Developing Critical Reading Skills by Retaking Colombia’s Indigenous Myths as a means of Understanding Learners’ Self-Cultural Awareness

Jessica Dacnery Pantoja Cutiva
Diana Carolina Enriquez Cuaspud

Licenciatura Básica con Énfasis en Inglés

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
## Table of contents

### Chapter I

**Introduction** ................................................................. 4  
Problem Statement ............................................................. 6  
Justification ................................................................. 9  
Leading Question .............................................................. 11  
**General Objective** ............................................................. 11  
Specific Objectives ............................................................ 11  
Interns’ objectives .............................................................. 12  
Colsubsidio High School .................................................. 12

### Chapter II

Cultural Awareness ............................................................ 13  
Myths ................................................................. 15  
Critical Reading ............................................................. 17  
**Theoretical Framework** ............................................................. 19  
Cultural Awareness ............................................................ 19  
Myths ................................................................. 22  
Critical Reading Skills ....................................................... 24

### Chapter III

**Instructional Design** ............................................................. 26  
Setting ................................................................. 26  
Population ................................................................. 27  
The Pedagogical Innovation Oriented in Wallace’s Critical Reading Dimensions and PPP as an Action Plan ............................................................. 28  
The Curriculum Platform .................................................. 31  
The Organization of the Pedagogical Intervention ............................................................. 34

### Chapter IV

**Report Design and Meaningful and Innovative Contribution** ............................................................. 35  
Leading Question ............................................................. 35  
Data Collection Techniques .................................................. 35  
Data Collection Instruments .................................................. 36  
Meaningful and Innovative Contributions ............................................................. 37
First Intervention .............................................................................................................. 37
Second Intervention “The Fountain of the Water” .............................................................. 41
Third Intervention “What is the Origin of the World?” ...................................................... 44
Fifth Intervention “Spelling Bee” .......................................................................................... 50
Sixth Intervention: keepers of culture ............................................................................... 51
Innovative Contribution ....................................................................................................... 54
Model Proposal ................................................................................................................... 54

Chapter V
Conclusions, Implications and Further Research .............................................................. 58
Conclusions ......................................................................................................................... 58
Implications ......................................................................................................................... 59
Further Research .................................................................................................................. 60
References ............................................................................................................................. 62
Chapter I

This chapter presents an introduction that explains, describes and illustrates the study’s field of inquiry; in this case, learners’ language cultural awareness. Besides, it will present the statement of the problem, in which the authors explain ‘what’ the problem is and ‘how’ it arises. In addition to this, it will explain the contributions of this study to language education and its social impacts. Finally, it ends with the leading question and the objectives that this proposal aims at.

Introduction

Since the mid-twentieth century, it has been set out the discussion about the unflinching relationship between language and culture. There has been carried out different types of studies that aim at getting “insight into other culture and positive attitudes towards speakers of other language” (Byram, M., Lloyd, K., Schneider, R., 1995, p.5). From this perspective, the purpose of this study is to discover and understand how learners’ self-cultural awareness enhances their language learning. But, before focusing on language learning, it should be named how teachers address culture as an integrative aspect of language teaching (Shemsshadsara, 2012). Some teachers-researchers have used culture materials as a tool for knowing how learners make sense of culture (Catañeda, 2011), how learners focus on the target language when the activities are related to their own culture (Yeganeth & Raeesi, 2014) and comprehend if teachers’ intercultural perspectives may have an impact on their pupils’ cultural awareness (Shemsshadsara, 2012).
In terms of culture, Sultan and Nurthadi (2017) go on saying that “critical reading is believed to give a chance to the readers to enrich their knowledge by understanding different cultures from different points of view” (p.77). These authors, through qualitative research, found that learners enhanced their critical reading skills by a learning model which is based on making learners able to assess and criticize the ideological position of texts; furthermore, they noticed that learners could develop their perspectives and capability of self-reflection. From what was already exposed, the present paper employs Colombian’s indigenous myths as the transversal issue where cultural awareness and critical reading skills matched.

By the same way, Wallace (2003) points out that the development of reading skills have had a tend “[...] to be too much emphasis upon the text as product and too little emphasis upon the processes of producing and interpreting texts” (p.3), in other words “conventional reading of texts is most likely to restrict students’ response to the text” (Asghar & Al-Bargui, 2014, p. 181). Bear in mind this, the present study is carried out thinking on giving learners the possibility to retake Colombia’s indigenous myths not just for being read as a simple text, but as a text that enriches their cultural history, which empowers and allows them to reflect on their self-culture. This study is an internship project which is carried out at a secondary school in Bogotá city; this is developed with pre-intermediate English learners, who on average are between 14 to 16 years old.

This project is divided into five chapters. The first one deals with the introduction, justification and the presentation of the problem statement including the objectives that it is aimed at. The following chapter, the second one, links to the theoretical framework in which this project is based on; then it illustrates the philosophical foundations that support this internship. In the third chapter,
it is presented the pedagogical intervention which is carried out; this section shows the description of the stages and procedures that are followed to achieve the objectives proposed by the present study. The next chapter, the fourth one, exposes the meaningful contributions and findings of the current intervention. Finally, the conclusions and implications are displayed in chapter five.

**Problem Statement**

This section explains the process that was carried out to formulate a problem based on a needs analysis of a social phenomenon and language learning within a learning context; supported by samples of the process and philosophical foundations. In the same way, it will describe the problem regarding to this social phenomenon and language learning issue.

It is well known that in foreign language learning, materials play an important role in developing language proficiency. Varon (2009) points out that textbooks and materials, in general, support the concept of communication and culture; however, there is a “concern about the transmission of facts regarding the target” (Fandiño, 2014, p. 83), language culture since there is not a clear review about what type of information should or not have materials; in other words, the books and materials are full fill of ideologies, stereotypes and different kinds of influential perspectives of the world. Therefore, there is a concern about the use of this kind of materials in the classroom since teachers neither learner are aware of the ideological meaning that these ones have. In Colombian language educational context most of the texts used by the public and private schools are produced by foreign publishers as Varon (2009) highlights. Thus, it has been set out the issue of how the development of language proficiency contributes to one’s own culture.
This study took place in a private school, which shares the same curriculum design with other three of this organization. This curriculum is built upon the humanistic pedagogical approach, which employs the development of the competencies as the principal strategy. These competencies are related to the skills required for tackling the real world challenges, strengthening students’ critical thinking and autonomy (Scott, 2015a, p. 9). Regardless of these features mentioned before, some classes observations given an overview of how those are structured, and what sort of materials are being used for the learning processes.

The first data collection was made by using ‘Stalling Classroom Snapshot’ instrument (See figure 1) which was provided by Colsubsidio as a way to gather the most relevant elements and aspects of the classroom interaction (Asghar & Bargui, 2014). It allows jotting down the different class activities and materials management throughout of all grades- in secondary school-. As a result of these observations (See graphic 1.), it is noticeable that the most common activities are: lecture/demonstration in which the teacher explains the academic content to students; discussion which relates to academic verbal exchange; practice and drill, that focus on memorizing material; assignment/classwork, in which students are developing activities for learning by doing; and, copying which is transferring the text on the board to students´ notebooks (SIEF, 2015, p. 12-14).
Thought the graphic 1 does not show reading as one of the common activities, it must be highlighted that these schools have two online platforms ‘Progentis’ and ‘A-z Learning’ in which there is a large repertoire of readings in both their mother tongue and the target language – English-, here, students must achieve a number reading per week; this allows students to increase their vocabulary and reading comprehension. Nevertheless, as a teacher mentions in her reflective journal, students have difficulties understanding some of the readings because most of the time the readings' contexts do not apply to the learners’ reality.

According to Scott (2015 b, p. 10) the schools’ activities should connect learners’ experiences to real-world contexts, in this way students could drive different projects for transforming their life quality. Having in mind what was just mentioned, there is a lack of readings related to learners’ contexts that allow them to approach the language target as well as strengthening their self-cultural
awareness; as a consequence, learners have some difficulties to understand the different types of readings. To address this situation, it is proposed to use Colombia’ indigenous myths with pre-intermediate learners as a reading strategy to understand their self-cultural awareness as well as to enhance their critical reading skills.

*Graphic1.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>School B</th>
<th>School A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice/Drill</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment/classwork</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copying</td>
<td>6,6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture/Demostration</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>23,3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Authors’ creation

**Justification**

In this section it is explained how the present intervention contributes to the field of language teaching, school community, Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) community and the researchers’ personal views.
This internship project is conducted to address an important issue which is the understanding of culture in language learning and teaching. It is visible how language and culture are intertwined; culture on the view of “shared characteristics of behaviors and social interactions, cognitive constructs, and effective understanding; patterns that are acquired through a process of socialization and transmitted [...] an ongoing meaning-making process within a context” (Pourkalhor & Esfandiari, 2017, p. 23). In the same way, Pourkalhor and Esfandiari (2017) say that “language is a means to develop and transmit the culture as well as to communicate within the culture” (p.23). Thus, language reflects the different aspects of culture and this one exists because of language spreads out its existence.

As language and culture co-exist, it might be highlighted that it is not just involved the target language culture but also the learners own language and culture; then, it is settled out learners’ self-cultural awareness as a crucial issue to bear in mind in class activities. This study also looks for contributing to the school community and the social view of the language education as Byram (2012) describes that “[...] awareness thus include social analysis – the use of language in society-and self-analysis, analysis of the significance of language and culture for the self”(p.8). In the long run, learner’s’ self-cultural awareness enhances the reflection on the different features of their culture which will guide them to recognize new or variant factors of other ones.

On the other hand, this study contributes to the Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) community since it shows a way to address some cultural aspects of Colombia’s context in developing language skills. Colombia’s diversity is a factor that has a visible impact on Colombia’s education because it is possible that at least a learner of a school comes from a different ethnic
group or culture. Then, it is indispensable to engage learners to understand that through their own culture; moreover, it is a useful mean to approach to the foreign target language.

Finally, this paper enriches researchers’ personal experiences as educators because it has given them insights into a relevant issue ignored by some English language teachers, and to implement or employ some cultural aspects on English teaching taking the proposed model at the end of this project that manages to compile the three dimensions proposed by Wallace (2003) which in addition to helping them deepen critical reading, enhance students cultural awareness

Leading Question

What are the effects of using Colombia’s indigenous myths on pre-intermediate learners’ self-cultural awareness as a means of enhancing their critical reading skills?

General Objective

To design Colombia’s indigenous myths critical reading activities as a tool for understanding learners’ self-cultural awareness.

Specific Objectives

- To apply Colombia’s indigenous myths reading activities for enhancing learners’ critical skills.
- To explore a new model based on critical reading skills though myths to enhance student´s cultural awareness
Interns’ objectives

This internship has allowed to increase some individual competences as English teachers, in terms of developing new abilities and improving the language knowledge; furthermore, as students this experience has given the possibility of participating, being motivated and working on the project not as the ultimate goal, but as a means to strengthen some research skills. For that reason the personals’ goals are:

- To understand the relationship between learners’ cultural awareness and the development of critical reading skills.
- To make learners aware of the importance of indigenous cultural legacy that enriches their culture.
- To promote learners’ self-cultural awareness through Colombia’s indigenous myths and as a tool of developing critical reading skills.

Colsubsidio High School

Mission

To work with companies, workers and the government, for the integral human development through the management of family subsidy programs, security and social responsibility for the achievements of a country more fair, solidarity and peaceful.
Vision

Being the social company of Colombians, recognized by our leadership and excellence in the configuration of policies, the management of programs and services.

Chapter II

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first one presents and illustrates the literature review that has been consulted to understand and generate knowledge about the main constructs of this study. The second section presents the theory-based literature of understanding cultural awareness, indigenous myths and critical reading skills.

State of Art

This section reviews some of the studies run by different authors talking about cultural awareness, myths and critical reading for ELF learners.

Cultural Awareness


This research presents the place of culture in EFL classrooms at secondary school level in an Iranian educational context; one of the obstacles facing teachers in teaching culture, and the cultural
content of materials in particular. To do so, questionnaires were distributed among EFL teachers from three provinces in Western Iran, and responses from 291 teachers were then collected.

The contributions to this research project are based on the necessity to work cultural awareness as a way to learn another language; although teachers have positive attitudes towards incorporating cultural content in teaching, it is indicated that they have materials designed with the target culture in mind. This means that they perceive culture as part of language learning experience, on another hand, when teachers apply activities related to their own culture, learners are more focused on the target language.


In this paper it is mentioned that “Culture awareness has become an important focus of modern language education” (p.1) studying the status of cultural understanding in EFL teaching, analyzing assumptions and influences of culture awareness in Language teaching and learning.

This paper contributes giving a critical look from the perspective of culture and teaching culture as an integral component of language teaching, likewise a way to improve and develop cultural awareness. It also helps to develop teachers’ intercultural perspectives that may have an impact on their language teaching methodology and syllabus design with a literary revision, handling theories by authors like Hadweley (1993), Tomlinson and Musuhara (2004), Knuston (2006) and Kumaravadivelu (2003).

This research presents a qualitative and interpretative case study conducted at a high school located in the southeast of Bogotá. The population consists of fifty-one eighth graders who had had little contact with English. The purpose of this study is to explore how the adolescents make sense of the culture-based materials implemented in the English lessons, and at describing their perceptions about foreign cultures.

Contribute to the present research project in that it emphasizes the teaching of target cultures and own cultures, the teacher must be an observer of the needs and advances of the student; and this is related to that educators have to use a wide diversity of materials to make sure their classrooms are places of learning of an integrated manner.

**Myths**


In this qualitative research the Indonesian educational context is presented with the purpose to reveal how primary school teachers in Solo, Indonesia understand the use of folktales as a medium of EFL instruction for primary school students. The primary focus of this research is the exploration
of teachers’ interpretations and understandings of the government policy related to the promotion of local cultural knowledge into their EFL classes.

In this research, conducted as a narrative case study approach, the researcher used three research tools: one-on-one teacher-student interviews; document analysis of teachers’ lesson plans, and visual elicitation methods. The population was two primary schools from differing institutional backgrounds. This study promotes pedagogical strategies which indicate that students’ basic EFL skills and their sense of cultural identity were enhanced, new insights for the teaching of EFL continuing use of folktale texts.


This study emerges since the folk literature, which is more widely referred to as folklore which seems to have been under-utilized in today’s language classes. On this his paper was discussed the ways in which folktales can be useful for facilitating EFL/ESL learners in their understanding of the importance of language form to achieve specific communicative purposes, and also for enhancing their cross-cultural awareness.

This proposal contributes with its linguistic and structural analysis of folktales, and argues that there are certain major benefits in using folktales for teaching English as a foreign or second language (EFL/ESL).

This qualitative research presents an analysis of Asian folktales drawing on some sample which: identify and explore the features of narrative structures and contents which can be seen as transcultural and others which can be highlighted as culture-specific, and the discussion how such comparative analyses of narrative structures and contents in Asian folktales can be used to promote the cross-cultural awareness of English language learners in Asia. The purpose of this study is to promote learners' cross-cultural awareness.

This research contributes in that it emphasizes the teaching English implies speakers need to develop not only communicative competence but intercultural communicative competence, teachers must show students the appreciation of their cultural diversities, while celebrating certain similarities, promoting learners' cross-cultural awareness.

**Critical Reading**


This paper is a proposal for materials developers and action researchers because of the innovative purposes which will help to improve the learners ‘reading skills; the principal theoretical base is the Wallace’s approach which the reader can acquire a deeper level comprehension of the text presented. In the line of Wallace’s students can develop skills to be autonomous thinkers,
throughout three dimensions; linguistic, conceptual/critical and cultural slants. In such a way it is possible to connect the academic issues with the world; in Kumaravadivelu (2012) words “connect the word with the world recognizing language as ideology language no just system” (p. 195) that is to say that the student is able to recognize and contextualize his environment connecting it with the world.


This action research explores the role of three main features of critical reading courses in increasing motivation, the study tried to overcome some reading problems using a proposal which there is a relationship between the student’s realities and the classroom procedures. It was conducted with 24 preparatory year students who expressed the lack of motivation is the main obstacle to enhance the critical reading. This study contributes to the adaptation of critical reading practices, suggesting the readings design relating to students’ own realities through the use of real-life and real-context taking into account their opinions as readers after and before the text but also increasing the student control.

This paper discusses about the importance of critical reading which can empower reader through critical reading skills, the purpose is to develop a critical reading learning model and test its effectiveness. The experiment was conducted for two weeks applied to 150 students.

This research contributes giving the teachers a critical reading model which contains a set of structured learning activities with some stages to promote critical awareness, through practical and structured activities, this model encourages students to act and behave critically measured by the arguments and the self-reflection presented and allows them to be more effective in developing students critical reading competence but also becoming more criticize.

**Theoretical Framework**

Firstly, this section describes what cultural awareness is and how it is an important aspect of teaching and learning a new language. Secondly, how indigenous myths could enhance learners’ reading skills and cultural awareness is displayed. Finally, the concept of critical reading skills is addressed.

**Cultural Awareness**

Cultural awareness in language learning-teaching has been an issue studied for some decades. Porto (2013) highlights that the interest in the cultural dimension rose mainly for political reasons rather than educational ones in 1930s. The different social factors that at this period were living like migration and the notion of national identity caught language teachers’ attention to the relevance of culture in language teaching. According to Valencia and Medina (2009) “individuals are in between and are pulled by the strings of these two forces” (p. 162) the cultural and social dynamics. Culture
as one of this force is updating and struggling with the diversity contexts of societies while society is challenged by cultural knowledge and making up new understandings (Valencia & Medina, 2009). This shows that the learner’s culture is shaped by his/her context which links to the social dynamics and it displays a relationship among culture, society and language education.

Lynch (2015) asserts the current society is a multicultural one that requires an education that allows learners to be aware of the world’s diversity promoting cultural awareness. In other words, learners are in the “sphere of the interculturality” (Kramsh cited by Frank, 2013) where they must be conscious of relevant or irrelevant aspects of his/ her identity and those of the others’ cultures. At this point, learners are developing their own cultural awareness to become intercultural speakers (Valencia & Medina, 2009). In this regard, Byram and Fleming (1998) point out that there is a “[...] reflective impact focus on learner’s own culture and not just a view outwards to other cultures” (p.4), this gives an insight on understanding that cultural awareness involves both the target language culture and the learner’s own culture.

Valencia and Medina (2009) affirm that as learners become familiar with the culture and its implications, they would notice how language manipulates or is used to understand perceptions, values, attitudes and beliefs of the different cultures (Morgan, 2001 cited by Valencia & Medina, 2009). In this way, they could appreciate the link between language and culture. This includes “[...] awareness of the way in which language represents the world and reflects and constructs the power relations” (Clark & Ivanic, 1999). In the other hand and as an issue that teachers hardly ever examine is that there are some countries which are “otherness” which is defined as “[...] a feature of any society which contains more than one ethnic group” (Byram, M., 1989, p. 25), this brings up
that inside of a classroom there is not a barely culture but a diversity of learners’ cultures that are influenced by the language learning.

There is a major complexity in discussions of cultural awareness; it is how teacher and learners could address culture throughout the classes. Byram and Zarate remark that learners of a foreign language ought to learn how to become intercultural speakers (1994 cited by Kramsch 1998); it means that learners must ground oneself in their culture to learn about the other culture, especially the target language one. It would help them to recognize similarities and differences among them. According to Tomalin and Stempleski (2013) most of teachers teach culture through the “little C” which represents the products and ideas of a culture. Indeed, it is the surface culture (Frank, 2013) that offers a superficial view of the cultures focusing on national customs, traditional music and dance, literature and specific holidays (p.4). After the surface stage, the sub-surface culture has place. It is behavioral-based (Frank, 2013) which emphasizes in facial expressions, gestures, conversational patterns and touching (p.4).

In order to go beyond the notion of cultural awareness, the development of this one promotes the intercultural communication. Byram (2012) sets out that acquire language and “intercultural awareness includes a social analysis of the significance of language and culture for the self” (p.8). It implies an ethnocentric recognition (Valencia & Medina, 2009) to understand the features of the one-self culture, and then compares it with target culture developing a critical ability to evaluate the perspective, practices and products among the cultures (Byram, 2012).
Byram (cited by Rico, 2012) proposed some dimensions of intercultural encounters. The first dimension “Savior-knowledge” refers to know culture-general knowledge, in other words the “little C” before named. Secondly, Savoir-s’engager-awareness as Byram, Nichols, & Stevens expound “This is the ability to evaluate, critically, and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (2001 cited by Rico, C. 2012, p. 139); the next dimension Savoir-être-attitudes and traits takes in the ability of being less ethnocentric in order to be an intercultural mediator. Savoir-faire skills is the fourth dimension, this dimension is related to how we can identify some representative traits of a culture and make a relation between that culture to our own culture, and the last dimension is Savoir-communiquer proficiency through “this is the ability to function linguistically in a second or foreign language.” (Rico, C. 2012, p. 139), for that reason it encourages learners to learn another language as a new experience.

Myths

EFL English teacher usually focuses on achieving critical reading goals using traditional strategies so that students can read texts which they do not know a context and answer questions, however the challenges of the current world are focused on the academic but also on the cultural and we have to start knowing our own culture without neglecting the learning of the second language as Kumaravadivelu says (2003) culture should start from the local culture and myths are a good way to start.

Myths are included within the term folktales, according to Aaron (2012) different kind of folktales include fairy tales, tall tales, myths (cited by Ismail 2017) this type of texts have in common that start as oral stories of a culture that try to explain the world around them. The use of
these texts as material in the development of the English class can catch the student’s attention due to their high content of characters such as gods, mythical animals, nature that students can recognize because they are in their own local context, allowing the connection with their conscious and unconscious selves (May 1991 cited by Goh, p.4) but also the ability to recognize narrative structures, powerful innovation and potential understanding.

The developmental of the student’s imaginations and critical reading, is determined by the complexity of symbolism or angles some of which are described by Honko (1972, p. 13) such as: the enigmatic phenomena; it’s symbolic expression because myths has its own laws and forms of expression; myth as an integrator factor in man’s adaptation to life and finally myth as a result of historical situation the latter could help the student according to his knowledge of history be able to judge the text and have a point of view, behind them comes an ideological content bringing common experiences for both students and teachers.

The usage of myths as a material could provide students to a wide range of vocabulary, because it is not the typical one, it includes places, animals, gods, etc. so they can use more complex vocabulary increasing their linguistic dimension connecting codes, which according to Goh (1996) can access through the reading and understanding the narratives through different activities: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar patterns, etc. Folktales promotes awareness and acceptance of different cultures, they also serve a cross-cultural bridge allowing student get close to the cultural knowledge fulfilling the communication taking place among members of a community.
Critical Reading Skills

Learning a foreign language includes exploring and expanding knowledge and, indeed it is a learning process that can support the development of critical thinking which is defined as “reasonable reflective thinking” (Ennis, 1996 cited by Mason, 2007). Ennis (1996) asserts that critical thinking involves skills such as observing, inferring, reasoning and evaluating (cited by Mason, 2007). This shows that there are some threading links in language learning process that are attached to learners’ critical thinking since in language learning the experience is a crucial issue that contributes to gain insights into a new language and its culture but it also refers to “[…] a deep knowledge of oneself” (Paul, 1982 cited by Mason, 2007) to develop skills of a critical thinker.

Kumaravadivelu (2006 cited by Asghar and Al-Bargui, 2014) points out that becoming a critical thinker in language learning is not just learned an isolated system but recognizing language as an ideology. From this view, language is conveyed “[…] as a container or a conduit for ideas” (Cameron, 2006, p.145). This means that surrounding language embodies ideology to be spread out and learners should be able to take their own positions. Therefore, the development of critical reading skills will make “more powerful users of a language” (Wallace, 2003, p. 4) who instead of decoding a text interpret this one.

Critical reading since it has seen as the way of encouraging learners “[…] to connect their experiential knowledge with the text […] (Marschall & Davis, 2012, p. 66); in other words as a means for understanding one’s history and culture and their connection to current social structure […]” (Simpson, 1996, p. 118), has rose up the wonderings about how reading could be addressed in classroom and further how learners could reach or develop critical reading skills. Answering these
wonders Wallace (2003) suggests that critical reading should aim at linguistic, conceptual/critical and cultural understanding of a text allowing learners to approach to texts from different views that link at a certain point.

Wallace (2003) proposes a model based on three dimensions ‘linguistic, conceptual/critical and cultural’ (p.84) to develop critical reading skills in classroom context. Firstly, linguistic for understanding the ideological meaning encloses in texts might be viewed as facilitator of reflection, “helping students to gain an understanding of the nature of ideological meaning embedded in text” (Wallace, 2003, p. 43). Secondly, the conceptual/critical dimension purpose to enable learners to make likeness between the text and their personal live, based on that, learners will be provided some analytic tools for getting a concrete understanding, to enable them to “move beyond the text to develop a cogent argument” (Wallace, 1998, p. 50); finally, the cultural slant promotes insights into cultural assumptions and practices, similarities and differences across national boundaries (Wallace, 1998; Wallace, 2003). In other words, learners will be able to seal gaps between their knowledge and the new one, understanding other cultures, perspectives and believes (Asghar& Al-Bargui, 2014, p.182).

Wallace suggests critical reading should aim at improving learners’ ability to reflect on the use of power in language in such a way that learners “recognize, detect, respond to, and connect the ideological purposes” (Wallace, 2003, p. 77). This focus equips learners with skills to become autonomous thinker, but also demonstrates that teaching-learning English could be extended on the social, cultural and political dynamics, building bridges of learning. From the linguistic aspect, critical reading aims at involving learners in texts so that they can identify ideological messages,
recognize the grammar content but it also “facilitate reflection on the effect of language choice” (Wallace, 1998, p. 50).

Due to the type of study this internship is grounded on enhancing learners’ self-cultural awareness through developing critical reading skills, it has been decided to propose an innovative pedagogical project that would provide answers to the leading question. The following chapter gives an account of this innovative pedagogical intervention.

Chapter III

Instructional Design

This chapter begins with a brief description of the setting and population. Then it presents a general account of the pedagogical innovation oriented in Wallace’s critical reading dimensions (1998; Wallace, 2003) and the PPP (presentation, practice and production) and its alternative engagement, study and active (henceforth: ESA) approach as an action plan. Afterwards, it presents the curriculum platform, and ends with a thorough and concise description of the tasks, activities, procedures, and the resources carried out and used throughout this innovative pedagogical intervention.

Setting

This proposal was carried out in a private school in the southwest of Bogotá, Colombia. This is one of Colsubsidio official schools. Its mission is meant to offer students from elementary to high school an integral formation based on the principles of equity, solidarity, respect, and honesty.
Moreover, it aims at encouraging the development of empowered leaders to improve their personal and collective conditions. This integral formation focuses on three pillars of formation: 1. Expression and Culture which involves the Humanities areas such as English, Spanish, Artistic and Physical Education; 2. Stem as its acronym shows Sciences, Technology, and Mathematics; 3. Economy and Society which involves Social Science, Philosophy and Economy.

Classes were carried out in the classroom, in the English laboratory (a multimedia computer room) and the library from Monday to Thursday from 7:30 a.m to 9:30 a.m. The classroom was equipped with an acrylic board and student desk. On the other hand, the English lab provided students with technology resources such as computers, computer-based technologies, and Internet connectivity. Besides, there was a third context which was the library and its wide literary content in English.

Population

The population of this pedagogical intervention was twenty-one EFL students of a pre-intermediate English class of ninth grade. They were six boys and fifteen girls who were between 15 and 17 years old. Before they were to be enrolled at the pre-intermediate level, they were tested through an evaluation designing by the school English teachers staff. This test was designed to assess students’ competencies and skills in English based on the Common European Framework of References for Languages. All these students achieved the pre-intermediate English level.
The Pedagogical Innovation Oriented in Wallace’s Critical Reading Dimensions and PPP as an Action Plan

This innovative pedagogical intervention was possible based on the problem statement which described that there was a lack of readings related to learners’ context that allowed them to approach the language target as well as strengthening their self-cultural awareness. This proposal was comprised of Wallace’s critical reading model (2003) which was the basis of the activities design in this pedagogical intervention. Wallace asserts that reading texts from the critical view have to focus on bringing not only awareness of “micro-interaction among the readers, writers, and texts, but also macro-understanding of what it means to be a reader in the contemporary world” (Asghar & Al-Bargui, 2014, p. 182) which means that learners “respond to texts in more diverse and complex ways than is generally acknowledge” (Wallace, 2003, p.3). Wallace’s model addresses three dimensions the linguistic, critical and cultural ones in understanding texts (Wallace, 1998, p.50).

Based on these three dimensions it was proposed different activities to develop the learning and teaching process of this pedagogical experience. Firstly, the linguistic dimension aims at helping learners to gain an understanding of the ideological meaning embedded in texts reflecting on the use of language (Asghar & Bargui, 2014; Wallace, 1998; Wallace, 2003); it refers to whether learners recognize the ideological meaning and notice how it is presented through the text regards to the language choice. Secondly, The aim of critical/conceptual dimension is to “enable learners to develop a cognitive as well as critical link between the text and their personal life” (Asghar & Al-Bargui, 2014, p. 182); Indeed, learners are guided to establish any relationship among writer, text and their own experience in such way they discuss, keep or shift their position about an issue debated in the communicative classroom. Finally, the cultural dimension is considered as the way
“to promote insight into cultural assumptions and practices, similarities and differences across national boundaries” (Wallace, 2003, p. 43); this dimension helps learners not only learn a new culture but enhancing their understanding. In some measure, learners should be able to identify those features of their self-culture. These dimensions were applied to the lessons specifically in the workshop designed.

Therefore, to apply this intervention, it was agreed with the head-teacher and learners that the designing of the workshops would be based on Wallace’s model and the usage of Colombia’s indigenous myths. According to Yann-Ru Ho (2018) these narratives guide learners’ reflections about “make sense of the world” especially the one of themselves. Thus, the indigenous narratives in this context worked as a reading strategy in developing learners’ critical reading skills and enhancing learners’ self-cultural awareness.

To support this proposal, it was planned and organized an instructional design using the PPP approach which is defined as teaching language items which follows a sequence of presentation, practice, and production of an item (Tomlinson, 2011). Ur (2003) asserts that this is not just a “limited and controlled modeling of a target item” (p.11) but an “[...] initial encounter with comprehensible [...]” (p.11) spoken or written input. In the same perspective, the practice stage is the consolidation of the learning performance where learners acquire an intuitive knowledge through practice (Ur, 2003, p. 19). While the production stage is understood as the “immediate creativity” (Harmer, 2001) where learners use the new language item or knowledge at their own. Following this pattern and straightening it, Harmer (1998 cited by Harmer, 2001) proposed an alternative model based on the PPP approach which is Engagement, Study and Active (henceforth: ESA) sequence
which differs from the PPP model since in the first component it is not just presented an item, but learners are being encouraged through a game, pictures, others activities to get their interests (“ESA”). In the second component – study-, there is a focus on how language is constructed, whether it is intonation or grammatical patterns, examination of a text, vocabulary (“ESA”; Harmer, 2001). In the third component – active-, learners “are encouraged to use all or any of the language they know” (Harmer, 2001, p. 84).

Based on what was just mention, this instructional design combined the PPP approach and its alternative model ESA since both are laid on three stages where learners play different roles as the center of the class; and because the PPP model has been considered as an inadequate and default teaching structure for communicative language items (“ESA”, Harmer, 2001, p. 82). On the contrary, the PPP approach and its ESA alternative model combined allow developing a flexible class where learners and teachers agree to at which stage starts the procedure and how to follow them. In this extent, the presentation stage worked also like the engagement one; the practice like the study stage; and the production like the active stage.

Through the PPP – ESA alternative- approach the decision made about the type of curriculum platform, types of tasks, activities, materials, and resources that could promote opportunities for learners to develop their critical reading skills to strengthen their use of language as a means of enhancing their cultural self-awareness, recognize the ideological meaning of texts, analyze texts structure, describe or give their opinions, express their reflections, discuss their positions, develop and strengthen writing practices and processes jointly and individually, strengthen awareness of the
forms and functions of English as a foreign language. What follows is an account of the curriculum platform, and the chapter ends with a concise description of the innovative pedagogical intervention.

The Curriculum Platform

To support this innovative pedagogical intervention, this instructional design assumed a learner-centered curriculum view in which learners’ holistic development is the principal focus while teacher’s role is not a controller one but as active and parallel as learners’ (Fung, 2015). From this curricular assumption, learners “[…] manage their own learning process and become actively engaged in knowledge construction […]” (Fung, 2015, p. 422), hence, they acquire an autonomous and responsible role in the construction of their language learning process and knowledge based on the association and assimilation of an experience (Piaget, 1964) provided by the teacher and supporting by their needs. The learner-centered curriculum is the one that expects that learners appropriate their language learning process allowing them having more responsibility and increasing their abilities of critical thinking - critical reading- and the development of their understandings about the issues presented (Fung, 2015; Keyler, 2009). Nunan (1986) asserts that learner-centered curriculum perspective has planning, implementation, and evaluation stage which constantly involves a negotiation between learners' and the teacher' points of view about the material, content and the context provided.

To support this vision of curriculum, this instructional design espouses constructivist and scaffolding learning processes. From the constructivist view, learning was a process where, firstly learners constructed knowledge and understandings by organizing and making meaning of their experiences (Baxter, 1999) and critical reading interpretations, and secondly, the construction of
learners’ assumptions regarding indigenous myths and its imaginaries. Similarly, scaffolding learning process took place when learners were guided by the teacher through the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) where learners moved from some bits of knowledge, interpretations, and imaginaries about indigenous myths to reinforce those with reliable bases and structure new ones.

To uphold the vision of learning, this instructional design was built on the interactional view of language which according to Richards and Rodgers (2001) is “[...] the realization of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transaction between individuals” (p.17). This view emphasized on the language interaction and the negotiation of the meaning among the speakers (Gumperz quoted by Di Luzio 2003); in other words, people interpret the meaning of what it is said based on their experiences and background, but also influenced by their identity and socio-cultural phenomenon. At this point, learners’ identity drew a self-classification reflected in people’s social behaviors understanding these ones and giving them a higher relevant in the social-cultural phenomenon (Bucholtz& Hall, 2009). On the top of that, the intercultural communication takes place as a “bi-directional” interwoven of language and culture explained by Gumperz (2003 quoted by Di Luzio).

To support the vision of curriculum, learning, language vision this instructional design assumed a dialogic classroom perspective where learners and the teacher were encouraged in reasoning, discussing and explaining different class issues in order to construct a convey and meaningful meaning of these ones. According to Alexander (2006) dialogic classroom “capitalizes on the power of talk to foster students’ thinking, learning” and critical opinion. Thus, learners could improve the
quality of argument (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2017) to defend their position and generate new ideas (Quanstrom, 2004) and understandings.
**The Organization of the Pedagogical Intervention**
The following chart displays a general view of the pedagogical intervention.

**Chat 1: a general view of the pedagogical intervention**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Learning objective</th>
<th>Wallace’s dimensions</th>
<th>FPP ESA alternative Approaches</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Instructional objectives</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students define culture, looking for evidence of culture in their lives and all around.</td>
<td>Cultural Critical Linguistic</td>
<td>Presentation Engagement</td>
<td>What are your imaginations?</td>
<td>Present and explain some pictures about different cultures.</td>
<td>Share and express personal opinions about indigenous communities.</td>
<td>Computer Video Room Speaker Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students build their understanding of what a myth is and establish their main features.</td>
<td>Linguistic Cultural Critical</td>
<td>Presentation Engagement</td>
<td>What’s a myth?</td>
<td>Explain the origin of the myth and some of its features.</td>
<td>Give their understanding about “The fountain of water” myth.</td>
<td>Reading: “The fountain of water” Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Students make a connection between the perceptions of the origin of the world of indigenous and their own.</td>
<td>Cultural Critical Linguistic</td>
<td>Production Active</td>
<td>Raising point of view</td>
<td>Exemplify the features of a myth.</td>
<td>Reflect upon the importance of indigenous myths and its social implications.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Students make a connection between the origins of the indigenous communities and their own.</td>
<td>Cultural Critical Linguistic</td>
<td>Presentation Engagement</td>
<td>Where are they located?</td>
<td>Explain how the indigenous communities located in Colombia.</td>
<td>Locate in a map some of the indigenous communities.</td>
<td>Colombia Map Reading: Myth of origin, the two paradigms Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Students recognize some historical issues related to the culture of indigenous communities.</td>
<td>Cultural Critical Linguistic</td>
<td>Practice Study</td>
<td>Different point of view: Myth of origin, that we partidge.</td>
<td>Encourage learners to reflect upon the reality of these communities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Students identify how indigenous have built their assumption about some behavior.</td>
<td>Cultural Critical Linguistic</td>
<td>Production Active</td>
<td>“Temple of fire” reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Students identify how indigenous have built their assumption about some behavior.</td>
<td>Cultural Critical Linguistic</td>
<td>Presentation Engagement</td>
<td>“Temple of fire” reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Students identify how indigenous have built their assumption about some behavior.</td>
<td>Cultural Critical Linguistic</td>
<td>Practice Study</td>
<td>Read “Bochica and the origin of the profane pleasures”</td>
<td>Encourage to focus on the text interaction</td>
<td>Analyze the text structure.</td>
<td>Reading Workshop Markets, paper, color.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter IV

Report Design and Meaningful and Innovative Contribution

This chapter presents the report design that contains the data techniques and instruments used to gather the data based on a working plan. Then, it illustrates the meaningful and innovative contribution of this intervention.

Leading Question

It is recalled the leading question since the techniques and the instruments were chosen and applied to address this one.

What are the effects of using Colombia’s indigenous myths on pre-intermediate learners’ self-cultural awareness as a means of enhancing their critical reading skills?

Data Collection Techniques

This intervention is considered as part of qualitative research which deals with human live experience aiming at describing and clarifying those experiences (Polkinghorne, 2005); its main focus is the understanding of human beings and their reflections, behaviors and cognitive processes (Jackson R., Drummond D. & Camara S., 2007). Based on this, the data collection techniques used in the intervention followed the qualitative pattern. The first data collection technique was the observation which is a “[…] systematic recording of observable phenomena or behavior in a natural setting” (Gorman & Clayton, 2005 cited by Baker, 2006). This refers to the data gathering through
the description of the learning and teaching process in a determined setting; in this case, the center of attention was the learners’ behavior and attitudes in the classroom towards the topic or activities proposed through different lessons.

On the other hand, the data that was most gathered was the written which according to Polkinghorne (2005) is evidence from documents, and data originally generated in oral form but transformed into written text. This author emphasizes that “the evidence itself is not the marks on the paper but the meanings represented in these texts” (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 138). Indeed, the written data provides a different kind of information to be analyzed like how learners understand a topic, how they express their thought and how they use the language to transmit their opinions and reflections.

**Data Collection Instruments**

As teacher-researcher gathering data is part of the inquiry process, since the constant and direct interaction with the learners allow to appreciate most of their behaviors and attitudes during the learning and teaching procedures. For that reason, one of the instruments used was the journal which is a main tool for teachers to record what is happening in his/her classroom; in this intervention “journaling offers a rich means for describing practice; for recording and examining beliefs, assumptions, questions and challenges; and for expressing feeling and identifying problems” (Pine, 2009, p. 194) that the teacher could face during his/her lessons.

The learners’ artifacts also were part of the data gathered. Artifacts are evidence created and used by people which could be digital or no-digital materials (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017) that have an
intrinsic value. In this case, the learners’ artifacts were written activities, posters, and drawings in which learners displayed their understanding of culture and showed their critical reading skills.

By adapting and implementing the artifacts based on Colombian myths, it was proved that it was a very useful resource to connect theory, practice and culture; because it helped students to improve critical reading, understanding some forms and functions of the English language included in the worksheets designed. It means that students could actually establish connections between critical reading and cultural awareness, that is to say, that the use of myths did promote understanding, and later on learning. Besides, it engaged students to work autonomously but following Colsubsidio method which is cooperative learning.

**Meaningful and Innovative Contributions**

**First Intervention**

At the beginning of the implementation, students asked the intern about what to do because they usually worked with a textbook which has readings with topics such as sports, style of life and questions. They were provided with a material however It was just matter of time that students started to understand not only the characteristics of the material but also the usage. Then they would read more about myths or collect extra information by themselves sharing with the class and they finally learnt how to read carefully identifying the linguistic, the conceptual and critical dimension.

The object of the first intervention was to determine the students’ imaginaries about indigenous (See image 1). Indeed, students were encouraged to build a bridge between the culture they know
and the indigenous ones developing a sense of global culture understanding and giving space to comprehend different behaviors and beliefs. For doing so, at the beginning of the lesson they appreciated the faces of different people through some digital pictures. They included a group of indigenous women, two young indigenous girls, an old indigenous leader, and a YouTuber (See image 2).

Looking at these pictures, students were supposed to describe the impression that each one arose on them. What call the attention were the qualifying adjectives using to describe these people. They used words such as “fear” “isolated” “different” and “colorful” to talk about indigenous pictures.
While the adjectives used to describe the YouTuber were “funny man” “a great YouTuber” and “so cool man” (See image 3) illustrating in this way the poor perception that most of the learners had about indigenous. It must be clarifying that some of these pictures were chosen from the media especially from the social network which according to Thomas (2016) has a “potential to distort an individual’s sense of self and sense of other people”. It means that the students’ imaginaries about these people might have been influenced by this sort of media that have altered the collective sense of reality (Thomas, 2016).

Image 2- Digital Pictures

Image 3- Adjectives

This shows how culture is constructed from the social dynamics (Valencia & Medina, 2009). With regards Wallace (2003) asserts that in multicultural classes with a variety of points of views and experiences, it is necessary to see the differences and accept them to pursuit a greater understanding. On the second point of the paper sheet, students had to compare some items related to the outfits and cultural assumptions; in its developing some complications appeared since some of the students did not know much about indigenous and their culture. In fact, it gave the students a further challenge due to they had to bring up all those ideas or imaginaries about indigenous
communities and linked them to reality. At this point, the students’ roles were active allowing them to be autonomous to discuss, classify and question their imaginaries and those of their peers.

As a result, they wrote down that indigenous wear colorful clothes but not wear shoes while they wear colorful as well as black clothes combining it with different kind of shoes. On the other hand, they consider the water as another element in the world and most of the time they pollute and waste it, whereas indigenous give the water a special treatment related to a pure god (See image 4). Finally, taking about the origin of the universe they shared religious and scientific ideas and theories meanwhile they considered indigenous believe in gods or/and natural spirits but nobody wrote a specific one (See image 5).

At the end, students had to draw how indigenous look like. It was interesting how students showed the willingness to represent what were on their mind (See images 6 and 7). This item was connected with the previous point recognizing what could be changed in their perceptions or ideas.
and indeed there was a general one. It was about wondering really how the natives dress and if anyone had ever met one.

Undoubtedly, as Bahrami (2018) argues learners are exposed to new and sometimes different viewpoints of the world, life and existence that require specific frames to be constructed. And, sometimes, “L1 cultural frames do not meet the requirements of L2 cultural items and world” (p.116); for that reason, it was important to check the students’ imaginaries because it is expected to understand the culture by being open-minded and exploring the texts in a beneficial way.

**Second Intervention “The Fountain of the Water”**

The second intervention was based on one of the most important myths for the Emberas community “*The fountain of the water*”. Firstly, the teacher explained the related vocabulary; it was agreed in the first intervention that in each intervention the warm-up activity would be grounded on vocabulary because of students' lack of vocabulary could hold up the comprehension of the texts.
In this case, the warm-up activity was called "Adopt a Word". This activity aimed at providing students a word, which they contextualized using dictionaries and internet. Then, they shared the word through some examples into their groups.

Following up and focusing on the cultural dimension, it was stated a question through it was expected that students could get the gist of the myth. The question was “How important is the water for you?” after discussing by groups, most of them summed up that water is a very important natural resource to survive. However, there was an interesting answer in which students set down that no matter what culture people belong to and the differences among them, the natural resources are valuable for all (See images 8 and 9). They highlighted a common feature between people.

Image 8- How important is the water for you?

Image 9- How important is the water for you?
After reading, students worked on the post reading activity in which they focused on the usage of language that according to Novia and Ashadi (2015) teaching critical reading skills will propose some skills and aspects for the students such as examining assumptions, audience, reasoning, characters and context to identify the basic information of the text, evaluating the truth, reliability, applicability and the value of the text. Looking forward that students could identify how important a character is in the text and its influence to comprehend the whole reading, students were required to read the myth individually identifying the role of each character and classifying it according to the cast in the story. After reading, using the information collected they had to complete a chart in which there was explicit the characteristics, influence and attributes of each character (See image 10).

This item took them more time than it was planned since they had to re-read and check the text again to review the information; for that reason, they could not finish the activity and it was postponed for the next session. In fact, this particular activity puzzled them to identify primary and secondary roles and differentiate what is a characteristic from what is an attribute. Moreover, students through a deeper reading found out the characters’ abilities although some characters lacked of literal adjectives in the text. It was evident that students needed to read in group for getting in an easy way the main points of the story.
After reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Characteristics (adjectives, etc.)</th>
<th>Influence on the text</th>
<th>Attributes - Processes - Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Beautiful/cute</td>
<td>Main character, she killed his son...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chidima</td>
<td>Smart, strong</td>
<td>he cut the tree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenzerá</td>
<td>had power</td>
<td>Important. He was the owner of the tree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caragabi</td>
<td>powerful, slice</td>
<td>Main Character:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dachizeze</td>
<td>wise</td>
<td>tried to cut the tree, they were</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emeberá</td>
<td>were amazing</td>
<td>the father of...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The development of the workshop continued the next class. Students took time to resume reading and be prepared to answer questions focused on the conceptual dimension. It provided students explore the message of the text, but also consider their own questions in order to clarify the objective; some questions were solve by themselves as the idea was, but most of them wrote questions that they did not know how to answer, it show the interest on the reading and also the comprehension. At the moment to explain the title and ask some questions about the text enables to complete some gaps between the new information and their own knowledge developing a sense of global culture.

**Third Intervention “What is the Origin of the World?”**

At the beginning of the intervention, it was stated a question about the previous reading “Fountain of the Water” focusing on Emberas indigenous community location. The question was “Where is located Emberas indigenous community in Colombia?” Most the learners just try to guess the cardinal directions saying “in the north” “in the north-west” but at the end, it was difficult for them.
to point out the right location. Then, the intern provided by group a picture of Embera indigenous and learners had to describe the outfits and the place (See image 11).

![Emberas pictures](image11.jpg)

*Image 11 – Emberas pictures*

Based on the description, learners could set in the Emberas indigenous community location, they could notice that Emberas people:

- “wear fresh clothes so ... they must live in a warm place” *(Student statement)*
- “live in a jungle because the background of the image show[s] a lot of trees” *(Student statement)*
- “maybe live in a jungle like Amazonas” *(Student statement)*

They got into a discussion since in Colombia there are a lot of warm places with trees around. Then, the intern told them that this community locates in the south-west of the country in Choco department. After this introductory activity, learners showed active and disturb attitude because they really know little about Colombia’s indigenous.

This third intervention was divided into parts. The first one consisted on watching a video which narrates how the Chinese understand the origin of the world. The video narrates a Chinese myth that
explains “The Creation Story” (See image 12). After having listened, the students were questioned about how did life on Earth begin? Or myths are stories from long, long ago that have a ….

They answered that

- “life began because of the Bing Bang crash” (Student statement)
- “God creates it in seven days” (Student statement)

They shared their different assumptions. Finally, they were asked to compare their knowledge about their self-culture with other cultures. They discussed and compared the Chinese myth and their ideas, some of them were disappointed since they did not understand why Chinese matched the origin of the world with a dead man, others just embraced the” Bing Bang” theory while a few of them considered “the evolution theory”. Indeed, it was clear that understanding world’s diversity allows students to “promote insight into cultural assumptions and practices, similarities and differences across boundaries” (Wallace, 2003, p.116). Almost all the students seemed interested, asking for the unknown vocabulary and trying to support their arguments as much as possible.

The second part was based on a reading comprehension item. According to Colsubsidiay Method which is the Cooperative learning: by groups, each student had a short part of a reading, and they
had to read it and sum up it for their partners. Then, they had to organize the myth as quickly as they could. It was visible that students could easily organize the myth because they recognized the basic form of a narrative text. Once the myth was read, students got disconcerted, they expressed had never listened to this weird story in country. Using the reading, they had to complete a chart. At this point, the linguistic and the conceptual dimensions were integrated since the chart sought that they set out the “introduction, problem, solution and conclusion” about the text.

Students gained an understanding of the nature of the text (See images 13 and 14), this refers that critical reading includes an analytical stage in which students are able to look at the texts as a process rather than a product (Yu, as cited in Vina Nurviyani, 2018).

![Image 13.- Chart](image-url)
In the same way, critical reading also involves the learners’ previous knowledge which implies an evaluative sense of what it is read. That is to say, the reader must distinguish what type of text it is, and he / she would be able to make judgments and anticipate the type of scenario and characters will be found. The second part of the chart helps them to deepen the contents of the type of reading they have. Once they did, they could evaluate what is missing from the reading and be able to make inferences and comparisons with other myths that had been checked.

The last item in the workshop was based on the student’s imagination and learning from the previous point. They were asked to create new community with its own myth and its own name. They did not write on the paper, they proposed to the intern to make a presentation and tell briefly the myth using different materials. They grounded in their self-culture to create another one; they enjoyed creating the myth because they felt comfortable following a basic narrative structure of myths (See images 15 and 16).
shortening the time to work in the workshop avoiding possible variables; students maximized their own learning because each one contributed on the development of the workshop; once the myth was read a chart had to be completed, now the linguistic and the conceptual dimensions are integrated at the moment to complete the “introduction, problem, solution and conclusion” students are gaining an understanding of the nature of the text, (see image 11 and 12) critical reading is also analytical, students have to look the reading as a process rather than a product (Yu, as cited in Vina Nurviyani, 2018).

Fourth Intervention “Colonization”

This fourth intervention is focused on historical knowledge, to build meanings about culture. It is important that the reader knows the history of the argument present in the text, then, a possible interpretation of the facts can be given. Using critical reading skills learners can explain and support opinions and results about the texts. In the engagement stage, the teacher shows some flashcards of Muiscas indigenous community, asking learners where they are located and what they know about them. Most of learners’ answers were accurate although others were confusing since they have some doubts about if Muiscas are the same Chibchas indigenous. It is interesting to observe and
read what they knew or remembered about the history that not only affects one person, but also the Colombian population. Most of the students specified the wrong dates, but it is remarkable the answers with a critical sense (See image 17). The answers show students have used a mental and aware process without having a text, it is possible students have understood the previous text’s purpose.

![Image 17- Students’ answers.](image)

**Fifth Intervention “Spelling Bee”**

At Colsubsidio high school, activities outside the classroom are handled, where students are expected to show what they have learned during their process in an interactive and eye-catching way. In the English area different activities were arranged in which the students could show their progress; one of them was from the students of the 10th grade of the pre-intermediate level who decided to work different activities with the theme "Spelling Bee" (See images 18 and 19).
The linguistic dimension is important for the development of a good critical reading but in addition to a cultural awareness; the use of vocabulary for example can help the student to understand the intention of the author or simply show a part of the culture. In this way Wallace (2003) argues that the word is a way to make connections between the context and an approach to the meaning of the same giving a better view of what the author wants to achieve through the text.

In the development of this process the students handled an extensive vocabulary found in the myths presented during the sessions, as well as evidenced that the warming up activity adopts a word worked since the students appropriated some to explain them to his classmates and teacher its meaning.

**Sixth Intervention: Keepers of Culture**

Sessions, where students can read and through the texts and know concepts of the language but also get a bit closer to the culture were carried out. The last session will be observed how important is the culture for intermediate students and the knowledge acquired through the myths presented. Although culture is a very broad concept which embraces all aspects of human life, in learning
process culture plays an active role that makes students aware of the social and cultural differences that could make them success in an intercultural communicate context (See image 20). For that reason, culture can guide students to analyze the similarities and differences of cultures and establish his/her position in front them from their own culture. It is also a good method for students to explore the values that are often represented by both the target culture and their own.

How might an English teacher help students become aware of culture? It has a big question with different options to explore. One of them is by promoting a learning process that integrates more than one cultures and begins from students own culture; providing opportunities for students to investigate unique facts of their community, this is an effective way to help students to gain a greater appreciation for their own culture. Getting closer to students’ believes, values, assumptions and perceptions for example showing students photos of different indigenous communities, so they can look at them and themselves convey in a same place or context. Avoiding teaching students about the same minority role models; if students are taught about the contributions that different cultures have made to all fields, they will be more likely to respect and value the diversity after all. If students recognize culture they can consider themselves as keeper of cultures (See image 21).
The conceptual and linguistic aspects of critical reading were developed at the third point (See image 22) since they applied the concepts developed through the readings and the grammatical aspects of the language. Critical reading may involve evaluation, the analysis but also allows students critical writing identifying patterns of elements, structure, characters, values, and the language usage. In this case, students wrote a myth to tell how social networks appeared applying that a myth is usually a traditional story that serves to unfold part of the world view of a people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon (Merriam-Webster). Moreover, it allows the reader to contemplate the view towards history.
Innovative Contribution

Model Proposal

The above analysis demonstrates that reading text with a linguistic, conceptual, and cultural dimension not only helped students perceive the society that have around them, it also equips them with skills to become critical thinkers and readers. A step could be given on the Kumaravadivelu thinking “connecting the word with the world”, this proposed model pretends to extended the English subject more than the grammar one, to the social and cultural that exist in learners own society.

The model shows a process that has three main statements. Firstly, myths are presented as the pathway -how- where students’ cultural awareness increase while reading and doing workshops making them be open-minded. Myths as a mean of recording important events in the history like
indigenous cultures give the idea of a time period, a place, a situation and some cultural facts that help learners to build meaning and to enhance awareness about the local culture. Integrating Colombian Indigenous myths in English language learning process could enhance learners’ self-culture since these readings allow them to link the history facts to their previous knowledge and reality giving them the possibility of being aware of the values, beliefs and products that the different cultures convey. Myths provide unlimited potential for autonomous and collaborative learning as well as a myriad of teaching possibilities for language instructors.

Secondly, the paradigm shows a ship with big sails which represent the critical reading skills that help to encourage and to understand cultural awareness. To guide the ship to follow an appropriate direction, it is indispensable to provide learners with critical skills that let them be able to examine and go beyond written text. Evaluating, interpreting and analyzing alternative possibilities are some tools that encourage learners to connect what they have learned to the text (Meyers & Jones, 1993 cited by Tomasek, 2009) developing in this way their critical thinking. For instance, critical reading/writing prompts “elicit a reader response that promotes the alignment of readers with the literary text in a variety of different way […] the prompts are making connections, making applications, and taking a different point-of-view” (p. 128). The suggested way to usher learners is applying the three dimensions proposed by Wallace (2003) linguistic, conceptual and cultural which allow the awareness of the students but also micro-interactions ad macro-interactions.

Finally, upon the arrival of the ship at the cultural awareness statement, when learners have successfully understood the myth, they will have achieved to recognize some features of the new culture being aware of their native culture demonstrating that embracing two cultures is possible and could lead to a richer life filled with more treasured cultural experiences. Learners will be able
to relate with everyone easily; being aware that it is difficult to think and behave in the context of their own culture within the confines of another culture assuming that there are differences, at least until similarities are proven, an increased understanding of your own and other people’s cultures, and a positive interest in how cultures both connect and differ (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004, p. 3). The new perspectives of the world need a learner with a broad mind, tolerant, sensitive, and critical.

The model is a proposal for the ones who want to start changing their typical model in the XXI classroom context, supporting by the idea that people are linked by shared features through their culture. And if teachers move from be aware that culture has become an important focus of modern language education to plan, design and apply lessons or activities that convey the notion of an intercultural nation, it will facilitate the communicative experiences among learners supporting a better language learning process. On the other hand, the booming of information technology and globalization also shows the necessity of build on learners the abilities to tackle this issue so that they could be autonomous to decide what describes the reality and what not. This proposal can be a shift that reflects a greater awareness of the language and culture, and a reason to continue preparing learners for intercultural communication.
Figure 2. Model illustration

Waves: Indigenous Myths  Sails: Critical Reading Skills  Ship: Cultural Awareness

Authors’ creation
Conclusions, Implications and Further Research

Conclusions

Base on the general objective of this intervention, which is to design Colombia’s indigenous myths critical reading activities as a tool for understanding learners’ self-cultural awareness, the intervention was oriented to observe how the employment of indigenous myths as a means of developing critical reading skills focused on linguistic, conceptual and cultural dimensions proposed by Wallace (2003) enhance learners’ self-cultural awareness.

To start, it was indispensable to show how culture, myth and critical reading skills relate. It must be stated that critical reading “provide[s] insight into the ways [learners] read themselves and the world around them” (Daspit & Weaver, 2000, p. 9). It means that readers should be able to recognize, comprehend, analyses and wonder about the text ideologies and general background which implies stablish a dialogic interaction with the text and be aware of the culture in it (Daspit & Weaver, 2000). In the same perspective, myths as result of historical issues (Honko, 1972) set out cultural frameworks that come from the indigenous cultures. This shows different views of the world that may shift or support learners thoughts and ideas of others and about themselves.

At the beginning, when learners were reading the first myth they considered this as another fantastic story of Colombia’s literature. Most of them did not envision how texts contain cultural or ideological ideas; instead they assumed that myths just show a type of information to enjoy people. According to Kumaravadivelu (2003) culture in L2 learning should start from the local culture since
the L2 is teaching in this context. In other words, teachers must employ the local materials available to facilitate the link between learners and the target language. And, myths as a symbolic expression, as testimonies and as a message (Honk, 1972; “Why Myths and Legends?”, 2015) provide learners a “sense of familiarity, relevance and security with the learning environment” (“Why Myths and Legends?”, 2015). Learners, after discussing about myths especially the one they already read “The fountain of the water” from Emberas indigenous, expressed that some of their relatives used to tell these stories as a way to show why people do or not some things and described myths as part of their background.

At this point, it was noticed that learners got interested in reading the myths to learn more about indigenous communities. They understood that despite the differences some features tie them with indigenous cultures. Moreover, learners recognized that much of the current media denies their background changing people ideas and perceptions. Through this intervention, most of learners get to be open-minded in front of the others, their behaviors, believes and some attitudes and they tried to go deeper in knowing the background reasons for those issues.

Implications

Currently, L2 learners still think that learning a second language just implies the grammatical and linguistic use of the language. There is a low conception of how culture influences the learning process. Most people learn English to get a better job or just to fulfill a requirement but they do not consider how this process might change their perceptions or assumptions about the society and the world. That is why school learners must be supported to develop critical skills that allow them to size the implicit path of learning another language.
On the other hand, education is not out of touch when the media and digital literacy appear. It means that learners are exposed to a wide bank of information and at this point, they need to have skills that give them the opportunity to be critical and overall be aware of themselves.

To sum up, the design of these lessons and workshops open a new knowledge passage for learners and for the teachers-researchers that developed this intervention since they could challenge themselves to make an effort to understand all the paths that this issue has in language learning and learners.

**Further Research**

This research project shed light on the way learners used the critical reading skills to address the understanding of their own culture and improve the ability to express opinions and communicate their points of view changing imaginaries; supporting the idea materials place an important role in teaching and learning a second language.

Also, this study may lead to inquire teachers can integrate indigenous artifacts and cultural components into their classes, taking into account that the most important issue to understand the world is through their own culture and not only the target language one.

Finally, this inquiry results may lead to formulate further research about the effectiveness of the usage of indigenous material design compared to foreign material in teaching English in different
level or learning. In the same way the applying local material like workshop based on indigenous myths in Colombia’s high schools being for them culturally familiar
References


United Kingdom, UK: Cambridge University Press.
