, the people around him will insult him.”

(Teachers’ Journal N. 1)

This portion of the debate indicates how students went from solving a workshop and attempting to define a concept (Annex 3), to relating this topic to a personal experience and sharing such experience with others. Moreover, in discussing it, they also got to reflect about the power relations that take place in their everyday contexts and how these relate to and affect them. They were able to “give meaning and expression to their own needs and voices as part of a project of self and social empowerment.” (Freire & Macedo, 1987. p. 7).

Besides looking back to and reflecting on personal experiences, participants were also encouraged to take a look at the wider picture when asked about feminism in mass media, as they wrote and later shared and debated about the role of women in mass media, that is, in our cultural context (Annex 3). Students’ reflections upon the issue were recorded in the teachers’ journal 1 as shown below:

“(…) students answered that women in T.V series, commercials, movies and advertisement were still being sexualized and categorized as domestic wives. Additionally, they reflected upon the role of Latina women in media, they said that it reinforces the stereotypes of sexy, hot, materialistic, salsa dancer, tanned skinned (i.e. Sofia Vergara). As we were discussing equality in both genders we also talked about the role of men in media and the stereotypes that latino men are drug dealers, sicarios, dancers and desired for their sex appeal. However, they also highlighted the fact that movies nowadays have stronger female roles such as in Wonder Woman, The Hunger Games and Kill Bill.”

(Teachers’ Journal N. 1)

These reflections served as a means for getting students to know a different culture and then based on the differences and similarities, take a critical stance and a political stand, where they

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see their culture and vision as part of themselves and themselves as part of a cultural, political context.

To sum up, the first topic: *Feminism* dealt with understanding the concept of feminism. This knowledge was then further developed towards a critical point, by having students think of and share their experiences, using their voices as a means of self-empowerment. Students then reflected upon not only their personal context, but also the cultural circumstances of which they are part, this was achieved by having a constant dialogue in the classroom where these personal experiences and cultural assimilations could be openly discussed. In other words, students were able to “produce meaning in the dialogue and interaction that mutually constitute the dialectical relationship between human subjectivities and the objective world” (Freire & Macedo, 1987. p. 15). This is also confirmed by the answers students gave during the interview, when asked:

Do you feel that this course helped you in taking informed positions about situations like social justice, environment, and/or feminism?

Yes, I believe so. This course helped us to know of many aspects that we did not know of about issues like feminism and environment, and I think it is absolutely important to know about them nowadays, since it is a huge problem that society has.

(Interview N. 2)

The second topic of our project was developed in a similar way, by targeting an issue such as *Social Justice*, we presented narratives which could represent a challenge for students and that would foster students to read not only the word, but also the world.

Although this was similar to the previous topic in aspects such as asking students to define, give their opinions, and contextualize the issue of Social Justice, we became aware of the fact that the dialogue could be taken further and encouraged students to analyze the issue of Social Justice from different points of view, by problematizing not only the issue itself, but also its

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sources, victims, reasons, and solutions. In other words, to evaluate, to interpret others' interpretations and reflect upon one's own reflections (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

With this goal in mind, after participants had described, interpreted, shared thoughts, and discussed the topic of Social Justice, we asked students to analyze the issue from different perspectives and think of questions regarding Why, How, When, Where. In doing this, we sought to address not only an overall view of Critical Literacy as we had before, but to follow the dimensions that Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys (2002) propose in order to guide our students into a more complete development of Critical Literacy.

Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys' (2002) thesis proposes four dimensions that are necessary to achieve Critical Literacy, these are: disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on socio-political issues, and taking action and promoting social justice. Students tackled these four dimensions when they were asked to form groups and choose one of three topics concerning social injustice (i.e. economic inequality, police abuse, and forced displacement), then, each group had to answer a set of questions dealing with: who, what, where, when why and how, in relation to the chosen topic. The results were seen in the classroom through a PowerPoint presentation in which they sought to achieve a deeper analysis and understanding of the Social Justice issue by answering these questions.

Regarding the first dimension: Disrupting the commonplace, it relates to interrogating the texts by asking questions such as: "What position does this text want me to defend?" (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002). In their PowerPoint presentation, students did this by interrogating types of Social Injustice with questions such as: "What would be a counter-argument? How do we know the truth about this?" and so on. The answers that students provided for these questions

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allowed us to see how they were able to dive deeper into the meaning of the issues, as recorded in Journal 4:

“When they were asked about possible counter-arguments for police brutality they answered that some people could see police forces acting with violence because they follow orders given by their superiors or that they do whatever it takes to protect democracy, even if it implicates to hurt some people.”

“Students also stated that knowing the truth comes from reading not only one but several sources like academic articles or official facts, avoiding fake news or channels that are controlled and manipulated to benefit particular interests.”

(Teachers’ Journal N. 4)

The second dimension though similar, has to do with interrogating multiple viewpoints by trying to understand texts and experiences from our own perspective and the perspective of others. In this case, such texts were the images presented to the students about three different cases of social injustice (i.e. economic inequality, police abuse, forced displacement). This dimension was addressed when students gave answer to questions such as “What is another perspective? How does this benefit us/others? ”, where they answered:

“The second group talked about police brutality. They started mentioning that in most cases the victims of police brutality are peasants and students who protest for their rights and get attacked by police forces. On the other hand, students commented that it is important to know various perspectives of the stories to know the truth and understand the motivations and reasons behind everyone’s actions. They gave examples of policemen that always defend people and do their best to protect civilians. Sometimes people who protest attack police officers and they defend themselves and some people can understand that action as police brutality.”

“Students also mentioned that Economic Inequality benefits people who are in the top of society (elites) as they get more opportunities to study, work and travel as well as better food and health services. The elites consider this appropriate but poor people can argue that those opportunities and services should be rights for everybody and not a privilege.”

(Teachers’ Journal N. 4)

The third dimension aims to Focus on socio-political issues, this dimension was developed by addressing topics regarding social injustice such as: economic inequality, police abuse, and forced displacement. Finally, the last dimension is taking action and promoting social justice and represents the last step in the process of developing critical literacy abilities, in which the person takes action into processes to change the world (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002).For this dimension, we considered retaking the classroom as a dialogical space where students could discuss their ideas and come to an agreement on how to take action in changing the world, these

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ideas were written down and collected as students' artifacts. Some of the actions that students proposed about 1) economic inequality, 2) police brutality, and 3) forced displacement, are mentioned below:

1) Economic Inequality: "To manage taxes by creating new businesses to generate jobs, starting to investigate the corrupt people".

2) Police Brutality: "To watch over the policemen through spokesmen from Human Rights to control their actions."

3) Forced Displacement: "Implement security in the rural zones. End with the armed conflict and use the insertion to the society of the demobilized guerrilla."
(Students' Artifacts, Social injustice: group solutions)

The results of this exercise demonstrate the completion of this final stage. Moreover, we were able to confirm the extent to which students found Social Justice as a relevant topic in which they were active participants. One example of this, is the affirmation that Participant 3 made in the last question of the interview when we asked him about his idea of a class that promotes critical thinking students, as he stated:

"I would say it's about trying to make students take themselves seriously, to step into the role that it is a problem that affects us, and after this, they should take the initiative to investigate find solutions and realize where they are making mistakes."

(Interview N. 3)

This answer demonstrates the intention of the student not only in taking action but also in promoting social justice, as suggested by Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys (2002) in the final dimension for achieving Critical Literacy: taking action and promoting social justice and represents the last step in the process of developing critical literacy abilities, in which the person takes action into processes to change the world. (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys. 2002)

For the final stage of our intervention, the topic of Environment was considered. The activities developed for approaching the issue critically allowed students to apply the four principles of

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Critical Literacy proposed by McLaughlin & DeVogd (2004) in order to achieve a critically literate classroom.

The first principle states “critical literacy is focused on issues of power and promotes action, reflection and transformation.” (McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004. p. 13) When participant 1 wrote about environmental issues like ice melting, climate change and fossil fuels use, he made clear that powerful people in the world played a significant role in the development of these events and they are the ones who make decisions about them:

“The group of people who neglect [climate change] are not just common people, there are also politicians and important people like the president Donald Trump, and although some scientists who have studied this problem show them this is a real and dangerous problem, those people keep thinking that it is not. Why? The answer is simple, because they earn money with this problem. If this problem finishes, also their businesses, and for that [reason], they do not want new ways to stop this problem”.

(Students’ Artifacts, Environmental issues paper)

After establishing this situation, Participant 1 prompted action, reflection and transformation by asserting that:

“The excessive production of garbage produces a big damage in the environment, if we do not produce that quantity of garbage it would be reduced and also the damage produced by this. It is easy, we just have to reduce the quantity of garbage produced, reusing and not using one new [element] each time we need it, and finally dividing the garbage. With [these actions] it could have the necessary treatment.”.

(Students’ Artifacts, Environmental issues paper)

The second principle consists on Critical Literacy focusing on the problem and its complexity. Thus, the issue of ice melting and sea levels rising worked as an example of the students’ awareness about a consequence of climate change that presents future difficulties to be considered. Participant 1 commented:

“It is alarming [to see] how ice levels have decreased in a few years because of climate change. The increasing temperatures make us realize how the situation is going to be in the future. [Moreover] ice melting and sea levels rising are a really big problem as [water] could cover some cities around the world. The warmest days in all the history have been registered nowadays, making us wonder how the future is going to be”.

(Students’ Artifacts, Environmental issues paper)

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The third principle of Critical Literacy to consider is that “the techniques which promote Critical Literacy, should adapt to the context in which they are used” (McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004. p. 13). For instance, in an activity we developed, we showed the students the painting *The Garden of Earthly Delights* made by Hieronymus Bosch, in order to make a discussion about the events that could be observed on it. The painting is divided into three panels that show different stages of the human race (Past, present and a possible future). In the first panel, Bosch painted a paradise and the origin of life on Earth, the second panel represents the humans’ mundane pleasures, and the transition stage between paradise and hell. The final panel depicts a vision of hell in which humans have surrendered to sin and are in everlasting sorrow. At the beginning students seemed to be afraid or reluctant to talk, perhaps because they did not understand clearly the situations presented in the painting. The discussion allowed us to start talking about movies that present a dystopian future and have a relation to the painting, like *War of the Worlds*, *Planet of the Apes* and *I Am Legend*, and series like *The Walking Dead*. Afterwards, students started to generate more ideas about the painting and answered the question “What events are happening in the painting?” as stated in Journal 5:

“As asserted by students, in the first panel humans are cohabitating with animals and god-like figures and there are just a few of them. Not much is happening. In the second panel, humans are overpopulating the Earth, and strange structures appear in the setting; humans appear to use animals as a means of transport and as food. Besides, students stressed the odd relationships and interactions among humans. For the last panel, students expressed that it represented a sort of apocalypse where animals rebelled against humans and extra-terrestrial beings invaded the Earth”

(Teachers’ Journal N. 5)

Knowing the context and adapting to it using the discussion technique, prompted a better development of the activity.

The last principle proposed by McLaughlin & DeVogd (2004. p. 13) focuses on examining multiple perspectives as a fundamental element of Critical Literacy. For integrating this

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principle, we decided to generate discussions over all the topics, recognizing that students' voices and experiences are essential for social empowerment.

Regarding the Environment topic, the video of the song *Another Way to Die*, presented in class, gave students the opportunity to share their opinions and points of view about multiple elements like immediate action to change the environmental issues and the role of governments, factories and industries in the matter. The video shows a world in which water is scarce and people live in precarious conditions because of their misuse and exploitation of natural resources. The students developed a fill in the gaps activity to obtain vocabulary related to the topic and then shared their opinions and reflections upon the video. It is recorded in Journal 5 as follows:

“One student said that he liked the video because it portrayed accurately the future of our planet. Most of the students agreed with his opinion but another one said that she didn't like it because she didn't want that future to occur, and said that we must do something right now if we want to stop it. As response to her comments, one student said that although we made small changes like turning off the lights and recycling, it wouldn't make much difference if the companies and factories didn't commit to the enterprise, she also added that many of the CEOs are also important politicians and they wouldn't accept laws that would damage their businesses”

(Teachers' Journal N. 5)

After the intervention, Participant 4 also commented in an interview (Annex 5) how he applied actions to transform reality:

“Interviewer:

- Do you think that writing about your experiences helped you to reflect upon them?

Interviewee:

- Yes, very much, mostly in the case of environment, because I realized that I made a lot of mistakes and with time, I have tried to leave them behind and to improve in this aspect.

Interviewer:

- Could you tell us something specific that you remember?

Interviewee:

- Well, let's say: the fact of leaving the water running, I used to do that when brushing my teeth, or throwing garbage [to the street] ... Things like that, the cigars... So I have tried to put aside these habits that I had.”

(Interview N. 4)

With these examples, we could see how the McLaughlin & Voogd's principles included in the design and application of the classes helped constructing a more critical setting and promoted social change based on sharing and discussing personal experiences.

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Through these paragraphs, we have analyzed the process and outcomes of the intervention, dividing the chapter into three main categories: Assessed Use of Concepts, Building Up a Critical World and Achieving Critical Literacy. Each one of these categories helped us to answer the question: “How may Basic English level students develop Critical Literacy with the use of narratives in the EFL class?”

The first category, Assessed Use of Concepts, showed us how students learned to use concepts such as feminism, environmental problems and social justice with precision and care, considering others’ perceptions about these words and taking into account the intentional misuse of the terms to benefit a particular ideology or group of people. This development helped students to be more confident and accurate when talking in the foreign language and provided key elements to think critically, such as asking the meaning of terms and wondering how the use of these words can affect people’s perceptions of reality.

The second category, Building Up a Critical World, portrayed how students followed the Bloom’s Taxonomy steps to acquire Critical Literacy skills in each one of the topics that were seen during the classes: Feminism, Social Justice and Environment. The analysis proved that students integrated all the skills presented in Bloom’s revised taxonomy Pyramid (Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate and Create) in their artifacts, comments and discussions during the course (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The apprehension of these skills when reading and writing narratives evidenced their influence during the intervention.

The third and final category, Achieving Critical Literacy, described the process developed by the students in relation to the theories of Critical Literacy posed by theorists as Freire & Macedo (1972), Goodman (2003), Lewison Flint and Van Sluys (2002). There, students demonstrated the

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importance they give to personal experiences, their understanding and analysis of narratives, their wondering over social justice and the promotion of self and social empowerment, action, reflection and transformation.

These categories and their respective analysis led to the writing of the paper conclusions, pedagogical implications and further research that the reader will find next.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this research project was to trace the development of Basic English level students Critical Literacy skills with the use of narratives. After designing and applying six classes with the use of narratives and the analysis of students' tasks as well as journals and interviews, this study revealed that Critical Literacy development is positively influenced by the use of narratives in the class. Students developed abilities to criticize audio-visual and printed texts. Furthermore, they wrote proposals and solutions for daily life problems and reflected about their contexts and complex realities.

We can conclude that students are able to identify points of view, ideas, statements and opinions within the narratives and they become more efficient in doing so each time as they had more opportunities for analyzing and reflecting in the classroom. Although we cannot trace their posterior development or application of the skills that we saw and promoted during the lessons.

Furthermore, though students were attending an English class, the improvement of language skills was not the final goal. Rather, the language was used as a means to communicate their point of view of the world and reflect on their role in it, through constant dialogue and interaction with their classmates where all the participants were seen as equals.

We could also conclude that students increased their interest about the relations of power among individuals and communities behind a visual and/or audio-visual text and the intentions of the producers of narratives when designing their texts (either written, visual or audio-visual).

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Finally, when learners wrote about their own context and events occurring in their daily lives, which can be seen as an initial step in writing narratives where students portray their vision of the world, they portrayed their own identities, their relationship with others, their understanding of the relations of power in society and their impact acting, reflecting, and transforming their reality, promoting social justice and freedom. Additionally, we noticed a better and more frequent participation in the creation of proposals and solutions which can be understood as an example of students being able to empower themselves in small contexts such as the EFL classroom and using their voices to express their opinions and propose solutions to their social context.

Pedagogical implications

As teachers, we got to the conclusion that it is important to provide students the opportunities to analyze a text beyond understanding and let them participate in discussions and debates which prompt ideas for solutions. The activities and topics chosen were selected based on the students' age, level of English and the results of the diagnosis survey.

We observed throughout the process of the classes that students were not used to develop the activities we proposed and it was a challenge for them to analyze, interpret and critique others' positions and write about their own experiences and context in order to change current practices and ideas in society.

It also created a different environment within the students in the classroom as they listened to others' experiences and ideas and read their classmates' narratives. This event helped us to construct a cooperative setting in which participants identified and respected different opinions and beliefs and took advantage of these differences to find new alternatives for solutions.

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Students learned how to approach different kinds of texts that they encountered on a daily basis (such as movies, images, music, and real life scenarios), and analyzed them critically, by applying the different skills that were carried out in the classroom, and taking into account different perspectives.

Further Research

The results of this project allowed us to say that this investigation invites teachers from Colombia, Latin America and other parts of the world to implement in their classes activities that challenge students' abilities to analyze, compare, discuss and propose ideas. This will help students to understand realities from different perspectives and solve efficiently daily problems. Therefore, the English classes should seek for more than the apprehension of the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and the understanding of the English speaking cultures, by seeing the language as a tool for transforming realities based on personal experiences and dialogue.

There is a need to develop further research on the use of audio-visual texts in the classroom and their relationship with students' lives. Teachers may think of strategies, designs and activities including songs, series, movies or other audio-visual elements that help students to analyze the texts in connection with their context.

There is also a need to research on strategies for cooperative activities for proposing solutions in real life, this project showed that students proposed several ideas for change and improvement in their world, country, city and homes, after discussing with their classmates about their ideas and conceptions. We think that more studies regarding this theme can help academic communities to achieve better results and contribute to society.

Limitations of the Study

During the development of our project, we had some difficulties regarding the time we spent in the application of the classes, because some unexpected events occurred in the university and classes were cancelled or students could not get on time for the classes. University students' riots and meetings to discuss social problems related to the University were the main obstacle to finish the classes.

In addition to this, participants' assistance to the classes was uneven during the process. We planned the activities for the entire group but we had to adjust them according to the number of participants present in each class. It was also difficult to organize groups because some students left the University in the middle of the intervention and others went to one class, missed the next two and then came back for the rest of the intervention. As a result, we had a small group of participants present during the entire intervention.

Finally, the data analysis stage took a considerable amount of time as we had to re-write and organize that section several times. We needed to include more information and categories to explain thoroughly the results of the intervention and their link to the reviewed literature, the research question, objectives and main goal of the project.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Consent Form

CRITICAL LITERACY DEVELOPMENT WITH THE USE OF NARRATIVES

Consent to take part in research

- I James Andres Mendez Prieto voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves the development of activities in class, homework and the creation of artifacts to hand in. All of these requirements must be related to the topics of feminism, social justice or environment.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in dissertations, conference presentations and published papers.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in public online folders until the exam board approves the final paper.


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- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years
- I understand that under freedom of information legalization I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Researchers:

- Alisson Julieth Rodríguez Cuervo – 3204036098 – alissonjrodriguez@gmail.com
- Cristian Daniel Torres Quintero – 3213676549 – danieltorres2808@gmail.com

Signature of research participant



Signature of participant

09/09/2017
Date

Signature of researcher

Cristian Torres

Signature of researcher

09/09/2017
Date

Signature of researcher

Alisson Rodriguez

Signature of researcher

09/09/2017
Date

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Annex 2. Survey

UNIVERSIDAD DISTRITAL FRANCISCO JOSÉ DE CALDAS

Agradecemos su honesta participación en nuestro proyecto de investigación: *Writing personal narratives: an initial step in Critical Literacy*.

Atentamente, Alisson Julieth Rodríguez - Cristian Daniel Torres.

Por favor seleccione con una X la casilla que describa su caso.

	Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
Escribo sobre mí y/o mis experiencias					
Tengo oportunidades de leer y escribir sobre mí en las clases de inglés					
Defiendo mi opinión aunque difiera de la de los demás					
Me pregunto quién escribe los textos que leo					
Me pregunto qué pretende un autor al escribir un texto					
Expreso abiertamente mis opiniones en clase de inglés					
Verifico si la información que recibo es verídica					
Me intereso por lo que sucede a mi alrededor					
Me interesa escuchar las opiniones de los demás					
Reflexiono acerca de mis experiencias					

Annex 3. Student's artifact

WHAT IS FEMINISM?

1. Answer the following questions using the expressions from the box. Write your insights using the expressions within the box.

OPINION SENTENCE STARTERS

- I believe...
- I think ...
- In my opinion...
- I prefer ...
- I feel ...
- ... is better than ...
- My opinion is ...
- The best thing about ...
- The worst thing about ...
- Everyone should...
- I agree with ...
- I disagree with ...

What do you know about feminism?

I think the feminism is making the women equal to the men, it mean both have the same opportunities. on the other hand the people nowadays think the feminist is think they are superior than men

What do you think about it?

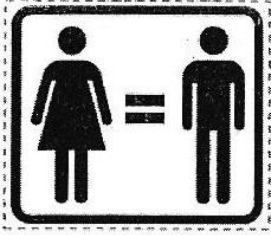
I am agree with this movement because the ~~men~~ women need to have the same threat than the men

Do you think there is feminism in today's media? Why?

i think the movement is changed by an extremist feminist (think they are superior than men) in the mass media.

Give examples of feminism (or anti-feminism) you have seen or experienced in the context you live in.

nowadays in the social media there are women that put photos naked supporting the movement i think this is not the way to do this.

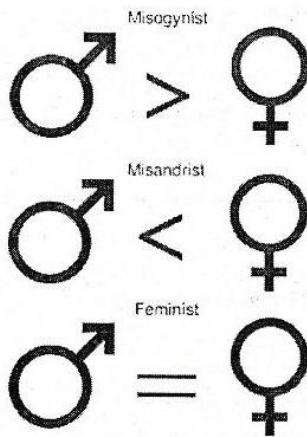


Watch the video and answer the following questions:

- What does the glass represent?
- What is the reason for the glass to be there?
- Does this happen nowadays? Explain.

Feminism Noun \ fem-i-nizm

A BELIEF IN THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC EQUALITY OF THE SEXES



I think the glass represents the ^{inequality} ~~disparity~~ between the man and the woman.
Because is harder to the women get a job
Yes in the jobs, is harder for ^{them} ~~her~~ get a job.

Annex 4. Teachers' journal

4th Session Social Justice

This class was entirely focused on the students' presentations about Economic Inequality, Police Brutality and the protest of October 4th for public education and its financing. They answered multiple Critical Questions related to the topic they selected for a Power Point presentation.

The first group talked about Economic Inequality. They told us that economic inequality is never acceptable because this inequality affects innocent people who didn't do anything wrong to suffer in this situation. They also mentioned that this issue leads to other problems like extreme poverty, absence of education and hunger. They also mentioned that this is the perfect moment to start changing this reality because it is an obstacle to achieve a better society.

They stated that Colombia is one of the most unequal countries in the world and laws often benefit rich people instead of poor people. Students also stated that knowing the truth comes from reading different sources like academic articles or official facts, avoiding fake news or channels that are controlled and manipulated to benefit particular interests. They also mentioned that experiencing by themselves the situation helps to know the truth, at least partially. Students also mentioned that Economic Inequality benefits people who are in the top of society (elites) as they get more opportunities to study, work and travel as well as better food and health services. The elites consider this appropriate but poor people can argue that those opportunities and services should be rights for everybody and not a privilege.

To finish, they mentioned that spreading information and making people aware of this inequality is the first step to foster changes as people will know their rights and will defend them from others who dare taking these rights away from them.

The second group talked about police brutality. They started mentioning that in most cases the victims of police brutality are farmers and students who protest for their rights and get attacked by police forces. On the other hand, students commented that it is important to know various perspectives of the stories to know the truth and understand the motivations and reasons behind everyone's actions. They gave examples of policemen that always defend people and do their best to protect civilians, in order to analyze the issue from a different perspective. Adding that sometimes, people who protest attack police officers and they defend themselves, and some people can understand that action as police brutality.

They also added that the alternative will always be dialogue and respect between civilians and police forces, and showed us an example of a pacific protest developed by the two of them. When they were asked about possible counter-arguments for police brutality they answered that some could see police forces acting with violence because they follow orders given by their superiors or that they do whatever it takes to protect democracy, even if it implicates to hurt some people. They also commented that, in the best scenario, police forces stop hurting people and start helping them so the relationship improves.

Annex 5. Interview transcript

Participant 5

1. ¿Crees ha mejorado tu capacidad crítica para analizar textos y contextos?

Pues yo creo que sí sobretodo porque nosotros somos del área de inglés y no vemos temas sociales a fondo y pues en ese curso vimos temas como el feminismo y el medio ambiente, que no fueron tomados por encima sino nos fuimos más allá entonces pudimos ser más críticos y discutir, y hacer debates acerca de eso.

2. ¿Sientes que el curso te ayudó a tomar posiciones claras/ informadas sobre situaciones como la justicia social, medio ambiente, y/o el feminismo?

Sí, lógico me ayudó porque como lo dije ahorita pues no habíamos entrado o no nos habíamos sumergido en esos temas entonces empezamos a trabajar temas como el medio ambiente y vimos un documental y verlo pues me informó más y pudo hacer que yo tomara el tema con más propiedad y poder hablar acerca de eso.

Pregunta extra: ¿Cómo me podría definir feminismo y medio ambiente después del curso?

Pues yo tenía de las dos una noción y pues creo que no era tan clara y después de eso ya empecé a ver el medio ambiente, después del documental, como algo que nos está afectando a todos y que por medio de cosas como documentales, podemos llevar a cualquier tipo de personas. Hay estudiantes que no les gusta leer acerca del medio ambiente entonces ya vemos esa posibilidad del documental para llegar a todo tipo de público

Y el feminismo es un tema más complejo porque hoy en día no les afecta solamente a las mujeres sino también a los hombres y más si estamos en un entorno como el colombiano que se caracteriza o se ha conocido por ser algo violento, entonces el feminismo yo lo veía muy por encima porque no estaba en un caso así como de un feminicidio. Yo creo que cuando vemos un caso de feminicidio es cuando se empieza a hablar de feminismo, de defender los derechos de la mujer; pero antes de eso simplemente, cuando están las cosas normales, no vemos eso ni nos empoderamos de ese tema entonces el curso nos ayudó a tenerlo en cuenta y ver que no necesitamos algo trascendental para ser tomado en cuenta.

3. ¿Sientes que usas con más seguridad términos como feminismo o problemas medioambientales después de las clases?

Sí, claro que sí, por lo mismo que se trascendió y no fue sólo “mencionamos el tema y ya” sino hicimos debates y más que fue en inglés, casi toda la clase se vio en inglés, el hecho de que sea en inglés nos hacía preguntarnos palabras como mujer, aunque es básico. Eso hacía que se quedara en nuestras mentes por lo que estábamos buscando la definición en los dos idiomas y así mismo nos da más criterio a la hora de mencionarlos.

4. ¿Cuál de las siguientes cosas dirías que se trabajaron en clase y de qué manera? Recordar, entender, aplicar, analizar, evaluar, crear.

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Yo creo que se trabajaron todas, pero las que más se trabajaron en mi caso fueron las de recordar, pues ya habíamos hablado de temas en el colegio, pero me tocó recordar cosas que ya sabía para poder mantenerme en un debate. Entender también porque pues no lo tenía todo totalmente claro entonces me tocó hacer (y ahí voy a mencionar la otra) un análisis acerca de esos temas y de términos que no conocía, entonces a partir de recordar y analizar el tema pude lograr entender cosas como el feminismo y el medio ambiente.

5. ¿Cuál es tu opinión acerca de tratar este tipo de temas en clase de inglés?

Yo creo que es positivo porque todavía no dominamos el inglés al cien por ciento, por lo menos yo, entonces mencionar este tipo de temas que no son de la clase, o pues no creo que un profesor de inglés en básico dos, como trabajamos con ustedes, vaya a hablar de estos temas, entonces ¿qué hace que manejemos estos temas en ese nivel? Que empezemos a buscar un vocabulario que no conocíamos en ese momento para hablar o mencionar temas polémicos, entonces estos temas nos ayudaron para mejorar el vocabulario.

6. ¿Sientes que hablar sobre los temas tratados en clase mejoró tus habilidades para argumentar en inglés?

Claro que sí porque, como lo dije ahorita, empecé a tener más vocabulario. También empezamos a hablar más en inglés y pues el sólo hecho de hablar hace que uno empiece a mecanizar cosas básicas como los pronombres, empezarlos a manejar con verbos en el caso de opinión como: Yo creo, yo pienso, supongo. Entonces ese tipo de cosas pueden servir en esas actividades.

7. ¿Crees que escribir acerca de tus experiencias te ayudó a reflexionar sobre ellas?

Claro que sí porque uno esos temas los ve muy por encima entonces en el momento en el que nos sentamos a pensar, a redactar algo, queremos que quede bien y de ese modo, cuando ya nos sentamos a escribir, a buscar información para que quede bien, puede ser el ensayo, ahí empezamos a enriquecer todas las competencias comunicativas.

8. Tras tener la oportunidad de expresarte en clase, ¿opinas que sea importante hacerlo dentro del proceso educativo?

Claro, todo espacio de debate o discusión es importante para desarrollar un buen proceso educativo ya que nos hace personas más críticas y nos hace argumentar situaciones que puede que se nos den en nuestra vida cotidiana.

9. Al principio nos dimos cuenta de que varios estudiantes no escribían sobre sí mismos ni sobre sus experiencias, nos gustaría saber si sientes que ha cambiado esa situación.

Yo creo que el primer factor para tener en cuenta es que muchas veces no escribimos acerca de nosotros o sobre nuestras experiencias no porque no queramos sino porque muchas veces no las tenemos claras. Simplemente vivimos pendientes de trabajar, de estudiar y ya, pero digamos cosas como interiorizar o exteriorizar eso que tenemos nosotros, lo pasamos por alto.

Pregunta extra: ¿Y consideras que después de la clase eso pudo haber llegado a cambiar, por lo menos a nivel personal?

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A nivel personal, claro. Y puedo asegurar que de mis compañeros también porque muchas veces salíamos de clase y hablábamos del tema. Eso hizo que ya nos ubicáramos en un espacio en cuanto a esos temas, a liberarnos y a tener más confianza para hablar de esos temas y entre nosotros.

10. ¿Cuál fue tu motivación para llevar a cabo las actividades en clase y participar?

Pues yo creo que lo más importante es que todos los que estamos acá en la universidad tenemos un gusto por aprender y por siempre superarnos entre nosotros entonces temas como feminismo y medio ambiente están ahí pero no los tenemos muy claros entonces ya poder tener la posibilidad de estudiarlos y acogerlos a mi aprendizaje, creo que sirve.

11. ¿Qué opinas que se deba hacer en una clase para mejorar el pensamiento crítico de los estudiantes?

Cosas como debates o temas que nos den pie para llevar a cabo un debate. Creo que hicieron bien eligiendo esos dos. También podríamos haber tomado temas como el aborto, en los barrios se habla mucho de la limpieza social; hay muchos que desde la religión toman su pensamiento crítico, según sus creencias. Por otro lado, están los que lo toman según su cultura. Digamos, para un skinhead de pronto no está tan mal irse a los golpes con otro, por ejemplo. Como para una persona que crea más en la paz, no va a estar tan bien, entonces eso puede generar que se dé un debate y a partir del debate desarrollemos lo que es el pensamiento crítico.