

© 2022 Nathalia Andrea Robles Ortiz

DISRUPTING THE STATUS QUO: CULTURALLY SUSTAINING LITERACIES FOR
LANGUAGE TEACHING

NATHALIA ANDREA ROBLES ORTIZ

UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA BOLIVARIANA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGY AND ADVANCED EDUCATION SYSTEM
MEDELLÍN
2021

DISRUPTING THE STATUS QUO: CULTURALLY SUSTAINING LITERACIES FOR
LANGUAGE TEACHING

NATHALIA ANDREA ROBLES ORTIZ

Licenciada en Lenguas Extranjeras, Universidad Católica de Oriente, 2017
Graduate Specialist in ELT, Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, 2020

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of MAGISTER EN PROCESOS DE APRENDIZAJE Y ENSEÑANZA DE
SEGUNDAS LENGUAS in the School of Education and Pedagogy and Advanced Education
System of Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Sede Central Medellín, 2021

Thesis Committee

Raúl Alberto Mora Vélez, Ph.D. (UPB-Medellín), Director and Chair
Alice Y. Lee, Ph.D. (University of California, Riverside)
Stephanie R. Toliver, Ph.D. (University of Colorado, Boulder)

UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA BOLIVARIANA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGY AND ADVANCED EDUCATION SYSTEM
MEDELLÍN
2022

2nd December, 2021

AFFIDAVIT

I, Nathalia Andrea Robles Ortiz, hereby declare that this master's thesis has not been previously presented as a degree requirement, either in the same style or with variations, in this or any other university (Article 92 Advanced Education Student Code, Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana)

Nathalia Robles Ortiz

NATHALIA ANDREA ROBLES ORTIZ

Abstract

The diversity that we find in our language classrooms invites us, teachers, to revisit and reflect upon our practices. This qualitative study aims at proposing Culturally Sustaining Literacies (CSL) as an approach to honor and sustain students and their communities' cultural practices by rejecting power hegemonies from the English classrooms. It embraces the concepts of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (CSP) and Critical Literacy (CL) as practices that helped me to conceptualize and plan lessons that center students' historical, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The aim of this study is to identify and suggest some teacher's pedagogical practices that could promote spaces for reflexivity and social justice.

The participants in this study are students from a Bachelor's degree in English language teaching. Data instruments comprised teacher's journal, students' artifacts and interviews. The findings indicate: first, CSL can be included in the language curricula to guide and engage students in reflections that challenge power and hegemony across cultures. Second, how students' artifacts can create judgment-free environments for reflexivity. Third, the challenges when implementing CSL not only as a way of teaching but as a whole personal mindset to disrupt. This research is a referent for other educators interested in the growing fields of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies and Critical literacies as imperatives in language teachers' training.

Keywords: Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies, Critical Literacy, Culturally Sustaining Literacies, English language teaching.

To my mom, who is my force and my inspiration for being the best version of myself.

To my soulmate, for supporting me in every step I take.

Acknowledgments

This journey has undoubtedly shown me the unconditional support of those who have always been by my side. First and foremost, I want to thank God for his unimaginable love, for guiding me and filling me with strength to get this far. He has been in charge of putting by my side wonderful people who have helped me make this dream possible.

Thanks to my beloved family for all their support. I will always be in eternal debt with my mom, she has been my cornerstone, peace, and the reason why I am who I am today. We DID it, mom! I feel so lucky for being your daughter. Thanks to my granny and her love that helped me to continue during hard times and to my little brother for making me laugh when I needed to. I can't stop thanking enough to the one who became my home when I moved out of mine: my soulmate. Your love, patience and faith in me propelled my work and gave me back the horizon that at times I felt I was losing.

To my mentor, Dr. Mora, thanks for believing in me and in this project, for questioning me, and for your guidance. You set a role model for me to follow as a professor and scholar. I would also like to offer my gratitude to my incredible fifteen students/participants in this project, without you, this idea would not have come true. I am so proud of you and the kind of teachers you are becoming.

Finally, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the B.A in Foreign Languages program for trusting in me and allowing me to carry out this project.

All of you have left a trace in my life, and for that I am forever grateful, I hope one day I could be able to retribute all the kindness, trust, and love I have received.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Understanding Where We Are and Where We Need to Go	1
Defining the Pillars of this Study: A Conceptual Framework for Culturally Sustaining Literacies	7
<i>Critical Literacy</i>	7
<i>From Culturally Relevant Pedagogy to Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies</i>	10
Culturally Sustaining Literacies for Language Teaching: A Framework for Social Justice	13
Chapter 2 A Critical Review of the Literature: What Has Been Done and Taking a Step Forward	20
Critical literacy: Exploring Worldwide Perspectives on Current Practices	20
<i>Critical Literacy in Colombia: Our Modes of Representation</i>	23
Culturally Relevant, Sustaining Pedagogies	24
The intersection of Critical Literacy and Culturally Relevant-Sustaining Pedagogies: World-wide practices	26
Chapter 3 From Theory to Praxis: Implementing Culturally Sustaining Literacies in an English class	30
Stating my Research Question and the Subquestions	31
Research setting	31
<i>Participants</i>	32
Data Collection	35
Data reduction	38
Data analysis	39
Chapter 4 Culturally Sustaining Literacies as a framework for social justice: responding to L2 classroom diversity	43
On the path to becoming a critical culturally sustaining teacher: reflections and implications	45
<i>Teachers' reflections when centering students in their lesson plans</i>	54
Students' perceptions when facing social injustices deconstruction: decentering the white gaze	56
<i>Teachers' implications when unveiling knowledge impositions</i>	59
Students' artifacts as the reconstruction of the society they want to inhabit and sustain: Using L2 learning as a way to raise their voices against social injustices.	66
Chapter 5 A disclosure to embark on a new journey: from a mindset change to social transformation	75
How the teacher enacted students' realities to Culturally Sustaining Literacies	75
Students' voices and representations when engaging in CSL practices for social justice	79
	viii

Students' and teacher's tensions: Challenges when implementing CSP	82
Limitations of this study	87
Advice for future researchers: A call to join forces	89
References	95
Appendixes	104
Appendix A: Consent forms for students	104
Appendix B: Consent forms for the institution	106
Appendix C: Personal interview questions	108
Author's Biography	109

List of Tables

Table 1 <i>Participants chosen for this Qualitative Research project</i>	40
Table 2 <i>Participants</i>	49
Table 3 <i>B1+ B2 topics selected to implement CSL</i>	51
Table 4 <i>Questions for going beyond the traditional understanding</i>	53
Table 5 <i>Questions to understand our identities</i>	56
Table 6 <i>Questions to promote Critical literacy and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies.</i>	61
Table 7 <i>Questions to reflect upon Colombian stereotypes.</i>	67
Table 8 <i>Questions for connecting students' realities</i>	72

List of Figures

Figure 1. Andrés representing his identity.	57
Figure 2. Camila showing her identity.	58
Figure 3. Carolina presenting her identity.	59
Figure 4. Camila and Tatiana’s presentation.	63
Figure 5. Sara, Carolina and Valentina’s presentation.	63
Figure 6. Images for analyzing Colombians stereotypes.	66
Figure 7. Keren and Sandra’s thoughts on Colombian women’s representations	68
Figure 8. Andres and Sebastián’s discussing: Colombian and Paisa men representation.	69
Figure 9. Keren and Sandra identifying analyzing Colombian cultural references.	73
Figure 10. Wayra and Yeidy identifying analyzing Colombian cultural references.	73

Chapter 1

Understanding Where We Are and Where We Need to Go

Nowadays, along with the strengthening political position of English, in a globalized world, Blommaert (2010) described it as a language for international communication. Conversations around its socio-economic benefits have increased significantly in different contexts, where it is seen as a tool to access better job conditions. Hence, the phenomenological conceptions of institutions and teachers around the learning and teaching of English have shifted in order to make these processes more meaningful and closer to students' diverse realities.

This view seeks to provide pedagogical and curricular interventions that innovate and that would move the teaching and learning processes a step further from the deficit and traditional approaches that have influenced teachers' practice across the decades (Paris, 2012). With that in mind, teachers reflecting on their practices have realized some aspects which need to be addressed in order to answer current demands. On the one hand, there is the importance that including cultural components may have in students' processes. As Risager (2007) explained, there is a close connection, interdependence, and a complex relationship between language and culture. Taking that into account, there is the understanding that language and culture cannot be analyzed in isolation (Nieto, 2002). This infers that language teaching should establish a dialogic discourse between language and culture, being the classroom the epicenter for these didactic and methodological reflections.

On the other hand, such reflections have led teachers to recontextualize the definition of language and how that conception we have can affect the way we see and show it in our language classes. There are mainly two perceptions about language in ELT: the first from a traditional perspective which is language as a code, a set of grammar rules that needs to be taught (Ko &

Wang, 2013). The second understands language as a discourse. The definition of discourse is grounded from its Latin word *discursus*, which basically means “to run to and fro” (Rogers, et al. 2005). Within this tradition, language is seen and used in social practice and, the same as discourse, it is dynamic, constantly in motion. It helps to reflect and construct the social world, in this sense, language cannot be seen as neutral as it is always involved in political, social, racial, economic, religious, and cultural formations (Baker-Bell, 2020; Bourdieu, 1991; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Pennycook, 2001) . From this perspective, language teaching is understood as a process of teaching not only pre-existent meanings, but also a process in which we are able to build new meanings, position ourselves, and construct our identities. In other words, when language is defined as discourse, the teaching act becomes a new way of reinventing and representing oneself and of perceiving, understanding, and constructing the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) (Paris, 2012) not only builds on the key components of the asset-based Pedagogies that preceded it but also takes them to the next level. Paris (2012) considers that instead of just accepting or affirming students’ backgrounds, CSP seeks to value and maintain students’ cultural heritage. Besides, it considers schools as places where the cultural ways of being in communities are honored and sustained, instead of being eradicated or neglected. This practice promotes equality across racial and ethnic communities and seeks to ensure access and opportunity. Moreover, it also supports students to critique and question dominant power structures in societies, this is where the connection to Critical Literacy (CL) is evident and perceived as a bridge for a more equitable society.

Freire and Macedo (1987) suggested that Critical Literacy must engage students in developing a critical consciousness that questions the discursive structures they are immersed in. It focuses on the relationship that language and social discourse have, that is to say, the way that

language is used to promote discourses that marginalize certain populations and impose ideologies. In this regard, it establishes literacy as a social practice with the aim of making the students agents that resist injustices and make a change towards equality and social justice (Ko, 2013a). Along the same lines go the roots of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2017; Robles-Ortiz, 2021), developing critical consciousness, a critical stance toward the language and critical action against unequal power are also underlying principles of this approach (Paris, 2012) this is where these two practices complement each other.

As Milner (2018) argued, in order to be culturally sustaining, one needs to be critical. They both are grounded on fundamental questions about the purpose of teaching and learning, and the responsibility of schools to sustain and honor students' diversity to promote equity across racial, ethnic communities, gender, and ideologies to ensure access and opportunities. CL and CSP are ways to revitalize what is ours, our culture, languages, ideas, ways of being, and feeling about an oppressive world, instead of ignoring, assimilating, and eradicating them as people with power have done in the past and still do currently. As classrooms become more and more diverse, teachers must face the reality that they will continue to come into contact with students whose cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial, and social class backgrounds differ from their own (Howard, 2003). Teachers are called to rethink and reshape their practices to fit the needs of their classrooms.

According to Mora and colleagues (Mora, Chiquito, & Zapata, 2019), "multilingual policies and curricula need improvement to address the linguistic realities of Colombia as we move forward" (p. 59). For that reason, higher education institutions have the commitment of preparing a new generation of teachers that are aware of the use of English to communicate effectively in the reality that surrounds us. It means that teachers and their students are able to reflect on different

facts about their contexts. In that way, they have elements to critically confront their realities and can apply language as a means to understand their worlds.

As an English teacher, I have faced different scenarios where my students do not feel comfortable talking about what is ours and what makes part of our identity as Colombians, because of lack of knowledge and in some cases, less importance. Additionally, they either feel English is something that comes from abroad and that cannot belong to them because it is the language of others or they seem interested in centering their gaze at other countries or cultures which they consider 'superior' based on what the media portrays. Surrounded by stereotypes and violent history, our country has been the target of negative views, both in the national and the international scope, which perpetuates social injustice.

This study intends to pave a path for teachers to reflect upon our role in our country in terms of reshaping teaching practice in a post-conflict era. I consider that teaching and learning should be a liberating process, not to escape from our realities, but to make them better and construct the society we are waiting for. Throughout this project, I plan to explore and design practical applications of culturally sustaining pedagogies and critical literacies in language classrooms. One of CSP's purposes is to advance and cultivate the linguistic and cultural practices by liberating teaching and learning from the dominant gazes (Paris & Alim, 2014) Similarly, CL's purpose is to disrupt and deconstruct those dominant gazes and discourses that are reproduced marginalizing certain groups, by not truly letting them live a legitimate experience of who they are.

Teachers discuss diversity in their everyday workplace, in various professional developments such as implicit bias training, and there is a great deal of research highlighting the benefits of relevant/responsive/sustaining pedagogy. The problem in the field is that although

many teachers embrace cultural diversity and recognize privilege, it is unclear how that translates to action or change (Lensmire, et al., 2013).

As Howard (2003) explained, teachers must be able to construct pedagogical practices that have relevance and meaning to students' social and cultural realities. For that reason, in this study I chose the participants because of their impact as future teachers. They are studying English to become teachers that could contribute with different ideas to the fields and contexts in which in some years they will be working.

I consider this study ensures and reaffirms the vision of the Faculty of Education to which this program belongs. It is grounded on the dialogue between educational sciences and critical social pedagogy evidenced in its alternative views and readings on education in non-institutional contexts and beyond the urban-industrial society. Besides, its vindication of the teacher as a reflective practitioner and subject of pedagogical knowledge, in the defense of human dignity and freedom, and in the understanding of society as a historical construction (Proyecto Educativo de la Facultad, 2018).

For that reason, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies and Critical Literacy became my personal approaches to teaching and the pillars for the design of this pilot study which consist of bringing together CSP and CL to have as a result Culturally Sustaining Literacies, and how it could be reflected in a language classroom through different strategies. To do that possible, I had to find the connection between my lessons, CSP, and critical literacy practices and go beyond classroom environments in such a way that can enrich my classes with contextualized approaches according to our cultural needs (Díaz & Hernández, 2010). The aim was to help my students get involved, raise awareness on the realities that surround us not only during classes but also out of them to “read the world”. It stems from the importance of the role of students and teachers in English

classrooms and as part of critical literacy, there is a call to question the status quo to change the social order (Ko, 2013b). For that purpose, students and the teacher should be active agents that do have a voice, can raise it and that voice can transform society. I would define critical literacy (CL) and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (CSP) ways of understanding, shaking, and deconstructing power hierarchies that are present in the discourses and the way English teaching and learning is presented. Along these lines, the inclusion of CL in CSP would make English more a part of students and not an isolated language they feel is compulsory to learn.

Having the fundamental tenets of CSP and CL in mind, this project focuses on the ways in which teachers could support their students who have linguistic and cultural competencies that differ from white mainstream or dominant competencies. Therefore, it seeks to understand, explore and propose some practical applications of Critical Literacies and Culturally Sustainable Pedagogies in the context of Colombian pre-service language teachers. Through these lenses, this study describes some explicit teaching strategies that could help as a source of inspiration for teachers. They might adapt and use these activities in an attempt to maintain and cultivate the diverse and rich skills and knowledge that their students bring with them to the classroom.

In addition, this research seeks to better understand how teachers sustain students' cultural backgrounds while providing access to understanding and critiquing dominant cultural competencies. The main purpose of CL and CSP is to question, cultivate and reflect upon the linguistic and cultural practices of our students by liberating teaching and learning from the dominant power structures such as the white gaze, the male gaze, the ableist gaze, etc. (Paris & Alim, 2014). For this reason, the following question informs this study:

How do Culturally Sustaining Literacies for Language Teaching help construct environments of reflection to promote social justice in the context of preservice language teacher education at a private University in Colombia?

Defining the Pillars of this Study: A Conceptual Framework for Culturally Sustaining Literacies

In this section, I am expanding and proposing ways of praxis by merging Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (CSP) and Critical Literacy (CL) principles for language education. After analyzing and reflecting upon their tenets, what they might look like in the context of English teaching and the challenges they represent, the concept of Culturally Sustaining Literacies (CSL) arose as a possibility for language teaching transformation. In the following lines, I will elaborate on what CSL means. I will start by describing and reflecting on the key concepts that comprise this proposal: Critical Literacy (Freire, 1970) and Culturally Relevant, Sustaining Pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017).

Critical Literacy

Historically, one of the most relevant precursors regarding literacy is Paulo Freire, his ideas about ‘banking education’ (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987) shook education and laid the ground for Critical Literacy practices. These ideas regarding banking education are related to seeing students as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge. Such knowledge is often disconnected from students’ social realities. Thus, a change is needed not only to raise learners’ awareness of what they are, their history, and their social reality but also stepping up and acting upon it and transforming it. In this way, students have elements to face and question social injustices from the classroom scenarios and it is expected to transcend to society.

Freire (1970) defines literacy as "an attitude towards texts and discourses that questions the social, political, and economic conditions under which those texts were constructed." (p. 392) It does not go far from the conceptualization of critical literacy. For instance, Coffey et al. (2013) claimed that it offers a way for people that have been historically oppressed to engage in critical discussions to resist the constant reproduction of norms of dominant groups. It is a concept and a practice that Mora (2014) framed as a "social imperative" in language education. Most recently, Pandya and colleagues (Pandya, Mora, Alford, Golden, & de Roock, 2021) framed critical literacy as "literate practices individuals need in order to survive and thrive in the world, foregrounding the concept that information and texts are never neutral, and the ability to produce powerful texts that address injustices in our lived worlds" (p. 3)

Nevertheless, it is a practice that needs to be cultivated, it cannot be implemented in isolation during a period of time, it needs to be an ongoing process. (Vasquez, et al, 2019). If it is properly practiced, it helps teachers to guide and raise citizens able to face, analyze and question social inequalities making a change not only inside but also outside the classroom. (Pandya, et al, 2021). These concepts complement each other, as from the perspective of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies and Critical Literacy it is possible to deconstruct hierarchies of power and injustice present in and outside classrooms.

Luke (2012) extended this notion and defined CL as a cultural and linguistic practice that involves an understanding of how texts and discourses can be manipulated to represent and change the world regarding relations of power, peoples' social relations, and geopolitical and economic relations. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to do something and that is why "The aim of CL is the development of the human capacity to use texts to analyze social fields and their systems of exchange with an eye to transforming social relations and material conditions" (p. 9)

In an environment where CL is promoted, students are encouraged and called to be engaged in critical dialogues in which they participate respecting others' views (Dozier, Johnston & Rogers, 2006). These spaces and practices provide the opportunity to understand self and others, it can be a resource of courage, dignity, vindication, and empowerment (Ada & Campoy, 1999) for learners. Herewith, students are free to express their feelings and thoughts based on real-life experiences and their personal position towards a text. Learners get involved in critical reflections that permit them to create and transform their surrounding world.

The inclusion of critical literacy in the classroom, as Lau (2012) argued, helps students to avoid being passive readers and writers in the sense of shaping and re-shaping their own realities in order to bring change to their social conditions. However, Lau added that it constitutes quite a challenge as it is an area left behind in English classes, mainly for the reason that teachers feel the language gap might be a limiting factor to talk about such complex and sensitive issues that include moral and cultural perspectives.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy stems from Critical Literacy practices as we can notice some characteristics that are framed under this approach. The intersection between them can be found in the intention of ensuring equity through the maintenance of the languages and culture, by taking a critical stance toward and critical action against unequal power relations resulting from research and practice (Paris, 2012). They are two practices that advocate for social justice, CSL and CL meet at the point where teachers want to guide their students to advocate from and for themselves. Their ultimate goal permitting students discover and be aware of their own and others stances; when they use culturally sustaining pedagogies and critical literacy, they are able to acknowledge, question, and sustain their literate, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

From Culturally Relevant Pedagogy to Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) first proposed Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) as a theoretical teaching framework in response to deficit pedagogical approaches to education that did not meet students' needs. Deficit approaches argued that for diverse students to succeed in school, they would have to abandon the cultural practices of their community and instead embody dominant practices. (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012).

The roots of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (CSP) come from Ladson-Billings' concept of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, developed and introduced almost 30 years ago. It acknowledges and celebrates cultural aspects in students from different cultures and backgrounds. Ladson-Billings (1995) stated that culturally relevant pedagogy is a theoretical model that promotes not only student academic achievement but also helps students accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequality that schools may preserve. It is a pedagogy that "empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 382). As it is a pedagogy of opposition that is committed to empowerment, students can critically examine society to speak on behalf of those who are silenced in order to promote social justice in their contexts.

Elaborating on this work, Gay (2002) introduced the term culturally responsive teaching to highlight the need of reconsidering curricular content and moving to an approach to promote students' engagement, enrichment, and achievement. Such objective is possible when teachers identify and nurture students' cultural strengths while embracing their lived experiences. Her work focused on the representation of students' experiences and cultures in the curriculum by taking advantage of their cultural backgrounds and styles in instruction. She encouraged teachers to

transcend the “mere inclusion of ethnic content into curricula” and advocated for making “radical changes in instructional processes to promote inquiry, critique, and analysis” (2018, p. 35).

Although it is clear that Ladson-Billings’ ideas created the groundwork for maintaining students’ cultural heritage besides encouraging students to critique dominant power structures, other scholars (Gay, 2010; Paris, 2012; Alim & Paris, 2017) claimed that much of the work being done under the umbrella of culturally relevant pedagogy needs to have a wider view considering the need of preserving the pluralistic and diverse world we are living in.

In 2012, Django Paris first offered the term Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) as a way to expand the fields of culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive pedagogy given his argument that “it is quite possible to be relevant to something or responsive to it without ensuring its continuing presence in a student’s repertoire of practice, and as so, its presence in our classrooms and communities” (Paris, 2012, p. 93)

Indeed, the very term ‘relevance’ does not explicitly support these goals, as their principles do not show us hints about them. After questioning if the term relevant was the most accurate, Paris (2012) proposed and framed Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies. He advocated for the positioning and re-centering of diverse cultures as opposed to ‘responding’ to them in order to defeat systemic inequalities in classrooms. In other words, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy informs about *what* to do with our students’ diversity, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy focuses on *why* it is necessary to take that diversity into account, and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies promotes the *how* to do it while perpetuating students’ way of being and doing.

Paris (2012) argued that the terms *relevant* and *responsive* do not entail the needs of a pluralistic society. These terms refer to the way in which a students’ culture is used as a means to teach them the dominant language and culture. CSP aims to perpetuate and encourage cultural

diversity. This pedagogical stance is strongly supportive of students' cultures rather than merely being responsive or relevant. CSP seeks to sustain culture both in a traditional and evolving way according to students' lived experiences. Paris (2012) posited the need of supporting young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence" (p. 95). Thus, he introduced the term and stance of *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies* as a means for future research and advocacy for educational justice.

CSP acknowledges, honors and sustains students' diversity without silencing, homogenizing, or restricting their L1 use in a multilingual classroom. It opposes the eradication of students' identities or literacies in the classroom and instead encourages teachers to embrace them as valuable elements that allow meaningful learning to happen. Pursuing that objective, Paris and Alim (2014) encouraged teachers to see rich and complex linguistic and cultural practices to avoid implementing "pedagogies that are not filtered through a lens of contempt and pity" (p. 86). They argued that being multicultural and multilingual should be seen as a path towards power in our diverse society. Thus, the concept of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies was chosen as the basis of this project, according to Paris and Alim (2017) CSP seeks to perpetuate and foster linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for positive social transformation and revitalization. CSP requires that students and teachers think critically about social phenomena and prepares them to address injustices and challenge society dynamics that privilege one group over another.

Lee (2017) established that the main objective of CSP is ecological as teachers need to consider students' lives not only as a source of knowledge but as targets of learning to be sustained. Both, students' and teachers' lives outside the classroom demand to be considered and how

classroom dynamics and experiences impact and affect these lives, as they are intersected by multiple participants, situations and viewpoints.

It is possible to find misconceptions about CSP, in fact, some teachers find it difficult to implement as they may think that it is about copying or replicating students' background and adapt it into the classroom environment. On the contrary, Puzio *et al.* (2017) explained that it should not be an issue, as the idea is not to work alone as a teacher, but to work collaboratively with students, parents and the community to share and enact their stories. In that way, those stories help us to understand our history to pave our future.

Nowadays, a central tenet in education must be social transformation and it can be approached by promoting CSP practices. It is the response to the changing dynamics and tremendous diversity we see in our classrooms. Teachers' approaches must be modified in order to understand and acknowledge this diversity, as well as recognizing how our students' cultures and identities are continually changing. Besides, it favors a teaching style where we, teachers are proving our students with the necessary capabilities to flourish in a pluralistic, multilingual, and multicultural environment through CSP. (Robles-Ortiz, 2021) Under this approach, teachers need plan their classes to establish learning conditions that enable students to become social agents who advocate for them and the communities they represent.

Culturally Sustaining Literacies for Language Teaching: A Framework for Social Justice

Paris (2012) explains that CSP transcends the idea of being responsive or relevant to the cultural experiences of minoritized communities as it seeks to perpetuate, foster, and sustain linguistic and cultural pluralism from classroom scenarios as part of the curriculum. Based on this concept, it is possible to notice that CSP affords the opportunity to extend this conversation to new realms.

Although education scholars have proposed different approaches and lenses for teaching in general terms, sometimes it is still missing a proposal that seeks to connect to students and what they bring with them to the classroom, my proposal looks at the possibilities on how these two practices coexist together in the language classroom to promote spaces of reflection and social justice. Hence, I propose a framework that will encourage the rethinking of teachers' and students' roles in language classes. Besides, it will help the educational institutions communities to reimagine a pedagogical proposal that includes scenarios promoting critical reflexivity on how preservice teachers can be engaged in such practices in the pursuit of social justice.

Cultural Sustaining Literacies is grounded on CSP and CL practices responding to students' cultural backgrounds and home literacies and practices. From CSP, Culturally Sustaining Literacies take the need of approaching, honoring and supporting the complexities of students' identities understanding culture as fluid, diverse and never static. Besides, it can challenge educational inequalities that are perpetuated by a system that builds on standardized language learning (Flores & Rosa, 2017). Culturally Sustaining Literacies take the best of both approaches to reimagine and reconceptualize language teaching in ways that hegemonic discourses are not perpetuated. As CSP and CL deal with social justice to avoid systemic inequities, they act as decolonial pedagogies that pave the way for language teaching to promote liberation. Besides, they intertwine race, language, class and power as essential elements for teachers to consider in a language classroom, if they are willing to engage in reflexive and transformative practices to question the status quo. In other words, CSP and CL advocates for the equitable development and acquisition of language through analysis and alteration of power structures, (Luke and Dooley, 2009) through the revision of any form of meaning that does not center linguistic, literate and cultural pluralism. (Paris and Alim, 2014)

Some scholars (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Luke, 2000; Gay, 2000, Paris, 2012) have explored and proposed different approaches teachers can address to better reach their students. They have offered some strategies for relating to students and working toward equity inside and outside the classroom. However, there are missing some practical experiences and lesson planning inspiration, in which the transformation we are looking for is seen in action, especially in a second language classroom. This is where Culturally Sustaining Literacies steps on and works not only on second language education but also on its implications in a country like Colombia and what is needed to better enact our students in an exploration of decolonial practices while sustaining their ways of being.

This proposal highlights some strategies and approaches that teachers could use to get some inspiration and start getting focused on their students' identities in the commitment of knowing, honoring, and sustaining their communities. It is an approach designed to address the social, political, and historical issues of the past (Muhammad, 2020) and contemporary contexts of Colombian education. It seeks to raise the consciousness of what we were, what we are, and what we will be, and take actions that lead to social transformation. The following principles are thoughts and initial reflections we; language teachers can start including in our lesson planning.

Teachers' Self-assessment

Before engaging in Culturally Sustaining Literacies, it is vital to critically revisit our practices first. Our practices must be critical and deconstructive around coloniality, teachers need to identify and transform the ways in which colonial power relations exist in schooling (Dominguez, 2017). For that to happen, as teachers, we must unpack our biases and prejudices and discard the idea of classes designed under a 'one-size fits all' view. We cannot preach

something we cannot put into practice or just simply distort the real message and turn it into something we believe in.

Flores and Rosa (2017) asserted that some teachers and asset-based approaches to language education that claim to embrace diversity and students' practices might be actually reproducing inequality by positioning them as less appropriate than others for academic settings. We need to decolonize all our practices that stigmatize and neglect ways of being and doing. Of course, as Ladson-Billings (2017) claimed, there is not a single teacher training course that could prevent and cover every possible cultural conflict but it is our duty to take the first step by really knowing the communities in which we work. It is vital to recognize that just as culture is not static, it is dynamic, so should be the frequency with which we review our teaching practices. It is an ongoing process that will never have a definitive way of acting inside and outside the classroom, therefore, we must critically revisit what we are and what we do.

Language Focus - Curriculum Adoption and Adaptation

This framework is directed to language teachers and as such, we cannot leave aside the fact that we are guiding students to master their language skills as well. As it is known, as language teachers, we have to follow a curriculum provided by the institution we make part of. In our Colombian context, the Ministry of Education in their National Bilingual Plan (2006) adopted the Common European Framework of Reference for language standards, therefore, all institutions from primary to higher education must be aligned with them and showing that students have achieved them. Considering that, teaching under critical lenses is not an easy task; however, it is not impossible, it is about 'playing with the system' when it is hard to crack into it. As long as we can show improvements and positive results the 'HOW' could be up to teachers.

Teachers who want to promote culturally sustaining practices in their classrooms must evaluate and propose a change of instance and practice in the traditional curriculum (Mora, et al, 2019). Once it is critically analyzed, it might be an opportunity to talk to superiors and make this proposal into praxis. If possible a cross-curricular project that can involve other students, teachers, parents, administrators, and their communities of practice. Otherwise, if it is just you and your class that is a good starting point as from our classrooms we can reimagine ways to link language to realities and fight social inequalities. Although it may sound idealistic, it is possible to transform society through the recognition and enactment of our own languages and lifeways that we practice that are different from the dominant ones that we could address in our classrooms, mainly how to live under English-speaking ideals.

Our Identities - Teaching and Learning That Matters

It is about understanding how CSP acknowledges the role of students as ‘funds of knowledge. “Learners can be sources and resources of knowledge and skills...” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 79). This approach to education considers students’ repertoires and literacies, the ways in which they interact including family and communities in the classroom setting. In other words, “the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (González et al., 2006, p.133).

As students are an important source of information, so are teachers, and their role also encourages students to be active participants in this process. By creating spaces in which both can open up and share their experiences, an environment of trust, reflection and caring is created to build a community. ‘We co-construct together not in spite of our differences, but because of them.’ (San Pedro, 2017). Students can feel safe when expressing themselves, revealing who they really

are, and get involved in discussions of race, colonization, and oppression that can be discussed meaningfully and dialogically. (San Pedro, 2017)

Past and Present Cultural Linkages - A Cultural-Sociohistorical Vindication

In Colombia, we have a sociohistorical debt with our communities as our country makes part of a large group of nations affected by legacies of genocide, land theft, enslavement, linguicide, among other forms of colonialism (Alim & Paris, 2017). In our traditional schools, we have been taught the part of history in which the colonizers are the heroes who ‘helped’ and ‘educated’ us. The truth is we have had little or no exposure to our roots to understand who we are, how our identities have been shaped this way and what kind of interactions can emerge between these past and contemporary cultural shifts. It seems like we are training students to know more about dates, names and other colonial historical facts but we have not really addressed history in a way that we can honor and sustain our ancestors, communities and what we really are. As teachers, we have the duty to disrupt what Paris (2012) calls the “traditional democratic project of schooling” that endorses a violent speech in which students, parents, and communities are forced to lose their literacies in order to fit and succeed in traditional education.

This principle is the core of CSP consisting in the sustainability of the lifeways of communities, who have been attacked and continue to be outraged and eliminated through the traditional project of schooling (Alim & Paris, 2017).

Stepping Forward - Cultivating Critical Reflexivity as Praxis

As Alim & Paris (2017) explained, one of CSP’s goals is to go beyond critiques and challenge regressive practices that promote social injustice. Thus, our classrooms need to advocate not only for the understanding of perspectives and realities of marginalized and oppressed

communities but also for the commitment we and our students have to change. In other words, critical reflexivity is a vehicle that leads toward the deconstruction of coloniality in and out of educational settings, with the potential to prompt students to critique the realities in which they are embedded and facilitate positive social transformation (Paris, 2012). From this perspective, students' agency is cultivated and promoted in a responsive way that allows them to make decisions that will directly impact in a positive way their lives and those of their communities.

Chapter 2

A Critical Review of the Literature: What Has Been Done and Taking a Step Forward

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of using Culturally Sustaining practices to engage students in Critical Literacy. It is going to provide elements that may guide my research in terms of understanding the status quo from an international and national perspective, challenges, methodological implications, results, and recommendations. Moreover, the literature serves the purpose of supporting and positioning this project by evidencing how it fits in the academic community.

After consulting databases, I noticed that these topics have not been explored yet together; they have been treated separately and in fields different from English learning. Therefore, I decided to divide these two approaches and start looking for projects that eventually will connect Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies and Critical Literacies.

Critical Literacy: Exploring Worldwide Perspectives on Current Practices

Critical literacy is an approach that has been gaining interest around the world with educators from countries such as Brazil, Singapore, USA, Korea, Taiwan, Iran, among others (Pandya, et al., 2021), in different levels of education from preschool to college.

A study carried out in Brazil by Jordão and Fogaça (2012) reports the experience of creating teaching materials for public school teachers and students in southern Brazil. The materials were intended to be used as resources by teachers according to their students and their own needs. They also bore in mind those local communities and what they needed while using the materials as a need rather than as a textbook itself. The researchers remarked that the process of developing EFL teaching and learning materials was a very rewarding learning experience, as well as a very challenging one. Besides, they mentioned that they do not expect, by any means, that the

materials are seen as a solution to all teaching and learning contexts and that they will be regarded as sources to be followed uncritically.

A possible limitation in this study was that after designing the materials, even 4 years later, teachers had not had the opportunity to use and experiment with it. The project was not implemented yet and although it is ready to be printed. Besides, as the reproduction rights are in hands of the Secretariat of Education, it was not possible for the researchers to share the materials on their own. From this study, it is possible to conclude that sometimes protocols are a limitation for real change in our classrooms, teachers need to advocate for students' rights and always put them first instead of just making them lose an opportunity of change.

Similarly, Fajardo (2013) described critical literacy practices around the world in her article. She starts by defining critical literacy in terms of both critical text and critical pedagogy. This review then identifies common theoretical frameworks and pedagogical foci in recent research involving secondary and tertiary ELLs. It highlights the possibilities and challenges experienced by both ELL students and teachers as they practice critical literacy in English language classrooms. The review suggests three major findings. Firstly, with teachers' guidance towards explicit engagement with power relations in texts, it means that English language learners are able to develop and enhance their critical literacy. Secondly, both English language teachers and learners seem to favor conventional literacy practices rather than critical literacy. Finally, she claims that there is a need for English language teachers to lead students toward a heightened awareness of the presence of power structures at work in the valorization and subordination of varied literacy practices. This study covered an extend of the discussion, however, to keep making this field grow, it is important to continue working on this field to the identification of the sources of beliefs, to tackle possible misunderstandings concerning language teaching and learning.

Cho (2015) explored critical literacy in which the population was pre-service and in-service teachers in the United States through an action research approach. She based her work on the absence of pedagogical models for implementing critical literacy in teacher education contexts. The researcher started working on the definition of critical literacy and then, described how her participants perceived challenges of employing this approach in their current and future classrooms. Findings reveal that despite the differences in the two instructional contexts, both groups recognized that the current curriculum and the standardized tests are the major obstacle for enacting critical literacy in the classrooms. As limitations, she reports that a big obstacle to implementing critical literacy in public school settings was the standardization of curriculum and the test-driven educational environment. Besides, there was another constraint regarding parental resistance and confusion over the construct of critical literacy.

Some insights about critical literacy in second language curriculum and instruction were provided by Abednia and Crookes (2018). They made a historical journey of the origins of critical literacy to trace back the first language encounter it had with language education. Considering that, they could understand how CL began get connected to the field of applied linguistics. After that, they offered the main key features of L2 critical literacy practices that need to be considered in language instruction and learning. To do this, they recognized what practitioners have reported on their practices regarding classroom content and process. The findings also report and reflect on the outcomes of these practices and the challenges that practitioners have found when including it as part of their second language teaching processes. For instance, the way of implementing critical literacy in the classroom from the policies presented to the lack of support from stakeholders and parents in the implementation of the critical literacy practices. Researchers have also

problematized lack of time and materials that limited the implementation and having an appropriate guide to implement such practice.

Critical Literacy in Colombia: Our Modes of Representation

A qualitative study developed in Bogotá, Colombia by Gil (2015) interpreted the students' statements about what actual social issues represent for them. The study took place in a private bilingual school where the development of literacy has been at the core of its academic concerns. Traditional literacy and critical literacy, and the relation between them are the main theoretical pillars discussed. The participants were 10 senior students, who got involved in a pedagogical innovation for eight months, and whose purpose was to make them gain awareness of the social issues that surround them through the writing of argumentative essays. The instruments used for data collection were discussions and the students' papers. As findings, she claims that the students assumed social agency roles as a result of their sensibility and sensitivity towards issues such as bullying, discrimination, and mistreatment, and reading and writing helped them fight back and grew personally. In this way, they had the opportunity to experience literacy as an act where they could rediscover themselves and in turn, make sense of the world around them.

Another study, developed in Boyacá, Colombia by Esteban Nuñez (2014) showed the results of a research project that had the intention of identifying and describing the way in which critical literacy skills emerged in a course of Literature and Culture of English-speaking countries. Students questioned, analyzed and reflected upon culture and identity issues that were involved in different literary texts. Those materials were carefully and intentionally selected by the teacher to lead and engage students into a deep reflection upon North American Culture and identity issues while contrasting and analyzing their own concepts of their Colombian and *Boyacense* culture and identity. The results suggested that it was possible to establish some strategies that allowed critical

literacy such as: dialectical notebooks and double entry journals as students were able to confront their own realities.

Likewise, Gómez and Gutiérrez (2019) in Medellín, Colombia; showed how it was possible to engage English learners in Critical Literacy moments. Through interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, students' artifacts and the teacher's journal the data was collected to make possible the study of this implementation. The results suggested that students were able to identify and reflect upon power relationships while learning a language. Nonetheless, resistance from students to this practice was also found. This finding can help future teachers to get ready for similar and future practices, it is understandable as traditional teaching approaches do not normally encourage critical perspectives in the development of language lessons.

More recently, Mora and colleagues (2021) reported the results of extensive research and analysis on studies carried out in Colombia framed under Critical Literacies (CL). They provided a description about Colombia and its current sociopolitical and educational context to enact past and present critical literacy practices. The 29 articles revised proved how CL is a growing field in Colombia with studies in both English and Spanish. They showed the efforts of Colombian public and private settings to contribute new knowledge and experiences to larger national and international conversations. The analysis and reflection of these practices led to the conclusion that critical literacy offers a possibility of change for a country like Colombia that is facing social, political, and economic transformations. It challenges teachers to reassess their views of language and instruction to promote equality in our society.

Culturally Relevant, Sustaining Pedagogies

Using an ethnographic case study approach, Durden and colleagues (2015) examined how teachers and parents within an ethnically diverse early childhood program conceptualized and

implemented culturally relevant pedagogy to encourage children's socio-cultural development and awareness. Data sources included questionnaires, interview transcripts, and observational field notes. Findings suggest there were multiple strategies and resources teachers used to facilitate the socio-cultural growth of young children indicative of culturally relevant practices. However, we discovered there were mediating factors that impacted how and whether teachers were able to implement culturally relevant pedagogy in the early childhood classroom.

In a different scenario, Szech (2019) developed a study where she problematizes the need of public schools' teachers in the U.S. to reach students' expectations in the elementary classroom. This study considers the ways in which nine teachers, one Black, two Latinas, six white, who teach elementary school, experience, discuss, and implement Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies in a professional development course. She collected the data for this qualitative study during five months through observations, interviews, audio recordings, photographs, detailed field notes, and participant self-reflections. The results from the study showed the limitations to engage in culturally sustaining practices because of school standardizations. Likewise, it was evidenced that some teachers felt discomfort in discussions about race and power in the elementary classroom. Despite the constraints, the study suggests that the lack of teachers' knowledge and awareness on this issue helped them to reflect. It eventually led teachers to new culturally sustaining practices.

Durden and colleagues (2015) developed an ethnographic case study approach. This project examined how teachers and parents in an ethnically diverse early childhood education program conceptualized and applied culturally relevant pedagogy and how these primary caregivers fostered children's sociocultural development and awareness. In the data collection methods, they included questionnaires, interview transcripts, and observational field notes (classroom and community) field notes. The results showed that there were multiple strategies and

resources used by teachers to facilitate young children's socio-cultural growth, indicating culturally relevant practices. Conversely, they found that there were mediating factors that influenced how and whether teachers were able to implement culturally relevant pedagogy in the early childhood classroom.

The intersection of Critical Literacy and Culturally Relevant-Sustaining Pedagogies: World-wide practices

Very few studies documented the connection between Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Critical literacy; however, as I read, I noticed that sometimes they do not use the variant 'sustaining' but they use 'relevant' or 'responsive'. Based on their roots, practices, goals and commonalities it is possible to connect them to CSP.

It is the case of this work, where acknowledging the need of responding to more diverse classrooms, López (2011) calls for more culturally relevant pedagogies that center the lived experiences of diverse students to ensure engagement along with educational success for all learners. She argues that there is a need to support teachers who are willing to take on this complex task by providing examples of ways culturally relevant teaching can be implemented in their classrooms. She presented the common elements of culturally relevant pedagogy and critical literacy through performance poetry in a grade 12 English class. In this collaborative action research, she examined how teachers could support their efforts at becoming more inclusive in their practices. This study showed how a diverse multicultural classroom started deconstructing and reconstructing how they view different forms of poetry, a knowledge that is privileged and not privileged, and their own understanding of people who do not look like them.

Carpenter (2020) inquired about the connections between CL and CSP. Developed under an action research method, this study examines how English language learners perceive the

inclusion of native languages and cultures and how they are valued in the classroom environment. The aim of this study was to explore how culturally sustaining practices could be present in a classroom environment, using critical literacy to learn more about the students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The participants in this study were nine second graders who are refugees and speak different languages. The data was collected using guided discussions with the participants, observations, students' artifacts, field notes, and researcher memos. The results showed some of the components that students want to sustain: relationships, cultural food, the story of the journey of their families, and their access to technology. These findings inform teachers about what students feel and what they wish to support based on their cultural and linguistic identity. All these elements guide teaching in terms of reformulation of lessons, content, and classroom practices.

One of the ruling principles of CSP involves the White and hegemonic gazes to describe the figurative and literal violence along with the influence that emerge from the institutions and other relations that create oppression. Wong and Burkhard (2021) relied on this principle to systematize Burkhard's experience in a student-led program from a suburban high school in the Northeastern of the USA. In this project, her role was more like a supporter of a group of 10 members and not like a leader. The youth from this program were the ones in charge of activities, analysis and discussions about social problems worldwide. During the sessions, Burkhard realized that instead of having moments of critical reflection, which was their intention, they unconsciously ended up perpetuating social injustice. Considering her role, Burkhard did not want to interfere with the leadership of the group. She observed and analyzed the dynamics, behaviors, and positions that they took. Her reflections and regrets on what she lived, as a spectator, happened after this experience, which is often the case in educational practice.

To conclude, teachers who are interested in social justice-based education and supporting Critical Literacies through CSP should follow three principles to know if they are ready for this challenge and start getting involved in a teaching practice that sustains and revitalizes communities for collective emancipation. First, courage, to accept when they are wrong, question their beliefs and take the risk of feeling unaccountable when changing their teaching practices and engaging in necessary conversations to develop critical literacy through CSP. Second, honesty, with themselves and others, in order to recognize and do what was contemplated in courage. Finally, vulnerability, unveiling and abandoning power and oppression to provide conditions for collective liberation.

This literature showed that despite CSP and CL are approaches that were conceptualized years ago, these fields are still growing and there is a gap in terms of teaching practices that reject power hegemony while honoring and sustaining students' community cultural practices and identities (Woodard et al., 2017). Although we cannot have one specific method to follow, it would be useful to share experiences and provide teachers with some practical strategies that can help them to engage in critical and culturally sustaining practices, reflections and discussions.

Despite the fact that some teachers do acknowledge the need of teaching under critical literacy lenses, several factors influence and most of the cases limit them when applying this in their classrooms. From non-flexible curricula focused just on content to resistance from students' parents are some of the major limitations that teachers may find when planning and implementing critical literacy practices in their classes. Understanding these situations, and in the light of the current literature found about CL and CSP it is necessary to keep nurturing these fields to offer alternatives for English language teaching different from language-structures approaches to language learning.

After exploring and analyzing the previous studies and resources in relation to Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Critical Literacy fields, I got many insights regarding the methodological aspects involved in research and the current state of these fields. In terms of methodology, I noticed that the most common research approach was qualitative, framed under the action research and case studies methods. Likewise, it was possible to understand how each teacher from different and broader perspectives had the same goal with Critical Literacy and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies. All the principles, strategies, experiences and techniques led to successful implementations that guided this project.

Chapter 3

From Theory to Praxis: Implementing Culturally Sustaining Literacies in an English class

This chapter describes how this research was a challenging and rigorous process that described students' engagement with Culturally Sustaining Literacies. For the implementation, I present the methodological characteristics of this study and the approach that frames it. Additionally, I revisit the research question, describe the participants and research setting where it took place. Finally, the data instruments that were used to collect information along with the data analysis of this study.

Considering that the intention of this research project is to promote students' critical literacy through the inclusion of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies practices, I will adopt a qualitative approach. Thus, the focus of qualitative research is to understand phenomena, by exploring it from participants' viewpoints within their natural setting (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Hence, it allows this researcher-teacher to explore and depict students' viewpoints of the understanding and the interpretation they have about the inclusion of CSP, how it can lead us into CL and their impact in English classes.

Qualitative research helps the researcher to understand the particularities and complexities of people; as Stake (2010) stated, "It seeks uniqueness more than commonality; it honors diversity; qualitative studies allow particularity to be studied" (p. 11). In this research project, I describe how Culturally Sustaining Literacies construct environments of reflection to promote social justice. My role in this project can be described from two perspectives: teacher and researcher, as a teacher with the intention of impacting my students' lives, and as a researcher in order to reflect on my practice to improve it.

Stating my Research Question and the Subquestions

Considering the phenomenological nature of qualitative research, I proposed the following question to be answered throughout this process: How do Culturally Sustaining Literacies for Language Teaching help construct environments of reflection to promote social justice in the context of preservice language teacher education in Colombia at a private University?

After shaping my research question and collecting the data, I started to refine it by using some subquestions that helped me to organize and analyze the information that I had to answer the main question. They guided the description, analysis and interpretations of the results in chapter 4:

- How does the teacher promote spaces for social justice through Culturally Sustaining Literacies?
- To what extent do students' artifacts allow the opportunity to engage in Culturally Sustaining Literacies to generate environments for social justice?
- What are the challenges of implementing Culturally Sustaining Literacies?

Research Setting

This research project took place at a private university in Rionegro (a city about 1 hour from Medellín) in an English course. This university offers 29 undergraduate programs and 17 postgraduate studies with around 5400 students. One of these undergraduate programs is where this project was carried out, it is a B.A. in Foreign Language Education with English emphasis (*Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés*) that belongs to the Faculty of Education. The Faculty has the objective of training critical teachers and researchers in education and pedagogy, in compliance with the commitment of the institution to this sub-region of Antioquia. In this study, I focused on fourth semester students of an English course that I taught.

The curriculum of the program contains six English courses throughout the degree. Each course is divided into an English level of proficiency-based on the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001). Integrated English 1 (A1), Integrated English 2 (A2), Integrated English 3 (B1), Integrated English 4 (B2), Integrated English 5 (B2+ - C1), Integrated English 6 (C1). From Integrated English 1 to 5 the classes have an intensity of 6 hours per week and Integrated English 6 has two-hour classes. In this project, as students are from the 4th semester, the course was Integrated English 4.

A central tenet of the Integrated English program, as the name of the courses implies, is the integration of skills, widely held to be an effective approach in modern language instruction (see Brown, 2000; Harmer, 2007; Kumaravadivelu, 2003). By ‘skills,’ teachers and students should understand not only the ‘traditional’ skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking, but also socio-pragmatic skills and language functional skills. As much as possible, teachers should aim to incorporate each skill into all of their classes as such, where courses are to be co-taught they will not be divided by skill, rather by topic. In each course, space is made for specific ‘workshop’ sessions, these are skill specific and are designed for students to develop their ‘ability to learn (*savoir-apprendre*)’ (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 106) by developing specific, goal-oriented strategies (e.g. Oxford, 1990) thus encouraging them to become autonomous, lifelong learners.

Participants

Integrated English 4 (IE4) had two groups that consisted of fourteen adults each. Both classrooms had a teacher in charge. Nevertheless, the research study was carried out in my English class, called IE4 group 2. The adults are from 18 to 29 years old and all of their L1 is Spanish, including this researcher-teacher. The information collected, and the instruments used were applied during the English classes. The group was chosen, due to the proximity that I have with

these students as I was their teacher during the second semester, and because of them, I started questioning my practice guided by CL and CSP. The experience with them engaged me in a reflective process of promoting a more critical and culturally appropriate classroom environment. Besides, this course was also part of the assignments that I have been receiving from the university for the past year.

Understanding My Students' Realities, Selecting Participants To Represent All My Students' Voices

The process of collecting data started at the beginning of the second semester of 2021, from the beginning of August until the third week of September. 15 students comprised this group of 4th-semester students, 13 women and 2 men, all of whom agreed to participate by signing the consent form. As it was a lot of information to process, I decided to select the students based on purposive sampling (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003). It can provide more specific and relevant information considering the objective of this research project, as it leads to precise insights that are coherent and meaningful for the context of the study. I proposed the following parameters: a) quality of productions that reflected Culturally Sustaining Literacies, b) representative and varied English levels (pre-intermediate and intermediate), and c) Engagement and participation during the classes. Based on those parameters, I selected eight students for the data collection process. Another consideration was the availability in terms of time that students had for the interviews, some of them had other classes or had to work and could not meet during the proposed time for the data collection. Therefore, the eight students I selected accomplished with all the previous parameters presented in terms of content and time availability. It was a B1 - B1+ course, the classes, the implementation, and materials were carried out in English. In some moments of

reflection during the classes and the interviews, some students made use of our mother tongue to fully express themselves.

Table 1

Participants chosen for this Qualitative Research project

Student	Gender	English proficiency level
Camila	Female	Intermediate
Carolina	Female	Pre-intermediate
Sara	Female	Pre-intermediate
Andrés	Male	Pre-intermediate
Keren	Female	Pre-intermediate
Yeidy	Female	Pre-intermediate
Valentina	Female	Pre-intermediate
Wayra	Female	Intermediate

Note. *My participants expressed their desire to appear using their real names, as they wanted to take a more active role in this research.

This group of participants was chosen considering the variety of levels of English they had, their participation and willingness to collect information due to the time in which it was done. As some students were unable to attend due to work or academic commitments that conflicted with the interviews, at the end 8 students were the ones that fulfill all the requirements.

Understanding that in this group that had 15 students, there were only 2 students that identified themselves as male, from which 1 of them could participate because of the time. It was

possible to observe how this group had mostly female participants and in the analysis of this study and the implications, some suggestions will emerge as a consequence of this phenomena.

Role of the Researcher

As I carried this project in my workplace, being both the teacher and researcher in my course, I understood the power we are given in a class to create meaningful experiences. This project was my attempt to demonstrate how Culturally Sustaining Literacies (CSL) promote social justice in a language classroom. I used this course as an opportunity to envision a new perspective on English teaching by promoting reflection/action among future language teachers and start making curricular changes in traditional language classrooms. During this process, different tensions emerged: the number of topics to be taught and how they were going to be connected to CSL, the need of having more expertise on this topic to tackle or expand certain moments of criticality, lack of time due to some institutional dynamics and creating an environment in which students could feel free to share their thoughts regarding the issues addressed.

Even though I had significant challenges with this project, I thought of some instruments which helped me to step away from my own expectations and understand, describe and honor my students' voices. The instruments implemented were: my teacher's journal, students' artifacts, and students' personal interviews. In the following chapters, I am respectfully and carefully describing the results of these implementations, a critical analysis of this information, the process and limitations of this project.

Data Collection

With the purpose of collecting accurate data to find information that helps me answer my research question, I selected three instruments: teachers' journals, students' artifacts, and personal

interviews. These instruments provided me with enough elements to understand students' perceptions about CSL practices from their voices to the attitudes they had during classes.

Teachers' Journal

Keeping in mind my role as a teacher-researcher, specific situations or comments may arise at unexpected times in class, which although not planned, may be ways to present students' views on Culturally Sustaining Literacies (CSL) for social justice. The idea with this personal journal was to help to describe important issues that were occurring or possible ideas used for the project. I wrote in this journal after each class of the implementation, it means once or twice a week during 2 months. This diary helped me to observe students' feelings, behavior, situations, and opinions towards the implementation of the CSL lessons as well as the impact on their learning process. Journals allow teachers to document, reflect and facilitate what we observe to understand the experiences depending on the conditions presented in the context analyzed (Altrichter et al., 2005). Supporting an idea related to the previous authors, Engin (2011) posited that it is a repository of the reflection obtained along with the research experience that helps to show the validity of the data, from our perspective we can provide insights through the interpretations and experiences that emerge in the context. This data collection method was useful to express my point of view of what I experienced in my role. As well as getting some perspectives, analyses, and conclusions taking into consideration the different situations that emerged in the application and development of this research project.

Student Artifacts

Artifacts are conceived as a source that can add important contextual details to the existing data (Lankshear and Knobel, 2014; Pahl & Rowsell, 2014). For that reason, I chose this method as a way of complementing the reflection and voices of my students. These are other ways of

representation that even if they do not have the words to express it, they are showing meaning, insights, and understanding of their realities. I collected collages, presentations, and infographics that showed how they reacted to the activities presented with a Culturally Sustaining Literacy perspective.

Personal Interviews

I chose interviews because I wanted to know the experience of my students during this project. For that reason, I conducted semi-structured interviews with my students, based on the questions I had prepared in advance (Seidman, 2005). The questions were planned to know their points of view of the classes I planned for them around the research question. This type of interview is characterized by being flexible and allowing more questions to emerge from the provided answers by the interviewee (Burns, 2010). Galletta (2013) highlights that a semi-structured interview is a meaningful instrument for collecting data when the researcher needs to reflect and assess a program. I carried out a semi-structured interview at the end of the implementation. With this instrument, the intention was to describe students' perceptions and experiences about the environments created around classes planned under Culturally Sustaining Literacies frameworks.

Based on the above, it allowed me to explore and build some foundations on Culturally Sustaining Literacies considering students' perceptions for the purpose of this project. I interviewed the eight students, out of 15 students that I had in my group, during the last session of CSL implementation. I recorded with my cellphone all the interviews. The interview had 2 main purposes: gathering students' insights and experiences during the implementation and identifying if they noticed any changes in the perspectives they had before the lesson and after them. By meeting with the participants, I collected data on their individual perspectives, which was especially helpful in identifying the specific effects and challenges of CSP implementation.

The interview also gave participants time and space to share their experiences and reflect upon the classes and their learning processes. They felt their voices were important when expressing their thoughts. It helped me to identify a community of practice, understanding the role of the participants and me through the classes and the interviews. In a community of practice is critical to ensure that students can reflect, sustain their own ideas about the implementation of CSP. My interview protocol was guided by questions focused on asking participants about what perspectives my students brought to the classroom, how they might have changed, the reflections around my role and their future role as teachers, how they felt I centered the cultures and lived experiences of them in my teaching, and what pedagogical approaches, strategies, lessons, and activities they felt were culturally sustaining.

Data Reduction

As the data for this project was collected from three different sources of information present several central elements and secondary ones arose. Nevertheless, in order to narrow down the analysis and provide more precise results, it is necessary to visualize some categories rooted in the research questions and objectives that will lead the discussion. For that reason, I use the following strategies to narrow and select the most accurate information that could answer questions that I posed.

Mind Mapping

I used them to sort and organize the all the information taking into account the research sub-questions and the information collected from the different instruments I used (students' artifacts, transcripts and possible excerpts from the teachers' journal).

Word Clouds

After selecting the transcripts and the journal excerpts, I created two word clouds, one for each of them. This strategy takes the most frequently used words and displays them visually identifying key words in different sizes and colors based on the frequencies (DePaolo and Wilkinson, 2014). Through the examination of the frequencies in a word cloud, researchers can focus on specific patterns of words and phrases to match them with the information required for the research question and sub-questions and create the names for the categories.

Chart

After finding appropriate names for the categories, I decided to do a chart where I could copy and paste the ideas and artifacts designed by my participants that corresponded to the categories. By using this strategy, I could notice how some categories interrelate among them (Leavy, 2014) which helped me to discard information that did not fall into any of these categories that eventually were not that related to the research questions.

Data Analysis

The data I had collected was analyzed in different phases. First of all, I could start noticing some emerging patterns and commonalities, in this phase is the information coding, it is about setting the information according to topics, themes, and issues important to the study, (Stake, 2010). When I started to read the audio transcripts and field notes; I used color coding in order to compare, contrast and classify the information. Colors helped me to select and analyze the information related with the sub-questions that guided this study.

Then, I continued refining these codes in order to more accurately reflect the data and answer the research question and sub questions. Having collected and analyzed all the data, it was time to categorize the information and the categories that emerged were the following:

On The Path to Becoming A Critical Culturally Sustaining Teacher: Reflections and Implications

This category shares insights on my praxis, I analyzed what I did to create an environment that promoted Culturally Sustaining Literacies in the pursuit of social justice. Besides, I included the strategies I designed in my lesson plans and the curricular and personal challenges that represented being a Culturally Sustaining teacher. This category was mainly used for the analysis of the teacher's journal and the personal interviews. Results could pave a way for future teachers that are interested in shifting their classroom dynamics and joining this growing field.

Students' Perceptions When Facing Social Injustices Deconstruction: Decentering the White Gaze

Understanding how my students' voices are essential in the construction of equity environments, this category depicts the ideas my students presented during the discussions, the feelings and tensions when implementing the activities I designed, the use of their linguistic repertoires in both English and Spanish to fully express their thoughts while decentering hierarchies of power. This category sought to find how students engaged in Critical Literacy and Culturally Sustaining practices.

Student Artifacts As The Reconstruction Of The Society They Want To Inhabit: Using An L2 As A Way To Raise Their Voices

After getting involved in the activities proposed, students were able to create their own visions of the world that surrounds them, the national and global issues that are present in our daily

discourses that perpetuate inequities. This category shows the artifacts students use to represent who they are, where they came from and the change they want to see in society.

Trustworthiness

It refers to the confidence with which data is taken and analyzed properly by researchers. This project was carried out with respect and commitment to the participants, the setting, and the academic field. The data collected, and its analysis for this project, was by all means treated with the highest level of professionalism. Students' ideas were written exactly as they said it (including Spanish expressions, minor grammar mistakes, and others.) Transcriptions from the classes and the interviews did not change any word from the original audios. Besides, students' artifacts were created based on some generalities provided by the teacher but I did not influence their answers, and neither did I participate in the creation of their compositions. The students participated willingly during and after the implementation process; knowing and being aware that the answers provided were merely for academic purposes and in no way had any kind of repercussions on their grades in the course.

Ethical Considerations for This Project To Come True

First of all, I spoke with the coordinator of the program. I presented to him the consent form where I explained the topic intended to be developed and the specific course and semester where the research took place. We had a short meeting, where I explained to him the general aspects my research pretended to develop. I told him about my intention of mixing CL and CSP practices to analyze students' perspectives when facing real-life situations that advocate for more social justice in approaches to education. From the very beginning, he agreed, so it was the moment to talk with my students at the beginning of the semester to ask for their participation willingly. After having the opportunity to present my research and having support from the university, I

presented the official consent form to my students. The course was composed of 15 students and all of them answered it, allowing me to take their views, constructions, and ideas to my project. Due to practicality, it was reduced to a focus group, made up of 8 students who were carefully selected as mentioned before. Students were told that they could use pseudonyms during the project but all of them agreed to use their own names as they wanted to make part of the project in a more personal way.

Chapter 4

Culturally Sustaining Literacies as A Framework For Social Justice: Responding To L2 Classroom Diversity

Data analysis is a way of “seeing and then seeing again.” It is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the data to discover what is underneath the surface of the classroom
(Hubbard & Miller, 1993).

This chapter outlines the patterns and findings I noticed after analyzing data from students’ artifacts, teacher’s journal, and students’ personal interviews. As this study seeks to promote environments for social justice in an English classroom with pre-service teachers, the categories that emerged are closely related to the objective of this project, along with the research question: How do Culturally Sustaining Literacies for Language Teaching help to promote social justice in the context of preservice language teacher education in Colombia? Besides, I created three sub-questions that led my analysis to reduce data more effectively: (a) How does the teacher promote spaces for social justice through Culturally Sustaining Literacies? (b) To what extent do students’ artifacts allow the opportunity to engage in Culturally Sustaining Literacies to generate environments for social justice? (c) What are the challenges of implementing Culturally Sustaining Literacies?

After the analysis process, I was able to categorize common aspects of the different representations of meaning obtained from the implementations, three main issues were observed. The first, on the path to becoming a critical culturally sustaining teacher: reflections and implications, is connected to the first sub question that inquiries about teachers’ role when implementing culturally sustaining literacies. The second category: Students’ perceptions when facing social injustices deconstruction: decentering the white gaze, leads to complementing the first sub question and providing light to the second question about students’ creations to engage in

CSL. The third, Students' artifacts as the reconstruction of the society they want to inhabit: Using an L2 as a way to raise their voices, is linked to the second and the third question that deals with the challenges and tensions when implementing CSL practices.

The following table shows the students that participated in this the research with no pseudonyms, as they decided to have their own identities to make part of the project in a close way, their ages and genders that will help to understand the narration and analysis of the data. Additionally, some images about the students' artifacts will be presented along with quotes extracted from the recordings of the class that were part of the teachers' journal and the personal interviews. These sources were the basis of this analysis, the reduction of the data and the process to obtain the results and conclusions.

Table 2

Participants

Students' names	Gender	Age
Camila	Female	19
Carolina	Female	21
Sara	Female	21
Andrés	Male	20
Keren	Female	18
Yeidy	Female	22
Valentina	Female	21
Wayra	Female	19

On The Path to Becoming A Critical Culturally Sustaining Teacher: Reflections And Implications

Before, during, and after the implementations my role, as an English teacher, presented a lot of tensions between what I had to teach and what I should teach. Culturally Sustaining Literacies turned into classroom strategies I used to change the paradigm of a typical language class. The course is called 'Integrated English' due to the approach to the four skills that as teachers, we need to consider when designing our classes. The first thing I had to do was to find ways to connect the topics, learning objectives, the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing), and the sociolinguistic skills from the course to critical sustaining practices that could help my students to become empowered and active subjects of change. I wanted them to be empowered with their identities, histories, and acknowledge what makes us Colombians in order to honor and sustain our communities.

Our first session began on August 3rd, 2021. During that class, my objective was to explain to participants the details of this research project and solve the doubts they still had regarding their participation, namely, they were concerned about negative effects they would receive in the course and the program as a 'bad grade' or 'discrimination' for expressing what they really wanted to say. After I explained that I could make sure that it would not happen, I was there with 15 students who had just signed the informed consent; they were eager to know more about the experience, and with their acceptance, I gained more confidence to start with the process. I wanted to offer them a space where they could know about our cultures without prejudice, as this was a classroom with students from different regions of Colombia like Antioquia, Boyacá, and Cesar. I wanted to provide them with a scenario so that they would use English to speak about who they are, the community that surrounds us, and our country.

I cannot deny I felt nervous, because even though I had my mind clear on the principles and the vision or possible outcomes of the project, it was really challenging having to translate the theory to practice, as there is not like a ‘how to do it.’ By understanding that the foundational approaches of Critical literacies and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies are not methods, it is possible to reflect upon how they offer a lot of possibilities for teachers to start exploring and planning under these umbrella terms.

Opening Spaces In The Curriculum For Critical Culturally Sustaining Practices

As a language teacher, it is important to take into account the linguistic competence and how we can guarantee the presence of the curriculum in order to answer students and institutional demands. The course aimed at a B2 level which helped me to address complex topics and I could realize how Culturally Sustaining Literacies fit as an approach to reach the desired objectives. From this perspective, I could support my study, because CSL invites students to go beyond the complexity of the language to problematize and transform their realities. Even though it was a difficult task, after some reflections and a spark of creativity, I came up with some ideas in which I started to see the light to the transformative path. The following table shows the topics that I selected for the implementation; these were directly taken from the curriculum of the course.

Table 3

B1+ B2 topics selected to implement CSL

Topic	Language focus
Decentering the typical view	Future clauses
Who am I? Unveiling our identities.	Used to/ Be used to/ Get used to
Myths or fake news we’ve been taught.	Future forms (will, going to, present

	continuous)
Colombian men and women. Are we really represented?	Phrasal verbs and reported speech
Movies inspired in Colombia: an analysis of who we are.	Past forms (past simple vs past perfect)

Decentering The Typical View

Taking into account the topics previously mentioned, the series of interventions started with the topic I called ‘Decentering the typical view’, after having explained future clauses (when, by the time, before, until, etc.) I asked my students to watch the video for the Oscar-winning short film *Hair Love* (Sony Pictures Animation, 2019) twice. By ‘decentering’ the typical view, I referred to some of the comments I had heard from my students in previous classes before the implementation. Some of them made some comments about how there was a tendency to show similar characters in TV shows, films and even animated films. They claimed that these programs showed white-skin characters with straight hair and slim bodies because that is what people wanted to see (Teachers’ journal, July 28th, 2021)

The first time I played the video, I asked them to analyze the characters, events, and message of the story. The second one, using their own words, they had to retell the story, using future clauses to describe what they saw and their own feelings towards it.

After watching it for the first time:

- Teacher: Any thoughts or feelings about the video?
- Sara: ‘The girl was so pretty, her hair, I love it! That’s a beautiful video, teacher’
- Camila: ‘Yes and so sad, it made me think a lot. ’

- Valentina: ‘It’s very different from what we normally see.’
- Teacher: ‘And... What do you normally see?’
- Valentina: ‘Like white people, with blue eyes, speaking English’ (Teacher’s journal)

From the moment we started, students started to question how traditional media overuses white-middle class perspectives to portrait a life a lot of people do not feel represented with.

After having watched the video for the second time, we started discussing these questions:

Table 4

Questions for going beyond the traditional understanding

Why didn’t her father give up on doing her hairstyle?
What is the message of the story?
How important is family to you? How important is it in our Colombian culture?
What communities are represented in the video? What communities are not?
To what extend this situation can be real?
How could this be a social problem? What can we do about it?

Students had to write a composition including the previous questions and the vocabulary studied in the class, in this case, using future clauses. They were confused with the questions, as they thought I would only ask about the sequence of events that happened in the video. While writing, they asked questions for clarification like: ‘Teacher, what do you mean by *communities*?’; ‘Teacher, why is it important my opinion about *family*?’; ‘How can we compare this to our real

context?’ (Teacher’s journal, 2021) The following excerpts were taken from the activity mentioned before.

- Valentina: It is great to see other cultures here, it is not common to see the afro community represented, and also sick people are part of the story. This video can give visibility to other communities.
- Wayra: I felt identified with the video, it made me think about when I try to hide my hair, I have to love it, it is part of what I am.
- Sara: The video showed the diversity of races, it made me think about racism we see in other countries, even ours. The message is about doing everything in your hands to change our lives.
- Camila: This video made me aware of our richness, the richness we find in our country and around the world; like races, languages, and cultures.
- Andrés: A traditional family is represented and not in terms of race, but in terms of having a dad, a daughter, and a mom, today we need to think about other kinds of families.

In this first activity, students found difficult the identification of power, but after thinking about it, they noticed that movies, pop culture, music, models, and other media, normally show white-skin people that seem to have a good or at least stable life. Students tried to look always at the positive side of the situation, I wouldn't say it is resistance but it is more related to the lack of exposure to these activities that put them in this position of getting used to seeing this marginalization as normal standards to follow. After all, students were conscious about aspects that we do not normally realize, they were able to think outside the box, considering multiple viewpoints and how no message is neutral.

I consider that this activity designed under the Critical Literacy and Culturally Sustaining pedagogy approaches will guide my students to develop an argument by systematically highlighting significant points and including supporting details where necessary. Besides, students could be foster their written skills while they create compositions with arguments that contain appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting details; these two objectives are established in the course for this semester. I see these approaches as ways to disrupt the common place and at the same time promote discussions about complex topics that are skills to work on to get a B2 level (Teacher's journal, July 30th).

Who Am I? Unveiling Our Identities

The next topics in the course were: used to, be used and get used to. After presenting and practicing the topic by using a listening recording of how that looks like in real life situations, and doing some grammar exercises, I wanted to connect these structures with students' realities by using the opening question 'Who are you? Students were surprised and expressed some reactions towards that question:

- Wayra: Teacher, that is the typical question we were asked at school...
- Valentina: Teacher, what is that deep question?
- Carolina: It is very difficult to answer that, teacher. I don't really know.
- Yeidy: Us? why about us, teacher? Are we that important?
- Teacher: Of course you are! But have you stopped to reflect on that? Do you have a single answer to define yourselves? Do not worry, we will use some guiding questions to get some ideas about our identities.

As homework, students had to prepare a presentation for the following class, to do that, they had to create a collage with images and pictures that they felt identified with and that they

considered could help the audience to understand who they are. Likewise, I provided the next questions to guide their speech and to facilitate the images choice for their collages. These questions were adapted from Muhammad (2020):

Table 5

Questions to understand our identities

Do you know who you are? If you had to describe yourself using 3 adjectives, which ones would they be?
What does your name mean? If you were given a different name, would you be the same person you are today?
What would others say about you? Do you think it is real?
What did you use to do as a kid? (games, activities, food, likes, music, etc.) Is it similar to the person you are today?
What are your cultural identities? Consider your beliefs, languages you use, what you read, your rites, traditions, celebrations, food, practices, etc.
What practices/ traditions are you used to?
How are people like you depicted in society and media? Do you feel identified with that?
If you could take us somewhere to help us understand your culture/ethnicity, where would it be?

Those were the questions that students used to guide their presentations. Before they started, they were excited to share with their classmates the results of the research they did. Students said that it was a positive exercise as they had never asked themselves or their families about who they



Figure 2. Camila showing her identity.

- Camila: I am a Colombian who is into Asian culture. Since I was a little girl, I've been in contact with this culture, I consider that it is beautiful and I feel identified with it. Asians are kind and respectful, we, Colombians are too, but we are missing much more. Thanks to globalization today we are exposed to different music and series, that is how I started with this influence. About how the media shows girls in Medellín, I found this picture with these 3 girls drawn, they are similar among them. I know that there are girls like these, but I don't feel that drawing represents me. That is the image that a lot of people have about *Paisas*, pretty girls that have hair like this and that dress like this. However, it is important to recognize the diversity of women we have in this region.



Figure 3. Carolina presenting her identity.

- Carolina: I am Colombian, I am from San Carlos. I love Colombian landscapes, I think our country has the best places to visit. For that reason, if I could take you anywhere to understand my culture and my identity, I would take you to one of the marvels of Colombia, its waterfalls. They are amazing to relax, to get disconnected from life and to start over.

Teachers' Reflections When Centering Students In Their Lesson Plans

Sometimes, when we think about *culture*, we tend to believe that we have to teach about general or superficial aspects to connect with our students, for example, food, traditions, beliefs, or music. In order to understand the dynamics and diversity in our classrooms, it is vital to understand that cultures are fluid, cultures are not static (Paris, 2012), it means that it is necessary to enact both traditional and evolving ways of culture of our students. I noticed that students recognized themselves not only as citizens of Colombia but also from the world. Moreover, Students were kind of anxious, I had the impression that they have not had the chance to stop and think about themselves, who they were and how the place they inhabit made part of their identities. Some of them questioned why I wanted to know that, how it was important in the class, as it was

a language class, not an ethics class. Hence, it made me think about the extent to which we, teachers, are really centering students in our classes. I wondered if we really took the time to know about them to create environments where teaching really matters and connects to the humans that are in front of us.

In our role as culturally sustaining teachers, we need to go deeper also on how students perceive and interact with their culture, their communities or the place where they live. In some classes, during informal talks, I heard from students that some cultures are better than others and even ours. I could not help it and I asked how they came up to that conclusion. They argued that what they have seen in movies or series is the way people from these countries acted that showed respect to others, humility, among other qualities. I made them think by affirming that there could be two possibilities. One, that those qualities could be real and if so we can learn to be better from them, or second, there could be an idealization of some cultures and how countries try to sell ideas to show supremacy, st and diminish others. I remarked on the hospitality that characterizes Colombians, that we can see nationally or internationally with foreigners that claim that. My students were surprised and highlighted how sometimes they try just to point at the aspects we need to improve and not those that make us proud of who we are. Besides, they were aware on how has great media influence their thoughts and their visions along with ‘small acts’ can perpetuate the power imposed. (Teachers’ journal, August 3rd, 2021)

Students' Perceptions When Facing Social Injustices Deconstruction: Decentering The White Gaze

Myths Or Fake News We've Been Taught.

I connected this topic to future forms. First, we talked about the future forms in English and how they have specific uses depending on the situation. Second, I started to think about how students could use these structures to commit themselves to their communities, in their role as future teachers. Third, I asked them about historical facts we were taught at school but later on, we discovered it was not like that. Almost at the same time, the majority of students said: *'The discovery of America'*. Then, I shared with them a text about the origin of the name of our country, Colombia, and how the name was a way of honoring Cristopher Columbus even though he never stepped foot on this land. Finally, I proposed some questions to guide students into getting their views about this topic.

Table 6

Questions to promote Critical literacy and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies.

Did you know this information?
Before you mentioned that the discovery of America was one of those facts that were wrongly taught. What are your feelings towards the name of our country?
How important is it to know these facts?
Who benefits from spreading information like this? Who doesn't?
How were people affected by this information? How can we affect others with the dissemination of this information?
Why were we taught this way?
As future teachers, what are you going to do to avoid the perpetuation of unreliable information?

- Carolina: To be honest, I had no idea about this information. I can't believe people honored a person that did such terrible things.
- Valentina: I agree with Caro, our ancestors had to suffer all kinds of violations during the 'discovery of America' I know we are a product of Colonization but there is no need to neglect what happened.
- Sara: Imagine being free in your land and the next day everything is chaos.
- Camila: I think teachers had to teach us this information because they are agents of the government and they had to follow a curriculum. The government is always trying to hide things from us and change events to avoid conflicts.
- Valentina: As future teachers, we need to teach and fight for the truth, we can do a lot of things. I am going to be a teacher that
- Camila: I am going to be a teacher that shows things how they are, I will ask my students to do some research and promote discussions in class like this one. I think we cannot teach just English and grammar rules; we need to raise conscious citizens that change our society.
- Carolina: As teachers, we have the power to change education and the society we live in.

Once students finished discussing the text, I asked them to do some research to find facts that we were taught differently and that now we have evidence and arguments to have a different opinion about them. I remarked on the importance of citing sources/evidence and providing their own analysis of the situation. Students had to choose the ones they considered the most important to share with the class.



Figure 4. Camila and Tatiana's presentation.

- Camila: There was no 'shout for independence' as such and the incident insistently reproduced in school textbooks of the Llorente vase was a pretext for the Creole elite to create an atmosphere of popular unrest by taking advantage of the popular anger towards the officials and Spaniards (...) It is also necessary to talk about a lie that has mourned many families in our country: the false positives. At first, the government did not want to make this atrocious fact out, but later, thanks to investigations, it has been possible to clarify the issue. Without a doubt, a crime that must be taught in our history in order not to repeat it and in solidarity with the victims that want the truth.



Figure 5. Sara, Carolina and Valentina's presentation.

- Sara: At school, we were told that July 20th was Independence Day, but the radical politicians of Bogota were the ones who chose this day. This day responds to the political interests of the elite that made it so.
- Valentina: Also, in social studies classes they make us learn about the constitution, our rights, and how our country, being a social state of law, must guarantee them. Sadly, we see the reality that when we want to raise our voices in protest against the violation of our rights, the government responds negatively.

Teachers' Implications When Unveiling Knowledge Impositions

In this discussion, I was able to observe how in general students quickly found those facts that were taught to them from one single perspective. I felt students perceived my role as a guide, they consulted if it was okay to share some thoughts as some could be problematic or not so 'politically correct. I tried to explain to them that the position we could take against a situation we find unfair, is always going to shake the feelings of those who are looking for perpetuating their ideas (Journal, August, 5th, 2021).

In the presentations, students were surprised, they said they felt like they were blindfolded by a system that perpetuates power and wants that students know only one part of the story. They were empowered when doing their research to debunk historical facts from America and Colombia that they considered as truths. Students were aware of the imposition of the white gaze and its influence on the curriculum. They could analyze how teachers' role is essential and how teachers could make a choice to guide students into an emancipation project. This exercise helped me to let students take control of the class, being more a guide and not a lecturer because students are always waiting for your approval or opinion and it can totally affect their views. The most challenging

aspect was to leave my feelings and thought aside to empower more my students and encourage them to make their own choices to spread the information with solid foundations to their classmates.

In terms of the linguistic objectives of the class, students were glad to fit correctly some of the phrasal verbs studied, they expressed gratitude to make this knowledge applicable in a purposeful way by sharing their opinions towards an issue. Besides, the use of reported speech allowed them to paraphrase authors and support their thoughts to feel more confident when they made an assertion.

Colombian Men And Women. Are We Really Represented?

The language focus we worked on was phrasal verbs. As this topic is more related to vocabulary learning, students had more possibilities to implement them in their speech. We started with a review of the vocabulary studied before by dividing the board into different contexts and the phrasal verbs that they could use in them. The contexts were related also to social issues and how people create imaginaries of others by hearing a nationality or the language they speak. Therefore, I asked my students about the perception that they considered people from other countries had about us, Colombians.

- Teacher: Guys, have you ever wondered what other people from abroad think about us?
- Wayra: Yes teacher, probably what they see on the TV, like *Narcos*. It is really sad to be compared like that. That is a chapter I am sure we have all tried to close.
- Valentina: Movies and series always show a side that does not identify us, we are different.
- Camila: Movies do it for money, without thinking about consequences.
- Teacher: Those are called stereotypes, like a reduced perception of a group of people that share some characteristics, in our case, being Colombians.

I designed this activity, considering students' identities previously addressed to discuss if they felt identified with what the media shows about us. To begin, I showed students the following screenshots taken from Google when looking for the words 'Colombian women/men.'

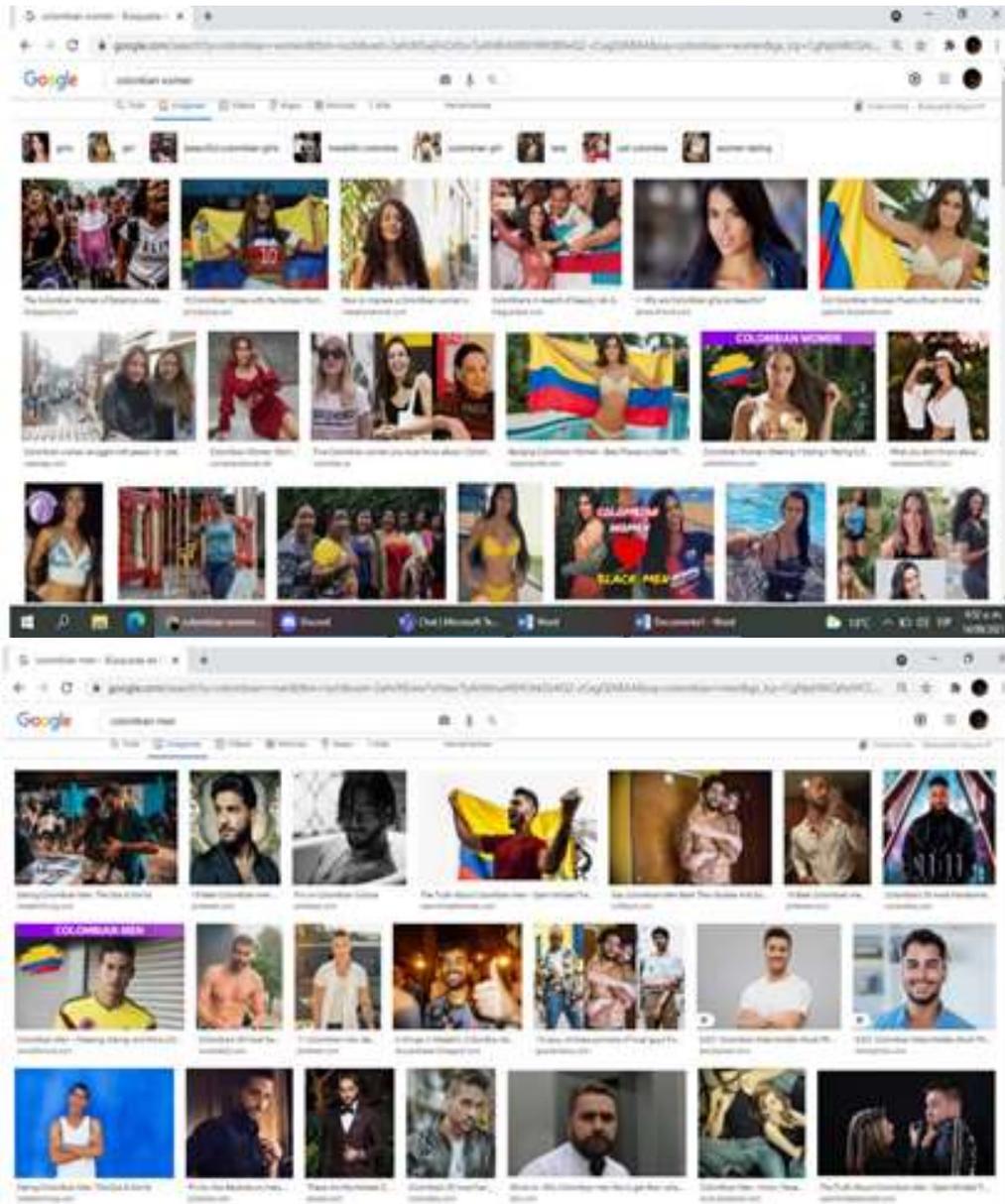


Figure 6. Images for analyzing Colombians stereotypes.

Bearing in mind the previous images, I provided my students with the following questions for a discussion in pairs.

Table 7

Questions to reflect upon Colombian stereotypes.

Do you reckon these pictures represent you? Yes/No Why?
What do the media say about Colombian men? (Use reported speech)
Based on the pictures what can foreigners think about us? (Implement phrasal verbs)
Whose voices are represented in the pictures? Why?
Whose voices are not represented in the pictures? Why?
Are there any stereotypes/misconceptions present? Describe them
What would you like to change or add?
Now, try to find other perspectives on google using the region you are from. Example: Paisa girls/boys/man/women -Look at the first 3 lines of results. Considering the previous questions: What are your thoughts on these results?

I organized students in pairs, making sure the same genders were working together to position themselves based on the gender representation that the media showed. I gave them 30 minutes to share their personal views with their partners. Students were engaged with the topic, they could not believe those were the simplified versions of the vast culture and diversity we have in our country (Teacher's journal, August 11th, 2021). They were speaking English (L2) and in some cases, they used words in Spanish as they did not want to be limited with their ideas and as they said, feelings are better expressed in our mother tongue. Some students apologized for using Spanish (L1), but I made sure to create an environment free from judgment. I told them that if they considered that the idea was better expressed in their L1, and there was not an appropriate equivalent in their L2, it was okay to use Spanish or 'Spanglish', I tried to make them aware of how it is a skill and an opportunity to communicate and not a limitation.

Additionally, this finding reports that during the use of Spanglish, some students became more aware of their L2 linguistic competence and how the class environment supports their process.

- Yeidy: To do this activity I had to look for a lot of vocabulary. I improved a lot in my English, I felt that the fears I had about my Paisa pronunciation disappeared. I always worried about it in other courses and I felt stuck. (Teachers' journal August 11th, 2021).

Students reflected on the confidence they have gained in the L2. They mentioned how sometimes, for them, it was difficult to have an accent and how they tried to hide it. It was an example of how CSL framed under CSP seeks to highlight and sustain students' linguistic backgrounds. This framework guides students into more deep reflections that went beyond the topic of the class, it invited them to think about their L2 learning process too.



Figure 7. Keren and Sandra's thoughts on Colombian women's representations

- Keren: As we were seeing the pictures, we could not deny the beauty of Colombian women and we felt it was a good image to show abroad. However, we did not feel those women represent common women. Models have other lifestyles, and it seems there is a beauty standard that minimizes other women as ‘less’ or not ‘good enough to appear on a search. We would like to have more diversity of races, bodies and not only in terms of the physical aspect but also in different professions or fields. For instance: Colombian scientists, athletes, writers, musicians, etc. We are and we have more than a beautiful face or body to show.

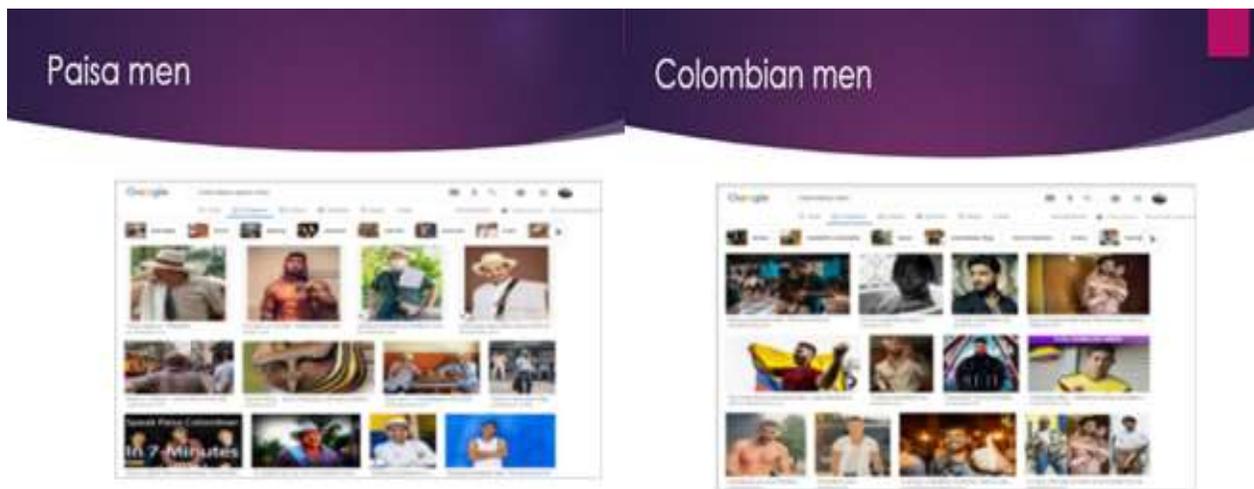


Figure 8. Andres and Sebastián’s discussing: Colombian and Paisa men representation.

- Andrés: I don’t agree with these pictures. Look at us, we are Colombian, we are men and we don’t look like that. We are real. Social status different from rich or middle-class men are here but not others, why? Also, not all of our races are not shown in this search. Colombians are more than singers, football, or models. In these pictures, scientists, social leaders, writers, teachers, people that make some real change are missing.
- Teacher: Why do you think different social statuses are not present?

- Andrés: I don't know teacher, but it is not fair. Maybe because they are trying to show us only what is 'acceptable.'
- Sebastián: Also, these are superficial things, with these images what others can think about us is that we all like soccer or reggaeton and of course it is not like that.

Some Considerations When Exposing Students to Social Injustices

At first, when students saw the pictures of people representing Colombians, they did not feel sure about what they needed to comment on or analyze. For them, it was complex to identify *power* on why some people are chosen to represent us, and not others. Then, when guiding them through the questions they needed to answer, they started to interrogate the absence of diversity in terms of races, bodies, genders, social groups, communities, religions, and social strata. In their reflections, my students proposed a more inclusive view where everyone could feel pictured to let the world know the cultural richness we have.

Discussions around critical literacy and culturally sustaining pedagogies have arisen as a way to problematize the imaginaries, stereotypes, and the marginalization of who we are; how little by little our cultures, communities, ways of being, and thinking are disappearing. All of this, because of non-neutral discourses that are trying to impose the 'appropriate' way of doing such things to fit in the molds of society.

The principles of these approaches seek to avoid discrimination across sexes, cultures, and genders. This basis helped me to design this activity to fight and face my students with this social issue related to gender and cultural discrimination. For instance, by means of this Colombian gender stereotypes activity, my students could take an anti-oppressive point of view against sexism, patriarchal and white norms. During this class, I could realize how my students discussed different gender and cultural representations considering alternatives that are rooted in equity.

Students' Artifacts As The Reconstruction Of The Society They Want To Inhabit And Sustain: Using L2 Learning As A Way To Raise Their Voices Against Social Injustices

Movies Inspired In Colombia: An Analysis Of Who We Are

Our language focus in this class was: passive voice. The main aim was that students could choose different ways of saying things, depending on the person they are talking to and the context concerned either with passive or active voice.

To lead students into the main activity, students had to think about Colombian traditions, products, or diversity we have that they considered are not similar to any other country they knew. Then, they had to choose one and imagine how they would show and explain it to a person that did not know about it. Some students shared through pictures and steps, the origin and processes of collecting Colombian coffee, the ceramic production in El Carmen de Viboral, the preparation of a traditional Sancocho and plantain buns from the coast of Colombia. Students were engaged and surprised because they did not know the origin of these traditions and how our ancestors played a fundamental role that contributed to our modern times. (Journal, August 16th, 2021)

In the second and main part of the activity, students were asked to watch and analyze the trailers of two movies inspired in Colombia: *Tundama*, a Colombian film; and *Encanto*, an international film. Before watching the teasers and trailers available on YouTube, the opening question was: Have you watched any Colombian movies? What about movies that show our Colombian culture?

- Valentina: I have watched some movies and series but the majority of them show a side of Colombia that is related to violence and drugs. Is that all we have?
- Wayra: Yes, drugs and more drugs.
- Camila: That is why I prefer watching Korean dramas.

- Teacher: And why are those the main topics that people create?
- Yeidy: People like that, I guess.

The class continued and I introduced the movies by asking them if they have heard anything about *Tundama* and *Encanto*. All of them almost at the same time answered that *Encanto* was the new movie created by Disney that was going to be released in November.

- Teacher: Yes, that is right! Are you going to watch it?
- Students: Of course teacher, it's Disney and a movie inspired in Colombia is amazing.
- Teacher: What about *Tundama*?
- Students: No idea teacher, it sounds like something old.

To start, I asked students to watch *Encanto*'s trailer and they had to identify all the cultural references they saw in the trailer and they had to do some research about them and give us extra information about those elements that they noticed. Likewise, they used the following questions to complement their speech.

Table 8

Questions for connecting students' realities

How are Colombians depicted?
What cultural references can you identify in this movie?
Do you feel identified?



Figure 9. Keren and Sandra identifying analyzing Colombian cultural references.

- Keren: *El sombrero vueltiao* is traditional on the coast of the country. We could see our delicious and famous coffee and the *panela* that accompanies different preparations. Besides, we could see some characters wearing *Paisa* hats, ponchos and *carrieles*, and typical dresses. In the trailer, we could see a variety of skin colors and looks typical of our country.



Figure 10. Wayra and Yeidy identifying analyzing Colombian cultural references.

- Wayra: There were many references. Like the architecture of the houses from small Colombian towns. We could also identify the yellow butterflies, as the symbol of our writer Gabriel García Marquez. The accordion is an instrument that we adopted and is typically used in Vallenato and other tropical music (...) Today, people are adopting the influence of Asian and English music because of globalization. They consider that they are unique and the best. Sometimes, we value more what comes from other places because we do not know what belongs to us, did you know that in Colombia we have more than 1.000 different musical rhythms? I invite you to explore them, they are amazing.
- Yeidy: The flowers and animals are represented here as the huge fauna and flora diversity we have in our country. The flowers made me think about our traditional *Feria de Flores* and the beautiful *Silletas* people create. Also, we could see these traditional shoes known as ‘Alpargatas.’ today not many people wear them, sometimes peasants or when we wear costumes for traditional celebrations. Maybe the influence of fashion from other places are making them disappear.

When students presented the cultural elements they found in the trailer, they said they felt proud of being part of this Colombian culture, that it was not something they realized until they saw it from an external viewpoint, and it was perhaps taken for granted before seeing beautifully represented in Encanto.

Students’ responses were very positive highlighting how they felt their culture was well depicted in the movie. Nonetheless, I wanted students to go deeper into the trailer and consider some aspects that were going to be included and are also part of our identity but maybe we were not that aware. The question was the following: Some actors that are from the USA and others from

different South American countries are going to give the voice to the characters from Encanto. Few actors are Colombian. Is it relevant?

- Andrés: Of course teacher, because I consider that they need to show our accents even speaking in English. I don't think that could be possible that we don't have enough Colombian actors that could give the voice to these characters.

While speaking, students expressed conflicting feelings towards the movie due to the follow-up question I pose for discussion. They claimed that there is always something that is not shown and that sometimes it is hard to find because we are used to being marginalized.

- Teacher: Some of you mentioned that some traditions are disappearing, what can we do to avoid it?
- Camila: To do some research, to continue knowing about our culture, to continue filling ourselves with ancestral knowledge.
- Andrés: I think that through respect and empathy, I think that generating a pleasant space in and outside a classroom where we can all interact, we can all participate, if we have any doubts or if we make mistakes we can learn, that is how we can act as one, all acting as one, that is what makes us a culture, that is what makes us a community to sustain.

For the second part of this implementation, students had to watch Tundama's trailer, give their impressions, and answer the same questions they had to discuss in the previous movie (TABLE 8). Students seemed confused because they did not know who Tundama was. Hence, I asked to do a little research to have more context and respond according to that. Having read the Legend of Tundama, students were impressed because he was a brave Muisca warrior that opposed Spaniards when they entered the territories of Duitama (Colombia). Students recognized our indigenous culture as part of who we are today and they emphasized the importance of not neglecting it. Some

of them said that the tenacity of our indigenous communities is still in our way of opposing oppression. Moreover, they question the schools' curriculum, as they considered these historical facts worth teaching instead of just memorizing non-meaningful dates or distorted stories about our past. (Journal, September 3rd, 2021) To close this session, I promoted some reflections about the activities carried out to know if students really felt our culture had been honored while learning an L2.

- Teacher: One of the principles of this implementation and the previous ones is to highlight, honor, and sustain. Do you think it is possible to evidence it?
- Andrés: Highlighting our culture is something that is important; however, we must show how corrupt culture has been lately, I think that the culture we have must be rescued just as we are, not based on famous people, because the real culture is this culture that has been forged since ancient times, so it is something that we should not lose because of trends. (Personal interview, September 2nd, 2021)
- Carolina: I think that yes, during these classes it was evident, well, the importance of our culture in Colombia was honored and recognized because in the presentations, the teacher asked us to reflect on this topic with our own ideas, so, it was possible to recognize how important our culture is, and it was very nice to reflect on all that and yes, to create awareness about the importance of our culture (Personal interview, September 2nd, 2021).

I also used CSL as a practice for English language teaching to foster language skills in my students. Therefore, for me, it was important to highlight also the linguistic benefits that it had on my students. Camila argued that thanks to the activities, she learned a lot of vocabulary related to her environment. (Personal interview, September 2nd, 2021) Likewise, Yeidy mentioned that she felt how her speaking skills improve because now it was easier to articulate ideas coherently and

cohesively (Personal interview, September 9th, 2021) Other ability in which students felt some improvement was in their listening because as they manifested, they were used to listening American or British accents but hardly ever took the time to consciously listen to their partners to recognize and be exposed to the variety of accents people can have. (Personal interview, September 2nd, 2021)

To conclude this chapter, the results of this study suggest that Culturally Sustaining Literacies (CSL) used in an L2 class permits us to center students in our lessons. It gives us elements to raise consciousness on social issues to promote social justice. By engaging students into teaching from their identities and their communities, they can feel that they really matter and how an L2 can be more than a tool to communicate but an instrument to transform their realities that perpetuate norms that do not fit with who they are.

Knowing our students and their background lead teachers to successfully plan classes that connect to their needs and interests. It is imperative that our lessons are appropriate for their ages and contexts. Besides, the activities need to allow collaboration and cooperation among students to be able to build environments of social justice where students can feel free of expressing themselves and committing themselves to the purpose of CSL.

It was evident that there is a new generation of students and future teachers that are interested in promoting a change but need to be pushed forward to do so.

- Keren: I believe that these activities helped us to reflect on our culture and how we are marginalizing it and letting it disappear. But there is a question, and that is that you cannot sustain something that you don't know. The activities sought precisely that. For example, the perspective of how Christopher Columbus 'discovered America', but there were really many things happening around at that time. I believe that to sustain a culture, to highlight

it, to make it visible, it is essential to know about it, and that was sought in the classes. When I learned things about our Colombian heritage, I was able to prove that we really do not know our culture and we need to do something about it because this culture is also in the actions we do in everyday life. (Personal interview, September 2nd, 2021).

As my students claimed, it is not possible to sustain something we do not know, for that reason our role, as teachers, is vital to guide them through. Fortunately, I had the endorsement of my institution which facilitated my work. Nonetheless, I had to follow a curriculum and it was challenging to plan classes to both teach English and promote CSL. My lack of experience in the field made the planning and execution slower. As this was a new experience for me, it was also difficult to remain impartial before students gave their appreciations towards an issue, to avoid influencing their views.

I noticed that some students felt nervous when addressing such complex topics in an L2. However, when the teacher provides spaces with tranquility and a judgment-free atmosphere, they can become empowered to raise their voices, and little by little they stop worrying about making mistakes or feeling limited in an L2. Instead, they could use the repertoire they have in their L1 as a resource to sustain who they are and acknowledge it as a skill and not a limitation.

Having in mind the previous experiences, Culturally Sustaining Literacies (CSL) helps to construct social justice environments as it provides opportunities to both teachers and students to challenge the power dynamics present from the curriculum to society stances. In that sense, social justice is reached when we fit curricula in students' needs and not the other way around. By guiding students into identifying and disrupting power, they can transcend from the language classroom to their own mindsets to promote social transformation. To accomplish such a goal, it teachers must empower students and understand that they are the center, they bring with them knowledge, values,

and skills worthwhile sustaining. Those are a combination of elements that makes up the heritage that represents their communities. Teachers must ensure classrooms where students can make meaningful choices without any influence or imposition. Students need to feel free to be, express, and appreciate the practices that make them who they are.

Chapter 5

A Disclosure to Embark On A New Journey: From A Mindset Change To Social Transformation

In this last chapter, I analyze, validate and reflect upon the different categories found and detailed in the previous chapter. They shed some light to answer the research question and posse a series of reflections that address the implications, limitations, and remaining challenges of my study. This study proposed Culturally Sustaining Literacies to promote social justice in the language classroom with pre-service teachers. It aimed to identify, describe and challenge the pedagogical practices I used in the classroom. For that reason, I will confront and present the connection between my findings, data analysis, and the literature review.

Likewise, the following discussion expands on what this work implies in language education, to whom this work speaks, what its limitations were, and what suggestions I could give for this work to move forward, not only in our Colombian educational context but also in every place where transformative education can take place. In the end, I will share the insights gained during this journey, how this exploration became a rewarding experience for my personal and teaching practice and what goes next after this experience.

How The Teacher Enacted Students' Realities to Culturally Sustaining Literacies

Shaking My Practices, From Doing to Becoming A Critical Teacher

Having a journal helped me to really stop and rethink what I did and what I did not. Besides, I could write about how I could offer alternatives to avoid falling into a traditional mindset or a traditional teaching approach. CSL taught me to think critically and meticulously about my view of the world vs my teaching, the importance of a good classroom environment, and what we take for granted, that without noticing at the moment, perpetuates inequalities.

For instance, in a class, when I posed this question: ‘Guys, have you ever wondered what other people from abroad think about us?’ (Teacher’s journal, August 11th, 2021). I did not realize the magnitude of the word ‘guys’ at the moment of the class. It has been a word that we have consciously and unconsciously adopted but there is a lot more behind it. There are a lot of communities that are left behind by that word that looks so simple. It was just when listening to the class recordings to start writing and reflecting on my journal, that it resonated and questioned what I was doing and the message that I was trying to send.

Getting involved in asset-based pedagogies such as: Critical Literacies, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies and ultimately Critical Sustaining Literacies, implies a personal decolonial project as teachers. We must examine our practices, not only what we plan for the classes but those little moments that emerge in classes. Engaging in these pedagogies needs to go beyond a new teaching style, approach or toolkit; it needs the development, cultivation and lived experiences of a decolonial mindset (Dominguez, 2017).

This experience happened once and for a while in my class, but for sure will mark positively my personal and teaching practices. It invited me to revisit everyday who I am and what it means to me to go beyond the theory and really promote what I believe in. Additionally, I consider this mistake as an opportunity to question myself, to shake out those colonial practices I still unconsciously may have. As Kinloch (2017) posited, CSP is a way to facilitate and acknowledge the complexities of identities. It must reinforce teachers’ strong commitment to educational equity and cultural, racial and social justice.

Shaking The Curricula, Connecting Target Content with Students' Multiple Realities

Results showed how it is possible to open spaces for criticality in the traditional language classroom. I designed strategic lesson plans that could guide and give room to the integration of language skills, critical literacy and culturally sustaining pedagogies. The researcher-teacher implemented CSL activities that went along the suggested language parameters to be addressed in class. I included content that explicitly engaged issues of racism and patriarchal gender norms, as well as content that centered on students' voices and identities. This project demonstrated what Ko (2013a) argued about the way in which critical literacy can permeate a classroom. She argued that in order to promote critical literacy in an educational environment, teachers need to balance it with the curriculum. In the same vein, my findings described how I integrated this project without disregarding the language topics and skills to be developed during this B2 course. By means of this experience, I noticed how the simultaneous teaching of conventional language topics, the promotion of critical literacy skills, and the honoring of our cultural heritage could engage learners into criticality while learning an L2.

One of the objectives at a B2 level is related to students' speaking skills to present an issue in a critical manner and weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of various opinions. To do so, they must read complex text that helps them to build their arguments. Besides, students must develop listening skills that allow them to understand others' points of view to draw and write their own conclusions. In this session, I could evidence how students used advanced vocabulary and the target content while engaging in criticality. They were exposing situations or norms imposed by society as a way of living. They were aware of what the media wants to show us as 'the common families, races, genders, and ways of acting' (Teacher's journal, July 30th).

According to Paris (2016) curricula have served to reproduce and perpetuate inequality and oppression. I have to admit that my experience was really positive as I had the support of the program. I did not have to follow a rigid scripted curriculum. In this sense, I could make the most of my teaching, giving me the possibility of differentiating and balancing instruction to respond to what students are and what they need to learn. Through the lesson plans and their execution, I noticed how CSP's principles of perpetuating and fostering the linguistic, literate, and cultural competencies students bring to the classroom were a priority that was evidenced by myself and my students.

- Camila: I believe that our culture was honored and highlighted. For example, with the *Encanto* or *Tundama* activity, we were able to know and recognize what is ours, even what we sometimes forget or do not know. For example, I did not know the history of Tundama, so that was like something interesting and new. Encanto, well, we could feel identified with our traditions, what we see in the trailer does reflect things that are ours and some of them are disappearing. For example, the arepa, the poncho, among others.
- Carolina: During these classes, the importance of our culture in Colombia was honored and recognized because, in the presentations, the teacher asked us to reflect on this topic with our culture, so it was possible to recognize how important our culture is, and it was very nice to reflect on all even using some Spanish expressions to not feel limited, to create an awareness of the importance of our culture.
- Camila: I learnt a lot about our culture because I have always been a great fan of Korean things and I never started to investigate, what was around me here, so close, my close reality. I was always like, "Oh, Korea, what a beautiful country, what a beautiful culture,"

and I never started to think about what we also have here, about our richness, about the benefits of living here. I never got to think about that. (Interview, September 2nd, 2021)

- Sara: I felt that the classes really highlighted and gave a lot of importance to what is ours, but not so much here in Antioquia but rather Colombia. I felt that you wanted to highlight that even though we are learning English and we are in a globalized world, there are ways of not losing what we are. (Interviews, September 2021)

The previous comments reflected how the curriculum looks when institutions support teachers to enact students' realities and their diversity. In addition, it shows how curricula could encourage students to take an anti-oppressive stance against racism, classism, sexism, monolingualism, and heteronormativity. It was a hint on how proponents of CL and CSP could design curricula that eventually turns into a whole environment to sustain linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling (Alim & Paris, 2017; Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014).

Students' Voices and Representations When Engaging In CSL Practices For Social Justice

Students Sustain 'What They Value' And Know

The findings suggest that students were aware of their lack of knowledge about our cultures. They even mentioned that sometimes, they thought they knew more about other cultures because of the internet information access we have today. Through the activities, students got more interested in doing some research and knowing more about what is ours (Teachers' journal, September 2021). By reflecting, they could recognize the value we need to give to our cultural heritage and the importance of sustaining it to not let it disappear. Students committed themselves to learn more about their past and present communities to sustain their linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism. Similarly, Carpenter (2020) claims that through CL and CSP, teachers get some

ideas about what students feel and what they wish to support based on their cultural and linguistic identity.

Students' Productions To Promote Social Justice

Class discussions and students' artifacts offered a possibility for students to create, reimagine, propose and write messages that really honored their identities and cultures when confronted with social injustices. Gómez & Gutiérrez (2019) highlighted that students are able to identify and reflect upon power relationships while learning a language. The images shared in chapter four (see figures 1 to 9) showed how students wanted to rewrite their stories without society's power impositions. Teaching and learning frameworks based on Culturally Sustaining Literacies, as presented in this study, favor and value students' existing and prior multiple literacies. Through these experiences, students can elaborate on critical issues and represent in their artifacts, positions that make incursions in the pursuit of social justice. Eventually, these approaches demonstrate students' meaningful learning processes that match both students' and institutional' expectations.

Students assumed a critical position and evaluated how the classes could promote social justice. Moreover, they mentioned how these actions can transcend the language classroom to daily practices they can start implementing in their lives to build a better society. (Teachers' journal, August 11th, 2021).

- Camila: I consider these spaces on a larger scale can promote social justice and vindication. We were able to reflect on how, for example, many indigenous, our people's rights were violated, because we saw that their wealth was taken away from them and that even in schools today they hide these facts that are important for us to know.

- Keren: To provide instances of social justice I think it takes a long time because it is said that it is about transformation. However, these activities can be a beginning, but like all great things it takes time, and to be able to promote social justice it is necessary to change the chip that we all have. You cannot change society if your mentality is not changed, so mainly this is the beginning of a change. (Interviews, September 2021).

This finding is supported by Gil (2018) when showing that students can assume social agency roles as a result of their sensibility and sensitivity when facing social issues. Gomez and Gutierrez (2019) highlighted that students are able to identify and reflect upon power relationships while learning a language. It was evidenced that students were interested in taking these reflections to other levels more translated into actions.

Using An L2 To Connect To Students' Lifeways

This finding elaborates on how when learning an L2, besides learning meaningless sets of grammar rules, vocabulary, or fostering their language skills, they can use it to talk about them, to question inequalities, and promote solutions that center their communities and their realities. Students remarked on the complex structures and vocabulary they were able and pushed to use with a real purpose that connected to their lives.

It challenges one of the most common misconceptions when implementing critical literacy. Some people may think that its implementation needs to be postponed in the classroom environment until students have mastered the skills of reading and writing and have increased their English proficiency (Alford & Kettle, 2017) This project was developed in a classroom where students had a B1 English level. Nonetheless, when they engaged in complex debates, I let them know that they did not have to apologize for using their L1 if they considered that the idea was better expressed in their L1, and there was not an appropriate equivalent in their L2, it was okay

to use Spanish or ‘Spanglish’, I tried to make them aware of how it is a skill and an opportunity to communicate and not a limitation. (Teacher’s journal, August 11th, 2021)

That environment engrossed students to participate, to perceive an L2 as an opportunity to know more about their own realities without losing their linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

- Keren: I believe that these activities, these types of actions, showed me that a language can integrate things from our ways of being. I was very used to the fact that teachers always taught a language precisely from the outside, and that could devalue the richness of a language, and something very valuable that I personally emphasize about learning, is that English or any other language can be learned and taught from one's own being (Interview, September 2021).

Students’ And Teacher’s Tensions: Challenges When Implementing CSP

Based on the reported findings, this category depicts the possible tensions that we may encounter in the language classroom when implementing CSP. To begin with, as we are language teachers, we cannot help focusing on the L2 language use. It is essential to take a position that allows students to express their voices, their language proficiency should not be a barrier to raise their voices against social injustices. We need to establish this as a classroom rule, is it okay to use Spanish or ‘Spanglish’ even if we are in an English class? Yes, the answer will be always yes. So, what about the L2? We can be demanding with our students by encouraging them to use the linguistic repertoires they have, or they are learning in the class. Likewise, depending on their language level, you can guide them and offer new structures and vocabulary that match both the curriculum and their needs.

In my experience, my students boosted their language level due to the tasks that specifically asked to use some of the topics we had addressed and I invited them to do some research to expand their existing vocabulary knowledge.

- Yeidy: To do this activity I had to look for a lot of vocabulary. I improved a lot in my English, I felt that the fears I had about my Paisa pronunciation disappeared. I always worried about it in other courses and I felt stuck. (Teachers' journal August 11th, 2021).

To bear in mind, teachers must always lead students to achieve their L2. In all the classes is always important to link the language goals with the critical and cultural topic to address. For instance, by asking prepared questions in advance, promoting respectful debates, creating spaces where they can listen to each other as a critical act that can foster their listening skills, and always showing them how the language topics look like and how they could use in real life situations.

Students can also have exposure to 'dominant' cultures to keep fostering their L2 and improving their intercultural skills as they will be exposed to a variety of accents, lifeways and viewpoints. The most important aspect is that we provide them with tools to address it in a critical way. We cannot feel threaten about this practice, it would give us, as well, elements to know why our students have certain feelings towards other cultures and promote reflexivity in their practices.

- Camila: I learnt a lot about our culture because I have always been a great fan of Korean things and I never started to investigate, what was around me here, so close, my close reality. I was always like, "Oh, Korea, what a beautiful country, what a beautiful culture," and I never started to think about what we also have here, about our richness, about the benefits of living here. I never got to think about that. (Interview, September 2nd, 2021)

Our lessons must entail the notion of cultural pluralism which is a practice where all cultures are critically and equally valued and avoiding "assimilationist and antidemocratic

monolingual/monocultural educational policies” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 88). We cannot create classroom environments that rejects and neglects the reality of our diverse, globalized society, it is rather a strategy to get closer to our cultures and identities.

Implications Of This Study: To Whom Does This Work Speak?

The results allowed me to extend this conversation to new realms where education needs to be transformed. They constituted a way to reflect on the possibilities we have to improve teaching practices from our classrooms to question and permeate the national education system. This research wants to invite different sectors and actors interested in social change to propose and adapt these strategies according to their needs. I will elaborate on how these stakeholders can make part of this democratic and emancipatory project.

Educational Policies

For educational policies. The Colombian Constitution states that “The Nation protects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the country” (art. 7). In the same vein, Law 115 expands on this idea and remarks on the role of education in our Colombian context. Acknowledging that education needs to guarantee access to the culture of all Colombians in equal opportunities, there has been an approach to this goal and some of these ideas are present in the National Bilingual Program (2004). They are addressed in guiding documents such as: The Basic English Learning Rights (2016) and The Suggested Curriculum (2016) where there are starting points that position concepts such as interculturality and diversity as elements to be present in English teaching and learning.

However, there is no evidence on how teachers could implement these concepts in a lesson that transcends the classroom. It is vital to provide examples on how our teachers can pass from those theoretical concepts to practices where culture is enacted in our language classrooms. Teachers need to have principles, strategies and enough elements on how they can plan lessons

that build Critical and Culturally Sustaining environments for language teaching. The Colombian Ministry of Education should consider the implementation of pedagogies that recognize multiculturalism, multilingualism and multiliteracies for social transformation.

Mora, Chiquito, and Zapata (2019), proposed the idea of advocating for more multilingual policies and curricula in an effort to attend to the language realities of Colombia. They emphasized on the need that country and educational institutions have to prepare learners for using English in a critical way, considering the context that surrounds our students and not neglecting what they bring to the classrooms. In that way, students can critically face their realities, and they can apply the language as a medium for understanding their worlds (Mora, 2014). My study and proposal expand on this idea by proposing practices and exploring their effects. They can serve teachers to start moving to more transformative practices. CSL is an approach that outlines and describes how language skills are fostered through critical and culturally sustaining lenses. Regardless of the approach the Ministry decides to implement in the educational institutions, the policies must be socialized with the whole educational community and it should be provided with enough training and tools to do it. This is a collective effort that should not be a privilege but a right as stated in our constitution.

Language Teacher Education Programs

In teacher education programs, it is frequently taught the importance of adapting our teaching practices to students' backgrounds. However, in some cases, it is just conceptualized in didactical and pedagogical courses. It is necessary to be consistent in the curriculum and address these principles in practical scenarios where preservice teachers can have referents of how that theory looks in a language course. In this way, future Colombian language teachers will consider and reflect more upon the aspect of culture in second language teaching. It is an issue that although

has been approached and discussed, sometimes has been forgotten and replaced for traditional communicative approaches.

Current and future teachers need to be aware of the diversity they will encounter in their classrooms and the constant shifts in their cultures. We need to ask how educators can respond to these changes and in the same way provide them with tools for such demands.

For that reason, CSL should become a scenario adapted by higher education to give students power, choice, and voice in their learning process. If higher education institutions are interested in promoting critical and culturally sustaining scenarios, they should encourage CSL inclusion in language courses. Although it cannot be reduced to a method to follow, stakeholders can encourage the implementation of a set of principles, strategies or questions that will guide and inspire teachers to plan their lessons. When looking for a way to start, this study could provide and shape the ways in which they can support teachers in cultivating their CL and CSP skills.

Language Teachers

Today, the world and our society are facing different changes. It results in diversity, in terms of languages, literacies, and cultural ways of knowing and being of students. They are sometimes labeled as ‘inappropriate’ and in a conscious or unconscious way we, teachers, are neglecting students as subjects of knowledge. In this way, we are making our students fit a reality that is not theirs, in order for students to learn the dominant language, literacies and cultural ways of being, doing and existing in the society. Teachers are free to reject these practices and adopt alternative discourses. We are called to challenge the status quo and center our students’ knowledge. Teaching framed under asset-based pedagogies can diminish negative factors that could affect a students’ performance inside and outside the class. I am not saying that L2 culture cannot be addressed in the language classroom. Teachers can guide and support students in

sustaining what they are and what matters to them while simultaneously offering access to practices that are valued in other cultures; without imposing students a way of living. This teaching strategy could provide students with linguistic, critical, and intercultural knowledge and skills.

It is a challenge that if you are willing to accept, this work can give some hints on how to start. The activities presented in this study showed how CSL practices can be adapted to a language curriculum. The guiding questions that led the activities, could serve as well as a source of inspiration that invites teachers to make the necessary modifications that their contexts require.

English Language Students

Culturally Sustaining Literacies allows the student to give meaning to their practices while mastering their language skills. I openly invite language students to discover, value, and question their worlds. If they are especially interested in looking for alternative ways to understand, unveil, read and write their cultures, they can use CSL as a transformative practice. It has been shown how complex vocabulary and structures, speaking confidence and listening skills are meaningfully fostered based on students' backgrounds and needs.

Limitations of This Study

Literature about Critical Literacy and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies

When looking for literature, the access to some information related to CL and CSP in language classrooms with pre-service teachers was limited. I spent a lot of time trying to find studies to support mine. I found a few international studies and just one that was connected to these topics at a national level. Most of them were connected to social studies, poetry, literature and professional development courses. I could not find one specifically directed to English language teaching. Nonetheless, I looked at the bigger picture, focusing on the principles and general

objectives that are the common core of critical and culturally sustaining practices to get some inspiration for the activities developed in this study.

Selecting The Participants And Collecting The Data

All students wanted to participate in the project, due to the time I had to select a focus group (8 students out of 15) that represented the whole course. It was challenging as I wanted to make sure all voices did not get lost in this study. What I did was to take into account a variety of ages, English levels and places where they came from.

Lack Of Time

This project was carried out for more than 2 months, where students were excited, participated actively and went deeper into complex reflections. The dynamics of the course and some events at the university, reduced the plans I had in mind. From the very beginning, I knew that the idea was not to have CSL practices just during that time, but to have it as a lifestyle. Nonetheless, the collection of information for this project had to finish at some point. In the interviews, when I asked my students if CSL could build frameworks for social justice, they mentioned that it was a challenging goal but this was the first step for that. They also said that they would have liked to have more time to experiment with more guided practices in the classroom. After the data collection finished, we continued with more practices to reinforce their critical skills. I hope I have sowed the seed with enough principles for students to critically put into practice CSL as a way of living and teaching in their future.

Students' Diversity

In my English course, as I mentioned earlier, I had 15 students, of which 13 identified themselves as female and 2 as male. In some ways it was a limitation not having more men or

students who considered themselves non-binary to know their perspectives in the activities about the stereotypes of Colombian women and men. It could be said that it is a common denominator that can be conceived as a form of social injustice, since our educational system is considered inequitable in opportunities, where there are more women than men studying because of some 'roles' that society assigns to men that forces them to leave education to work directly.

On the other hand, most of my students are originally from the same region of the country, except for 2, and some home practices were quite similar in the conversations we had. Although this is valuable knowledge worthwhile sharing, hearing and sustaining, it would be interesting to have more students to discuss about their different cultural backgrounds to enrich our multicultural experiences and knowledge of our country.

These limitations are only lessons to be taken into account for the future and in a possible new implementation, where we can have more diversity and address any form of social injustice to take action against the country and the society in which we want to live.

The Confrontation of Students' Preconceptions

Some participants had some negative ideas about Colombia permeated by historical violent traces and the current socio-political situations. At the beginning, it was difficult for them to honor our culture due to ideas they had of supremacy about other cultures that came from superficial knowledge they had seen on movies, songs and the media. After some discussions, students could notice the huge power that people, cultures and media can have over our thoughts.

Advice For Future Researchers: A Call To Join Forces

This study builds on Culturally Sustaining Literacies for language teaching with adults. It showed how it can be connected to the target content to students' lives. Thus, I would recommend to other researchers interested in Critical Literacy and Culturally Sustaining pedagogies to make

an effort and implement them despite the grade or subject they teach. The context of this project was a bachelor's degree in English language teaching. Other researchers could try to expand the scope and do research in other higher education programs and compare if the benefits obtained there are similar to those reported in this work. Besides, it is important to explore the impact of this approach to language teaching (CSL) or any other subject in public education as well.

When teaching an L2, I also invite researchers and teachers to leave aside the fear of using critical literacy in the classroom, no matter the language level or the age students are. This study challenged that and proposed some strategies on how to handle moments of tension between L1 and L2 to let students freely express themselves.

In addition, it is possible to change the focus of the research, this research was focused on students' voices. Further research could open spaces to hear from teachers and their critical and culturally sustaining strategies and practices that could continue inspiring and paving the path for stakeholders. I consider there are a lot of variations and choices to make, the most crucial aspect to consider is that of sharing the findings with the whole educational community. This is something we cannot do alone if we really want to see some changes. Eventually, on a broader scale, it can inspire a curriculum reform starting in our institutions and hopefully having a 'snowball effect' that permeates national policies. For that to happen, researchers could delve into how advocates of CSL, CL or CSP could design curricula that really focuses on students without leaving aside but challenging what has to be taught. This is a democratic project that is open to everyone who wants to see a change in the society they inhabit.

Closing Remarks

This study falls under set asset-pedagogies and the approach of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (CSP) offered by Paris (2012). It shapes and fusions it with Critical Literacy (CL)

practices in a language classroom. This Culturally Sustaining Literacies (CSL) framework is a proposal that emerged from a need to provide an approach to language teaching that disrupted the current traditional ones, to promote social justice. As such, it contributes by filling the gap in the existing literature when proposing practical applications of CRP and CL within a higher education setting in Colombia.

This qualitative research project sought to build environments of social justice in a language classroom through CSL practices. The strategies and activities carried out in the classes allowed the preservice teachers to recenter their linguistic, literate, and cultural backgrounds, to engage in discussions that question and problematize the ways in which we live and sustain our cultures while learning and fostering their L2 skills.

The data collected through students' artifacts, interviews and teacher's journal offers the possibility to consolidate theory and praxis. The results demonstrated how a framework that privileges students' lifeways can bring positive engagement in the classes that favors the learning of an L2. In this sense, it is possible to adapt the curricula and teach in a way that students can relate to. This experience led to essential reflections that invite teachers to constantly identify, interrogate, and disrupt hegemonies of power such as the white gaze.

This study sets the grounds for new approaches to language education in Colombia, for teachers that are exploring practical ways in which critical literacy and culturally sustaining pedagogies can be enacted in the classrooms. It is an invitation to disrupt the commonplace, and analyze our personal and teaching practices to embrace a new perspective that responds to the diversity and the current demands of our students.

What This Study Meant to Me: Navigating Through Uncharted Waters to Find My North Star

Embarking on this journey has been like navigating with and at the same time without a map or a plan. How could it be so paradoxical? Basically, when I thought I had all the answers or where to go, the wind blew and everything changed. Fortunately, I understood it was the way it was meant to be because no matter what, the North Star stayed still. New situations and issues emerged in my classes leaving me meaningful lessons on what means to resist and eradicate exclusion. In some cases, I could steer the situation but most of them were taken over, and I am glad it was like that. I wanted and I felt the responsibility of directing this ship but the weather conditions (my students) led the way to unpredictable destinations. All in all, this study has positively challenged and impacted my current and future teaching and personal practices.

My students' voices and acts were the lighthouses in this study. Their own, inner, diverse, and fluid cultures and identities helped me to see and go beyond the words. I could realize that from the way they dressed to the way they freely expressed their thoughts, there is a message to be spread: they are the reflection of a community that strives to be seen, highlighted, sustained, and transformed. In the discussions we got in, I felt astonished about how during and after the process they gained insights that deconstructed some imaginaries they had, making them feel proud of their heritage and stories.

The reason I came to this field and to this research project was simple, I, as a teacher was looking for a change in my practice and in the way English language teaching is conceived. How did I achieve this? By making sense of what I felt and desired through theory. That theory that helped me to support and challenge at the same time my role, as a teacher and what my students wanted to find in my classes. What I did not know was that what started as a classroom project

ended permeating not only who I am as a professional but also as a human being. I started with Critical Literacy and little by little I engaged in conversations with Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies, in the need of outlining a proposal for L2 teaching. It was how this English teacher evolved conceptually, personally and professionally. They became my North Star to propose Culturally Sustaining Literacies. Is theory the ultimate answer to all the classroom situations we face? As Love (2019) posed “Theory does not solve issues—only action and solidarity can do that— but theory gives you language to fight, knowledge to stand on, and a humbling reality of what intersectional social justice is up against.” My North Star gave me the strength to poise raise my voice as a human being and a teacher.

I am more aware of the huge importance of training and working with future English teachers. This was an enriching process where my students really felt that they mattered and that they deserved to be heard and I hope they can do the same with their future students. I consider this experience is not something that can be left behind as merely a practice with my English courses; it has sparked in me the curiosity to see and open spaces to work with other colleagues and students to continue doing research on this field. I hope to awake the interest in other stakeholders to share my lived experiences and pass the herm for new directions. Of course, as the Spider-Man Principle always reminds us, ‘with great power comes great responsibility,’ but to assume this challenge, it is vital to believe and remind ourselves every day that we are not just language teachers; we are social agents of change.

Hence, I am pretty sure I have not been the same since I started this project, it has permeated everything I do, how I understand the world that surrounds me and how I face it. I felt how this project shook my assumptions, lifeways, and everything I thought I knew. Now, writing these final lines, I am reflecting upon the ways in which I have grown personally, professionally, and

academically. I consider I am and have improved in ways I had never imagined before: I am a better person, a better citizen, a better teacher, and a better researcher. The most valuable lesson I learned, during these 2 years of shaping, deconstructing, and constructing this study, was that if we, teachers, are ever wandering and looking for a chart to follow, there is no need for that, it is right in front of you.

References

- Ada, A. & Campoy, I. (1999). *Home School Interaction with cultural or Language Diverse Families*. Del So Publishing.
- Alford, J., & Kettle, M. (2017). Teachers' reinterpretations of critical literacy policy: Prioritizing praxis. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 14(2-3), 182-209.
- Alim, H. & Paris, D. (2017). What is Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Why Does It Matter? In *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World* (1st ed.) (1–21). Teachers College Press.
- Altrichter, H., Posch, P., Somekh, B. (2005). *Teacher investigate their work. An Introduction to the Methods of Action Research*. Taylor and Francis e-library, London.
- Baker-Bell, A. (2020). *Linguistic justice: Black language, literacy, identity, and pedagogy*. Routledge.
- Beck, A. (2005). A Place for Critical Literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48(5), 392-400
- Bogdan, R. & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5 th Ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Harvard University Press.
- Blommaert, J. (2010). *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*. Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, A (2010) *Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching: A Guide for Practitioners*, New York: Routledge
- Carpenter, K. (2020). *Using Critical Literacy to Achieve Culturally Sustaining Practices with English Language Learners: An Action Research Study* [thesis]. Margaret Warner Graduate

School of Education and Human Development, University of Rochester Rochester, New York.

- Cho, H. (2015). "I love this approach, but find it difficult to jump in with two feet!" Teachers' perceived challenges of employing critical literacy. *English Language Teaching*, 8(6), 69-79. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n6p69>
- Cho, S. (2013). Critical pedagogy and social
- Coffey, H., Davila, L. & Kolano, L. (2013). Understanding dialect and developing critical literacy with English language learners. *Multicultural Learning and Teaching*, 8(1), pp. 115- 132. doi:10.1515/mlt-2012-0006
- DePaolo, C.A., Wilkinson, K. (2014). Get Your Head into the Clouds: Using Word Clouds for Analyzing Qualitative Assessment Data. *TECHTRENDS TECH TRENDS* 58, 38–44 (2014). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-014-0750-9>
- Durden, T., Escalante, E., & Blich, K. (2015). Start with us! Culturally relevant pedagogy in the preschool classroom. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 43 (3), 223–232
- Díaz, F. & Hernández, G. (2010). *Estrategias docentes para un aprendizaje significativo. Una interpretación constructivista*. McGraw-Hill.
- Domínguez, M. (2017). "Se Hace Puentes al Andar": Decolonial Teacher Education as a Needed Bridge to Culturally Sustaining and Revitalizing Pedagogies. In *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World* (1st ed., pp. 225– 246). Teachers College Press.
- Dozier, C., Johnston, P. H., & Rogers, R. (2006). *Critical literacy/critical teaching: Tools for preparing responsive teachers*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Engin, M. (2011). Research Diary: A Tool for Scaffolding. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 296–306. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691101000308>

- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. Continuum.
- Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. Bergin & Garvey.
- Fajardo, A. (2013). Stated vs. enacted beliefs: Looking at pre-service teachers' pedagogical beliefs through classroom interaction. *Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura*, 18(2), 37-57.
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, practice and research*. Teachers College Press.
- Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). Teacher College Press.
- Galletta, A. M. *Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond*. New York: NYU Press, 2013.
- Gil, L. (2018). *Critical literacy development in an EFL classroom* [thesis]. School of Science and Education, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá, Colombia.
- Gómez, M. & Gutierrez, C. P. (2019). Engaging English as a Foreign Language Students in Critical Literacy Practices: The Case of a Teacher at a Private University. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 21(1), 91-105. doi:10.15446/profile.v21n1.71378.
- Gutiérrez, K. & Rogoff, B. (2003). Cultural Ways of Learning. *Educational Researcher*. 32, 19-25. doi: 10.3102/0013189X032005019
- Howard, T. (2003). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Ingredients for Critical Teacher Reflection. *Theory Into Practice*. *Theory Into Practice*, 42, 195-202. doi: 10.1207/s15430421tip4203_5
- Hubbard R. & Miller, B. (1993). The artist's toolbox: Strategies for data collection. In Unknown (Ed.) *the art of classroom inquiry*. (9-49). New Hampshire:Heinemann.

- Jordao, C. M., & Fogaca, F. C. (2012). Critical literacy in the English language classroom. *Revista De Documentacao De Estudos Em Linguistica Teorica e Aplicada (D.E.L.T.A.)*, 28 (1), 69-84.
- Kinloch, V. (2017). “You Ain’t Making Me Write”: Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies and Black Youths’ Performance of Resistance. D. Paris & H. Halim (eds.), *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World* (1st ed.) (25–42). Teachers College Press.
- Knobel, M. & Lankshear, C. (2014) Studying new literacies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 58 (2). Pp. 97-101.
- Ko, M., & Wang, T. F. (2013). EFL learners’ critical literacy practices: A case study of four college students in Taiwan. *The Asia-pacific Education Researcher*, 17, 221-229. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s40299-012-0013-5>
- Ko, M. (2013a). Critical literacy practices in the EFL context and the English language proficiency: Further exploration. *English Language Teaching*, 6(11), 17-28.
- Ko, M. (2013b). A case study of an EFL teacher’s critical literacy teaching in a reading class in Taiwan. *Language Teaching Research*, 17(1), pp. 91-108. doi:10.1177/1362168812457537
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2003). *Beyond Methods: Macrostrategies for Language Teaching*. Yale University Press.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995a). But that’s Just Good Teaching. The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice*, 34(3), 159-165.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995b). Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465-491.

- Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* (2nd ed.) Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: Aka the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 74–84.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2017). The (R)Evolution will not be Standardized: Teacher Education, Hip Hop Pedagogy, and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 2.0. D. Paris & H. Halim (eds.), *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World* (1st ed.) (141– 156). Teachers College Press.
- Lau, S.M.C. (2012). Reconceptualizing critical literacy in ESL classrooms. *The Reading Teacher*, 66 (5), 325–329. doi:10.1002/ TRTR.01050
- Leavy, P. (Ed.) (2014). *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Lee, C. (2017). An Ecological Framework for Enacting Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies. In D. Paris & H. S. Alim (Eds.), *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World* (1st ed., pp. 261– 269). Teachers College Press.
- Lensmire, T., McManimon, S., Dockter Tierney, J., Lee-Nichols, M. E., Casey, Z. A., Davis, B. M. (2013). McIntosh as synecdoche: How teacher education’s focus on White privilege undermines anti-racism. *Harvard Education Review*, 83, 410–431. doi: 10.17763/haer.83.3.35054h1418230574
- López, A.E. (2011). Culturally relevant pedagogy and critical literacy in diverse English classrooms: A case study of a secondary English teacher's activism and agency. *English Teaching-practice and Critique*, 10, 75-93.
- Luke, A., Dooley, K. (2009). Critical literacy and second language learning.

- Luke, A. (2012). Critical literacy: Foundational notes. *Theory Into Practice*, 51, 4-11.
doi:10.1080/00405841.2012.636324
- Milner, H. R. (2018). Relationship-Centered Teaching: Addressing Racial Tensions in Classrooms. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 54(2), 60-66.
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN]. (1994). Ley General de Educación (Ley 115 del 8 de Febrero de 1994) Retrieved February 15, 2013 from http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/articles-85906_archivo_pdf.pdf
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2005). Bilingüismo: estrategia para la competitividad [Bilingualism: a strategy toward competitiveness]. Altablero, 37. Retrieved from <http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1621/article-97497.html>
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2016). Currículo sugerido de inglés. Bogotá, Colombia. Retrieved from: <http://aprende.colombiaaprende.edu.co/es/colombiabilingue/88005>
- Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2016). Orientaciones y principios pedagógicos currículo sugerido de inglés. Bogotá, Colombia.
- Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & González, N. (1992). Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms. *Theory Into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.
- Mora, R. (2014). Critical Literacy as Policy and Advocacy: Lessons from Colombia. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 58(1). 16-18. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.329>
- Mora, R., Chiquito, T., & Zapata, J. (2019). Bilingual Education Policies in Colombia: Seeking Relevant and Sustainable Frameworks for Meaningful Minority Inclusion. In B. Johannessen (Ed.), *Bilingual education: Politics, policies, and practices in a globalized society* (55-77). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05496-0_4.

- Mora, R. A., Cañas, C., Gutiérrez-Arismendy, G., Ramírez, N. A., Gaviria, C. A., & Golovátina-Mora, P. (2021). Critical literacies in Colombia: Social transformation and disruption ingrained in our local realities. In J. Z. Pandya, R. A. Mora, J. H. Alford, N. A. Golden, & R. S. de Roock (Eds.), *The Handbook of Critical Literacies* (pp. 151-158). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003023425-17>
- Muhammad, G. (2020). *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*. Scholastic Incorporated.
- Nieto, S. (2002). *Language, culture, and teaching: Critical perspectives for a new century*. L. Erlbaum.
- Pahl, K. & Rowsell, J. (2014). Artifactual literacies. In P. Albers, T. Holbrook, & A. S. Flint (Eds.), *New Methods of Literacy Research* (pp. 163-176). Routledge.
- Pandya, J. Z., Mora, R. A., Alford, J. H., Golden, N. A., & de Roock, R. S. (2021). Introduction to the Handbook of Critical Literacies: The current state of critical literacy around the world. In J. Z. Pandya, R. A. Mora, J. H. Alford, N. A. Golden, & R. S. de Roock (Eds.), *The Handbook of Critical Literacies* (pp. 3-9). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003023425-2>
- Paris, D. (2012). Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 93–97.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X12441244>
- Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 85–100.
- Paris, D. (2016). *On Educating Culturally Sustaining Teachers*. TeachingWorks Working Papers. University of Michigan.

- Pennycook, A. (2001). *Critical applied linguistics: An introduction*. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Puzio, K., Newcomer, S., Pratt, K., McNeely, K., Jacobs, M., & Hooker, S. (2017). Creative Failures in Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy. *Language Arts*, 94(4), 223–233.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/44809914>
- Risager, K. (2007). *Language and Culture Pedagogy: From a National to a Transnational Paradigm*. Multilingual Matters. doi: 10.21832/9781853599613
- Rios, E., Pérez, F. & Valencia, W. (2018). *Proyectos Educativos de Facultad [PEF]*. Fondo Editorial Universidad Católica de Oriente.
- Robles-Ortiz, N. A. (2021). Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies. *LSLP Micro-Papers*, 83.
<https://www.literaciesinl2project.org/uploads/3/8/9/7/38976989/lslp-micro-paper-83-culturally-sustaining-pedagogies.pdf>
- Rosa, J., & Flores, N. (2017). Do You Hear What I Hear?: Raciolinguistic Ideologies and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies. In D. Paris & H. S. Alim (Eds.), *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World* (1st ed., pp. 175– 190). Teachers College Press.
- Rogers, Y., Price, S., Randell, C., Fraser, D. S., Weal, M., & Fitzpatrick, G. (2005). Ubi-learning Integrates Indoor and Outdoor Experiences. *Communications of the ACM*, 48(1), 55-59. doi: 10.1145/1039539.1039570
- San Pedro, T. (2017). “This Stuff Interests Me”: Re-Centering Indigenous Paradigms in Colonizing Schooling Spaces. In D. Paris & H. Halim (eds.), *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World* (1st ed.) (99-116). Teachers College Press.

- Seidman, I. (2005). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press
- Sony Pictures Animation. (14 August, 2019). Hair Love [video]. Youtube. Obtenido de https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNw8V_Fkw28&t=3s
- Szech, L. E. (2019). *On a path toward culturally sustaining pedagogy: How teachers experience race, culture, family, and family literacies in a professional development course*. ProQuest LLC.
- Vásquez, V., Janks, H. & Comber, B. (2019). Critical Literacy as a Way of Being and Doing. *Language Arts*, 96(5), 300–311. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/222112699>
- Wong, M. & Burkhard, L. (2021). Supporting critical literacies through Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy within youth-led spaces. In the *Handbook of Critical Literacies* (1st ed.) Routledge

Appendixes

Appendix A: Consent forms for students

Apreciado Estudiante,

Cordial saludo.

Yo, Nathalia Andrea Robles Ortiz, soy estudiante de la Maestría en Procesos de Aprendizaje y Enseñanza de Segundas Lenguas de la Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana. Como parte de los requerimientos para el título de magíster es el desarrollo de un proyecto de investigación para la elaboración de la tesis. Para dicho trabajo, en base a mi experiencia docente y los aprendizajes adquiridos en la maestría, he propuesto la investigación “Disrupting the status quo: Culturally Sustaining Literacies for social justice”. Su propósito es describir cómo la práctica de la literacidad crítica y la pedagogía culturalmente sostenible, pueden promover ambientes para la justicia social en una clase de inglés, con estudiantes de una licenciatura en lenguas extranjeras con énfasis en inglés. Este trabajo de investigación está dirigido por el Dr. Raúl Alberto Mora Vélez, Profesor Asociado de la Escuela de Educación y Pedagogía de la UPB. Como parte de la investigación se hará la recolección de datos, que consiste en implementar tres instrumentos para la recolección de datos (1 entrevista, creaciones de los estudiantes y diario pedagógico docente) durante 6 sesiones. Esperamos que los resultados de este estudio nos ayuden a identificar cómo las prácticas de literacidad culturalmente sostenible sean valiosas para promover espacios de reflexión sobre la justicia social con estudiantes que serán futuros docentes. Los resultados de este proyecto de investigación se emplearán en principio para la escritura de la tesis. Sin embargo, los datos que se recolectan en el trabajo de campo también se podrían utilizar en futuras ponencias y publicaciones académicas. En todos los casos, se hará uso de pseudónimos (el cual podrá escoger libremente al final de esta carta), a no ser que usted autorice lo contrario. Esta carta, entonces, tiene por objeto solicitar su autorización para que yo, en el marco de este proyecto de investigación, pueda contactarlo para desarrollar el trabajo de campo que será soporte para el proceso investigativo. Usted está en completa libertad de participar, sin ninguna sanción o consecuencia negativa en su institución educativa o en la Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana en caso de no aceptar. Usted tiene derecho a ver los datos recogidos durante estas sesiones, el producto final y, de no estar de acuerdo con algo en el mismo, se harán los cambios del caso.

De antemano agradezco su colaboración en el desarrollo de esta investigación, la cual me ayudará en mi formación como docente e investigadora. En caso de cualquier inquietud con respecto a este proyecto de investigación, puede contactarme personalmente o a mi correo nathalia.robles6470@uco.net.co, también puede contactar directamente al Dr. Mora, mi mentor, en su correo raul.mora@upb.edu.co.

Atentamente,

Nathalia Andrea Robles Ortiz

Candidata a Magíster en Procesos de Aprendizaje y Enseñanza de Segundas Lenguas
Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Sede Central Medellín

He leído la información en esta carta y estoy de acuerdo con mi participación, aparición en audios, y divulgación de mis materiales creados en clase para cumplir el propósito de esta investigación.

Nombre:

Firma:

Fecha:

Seudónimo:

Appendix B: Consent forms for the institution

Apreciado Coordinador,

Cordial saludo.

Yo, Nathalia Andrea Robles Ortiz, soy estudiante de la Maestría en Procesos de Aprendizaje y Enseñanza de Segundas Lenguas de la Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana. Como parte de los requerimientos para el título de magíster es el desarrollo de un proyecto de investigación para la elaboración de la tesis. Para dicho trabajo, en base a mi experiencia docente y los aprendizajes adquiridos en la maestría, he propuesto la investigación “Disrupting the status quo: Culturally Sustaining Literacies for social justice”. Su propósito es describir cómo la práctica de la literacidad crítica y la pedagogía culturalmente sostenible, pueden promover ambientes para la justicia social en una clase de inglés, con estudiantes de una licenciatura en lenguas extranjeras con énfasis en inglés. Este trabajo de investigación está dirigido por el Dr. Raúl Alberto Mora Vélez, Profesor Asociado de la Escuela de Educación y Pedagogía de la UPB. Como parte de la investigación se hará la recolección de datos, que consiste en implementar tres instrumentos para la recolección de datos (1 sesión de entrevistas, creaciones de los estudiantes y diario pedagógico docente) durante 6 sesiones.

Esperamos que los resultados de este estudio nos ayuden a identificar cómo las prácticas de literacidad culturalmente sostenible sean valiosas para promover espacios de reflexión sobre la justicia social con estudiantes que serán futuros docentes. Los resultados de este proyecto de investigación se emplearán en principio para la escritura de la tesis. Sin embargo, los datos que se recolectan en el trabajo de campo también se podrían utilizar en futuras ponencias y publicaciones académicas. En todos los casos, se hará uso de pseudónimos. En el caso de la institución, solo si usted como líder del programa lo permite, se hará referencia al nombre de la misma en el trabajo investigativo a realizar. Esta carta, entonces, tiene por objeto solicitar su autorización para que yo, en el marco de este proyecto de investigación, pueda llevar a cabo mi trabajo de campo para desarrollar mi investigación. A los estudiantes que vayan a apoyar esta tarea se les entregará una forma de consentimiento similar. Los estudiantes que participen en esta tarea lo harán en completa libertad y no habrá ninguna coerción por su colaboración. Ellos estarán en completa libertad de

no participar, sin que ello implique algún tipo de consecuencias negativas en el curso en el que se encuentran matriculados conmigo o en la Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana. Además, los participantes estarán en derecho de ver el producto final y, de no estar de acuerdo con algo en el mismo, se harán los cambios correspondientes.

De antemano agradezco su colaboración en el desarrollo de esta investigación, la cual me ayudará en mi formación como docente e investigadora. En caso de cualquier inquietud con respecto a este proyecto de investigación, puede contactarme personalmente o a mi correo nathalia.robles6470@uco.net.co, también puede contactar directamente al Dr. Mora, mi mentor, en su correo raul.mora@upb.edu.co.

Atentamente,

Nathalia Andrea Robles Ortiz

Candidata a Magíster en Procesos de Aprendizaje y Enseñanza de Segundas Lenguas

Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Sede Central Medellín.

Appendix C: Personal interview questions

1. How did you feel during the classes in which we worked on the literacy of sustainable culture? why?
2. If we talk about culture, how would you define yours?
3. Do you think that in the class your culture was highlighted/honored and sustained? yes/no
Why?
4. What kind of practices can we have on a daily basis in order not to let our cultures disappear?
5. Do you think that these kinds of practices favored your personal/language learning? how?
6. Do you consider these activities to promote social justice? How?
7. Did any of these activities change your way of thinking?
8. What advantages and obstacles did you find in doing the activities?
9. As a future teacher, do you think it would be important for you or your students to create these spaces in the classroom and/or in an institution?
10. What does it mean for you to take part in this research project?
11. Do you have any recommendations for these types of activities?

Author's Biography

Nathalia Andrea Robles Ortiz was born on September 11th in 1996 in Barrancabermeja, Santander-Colombia. She is a Master's student in Teaching and Learning of Second Languages at Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana (UPB) Medellín-Colombia. She holds a B.A. in foreign languages: English and French, from Universidad Católica de Oriente (2017) and she is also a graduate specialist in English Teaching from UPB (2020). In order to fulfill the requirements for this post-graduate program. She developed a qualitative research study titled "Raising Cultural Awareness in EFL Pre-service teachers: A state of the art." It helped her to start navigating through the concepts of Culture, Multiculturality, Interculturality, and the current state of Colombian Education for Language teachers to start shaping her teaching praxis and master's research proposal.

Currently, she is a part-time professor at the Faculty of Education at Universidad Católica de Oriente. In this experience, she has had the opportunity of working with future teachers, giving her ideas to position her research. She carried out a qualitative study that proposed an approach by combining Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies and Critical Literacy principles to promote social justice in language classrooms. She is looking forward to expanding and researching more in these fields to contribute to teacher training in Colombia.