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CÓDIGO

AP-BIB-FO-06

VERSIÓN

1

VIGENCIA

2014

PÁGINA

1 de 1

Neiva, Junio 16 de 2017

Señores

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TÍTULO COMPLETO DEL TRABAJO: Promoting Intercultural Awareness through Community Based Pedagogy at a Rural Public School in an EFL Setting

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PARA OPTAR AL TÍTULO DE: Magister en Didáctica del Inglés

FACULTAD: Educación

PROGRAMA O POSGRADO: Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés

CIUDAD: Neiva **AÑO DE PRESENTACIÓN:** 2017 **NÚMERO DE PÁGINAS:** 126

TIPO DE ILUSTRACIONES (Marcar con una X):

Diagramas Fotografías Grabaciones en discos ___ Ilustraciones en general Grabados ___ Láminas ___
Litografías ___ Mapas ___ Música impresa ___ Planos ___ Retratos ___ Sin ilustraciones ___ Tablas o Cuadros ___
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Español

Inglés

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Pedagogía basada en la Comunidad | Community-Based Pedagogy. |
| 2. Conciencia Intercultural | Intercultural Awareness |
| 3. Trabajo por proyectos | Project Work |
| 4. Lengua Extranjera | Foreign Language |
| 5. Cultura Local | Local culture |
| 6. Turismo regional | Local Tourism |

RESUMEN DEL CONTENIDO: (Máximo 250 palabras)

Este estudio de investigación fue realizado en la I.E. Cosanza, institución pública ubicada en el sector rural del municipio de Timaná. Se desarrolló con un grupo de 22 estudiantes de secundaria pertenecientes al grado 11 (10° al momento de iniciar el estudio) y tuvo como objeto promover la conciencia y competencia intercultural a través de la pedagogía basada en los aportes de la comunidad y el contexto (Community-Based Pedagogy). La investigación se basó en la implementación de proyectos de desarrollo de turismo regional y en actividades enfocadas en contenidos interculturales con el objetivo de ampliar la percepción de los estudiantes hacia la cultura extranjera y la propia y mejorar la competencia comunicativa en el uso del Inglés como lengua extranjera. Observaciones, notas de campo, grabaciones de audio y video, entrevistas y demás producciones de los estudiantes incluyendo proyectos grupales, fueron los instrumentos utilizados para la recolección de datos. El análisis se realizó utilizando el grounded approach para hacer la triangulación de los datos. Los resultados indicaron que la implementación tanto de los contenidos interculturales como el trabajo por proyectos enmarcados en la pedagogía de la comunidad produjo un impacto positivo y significativo en la percepción y disposición de los estudiantes hacia otras culturas, así como un mayor sentido de pertenencia hacia su entorno y valoración de lo propio. Los estudiantes también manifestaron una mayor motivación y mejor disposición hacia el aprendizaje del idioma Inglés.



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ABSTRACT: (Máximo 250 palabras)

This research study was carried out in the I.E. Cosanza, a public institution located in the rural sector of the municipality of Timaná. It was developed with a group of 22 secondary students belonging to grade 11 (10 ° at the time of starting the study) and had as objective to promote the awareness and intercultural competence through Community-Based Pedagogy. The research was based on the implementation of regional tourism development projects and activities focused on intercultural contents with the aim of broadening the students' perception about foreign culture and their own while improving their communicative competence in English. Observations, field notes, audio and video recordings, interviews and students' artifacts, including group projects were the instruments used for data collection. The analysis was done using the grounded approach theory to triangulate the data. The results indicated that the implementation of both intercultural contents and work by projects within the community pedagogy produced a positive and significant impact on the perception and disposition of students towards other cultures, as well as a greater sense of belonging to their community. Students also expressed greater motivation and willingness to learn English.

APROBACION DE LA TESIS

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**Promoting Intercultural Awareness Through Community Based Pedagogy at a
Rural Public School in an EFL Setting**

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Universidad Surcolombiana

Facultad de Educación

Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés

Neiva, Junio de 2017

Note of acceptance

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Acknowledgments

All my gratitude to everyone who has enlightened somehow the route I needed to follow when developing this research study. Special mention to James Samuelson, Academic consultant at Pearson and Professor Carlos Rico, who facilitated me invaluable sources of studies in the field of Intercultural Awareness. I would also like to thank Professor Claudia Torres, my thesis advisor and main support for the development of this study, which could not be possible without her priceless help. Professor Torres inspired me to believe in my wants of working with local communities and have supported and reinforced my reflections about the role that local knowledge and cultural heritage have in the searching of a globalized use of language.

Abstract

This study explores the possible advantages that implementation of community based pedagogy in a school located in the rural area of Huila Department could bring to 11th graders, in terms of developing intercultural awareness and self-awareness of their own culture and local knowledge. Based on documents and on evidence collected from class observation, and institutional documents, it was established that there was little culturally relevant contents in the English syllabus. Then, this action research study inquires on the promotion of intercultural awareness through the implementation of Community Based Pedagogy and project work in the English class. The instruments used to collect the information were students' artifacts, surveys, unstructured interviews, teacher field notes and photographs. The data collected was analyzed under the scope of grounded approach, which helped me to draw some conclusions and implications based on the results obtained.

As a main conclusion, students' attitude towards English class changed drastically; they were highly motivated and committed with the project, and the expectations about working with the local community were positively fulfilled. In terms of implications and challenges in the academic field, I can say that it was not easy to work with the community and outdoor activities, not because of lack of interest but because of reduced cooperation from schools' principals, as they must follow institutional rules that limit the freedom to work with projects that are not part of the curriculum. However, in my view, and based on related studies and on my own experience, it is profitable for both, students and teachers to have an immersion in the community and take advantage of what they have to say. It also

reduces students' anxiety since they feel themselves more comfortable when working in their own context.

In terms of English teaching, I can say that maybe it is time to stop focusing mostly on language rules, and start giving a chance to our students' voices. As English teachers, we can teach language in a different manner, placing motivation and communicative goals first, rather than English correctness. Learning a foreign language means not only learning grammar or syntax, it is about connecting cultures and beliefs, perceptions and sometimes misconceptions about others and ourselves, and being able to build bridges between local and global communities.

Keywords: Community-Based Pedagogy, foreign language, intercultural awareness, local culture,

Introduction

“I teach world language to foster an appreciation for diversity - to make the seemingly foreign, familiar. I teach to eradicate racism. I teach to end discrimination. I teach to change the world”

Orozco-Domoe (2015, p.60)

This study discusses how Community-Based Pedagogy can serve as the basis for the pedagogical intervention of an identified situation at a rural public school that has to do with the lack of cultural contents in the curricula, which can have an incidence on students' perception about the usefulness of English in their lives. This problematic situation was established based on institutional documents and on evidence collected from surveys, class observation, and teacher journals.

According to the data collected, it seems that the little culturally relevant contents in the English syllabus was affecting the Intercultural Awareness that students need to build up, along with their EFL learning process. Thus, this study inquires on the promotion of intercultural awareness in the English class through the implementation of a local tourism project, in which learners communicate their feelings and thoughts about their cultural heritage to the world as they learn from other cultures. This project followed action research guidelines and it was divided in four stages according to the cycles of action research. The stages were exploratory, that corresponded to the observation cycle, deepening, which was aligned to planning; hands on, that was related to acting, and reflection, which was in accordance to the evaluation cycle. Every stage included group work and was monitored by the teacher researcher.

This document is organized in five chapters. In the first chapter, I present the statement of the problem, related studies, setting and rationale as well as the research question and the objectives that entail the study. In the second chapter, I describe the theoretical constructs of this project. In the third chapter, I present on the one hand the research design, which entails the approach and type of study and the description of the participants and instruments used for data collection. On the other hand, it includes the instructional design, which contains the pedagogical intervention, and didactic strategy implemented, the view of language and language learning, the methodological approach, the description of the innovation and the instructional objectives. In the fourth chapter, I explain the data analysis and present the research categories with its corresponding subcategories. Finally, in the fifth chapter, I present the conclusions and pedagogical implications of the study.

Chapter I

Research Problem

Based on institutional documents and on evidence collected from surveys, class observation, and teacher journals, as teacher researcher I was able to establish that the little cultural content in the English syllabus of a rural public school was having an incidence on the development of students' Intercultural Awareness. Despite the fact that students answered in an exploratory survey that learning English was important to access higher education or job opportunities, they were reluctant to speak or interact in the foreign language. It seems that this mismatch has to do with students' perception about the practicality of learning a foreign language in a rural context.

Statement of the Problem

I work as an English teacher for a rural public school in Huila, Colombia that serves low-income families who live from farming. The school is difficult to access by a dirt road. There are desks, boards, video beam and little else to work with. For my action research study, I chose my 11th grade class since these 16-18 years old students are motivated and curious about cultural issues. The data gathered indicated that learners did not see the relevance of English for their lives. An 11th grader candidly said to me: Why should I study English if I will become a coffee collector? "Profe, a mí ¿para qué me va a servir el inglés si yo de aquí salgo es a coger café?". This reluctance to study English especially to speak it, moved me to search for an alternative pedagogy that would value the knowledge of the community. This project also intends to discuss possible business opportunities for the region by integrating tourism and local knowledge as students learn English. To further support the problem, a class of 10th grade (11th grade now) took a survey in which 72%

said they preferred to work in pairs or groups, 90% preferred working with videos, stories and outdoor activities, and 100% affirmed that learning English was important.

Interviews revealed that most learners are aware of the importance of learning a foreign language and the opportunities it can offer in terms of access to higher education, scholarships or employment. Nevertheless, they expressed that they did not feel confident enough about their English or its usefulness. Based on the above, and to orient the inquiry, I started a study that explored the possible relationships between Community-Based Pedagogy and an appropriation of knowledge that would result in intercultural awareness development.

Related Studies

Searching for the inclusion of communities' cultural background when teaching a foreign language, English in this case, some studies have been developed in Colombia. A clear example is the proposal carried out by Jaraba and Arrieta (2012) which consists of an exploratory study into the language and cultural heritage of the Zenú population and how to integrate them to the English classroom. Proposing a different way of teaching English to non-regular groups is the keystone for closing the gap Education Policies in Colombia tend to maximize. Jaraba and Arrieta (2012) develop the claim that multicultural communities are not taken into account when working with strategies for improving English. This is why the same authors propose Ethno-English as a way to take benefit from the gist of multicultural education, and propose strategies to increase motivation in special communities.

One of the enemies of developing homogeneous standards of the foreign language in our country is the fact that adopted Educational Policies in Colombia come from a different background. In so doing, “these policies are rarely functional in multicultural communities, such as indigenous communities” (Jaraba and Arrieta, 2012, p. 95). Students at Institución Educativa Indígena San Antonio Abad (INESA) were selected to propose a different view of teaching English for meaningful communication, taking advantage of cultural mediation.

Acknowledging the importance of cultural background knowledge, this research study made students face situations in which cultural mediation through pottery allowed them to reaffirm their identity, realizing how effective was to use language in a meaningful context. Kramsch’s findings (1998) lend support to the claim that “Despite the entrenched belief in one language = one culture equation, individuals assume several collective identities that are likely not only to change over time in dialogue with others, but are liable to be in conflict with one another” (p.67). This is why teachers need to make students understand the importance of acceptance of differences. One of the key factors to achieve this purpose is to develop some kind of Multicultural awareness. Findings in Jaraba and Arrieta’s (2012) research study reveal aspects to support Kramsch’s idea: a) in the cultural-geographical aspect, differences are remarkable between students from the rural area and students from the urban area, discrimination was clearly identified from urban students towards rural students. b) In the communicative aspect, discrimination was strong due to differences between the rural area and the urban area in terms of language use and meaningful expression. c) In the pedagogical aspect, “el quehacer pedagógico estaba regulado por un *enfoque academicista* propio del modelo tradicional que buscaba más la

reproducción de contenidos”; thus, students’ interests and life conditions were not taken into account. The conducted research study led the community into a change of beliefs, as it should be in every multicultural community, where teachers, parents and students changed their mind towards cultural aspects and English use. Exchanging skins in classroom activities then become the main element to create students’ sensitivity related to somebody else’s feelings and perceptions. As Byram (1997) and Sercu (2005) state, “individuals have to decenter the self and take up the role of the other.”

One of the most remarkable aspects of this study was the construction of a dictionary that included not only English and Spanish equivalences but also the non-standard Spanish used by the local community. As evidenced in this project, despite the challenge that implies changing the perspective when teaching English, it is possible to make the difference. What we need is to start being more inclusive, more open minded, more tolerant toward differences and beliefs. This could be not only a way to change the English teaching in our country but also a way to make little changes in the world.

Another interesting study involving intercultural contents was carried out by Quintero, (2006) and took place in Caldas department in Colombia. This study has to do with the inclusion of local culture in the English classroom. This study was part of a bigger one oriented towards teacher education in the English Language Program at Universidad de Caldas. The study presents the findings of research that integrated the curriculum and English learning involving students’ cultural context. As the study was developed in a department that is part of the coffee region in Colombia, the center of the contents was the coffee culture.

Aiming at answering the research question How to build up curricula from the English teaching practicum that allow schools to contribute to the promotion of the coffee culture and its problematic situation, intercultural contents were adapted to be included in the syllabus of the school.

According to MEN (National Education Ministry), Interculturality means, a constant dialog among cultures and implies to interpret and to decode, in order to reach the communicative goals between the cultures involved (MEN, 1999). By following this principle, a set of cooperative learning activities were developed in the school, taking into account the cultural context and the local knowledge to communicate and transfer concepts from the mother tongue to the foreign language. Some of the activities and contents were related to tourist places, traditional food, and the creation of an illustrated cultural dictionary. This activity was quite interesting since the students had to use their creativity and imagination along with their knowledge of the target language in an attempt to describe and to explain untranslatable words like “mazamorra”, “sancocho”, “alpargata” and so on. The dictionaries made by the students had to be useful in the real context, hence, the students delivered some samples in events such as Expocafé, Manizales Fair, Theater Festival and “Once Caldas” soccer matches. By interacting with tourists, students were aware of the usefulness of English, not only to understand messages in the foreign language but also to transmit their own ones; even more, to have a real cultural interaction. At the end of the study, the findings were very positive since the experience was enriching for both, practitioners and students. Practitioners were able to teach how to talk about students own culture in a different language and students

realized that learning English could be a fun activity when involving their real context and teamwork. As I am developing an intercultural project with my students that has many common factors as the afore mentioned study, I can take advantage of some reflections, activities and findings for my own purpose. For example, the illustrated cultural dictionary is a good resource that can help my students a lot, since they are working in similar topics such as tourist places, local knowledge and special coffee.

Considering the global context, Wang, (2014) conducted a study on a related topic in Australia. This study aimed at investigating how students and teachers perceived intercultural awareness in a tertiary educational context. The research questions that guided the study were: What does intercultural awareness mean to teaching staff and students in general? In addition, how do teaching staff and students interpret intercultural awareness in tertiary-level language education? The study was part of a wider research project examining the views and attitudes of teachers and students towards intercultural awareness at a university in Australia. Surveys were carried out in order to collect data as well as semi-structured interviews. A group conformed by twenty six students and one teacher were the target population and they answered to open questions related to interpretation of intercultural awareness, significance of intercultural awareness, and attitudes towards intercultural awareness.

Responses from the participants suggested that they considered valuable and stimulating to integrate cultural awareness into foreign language teaching and learning. According to one of the respondents having a cultural side to language, learning was quite beneficial to his understanding of world culture. The results from the study

indicated that intercultural awareness is a key factor to be included in language teaching and learning and it was regarded as valuable for all the participants answering the surveys and interviews. This population manifested that some privileges of being intercultural like, engaging with people from different cultural backgrounds, and celebrating diversity were aspects they would like and enjoy exploring. According to this research, it was demonstrated that teachers and students can improve the effectiveness of their intercultural communication by including intercultural contents along with language teaching; it is a fact, and I hope to get similar findings in my study.

Regarding Community Based Pedagogy, Medina Riveros, (2015), carried out a qualitative research study in the national scene of a public university in Bogotá. The study was conducted in an online EFL course and underlined the development of critical literacy practices and awareness raising of the community as a resource to promote critical thinking. The foundations of the study were critical approaches to literacy, community-based literacies and pedagogies, and multiliteracies. The study focused on engaging the participants, online EFL students from English 3, second semester, in multimodal literacy practices. After implementing critical literacy practices in the frame of community based pedagogy, the researchers found that it was a suitable pedagogical approach for digital environments. Despite I am not working on virtual environments, this study gave me some lights on how to promote critical thinking in the activities developed with my students in the frame of intercultural contents and Community Based pedagogy. If searching to promote awareness about local and foreign culture, it is necessary to start to develop critical thinking besides.

Setting and Rationale

Cosanza Educational Institute is located in a rural area of Timaná, Huila considered as a difficult access place due to the bad conditions of its road. The socioeconomic population belongs to one and two strata, according to SISBÉN. This means that most of the students come from families with low incomes, which consequently have implications in factors such as nutrition, medical and mental care, and access to technology and educational resources, among others. The economy is mostly based on coffee harvesting and growth of random vegetables and fruits. Cosanza and its near villages have also wonderful places and landmarks to explore. However, it seems that students and the community are not that interested in taking advantage of those natural resources and immaterial cultural richness. When asked about specific places located in their town, such as Santa Clara's caves or Tobo Church, some students mentioned that they have visited those places but they did not find them as relevant as other places from other cultures. "Teacher, there is nothing to see in those places. What are we going to do there?" one student said to the class. At that moment, I understood what I wanted to teach them. I did not want my students only to know structures or English grammar; I wanted them to appreciate what they already have in their local context and to share that knowledge using English as a tool to communicate their feelings and thoughts about their community. As pointed out by Pennycook (1994), the English language classroom can be a place for cultural production and political opposition, which makes it a key site of the renewal of local and global forms of knowledge.

Diverse groups of researchers have remarked the importance and the impact that raising intercultural awareness can have in students of a foreign language. In Orozco-Domoe's views:

“When educators present culture with depth and breadth, they are able to foster multi-faceted, positive disposition toward the target culture(s) and its people. Through cultural comparison, students begin to see their home culture through the perspective of the other. When the exploration of the culture is authentic, the comparisons/dialogue that students imagine between themselves and the target culture(s) are powerful” (Orozco-Domoe, 2015, p.73).

Martyn-Jones and Heller, as cited in Lin (2001), declare that “Access (or lack of it) to English often affects the social mobility and life chances of many children and adults not speaking English as their first or second language. The classroom in many places in the world is a key site for the reproduction of social identities and unequal relations of power”. (p.271). The same authors also points out that students are likely to develop an ambivalent “want-hate” relationship with English, and the classroom could become a place of struggles and oppositional practices. That is why teachers should reflect about the context in which English is being taught, because it is not only matter of following a syllabus or keeping the teaching practice between walls. Students' needs and wants should be considered because they count (Lin.Y, 2001).

Taking the above into account, the purpose of this study is to allow students to be an active part of their learning process while giving them tools that can help them not only to fulfill academic tasks but also for life. It also pretends to settle what could be the beginning of a business opportunity regarding local tourism. How can this project help

students and the community? Well, Huila is a well-known department for tourist places such as San Agustín, Tatacoa Dessert and Salto de Bordonos, among others.

Nevertheless, there are other places that are not that recognized, and Timaná is one of them. Timaná is located in the southern part of Huila and it is the entry to the tourist complex of the department. However, it has not been promoted, as it should be. Through a project that aims at integrating tourism, local knowledge and cultural heritage with English teaching and learning, the students and the community can be pioneers in the promotion of this place and its history, traditions and landmarks. The expected findings concern issues on identity and reflection on Otherness that may emerge as a result of a community project that establishes a dialog between the local and foreign cultures.

Finally, I hope this project motivates more teachers and schools to include communities and local knowledge in the English syllabus and encourage students to work in projects that lead them to develop their intercultural awareness while promoting English learning.

Research Question

How can intercultural awareness be developed through Community Based Pedagogy in a rural EFL setting?

Research Objectives

General objective: To explore how intercultural awareness can be developed among eleventh graders through the implementation of Community Based Pedagogy.

Specific objectives: a) To describe the process students follow to develop intercultural awareness when implementing Community based pedagogy and

b) To analyze the role played by the local community in the development of students' intercultural awareness.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Searching for answers to the research question of this study, some of the authors that I have read have a common thought about teaching a foreign language. They consider that it is necessary to take into account the place and the sociocultural context where the foreign language is being taught. Thus, *intercultural awareness* is one of the main constructs of this research along with *Community Based Pedagogy* as an approach for *teaching English as a foreign language*. The didactic strategy applied in this study is *Project work*. All these will be discussed onward.

Intercultural Awareness



To understand what intercultural awareness means, it is necessary to attempt to discern what culture is in the first place. According to Pulverness, (as cited in Rico, 2011), culture can be viewed as a ‘whole way of life’. Kramersch (1998) affirms culture as a “membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings” (p.10). Moreover, Geertz (as cited in Kiet Ho, 2009), attests that culture is seen as “sets of practices or the lived experiences of individuals” (p.66)

Many other definitions can be settled here, but I am going to mention just one more for our purpose. According to Brown (1994), culture is deeply adhered to our being, it is what keeps a group of people together; but language, which is the means for communication among members of a culture, is the most visible expression of that culture. So far, we can see that there are different views of how culture is perceived among a

diverse group of authors; all of them are valid but none can be considered as the most accurate or the best one, mainly because culture is not fixed or rigid, it is changeable. Rico, (2011), claims that culture is not static but dynamic. In his words “It is in a continuous change and transformation which is determined by not only internal but also external influences of other individuals and cultures. It is very true that we shape culture, but also culture shapes us” (p.24)

Furthermore, there is another concept related to the above that needs to be analyzed here and it is language. Kramsch, (1998) declares that language is the principal means to conduct our social lives and it is a system of signs that has itself a cultural value; so that, language symbolizes cultural reality. Besides, Mitchell and Myles (2004), claim that “Language and culture are not separate, but are acquired together, with each providing support for the development of the other” (p.235). Hence, language and culture, are strongly tied to each other; we cannot split these concepts. Language and culture are inseparable concepts as they have been linked to each other since the very beginning of civilization. And nowadays that almost everyone can easily have access to global knowledge through the use of diverse technological devices, people need to cope with boundaries and constraints that can emerge when using English as an international language and teachers are called upon to provide help in the construction of intercultural awareness. Teachers should put themselves in the students’ shoes and evoke their own experiences as learners of a foreign language. What were their fears and feelings? What helped them to overcome those fears? Was there someone who inspired them to learn, and even more, to teach a foreign language? All of these questions can help teachers to find responses to students’ needs while providing them with confidence and a friendly environment to learn in.

Teacher's Role. The next aspect to take into account here is the role that teachers play in society and specifically in the construction of intercultural awareness. According to Mermann-Jozwiak and Sullivan (2005) "The role of teachers is crucial in bridging cultural barriers" (p.271). Teachers can play a quite remarkable role in the construction of a more inclusive society, which could lead to a deeper understanding of the differences between cultures and languages by narrowing the fault line between each other. "The teacher should act as "cultural mediator" and demonstrate an "awareness of other cultures' identities" for the communicative approach to be culturally appropriate" (Ellis as cited in Luk, 2005, p.251).

The teachers' task is not only to fulfill the syllabus requirements but also to mediate between local and foreign cultures. And, because teaching is a political act (Freire, 1993), they can also have a positive impact on students' minds and their perceptions about diversity and Otherness, contributing somehow to make meaningful changes not only in the local community but also in the world. Kramsh, (1993) conceives culture as a social construct that is basically the product of self and other perceptions. According to this author, four lines of thought should be addressed when looking at the teaching of language and culture: Establishing a 'sphere of Interculturality'; teaching English as an interpersonal process; teaching culture as difference; and crossing disciplinary boundaries. All of these lines of thought are fundamental to develop a cross-cultural approach where communities, cultural reality and cultural imagination are taken into account in order to have a deeper understanding of what is called a 'third perspective' that enables learners to have a view of both insider and outsider's perspective.

Third place. Constructing a ‘third perspective’ or a ‘third place’ is not an easy task to do. It involves the learner to be aware of their own culture and context, to self-reflect about the role of culture and language in worldviews and to decenter from their first culture to observe and reflect about both, their own and the target culture. Third place is where L2 learners inhabit between two cultures in order to establish their own understanding of the cultural differences. (Kramsh, as cited in Kiet Ho, 2009).

The searching and building of a third place encompasses intercultural awareness which implies for the learners to be able to reflect on their own culture and identity while regarding similarities or differences in comparison with foreign cultures where English is spoken as the native or adopted language. Interculturality means to be open-minded; students will be aware of the diversity and plurality that is part of their own culture, and consequently, they may break stereotypes and misconceptions about local and foreign cultures (Goldstein, 2014).

Connecting intercultural awareness to the classroom. Now I am going to focus on the specific aspect of how to raise intercultural awareness in the English classroom. As pointed out by Pennycook (1994), the English language classroom can be a place for cultural production and political opposition, which make it a key site of the renewal of local and global forms of knowledge. Nevertheless, why is it important to link culture to teaching languages? It is necessary to take into account the place and sociocultural context where the foreign language is being taught. It cannot be denied the fact that English language, and therefore English culture, have permeated almost all populations around the world and Colombia is not the exception. Every time someone is drinking *Coke*, or wearing *Nike*

shoes 'Just do it', or even using social networks such as Facebook, YouTube or applications as Twiter or WhatsApp, the influence of a foreign culture is widely sensed. But, what is happening to our own culture? Are we that proud of it to be able to show it to the world? Are we aware of all the richness and beauty we have in our country?

Unfortunately, our snob attitude towards the foreign believed as better and the vestiges of colonialism that still remain in our culture have limited our vision of our 'self'. Kubota (2012) holds that "the hegemony of English has been perpetuated through economic, cultural and educational activities promoted by governments, non-governmental agencies, publishers and the entertainment industry" (p.57). Therefore, we are unconsciously being conducted to the assimilation and adoption of a foreign culture camouflaged through the teaching of English as a foreign language. As Kramsch, (1998) points out "students usually have little or no systematic knowledge about their membership in a given society and culture, nor do they have enough knowledge about the target culture to be able to interpret and synthesize the cultural phenomena presented" (p.228).

As learners need to develop a deep understanding of their own culture in order to find similarities and differences in comparison with a foreign culture and hence make connections between their culture and the foreign one, it is necessary to look for a global perspective. It is out of the question that English is nowadays the global and international language par excellence and people are said to have to use it to communicate themselves with the world. Nevertheless, an intangible barrier has been built to separate what has been called 'native' from "non- native" speakers of English language and therefore it is

undeniable the existence of a gap between who are believed as the ‘owners’ and who are thought as the ‘intruders’.

But, is it that compulsory to standardize language patterns instead of taking advantage of the diversity to enrich one culture from another? Based on Luk’s beliefs (2005), what learners need is a curricula that enables them to develop their global discourse competence by expressing their pluralistic cultural and linguistic identities and to provide them with meaningful experiences in real contexts which are addressed to the use of English for globalized communication. In Lin views (2002), “To speak means to speak to someone about something that is relevant for our lives” (p.211)

Intercultural Competence. Hunter, as cited in Orozco-Domoe (2015), defines intercultural competence as “Having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, and leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one’s environment” (p.63). The term ‘open mind’ is quite important here, because it means not only to be tolerant towards the difference and diversity but also to recognize our own culture, context and environment as sources of knowledge that deserve to be shown to the world. In “Journey to Global Competence: Learning Language, Exploring Cultures, Transforming Lives” Orozco-Domoe (2015) makes reference to Muirhead (2014) and his ideas about being intercultural competent: “Global competence is not a mere content; rather it is a balanced package of interdisciplinary knowledge, dispositions, and skills. If students are not aware of their own cultural identities then they cannot be interculturally competent people. Being globally competent means being able to identify home culture. In order to accomplish

this end, teachers must do mental battle against an “ethnic aisle” attitude towards culture in which only those considered “other” are considered ethnic—We are all ethnic” (p.68).

It is interesting to see how wrong is the well accepted conception that sells the idea of being global competent through the homogenization of culture and language perpetuating the colonialism of the ‘powerful’ language over the ‘powerless’ ones. Instead of looking for homogenization, it is necessary to open the gates for diversity and the acceptance of the cultural heritage embodied in races, communities and languages, because regarding cultural issues we have both, uniqueness and plurality at the same time, and this is what makes cultural interaction so fascinating, the opportunity to create new perspectives of the world. Canagarajah, (2002) holds a very strong position about the influence and almost imposition of Occidentalism over other cultures. According to his beliefs, one cannot assume that knowledge is universal and only relevant for our culture; that does not promote interaction or communication. It is necessary to develop a pluralistic thinking in which diversity; plurality; cultures and identities are celebrated rather than left behind. He invites people to be engaged in projects that promote the shared humanity. “Breaking away from the history of constructing a globalized totality with uniform knowledge and hierarchical community, we should envision building networks of multiple centers that develop diversity as a universal project and encourage an actively negotiated epistemological tradition” (p.257)

As teachers, we can promote these types of projects and activities inside and outside the classroom, and this is what I pretend to do with this study. I want my students to get involved in the process of making sense of their culture and the foreign one; I want them to

open their minds to diversity in a very respectful manner and somehow to construct together what is expressed in this paragraph:

“When educators present culture with depth and breadth, they are able to foster multi-faceted, positive disposition toward the target culture(s) and its people. Through cultural comparison, students begin to see their home culture through the perspective of the other. When the exploration of the culture is authentic, the comparisons/dialogue that students imagine between themselves and the target culture(s) are powerful” (Orozco-Domoe, 2015, p.73).

Community Based Pedagogy

Community Based Pedagogy is the methodological approach this study follows. Sharkey and Clavijo, (2012) have defined it as “curriculum and practices that reflect knowledge and appreciation of the communities in which schools are located and students and families inhabit. . . . [A]n asset-based approach that does not ignore the realities of curriculum standards that teachers must address but emphasizes local knowledge and resources as starting points for teaching and learning. (pp. 130-131)

Community-Based Pedagogy has been implemented in various contexts and has demonstrated to be profitable for the local settings. In addition, many authors have brought to the table the importance of place or context in education, Somerville, Canagarajah and Sharkey, among others. In Somerville’s (2010) view “Place has the potential to offer alternative storylines about who we are in the places where we live and work in an increasingly globalized world” (p. 331). This reflection can help the learner to become self-aware of his/her environment and cultural heritage, creating a deeper sense of belonging. Even more, the author proposes that “A methodology for a place pedagogy needs to

encompass the multiple forms in which alternative representations of place are expressed; the embodiment of experiences in place and the multiple alternative voices and stories about any particular place” Somerville, (2010, p. 340).

According to Sharkey et al, (2016) “enactments of CBPs indicate that CBPs are flexible enough to allow multiple entry points, teacher autonomy, and ownership, and share enough commonalities with other pedagogical approaches to allow different learning trajectories for teachers and students” (p.1). Considering this flexibility, I decided to carry out my study under the frame of Community Based Pedagogy, since I want my students to be active part of their learning process while involving the community and without losing my teacher voice. However, the same authors warn that teachers need to have deeper knowledge of the places and spaces students inhabit before using the local knowledge in productive ways, thus in order to address negative assumptions that they might bring to these spaces. Sharkey et al, (2016). For this reason, I started myself to get familiar with the context before asking my students to go there for mapping and collecting information.

Even more, Foucault, (as cited in Medina Riveros, 2015, p.45) declares, “reading the community critically means questioning reality, raising awareness, transforming self and rewriting the world. It entails drafting an understanding of the power relations that subjugate our students and communities, and using language and literacy tools to initiate very specific transformations in the intricate fabric of power”. Taking into consideration that I want to raise self and intercultural awareness in my students, it is crucial to have an immersion not only in the target culture but also in the own culture, involving the community and giving value to local knowledge and place.

In the framework of Community Based pedagogy, the students worked on a tourist project that mediates a dialog between the culture from Huila and those of visitors that come from other countries. For instance, the statue of liberty and the statue of La Gaitana were compared as cultural icons from students' perspectives. The goal of these contrasting situations was to explore students' perceptions and understanding about the local and the foreign cultures and to promote class discussion surrounding different intercultural topics. Taking advantage of their creativity, technology, and the information gathered from community, students designed brochures, posters and made videos and interviews to promote their local places. These products were shared in a "cultural fair" at school and finally were part of an intercultural encounter with a French tourist guide who is an English, German and Spanish user.

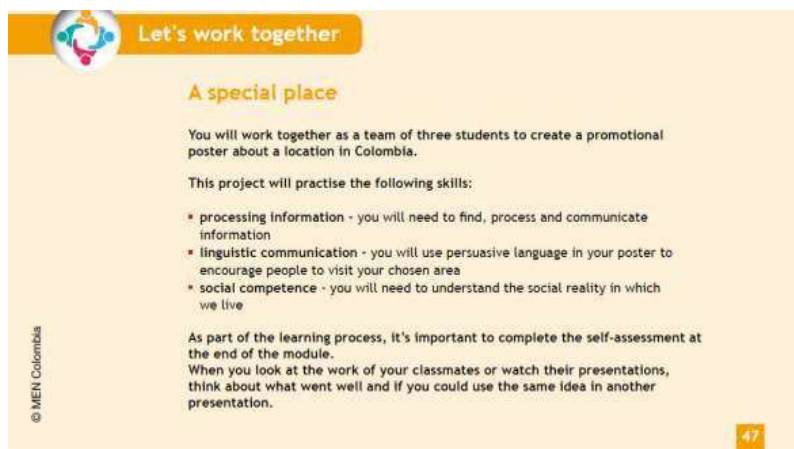
Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Teaching English as a foreign language in Colombia implies a challenge, not only for teachers but also for national, regional and local governments. The later have intended to design and implement standards, parameters and syllabuses that respond to the continuous needs of the students' population for being competent in the use of English language, and as a result, being active part of a global citizenship, considering the fact that English is regarded as the dominant language in terms of globalization. Fishman, (as cited in Bamgbose, 2001) declares that "the world of large scale commerce, industry, technology, and banking, like the world of certain human sciences and professions, is an international world and it is linguistically dominated by English almost everywhere, regardless of how well established and well-protected local cultures, languages, and identities may otherwise be" (p.73). Regarding the role of teachers at switching English

teaching from foreign to international language, McKay (2000), claims that “When teaching English as an international language, educators should recognize the value of including topics that deal with the local culture, support the selection of methodology that is appropriate to the local educational context and recognize the strengths of bilingual teachers of English”. (p.43)

Nevertheless, when working in places that are far from capital cities, teachers can evidence how little are the help and resources that schools and students have to complete tasks or develop activities properly. The Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN) has been implementing the use of specific material exclusively designed for the Colombian community, which is composed by a set of books, audio files and interactive helps called *English, Please!*. The Minister of Education in Colombia, Gina Parody, in her introduction to this package of Study Books affirmed “una de las prioridades del Ministerio de Educación Nacional es construir y consolidar estrategias que permitan a toda la población del sistema público de educación estar en igualdad de condiciones en materia de calidad y, a la vez tener acceso a los recursos educativos que favorezcan el desarrollo de competencias en lengua extranjera como el inglés poniéndolos a la par, a nivel de herramientas, con otros estudiantes de colegios privados en el país” (MEN, 2016).

However, this material has been delivered to few public schools in the whole country so far. Though the material includes community projects and task-based activities which involve the local knowledge and context (see picture below), it is not accessible for most of public institutions in Colombia, where the only contact students have with English, is the one they have 3 hours per week in the classroom.



Taken from: *English Please!* Student Book, Fast Track 9th Grade, p.47

It has been even admitted by the Colombian Ministry of Education (MEN, 2016) that the amount of class hours settled in the English syllabus for public institutions is not the ideal if searching for the development of a bilingual competence as shown in the table below.

TABLA 2. NUEVA RELACIÓN ENTRE LOS GRADOS ESCOLARES EN COLOMBIA						
GRADO	NIVEL DE LENGUA		HORAS ASIGNADAS VS. HORAS RECOMENDADAS PARA EL APRENDIZAJE DE INGLÉS			
			NÚMERO DE HORAS A LA SEMANA Y AL AÑO	RECOMENDADAS	ACUMULADO	
6	A1		3 horas x 36	900	108	
7	A2.1	A2	3 horas x 36	200	108	
8	A2.2		3 horas x 36		108	216
9	B1.1	B1	3 horas x 36	375	108	
10	B1.2		3 horas x 36		108	324
11	B1.3		3 horas x 36		108	

According to the publication “Esquema curricular sugerido para el área de Inglés, Grados 6 a 11” there is a need for Colombians to learn English as a foreign language. This has been even established by the Colombian government as part of the “Plan Nacional de

Desarrollo 2014-218” and has been supported by the development and implementation of programs such as “Colombia Bilingüe”, which pretends that Colombian students reach the B1 level according to the Common European Framework at the end of their secondary studies.

Yet, it is a hard task to reach the expected competence in terms of communication in a foreign language English in the Colombian context. “Actualmente solo el uno por ciento de los alumnos de último grado de colegios oficiales están en nivel pre intermedio B1, es decir que pueden participar en conversaciones, comprender y escribir textos sencillos y entender el contenido de clases y reuniones. Al 2018 se espera que este porcentaje suba a un 8 por ciento y que otro 35 por ciento alcance el nivel básico A2”. EL TIEMPO newspaper, (2016).

Based on principles such as democracy and tolerance, the MEN introduced a guide called “Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje” which intends to enlighten teachers in the development of a new curricula for teaching English focused on factors as globalization and multiculturalism (MEN, 2016). Nevertheless, it is not enough. It cannot be denied that nowadays English is being taught since the early beginning of the educational training, but most of teachers that belong to the public education system and teach students in kindergarten and elementary schools are not English teachers; therefore, most of them do not know how to teach it. Hence, teaching English as a foreign language in the Colombian context is a situation that has to be reconsidered in many aspects: First, the amount of hours per week is not enough for students to reach the expected B1 level at the end of high school. Second, materials and helps should be accessible for all teachers and all students in the whole country if we are looking for equal opportunities and not disparity in comparison

to the private sector. Third, teachers should be professionals in English teaching and constantly trained to enhance their communicative competences and pedagogical strategies. Finally, English teaching should be adapted to the local context, taking into account students' needs and wants and leaving behind the paradigm of the "native like" speaker. As pointed out by McKay (2002) "There is no satisfactory characterization of the term 'native speaker', then it is foolish to accept the construction of native speaker as a model for competence" (p. 53).

One alternative that can be useful for the Colombian context is to shift the focus of how English has been taught since the beginning of its adoption as the foreign language to be learnt in schools and start to reformulate it. This means a change from teaching English as a foreign language to teaching English as an International Language. But, what is English as an International Language? According to McKay (2002), an international language "is a language of wider communication among individuals from different countries and between individuals from one country. In this way, English is an international language". However, Kubota, (2012) questions the wide acceptance of English as an International Language by claiming that it should be more focused on heterogeneous and pluralist perspectives rather than homogeneous and imperialist ones, regarding the fact of the increased multilingualism around the world. According to Kubota, (2012) "The future of English language teaching should incorporate not only anti-normative perspectives to broaden learners' views of English and English speakers, but also an approach that goes beyond English" and this is perhaps the view we need in Colombia in order to reach the desired English communicative competence we are expected to. In Colombia, there is a common assumption about what implies being a competent English speaker, and this belief has to do with the ability of the speaker to

replicate as perfect as possible the native-like sounds. But, does it really matter for the communicative purpose? Do teachers have to emulate native-like accent in the classroom and expect students to do the same? Not all people who use English for wider communication achieve the native-like competence, even more; that is not the main goal they look for. McKay, (2002) argues that “a native speaker norm in English Language research and pedagogy is not relevant to many contexts in which English is used as an international language” (p.47). Switching from EFL to EIL implies a huge challenge for the Colombian system of Education, mainly because we are still in the process of changing our minds about the perception we have of everything that comes from abroad. This dominant culture of imperialism should be reconsidered. It is not about despising foreign cultures but embracing what is good from them to enrich our knowledge and culture (Canagarajah, 2002).

Project work

The didactic strategy used in this study are the projects that students developed to promote tourism in their area and which eventually will become a source of economical income for them. This didactic strategy is framed within Community Based Pedagogy, which is the methodological approach used in this research. Among the advantages of Project work, as stated by Stoller (2002), are that it focuses on content learning rather than on specific language targets, so that real-world subject matters. It is student centered and cooperative rather than competitive, this fits perfectly to students' wants since most of them answered in the exploratory survey that they would like to work in groups rather than individually. Project work also culminates in an end product and this is suitable for the

purpose of this study, since every group of students should hand in a final product of their work and finally it is potentially motivating, stimulating, empowering and challenging. “It usually results in building student confidence, self-esteem and autonomy as well as improving students’ language skills, content learning, and cognitive abilities” (p.32)

Following the principles of project work, students worked cooperatively in teams. Every team chose one of the following topics: Tourist places and landmarks, special coffee production and history of Timaná. To find further information about the topic selected, students carried out visits, interviews, and some research in the local library and on Internet. This searching for information involved the community and the student’s cultural background. Once students produced the material to show what they have done in their projects, it was socialized among the groups and the teacher, and some scaffolding and assessment were done. Then, students shared the results of their teamwork research with the complete academic community in a cultural fair, as a rehearsal for the next step that was having an intercultural encounter with a foreign English user.

Besides, project work was followed during the stages of implementation of this study; this type of methodology provided the learners with activities that were focused on specific subjects or contents while using the target language. What is remarkable about this approach is the fact that all communicative skills can be integrated and embodied in different projects, regarding the topic or issue learners are due to focus on. “In this approach, students are exposed to study skills and learn a variety of language skills which prepare them for the range of academic tasks they will encounter” Brinton as cited in (Stoller, 2002)

As I was working on intercultural awareness through community based pedagogy in a school located in a rural area of Huila, where beautiful landmarks and cultural traditions are part of the local imaginary, this approach matched the concept of my research project since it had to do with project work activities. According to Stoller, teachers can develop vocational English tasks and lessons by carrying out this type of approach. Students could create bulletin boards or brochures to promote local tourism, which includes written information in the target language (Stoller, 2002).

Chapter III

Methodological Design

In this chapter, the reader will find the Research Design as well as the Instructional Design of this study.

Research Design

This segment of the document encompasses the research approach and type of study I followed, likewise the research question and objectives that conducted this study. Additionally, I present the participants involved in this research as well as the instruments used for data collection.

Research approach. This study followed a qualitative approach since it fits the type of study developed with this specific population. In general, a qualitative research consists of searching for answers to a question, using a predefined set of procedures to answer the question, collecting evidence, producing findings that were not determined in advance and producing findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study.

According to Cresswell, (2007), the utmost characteristic of a qualitative research is that the information gathered for the study is obtained in a natural setting, having a face-to-face interaction with the participants. Locke (as cited in Creswell, 2007), affirms that the main role of the researcher is to interpret and for doing so he or she has to be intensively involved in the experience with the participants, keeping in mind factors such as gender, history, culture, socioeconomic status and any other that can shape their interpretation

during the study. I also chose qualitative research for “it seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations” (Mack, et al. 2005, p.1). This approach fits my study, since I worked directly with the students and the community and therefore I obtained the information directly from them in their own context.

Type of study. I chose Action Research to guide my inquiry as a way of covering students’ needs while giving them choices in their learning. In Burns’ views, (2009), Action Research has to do with the teacher exploring and investigating in his/her own classroom, getting a deeper understanding of challenges, ideas or dilemmas that are going on with students. Furthermore, Kemmis and McTaggart, (1998) see Action Research as a spiral process formed by four stages: Planning, acting, observing and reflecting. These stages are explained as follows according to Burns (2009). In the *planning stage*, teachers identify the problem situation they want to focus on and start to organize ideas and materials to work with. Having decided the plan to follow, teachers move to the *acting stage* and collect evidence or data about what is happening in the classroom as a result of the plan. Then, in the *observing stage*, teachers analyze and report their findings and finally in the *reflecting stage*, teachers evaluate the findings from their research. Once the cycle has finished, researchers can start again setting new ideas obtained from the study by following the same steps. A common factor about Action Research is the implementation of guided inquiry that according to Kuhlthau, (2009), is mostly based on the Constructivist Approach that is regarded as a process from which students are able to take part in their learning in an active

and meaningful manner, providing them knowledge for life. In the process of construction, the teacher assumes the role of a guide and the students are the ones in charge of building deep understanding and cognitive development through research and inquiry.

As a support for theories about Inquiry, Kuhlthau cites some background studies on the field. Dewey (as cited in Kuhlthau, 2009), carried out one of those studies. He proposes six phases or stages in reflective thinking that are a fundamental component for the construction based educational theory: suggestion, intellectualization, guiding idea, reasoning and action. Every one of the stages is necessary to reach the goal of thinking critically and teachers can evidence the success of this process when designing and implementing units of knowledge following these principles. However, it is not an easy task. Students can find some of the stages really hard and frustrating. Exploration and formulation are difficult and confusing for students “They are encountering lots of new ideas that often conflict with what they already know and seem incompatible with each other” (Kelly as cited in Kuhlthau, 2009).

In the educational field, innovation is necessary to keep students engaged towards learning and sometimes it is difficult to come to the classrooms with our minds full of ideas. Based on my own experience, motivation is one of the main pillars we need to construct in our teaching and involving students in an active mode is a good strategy to make them aware of what is happening in the classroom. It is fundamental to keep in mind what they already know and what they want to learn, and of course involving social interaction to enrich the construction of knowledge. In her paper “Learning Together through Inquiry” Short (1996), expresses the importance of taking into consideration the

students' needs in designing curricula and involving them in meaningful learning experiences. "Curriculum is most powerful when teachers, with their experiences, interests and knowledge (including state and district curriculum mandates), and students, with their experiences interests and knowledge come together" (p.56). Considering Short' views, it is exhausting for teachers when creativity comes only from them and when teachers are applying units just based on text books they are limited and safe, not risking to grow in diversity. Hence, it is necessary to involve students in the process of exploring new alternatives, searching for answers based on their experiences.

Short, (1996) regards learning as a continuous cycle in which students are providing broad concepts to work on and thereby making connections about different topics. They are integrated not isolated from education. Perhaps, educators need to follow this pattern to go beyond textbooks or established curricula, involving students in the processes of designing, taking into account their learning styles and their needs. Carrying out these changes in our classrooms could make a great difference in the way learning has been handled in public education institutions so far.

Participants. Eleventh graders from an EFL classroom, in a rural public school, were the participants of this study and myself as teacher researcher. These are described below.

Students. A group of 11th graders, males and females, whose average age is 16-18 years old, integrates the target population of this study. In terms of their English proficiency, students are not that skillful but they were willing to participate in the study

and to work cooperatively to learn more about their place and other cultures. Since in this study the local knowledge and cultural identity were taken into account, the community played a significant role in the process.

Teacher-researcher. As I want to promote intercultural awareness, I share Cakir's beliefs (2006) when says that teachers have to play a role in breaking down cultural barriers if wanting to achieve culture goals. My purpose as research was to facilitate interaction with community and teamwork with students in order to address good primary sources of information for further analysis. Chenail, (2011).

Instruments and data collection procedures. I used four instruments to collect the data from the different stages of the study, which were students' artifacts, field notes, (photographs/video recording) unstructured interviews and surveys. The purpose of the instruments as well as their importance in the collection of data are explained onward.

Artifacts. The main data collection instrument of this study was the students' artifacts (e.g. students' products derived from class activities). Artifacts were used in the present research because students developed different kinds of activities such as oral and power point presentations, brochures, posters, videos, interviews and written reflections. This set of activities allowed the researcher to obtain first hand data for further analysis, having the students' perceptions and thoughts expressed in multiple manners. The picture below shows a sample of students' work related to one of the activities they developed which had to do with their life stories. Students worked individually collecting data from parents and family in order to construct their life stories, which

were presented in class. This activity helped some of my students to talk about difficult situations in their families and somehow release their feelings. Two students even cried when reading their stories and this helped me to understand better their contexts and family backgrounds. Life stories were relevant for this study since they gave me a picture of my students' background knowledge, not only in terms of use of English but also about family and context, which fits to the purpose of the observing stage regarding action research guidelines.



Field Notes: Hopkins (2002) defines field notes as “a way of reporting observations, reflections and reactions to classroom problems. Ideally, they should be written as soon as possible after a lesson” (p.103). Field notes are valuable resources to assure having fresh information from the activities planned and reflect about them further on. They were important for my research because they provided good on-going record and the information contained was descriptive rather than speculative which facilitated its later analysis. In the sample below, I reflect on my first classes with the group and my concerns about the little participation they had in class when asked to use English.

DESCRIPTION	INTERPRETATION	REFLECTION
As I'm starting to work in this school, I want to know the students and their English level, this in order to design the activities they will need to improve their competences. I started my classes by doing a short dynamic: pass-stop and motivating the students to talk about themselves.	To know the people I'm going to work with, is very important for me as a teacher; mainly because I want to apply the right strategies and methods according to their proficiency.	After doing the exercise I noticed that despite of having a lot of written exercises and grammar in their notebooks, most of the students didn't reach the goal of the exercise: To talk about themselves in English. Not even a short introducing or likes and dislikes. This is worrying me.

After class, I also did informal interviews to some of the students, asking them about their dreams, families and if they did like to learn English or not. At the beginning, students were a bit shy, but then they started to talk about things they like to do, sports, food, movies and so on. Data from the behavior observed during and after class helped me to understand that, maybe the problem was not lack of interest or even their English level because the activity was a very basic one. The key factor here is that these students needed and wanted to be heard but somehow the atmosphere of the classroom was interfering because they perceived the activity, as some kind of evaluation, and talking to the teacher

in class was different from doing so outside. Two students told me they were afraid of speaking during the activity because they did not feel confident enough, but outside the classroom, they felt more freedom to speak.

Videotape recorder and digital camera: Hopkins (2002), defines videotape recorder and digital camera as “a means of gathering general information which allows teachers to observe many facets of his or her teaching quickly and provides heuristic and accurate information for diagnosis”. (p.115). As we had outdoor activities during the implementation of this study, using this type of instrument was helpful to support observations and to have first impressions about activities and students’ attitude towards them. It also enables situations to be constantly reviewed, which is valuable to diagnose problem situations and to observe patterns of progress. In the picture below, I photographed my students during a guided visit to Santa Clara’s caves as part of our local tourism project. This was our first outdoor activity and students really enjoyed to work outside; they were collecting information, interviewing community members, taking their own photos and talking all the time about popular stories and the way they could introduce the place to foreigners . They asked me many questions about the possibility of interacting with a foreign person and were very enthusiastic with the idea. I also used videotape recorder to collect information from outdoor activities, however, that evidence is not included in the data analysis of this study.



Surveys. Three surveys were applied in three different stages of the study. The first survey was the one that provided information to determine the problem statement and the research question. The second survey was applied after implementing the first cycle of intercultural activities and it helped to establish if the students were engaged with the contents and the way classes and activities were being developed. The last survey was applied at the end of the project and its aim was to help the researcher to determine to what extent intercultural awareness was developed via Community-Based Pedagogy and therefore to determine the possible answer to the research question of this study. In the excerpt below, the reader can see some of the questions and answers from the first survey that belonged to the exploratory phase.

1. ¿Es importante para Ud. el inglés?
 SI NO
 ¿Por qué?
PORQUE HOY EN DIA ES MUY NECESARIO PARA COMUNICAR CON
PERSONAS QUE HABLAN EL IDIOMA.

2. Aprender el idioma Inglés le parece
 Aburrido Dificil
 Fácil Interesante

3. Considera que para aprender inglés es Ud.
 Muy bueno Bueno
 Regular Me cuesta trabajo

Unstructured Interviews. This type of interviewing involves direct interaction between the researcher and a respondent or group. Unstructured differs widely from traditional structured interviewing, firstly, though the researcher may have some initial guiding questions, there is no formal structured instrument or protocol to be followed and secondly, the interviewer has freedom to move the conversation in any direction of interest that may come up. Unstructured interviews are particularly useful for deepen exploration of a topic, nevertheless, because of its lack of structure each interview is unique and therefore it is more difficult to analyze data collected. (Trochim, 2006)

Instructional Design

In this section of the research document, I present my pedagogical intervention including the instructional objectives. It also addresses the intervention conceived as an innovation, the vision of language, and language learning that supported the implementation, the methodological approach followed, the relation of the instructional design with the research question, the instructional phases and finally, I present a sample of a worksheet developed in class regarding cultural content.

Pedagogical intervention – didactic strategy. The pedagogical strategy used in this study were the projects that students developed in groups aiming to get a deeper understanding of their own culture and the foreign one while promoting local tourism and cultural heritage. The project also explored local tourism as an alternative for students' economic income and their community. This didactic strategy is framed within Community Based Pedagogy which was the methodological approach used in this study and which allowed students to work in teams as researchers, exploring what their place has to offer in the development of their projects.

How did 11th graders work with community knowledge and cultural heritage? Following the principles of Community-Based Pedagogy, students worked cooperatively in teams collecting information from their place through a mapping activity and interviewing and subsequently they used that information to structure their projects. Every team chose a specific topic to focus on, among which they had tourist places and landmarks, special coffee production and the history and legends about Timaná. To find further information about the topic selected, students carried out visits, interviews, and

some research in the local library and on Internet. This searching for information involved the community and the student's cultural and family backgrounds.

Once students produced the material to show what they had done in their projects, it was socialized among the groups, the teacher, and some scaffolding and assessment was done. Then, students shared the results of their teamwork research with the complete academic community in an activity called "cultural fair", as a rehearsal for the next step that was having an intercultural encounter with a foreign English user. The resources used for the implementation of the pedagogical strategy were readings, workshops, worksheets and talks with special guests, as well as human resources regarding Community Based Pedagogy, like an independent local tourism entrepreneur, the secretary of culture from the municipality, a French tourist guide who is an English, German and Spanish user, and the local people.

Instructional objectives.

General: To take advantage of the community's local knowledge and places to design workshops that lead to the development of students' intercultural awareness.

Specifics: a) To trigger students' interest in exploring their cultural background and b) To take ownership of students' local culture and to promote it using the English language.

Intervention as innovation. As stated before, this research study inquired to raise students' intercultural awareness through the development of local culture and tourism projects framed within Community Based Pedagogy. This view of learning English while taking advantage of local knowledge is innovative since it was the first time students had the opportunity to explore their place with a researcher's vision and integrate it to an English project. Working with the community was meaningful for them since they found English as a means to communicate their feelings and thoughts, not only as an isolated subject in the classroom. Intercultural contents were more relevant for them when discussing about those topics in the class and contrasting them with their own culture. All the activities involved teamwork and self-reflection, so that students discovered the classroom as a place for debate and exploration of knowledges. Working outside gave the students a sense of freedom and they were my guides when visiting their community; somehow the roles were inverted as I felt myself as the pupil of my students and they were glad to share their knowledge with their teacher.

In the last activity of the project, it was the first time my students had the experience of interacting with a foreigner and even more, being the hosts. They were the ones showing their own traditions, not only absorbing or consuming the foreign culture, but also being proud of sharing and 'interchanging skins'. They had never worked before on intercultural contents, nor had they debated about cultural topics and being that aware of the importance of traditions and local knowledge for academic purposes at the school. This study is also innovative because it searched to broaden students' minds and perceptions about diversity while giving them a deeper sense of belonging, and why not, what could be the seed for new business opportunities since tourism is almost unexplored

in their community. Local and regional governments are promoting it through programs such as “Huila: un paraíso por descubrir” and alliances with the National learning service SENA.

Theory of the nature of language and language learning. The vision of language entailed in this study is language from a cultural and ideology perspective (Tudor, 2002) and as experiential in terms of learning (Tudor, 2001). Conceived as a means to reach transactional goals, language expresses aspects of the culture as well as the view of the world that speakers from a specific community hold. Tudor (2001) claims that “learning a language implies learning the culture of the language”. Even more, Stevick, (1989) assures that "learning to see the world through the eyes of a different culture may be one of the most broadly educational advantages of learning another language" (as cited in Tudor , 2001, p.70). Sociocultural aspects of communities are determinant factors when crossing the bridge of communication in a foreign language, since learners should contextualize language into varied cultural situations.

As experiential, two issues are proposed, learning by doing and experience in context. The first one considers that learning language for communicative purposes is not only a goal but a means for learning as well (Tudor, 2001). Five principles are followed in experiential learning: *message focus* (conveyance), *holistic practice* (manipulation of various communicative parameters and levels of linguistic information), *use of communication strategies* (learners develop strategic skills that may be used inside and outside the EFL classroom) and *collaborative modes of learning* (learning activities and tasks that involve cooperation among learners). In terms of experience in context, students

learn a language to put it into some kind of pragmatic use and this can be proficient through communicative and problem solving activities that are relevant and meaningful for them, not only for the moment but also for the future, for life (Tudor, 2001).

Methodological approach underlying the pedagogical intervention /strategy.

Through the implementation of Community Based Pedagogy, I hope that my students develop a deeper sense of belonging to their place while learning and appreciating the local knowledge and its value, not only to accomplish tasks for the project but also for life. Mapping the community was the first step students followed when recognizing the potential sources of information that the community had to offer and which of them were useful for their projects. During this stage, students interviewed outstanding members of their community, visited remarkable places and institutions and took pictures and videos of their place. All the data gathered from these activities was analyzed and discussed with partners and the teacher and it was later included in their group presentations and brochures.

Relation of the instructional design with the research question or inquiry.

Regarding the research question of this study, I can say that the objectives and the activities proposed in the instructional design correspond to the inquiry since they aimed at raising students' awareness through the development of group projects within the frame of Community Based Pedagogy involving the local context. I want to mention here the post method pedagogy, since it fits to the results observed during the development of the activities in the instructional design. According to Kumaravadivelu (2006), three parameters constitute the conceptual foundation for a post method pedagogy, Particularity, Practicality and Possibility. The parameter of particularity, which emphasizes on local

exigencies and lived experiences, was fulfilled in this project because students worked with their local community and the experiences they registered were real. The parameter of Practicality, which can be summarized in the union of action and thought, was widely developed in this proposal since the teacher assumed a pedagogical and reflective position about the work that was done. Talking about intercultural awareness, it is a duty for the teacher to get well informed about the cultural, local and historical facts that could emerge during the process of collecting data and to keep students motivated towards learning. The third parameter, which is Possibility, has to do with language ideology and learner identity, which was developed having in mind that because of all the research work and hands on tasks students did, they focused on obtaining a deeper understanding of their cultural roots and heritage. Thereby, it is highly probable for them to shape and develop their own identity based on their sense of belonging towards the place where they live.

Instructional phases. In this part, I present the set of activities that were developed through the implementation stages, exploratory, deepening, hands on and reflection. These stages are framed on the principles of action research, which propose four steps in a cyclical process: observing, planning, acting and evaluating. According to the original chart, the activities were planned for 8 weeks, but it took more time to fulfil the tasks proposed; 12 weeks to be accurate.

STAGE	WEEK	TERMINAL OBJECTIVE	TYPE OF ACTIVITY
Exploratory	1	To become familiar with the concept of culture and what does it mean for the students	Cultural talk: Special guest
Deepening	2	To explore what knowledge students have about their place and community	Workshop
Exploratory			

Hands on Exploratory	3	To socialize perceptions about cultures around the world and shape their own concept about culture	Video, debate and drawing
Deepening Reflection	4	To reflect about stereotypes and differences between American and Colombian cultures regarding students vacations	Reading and debate
End of the first cycle:		Analysis of data, and planning of next stages	Field notes, artifacts
Exploratory Deepening	5	To become familiar with the concepts of local tourism and its relevance to preserve one's identityTo reflect about English as a global language: pros and cons	Teacher talk and videos Reading comprehension and Oral interaction
Deepening	6	To look at their place as a valuable resource and a business opportunity To become familiar with the concepts of local tourism and its relevance to preserve one's identity	Tourism Talk: Special guest Teacher talk and videos
Hands on Deepening	7	Mapping: To collect information about tourist places and local knowledge in a chart To look at their place as a valuable resource and a business opportunity	Community mapping Tourism Talk: Special guest
Reflection Hands on	8	To reflect about English as a global language: pros and consMapping: To collect information about tourist places and local knowledge in a chart	Reading comprehension and Oral interactionCommunity mapping
End of second cycle:		Analysis of data, and planning of next stages	Field notes, artifacts, interviews
Exploratory Hands on	9	To collect first-hand information about tourist places and local knowledge (pictures and interviews)	Outdoor activities
Deepening Hands on	10	To organize the data gathered in a means selected by the group	Brochures, slides, posters, videos
Hands on	11	To talk about tourist places and cultural knowledge of community in a presentation	Tourism fair at school

Hands on	12	To reflect about their feelings and thoughts after	Intercultural encounter
Reflection		experiencing real use of English in an out of school activity	
Last cycle:		Analysis of data, students' and teacher reflections	Field notes, artifacts, survey

Figure 1. Sample of terminal objectives for the pedagogical intervention

Source: Own

Figure 1 illustrates, in the first column, the stages that were covered during the implementation of the research study. The exploratory stage comprises a set of activities planned with the objective of becoming familiar with the concepts of culture and exploring their own cultural background. The deepening stage aims at widening concepts by addressing specific topics, discussing, and reflecting about them. The hands on stage is the one in which the students got involved directly with the project by working with the community and with their groups developing specific tasks that involved self-awareness, decision making and problem solution. The reflection stage comprised the last hands on activities and a written self-reflection, which were done after experiencing an intercultural encounter.

The second column of the table presents the weeks in which the activities were developed sequentially. The third column shows the objectives pursued in each week and the activities planned for that purpose. Most of these objectives were related to cultural contents: collecting information about tourist places, talking about cultural knowledge of the community, promoting tourist places and local tourism and finally reflecting about their feelings and thoughts after experiencing real use of English in an out of school activity, among others. The last column mentions the type of activities to be followed weekly during the implementation of the project. This column includes, readings, debates, interviews, oral presentations, oral interactions and making of videos, slides and brochures about the cultural contents selected per group since all of the activities were done collaboratively. Before starting the set of activities for every stage, a survey was conducted to determine the needs and therefore the research question. Then, I took advantage of the curriculum to develop an exploratory activity, life stories, which helped me to have some lights about students' family background and context, as well as their dreams and English

proficiency, because this was a written and oral task. After analyzing the survey, the observations and the field notes, it was determined that there was a need of including more cultural contents in the English class in order to raise students' intercultural awareness. This assumption led to the design of the activities that covered the stages of the whole process, following the cyclical model of action research. In the first week, students had a talk with the secretary of culture and tourism of the municipality and this served the purpose of capture students' perceptions about the value of their own culture and local knowledge answer some questions regarding these aspects before the talk and then contrasted their answers with the information received. In second week, students worked in teams in the workshop "Las enseñanzas de Don Juan" which gave me more information about community background knowledge students had, as well as their use of English and disposition towards group work. In this activity, I started to realize that it was necessary to make my students aware of diversity regarding English language usage. In the third week, we carried out a debate after watching a video related to different cultures around the world and students designed their own flag. This activity was quite interesting. First, students could share ideas about what they thought about foreign cultures and traditions and some misconceptions and stereotypes were part of the discussion. Secondly, it was a challenge and a kind of competition to design their own flags because every student came up with ideas and wanted to have the most beautiful flag, even more, they needed to explain their choices using English and finally my students' drawings and answers gave me more information about their personalities than any other activity. The instruction of this activity was to draw a flag that represent them if every one of them were a country, they were allowed to use symbols, letters and colours and the results were amazing. In the last stage, we debated based on a reading about misconceptions and stereotypes, and make

a respectful comparison among American and Colombian cultures, which was very valuable for my field notes. At the end of this first cycle, I made my own reflections based on the data collected so far and started to design the activities for the next stages. In week number five I started to introduce local tourism based on information from “Huila: Un paraíso por descubrir”, a top program of Huila Government and videos from Huila Travel, a local tourism agency. In the six week, we had a talk with a local tourism entrepreneur who gave students some lights about the possibilities to take advantage of the local places to preserve our identities and to let the world to know about those beautiful places using English as a means. In week number seven, students started to collect information about local tourist attractions using the mapping strategy in the frame of Community Based Pedagogy, this was a cooperative work since students worked in teams and every group selected a place or an attraction to work with. After collecting the information, and as I was monitoring the activities, some students asked me about differences between people from English speaking countries and people who use English as a foreign language, like me. “Profe, ¿usted si les entiende a los gringos cuando le hablan?” one student asked to me. This question was perfect for the last stage of this second cycle, which was a reflection based on a reading about the use of English as a global language. At the end of this second cycle, students were more aware of the diversity in terms of communication and all the possibilities that languages, not only English can offer to the world and the anxiety about speaking in class and making mistakes started to be reduced spontaneously. In the last cycle, the groups advanced a little more in the collection of data for their projects and interviewed people from community, did fieldwork to photograph places and made videos. In week number ten, students showed me the information gathered and started to work on the presentations, brochures, posters and videos. I offered them constantly support about

the written English they used, but allowing them making mistakes and not overwhelming them with grammar rules. In week eleven, a tourism fair at school took place and students showed to the academic community their projects; this activity served as a training for the last stage of this cycle. In week twelve, we had an intercultural encounter with an English user, a French tourist guide who had a good disposition to be part of this study since the first time I talked to him about it. This person, was the first tourist my students received and they were supposed to speak to him about the place we visited (Santa Clara's caves) in English, but the activity was not that successful in terms of English speaking. My students were very shy and felt intimidated at the beginning of the journey, then, they started to produce some short phrases in English such as greetings and demonstratives. However, in terms of interaction it was amazing. The group realized that they could communicate their thoughts using other strategies like body language and mimics, they asked the visitor to speak in French and German too. After visiting the caves, we finished the activity sharing a typical dish "asado huilense" in one of my students' home. There, the interaction was better; they felt more comfortable and told me "Profe, el señor es muy sencillo y descomplicado. ¡Qué bacano!". To end this cycle, students wrote a reflection about the encounter and answered a survey about the whole process. All the data collected was used for triangulation and analysis.

Sample of lesson. Below I include a sample of one of the outdoor activities condensed in a brochure designed by the students regarding a local tourist place chosen by the group.

<p>Viaeruel</p> <p>Literally, viaeruel means "way of the cross". In praying it, we remember with love and gratitude how much Jesus suffered to save us from sin during his passion and death.</p> <p>This path is represented by 15 images of the Passion that are called "stations". You will be encouraged to carry the crosses of each day if you frequently remember the seasons or steps of Jesus to Cahary.</p> 	<p>Landscapes</p> 	<p>TOBO TIMANÁ-HUILA</p>  <p>JIMENA HOMBELINA NELSON OBRIGERA VIVIANA MAYA OBRIGERA SERGIO CARRERA NARVAEZ</p>
<p>Sanctuary Tobo</p> <p>Patroness: Our Lady of Miracles.</p> <p>In the village of Tobo, Timaná parish, a beautiful painting of the Virgin Mary is venerated in time immemorial, under the invocation of Our Lady of Miracles.</p> <p>Numerous pilgrims come to seek a remedy in their needs, and many favors the Divine Mother dispenses, especially in the healing of their bodily ailments, without excepting prodigious conversions of people far from God, who return to Christian life and continue being exemplary in the performance of their duties.</p> 	<p>Aposentos of tobo</p> <p>Are located in the Quebrad of the same name, are two natural depressions formed by gigantic moles of stone that in concave form make two canyons where the water making the figures that the enormous stone forces it.</p> <p>This tourist attraction takes us to enjoy a</p>  <p>walk to two beautiful waterfalls that make us feel when we are bathing protected.</p> 	<p>religious life</p> <p>Predominates the Catholic religion famous for the celebration of the virgin of miracles on August 7 many pilgrims visit daily many miracles received by its filigree has a chapel in tribute to the virgin - house cural and home of spiritual retreats.</p> 

Chapter IV

Data Analysis and Findings

In this chapter, I present the analysis procedure as well as the stages used for that analysis. I also describe the Research categories and subcategories that emerged from this analysis. The instruments were organized, analyzed and classified according to the categories aiming at answering my research question and supported on theory and constructs from the Literature Review of this study.

Procedure for Data Analysis

To begin with, the process used in this study to analyze and interpret the data collected from surveys, unstructured interviews, field notes, students' artifacts and photographs was the Grounded Approach. According to Glasser and Strauss (1967), the Grounded Theory Approach is feasible for social research since it emphasizes on the generation and discovering of theory from empirical data that has been obtained systematically. Widening this previous concept, Freeman (1998) specifies that a Grounded Approach Analysis is a theory in which we can create categories based on information collected from instruments by establishing common patterns and comparisons. This process comprises four phases: *naming, grouping, finding relationships and displaying*. In the first phase, we label the data using codes in order to classify and analyze the information collected. In the second phase, we group the information that follows common patterns using color-coding. In the third phase, we find relationships among the categories created from the previous steps and finally, in the last phase, we display the common information creating a structure for the whole data gathered and classified. To triangulate the information obtained, Freeman, (1998) suggests that it is necessary to include multiple

sources of information as well as multiple points of view regarding the phenomenon investigated. Hence, I included the instruments I considered pertinent to obtain different sources of information, such as unstructured interviews, surveys, students' artifacts and field notes. The categories allow the researcher to identify patterns and relationships after the data collection, taking into account that social interaction is impossible to predict with a hundred percent accuracy. Most samples presented here were taken from students' artifacts after applying a set of activities related to intercultural contents, including videos, readings and workshops.

Research Categories

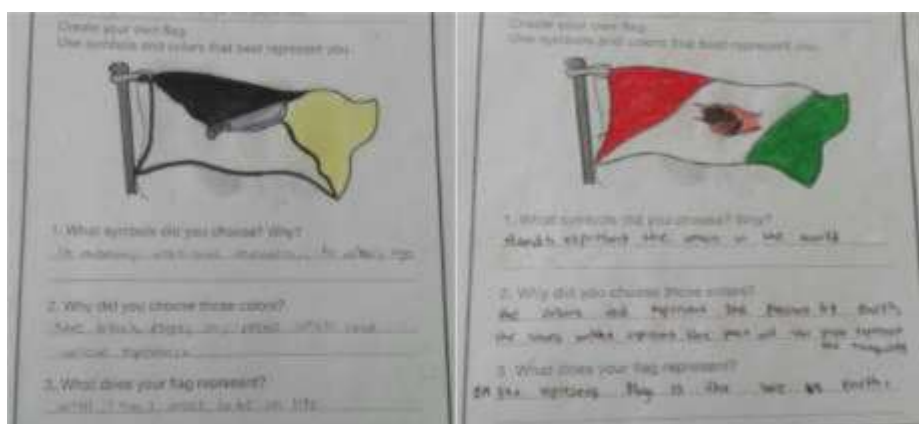
After analyzing the data following the steps proposed by Freeman, I identified three categories with its corresponding subcategories regarding the research question and objectives that were addressed in this study. These categories are presented in the following table and will be described onward.

Categories	Sub categories
Activating Cultural Background and Background Knowledge of L2	<i>Expressing Culture and Beliefs</i> <i>Solving Communicative Issues in L2</i>
Involving the Community in a School Project	<i>Working on alternative activities and projects as learning strategies</i> <i>Appropriating Own Culture and Broadening Knowledge about the Foreign One</i> <i>Giving value to their place and experiencing an intercultural encounter</i>

Activating cultural background and background knowledge of L2. During the analysis of the data collected, as researcher I evidenced that students appealed to their previous knowledge in the foreign language to complete the tasks proposed. However, as the tasks required from the students to reflect about their community *savoirs*, Rico, (2011) they needed to go back to their own experiences, the stories they were told and the people they know, using in this manner their cultural background. Something relevant about one of the activities was that students had to make choices in order to pick up a story about someone they know in their community who had empirical or ancestral knowledge to heal people or treat diseases using alternative medicine. Students worked in groups of four members and almost every student had a different and interesting story to work on. They selected a question for each one to deepen but they worked together in the answers, especially those ones that needed to be answered in English. Giving form to their ideas in English language was easier when working in groups; however, they made grammar mistakes and misspelling. According to Nunan, as cited in Richards and Rogers (2001, p. 224), when students work together to complete a communicative task in the target language, their attention should be principally focused on meaning rather than the form; hence, the key factor here is to reach the communicative goal. Regarding this category I developed a workshop based on the book “Las Enseñanzas de Don Juan” written by Carlos Castaneda. Students should read the introduction of the book and answer some questions contrasting information from the reading with examples from their community. It was motivating to see how they were so involved in the activity while working together as a group and sharing stories about people from their community who could be suitable for

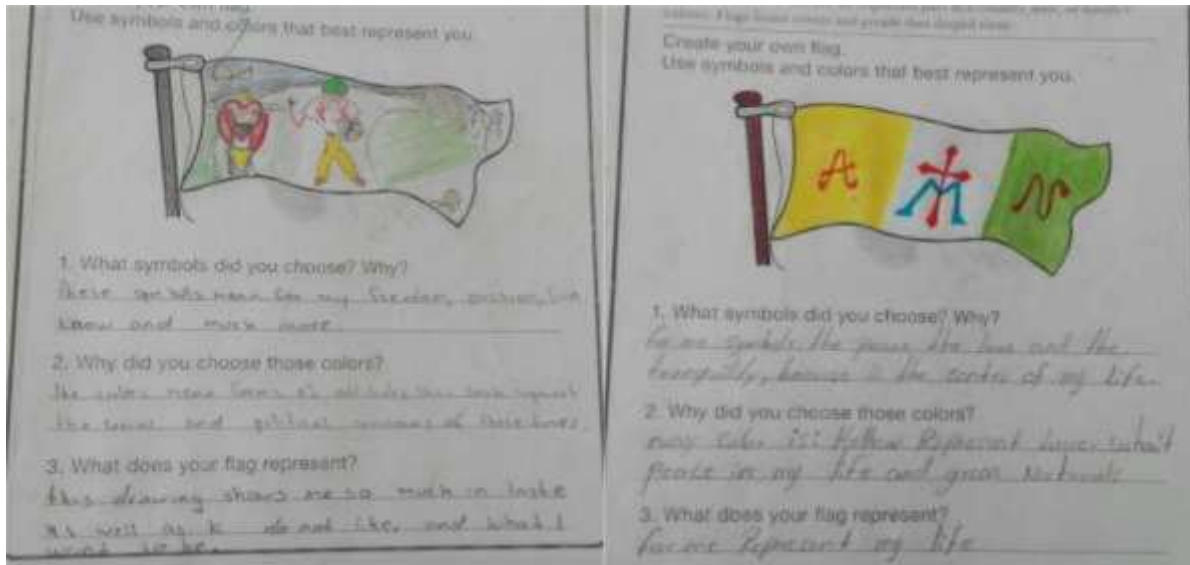
completing the activity. According to Somerville's (2010), "Place has the potential to offer alternative storylines about who we are in the places where we live and work in an increasingly globalized world" (p. 331). This assumption was well reflected in the activity where students took advantage of the local knowledge of the place they live to set an example to contrast with the reading workshop. As the reading was written in English and they had to answer the questions using the foreign language, this offered me evidence of their L2 background knowledge.

Expressing culture and beliefs. When analyzing this subcategory, it was interesting to see and to try to interpret some students' samples that were full of cultural contents and personal beliefs, expressed not only in a written form but also by using symbols, drawings and colors. As we know, communication is not only a matter of verbal discourse; it involves many other aspects such as non verbal communication, body language, symbols and so on. Pennycook (1994), sees verbal discourse as only one of the many modalities in which culture gets constructed: "Discourse does not refer to language or uses of language, but to ways of organizing meaning that are often, though not exclusively, realized through language" (p.128). This fits the samples analyzed here, since the communicative purpose of the activity was not merely based on written or verbal language. In the students' samples below, symbols and colors are used among written language to express culture and beliefs.



Something interesting about this exercise was the reading that someone else including myself could make of drawings and symbols used by the students, as for example, in the drawing of a machete in the middle of a flag. When I saw that symbol for the first time, the first word that came to my mind was violence and when I presented that drawing in a slide during a conference in Bogotá, I asked the audience, what does this symbol mean to you? And the answers were quite similar: violence, displacement, war, guerrilla, etc. However, for the student who drew that machete, it symbolized hardworking, because he is a farmer, and the machete is a tool for him to work with, rather than an instrument for violence. This made me reflect about the different notions, beliefs or stereotypes we hold even when sharing what seems to be the “same culture”. In this respect, Kramsh, (1998) points out that when used in contexts of communication, verbal and non-verbal aspects reflect the author’s attitudes and beliefs, so that language embodies and symbolizes cultural reality. This is what we can evidence in that machete drawing; it reflects my student’s reality, not mine or others’. In the second sample, the student chose to draw two hands shaking, one white and the other black. In this case, I understood that it symbolized the union of human kind and the end of racism. Again, I asked others, what they saw in that drawing and the answers were quite similar: world peace, end of discrimination, union, etc. and that is what my student wanted to represent according to what he wrote in his paper. In this case, our beliefs were similar and matched somehow with his drawing. Expressing beliefs was one of the most productive part of the exercise, because by this means, I could get closer to my students’ minds and perceptions, their beliefs, their dreams and their plans for the future and even some aspects related to past experiences in their lives. Thus, I include below two more samples of my students’ artifacts.

In these drawings, students represented their dreams and life experiences.

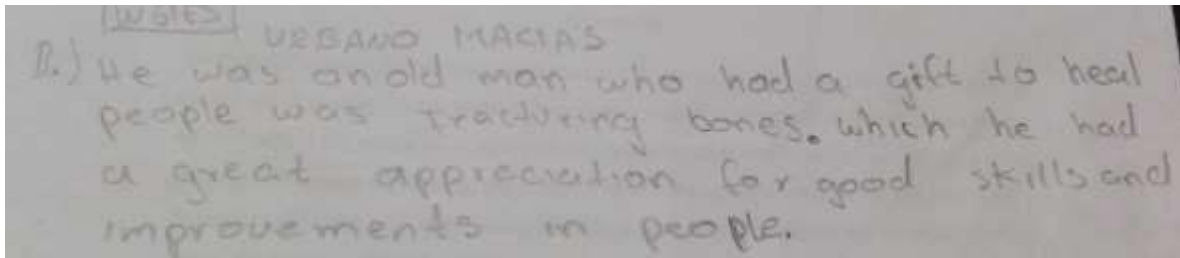


A student who came from Caquetá, a department that has been the target of many guerilla and paramilitary attacks, made the first drawing. As we can see in his second answer *“the colors means forms of attitudes that took against the social and political contours of these days”*. With this statement, he is clearly expressing his reality. When I asked him about that drawing for more detailed information, he told me that his family had to move from their town by force; abandoning everything, land, friends, relatives and school. After knowing about that situation, I understood better my student choices and what is more, I had a deeper knowledge about his family background, which gave me the idea to work in a movie forum regarding similar situations in Colombia. I made that decision because I wanted my student not to feel alone about what had happened to him and his family and after that, he became one of my best collaborators with all the projects. A student who wants to become a priest, that is his dream, made the second drawing and it was somehow reflected in the symbols he used to decorate his flag. These artifacts are priceless for my study since they reflect something beyond L2 learning; through these

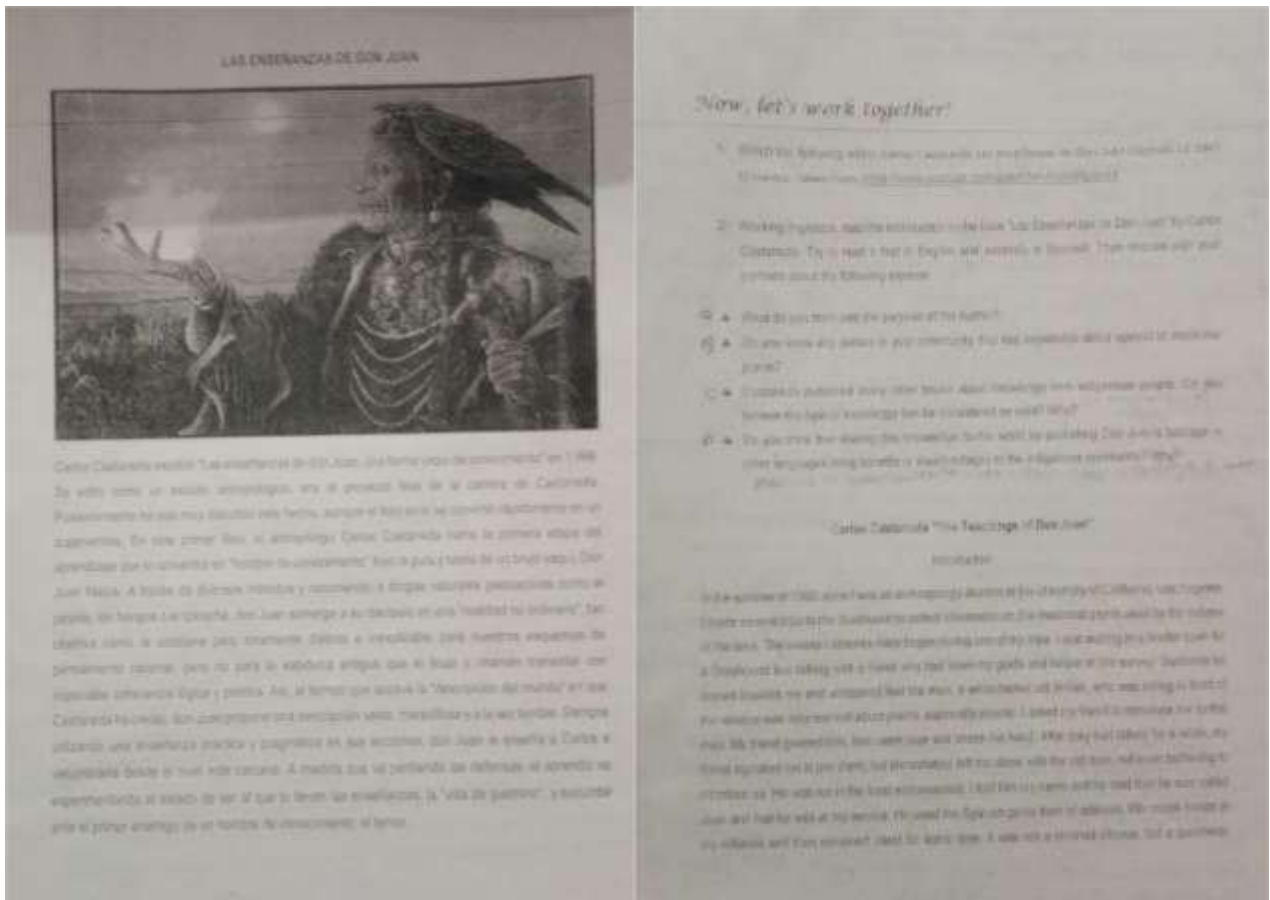
activities, I was closer to the aim of this project, which was to inquire about the development of intercultural awareness taking into account community and context.

In the sample below, the students answered the question ‘Do you know any person in your community that has knowledge about special or medicinal plants?’

Concerning the reading workshop “Las Enseñanzas de Don Juan”.



In this workshop, I started showing a short video to the students that was an excerpt from chapter 11 of the book “Las Enseñanzas de Don Juan” by Castaneda (1968).

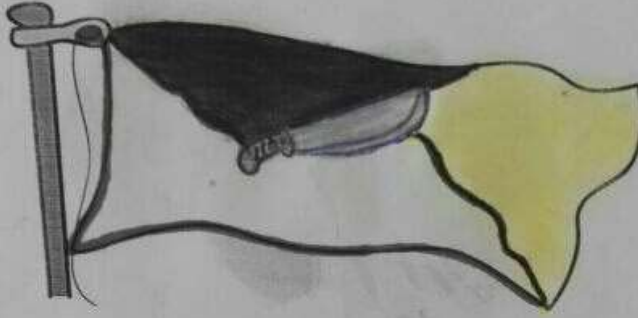


This book is a life story about a student who is working on his thesis and is interested in collecting indigenous knowledge of plants, specifically Peyote, a psychotropic considered a plant of power for the Yaquis. After experiencing a deep encounter with a Yaqui shaman, the author's view about the world and human kind changed drastically. The purpose of that video was to sensitize students towards indigenous knowledge, culture and the views they have about life and its purpose. Then, students worked in groups, reading the introduction of the book, which is a summary of the story itself. After completing the reading, students answered some questions related to the information they read and contrasted them with the place they live in and the information they had about similar people or cases. Students came up with many interesting stories and shared them in class, which gave me a deeper understanding about their community background knowledge.

Solving communicative issues in L2. As this study took place in a rural public EFL setting, where the only contact students have in the foreign language occurs in the classroom and is reduced to three hours per week, students do not have a high English level. For this reason, I felt the freedom to use the mother tongue in the classroom when requested or needed. However, it was necessary to encourage the students to use the target language in order for them to gain more confidence about their foreign language development. When doing activities or completing tasks (written and oral), students tended to switch between L1 and L2, most of the time because they do not know or do not remember the word they needed to use in the foreign language. According to Hughes et al, (2006), code switching is one of those characteristics that indicates students' advancement when learning a foreign language. However, some stages in code switching are followed by students in accordance with their buildup of abilities in the second language. After

analyzing my students' samples, it seemed that they are in a low second language ability stage where L2 learners "Mix because of lack of vocabulary between the first language (L1) and the second language" (Hughes et al, 2006, p.10). The sample below exemplifies the previous statement. In this case, the student fulfilled the activity and chose the colors according to his beliefs to decorate his flag; but when asked about his choices, he faced the problem of lacking vocabulary to express what he wanted. Hence, in a very resourceful manner, he switched from L2 to L1 to achieve his communicative purpose.

Create your own flag.
Use symbols and colors that best represent you.

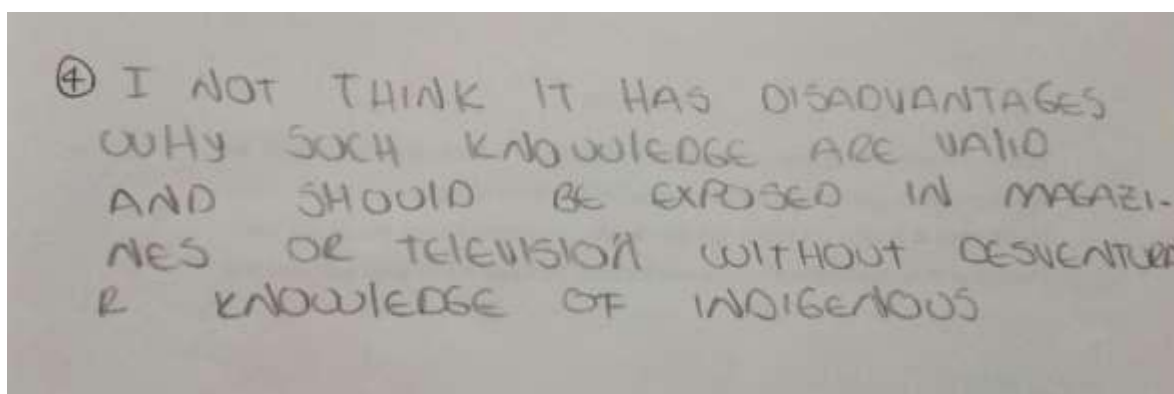


1. What symbols did you choose? Why?
It means work and dedication to what ago

2. Why did you choose those colors?
the black, red, my peace white and
yellow esperanza

3. What does your flag represent?
what I am I want to be in life

Something similar occurred in this excerpt from the workshop “Las enseñanzas de Don Juan” where students answered the question ‘Do you think that sharing this knowledge to the world by publishing Don Juan’s tutelage in other languages brings benefits or disadvantages to the indigenous community? Why? As the reading was written in English and they had to answer the questions using the foreign language, this offered me evidence of their L2 background knowledge.



They did not know the equivalent for the word “desventurar”, so they wrote the word in Spanish. In Freeman & Freeman (2001) view, Code switching despite as serving as a “filler” to continue the flow of the communication process, it is also an indicative of a weakness in the second language, a subtractive element. Well, it could be a weakness in terms of vocabulary, but it is also a strategy used by a student to look for a solution to solve the problem faced and to reach the communicative goals. Therefore, in my personal opinion, it is better to code switch than to stop the flow in communication.

Involving community in a school project. In this second category, the reader will find information concerning the role of community in the development of the projects done by the students regarding local tourism and cultural heritage. According to Markey et al

(2010), the central objective of involving community in research studies is doing it in respectful ways, especially when working with people from rural areas who are very busy and can be reluctant to participate if they feel they are being 'surveyed to death'. To deal with possible complications and to prepare my students for their own research, I prepared a class based on Community Mapping, following the principles of Community Based Pedagogy. As Sharkey and Clavijo (2014), state, "before teachers can learn how to integrate local knowledge and resources into their curriculum they must first know what is in the community and learn how to identify its assets" (p.49).

My role as a teacher was then to guide my students on the path of collecting information for the projects they had selected previously and to work with their community to obtain that information. Since the students were quite familiar with the places they should visit, it was an easy task. However, they were not that confident about asking people for information. Working in groups was a help to gain confidence and to facilitate tasks because the students could address activities according to their abilities. Trueba, as cited in (Mermann-Jozwiak, 2005) claims that "school activities must be perceived by students as supportive of their culture and home values to promote their success in the classroom" (p.271). In this sense, students were very willing to bring their context to classroom and to have the opportunity to be researchers of their own projects.

Working on alternative activities and projects as learning strategies. The images below, exemplify some of the students' mapping and outside activities for research purposes.



These pictures were taken by the students in Pericongo, one of the tourist places of their town. They went there riding their bikes and told me: “Profe, la salida estuvo muy buena. Los señores de la bizcochería nos atendieron re bien, nos colaboraron con la entrevista y nos dieron café con bizcochos. Además, estamos pensando que sería bueno ofrecer un recorrido turístico hasta allá en bicicleta”.

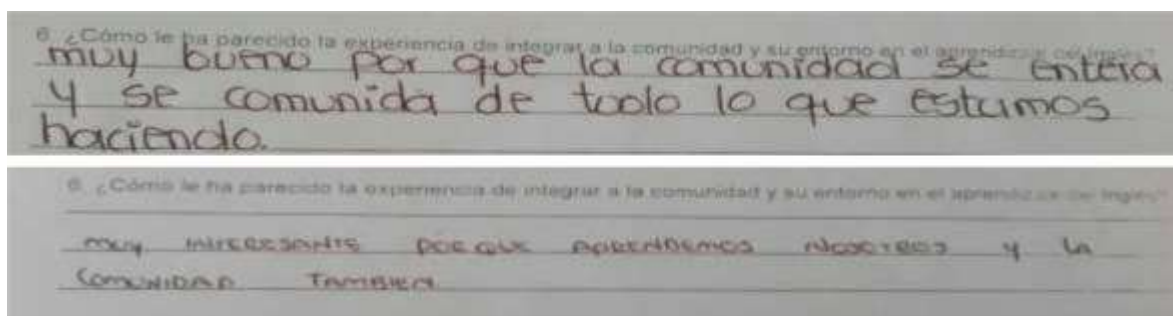
Another student told me that they were involved in some adventures when collecting the information: “Profe, las bicicletas de Leo y Alex se pincharon y llegamos tarde a la casa porque de bajada entramos a la Iglesia y había unos ‘gringos’ en el parque tomando fotos y nosotros los saludamos en Inglés y ellos nos respondieron y por ahí les entendimos algo, yes, yes, fue muy chévere”. These data was collected through unstructured interviews. Transcripts of the interviews are included in the appendix.

Below, I include field notes that reflected upon the activity mentioned and students’ attitude towards it. Carrying field notes was a very good source to go back, analyze, and keep record of the whole process of implementation.

DESCRIPTION	INTERPRETATION	REFLECTION
<p>Yesterday, I interviewed one of the groups that started to work on the data collection for their project. The guys told me they went to Pericongo by bikes! It is a long ride I imagine but they said it was ok for them and they enjoyed the experience. They also told me they had experienced and unexpected encounter with foreigners and they didn't feel afraid of talking to them. I'm so proud of them! Seeing those smiles in their faces while telling me their adventures made me feel I'm doing something good. I know my sts are starting to reduce their anxiety about interacting in English, they are making mistakes, but that's ok for me, everybody does. What I really want is to keep that motivation and willingness.</p>	<p>Students are starting to release their fears of English as a difficult subject, that's good. They are also enjoying the experience of working in groups and involving community in the projects. Even more, something they are very glad about is to have the opportunity to work in others spaces, not only the classroom. However, they are still reporting most of the information in written English, not orally, according to them it is because of the pronunciation, they feel they are not pronouncing well.</p>	<p>I'm very glad about my students' attitude and disposition towards the projects. They are starting to reflect more about the importance of their places and the value of local culture. They even came up with some ideas about tourism projections, experienced a short intercultural encounter, and were able to share greetings. As they are still reluctant to speak because of the pronunciation concerns, I'm going to work in a reading and a video to show them that there are many different ways to pronounce according to the English users and their countries, maybe this activity helps them to notice that there is not a 'correct' pronunciation and there is not a standard English as well.</p>

Teacher's field notes. Date: October 25th, 2016

According to my reflection, students were enthusiastic about the idea of being in charge of their own project and all what it implied. Collecting information from the community, taking pictures and conducting interviews were activities that students really enjoyed. To contrast the information obtained during the implementation with students' attitude at the end of it, I include some samples of students' answers from the final survey, regarding working with the community.



As evidenced in the excerpts taken from the final survey, students' attitude towards integrating community with school activities was very positive. I also observed that people from the community was very responsive to students' work. Considering that most of the activities in this research study were carried out in groups, cooperative learning is one of the factors to analyze taking into account students' projects and alternative activities developed. According to Stoller (2002), project work is cooperative rather than competitive, it is potentially motivating, stimulating, empowering and challenging and finally it focuses more on content learning than on specific language targets. Regarding this point of view and the fact that community based approach allows working in teams; this strategy was quite useful for the purposes of this study. In the analysis of the final survey, the results showed that one of students' preferences was to work in groups when selecting among different strategies.



Another remarkable factor to consider is that projects can use different types of data collection and can result in a face-to-face contact with guest speakers or individuals outside the classroom (Stoller, 2002). In this study, students experienced those contacts in three different stages and with three different guests as shown in the pictures below.



Cultural talk. Guest: Timana's secretary of culture and tourism



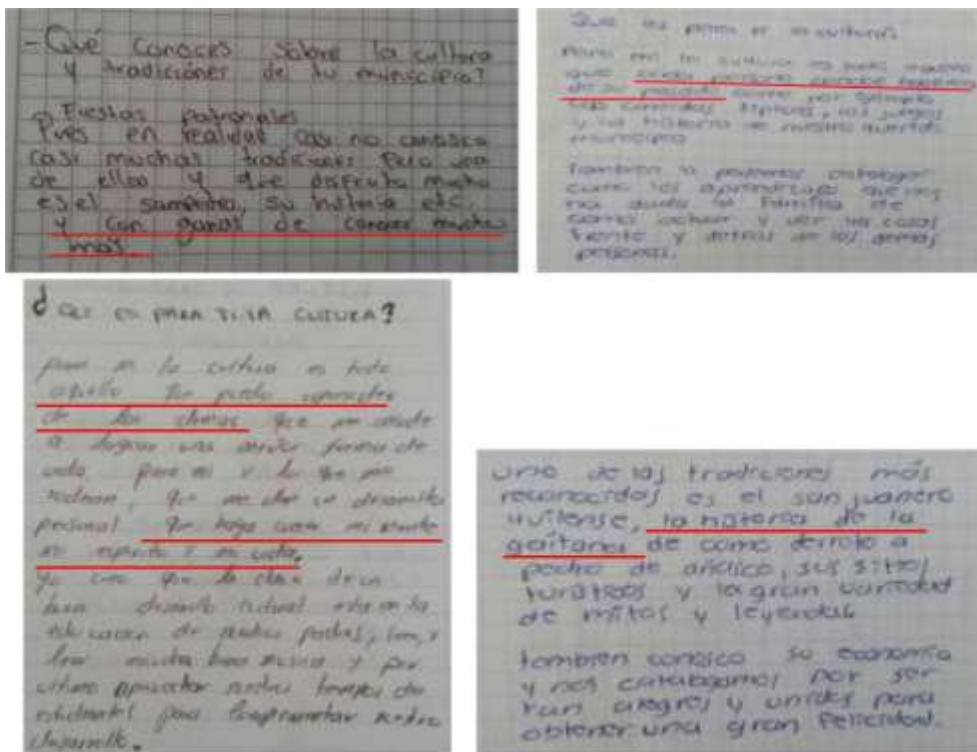
Tourism Talk: Guest: Local tourism entrepreneur



Intercultural encounter: Guest: A French tourist guide. English, Spanish and German user

I used photographs to analyze activities further. Students' gestures and disposition towards guests gave me valuable information for the study. Teachers cannot be recording all data in their memory, so that, photographs are a good source to go back to the activity and analyze it more carefully. They also served as evidence and memories for the study.

Appropriating own culture and broadening knowledge about the foreign one. In this subcategory, I analyze the way students respond to the inclusion of intercultural contents in the classroom giving evidence from artifacts, photographs and surveys to explore students' perception about culture and to determine what background knowledge they had regarding this topic, some activities were developed in the exploratory and deepening stages, as shown in the samples below.

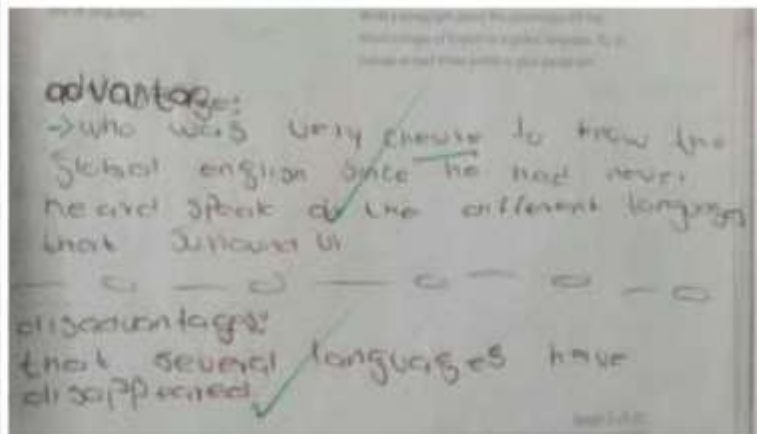
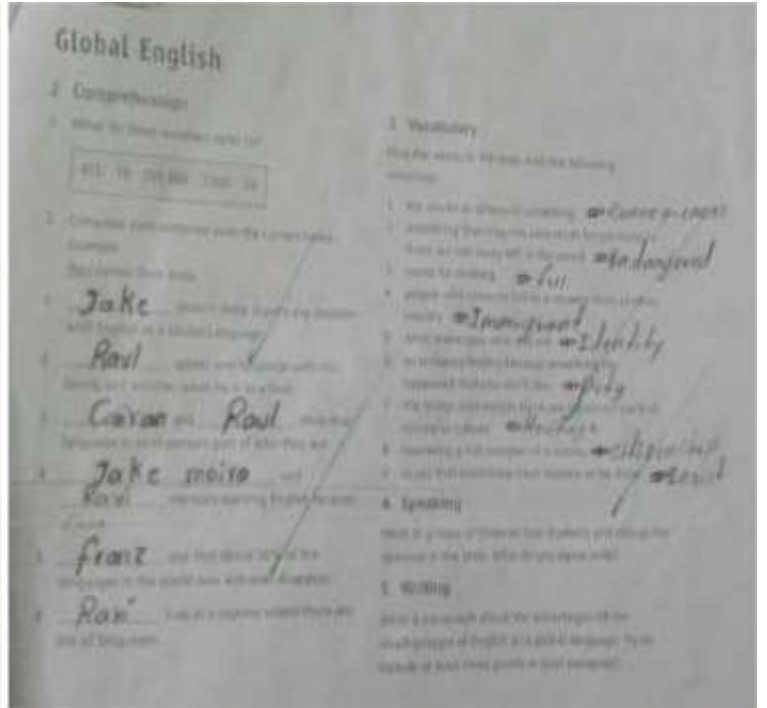
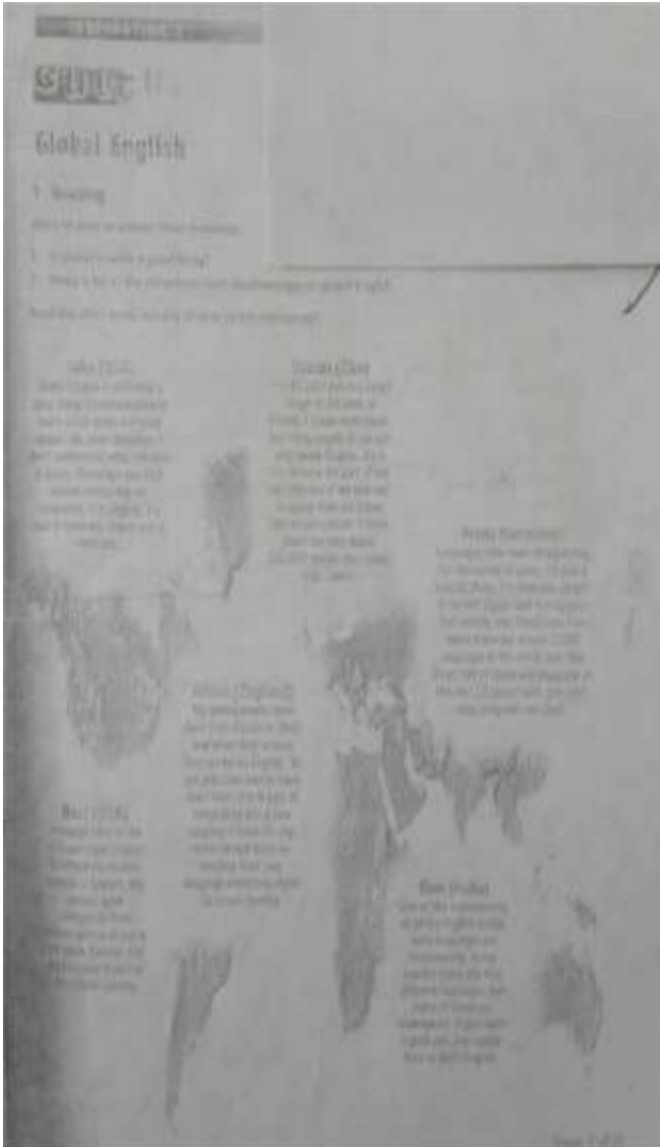


Samples taken from the exploratory stage: Guest Talk: What do you think is culture?

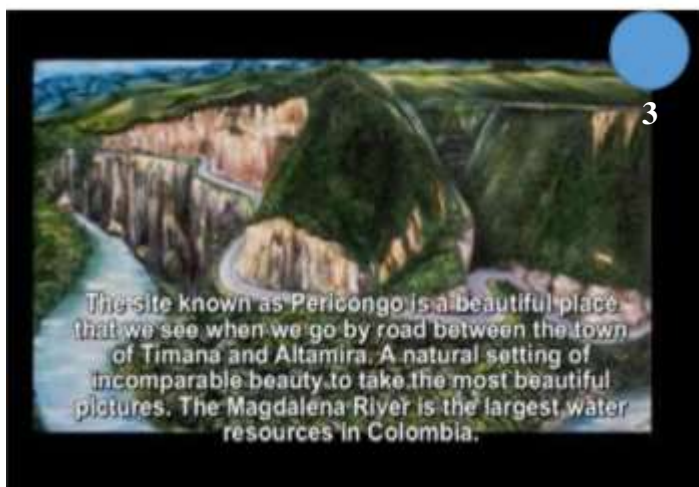
In these excerpts, students answered to questions related to their previous knowledge about culture and local traditions and were taken from the first guest talk. The purpose of this activity was to explore what did students know about culture and motivate them towards a deeper learning of their own place. According to the students' responses, they seem to have a clear concept about what culture is although they offer different definitions. They also seem to have some knowledge about traditions of their place.

Tomlinson, as cited in Kiet Ho, (2009), points out that cultural awareness implies a gradual development of an inner sense of cultures equality, as well as a deeper understanding of the own culture. On the other hand, Kramsh (1993) claims that "understanding a foreign culture requires putting that culture in relation with one's own", hence, it is important for the student to immerse themselves in their own culture if searching to open their minds towards other cultures. As in this study, the foreign language addressed is English and so it is the language of the target cultures. I carried out a reading workshop regarding the importance of acknowledging that there are many English variations according to the place it is spoken. This activity also helped my students to reduce their fears of speaking because of their constraints about a standard English pronunciation. At this point, I present some excerpts from that workshop. This reading was very useful for the purpose of getting students to know that there are more than one or two standardized variety of speaking English and all of them are equally valid. Under the guidance of the teacher, students discussed their answers with the group and contrasted advantages and disadvantages of the homogenization of English as a language of wider variety over others. Regarding my students written answers, I could notice again the switching between languages as a way to solve L2 issues, as marked with the red circle. After reading and sharing ideas, students

were more aware of the use of English as an international language and lingua franca and compared its varieties with the varieties of their mother tongue. This comparison called their attention especially because it was animated through a video.



However, students’ attitude towards their place started to change gradually while they were involved in the process of collecting data, interviewing people from their community and using the English language to promote the value and beauty of those places. Murhead, as cited in (Orozco-Domoe, 2015, p.68), declares, “If students are not aware of their own cultural identities then they cannot be globally competent people. Being globally competent means being able to identify home culture”. Based on evidences collected after implementing all the stages of the intervention, students’ cultural awareness and sense of belonging increased significantly.



1. Promotional brochure designed by students

2. Poster from the intercultural fair

3. Screenshot of a promotional video of Pericongo

4. Outdoors activity: Visiting Naranjal Chapel

Experiencing an intercultural encounter was probably the most memorable activity from the study. Most of the students had never had the chance to interact with a foreign person, and during the guided visit to Santa Clara's caves, they could live that experience the whole day. In Orozco-Domoe (2015, p.83) views, "Teachers can foster global competence in their students by empowering them to learn languages in pragmatically correct ways, explore cultures with an emphasis on understanding cultural perspectives from product and practices, and transforming lives by creating opportunities for students to take action and interact with speakers of their studied languages in natural contexts".

I feel deeply identified with this point of view, because since the beginning of the study, this is what I wanted for my students, and now, looking at the evidence I feel that all efforts were worthwhile. We faced some difficulties to develop this practice, mainly because it was an outdoor activity that required written permission from parents and school, but at the end, we could make it.

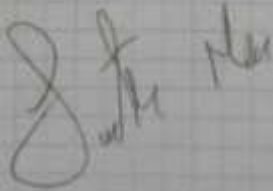
According to Kiet Ho (2009), when teaching from an intercultural perspective, learners will develop abilities to negotiate meanings across languages and get a deeper understanding of their own 'culturally-shaped' world behaviors, and this critical cultural awareness will prepare them for cross-cultural communication. Even more, Cakir, (2006) declares that understanding a language involves having knowledge of its culture, it is not only matter of grammar, phonology or lexical knowledge. When my students encountered and interacted with the foreigner, I observed their reactions and it was rewarding to see how they started to overcome fears or stereotypes about the foreign culture and even took

actions to involve the visitor in their context. Learners can develop their cultural awareness from personal experiences, which includes having a direct contact with the target culture. This can be done through music, movies or inviting a native speaker to the class. In this way learners not only develop linguistic but intercultural competence to overcome barriers they may encounter when interacting with people from other cultures, according to Kiet Ho, (2009).

The pictures and written reflection below are evidence from that intercultural encounter. In the reflection, a student wrote “a la hora de relacionarnos con una persona de otro país se nos presenta cierto grado de dificultad”; this is evidencing that communication in terms of speaking is still an issue for students.

La experiencia vivida con Franco deja gran impresión para mí, ya que a la hora de relacionarnos con una persona de otro país se nos presenta cierto grado de dificultad, lo cual nos enseña que no tenemos simplemente con la teoría si no que debemos interactuar con ellos para medir el grado que debemos tener para poder hablar y expresarnos y no tener dificultad para hacerlo.

Att: Sebastian Mucris



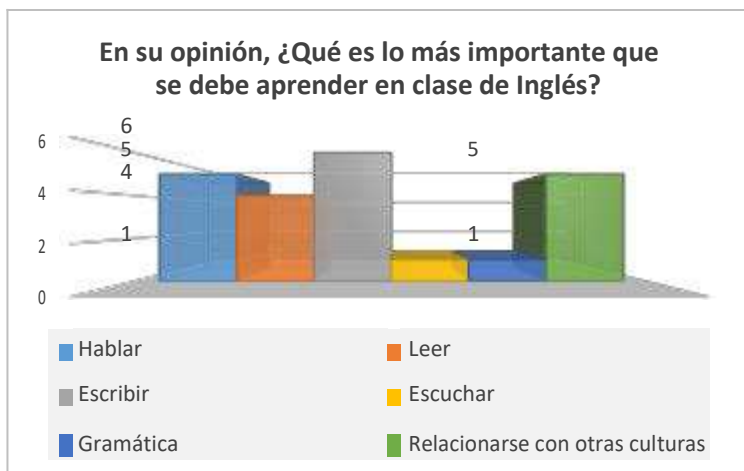
However, according to the photographs taken during the activity and my reflection as a teacher researcher, students felt comfortable about sharing their knowledge and showing their place to a foreign person. In the photographs, the reader can see the students sharing a typical dish “asado huilense” with the guests (French tourist guide and Local tourism entrepreneur) and the teacher. This activity took place at one of my students’ place and it was very rewarding to see my student’s mom so glad about being the host of the whole group. She said “Profe, qué bueno ver a los muchachos tan contentos trabajando y aprendiendo”. Transcript of the whole interview is in the appendix.

This closing activity was also a way to farewell my students because they were coursing the last year of school. I had been working with them since middle of 2015 and was also her grade director and Ethics teacher, which gave me the chance to spend more hours per week with the group. During that period I could know more about my students wants and dreams and also, this research study gave me the opportunity to know my students’ families, their homes and place and that was priceless, not only for the sake of the study but for my personal and professional development.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

This last chapter addresses the main findings of the research and pedagogical implications for further studies. The findings of this research project showed that the implementation of community based pedagogy promoted the development of intercultural awareness in students from a rural school, since they were gradually improving their reflection about cultural differences while using English to promote their place and culture, giving them a huge sense of belonging. Contrasting the analysis from the first and the final surveys, I can say that now those students are more interested in learning from their own and others' cultures, and their ideas about the usefulness of English has changed to a better understanding of what it implies.



Students responded positively to the idea of taking advantage of the context and were very committed to the development of their projects. In the scope of action research, I started identifying issues through class observation and surveys that guided me to formulate the

research question that entailed this study. Following Kemmis and McTaggart, as cited in Burns (2009), I carried out my research in four steps: Planning, Acting, Observing and Reflecting. These steps allowed me to involve my students in this cyclical process while collecting valuable data for further analysis. For example, at the beginning of the study, when asked about the importance of learning English as a foreign language, the students answered uncertainly, they did not seem to be sure about the purpose of learning a foreign language. Some of them answered that English was important for higher studies but in the classroom, they were not reflecting their answers, they were reluctant to participate. At the end of the study, when answering the same questions, students' reasons and reflections were deeper; they showed more awareness in regards to the question.

Marque con una X la respuesta que mejor exprese su opinión:

1. ¿Considera usted que aprender otro idioma (Inglés) es importante o significativo para su vida?

SI NO

Tanto si su respuesta es SÍ o NO, por favor escriba una justificación:

Si, por que quisiera conocer mucho de este mundo, sobre todo por la capacidad de darle mi experiencia y a mi vida en un futuro

Marque con una X la respuesta que mejor exprese su opinión:

1. ¿Considera usted que aprender otro idioma (Inglés) es importante o significativo para su vida?

SI NO

Tanto si su respuesta es SÍ o NO, por favor escriba una justificación:

Es importante por que al momento de hacerme prueba cultura y conocimientos a otras personas (extranjeros) es necesario conocer y tener un poco conocimiento del idioma inglés

1. ¿Considera usted que aprender otro idioma (Inglés) es importante o significativo para su vida?

SI NO

Tanto si su respuesta es SÍ o NO, por favor escriba una justificación:

Si por que el inglés se esta convirtiendo en la lengua y idioma universal y seria excelente que todos los estudiantes y otras personas lo aprenda para una mejor comunicación

Students also showed a higher awareness about the link between culture and language, as evidenced in the answers below.

3. ¿Considera usted que el aprendizaje del inglés puede favorecer la interacción con otras culturas?

Sí NO

Tanto si su respuesta es Sí o NO, por favor escriba una justificación:

si por que muchas veces no conocemos y tampoco sabemos la lengua nativa de aquella cultura pero quizás sepan inglés y así podremos entablar una conversación.

3. ¿Considera usted que el aprendizaje del inglés puede favorecer la interacción con otras culturas?

Sí NO

Tanto si su respuesta es Sí o NO, por favor escriba una justificación:

FORTALECE LA INTERACCION CON OTRAS CULTURAS PORQUE APRENDIENDO OTROS IDIOMAS NOS PODEMOS RELACIONAR CON OTRAS PERSONAS

3. ¿Considera usted que el aprendizaje del inglés puede favorecer la interacción con otras culturas?

Sí NO

Tanto si su respuesta es Sí o NO, por favor escriba una justificación:

porque se pueda relacionar las cultura y promoverlas con otro idioma

3. ¿Considera usted que el aprendizaje del inglés puede favorecer la interacción con otras culturas?

Sí NO

Tanto si su respuesta es Sí o NO, por favor escriba una justificación:

si porque el ingles es el idioma mundial y por lo tanto si ayuda a interactuar con las demas culturas.

As a teacher researcher, I can say that this experience was crucial to my professional development. Teacher as well as student's voices should count; we are active part of communities and society, not just viewers. I have learnt from my students in all possible ways and I am sure they have learnt a little more than expected at an English class, they learnt to give value to diversity, to different types of knowledge, to different ways of thinking, to appreciate their place and to interact with other cultures breaking stereotypes and invisible barriers.

I profoundly agree with Orozco-Domoe (2015) when says that teachers should show passion for the language they speak and the cultures that speak the language:

They would likely talk about human understanding, open mindedness towards other cultures and an ability to see an issue from more than one side. Teachers who want these results must adopt a transformative mindset. They are not teaching to eradicate poor grammar, rather they are teaching to inspire their students to be the best version of themselves that they can be.

They do this for their students, but ultimately they hope that their students will be able to take actions on issues of global significance (...) Controversial issues like violence, hunger, international terrorism, inflation and inequality must be addressed. Community-based learning, inquiry, dialogue and multiple perspectives must be part of classroom practices bringing the world into the classroom. (p.69)

That is the teacher I want to be and this study has been a wonderful first step to follow that path. I want to keep on working in intercultural projects and implementing Community-Based Pedagogy as a learning strategy. This study can also serve as a basis for other teachers who want to develop similar projects at their schools.

The community played a crucial role in this study, since they were providers of information for the development of every project work. They were also willing to participate and glad to be involved in activities from the school. According to students' interviews, members from the community were very kind to them and facilitated the investigation. In my own experience, I also found quite good disposition from every person I asked to participate in the experience, people such as the Secretary of culture and tourism, the Tourist guide, the Tourism entrepreneur and parents who facilitated

transportation, permissions and even their houses for some of the activities. Sharing and learning from the community was one of the most rewarding aspects about conducting this study. For the students, they expanded their local knowledge and their worldview, showed higher awareness about the link between culture and language, became aware of cultural diversity, and language varieties, assigned value to the local knowledge, developed a deeper sense of belonging and understood the relevance of English in the school curriculum to communicate local knowledge to other peoples. For me, as a teacher researcher I acquired valuable information about history of the place, which was useful for planning activities and designing workshops according to the students' context. I also made some networking with members of the community to involve them into the project and that was an alternative teaching strategy, bringing guests to the classroom. I broaden my own cultural awareness while learning from students and community about many different aspects that make part of the daily life of these people. For instance, I knew that many of my students had a huge knowledge about coffee harvesting because they helped their parents with farming on weekends and after school, they also earned money during the harvesting working as collectors. All that knowledge of context and families gave a deeper understanding of my students' lives and helped me to appreciate more the efforts they did in the class and the activities.

Regarding community, I can mention a specific case of cooperation and it is the work done with the local tourism entrepreneur. He served us as a guide during the outdoor activities, and my students enabled him to use the brochure they designed regarding information for that place in English and Spanish, of course, the students

received the credit for their work in the brochure. This type of cooperative work can bring benefits for students and community since both are getting involved in a common project. This cooperation can be expanded to special coffee production, pottery and craft and many other projects that are being developed in the community.

Pedagogical Implications

With the implementation of Community Based Pedagogy as a means to develop intercultural awareness, I intended to have some insights about the gap Kramsch, (1998), has identified “Students usually have little or no systematic knowledge about their membership in a given society and culture, nor do they have enough knowledge about the target culture to be able to interpret and synthesize the cultural phenomena presented” (p.228). The analysis of my students’ artifacts so far has contributed to narrow the distance between the problem statement and the expected results of the study, because now I have more information about students’ thoughts and beliefs regarding the foreign and their own culture. Until this stage, students demonstrated deep interest in the topics discussed in class, the teamwork activities and the intercultural encounter that took place at the end of the study. Talking about definite results is not possible since this is my first attempt implementing Community-Based Pedagogy in my classroom; however, the data analyzed so far has shown positive results in terms of use of L2, cultural awareness and sense of belonging.

The positive results from this research can be summarized as follows: Successful teamwork involving community and place, deeper understanding of own and foreign cultures and inclusion of cultural contents and activities in the English class. Additionally,

students who participated in the study obtained better scores in English at Pruebas Saber 11 in comparison to the previous year results from 11th graders. About the implications for the Language teaching, I can say that according to this experience it is possible to start to shift from teaching English as a foreign language to teaching English as an international language. Students need to be aware that there are more than American and British cultures when talking about English, and most of the books and the materials, at least in the school I worked were focused on these two cultures. Involving more cultures, traditions and countries with the English teaching is beneficial for both, students and teachers.

Limitations

I had some difficulties in the implementation of the pedagogical strategy because some activities required to work outdoors and it was difficult to obtain the permission from school and some parents. However, students were so committed to the activities that we could make it together. Another issue I had to deal with was the money factor, because the school did not offer any support to the project, so I had to look for sponsors and to use my own incomes to bring the guests for the activities. Some other limitations that teachers can find when working with similar projects are the dispositions in terms of curricula that every institution has to follow since the Ministry of Education gives the guidelines, and sometimes there is little time and support to try innovative activities.

Further Research

Based on the findings from this research and as I am working now in another rural school that share some similitudes with the school where this study took place, I want to

set this question for a further research at this school: How can 9th graders from a rural school develop intercultural competence through a special coffee project?

Community Based Pedagogy would be the approach for this study, since I really enjoyed working with communities and local knowledge.

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Appendix

1. Consent Forms
2. Surveys
3. Parents permissions
4. Transcriptions of interviews
5. Workshop
6. Designing flags worksheet
7. Readings