Social awareness as a basis for the construction of English language learners' cultural meanings

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Abstract

Social awareness is understood as the ability to empathize with others and understand different perspectives, as highlighted by Selman (2011). In Colombia, while social awareness has been emphasized in EFL classrooms, scarce research on this theme focuses on primary education contexts (Herrera *et al.*, 2023; Jadán-Guerrero *et al.*, 2022; Pérez, 2013). This study explores the cultural meanings 17 second graders assign to their interactions and perceptions of social reality, and the ways they construct meanings around significant cultural issues. To achieve this, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) was implemented to foster social awareness within the classroom environment. Employing a qualitative, descriptive, and interpretive analytic approach, this research addressed students' artifacts, which were collected from the pedagogical intervention. Also, I conducted an analysis of the co-construction of cultural meanings via semi-structured interviews and systematic observations of student interactions during classroom activit ies. Findings reveal students' awareness of conflicts impacting their families, schools, and other environments. Additionally, students displayed an ability to co-construct positions on social issues, emphasizing the importance of not criticizing or offending others. These insights underscore the potential of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in developing social awareness and fostering empathetic respectful interactions among young learners.

Keywords: English language learning, social awareness, social justice, cultural meanings, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.

Introduction

Social awareness is a critical component in children's development, impacting their ability to understand and navigate the social complexities of the world. Social awareness involves recognizing and understanding feelings, perspectives, and cultures of others, which is essential for fostering empathy and respect in diverse environments (Selman, 2011). In this regard, Daniel Goleman emphasizes the role of social awareness in developing emotional competencies that are foundational for effective interpersonal relationships and personal success. Goleman argues that children who are taught to be socially aware are appropriately equipped to manage their own emotions and behaviors, leading to more harmonious interactions and a more inclusive society (Goleman, 2006).

This study posits that incorporating social awareness into education is essential for improving the learning experiences of children and their coexistence among peers. According to Goleman (2006) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), integrating social and emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum not only enhances academic performance but also fosters a positive school climate. Jones and Bouffard (2012) found that SEL instruction improves social skills, reduces emotional distress, and boosts academic achievement. By embedding social awareness into educational practices, schools can create environments where students feel valued and respected, thereby enhancing their overall educational experience (Gay, 2000).

Educators around the world acknowledge the importance of social awareness in shaping well-rounded individuals who can contribute positively to society. Paulo Freire (2018) underscores the need for education to be an act of liberation where learners critically engage with

their social realities and work towards transforming them. Freire's concept of *conscientization* underlines the importance of education as a tool for social change. By fostering a critical awareness of social injustices among students, *conscientization* not only illuminates the inequities they face but also empowers them to challenge and transform their realities (Freire, 1970). This transformative process is fundamental to creating engaged and informed citizenry capable of advocating for a more just society.

The imperative of including social awareness into education is underscored by Vygotsky's (1978) seminal work, which highlights the inherently social nature of learning processes. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory posits that learning occurs through social interactions and that cognitive development is deeply influenced by the cultural context (Vygotsky, 1978). By integrating social awareness into the curriculum, educators create learning experiences that are relevant to students' lives and cultures, thereby enhancing their engagement and motivation. Furthermore, fostering social awareness is pivotal in building a sense of community and cooperation among students, which promotes positive relationships and mitigates conflicts. Ultimately, integrating social awareness into the educational curriculum is essential for equipping students to navigate and contribute effectively to an increasingly interconnected and diverse world.

This phenomenon of social awareness led me to explore and develop a theoretical reflection of concepts such as culture (Banks, 2006), social justice (Freire, 2014), and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) articulated in the English classroom. In this process, cultural meanings English language learners construct, and how they do it, in connection with their social awareness could be explored, in relation to current social inequalities issues that affect the learning process and students' coexistence. My epistemological positioning is aligned

with a critical perspective, rooted in Paulo Freire's principles of critical pedagogy, emphasizing the transformative potential of education in addressing social injustices and empowering marginalized communities (Freire, 2014).

Social awareness is vital to the learning and coexistence process of English language learners. Understanding how students construct cultural meanings from their own backgrounds and those of others is a key aspect of this process. Addressing social inequalities requires creating supportive environments where students can voice their concerns and be heard by both their teachers and peers (Aldana, 2022, 2024). This collaborative approach fosters perspective-building and promotes social justice.

This study is organized into six chapters, each addressing key aspects of the research process, including the problem statement, theoretical framework, research and instructional designs, data analysis, conclusions, implications, and limitations. The problem statement outlines the conflicts observed among students in the classroom, providing a detailed account of their nature and significance. Following this, the literature review explores relevant theories and previous research on the topic. In the theoretical framework, three central constructs—culture, social justice, and social awareness—are discussed, with an explanation of how culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) informs and supports these constructs. The methodology is situated within a critical educational perspective, emphasizing the potential of education to challenge and transform oppressive structures. This approach advocates for dialogic learning, where teachers and students engage in mutual inquiry and reflection, recognizing their shared responsibility as co-creators of knowledge (Freire, 2014).

In the instructional design of this study, diverse activities were proposed. In that section, I explain the epistemological and practical decisions of this intervention. In this qualitative research, students created artifacts related to the proposed topics, and they also participated in interviews, which explore their voices and revealed the positions created. By means of the interactive model of Miles et al., (2018), I will perform the data analysis, to draw conclusions.

Justification

The rationale behind this thesis emerges from a relevant need to address social inequalities and enhance the educational experiences of English language learners through the lens of social awareness and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). This research aims to explore how English language learners construct cultural meanings and develop social awareness, contributing to the creation of more inclusive and equitable educational environments.

In my research, I draw on the works of authors such as Freire (2014) and Goleman (2010), who provide foundational theoretical support. Freire's principles of critical pedagogy highlight the transformative potential of education to address social injustices and empower marginalized communities. On the other hand, Goleman highlights the role of social awareness in developing emotional competencies, which are essential for effective interpersonal relationships and personal success. By integrating these perspectives, my study aims to promote the development of social awareness in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms to foster empathy, respect, and cooperation among students. For instance, in an EFL classroom, implementing collaborative projects where students discuss social justice issues can lead to greater understanding and empathy toward diverse experiences, creating a space of mutual respect and constructive dialogue.

I have developed this research within my local context through the teaching of English, using pedagogies that create spaces for students to raise their voices (Aldana, 2022, 2024) against the social inequalities they face daily. In these settings, students are given the opportunity to reflect on both their own experiences and those of their peers, cultivating greater social

awareness, which in turn fosters cooperative and supportive attitudes. In other national and international pedagogical contexts, CRP has demonstrated significant outcomes in both the learning process and the relationships among students (Worthy et al., 2012). My research aligns with these findings by encouraging spaces for dialogue and critical action within the EFL classroom.

This research is closely aligned with the research line Literacy Studies and Local Pedagogies for Social Transformation in the Master's program. In this context, literacy extends beyond basic reading and writing skills to encompass a critical understanding of social and cultural contexts (Freire, 2018). Grounded in the work of scholars like Vygotsky (1978), who emphasized the social nature of learning and the role of cultural context in cognitive development, this study extends current scholarship by exploring how English language learners construct cultural meanings through the lens of social justice. Specifically, it contributes to the research line by examining the intersection of English language learning and social awareness, thereby addressing existing gaps in how literacy practices foster critical engagement with cultural and societal issues in EFL contexts. The findings from this study have the potential to challenge traditional views of literacy by offering new insights into how learners' social awareness can be cultivated through culturally responsive pedagogy, thus contributing to both local and global discussions on literacy as a transformative practice.

Furthermore, this study is pertinent to local pedagogies for social transformation, as it addresses specific social challenges faced by students in Bogota such as discrimination, bullying, racism, among others. Similarly, the realization of CRP here, as suggested by Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gay (2000), bridges the gap between students' cultural backgrounds and their

educational experiences, in the sense that it actively integrates students' cultural identities into the learning process, making education more relevant and meaningful to their lived experiences.

This study produced harmonious and inclusive classroom settings creating class environments that value students' cultural strengths and promote social awareness. For instance, students were encouraged to share their cultural experiences and perspectives during collaborative projects and discussions, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual respect. By integrating CRP and encouraging dialogue around social justice issues, students became more aware of both their own identities and the diverse backgrounds of their peers. This, in turn, facilitated cooperation and empathy, as English language learners developed a deeper understanding of social dynamics and learned to navigate differences constructively, contributing to a classroom atmosphere of inclusivity and mutual support. Not only did this approach support the educational experiences of ELL involved, but it also responded to broader goals of social transformation, by promoting equity, respect, and cooperation among diverse student populations.

Statement of the problem

In this chapter, I address the research problem identified in this inquiry. Documenting various problematic situations was essential to understanding the issues related to the social awareness of second-grade students in the EFL classroom. Four sources provided insights to document the problem: the institutional Learner observer, the reconstruction of informal observations, a brief literature review, and semi-structured interviews with students and parents. I first explain the context in which I work, the students I work with, and how tools such as the institutional Learner observer constituted important documents to support this research problem, which is then stated and explained.

I work at a private school in the southern area of Bogota, located in the Rafael Uribe Uribe district. I teach second graders who are between seven and eight years old. One of the school's objectives is to create a coexistence environment that allows the integration of all areas of study in the institution through dialogue. For this reason, as teachers, we seek to create spaces in classrooms that reflect students' teamwork, respect for peers and their opinions, values, and active participation, among others.

Last year, I noticed how coexistence affected the learning process of students by reviewing the institutional Learner Observer, which is an educational tool that includes notes on students' academic development, coexistence, achievements and merits, among others. By the end of the second academic period of 2022, data from the institutional Learner observer and interviews revealed a high incidence of verbal and physical aggression, affecting students' social interactions and learning. Events recorded in that tool also highlighted the need to work on specific aspects such as teamwork and the promotion of more harmonic relationships between

students to create a different environment for learning (Learner Observer, 2022). These aspects were reinforced in talks I held with parents, other teachers and students. Parents and teachers pointed out that social factors such as socialization with peers, the relationship of students with their parents, and the student-teacher relationships influenced students' learning processes. For instance, a student's mother (personal communication, March 23, 2023) pointed out that:

> *It is important to show our children how to be more tolerant with their peers, when my daughter tells me about some of her peers who are aggressive, she tells me that she doesn't like to play or team up with them. One day at the park we met one of these peers and my daughter didn't want to say hello to her or play with her. I think it is important that we do something, I don't know if we all collaborate because I don't like the attitude she is taking.* (translated from the original in Spanish)

This situation, as described by the mother of a student, has been present in the classroom. Some students find it difficult to work as a team, they do not share their school supplies, they make gestures of indifference when I group them together for activities or games in class. In a group activity that took place in the classroom, students expressed their emotions about the behavior of their classmates and why it was so difficult to share activities or objects with them. In fact, some students (personal communication, March 28, 2023) indicated that in their own words:

> Ss: *"I don't like working as a team with her, because she doesn't bring the class materials, and she always asks me to borrow them."* (translated from the original in Spanish)
>
> Ss: *"She is very rough with me, pushing and shoving me. She always makes promises that she will be good to us, but she never keeps her promises."* (translated from the original in Spanish)

These comments have spawned various positions related to tolerance among peers, and the coexistence of students has been affected, since some children who were not aggressive have shown an unruly behavior. Delving into the literature review, I found how aggression, indiscipline, the roles of socioeconomic factors can impact students' learning processes, and how the effectiveness of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy can contribute to the growth of students' developments. For instance, Cerda *et al.,* (2018) concluded that students' low academic levels were related to poor peer and teacher relationships, and factors such as indiscipline, aggressiveness, and victimization among others, also affected students' academic performance. Nowadays, most schools are experiencing social challenges with their students, as coexistence among them is more difficult due to the environment where students live.

Discipline is a factor that influences the academic and motivational process of students. Arens *et al.,* (2015) examined the relationship between discipline problems in language classes, student achievement, and student motivation. This study used German data from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, and its results showed that discipline problems were directly and negatively related to achievement and to all the motivation constructs considered. Apart from discipline, there are other factors of coexistence in the classroom that could affect students' learning and hinder their holistic processes, such as their cultural contexts. Particularly, socioeconomic status has an important role in student behavior and learning (Chen & Weikart, 2008). Thus, the cultural context each student brings to the classroom influences most of the relationship with their peers and the development of their academic process. I asked a mother a question in this regard during the interview, and she (personal communication, March 23, 2023) commented that:

> *It does affect me, I have always said that what one is at home is everywhere, so when one has values at home, has a solid foundation, has a solid rock, it is reflected in the children, in their behavior, they are not aggressive, they are not children who practice bullying, and they are good students, academically they are also good.* (translated from the original in Spanish)

Numerous studies have affirmed that students' learning processes and interactions are shaped by a range of influential factors. Shapira-Lishchinsky and Ben-Amram (2018) highlight the significance of both internal and external elements within the school environment. They recommend increasing investment in students' home educational experiences and suggest examining factors such as socio-economic status and cultural context to better understand their relationship with students' educational outcomes. Worthy *et. al* (2012) indicated that students' reputation among their peers can positively or negatively affect their development. Through personalized instruction, attention to social interaction, and focusing on students' previous knowledge, the teachers in that study managed to transform the reputation of two second grade students who dealt with emotional, academic, and social issues. The study showed that it is feasible to create a unique environment where students become aware of each other and learn to interact with and value other people.

Indiscipline, verbal and physical aggression and the lack of appropriate or constructive relationships among students are closely related to their social awareness. All these challenging situations related to the idea that students have not developed awareness of their social environment, that is, of the people within that environment, and it is an aspect I want to address. Ponzo (2013) argued that the violent behavior of some students is due to rejection and

victimization by their peers, showing behaviors of loneliness, low self-esteem, poor physical health, among others.

Social awareness, as a crucial skill, enables individuals to empathize with others and appreciate diverse perspectives (Selman, 2011). Key aspects of this skill include empathy, recognizing the strengths in others, showing concern for their emotions, and understanding social norms. Fostering social awareness requires creating and nurturing new cultural understandings, which can be introduced in the classroom and extended to influence the home environment, or vice versa. For this, I have considered Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, because we can promote social awareness in the classroom through it (Wah & Nasri, 2019). After reviewing national studies on this topic, I found that few studies have been conducted in primary education. Pérez (2013) conducted a qualitative study on Colombian high school students, revealing insights into social awareness. Interviews and artifacts indicated that students viewed violence as necessary to avoid mistreatment by aggressive peers, and felt their parents neglected their personal growth while focusing solely on academic performance. At the end of the pedagogical intervention, there were noticeable changes in healthy relationships between the students and a more harmonic environment in the classroom. The author concluded that social awareness transforms students' behavior with their peers and the environment. However, very little is known about this issue in elementary school students.

Internationally, studies on promoting social awareness emerged. Harris *et al.,* (2020) developed a three-year cross-cultural study in the Republic of the Fiji Islands to develop culturally sustainable practices to promote preschool children's literacy in their native languages and English, in communities without access to early childhood services. The study was framed within critical participatory action research, with a methodology of encounters (Aldana, 2022),

documentation and participation. Dialogues were generated with the community at large, and their conclusions were related to the growth of a social awareness of culture and race, focusing on traditional languages and cultures in a dynamic way, and looking inward. Similar studies also explore social awareness, often implementing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). CRP is defined as "a learner-centered approach to teaching, in which students' unique cultural strengths are identified and nurtured to promote student achievement and a sense of well-being about the student's cultural place in the world" (Lynch, 2011, professional development section).

Gay (2010) highlights several benefits of developing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) in classrooms, aiming to bridge students' home experiences with the school context. CRP fosters social awareness by providing the learner with the ability to make constructive and respectful decisions regarding personal behavior and social relationships, considering ethical standards, social norms, evaluation of the consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

International studies demonstrate implementing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the classroom fosters social awareness among students, teachers and the community, actively involving parents (Harris *et al.*, 2020). Research indicates that CRP's effectiveness depends on teachers understanding and integrating student's backgrounds into the learning environment (Aksiutina, 2017). Like this, most research points to the needs observed in today's classrooms. However, the promotion of social awareness cannot be directed only to students, the need to promote social awareness according to recent studies point out that it should also be directed to parents and teachers.

Promoting social awareness should extend beyond students to include parents and teachers. CRP encompasses teaching practices and daily interactions, requiring teachers to engage with students to understand their culture and prior knowledge, thereby building bridges between students and their environment (Jónsdóttir & Einarsdóttir, 2022). Few studies related to the topic of social awareness in Colombia and the ones that have addressed this issue have concentrated on university or high school students (Herrera *et al.,* 2023; Jadán-Guerrero *et al.*, 2022; Pérez, 2013). In addition, I have identified in my own school certain problems related to school climate such as verbal and physical aggression, that may come from the lack of awareness of each other and the scarce knowledge of each other's cultures and backgrounds. For this reason, I intend to foster social awareness by means of a pedagogical strategy based on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy. The analysis of my context along with a literature review seem to underline the need to promote healthier relationships between students during their educational processes. Particularly, this is indispensable in early childhood or elementary school, which are educational levels that have often been neglected in the Colombian context.

Hence, deem The English classroom can serve as a critical platform for students to develop social awareness by reflecting on their experiences, funds of knowledge, and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, there are also students in the classroom who may go unnoticed, or there is simply no development of a classroom culture that allows them to express their ideas and background knowledge. Being culturally responsive is a constructive challenge, as not all classrooms practice or apply this pedagogy, but I have a strong belief that it can be implemented by addressing diversity, recognition, encouragement, and teamwork, among others, to reach harmonic classroom contexts.

As Jónsdóttir and Einarsdóttir (2022), along with Taylor and Leung (2020) emphasize, fostering social awareness in teachers is crucial. Teachers create environments where students feel free to express themselves and relate better to peers, teachers, family members, and the community. As a teacher, I must challenge myself to understand the cultural characteristics of each student and create environments that promote social awareness. This involves understanding and responding appropriately to social situations, which requires assertive communication skills (Gay, 2010).

Furthermore, Selman (2011) asserts building strong relationships involves concrete, teachable social skills. Social awareness helps children form positive relationships at school, home and in the community. This skill fosters empathy, enhancing our ability to understand others' feelings. Additionally, appreciating cultural differences and diversity is activated through social awareness.

Ultimately, numerous skills work in tandem with social awareness to improve individuals' lifestyles. I have realized that fostering this skill in students requires the implementation of a pedagogy that leads to achieving this objective. As I mentioned before, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy can boost social awareness. The classroom is the field in which students develop naturally, and as teachers we can observe, learn, reflect and guide activities that contribute to the process not only academically but also to the holistic process of students. Accordingly, the following question and objectives arose.

Research question

How do English language learners construct cultural meanings through the lens of social awareness when engaging in a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the English classroom?

Research objectives

To explore how English language learners' construct cultural meanings through their social awareness when engaging in a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.

To describe the development of social awareness in English language learners through their engagement in a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.

Theoretical framework

This chapter aims to explain the interest of my research, which focuses on understanding the way students construct their cultural meanings fostering social awareness. Thus, an epistemological stance will be presented, followed by a theoretical discussion on the interplay of three constructs: *social awareness, culture, and social justice*, under Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as the umbrella term for these constructs.

I place myself within a critical perspective, rooted in Paulo Freire's principles of critical pedagogy, underlining the transformative potential of education in addressing social injustices and empowering marginalized communities. This perspective views knowledge as inherently political and education to challenge and change oppressive structures. Freire's critical pedagogy advocates for a dialogical approach to learning, where teachers and students engage in mutual inquiry and reflection, recognizing their roles as co-creators of knowledge. This standpoint rejects the traditional "banking" model of education, where knowledge is deposited into passive students, and instead promotes an active, participatory learning process that fosters critical consciousness (Freire, 2014).

From my critical epistemological stance, the production and validation of knowledge are viewed as dynamic processes that must consider the socio-cultural contexts and lived experiences of learners. Freire states the importance of situating education within the realities of students' lives, enabling them to critically analyze their conditions and envision possibilities for change. This approach challenges the dominant, often Eurocentric, paradigms that marginalize non-Western ways of knowing and being. By acknowledging the validity and richness of diverse epistemologies, critical pedagogy seeks to decolonize education and create inclusive, equitable learning environments that honor the voices and experiences of all students.

Furthermore, my epistemological positioning underscores the necessity of praxis – the continuous interplay of reflection and action – in the learning process. Freire (2014) argues that true knowledge emerges through the dialectical relationship between theory and practice, where learners actively apply their critical understanding to effect social change. This praxis-oriented approach empowers students to become agents of their own learning and transformation, fostering a sense of agency and responsibility. Furthermore, engaging in critical dialogue and collective action, English language learners develop the skills and dispositions needed to challenge oppressive structures and contribute to the creation of a more just and equitable society.

Aligned with Freire's principles, this critical epistemological perspective advocates an education that is inherently democratic and emancipatory. It calls for educators to adopt a critical stance, questioning the status quo and advocating for systemic change. This requires creating spaces for critical dialogue, encouraging students to question dominant narratives, and supporting them in developing their own voices and perspectives. Ultimately, this epistemological positioning envisions education as a practice of freedom, where learners and educators work collaboratively to dismantle oppression and build a world based on principles of justice, equality, and human dignity.

Furthermore, I assert that learning is fundamentally a social process, occurring through interactions with others and the environment. This view aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which posits that learning cannot occur in isolation. Vygotsky emphasizes the critical roles of mediation, internalization, and the zone of proximal development in facilitating learning through social interaction. These elements underscore the necessity of social and environmental contexts in the learning process, reinforcing the idea that effective learning is

deeply embedded in social dynamics. This is particularly important for this study as students who lack social awareness and face violence problems engage in positive social interactions which help them develop essential social skills, such as empathy, and a sense of community. By fostering a supportive and interactive learning environment, educators address these challenges and promote a more inclusive and equitable educational experience.

Based on my experience as a language teacher, I have observed the behaviors of the students, which have shown progress in their academic performance and coexistence among them. When students interact with each other, links are created that go from academic to social, generating new relationships in them. Interaction among students is a natural process that is produced by affinity among peers due to age, cultural context, academic contexts, among others. Vygotsky (1978) believes that culture plays an important role in shaping cognitive development, i.e., the way the children interact with their environment is determined by cognitive structures, and that any given structure equips the children to function in a particular way (Bain, 1996).

Hence, I consider that each student's culture is significant not only in reinforcing their own learning processes, but also in enhancing the learning experiences of their peers and even the teacher. When it comes to culture, society, parents, teachers and children collectively share responsibility for each other's actions. In this sense, Bain (1996) emphasizes that every person in society is a social actor who plays an active and nurturing role in helping children reach their potential.

By adopting a critical perspective grounded in Paulo Freire's theories and Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural constructivism, we can better understand the socio-cultural dynamics that shape students' experiences and interactions. Freire's principles of critical pedagogy point out the transformative potential of education, where research becomes an active, participatory process.

This approach fosters a dialogical relationship between researchers and participants, challenging traditional power hierarchies by positioning participants as co-creators of knowledge. For instance, in my research, I will apply Freire's notion of "praxis"—reflection and action—to empower students to critically examine their realities and engage in social justice issues within the classroom. Through this framework, I aim to explore how learners' voices, experiences, and insights can contribute to understanding power dynamics and inequality, while also producing knowledge that has the potential to drive social transformation (Freire, 2014).

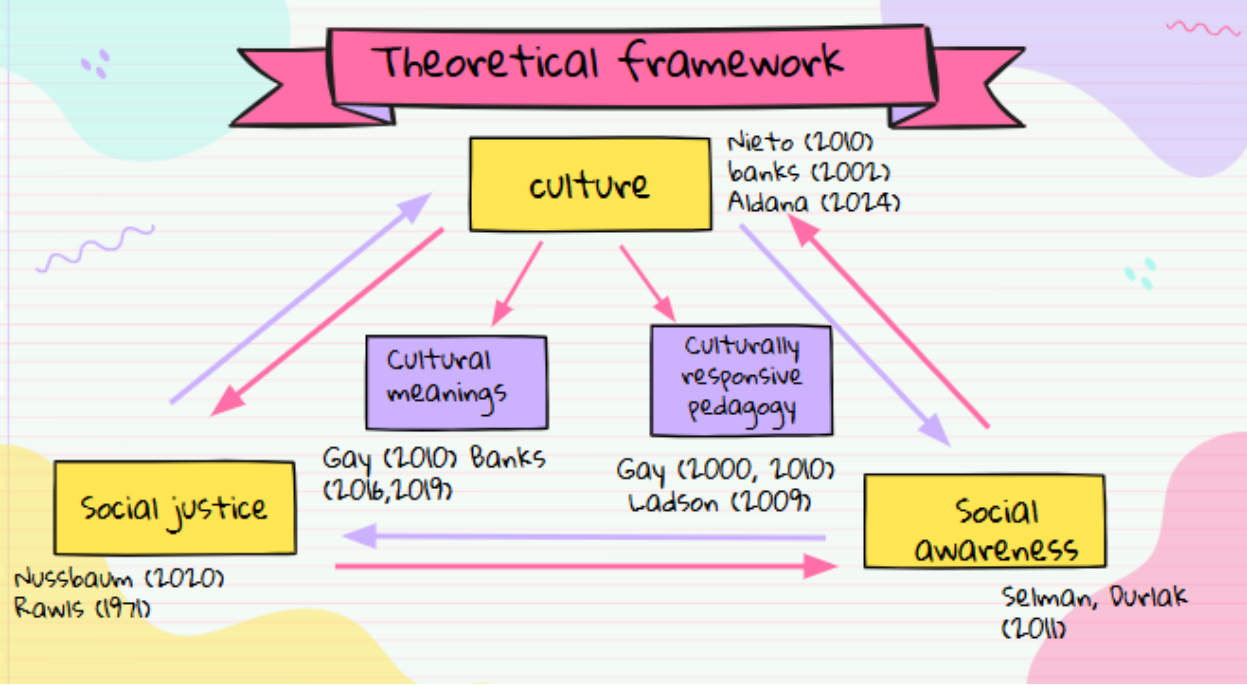
In addition, Vygotsky's sociocultural constructivist theory further enriches my critical perspective by accentuating the importance of social interactions and cultural contexts in the development of human cognition. Vygotsky's concept of the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) underscores the significance of collaborative learning and the role of more knowledgeable others in facilitating cognitive growth. In qualitative research, this means recognizing the co-constructed nature of knowledge and understanding how social and cultural contexts influence participants' perspectives and experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). By integrating Vygotsky's insights, as a researcher I can develop a more nuanced understanding (Aldana, 2022; Aldana 2024) of the interplay between student's agency and structural forces, leading me to more comprehensive and contextually grounded findings. This critical perspective ensures that this research not only captures the complexity of students' experiences, but it also empowers participants by validating their voices (Aldana, 2022) and fostering social change.

In my study, these theories contributed to the different stages of description, data collection, analysis, and conclusions. The constructs I will present below are linked to learning, interaction, context, and everyday situations that concern students. These constructs are culture, social justice, and social awareness. Next, I will explain the relationship and importance of each

one for my study, their contribution and how they relate to each other. The following figure shows the connection between the constructs.

Figure 1

Relationship between constructs



Culture

As a complex construct, culture can be defined in multiple forms. It can be understood as a complex, evolving construct that encompasses the shared beliefs, values, norms, practices, and artifacts of a group, influencing and being influenced by social interactions and power dynamics. Banks (2006) offers a comprehensive and *nuanced* (Aldana, 2024) understanding of culture, defining it as a dynamic and multifaceted construct that encompasses the shared experiences, beliefs, values, and practices of a group. According to the author, culture is not a static or monolithic entity but an ever-evolving set of social practices and meanings that individuals and groups continuously negotiate and reinterpret. This view of culture underlines its fluidity and the

ways in which it is influenced by historical, social, and political contexts. Therefore, Banks' perspective challenges the notion of culture as a fixed set of traits and highlights the importance of understanding cultural diversity in its complexity and variability.

This author further elaborates that culture plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' identities and worldviews. He argues that culture influences how people perceive and interact with the world, guiding their behaviors, attitudes, and interpretations of experiences (Banks, 2006). This cultural framework provides individuals with a sense of belonging and a way to make sense of their social environments. Furthermore, Banks (2008) highlights that educational practices must be culturally responsive to create inclusive and equitable learning environments. By recognizing and valuing the diverse cultural identities of students, educators can foster a more engaging and supportive educational experience, one that not only enhances academic success but also nurtures personal growth. This culturally responsive approach enables students to see their own experiences reflected in the curriculum, promoting a deeper connection to their learning and encouraging their overall development (Banks, 2008).

In addition to its role in identity formation, Banks (2008) draws attention to the interplay between culture and power. He stresses that dominant cultural norms and values often marginalize minority cultures, perpetuating social inequalities. Hence, Banks (2015) advocates for a critical examination of the power dynamics inherent in cultural interactions and educational practices. He points out the need for multicultural education that not only recognizes cultural diversity but also challenges the hegemony of dominant cultural narratives. This approach aims to empower students from diverse backgrounds to critically engage with their social realities and work towards social justice and equity (Banks, 2015).

Banks' conceptualization of culture includes the critical notion of cultural competence, which he defines as the ability to understand, appreciate, and interact effectively with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. He argues that cultural competence is essential for educators seeking to create inclusive classrooms that respect and affirm the cultural identities of all students. In the context of English language learners, developing cultural competence enables educators to not only recognize and value the linguistic and cultural diversity of their students but also to foster social awareness by encouraging learners to engage with and reflect on different perspectives. Banks (2016) highlights that cultivating cultural competence is an ongoing process of learning, reflection, and adaptation. For educators, this means a commitment to examining their own cultural assumptions and biases, as well as those of their students, to promote an educational environment where social justice and equity are at the forefront of teaching practices. Furthermore, by embedding these principles into English language teaching, educators can create opportunities for learners to develop social awareness and critical thinking about the world around them.

From another perspective, Nieto (2010) conceptualizes culture as a dynamic, multifaceted system encompassing social meanings, values, norms, practices, and beliefs shared within a group. This conceptualization highlights culture as an evolving construct, continuously influenced by historical, social, and political contexts. The interplay of these contexts shapes and reshapes culture over time, reflecting how individuals and communities adapt to their circumstances. Nieto argues that culture profoundly impacts every facet of an individual's life, including their identity, worldview, and daily behaviors.

In educational settings, acknowledging students' cultural backgrounds becomes critical under circumstances where systemic inequities or a lack of representation might alienate

marginalized groups. Nieto (2010) posits that creating inclusive and equitable learning environments involves validating and affirming the diverse identities of students, fostering a sense of belonging, and reducing cultural disconnects. This approach aligns with the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy, which advocate for the integration of students' lived experiences and cultural assets into the curriculum (Gay, 2010). By embedding these practices in education, educators not only address students' needs but also empower them to critically engage with their environments, thus fostering both academic success and social transformation.

Moreover, Sleeter and Grant (2009) expand on this understanding by exploring the interplay between culture and power in educational settings. They argue that educational institutions often reflect and perpetuate the dominant culture, marginalizing minority cultures and reinforcing social inequalities. The authors assert that a critical, multicultural education must challenge the hegemony of dominant cultural narratives and create spaces for diverse cultural expressions. This approach aims to empower students from all backgrounds by promoting cultural pluralism and social justice within the educational system (Sleeter & Grant, 2009). Both Nieto, Sleeter and Grant accentuate the importance of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in fostering educational equity. Nieto (2010) advocates teaching practices that recognize and build upon the cultural assets of students, thereby enhancing their engagement and academic achievement. She contends that educators must be culturally competent and aware of their own cultural biases to effectively support their students' learning. Sleeter and Grant (2009) similarly argue for an education that is responsive to the cultural contexts of students, enabling them to connect their lived experiences with academic content. Not only does this approach improve educational outcomes, but it also promotes a sense of belonging and self-worth among students (Sleeter & Grant, 2009).

Furthermore, Nieto (2010) and Sleeter and Grant (2009) highlight the transformative potential of education when it incorporates a critical understanding of culture. Nieto (2010) posits that culturally responsive education serves as a tool for social change as it raises students' critical consciousness about social injustices and empowers to become agents of change. Sleeter and Grant (2009) reinforce this idea by advocating for an education that not only acknowledges cultural diversity but actively works to dismantle systemic inequalities. In that sense, fostering critical thinking and cultural awareness, educators can prepare students to navigate and challenge the complexities of a diverse and unequal society (Sleeter & Grant, 2009).

A key concept that I want to address in this construct is 'cultural meanings' since English language learners will construct and co-construct them from social awareness in dealing with social issues. Cultural meanings encapsulate the shared symbols, values, beliefs, and practices that people use to make sense of their experiences and the world around them. According to Geertz (1973), culture can be viewed as a "web of meanings" that individuals and groups spin and within which they exist. This perspective highlights the interpretive nature of culture, suggesting that cultural meanings are continuously negotiated and reinterpreted through social interactions. In my research, understanding cultural meanings involves exploring how individuals and groups construct, express, and transmit these meanings in specific contexts (Geertz, 1973).

Spradley (1980) remarks on the importance of understanding cultural meanings in the context of educational settings. Spradley argues that educational practices and interactions are deeply embedded in cultural frameworks, which shape the ways in which students and teachers perceive and engage with each other. One of my classroom experiences with English language learners was related to exploring students' cultural meanings. So, for the activity, each student

brought to class an object or toy that had a personal meaning. During the activity, students shared the story behind the chosen object, explaining its importance to them. This experience allowed students to share their cultural identities, while helping them develop their social awareness by listening to and learning from the diverse backgrounds of their peers. In line with Spradley's framework, this activity spotlights the importance of understanding and valuing cultural meanings, promoting deeper engagement between students and teachers.

Building on this, Lave and Wenger (1991) introduce the concept of "communities of practice," which underlines the social and cultural nature of learning. They argue that learning occurs through participation in social practices and that cultural meanings are co-constructed through collaborative activities and shared experiences. This perspective underscores the importance of considering the cultural contexts in which learning takes place and the ways in which these contexts shape the meanings that learners construct. In this qualitative research, examining cultural meanings involves looking at how English language learners navigate and contribute to their communities of practice, and how these interactions shape their identities and understandings (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Building on these cultural meanings and their close relationship with culture, I explain Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as a strategy for students to construct and co-construct cultural meanings from their own cultural backgrounds.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy as a strategy for students to construct and co-construct cultural meanings

CRP focuses on recognizing the knowledge, skills, and rich cultural experiences that students from diverse backgrounds bring to school (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Over the years, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy has implemented strategies that seek to nurture the well-being of students, including academic, psychological, emotional, social and cultural well-being. Gay,

2000; Howard, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009 have contributed with their research, stressing that the roles of each social actor, places and practices are important and add to students' educational processes within the framework of this pedagogy. My position as a language teacher for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy is based on what is proposed by Howard (2010), who proposes that Culturally Responsive Pedagogy should be focused on the development of bright teaching practices, multicultural content reflective of students' cultural and life experiences, and multiple approaches to assessment.

My pedagogical practice intends to promote dialogue, reflection, healthy interaction, and free thinking. I use activities that enrich all participants culturally. When incorporating themes of social justice, social awareness, and culture into classroom activities and strategies, I develop a responsible culture among students. In the pedagogical intervention I will create opportunities for students to engage in structured yet open dialogues about social justice, cultural differences, and personal experiences and incorporating reflective exercises where students analyze their own assumptions, biases, and roles in the social material of the classroom and the wider community. This approach will help me, as a teacher-researcher, understand how students build knowledge and develop or strengthen skills that enable them to function effectively in their contexts. Gay (2010) proposes "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of culturally diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 31).

As students interact with each other, sharing experiences and cultural knowledge, learning will be shaped, and a discourse will be constructed that will allow students to raise their voices in the classroom. As mentioned by Sleeter and Grant (2009), education must be focused on social reconstruction, and this can only happen through the creation or adaptation of

environments in which knowledge is constructed and reconstructed. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy aims to highlight learners from diverse backgrounds, recognizing their differences as valuable resources rather than obstacles. It promotes socio-cultural awareness, helping students understand that there are many ways to perceive and experience reality.

Aligned with Howard's (2010) principles, he posits five key principles that underpin the research and theory of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: 1) The recognition of the complexity of culture and the acceptance and permission by educators for students to use their personal culture to enhance their pursuit of educational excellence; 2) a notion of authentic and culturally informed care; 3) a critical consciousness and a socio-political awareness that reflect a permanent commitment to challenge injustice; 4) the rupture and questioning of the idea that Eurocentric or middle-class forms of discourse, knowledge, among others, are normative; and 5) the eradication of deficit-based ideologies aimed at culturally diverse students. These principles align with the key ideas I have discussed in this chapter, emphasizing the importance of students constructing their own cultural meanings.

Building on the principles, my approach as a language teacher considers encouraging reflection and dialogue, as well as empowering students to generate a representative discourse for each of them in relation to social justice issues that they face daily. Through these actions, raising social awareness can result in students' positive holistic developments. Different studies at international level have shown how the implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy with topics related to social justice and social awareness have transformed students' learning process, leading them to create reflective spaces on topics proposed by students and the community (Aksiutina, 2017; Harris *et al.*, 2020).

In my research practice, the aim is to collect data, then analyze and explore the cultural meanings that students have constructed. As a teacher-researcher I hope to contribute with this study to the process of my students, both academic and social. Since it is in the teaching practice that we observe those small and big changes that students show through their speeches and reflections. Gay (2010) mentions that the educational practice of a teacher should always be in continuous transformation, being aware of the cultural knowledge of each student, to contribute to their evolutionary process.

To sum up, culturally responsive pedagogy as a strategy to construct and co-construct cultural meanings can be understood as the intricate and dynamic interplay of cultural meanings in educational contexts. In constructing this concept, it was essential to incorporate the perspectives of various scholars who highlight the complex and dynamic nature of culture and its interplay with students' construction of cultural meanings. Culture can be conceptualized as an evolving construct that encompasses the shared beliefs, values, norms, practices, and artifacts of a group, reflecting the ways in which individuals and communities interact with and respond to their social environments.

For English language learners, culture is both a source and an outcome of social interaction, continuously shaped by the power dynamics and diverse perspectives they encounter in educational spaces. This understanding aligns with Nieto's (2010) assertion that culture is not static but is shaped by historical, social, and political contexts, as well as with Banks' (2016) view that cultural diversity within classrooms offers a critical opportunity for mutual learning and the development of inclusive practices. Recognizing and addressing these elements within educational frameworks enables learners to navigate and contribute to the construction of cultural meanings while fostering equity and inclusion. This leads to the second critical concept:

social justice, in which English language learners can position themselves as advocates for change against social asymmetries.

Social justice

Social justice is a foundational element of my teaching philosophy, addressing the pervasive issues of equality, race, social class, and ethnicity that permeate classrooms and society. According to Rawls (1971), social justice is contextually constructed, with each society determining its own principles of fairness based on collective beliefs. Rawls conceptualized justice as *fairness*, describing it as an ideal framework where a group of equals, devoid of personal biases, could rationally agree on equitable practices for the common good. From my perspective as an educator, social justice is about fostering equal opportunities in all areas of human interaction and development.

To achieve this, it is crucial to create classroom spaces that promote dialogue, enabling students to express and reflect on their understanding of social justice and its relevance to their lives. For instance, a classroom discussion on environmental justice could invite students to share their perspectives on how pollution impacts marginalized communities disproportionately. By connecting these reflections to broader themes of equity and sustainability, students can construct their own cultural meanings while critically engaging with a pressing global issue. This approach not only validates their voices but also equips them with the analytical tools necessary to navigate and challenge societal inequities.

The principles Rawls (1971) mentions as *veil of ignorance, impartiality, individual freedom*, and *equality* seek to develop and promote an equitable society in all aspects, such as political, economic, and educational, among others. However, as a teacher, I have observed that each family nucleus has its own concept of social justice, and even if they are part of the

communities, inequality remains. This is why researchers have studied social justice phenomena, particularly in the classroom. It is there that issues of tolerance among students and the rejection of differing opinions on controversial topics often arise (Ortega, 2019).

This reality requires reflection on everyone's part so they can expand their knowledge of social justice and, at the same time, generate empathy with issues that have caused problems in society. Hence, one of the purposes of the pedagogical intervention in this study is to encourage students' empathy and reflection on topics that have caused controversy in the classroom by promoting activities that will enhance their skills to engage in discourse as social agents within their environment. This means becoming socially aware individuals who understand their reality and contribute to the construction or reconstruction of cultural meanings. Ultimately, everyone has the ability to function in society and the autonomy to make informed choices.

In that regard, Nussbaum (2020) explains that everyone possesses three types of capacities: basic, internal, and combined. Basic entail innate abilities that individuals already possess. The internal aptitudes developed through the upbringing process, in companionship of social factors. Finally, combined capabilities understood as internal abilities strengthened by supportive external conditions, are essential in fostering individuals' freedom to make choices. Observing my students' diverse backgrounds, it becomes evident that not all possess the same capabilities, as these are significantly influenced by the distinct family and social environments to which they belong.

In addition, Nussbaum (2020) argues that the combined capabilities lead to the realization of a person in society, and thus critical thinking of our environment is necessary. A student is capable of constructing their own discourse when they possess an acute awareness of their surroundings. In the creation of discourse or personal perspective, factors such as social

awareness, culture, among others, become allies in the constructive process of discourse. Nussbaum (2000) proposes freedom of choice on the part of the individual when possessing the 10 capabilities, which enable an individual to make better decisions regarding issues or situations that he/she lives in his/her environment. Of course, these capabilities are given on an individual level. However, to promote and develop these capabilities, social relationships with the environment and other social actors are necessary, and in my opinion, the aforementioned relationships are indispensable.

These conditions have encouraged me to strengthen my students' forms of self-representation in the classroom and at home, considering that Nussbaum (2000) proposes developing capacities from different spheres to generate empowerment in the individual. In other words, nurturing my students' self-representation through reflection in the classroom would help them to develop a new discourse on what may afflict them or more people. As a teacher, I understand that my participation in the classroom has enabled environments that generate curiosity, interaction, freedom of thought and ability to express emotions. This can occur through the active participation of students and their social awareness, which should also be fostered in the classroom. Since all students have different perspectives, it is necessary to mediate between conversations and debates that may arise in the activities proposed in the pedagogical intervention, which will be explained in the following chapters. It is of great value to my study to enhance the voice of my students, since the purpose is focused on the construction of cultural meanings.

Another view on social justice as a construct involves the commitment to creating a fair and equitable society by addressing and challenging inequalities and injustices. Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy offers a foundational perspective on social justice, emphasizing the need for

education to empower marginalized groups and to foster critical consciousness. Freire (2014) argues that education should not merely transfer knowledge but should enable learners to critically engage with and transform their social realities. This transformative approach is rooted in the belief that education can be a powerful tool for social change, challenging oppressive structures and promoting equity and justice (Freire, 2014).

Nussbaum complements Freire's ideas by framing social justice within the context of the capabilities approach, which focuses on what individuals can be and do. Also, Nussbaum (2000) argues that true social justice requires the creation of conditions that allow all individuals to fully develop and exercise their capabilities. In my research, this means providing English language learners with the resources, opportunities, and support necessary to pursue their goals and to participate fully in society. Nussbaum's perspective points up the need to address systemic barriers and inequalities that hinder individuals from realizing their full potential. She underscores the critical role of education in promoting human development and facilitating meaningful social participation, highlighting how equitable educational practices can empower individuals to overcome structural limitations (Nussbaum, 2000).

In this case, Freire's concept of praxis is central to understanding social justice as a construct. Praxis involves the continuous cycle of reflection and action aimed at transforming oppressive conditions. Freire (1998) highlights that educators must engage students in critical dialogue, helping them to question and challenge societal norms and injustices. This process of critical engagement not only raises awareness of social issues but also encourages students to act towards creating a more just and equitable society. Therefore, the author's approach to social justice education is inherently participatory and transformative, aiming to develop active, critical, and socially conscious citizens. I understand this construct of social justice in my research as

crucial because it addresses the core issues faced in today's classrooms, homes, and society, such as equality, race, social class, and ethnicity.

Rawls (1971) complements Freire's view as the author posited that social justice is created by each society, with rules and principles that vary based on collective beliefs about fairness. He introduced the concept of "justice as fairness," wherein a group of equals could rationally agree on what is best, irrespective of their backgrounds or personal circumstances. As a teacher, promoting social justice means providing equal opportunities and generating spaces for dialogue to understand students' perceptions of social justice. This understanding helps in constructing cultural meanings on controversial topics, enhancing students' engagement and empathy.

Moreover, reflecting on social justice issues in the classroom can expand students' knowledge, promote empathy, and develop their abilities to generate their own discourse, contributing to their role as socially aware actors. As discussed earlier, Nussbaum's (2000) capabilities approach underscores that developing these capabilities involves critical thinking and social interaction, essential for realizing students' potential in society. Then, aligning with the goals of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, it is vital to address social justice as part of students' education so that they grow into reflective, inclusive, and socially aware beings.

In conclusion, integrating social justice into my teaching practice not only addresses the immediate issues faced by students but also contributes to their long-term development as critical, socially conscious individuals. Succinctly put, I aim to equip my students with the tools they need to challenge injustices and contribute to the creation of a more equitable society by fostering dialogue, reflection, and critical engagement.

Social awareness

The ability to understand emotions, needs, and concerns, coupled with the capacity to empathize with others, forms the cornerstone of social awareness. This foundational skill not only fosters meaningful interpersonal relationships but also enhances collaborative efforts in diverse settings. Moreover, it empowers students to contribute positively to their communities, promoting an inclusive and harmonious society. My interest in this construct arose from activities I conducted with my students. I saw the need to promote this ability in the classroom to enhance their skill-building processes, enabling them to make decisions, solve everyday problems, and build healthy relationships with one another.

As discussed in the statement of the problem, promoting social awareness not only enhances classroom coexistence, but also benefits students' academic processes. According to Greenberg et al. (2017), activities that foster social awareness can positively impact students' executive functions, such as adaptive thinking, planning, self-control, working memory, and organization. For instance, a group project in which students must collaboratively solve a community-related problem encourages them to practice empathy by considering others' perspectives and needs, while also requiring them to plan, organize tasks, and exercise self-control in listening and responding to peers. These types of activities support the holistic development of students by strengthening both their social awareness and executive functions.

Furthermore, social awareness refers to the ability to understand and empathize with others, recognizing their emotions, perspectives, and social cues. It involves being aware of social norms, understanding the dynamics within a group or community, and appreciating diversity and inclusion. Selman (2011) proposes that social awareness is a crucial component of social-emotional learning (SEL), enabling individuals to navigate social complexities and build meaningful relationships. This understanding of social awareness underscores its significance in

fostering social harmony and cooperation in educational settings. Also, Selman (2011) indicates that social awareness is an evolutionary human capacity to consider the thoughts, feelings and actions of others. Since social awareness is a capacity possessed by individuals, it can be inferred that not everyone has reached the same level of development in this regard. Consequently, variations are observed in how individuals navigate different environments throughout their development. Selman (2011) proposes that one of the main objectives of the school would be to foster this ability in students. According to the author, activities planned by teachers are necessary to include topics such as: problems in the classroom, family conflicts, personal challenges, relationships, among others. With this, the author delegates great responsibility to the schools due to their importance. However, I can add that the work done at school will require family support to reinforce this learning, just as a student learns a subject in the classroom and reinforces it in other contexts.

Moreover, Selman (2011) posits that social awareness develops through stages, from early childhood to adolescence, where individuals progress from egocentric perspectives to more complex, abstract understandings of social relationships. This developmental trajectory highlights the importance of age-appropriate educational interventions that promote empathy, perspective-taking, and social understanding. When incorporating activities that enhance these skills, educators can support students in becoming more socially aware, thereby improving their interactions and reducing conflicts within the classroom.

Durlak *et al.* (2011) expands on this by demonstrating the positive impact of social-emotional learning (SEL) programs on students' social awareness. Their meta-analysis of school-based SEL programs found that these interventions significantly improve students' social-emotional skills, including social awareness, which in turn enhances academic performance,

attitudes, and behaviors. Durlak and colleagues emphasize that effective SEL programs incorporate explicit instruction, active learning, and opportunities for practice, reinforcing the development of social awareness through structured and supportive environments.

Social awareness skills provide a crucial foundation for understanding and navigating diverse communities. Csóti (2001) highlights that these skills enable children to deepen their understanding of human nature, fostering empathy and perspective-taking. Each child develops unique viewpoints shaped by their interactions with others and their environments. Consequently, social awareness empowers children to interpret behaviors and situations they encounter daily, equipping them to respond thoughtfully and ethically in culturally diverse settings. Exposure to other cultures enhances their values, principles, abilities, and knowledge, shaping their ability to act effectively and sensitively in cross-cultural situations.

However, fostering social awareness in a multicultural classroom is not without challenges. Cultural differences can influence how students perceive and engage with social issues, potentially leading to misunderstandings or resistance. For instance, certain topics, such as gender equality or religious diversity, might conflict with students' personal beliefs or familial teachings. Additionally, some students may feel uncomfortable or unprepared to confront issues like systemic inequality or historical injustices. To address these challenges, it is crucial to create a safe and supportive learning environment where students feel respected and heard. Educators must employ culturally responsive teaching strategies, such as scaffolding discussions or incorporating diverse perspectives, to navigate sensitive topics effectively and promote meaningful dialogue. Through this approach, students can develop their social awareness while learning to appreciate and navigate cultural complexities.

That is why the topic of social awareness has been studied for decades: to cultivate skills among people that enable them to function effectively in society and to understand the behaviors of other social actors in diverse environments. That the social factor significantly influences how individuals create knowledge, relying on others to develop their own understanding and thrive within society. In the educational field, international researchers have realized that the development of social awareness among students has not only positively affected them, but has also gone beyond the educational field, reaching homes where families have cooperated for the good of their children and society (Jónsdóttir and Einarsdóttir, 2022; Taylor and Leung, 2020).

These authors agree with Selman (2011) that teachers are the first to be trained in social awareness skills. I fully agree with the above, since the teacher is the facilitator of spaces and environments in which these skills are promoted, while generating activities in which these skills can be practiced. If these educational environments guided by the teacher are allowed, the result can include healthy educational environments where students develop critical thinking, and they build cultural meanings that allow them to make important decisions to face conflicts, or daily situations. As a teacher, in my pedagogical intervention, I aim to create activities that enable students to construct cultural meanings, empowering them as social actors. Simultaneously, these activities support me in my role as a social actor and researcher, reinforcing existing knowledge on social awareness at the local level. This is particularly important given the current scarcity of studies on this topic.

In addition, students, as social actors who continuously construct cultural meanings and seek new knowledge, play a vital role in developing social awareness skills within their environment. Since social actors will always depend on social relationships to learn, students must learn to take responsibility for their behaviors and not rely solely on parents and/or teachers

to be responsible for their behaviors. (Csóti, 2009 and Durlak, 1996). For this reason, nowadays the process to pass from grade to grade includes a holistic student evaluation, taking into account their academic performance as well as their behavioral and attitudinal developments (Durlak *et al.,* 2011).

In conclusion, social awareness among individuals plays a vital role in the construction of cultural meanings, fostering the development of essential skills such as empathy, critical thinking, and problem-solving. These skills not only enhance personal growth but also enrich interpersonal relationships, facilitating mutual understanding and collaboration. In my teaching practice, promoting social awareness among students, colleagues, and parents remains a complex yet critical challenge. Achieving this goal involves empowering students to become active participants in constructing cultural meanings that enable them to navigate their social and cultural contexts effectively.

At the national level, studies like those conducted by Perez (2013) highlight the potential of fostering social awareness through the resolution of conflicts both within and beyond the classroom. These interventions encourage reflexivity and critical thinking in students, particularly when confronting controversial or complex issues. This process equips them with the skills to respond constructively and thoughtfully to challenges they may encounter in the future. As such, prioritizing social awareness within educational settings not only contributes to individual growth but also promotes more inclusive and socially responsible communities.

Research design

In the previous chapter, I developed the critical perspective and showed how the constructs emerge directly from the social context. These concepts include culture, social justice, social awareness, and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2010), which is the strategy I used in my class to address social issues and promote awareness of social problems. This pedagogical model seeks to generate social awareness in students through the prior knowledge they possess and the construction of new knowledge they make in the context in which they find themselves as social and cultural actors. (This will be explained in more detail in the Pedagogical Intervention).

In this chapter, I present the research design I followed in this study. More precisely, I describe the research approach and the type of methodology with its characteristics. Also, the criteria for selecting participants and their profiles are specified. Next, I include an explanation of the instruments used. The ethical concerns and a straightforward description of the context will appear afterward.

The research approach I selected is participatory action research (Fals-Borda, 1991) as it is a collaborative approach to research that involves all stakeholders, particularly those who are traditionally the subjects of the research, as active participants in the research process. This approach aims to democratize the knowledge production process by valuing the experiences and views of community members, who are often considered co-researchers rather than mere subjects. Participatory action research intends to produce knowledge that is directly relevant and beneficial to the community involved, fostering empowerment and social change. Freire (1970)

emphasized the importance of dialogue and reflection in the process of knowledge generation, which can lead to transformative action.

Some aspects of participatory action research include its emphasis on collaboration, empowerment, and action. First, collaboration ensures that the research process is inclusive and that the voices of all participants are heard and respected. Second, empowerment is another characteristic which means giving participants greater control over the research process and the knowledge produced. This empowerment can lead to increased agency and self-efficacy among participants, enabling them to address issues that directly affect their lives. Finally, participatory action research is action-oriented, meaning that it seeks to understand the world and change it. This approach aligns with the principles of action research, as described by Lewin (1946), who highlighted the iterative process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting to achieve meaningful change.

Furthermore, the principles of participatory action research align with the research question as they involve exploring the perspectives and experiences of second grade English language learners, which makes the choice of a participatory approach appropriate. By involving learners as co-researchers, participatory research allows for an in-depth understanding of how they construct cultural meanings and navigate issues of social justice within the classroom context. This collaborative approach confirms that the learners' voices are central to the research, providing authentic insights into their experiences and perceptions. Moreover, the emphasis on empowerment in participatory research (Fals-Borda, 1991) can help learners to critically engage with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2010), fostering a deeper sense of agency and social awareness. As a result, the findings can inform teaching practices that are more attuned to the

needs and realities of English language learners, promoting social justice and cultural understanding in the EFL classroom (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991).

Type of study

This qualitative study is both descriptive and interpretive. I selected a qualitative approach because it accentuates "induction, discovery, exploration, and theory/hypothesis generation" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18), processes essential for examining my students' development of social awareness through their engagement in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2010). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie's (2004) accent on discovery aligns well with my focus on interpreting students' responses in a natural setting rather than relying on predetermined hypotheses. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2017) describe qualitative research as a naturalistic approach that seeks to interpret meanings within real-life contexts, which underscores the value of using my classroom as a natural setting for data collection. This environment, where students naturally interact and respond, provides rich, authentic insights into how they make sense of their social reality, understand cultural issues, and perceive their interactions.

Theories from Gay (2010) on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy also guide my methodology by focusing on how students construct meaning within their cultural contexts. As a teacher-researcher, I focus on students' perspectives, going beyond mere observations and seeking to understand the deeper meanings they assign to interactions and cultural discussions. This interpretive approach not only captures students' responses to classroom events but also allows me to explore the nuanced ways in which they interpret and internalize social awareness.

This research is interested in the construction of meanings related to everyday issues that students live in the context that surrounds them. Therefore, this study has the characteristics of

descriptive and interpretive type. The purpose of the descriptive design is to find a detailed explanation and description of the object of research in a systematic way (Creswell, 2012). In this research, students play a vital role in not only describing their experiences but also in interpreting those artifacts together with me, as co-researchers. Then, the analysis of the data revealed outcomes that helped me to answer the research question qualitatively and with an interpretive plus descriptive tone.

Playing a pivotal role in this descriptive and interpretive study, students had the opportunity to make connections between prior knowledge and new knowledge about social issues through pedagogical activities in the classroom. In this engagement, they produced some artifacts. As a researcher, I described these artifacts initially and then I invited the authors of the artifacts to interpret the same artifacts with me. Therefore, my role as a teacher was to construct educational environments where activities planned in the pedagogical intervention gave rise to interactions between students. This permitted me to know the prior knowledge that students possessed, and the creation of new knowledge related to social issues. Through the artifacts created by the students, short interviews related to the interpretation of the artifacts were conducted and descriptions made by me of the students' interactions. As the researcher, my role was to describe those activities in which students participated and expressed their views, new knowledge, and gained social awareness related to social issues.

Participants

My participants were 17 second grade students from a private institution. Their ages range between 7 and 8 years old. Most of them live in the district of the institution or in close neighborhoods. Moreover, the students belong to socioeconomic level 2, according to Colombia's socioeconomic classification system, which typically includes families with limited

economic resources and access to fewer services. They come from diverse family structures, including both nuclear and single-parent households. In Colombia, socioeconomic levels range from 1 to 6, with 1 being the lowest income bracket. Level 2 generally encompasses working-class families who may experience financial constraints and limited access to certain services and opportunities, which can influence students' educational experiences and support systems. Most of them have studied since kindergarten at the school. In the institution, the subjects included in the students' schedule are mathematics, Spanish, science, social studies, English, democracy, geometry, computer science, dance, music, physical education, projects, among others. The students take their classes in a single day. One of the cultural characteristics of the students is their native language, which is Spanish.

Another sociocultural characteristic is related to ethnicity; the vast majority of the students were born in Bogotá and have remained in the city. Particularly, the participants were selected using the purposeful sampling technique, which requires "to select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (Patton, 1990, p.1). Accordingly, this technique allowed me to group diverse students whose characteristics were relevant for this study. They provided useful information for approaching the research question in this study.

To clarify the process of participant selection, it is important to detail the purposeful sampling approach employed to identify information-rich cases. As a teacher-researcher, I began by meeting with the school directors to present the research objectives, the pedagogical intervention planned, and the potential benefits for students' academic and social development. Approval for the study was granted in 2023, which enabled me to proceed with selecting participants intentionally rather than randomly.

The selection criteria focused on engaging second-grade students due to their developmental stage and the potential for impactful outcomes in their social and cultural awareness. To ensure parental involvement and understanding, I organized an informative meeting where parents were provided with a detailed explanation of the study's purpose, ethical considerations, and expected outcomes. Their consent was obtained after they demonstrated a clear understanding of the research process.

Subsequently, a group meeting with students was conducted to explain the study's objectives in age-appropriate terms. I informed students about their right to voluntary participation and the ability to withdraw at any time without any repercussions. This transparent approach fostered trust and collaboration, ensuring the participants were genuinely engaged and invested in the study. Upon giving their consent, the students transitioned from being prospective participants to active contributors, who would provide valuable insights into the research.

This purposeful sampling method ensured that participants were not only representative of the study's focus but also capable of enriching the research with their perspectives and experiences, fulfilling the criteria for information-rich cases.

Context

The context in which this research was developed was the private school 'Liceo Infantil Le Fountain', which is located in Rafael Uribe Uribe district. The school provides educational services to preschool and elementary school grades. The mission and vision of the institution are based on a humanistic pedagogy, which provides a comprehensive education based on principles and values seeking to improve the educational quality of the sector by strengthening its ethical and moral aspect. One of its objectives is to promote the comprehensive education of people with

a life project that impacts their social reality through the curriculum, principles, institutional values and spaces in which they can express themselves.

The curriculum for English classes is co-constructed by teachers, using the coursebook *Let's Go B* as a foundation while adapting content to reflect students' social realities and encourage critical thinking. Students have three hours of English per week, and the teacher exercises autonomy in planning and developing lessons that go beyond rote learning. Guided by Freirean principles and the institution's guidelines, classes are designed to be interactive and engaging, fostering a playful environment where students actively participate, question, and engage in dialogue. This approach transforms the classroom into a space for collaborative learning, where students connect language acquisition with meaningful discussions about their own lives and communities. However, the school environment of students in the classroom has been affected by the behavior of some classmates, being aggressive, disrespectful to teachers and students. The school has provided psychological support for those students who have demonstrated aggressive behavior both physically and verbally. These behaviors have shown a decline in interpersonal relationships among classmates making their coexistence more difficult to cope with. When knowing more about the family context of the students, the economic factor has had a great influence on the fulfillment of the necessary materials for the classes. Other students are absent from class, which makes the learning process more difficult for them and they have low academic and social performance.

Ethical issues

In conducting this research, I adhered strictly to Social Sciences research regulations, ensuring the protection of participants' rights, including confidentiality, dignity, integrity, beneficence, honesty, and transparency. Every effort was made to protect their identities, and no

harm was done, as participants were not subjected to any experimental procedures. I obtained informed consent through a detailed consent form, securing permission and support from the school's directors, parents, and students. They were thoroughly informed of the study's objectives and the tools used.

Throughout the research process, I held regular meetings with parents, students, and teachers to update them on progress, receive feedback, and create an ongoing dialogue about the study's development. This approach kept the process dialogical and participatory, fostering a collaborative environment in which stakeholders could engage with and contribute to the research. I prioritized transparency and reliability by sharing updates with the entire community, reinforcing accountability and ensuring that everyone involved was aware of the study's progress. Finally, I shared the conclusions and findings with participants and the broader community to openly communicate the results and contributions of this work, underscoring its value and relevance to those directly involved.

Data collection instruments

This research utilized a variety of data collection instruments, all integrated into the planning activities of the pedagogical intervention. The primary data sources were the participants, who in this case were my students. Through various activities, the students independently created artifacts, which serve as tangible evidence of their learning processes and outcomes. As a teacher-researcher I conducted systematic classroom observations to capture the dynamics and interactions within the learning environment. Additionally, I organized short interviews with the students to gain insights into their personal interpretations of the artifacts they presented. These interviews provided a deeper understanding of the students' perspectives and enriched the overall data set.

Students' artifacts

In this study, artifacts served as key products and processes through which students could express their ideas, perspectives, and both prior and newly acquired knowledge. These artifacts emerged from a carefully designed pedagogical intervention that presented students with various opportunities to interact, engage, and reflect on social issues. According to Czerwinski (2018), artifacts are invaluable in qualitative research as they include participant-created items like cultural texts, media texts, symbolic discourses, events, and personal experiences. These elements provided a rich foundation to explore how students, as English language learners, interpreted and expressed their understandings of social justice and cultural awareness.

Examples of artifacts created by students included cartoons, posters, mind maps, and post-it notes, as well as group discussions and exhibitions. Each type of artifact offered students a unique platform to voice their positions and perspectives on social inequalities they observed in society. For instance, posters and mind maps visually represented students' awareness of social issues, with many highlighting themes such as racism, discrimination, and cultural diversity. Through these creative forms, students could organize and communicate complex thoughts visually, enabling them to both process and share their ideas with their peers. Cartoons were another engaging medium, allowing students to illustrate their reflections humorously or critically, which further demonstrated their comprehension of cultural issues and social dynamics.

To complement these artifacts, I conducted semi-structured interviews, which provided additional layers of insight into the meanings, thoughts, and knowledge students embedded in their work. While the artifacts offered initial glimpses into students' views, the interviews allowed me to delve deeper into the nuances of their perspectives. These conversations enabled

students to explain their creative choices, discuss the social issues they explored, and reflect on how the learning experience impacted their understanding of social justice. Together, the artifacts and interviews created a comprehensive dataset that illustrated students' evolving social awareness and understanding of cultural issues, as well as the significance they attached to advocating for social change.

Semi-structured interviews

The purpose of the semi-structured interviews in my research was to examine in depth what English language learners understood or co-constructed about the topics proposed in the different activities from their social awareness. Knox and Burkard (2014) stated that semi-structured interviews are a blend of structured and unstructured types of interviews, being open-ended and allowing the researcher flexibility to ask follow-up questions. As a teacher-researcher, I used semi-structured interviews specifically designed to capture in-depth insights from second-grade students in a way that was both flexible and age-appropriate. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews was crucial, as it allowed me to adapt the conversation to each student's level of understanding while still maintaining a structured approach. To engage students and encourage thoughtful responses, I formulated open-ended questions that were clear and accessible for young learners. For example, instead of asking directly about complex concepts like "social justice," I asked questions such as, "Can you tell me about a time when you thought something was unfair?" and "What would you do if you saw someone being treated unfairly?" These questions were intended to elicit responses that revealed students' personal experiences and reflections on fairness, empathy, and justice, in a way that aligned with their developmental stage.

Furthermore, I designed questions that allowed for comparisons across responses, which helped me identify common themes in students' understanding of social issues. By maintaining a core set of questions such as "How do you feel when you see or hear about people who are different from you?" I could draw parallels and contrasts in how each student interpreted cultural diversity and inclusivity. This comparative aspect added depth to the analysis, as it highlighted both individual and shared perspectives among the students, revealing patterns that contributed to a broader understanding of their social awareness.

Finally, the semi-structured format enabled me to probe further based on each student's unique responses, creating a supportive space where students could elaborate on their thoughts and feelings. For instance, if a student mentioned a specific example of unfairness, I could follow up with questions like, "What do you think could change to make it fair?" or "How would you feel if that happened to you or a friend?" This approach allowed the students to explore and articulate their understanding of social justice issues more deeply, making the semi- structured interviews a rich source of data that complemented their artifacts and brought additional context to their perspectives on social and cultural issues.

Classroom observations

Observation was a useful method in my research, as it allowed me to closely examine specific behaviors and interactions that revealed how students constructed social meanings based on their developing social awareness. Throughout the study, I focused on how students responded to different activities, engaged in discussions, and reacted to the activities of the pedagogical intervention. For example, during group dialogues and collaborative tasks, I observed how students shared ideas, negotiated differing viewpoints, and demonstrated empathy or curiosity toward peers' perspectives. These observations provided insights into their social

skills and willingness to engage with complex issues, which were key to understanding their evolving awareness of social and cultural topics.

I also paid particular attention to how students interacted during specific activities aimed at raising social awareness, such as creating posters or participating in role playing exercises. Observing their reactions, whether excitement, hesitation, or engagement. Gave me valuable data on how they interpreted and emotionally connected with the topics presented. For instance, when discussing issues of discrimination or indigenous culture, I noted how students expressed agreement, questioned norms, or related topics to their own experiences. These observations allowed me to see not only what they understood but how they internalized and personalized social concepts, adding depth to the data collected from their artifacts and semi-structured interviews.

This observational approach, as Patton (2002) suggests, enabled me to view student behavior through new lenses, uncovering aspects that might not have emerged solely from interviews or artifacts. By combining observation with semi-structured interviews, I could contextualize students' verbal responses with their real-time interactions and behaviors, enriching the analysis and allowing for a more nuanced discussion of how English language learners in the classroom construct social meanings and awareness.

To conclude, this qualitative, interpretive, and descriptive study employed a combination of artifacts, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon: the construction of cultural meanings and the development of social awareness among students as social actors in their environment. These

methods collectively provided a multidimensional perspective, enabling the study to uncover students' cultural interpretations and their evolving awareness of social issues.

The use of artifacts allowed for a tangible representation of students' perspectives, revealing their cultural interpretations through creative outputs. Semi-structured interviews offered a deeper understanding of their thoughts and experiences, while classroom observations captured their behaviors, interactions, and engagement in real-time. Together, these methods ensured a holistic approach to data collection, capturing the nuances of students' learning experiences and the dynamics of the classroom environment.

In the following chapter, the insights gained from these methods will be applied to explain the pedagogical intervention, which positioned the language class as a space for fostering cultural understanding and social awareness. This intervention was designed to align with the study's objectives and to empower students to become critical thinkers and active contributors to their communities.

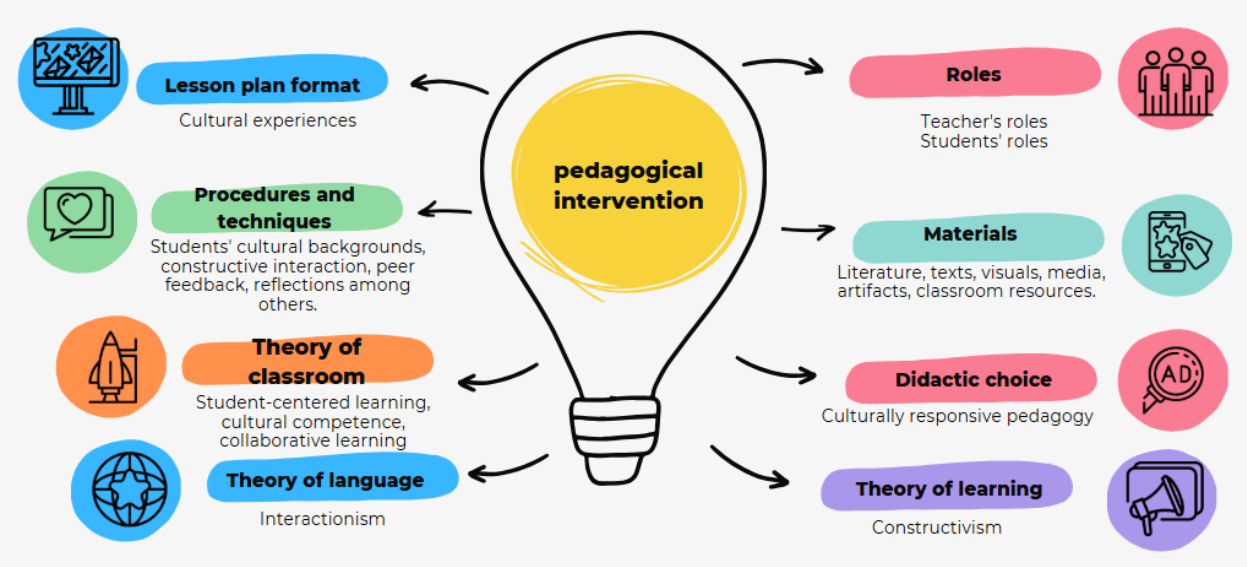
While conducting this research, potential biases in observations were acknowledged. As both teacher and researcher, my interpretations were inevitably influenced by my dual roles. To mitigate these biases, I involved students in reflecting on their own work and encouraged open discussions about their perspectives. This collaborative approach helped validate the findings and provided a more balanced analysis of the data. Additionally, maintaining reflexivity throughout the process allowed me to critically examine how my positionality shaped the research, ensuring greater objectivity and transparency in interpreting the data.

Pedagogical intervention

This chapter presents the pedagogical framework of the intervention designed to address the core research objectives: exploring how English language learners construct cultural meanings through social awareness, and describing how their social awareness develops through engagement with Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). The intervention was purposefully structured to help students connect their learning with diverse cultural contexts, fostering both self-reflection and an appreciation of social justice issues (figure 2). By integrating CRP principles, the intervention aimed to create a learning environment where students could explore cultural diversity and social equity, ultimately encouraging them to form meaningful connections between language learning and social understanding.

In alignment with these objectives, the pedagogical intervention was built around activities that encouraged students to engage actively and critically with cultural and social issues. The CRP approach provided a foundation to value students' backgrounds and experiences, allowing them to bring their own perspectives into the classroom dialogue. Through discussions, collaborative projects, and reflective exercises, I sought to guide students toward constructing cultural meanings rooted in their understanding of identity, inclusion, and empathy. This approach was not only about learning English but also about using language as a tool for exploring social topics, which is fundamental to building social awareness among young learners.

Figure 2



This chapter elaborates on the specific activities and class structures implemented during the second semester of 2023. I provide a detailed description of each session, highlighting how these lessons encouraged students to express, question, and refine their views on social and cultural issues. By using CRP-informed strategies, each class became a space for students to actively engage with and discuss real world issues, fostering both their language skills and their ability to interpret and construct social meanings. Through this process, I aimed to cultivate an environment that empowered students to articulate their cultural insights and deepen their social awareness as part of their language learning journey.

Pedagogical decisions

Vision of language

In this research, the vision of language is framed within the principles of critical pedagogy and social theory, emphasizing the importance of interaction in the English classroom. From an interactionist perspective, language learning is viewed as a social process where meaning is co-constructed through dialogue and interaction. Tudor (2001) highlights the

necessity of understanding students' needs related to language and identity, advocating pedagogies that engage students in the learning process so deeply that they create their own meanings through interaction with learning activities. This process seems fundamental, as it allows them to share their *funds of knowledge* (Moll, 2005), learn from each other, and build new understandings collaboratively. Hence, this approach aids in language acquisition and supports the development of self-expression and identity.

Moreover, I consider language plays a pivotal role in critical pedagogy, as it is both a medium for communication and a tool for critical thinking and social transformation. In this regard, Freire (2014) posits that language is central to the process of conscientization, through which individuals become aware of social injustices and their own agency to enact change. This means that students should be encouraged to use language not only to express themselves, but also to critically engage with societal issues in the context of their English language learning. This fosters a sense of empowerment and social awareness. In this line, my purpose is integrating critical pedagogy into language instruction, so I can configure learning environments in which students actively participate in discussions about culture, identity, and social justice, thereby constructing deeper cultural meanings and understanding their roles within a broader societal context.

Vygotsky (1978) discloses social interaction in learning processes, arguing that they occur through social interactions and the internalization of culturally mediated tools. For 2nd graders at this school, this implies that students learn best when they engage in meaningful interactions with peers and teachers. These interactions provide opportunities for scaffolding where more knowledgeable individuals support learners in achieving higher levels of understanding and skill. This aligns with Tudor's (2001) view that interaction is essential for

language learning and development. Therefore, utilizing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, I managed to design classroom activities that promoted students dialogue, collaboration, and critical thinking, creating a dynamic learning environment where 2nd language English learners constructed knowledge together, enhancing both their linguistic abilities and their understanding of cultural and social contexts. To collectively support language learning and development, it was essential to create classroom activities and relationships that allowed students to strengthen self-expression. This involved providing opportunities for English language learners to engage in authentic communication, share their personal experiences, and connect their learning to their own lives and identities.

What I explained above is connected to the role of language as a tool for empowerment and social change, the importance of social interactions in learning, and the need for pedagogies that are responsive to students' cultural and linguistic identities. This can create learning environments that values dialogue, collaboration, and critical thinking. With this in mind, I developed learners' cultural awareness and language skills necessary to engage with and transform their communities.

Vision of learning

In this research, I approach learning as a collaborative and socially mediated process in which knowledge emerges through active interaction and negotiation among students, their peers, and the surrounding environment. Guided by constructivist theory, I designed activities that allowed students to build understanding collectively, showing up that learning is not an isolated process but one enriched by social engagement. Vygotsky's (1978) concept of socially mediated language learning highlights how language acts as a tool for both psychological and social development, a view echoed by Mitchell and Myles (2004), who accentuate that children's

early language acquisition is rooted in collaborative, meaning-making processes within their cultural communities. This theoretical foundation shaped my approach to language instruction, making it both interactive and contextually relevant.

In practice, I created specific pedagogical activities that encouraged students to collaborate, negotiate, and refine their ideas as they engaged with one another. For instance, I implemented group projects where students worked together to discuss and create posters on social justice topics, such as cultural diversity or racism. During these activities, students were encouraged to exchange perspectives, challenge each other's ideas, and co-construct meanings, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for their learning outcomes. This collaborative framework not only allowed students to practice language skills in a supportive environment but also facilitated the development of empathy and respect for diverse viewpoints.

Through this approach, I observed how students engaged in dialogue that promoted critical thinking and strengthened their understanding of cultural issues. For example, when working in pairs or small groups on parallels exercises, students had to negotiate how to represent complex ideas visually, which required listening, interpreting, and synthesizing their peers' contributions. These interactions transformed the classroom into a socially dynamic space where students actively constructed and reconstructed their understanding, making learning deeply connected to their social context. Moreover, designing activities that foregrounded collaboration and interaction, I aimed to create a learning environment that reflected my vision of knowledge as a co-constructed, socially mediated process.

I integrate Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory to create a comprehensive approach to learning that values both social interaction and cultural

relevance. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, introduced by Ladson-Billings (1995), stresses the inclusion of students' diverse cultural backgrounds in the learning process, which increases engagement and makes learning more meaningful. Within the English language classroom, CRP is implemented through curriculum design and teaching strategies that reflect students' identities, fostering an inclusive environment where students feel respected and empowered. Combining this with Vygotsky's theory, which highlights the role of social interactions and cultural tools in constructing knowledge, I designed a learning environment that supports English language learners in co-constructing understanding collaboratively. This dual approach ensures that learning is both socially mediated and culturally relevant, leading to more inclusive and effective educational practices.

Vision of curriculum

I view the ELT curriculum as a dynamic framework that not only guides my pedagogical intervention but also creates an interactive space where the voices of teachers (Aldana, 2022, 2024), students, and the community come together to shape learning. Rather than a static set of instructions, the curriculum becomes a collaborative creation, as Doyle (1995) suggests, produced locally by those who participate in the learning process. In this approach, curriculum development requires an engaging and supportive environment, one that fosters active student participation and facilitates meaningful connections among all stakeholders.

To achieve this, I applied principles from Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), which reframes the classroom as a space that reflects the diverse lived experiences of the students. Through CRP, the classroom is transformed into an inclusive setting where student recognition, community building, and encouragement are prioritized (Gay, 2010). This curriculum framework goes beyond academic goals, striving to nurture a respectful and interconnected community

where students' cultural backgrounds and identities are recognized as essential elements of the learning process. By centering the curriculum around these values, I aim to create a classroom environment that not only supports language acquisition but also fosters a deep sense of belonging and mutual respect among students.

Teaching Methodology

The following pedagogical proposal builds upon the principles of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) as outlined by Gay (2010), with the goal of creating a culturally inclusive environment that promotes authentic student interaction and active participation. By incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into all aspects of learning, CRP ensures that education is both meaningful and relevant to students' lived experiences. This approach involves teachers in understanding and integrating students' cultural references into their pedagogical practices, cultivating a space where students feel seen and valued.

Grounded in the work of Ladson-Billings (1995) and Howards (2003), who advocate for teaching methods that respect and reflect students' identities, CRP directly aligns with my research objectives. Specifically, it supports my goal of exploring how English language learners construct cultural meanings and develop social awareness. By bridging theory and practice, this proposal addresses student needs in a way that fosters engagement, personal growth, and a deeper connection to social and cultural learning in the classroom

For this proposal, ten sessions took place, and they are outlined (see Appendix A) here. Each contains objectives and lessons to be developed during the estimated time. The objectives for this pedagogical proposal were:

- To create classroom environments that allow for the active participation of students.

- To promote social awareness in students through planned activities.
- To generate reflective spaces, in which students enhance their voice.
- To construct and re-construct knowledge related to the topics proposed in the lessons.

The first objective centered on establishing an inclusive classroom environment that fosters active participation among English language learners. To achieve this, I designed culturally relevant and engaging activities that made each student feel valued and respected. According to Gay (2010), creating a classroom community that acknowledges students' cultural identities is essential to building a supportive learning environment. In practice, I incorporated diverse materials and resources that reflected various cultural backgrounds, and I encouraged open communication to establish mutual respect.

One particularly effective activity was a "Cultural Sharing Session," where students presented aspects of their own cultures, such as family traditions, favorite foods, or traditional clothing. This activity not only encouraged students to share their backgrounds but also invited them to listen and learn from one another, fostering a sense of belonging and curiosity. As students shared and discussed these cultural elements, they became more engaged, taking pride in their heritage and gaining appreciation for their classmates' experiences. This activity contributed significantly to creating an inclusive environment, as it deepened students' understanding of cultural diversity and promoted active, respectful participation.

The second objective targeted the promotion of social awareness among English language learners through planned activities that addressed social justice issues and cultural diversity. According to Ladson-Billings (1995), culturally responsive teaching concerns helping students understand and critique the social inequalities that exist in society. Through varied lessons, my

purpose was to explore topics such as racism, discrimination, bullying, and indigenous culture, encouraging students to think critically about these issues. Mainly, students engaged in discussions, debates, and projects that required them to research topics on social justice that could help to raise their awareness and foster a sense of social responsibility.

In the third objective, the focus shifted to generating reflective spaces where students could enhance their voices and engage in critical self-reflection. Howards (2003) highlights the importance of providing students with opportunities to reflect on their learning experiences and their own cultural identities. Conducting the sessions, 2nd grade English language learners were encouraged to reflect and express their thoughts and feelings about the topics covered.

These activities helped students develop a deeper understanding of themselves and their peers, allowing them to express their perspectives on cultural and social issues in meaningful ways. For instance, during an activity focused on family and identity, students began to wonder about the differences in skin tones within their own families. Through guided discussion and reflection, they explored how family members can have a range of skin tones, which led to the realization that identity is not defined by appearance alone but includes other personal and cultural dimensions. Evidence of this learning emerged in their reflective comments and discussions, where students shared insights about identity as a complex blend of heritage, personal traits, and values, demonstrating an evolving awareness of social and cultural diversity.

The final objective involved constructing and re-constructing knowledge related to the topics proposed in the lessons. This process was dynamic and ongoing, as students engaged with new information and perspectives. Gay (2010) states that Culturally Responsive Pedagogy requires teachers to facilitate learning experiences that are relevant to students' lives and that

challenge them to think critically. In this pedagogical proposal, the lessons integrated activities in which students' cultural backgrounds and experiences were necessary, encouraging them to draw connections between their own lives and the subject matter. Collaborative projects, group work, and interactive activities helped students to construct and re-construct knowledge in a meaningful way.

My understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) and cultural competence has grown through a range of workshops, readings, and professional networks, each contributing vital insights and tools for implementing CRP in my classroom. Workshops like the Culturally Responsive Teaching Institute and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Training have offered practical strategies, while foundational texts including Gay's *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (2010), González, Moll, and Amanti's *Funds of Knowledge* (2005), and Ladson-Billings' *The Dreamkeepers* (1995) provided both theoretical and practical perspectives on integrating students' cultural backgrounds into teaching. Professional networks, such as the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) and Teaching Tolerance, have connected me with a community of educators dedicated to fostering equity and multicultural education, reinforcing my commitment to inclusive practices.

These resources have significantly shaped my teaching approach, encouraging continual self-reflection and adaptation to better understand and integrate my students' cultural contexts. I incorporated these CRP principles into my lesson plans by selecting culturally diverse texts and designing activities that honor students' backgrounds and encourage them to express their perspectives openly. This professional growth journey has allowed me to create a classroom environment that values all students and fosters respectful, meaningful engagement. By applying

CRP principles daily, I aim to promote equity, inclusion, and a deeper understanding among students, ensuring that their identities are respected and central to their learning experience.

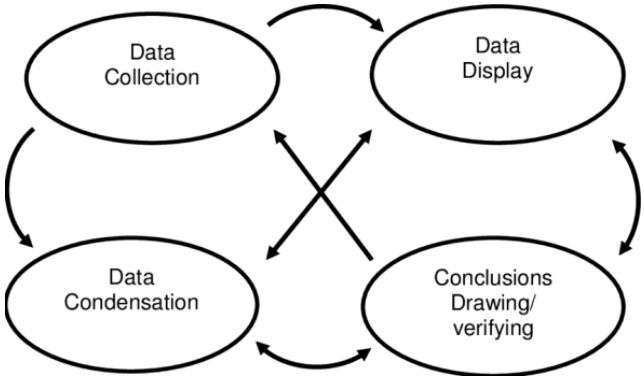
Data analysis

This chapter outlines the methods and processes used to organize and analyze data collected from a pedagogical implementation, grounded in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) within an EFL classroom. The intervention was conducted with second graders during the second semester of 2023. As I explained before, the implementation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2010) focused on 10 sessions involving activities in which students explore their constructions of cultural meanings in connection with their social awareness. Through this intervention, students constructed and co-constructed positions about cultural and social issues in society. For data organization and analysis, I utilized Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model, which has four components that interact with each other, being a flexible clear model that seeks to support data analysis simultaneously.

I selected this model, because it underscores the importance of iteration, meaning that the process is not always linear. As a researcher, I revisited earlier stages as I analyzed the data further. The data analysis was then interactive, and it involved constant movement between the stages to refine and validate findings. This model favored this study, as it is an iterative process that I could use with the different data I collected. It is also flexible and consistent to the dynamic instruments I chose for data collection. Figure 2 summarizes the stages proposed in the model as follows.

Figure 2

Components of Interactive Model (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.12)



As displayed in Figure 2, the four phases of the interactive model are: *data collection, data display, data condensation and conclusions: drawing and verifying* (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the following sub-section, I will explain each phase with examples from the research I conducted.

Data collection

In this first stage, I collected data from everyday classroom interactions using a variety of methods, including observations, semi-structured interviews, and student-created artifacts (Miles et al., 2018). Observations provided insights into students' behaviors, interactions, and responses during classroom activities, allowing me to examine how they engaged with the themes presented. To gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives, I conducted semi-structured interviews based on the artifacts students produced, which included posters, writings, cartoons, and research exhibitions related to social issues. These artifacts offered tangible evidence of students' engagement with the topics and served as focal points in our discussions, where students and I co-interpreted their meanings, exploring the cultural and social awareness they

expressed through their work. Each method contributed to a comprehensive understanding of students' learning processes and the ways they connected with the material on a personal level.

The activities were designed to identify the students' prior knowledge related to the proposed topics. Subsequently, the activities fostered spaces in which students constructed and co-constructed their positions on social issues. Observations were based on interactions between students, as well as interactions students had with the videos, posters, and other materials. Their teamwork allowed me to observe behaviors, attitudes and words used by them in the development of the activities. The first step in the introduction of a new topic was to know the position and previous knowledge of the students regarding social issues. In the development of the sessions, the students became aware of their positions and of social interactions with others. Then, the next step was focused on the construction and co-construction of their cultural meanings.

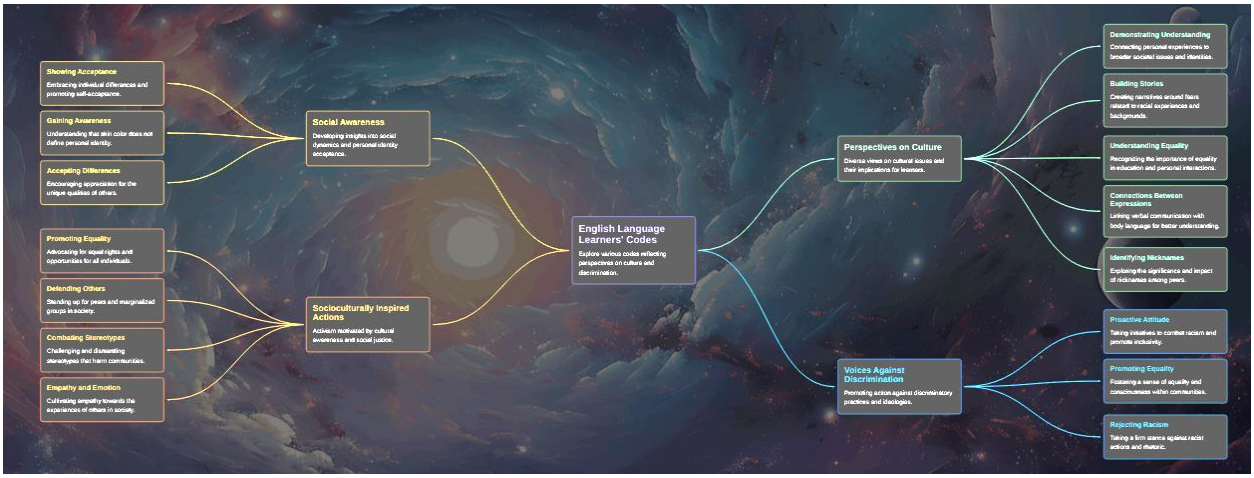
Data condensation

The purpose of this stage was to reduce and organize data by coding, drafting memos, and generating categories. Coding involved labeling segments of data by reading through it carefully and assigning names to themes based on my interpretations. For instance, one of the codes, *Exemplifying and connecting the story to their own relationships with peers*, emerged from students' reflections on an activity addressing the social issue of racism. I named this code by interpreting students' responses and, in some cases, co-interpreting it with them to gain further clarity and ensure that the codes accurately captured their perspectives. This collaborative process strengthened the reliability and validity of the codes, as involving students in interpreting their own words and experiences added depth and credibility to the analysis. This co-

interpretation allowed for a more nuanced and authentic representation of students' views, enhancing the trustworthiness of the coded data.

As I kept on identifying themes, I wrote summaries of my reflections on what called my attention, and I gathered those reflections in memos. Writing memos is a pivotal stage in the data analysis process because it triggers ideas on the codes and their significance from an early stage in the process (Charmaz, 2006). After reading and re-reading the data, I proceeded to assemble the codes to form groups. The objective was to condense the codes into a larger group according to similarities or recurrent themes. Once the groups were formed, I organized them in a visual display.

Data display



The objective of this stage in this study was to gather the coded data to obtain analytical actions and reflections that can be represented by networks and graphs, among others. To organize and interpret the coded data effectively, I used visual displays, such as matrices and tables, to illustrate the relationships between codes and to develop broader categories. These displays facilitated my analysis by grouping related themes, helping me to identify patterns and commonalities in students' responses. For example, as shown in the table above, I organized codes into categories such as *English language learners' co-construction of perspectives on*

culture and discrimination and sub-categories *English language learners' social awareness and self- acceptance*. This process allowed me to trace how students expressed understanding, empathy, and proactive attitudes toward issues like racism and equality.

Using matrices like this helped to clarify the connections between codes, showing how individual actions or reflections contributed to students' overall social and cultural awareness. Codes such as *demonstrating understanding, accepting differences,* and *promoting equality"* reflected students' growth in social consciousness. Additionally, the visual layout provided a structured way to examine how students connected classroom discussions to their own relationships and experiences, thereby developing their own perspectives on social justice topics. These matrices, by visually representing data relationships, reinforced the validity of my interpretations and helped to convey the depth and complexity of students' learning processes in a clear, systematic manner.

As a result, the categories emerged as well as the sub-categories that constitute' each category. Part of the analysis consists of creating and using displays; deciding the organization of the qualitative data in a matrix and their position; and choosing which data makes up a category. These are analytical activities that gave me a broader view of data in this study, and they help the readers understand the processes and relationships performed (Miles *et al.*, 2018).

Drawing and verifying conclusions

In this final stage, I sketched preliminary conclusions during data collection and simultaneously engaged in an ongoing analysis of the data. This iterative process allowed me to make informed decisions throughout the research. As a teacher-researcher, I began to identify emerging insights, such as *Children express awareness of skin perceptions and the influence of these perceptions on one's self-esteem*. Observations like this reinforced the alignment between

the research question, objectives, and the evolving interpretation of data. Through this process, relationships between codes gained significance, enabling the formation of meaningful categories that reflected students' developing social awareness and cultural understanding.

Once the data collection process was finished, I carried out the triangulation of the data, using the different sources of research data to develop a better understanding of the phenomenon (Patton, 1999). The process of this stage can be observed in two moments, explained as follows. As a teacher-researcher, I can divide this stage into two parts. The first one is related to the half of an image that leaves what is missing, what could be added or what does not fit. The second part includes a complete picture of the study, from which clear conclusions can be made.

Through the data analysis with the interactive model by Miles and Huberman (1994), some principles of grounded theory were also articulated in this process. Although my aim was not the generation of theory, data analyzed yielded findings that contributed to the understanding of a particular social phenomenon in relation to its theoretical background. More precisely, grounded theory supported the interactive model, given that its inductive process permitted a bottom-up construction of the emergent open category (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Moreover, another principle consisted of the constant analytical process and comparison between data (Creswell & Poth, 2016), which led to the emergence of the category: *English language learners' co-construction of perspectives on culture and discrimination.* Its sub-categories were three and constituted this open category.

Even when grounded theory and the interactive model are different, they are consistent data analysis approaches in this inquiry. For instance, both implied procedures are carried out simultaneously and iteratively to build up dynamically the category and sub- categories. With this, I could explore and illustrate the category and sub-categories. Moving in sequence, these

two models are exploratory in nature and recursive in process, sharing simultaneous consideration of instances and general patterns that make its combination a consistent decision.

Triangulation

To enhance the robustness of these research findings, triangulation was employed, addressing the conditions of validity and reliability (Cohen *et al.*, 2017). I implemented methodological triangulation (Patton, 2014) by using three different data collection methods: observations, semi-structured interviews, and student-created artifacts. Triangulating these sources allowed me to cross-verify findings and gain a deeper understanding of students' perspectives. For example, during an activity on social identity, students created posters expressing their thoughts on diversity. Observations of their collaborative discussions revealed how they negotiated meanings related to identity and discrimination. Also, this was further corroborated through interviews, where students articulated their reflections on skin color and self-esteem, providing additional layers of insight that reinforced the themes identified in their artifacts.

By comparing information across these sources, I could identify consistent patterns, such as students' growing awareness of cultural issues and their development of empathy. At times, the methods revealed contrasting perspectives as well; for instance, while some students openly discussed the importance of respecting differences during interviews, others expressed hesitations in their written work. This triangulated approach enriched the interpretation by presenting a more nuanced view of student learning and engagement, thereby enhancing the study's credibility (Cohen *et al.*, 2017) and providing a robust foundation for the conclusions drawn.

Findings

In this section, I present the final categorization developed through this study, which led to the emergence of a substantive theory encapsulated in one primary category supported by three sub-categories. This structure reflects my interpretation of data gathered within a specific, local pedagogical context (Hernández et al., 2014), lending authenticity to the data collection and analysis process. The main category arose from the connections established across data sources, with each sub-category capturing a distinct phase or aspect of the students' learning journey. Although each sub-category could stand as an independent category, together they represent a progressive timeline that contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the main category's formation (Strauss & Corbin, 2002).

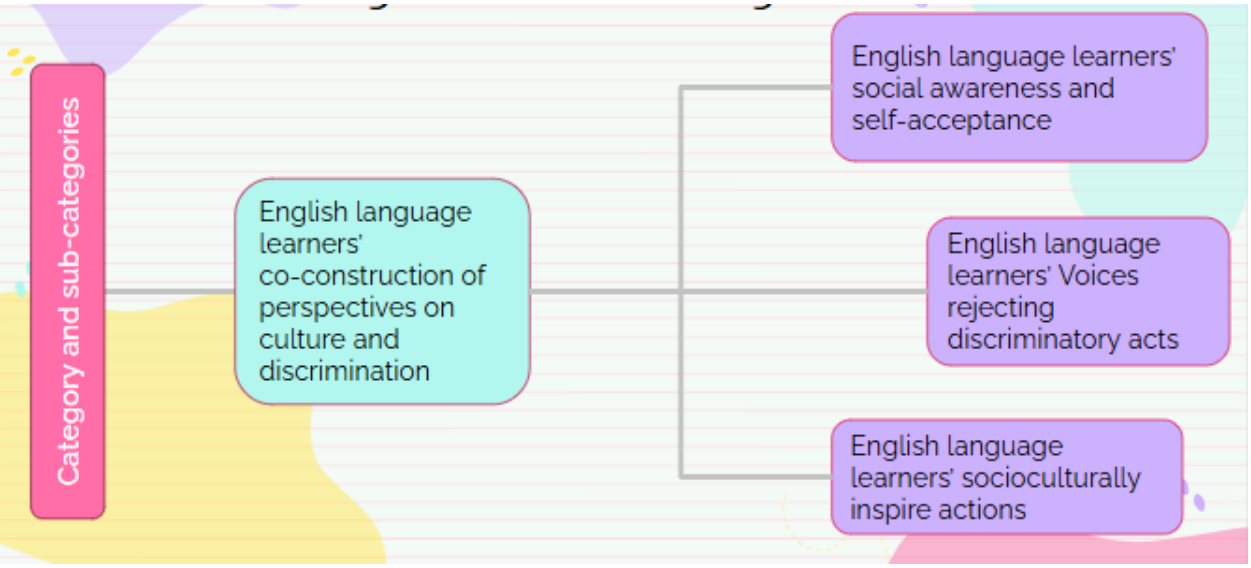
It is important to clarify that the main category directly addresses the research question, while the sub-categories align closely with the study's objectives, offering a detailed view of students' growth and understanding within this pedagogical environment. This layered approach highlights the alignment between the emergent categories and the study's aims, allowing for a coherent representation of findings. The following table summarizes these relationships, illustrating the progression from sub-categories to the overarching category that captures the essence of the research.

Table 1.

Research Question, Objectives, Category and Sub-categories

Research question	Research objectives	Category and sub- categories

How do English language learners construct cultural meanings through the lens of social awareness when engaging in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the EFL classroom?	To explore English language learners' construction of cultural meanings through their social awareness To describe the ways through which English language learners develop their social awareness	English language learners' co-construction of perspectives on culture and discrimination **Sub-categories** English language learners' social awareness and self-acceptance Sub- categories English language learners' voices rejecting discriminatory acts. English language learners' socioculturally inspired actions



At this point, recalling my epistemological positioning is relevant. I place myself within a critical perspective aligned with Freire's (2014) principles of critical pedagogy. He proposes that critical pedagogy aims to address social inequalities, oppression, and marginalization. It challenges dominant power structures and encourages learners to critically analyze their own

experiences. Through my research, one of my goals was to raise awareness of social injustices, through dialogue and praxis English language learners can apply to their knowledge and perceptions positively for change in their communities. As a teacher-researcher, I explored, interpreted and co-interpreted English language students' learning process considering their ways to frame social issues where power use and abuse seemed central. In the following section, I account for the main category and its sub-categories grounded in this epistemological positioning.

English language learners' co-construction of perspectives on culture and discrimination

Co-constructing perspectives in this project entailed exploring English language learners' interpretations of culture, alongside their emotions and attitudes towards cultural issues and discrimination. Each of the lessons implemented is intended to help students to comprehend and react to the social issues that are being experienced today in our society. Hence, this category articulates three sub-categories: one dealing with students' rejection to discriminatory acts; another one concerned with English language learners' self-acceptance and awareness; and the other revolves around the formulation of proactive actions by these students. This category responds to the research question of how English language learners construct cultural meanings through the lens of social awareness when engaging in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the EFL classroom.

Figure 3 below shows features that describe the emerging category in this study. In this vein, students drew on their contextual backgrounds dealing with diversity, racism, discrimination, Indigenous ethnicity, and stereotypes to co-construct their perspectives. These students shared their co-constructed understanding by expressing their ideas through mind maps, reactions to images using post-its, verbal opinions, anecdotes, and posters. This can be noticed in

the figure 4 where a student's artifact shows what she perceived around the word and situation of *racism.*

Figure 3.

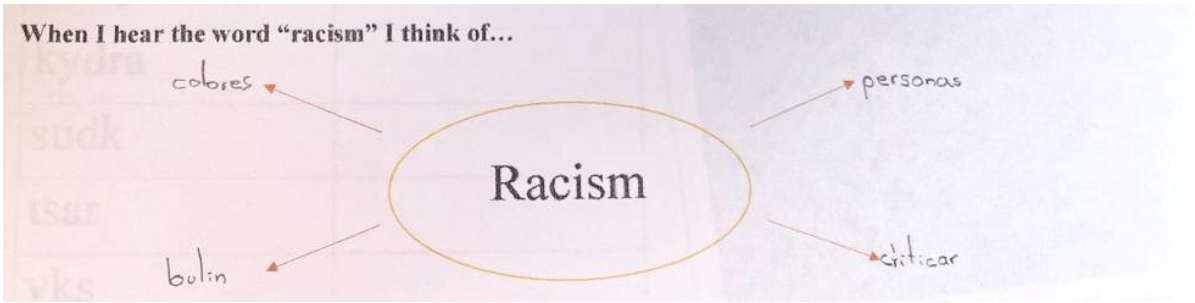
Category



Source: data collected set

Figure 4.

Students' artifact



Source: data collected set September 13th, 2023

The artifact above illustrates a student's perspective on the topic of racism. The underlying activity was designed to probe students' existing knowledge and personal experiences

related to this issue. In this instance, the student chose words like *bullying*, *criticize*, *people*, and *colors* to describe racism, drawing from personal experiences and observations of how others have been affected by discriminatory attitudes. During a semi-structured interview, we co-interpreted the student's descriptions of these terms, as documented in excerpt 1. She shared family anecdotes involving interactions with neighbors, where she witnessed acts of racism expressed through offensive language. Reflecting on these experiences, the student concluded that shifting perspectives requires listening to others and recognizing the principle of equality among all people.

To achieve such equality, Freire (2008) highlights the importance of cultivating core virtues such as love, humility, and tolerance, which are essential in fostering egalitarian relationships. Through this activity, the student not only articulated her understanding of racism but also identified key values necessary for building a more inclusive and respectful community. This reflective process reveals the depth of students' insights when they engage with socially relevant topics in a supportive educational environment.

Excerpt 1

> Ss2: What happened was that my mom told me that when she was little there was a boy who was discriminated against because of his skin color. And once she saw a group of three children who treated him badly, they didn't let him play with him, they silenced him, things like that...but then when the little black boy told them that we were all the same, well then they were thinking and they understood him and in the end he saw that they all became friends.(semi- structured interview, September 21st, 2023. Translated from the original in Spanish)

Therefore, this activity allowed students to interact not only among themselves, but also with their previous knowledge to co-construct their perceptions on the social issues. Indeed, Freire (2005) argues that when interacting with their own culture, students can construct an active and critical position. The English language learner in excerpt 1 also stated her knowledge

with some anecdotes related to the words *bullying*, *criticize*, *people* and *colors,* which are intersected towards the construction of her personal position (González, 2010). In the following sessions, these English language learners problematized how racism affected people, their emotions, as well as how the processes of interaction and learning work (Goleman, 2010). They used their stories to do it. Another example that shows how students construct cultural meanings about racism from their social awareness is the following poster (figure 5).

Figure 5

Students' Poster



Source: data collected, Students' artifact September 26th, 2023

In this activity, English language learners collaboratively created a poster for their peers, visually representing their ideas on combating racism. They worked together to determine the poster's content and the messages they wanted to convey, ultimately highlighting the belief in human equality. As illustrated in Figure 5, this poster aligns with Freire's (2018) principle that "nobody is superior to anyone else" (p. 114), a concept foundational to his critical pedagogy.

Throughout the intervention, I observed a shift in students' discourse and artwork, reflecting a deeper sense of equality and appreciation for diversity.

The students' empathy is apparent in the drawing of two girls with different skin tones embracing each other, which symbolizes their acceptance of diversity. The image of the boys in the center giving each other a high-five signifies mutual respect and the willingness to connect across differences. This act of symbolic agreement reflects the value of acceptance that students cultivated during this process. Additionally, phrases like "in the world, we are the same inside" exemplify their growing understanding of equality. The inclusion of flags representing Bogotá and Colombia, along with an Earth symbol with a face, broadens this message, suggesting an awareness that racism is an issue spanning local, national, and global contexts. These visual and textual elements demonstrate how students internalized Freirean ideals of respect and solidarity, which influenced both their creative expression and their evolving perspectives on social justice.

When interacting with students about their poster in Figure 5 through semi-structured interviews, a student (excerpt 2) expressed the following:

Excerpt 2

> We also decided to make this poster because it represents that between the brown people and the white people, there is no difference between the two. I mean, like once I heard, in the street, I heard a lady saying: black people are friends of black people and white people are friends of white people. But there is no difference because I am friends with many people and I am brown and what the poster teaches here is that no matter the skin tone we are all friends, we are almost like brothers. (semi-structured interview, September 26th, 2023. Translated from the original in Spanish)

The student's response reveals her belief in *equality* (Freire, 2018; Noguera, 2008) despite strong rooted views about segregation in our society, when she referred to the lady saying (excerpt 2): people are friends according to skin color. This response also supports an ongoing position the student is creating about the topic. More precisely, her position articulates the

interest in acceptance and appreciation of diversity. To achieve this, she considers real-life situations. The interactions between students' reflections and the relationship between their previous and new knowledge generate new cultural meanings around social issues. Social awareness has been crucial for students to view these issues from different perspectives, allowing them to choose positions that make them aware of how these social issues impact our society.

Interestingly, as students comprehended the content of the stories used in class, they connected them with their own relationships with their peers. A process of introspection took place and it articulated concepts such as racism and diversity to their own relationships with their peers. As I explained the concepts through various resources, students made connections to current situations or provided examples in which they and their peers were involved. This conscious, self-reflective process was evident when they examined a situation and provided their opinion, and possibilities of changing that situation in our context and society. Indeed, students' empowerment and derived capacities allowed them to generate a critical perspective of their environment, becoming aware of having the freedom to make decisions regarding issues in their social milieu (Nussbaum, 2020). To develop this level of criticality, fostering social interaction with other social actors was essential to provide a space for growth in their own perspectives (Vygotsky, 1978). When students exemplified and connected their stories to their own interpersonal relationships based on a story about a girl who suffered racism and discrimination, a student expressed his ideas by connecting this situation to the local class (Excerpt 3).

Excerpt 3

T: let's think about how we relate the topic of racism to the story, did we see racism in the story?
Ss3: yes, very much, it was all about racism.
T: why?

> Ss3: Because, for example, racism is to say, Dylan, Ana, Felipe are not going to be my friends because they are black, that is racism. Because for example pronouncing the color. (semi-structured interview, September 18th, 2023. Translated from the original in Spanish)

The student used this example to establish how racist actions can affect interpersonal relationships between classmates. By reflecting upon the use of the adjective "black," he realized about the fact that it is sometimes understood negatively in our society, and even used as an offensive tool (Hernández *et.al*., 2014). Thus, a transformation in his discourse and choice to refer to his peers was evident. In the co-construction of cultural meanings related to race, students changed their language use, since they have become socially aware of the consequences that racism brings to their relationships with their peers and the society in general. Scholars such as Csóti (2001) mentioned that social awareness skills afford the child to grow and understand human nature in depth. In summary the development of social awareness skills as Csóti (2001) argues, is crucial for students to deeply understand and navigate the complexities of human nature. The shifts in student language and behavior observed in this study reveal the transformative potential of critical pedagogy in addressing social issues like racism.

Each child holds a perspective on others and the places around him. As I consider, students used these skills to comprehend each other. The student 3 we referred to beforehand co-constructed his cultural meanings, grounding in social awareness as a basis for his position.

I observed students' interactions between them in certain classes that were important for this category. I was interested in specific moments in which language learners shared their experiences related to their routines, social relationships, stories, and jokes. These data showed that during interactions, students chose language that was not perceived as offensive and sometimes they encouraged their peers to change their word choice (excerpt 4). Excerpt four captures a classroom conversation between students discussing a peer named *Youseth*. They

reminisce about how he used to make them laugh and express regret over his absence. The conversation also touches on the "appropriate" terminology to describe *Youseth's* racial identity, with one student correcting another on the use of "negro" and suggesting "Afro-Colombian" instead. Another student points out that *Youseth* is not Colombian and suggests the term "morenito". This indicates that students were critically engaging with issues of *diversity* and *equality*. Recognizing and addressing cultural diversity in English language classrooms is important, as Freire (2018) notes. Specifically, he argues that Latin America, for instance, is characterized by vast social and cultural diversity that should be valued.

Excerpt 4

> Student: You remember Youseth, he made us laugh a lot. Too bad he's not around anymore.
> Student 4: Yes, but every time we played; he would get mad when we called him "negro".
> Student: You don't say "negro" anymore, you say "Afro-Colombian".
> Student 4: I know, but he's not Colombian, he's like "morenito", right? (Classroom observation, September 21st, 2023. Translated from the original in Spanish)

The spaces for class discussion allowed for a healthy environment where students expressed themselves and shared their own family anecdotes, from which they built stories around fear regarding race. These stories became lenses to look at today's social reality and opened spaces for attitudes towards social justice and *equity* among people, as well as individual freedom and fairness as proposed by Rawls (1971) in his principles. My purpose, as a teacher, was to strengthen my students' diverse self-representations in the classroom and at home. The following poster is an example of how English language learners examined the social issue of discrimination, which was reflected in a situation that was familiar to them.

Figure 6

Students' drawings



Source: students' artifact, September 21st, 20223

The figure 6 displays a drawing students made about a racism as a latent theme in our societies, and how it was reflected in their everyday experiences. This drawing shows the story of a student and a member of their family who go to a toy store to buy a doll. The girl in the story seemed to represent a stereotyped version of a beautiful woman (Cafri *et al.*, 2005), since she rejected the dolls that had a different skin color. On the right side of the poster there are images classifying women through a check mark, indicating acceptance of what constitutes beauty for her, which overlaps the white, blonde girl. Contrastively, the girl in the story used "X" as a disproving mark, showing rejection. When the student explained their anecdote, he stated that he did not understand his cousin's behavior as they were only dolls to play with (excerpt 5). In other

words, the student was developing his sensitivity to difference and acceptance to it (Selman, 2011). However, when asked in a semi-structured interview why he thought she did not choose the dolls with a darker skin color, he referred to the presence of racist beliefs (Wojnicka and Nowicka, 2023) in his cousin's attitudes and behaviors (excerpt 5).

Excerpt 5

> Ss5: The story is from my cousin Salome; my cousin told my aunt if she would buy her a doll. My aunt said yes. So, they went to a toy store and there were some white dolls and some brunettes, so my cousin said: mmm I just want a pretty one and she chose the white ones and the brunettes she didn't choose them.
> T: And why do you think she didn't choose them?
> Ss5: Maybe because she is a racist and doesn't like black people, every time she sees a black person he gets disgusted. (the boy made a gesture of disgust) (semi- structured interview, September 21st, 2023. Translated from the original in Spanish)

In this student's perspective, there are additional aspects to remark. First, he softened the possible influence of a racist discourse by using words that produce closeness and even solidarity with Colombian afro-descendant people. More precisely, he selected the word *negrito* rather than *negro*, because he was afraid of using offensive language, according to him. The second aspect refers to the interpretation he is giving to her cousin's behavior, qualifying it as racist because of her actions (Collins & Cannella, 2021). When her cousin throws a tantrum over the dolls, the student relates that action to racism. And third, when I observed the connections between the student's words and his body expressions to explain her cousin's behaviors (in other words: the displeasure she felt), the student recognized her cousin's action as discriminatory practice (Salter *et al.*, 2018).

The students have identified these discriminatory practices in various ways. For instance, they became aware of the emotional impact of using nicknames. In one of the sessions, I explained to the students the concept of racism and discrimination through a story. As we watched the video, the students identified nicknames that were given to the main character of the

story, explaining how the character felt about these discriminatory practices. Negative nicknames have psychological effects on the students, discouraging them from active involvement in class (Kuranchie, 2012). English language learners shared their perspectives about this topic through an open dialogue (see excerpt 6). This excerpt captures a session where I as a teacher and my students discussed instances of racism experienced by a character named Sulwe in a story. I prompted my students to find moments of discrimination in the story, leading a student to mention that Sulwe was called in derogatory terms like "blackie" or "darky". The student describes Sulwe's emotional response, saying that she felt sad and metaphorically compares her sadness to a "black hole".

Excerpt 6

> Teacher: Very good, exactly. When you were talking about racism in the story, in what situation did you see racism there, what moments did Sulwe experience when she felt discriminated by...?
> Student3: At school.
> Teacher: Why?
> Student3: because they called her "blackie"
> Teacher: Very well, they called her "dark", "darky", and how did she feel?
> Student3: sad.
> Teacher: and that made her feel sad inside.
> Student3: It was like a black hole (semi- structured interview, September 18th, 2023. Translated from the original in Spanish)

In the above excerpt the student spoke of "blackie" expressing that this type of nickname made the character feel very sad. In his study, Kiesling (1997) stated that the negative effects of nicknaming people using jokes and insults can lead to negative self-concept and learning processes. The awareness of the emotional damage of nicknames transcended to other types of activities during the school day. The students identified situations where this nicknaming practice was present (excerpt 7). These interactions point the fact that English language learners co-

constructed their own perspectives on racism and discrimination as they themselves called upon their classmates to refrain from this practice.

Excerpt 7

> Student: It's just that Dylan, he's mad at you, you called him "four eyes" and the teacher taught us that we shouldn't use nicknames, because that makes people feel bad.
> Student 2: Yes, I know, I already apologized. (Classroom observation, October 6th, 2023. Translated from the original in Spanish)

Through student artifacts and their co-interpretations, the development of personal stances on social issues became evident. These authentic narratives enabled students to cultivate an awareness of contemporary social practices, highlighting their sensitivity to how language can affect others (Bossér & Lindahl, 2019). In Excerpt 8, the student's statement implies a rejection of bullying, as he connects respect for equality with the lesson on avoiding hurtful nicknames. This reflects a Freirean approach, where respect and empathy are foundational to social equality (Freire, 2014) and underscores a growing commitment to rejecting discriminatory behaviors that harm peers emotionally. The student's confidence in his stance suggests an internalized value for respecting others, informed by classroom discussions that allowed students to co-construct ethical understandings.

Excerpt 8

> Student6: "We learned not to bully other people because we are all the same in reality".
> (semi-structured interview, September 26th, 2023. Translated from the original in Spanish)

At this stage, I have analyzed how students construct cultural meanings in relation to their social awareness. The data reveals that English language learners progressively build shared perspectives on issues affecting equality in everyday life. Through classroom activities, students engage in dialogues and reflections that deepen their understanding of fairness and respect,

developing critical awareness of how social dynamics influence individual and collective experiences. This process fosters empathy and a sense of responsibility towards promoting equality in diverse contexts. They have co-constructed knowledge about discrimination, racism and equality based on their previous knowledge and life experiences. I triggered interactions that aimed at having students express themselves and actively construct meaningful learning, as suggested by Nieto (1999). Besides gaining awareness of these issues, students proposed actions and voiced their discontent with social practices that permeate society and that have negative effects on people, including them and their peers. This category has three sub-categories that complement each other. The following sub-category shows how English language learners grow in social awareness and self-acceptance.

English language learners' social awareness and self- acceptance

This sub-category connects directly to the main category, focusing on how English language learners collaboratively construct perspectives on cultural issues and discrimination. Addressing the second objective of the study, this sub-category examines the ways students cultivated social awareness through intentional pedagogical interventions. Developing these skills required integrating strategies rooted in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Greenberg et al., 2017), which facilitated meaningful exploration of social and cultural themes.

The sessions incorporated activities designed to promote empathy, inclusion, and solidarity among students. These activities supported learners in understanding diverse perspectives and encouraged a mindset centered on others' experiences and realities. Through discussions and reflective exercises, students were prompted to critically engage with societal issues such as racism, discrimination, and stereotyping. These reflections included an exploration

of indigenous cultures, allowing students to recognize and value the diversity within their communities.

Perspective-taking and other-centered thinking emerged as essential components of this sub-category, challenging students to interrogate their assumptions and build connections with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. These efforts fostered a classroom environment where students could address stereotypes and social biases, ultimately deepening their understanding of their role as social actors within a multicultural society. The specific characteristics defining this sub-category will be elaborated in subsequent sections, underscoring its contribution to the overarching research objectives.

Figure 7

Characteristics of the sub-category



The figure above represents the key features of this sub-category, highlighting "showing self-acceptance" and "valuing different traits and cosmovisions." Self-acceptance, as defined by Selman (2011), involves recognizing one's unique qualities and embracing them, which was cultivated among students through various storytelling sessions. Seltzer (2008) expands on this by describing self-acceptance as appreciating one's individuality without qualification, acknowledging aspects that cannot easily be changed. Using the story of *Sulwe*, students

reflected on these values, connecting the protagonist's journey to their own lives and deepening their understanding of self-worth and uniqueness (excerpt 9).

In addition, "valuing different traits and cosmovisions" encourages students to respect and appreciate the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of others. This approach fosters a classroom environment where differences are celebrated rather than judged, nurturing empathy and mutual respect. Through stories and discussions, students engaged in dialogue about cultural diversity, learning to see traits that might differ from their own as strengths that enrich their social interactions and broaden their worldviews. Together, these traits form a foundation for social harmony and mutual understanding, key outcomes of culturally responsive pedagogy.

Excerpt 9

> Teacher: Sulwe's mother tells her an important phrase: "brightness is not in your skin, my love, brightness is just who you are". What does this sentence teach us? Who wants to have an opinion?
> Student3: "love yourself with whatever skin color you are, because true beauty comes from the mind and the heart". (semi-structured interview, September 18th, 2023. Translated from the original in Spanish)

The student's comment reflects a thoughtful interpretation of the message conveyed by Sulwe's mother. He went on to express the idea that the message encourages individuals to appreciate yourself no matter what your skin color. This implies an acceptance of oneself without judgment or criticism based on physical appearance (Seltzer, 2008). Furthermore, the student concluded by asserting that true beauty comes from the mind and the heart (excerpt 9). This suggests that the essence of beauty is found in a person's thoughts, character, and emotions rather than superficial attributes like skin color. It reinforces the idea that genuine beauty emanates from internal qualities (Ma, 2022).

In this context, the student's reflection on the story, connecting it to his own skin tone, demonstrates growth in self-acceptance. Selman's (2011) stages of social awareness development are particularly relevant in a multicultural classroom, where students learn to view themselves and others through multiple cultural lenses. These stages unfold as students increasingly interact with diverse perspectives, fostering empathy and deeper social understanding. Seltzer's (2008) ideas on self-acceptance become even more challenging for students navigating dual cultural identities, as they may face conflicting messages about belonging and self-worth. The classroom discussions provide an essential platform for students to navigate and affirm their identities, helping them internalize self-acceptance as they see themselves positively reflected in others' eyes. The following excerpt from a semi-structured interview (excerpt 10) reflects one student's evolving perspective on self-acceptance.

Excerpt 10

> Student7: I learned that you must understand that people may be different, but we are the same.
> Teacher: Why are we the same?
> Student7: We are all equal before God, we are equal because God sees us as equal, because inside and out we are like the same. Even if we have defects and even if we have a different skin color from others, we will always fit in the world.
> Student7: or like different religion, different country, color, hair, eyes, everything. Some of us are tall, some of us are short, but we have the same abilities to feel the same. (semi-structured interview, September 26th, 2023. Translated from the original in Spanish)

The student's comment reflects an awareness that aligns with multicultural education frameworks, particularly Banks' (2016) importance on recognizing and valuing diversity while finding common ground. The student's recognition of both difference and sameness echoes intercultural communication theories, which advocate for the understanding of both shared human values and unique cultural identities (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012). The mention of equality "before God" introduces a spiritual dimension, connecting to universalist approaches in

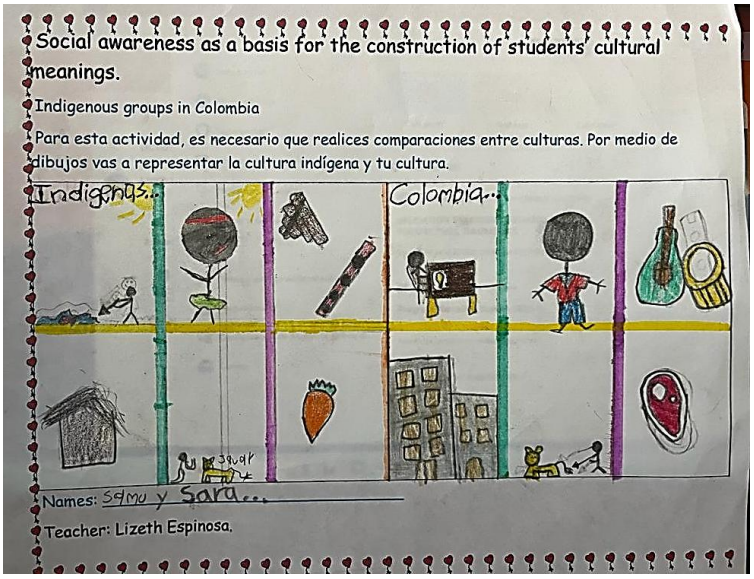
multicultural education that see diversity as part of a shared moral foundation. Contrasting this response with other students' reflections could further reveal varied understandings, as some may focus on concrete aspects of equality, such as fairness in daily interactions, rather than a spiritual or intrinsic notion. This variation highlights the multifaceted ways students engage with concepts of equality, offering a richer picture of their developing social awareness and intercultural competence.

The student further expands on the concept of *equality* (Freire, 2004), stating that we are equal both inside and outside. This suggests a belief in the intrinsic value of everyone, regardless of external appearances or perceived differences. Also, the student extends the idea of equality to encompass a broad range of differences, including religion, nationality, color, and physical attributes. The acceptance of diversity is accentuated, indicating a belief that everyone has a place in the world despite their variations. Ladson- Billings (1995) stated that students learn about diversity when they recognize and value classmates' cultural backgrounds as assets in the classroom, this helps to foster an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

Furthermore, the English language learner notes that, despite differences, people share similar abilities and emotions. This implies that, at a fundamental level, there is a universal human experience that transcends external distinctions. In my view, the student's comment reflects a holistic perspective of self-acceptance and acceptance of others. It underscores recognition of diversity, acknowledgement of shared humanity, belief in intrinsic equality and acceptance of differences, demonstrating an evolution in his social awareness of herself and others. Figure 8 shows how understanding different worldviews facilitates the development of social awareness in English language learners.

Figure 8

Cultures' parallel



Source: students' artifact October 23rd, 2023

In Figure 8, English language learners working in pairs use drawings to compare elements of their own culture with those of an indigenous Colombian culture, reflecting their understanding of cultural diversity and social awareness. This paired activity guided students to identify both similarities and contrasts, addressing topics significant to their lived experiences, including housing, clothing, tools, food, animals, and occupations. On the left side of the image, students illustrate indigenous culture with representations of traditional practices and symbols: they depict huts as living spaces, traditional clothing crafted from natural materials, musical instruments like panpipes and flutes, and activities like hunting. Additionally, animals such as jaguars and plant-based foods, such as vegetables, are used to reflect the indigenous connection with nature and subsistence practices.

By comparing these features with symbols of their own culture on the right side, the students convey their awareness of cultural diversity while recognizing the unique values embedded in each tradition. For instance, urban buildings, modern clothing, and processed foods

reflect their understanding of their everyday life. This activity not only highlights the students' perception of their culture and the indigenous culture but also demonstrates their ability to critically observe and articulate cultural distinctions, fostering a broader worldview and empathy towards different ways of life. Engaging in this reflective process, as illustrated in the drawing, aligns with multicultural education principles, supporting the development of students' intercultural competence (Banks, 2016) and their capacity to understand and appreciate cultural nuances (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012). This exercise reveals the students' emerging social awareness, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and valuing diverse cultural expressions.

In discussing the cultural knowledge they brought into the classroom, English language learners demonstrated an understanding of diverse worldviews, as depicted in Figure 8. According to Luis Moll and colleagues (1992), students possess *funds of knowledge,* a concept underlining that learners come to school with rich cultural resources shaped by their home lives and community backgrounds. This cultural awareness is an asset for fostering inclusive, culturally responsive teaching practices. Through the activity, students illustrated their knowledge of various cultural aspects, showcasing their perspectives on cultural diversity.

In a semi-structured interview, students elaborated on their interpretations of Figure 8, revealing a genuine curiosity about other cultures and a respectful acknowledgment of cultural differences. This reflects a growing social awareness and aligns with the principles of multicultural education, where learners' personal experiences contribute to a broader understanding of cultural diversity (Banks, 2016). The following excerpt provides insight into students' perceptions of cultural differences and their openness to learning from them, reflecting their interest in embracing diverse backgrounds and identities.

Excerpt 11

> Student8: We draw their customs and everything about them, comparing it with ours, we find many differences in many things and here, for example, we draw them hunting, but if we go to a restaurant, they serve us food without having to make any effort. Here are the clothes, here they paint their faces and so on. We dress like this with shirts and pants, dresses, and tennis shoes. While they make their own clothes with animal skins or things from nature. Here are the instruments, there are 2 instruments that, for example they use these little things like a flute and this one also like a flute. While we use guitars, drums, pianos, and all that.
> Teacher: What would you like to learn from them, if you had the opportunity to meet or live in a context such as school with a student from an Indigenous culture?
> Student9: I would like to learn about their customs, their language so that I could communicate with them, and they could explain to me what they do every day, what they do, how they hunt, their beliefs.
> Teacher: And what would you teach them about our culture?
> Student9: I would teach them how to make friends, for example, because there are many people who discriminate against them just because of their skin color or their culture or customs, so I don't think that should be the case because we are all equal. (semi-structured interview, October 23rd, 2023. Translated from the original in Spanish)

The above Excerpt illustrates the students' position in relation to the parallelism of the different cultures (Figure 8). It shows how the students contrast their cultures with the indigenous cultures. By recognizing and valuing different worldviews, English language learners are co-constructing cultural meanings that enable them to be inclusive, respectful, and equitable to others. Margaret Kovach, in her research on indigenous methodologies, highlights the significance of indigenous cosmovisions in shaping educational approaches that honor and integrate indigenous knowledge systems and worldviews (Kovach, 2019). The interest that students justify for other worldviews in the last part of Excerpt 8 indicates that English language learners have co-constructed a critical position by becoming social agents aware of social injustices towards others; in this case, towards children from indigenous cultures (Giroux, 1988).

The student as a social agent is willing to teach and promote friendship, seeking an exchange of cultural learning. It is displaying in its positioning a recognition of the fundamental equality between people, regardless of their skin color or culture (Banks, 2006). The following

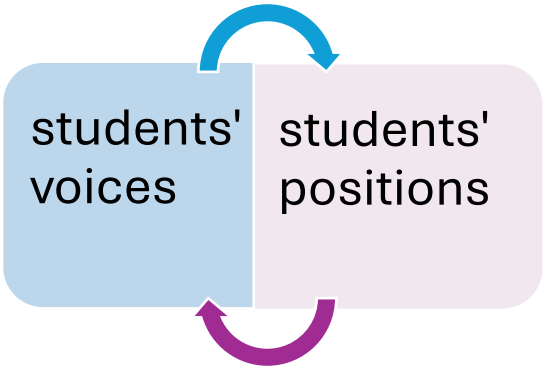
sub-category shows how English language learners react to social injustices and raise their voices.

English language learners' voices rejecting discriminatory acts

This subcategory is linked to the category process and the final subcategory, according to which students co-constructed cultural meanings based on social awareness, taking into account current social injustices. This subcategory addresses the first objective, which was stated as follows: to explore the construction of cultural meanings by English learners through their social awareness. A key feature of this subcategory is learner voices (Aldana, 2022, 2024); in this research, I underscored the importance of listening to and valuing learners' perspectives, experiences, and points of view. In this regard, Ladson-Billings (1995) believes that students' perspectives and experiences are crucial for creating an inclusive and effective learning environment. The following Figure 9 illustrates characteristics of this sub-category.

Figure 9

Sub-category's characteristics



Through the pedagogical intervention, English language learners gained a platform to express their opinions and experiences related to social injustices through real-life stories, narratives, and anecdotes in which they co-constructed positions and raised their voices (Aldana,

2022, 2024). The subsequent poster (Figure 10) depicts a poster with some drawings in the image that convey strong messages against racism. The central image prominently displays the bold text "No al racismo" and "say no to racism," emphasizing the core message of the artwork. Surrounding this central text are various smaller drawings and symbols that enhance the overall theme. One notable drawing features a group of diverse people, representing probably unity and equality among different races. Another drawing includes a heart symbol, likely signifying love and acceptance.

Additionally, a globe is depicted, symbolizing global unity and the universal importance of combating racism. Accompanying these images are phrases such as "todos somos iguales ante Dios" (we are equal before God, translated from the original in Spanish), which reinforce the message of equality and anti-discrimination. Collectively these drawings and texts illustrate second graders importance of rejecting racism and promoting equality and unity among people, using powerful imagery and words to convey their message. In this vein, Weis and Fine (2000) asserted that promoting social justice in schools can help dismantle barriers such as marginalizing students of color, limiting access to quality education and resources.

Figure 10

Students' poster



Source: students' artifact September 26th, 2023

This poster, created by English language learners, reflects their collective stance against racism, as students use symbolic imagery to communicate values of equality and solidarity. In the artwork, a girl and a boy appear on opposite sides of a central globe, symbolizing their shared presence in a world where equality should prevail for all. The choice of imagery—two children and the globe—conveys a vision of unity and underscores the students' belief in a world free from racial discrimination. Such visual expressions carry significant cultural meanings, representing a deepened awareness of social justice issues, as students actively reject prejudice and promote inclusivity.

Through phrases like "stop the racism" and "say no to racism," the students articulate a unified, co-constructed stance on social injustices. Their words and visuals reveal the growth of their critical thinking and critical consciousness, echoing Freire's (2014) notion that education fosters awareness and resistance against societal oppression. Freire posits that dialogic, collaborative learning enables students to recognize and challenge oppressive social, political, and economic structures, nurturing an activist mindset that motivates them to act against

discrimination. The creation of this poster not only highlights the students' engagement with social issues but also signals the development of their voices as active agents advocating for justice and equality. By sharing their views on racism through public art, students make visible their commitment to social change, reflecting both personal growth and a broader understanding of the power of community action in confronting prejudice and fostering inclusivity.

In addition, there are indications of a stance regarding the students' belief system, by saying that we are all equal before God, English learners reveal elements of their identity. Milner (2010) highlighted that educators who understand and integrate students' spiritual backgrounds into their teaching practices can foster a more inclusive and equitable classroom, thereby promoting social justice. These types of sentences from students unveil the construction of cultural meanings through their social awareness. Learners recognize their own biases and understand the experiences of marginalized groups, which is a key component of social justice education (Tatum, 1997). The following Excerpt is a co-interpretation with the students on the poster (figure 10).

Excerpt 12

> T: Ready, next group, why did you draw and write what is on the poster?
> Ss10: Well, to represent the brown people and not to bully them, because even though we have defects, we are all the same.
> Ss 2: we did these drawings to defend people who are bullied because of their skin color and culture, because we are all equal before God. (semi-structured interview, September 26th, 2023. Translated from the original in Spanish)

This co-interpretation with the English language learners illustrates the position they have co-constructed. The pedagogical intervention sessions allowed the students to address issues of social injustice from which they co-constructed a position and raised their voices (Aldana, 2022, 2024) for the rejection of these discriminatory acts. There are some words in the excerpt that

caught my attention such as the word *represent*. For the students, this action is their way to contribute to society to stop racism. Fine (2018) stated that students' representation includes an understanding of broader social and political contexts that shape their lives. In addition, students recognize that every human being can have flaws or fail at some point. However, this does not mean that the person must be discriminated against, which is an acknowledgement of equality on the students' part.

On different note, social awareness is understood as the recognition and understanding of social dynamics, inequalities, and cultural differences within the educational context. In the Excerpt 12, English language learners seem to have recognized bullying as a social issue that affects people based on their skin color and cultural background. This reflects an understanding of the broader social dynamics and the importance of addressing such issues. In this line, it is worth noting that Goleman (1995) emphasized that social awareness involves the ability to empathize with others, understand social dynamics, and recognize the needs and feelings of peers. In this way, the excerpt shows students' position for equality as defenders of marginalized peers. By stating they drew some images to defend people the students position themselves and their peers as active and committed participants in supporting their classmates in the fight against bullying.

In the excerpt 12, the reference to equality before God indicates a moral and possibly religious foundation for their beliefs. This position and students' identity allows for an inclusive and holistic educational environment (Palmer, 1998). The collective learning of the students was marked by the interaction between them and the different issues that led them to take positions

and express their opinions. The following Excerpt 13 shows the appropriation of the students to talk about their learning about issues such as racism, bullying and discrimination.

Excerpt 13

> Ss 1: I learned that it is not necessary to offend other people because of their color and that we are all equal in our feelings.
> Ss 2: I learned that we should not offend other people because of their color.
> Ss 3: I learned that we don't have to make fun of other people.
> Ss 4: I learned that I shouldn't offend people because of who they really are and that we must keep putting it in people's heads that they can hurt other people just because they are the way God created them. (semi-structured interview, September 26th, 2023. Translated from the original in Spanish)

These assertions are the result of the constructions they have made of cultural meanings through language and literacy practices (Heath, 1983). Students' voices provide a profound reflection on the importance of empathy, respect, and equality, which are essential principles in combating racism, discrimination, and bullying. For instance, when a student states: I learned that there's no need to hurt others based on their skin color because, deep down, we all share the same emotions, it resonates with Paulo Freire's notion of humanization and the ethical imperative to treat others with dignity and respect (Freire, 1970). Freire argues that education should foster critical consciousness, helping students recognize and challenge social injustices. This student's recognition of equality highlights an emerging critical awareness and a commitment to social justice.

Additionally, the students' collective overlapping learning that "we should not offend other people because of their color" and "we don't have to make fun of other people" aligns with Ladson-Billings' concept of culturally relevant pedagogy. This author argues that education must validate and affirm students' cultural identities while challenging discriminatory practices (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The students' insights display an understanding that respect for individual differences is crucial in creating an inclusive educational environment. Furthermore,

the statement "I shouldn't offend people because of who they really are and that we must keep putting it in people's heads that they can hurt other people, just because they are the way God created them" underscores the need for continuous dialogue and education about the impact of discrimination. This echoes Moll's "funds of knowledge" approach, which suggests that recognizing and integrating students' cultural backgrounds into the curriculum can foster a more just and8immk equitable learning environment (Moll *et al.*, 1992). The next subcategory shows how English language learners' socioculturally inspired actions aided the construction of cultural meanings.

English language learners' socioculturally inspired actions

This subcategory explores how English language learners' actions, inspired by the socio-cultural contexts, contribute to their construction of cultural meanings. Likewise, this subcategory is aligned with the main category and complements the process of the other two subcategories in response to the research question and objectives.

Figure 11

Sub-category's characteristic



The Figure above highlights the characteristic of this sub-category. Cultural meanings are understood as the significance and interpretations that students ascribe to cultural symbols, practices, and narratives within educational contexts. These meanings are shaped by social, historical, and political contexts and are central to understanding issues of identity, power, and

social justice in education. Heath (1983) demonstrated that cultural meanings are embedded in the everyday practices and interactions of students, and recognizing these meanings is crucial for educators to create culturally responsive pedagogies. The following Figure is a cartoon that the English students created about stories of racism they had heard or encountered.

Figure 12

Students' cartoon



Source: students' artifact September 21st, 2023

This student-created cartoon captures a powerful narrative about the experience of racism and the value of equality. It tells the story of an Afro-Colombian boy who faces exclusion due to his skin color, a theme that unfolds across the four panels.

In the first panel, the boy encounters racist language as a peer addresses him derogatorily with the phrase "¿qué quieres negro?" ("what do you want, nigger"). This interaction sheds light on the daily instances of discrimination that marginalized children may face in educational

settings. As Banks (2006) points out, such forms of racism, whether subtle or overt, contribute to a climate of exclusion and can severely affect students' self-esteem and sense of belonging. The student's portrayal in this panel underscores the need for awareness and action to confront these harmful attitudes in schools, aiming for a more inclusive and supportive environment.

The narrative progresses in the second and third panels, where the boy responds assertively with "más respeto amigo" ("more respect, friend") and "todos somos iguales" ("we are all equal"). These responses reflect an emerging sense of social awareness and a commitment to justice, echoing Freire's (2014) perspective on education as a pathway for empowering students to challenge oppression. By asserting equality, the student demonstrates an understanding that education can be a platform to advocate for respect and inclusion. This act aligns with Freire's emphasis on fostering critical consciousness, as students learn to use their voices to stand up against discriminatory behaviors, creating a classroom environment rooted in mutual respect.

In the fourth panel, the setting shifts to a festive scene featuring a Christmas tree, symbolizing unity and communal celebration. The accompanying phrase, "ni el color ni el dinero nos aparta del mundo, todos somos iguales ante Dios" ("neither color nor money separates us from the world; we are all equal before God"), conveys a universal message of equality and acceptance. This message resonates with Ladson-Billings' (1995) concept of culturally relevant pedagogy, which advocates for the acknowledgment of diverse backgrounds within educational spaces. Incorporating themes of equality and unity, the student's artwork underscores the importance of understanding and respecting cultural diversity, promoting a message that encourages empathy and solidarity among peers.

Following this session, students proposed additional activities to address racism, discrimination, and bullying, demonstrating their growing commitment to creating an inclusive environment. In the subsequent excerpt, students suggest a range of socially conscious actions to further foster cultural awareness and advocate for those whose voices are often marginalized. Through these discussions and activities, students engage with the construction of cultural meanings, building a foundation for critical awareness and social responsibility in their communities.

Excerpt 14

> T: Now I ask myself, what would we do to stop racism here in Colombia, in our city?
> Ss5: we must convince people.
> T: And how do we convince someone?
> Ss3: we could tell them that we are all equal.
> Ss4: we would tell them that people should not be discriminated against.
> T: We could make, for example, a poster, images?
> Ss2: we could print and put phrases that say: no matter the color of the skin, we are all equal and no matter the color.
> Ss3: we could make posters to give to people.
> T: And how else can we stop racism?
> Ss6: Not talking badly about people. (semi-structured interview, September 21st, 2023. Translated from the original in Spanish)

This exchange of ideas in the classroom reflects a collective effort to address racism through the lenses of cultural meanings, social awareness, and social justice. I prompted students to consider actionable strategies to combat racism, and their responses point up the importance of social awareness. According to Banks (2006), fostering social awareness in students involves helping them to understand and appreciate cultural diversity, which can lead to more inclusive and equitable interactions. By suggesting actions like making posters with anti-racist messages, the students engaged in activities that promote cultural understanding and highlight the shared humanity among diverse groups.

The students' emphasis on the message "we are all equal" and the need to avoid discriminatory language illustrates a grasp of social justice principles. Freire (2014) argued that education should empower individuals to challenge societal injustices and promote equality. The students' ideas to create posters with phrases that affirm equality and discourage discrimination are practical applications of Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed. These activities not only raise awareness but also encourage a shift in societal attitudes by reinforcing the notion that all people, regardless of skin color, deserve equal respect and treatment.

The conversation also features the significance of initiative-taking measures in combating racism. Ladson-Billings (1995) advocates culturally relevant pedagogy, which includes teaching methods that recognize and address the lived experiences (Aldana, 2022, 2024) of students from diverse backgrounds. By facilitating discussions and activities that address racism directly, I am implementing a culturally relevant approach that empowers students to work towards social justice. The students' suggestions to distribute posters and speak out against negative talk about others are steps towards fostering a more just and equitable community, reflecting the principles of social justice education.

Conclusions and pedagogical implications

In this chapter, I present the final interpretive statements of the findings that emerged from the research process that led me to answer the following research question: How do English language learners construct cultural meanings through the lens of social awareness when engaging in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the EFL classroom?

Throughout this research, I aimed to explore how English language learners constructed cultural meanings in the classroom, beyond just appropriating the material presented. The students constructed cultural meanings not only by absorbing the content but by actively engaging with their own experiences and those of their peers. This occurred through dialogues, artifacts, and social interactions where English language learners connected their realities to the classroom topics. They drew parallels between their lives and the cultural elements we discussed, fostering a deeper understanding of concepts such as social justice, acceptance, and diversity. These processes demonstrate that cultural meaning-making is an active, collaborative process, shaped by students' backgrounds, interactions, and reflections.

In terms of fostering awareness, what truly fostered social awareness in the students was the creation of a classroom environment that valued their voices, encouraged reflection, and allowed them to discuss topics that directly impacted their lives, like discrimination and respect for others. It was in these reflective spaces, supported by culturally responsive activities, that students began to not only recognize social issues but also reflect on their role in addressing these challenges. Their awareness blossomed through personal experiences, artifacts, and the opportunity to critique societal norms. The development of social awareness among English language learners was a dynamic process that implied both social and emotional growth.

Activities such as discussions, storytelling, and creative expressions like drawing and writing enabled students to articulate their thoughts and feelings about social issues. These activities also cultivated a sense of empathy and solidarity as students shared and listened to each other's experiences.

One significant way English language learners developed their social awareness was through the rejection of discriminatory acts; by voicing their opposition to racism and other forms of discrimination, students demonstrated their understanding of equality and human dignity. The category and sub-categories highlighted the importance of learner voice in promoting social justice. Activities that allowed students to express their views on social injustices, such as creating anti-racism posters, helped to amplify their voices (Aldana, 2024, 2022) and foster a critical consciousness. This insight is particularly important for ELT, where fostering such awareness goes beyond language acquisition, it involves developing empathetic, socially conscious individuals. The engagement with students was powerful; they showed a readiness to discuss and challenge issues of fairness, equality, and respect in ways that were both thoughtful and assertive. This research allowed students to step into roles as co-creators of knowledge, leading to a classroom dynamic where their voices were not just heard but valued.

For future teacher-researchers interested in developing culturally responsive pedagogy, it is essential to accentuate the importance of listening to students, understanding their sociocultural backgrounds, and creating meaningful learning experiences that connect with their lives. This research has taught me that CRP not only engages students but also empowers them. Teacher-researchers must view their classrooms as spaces of mutual learning, where students' cultural wealth becomes a foundational element of the learning process.

In this manner, this study presents pedagogical implications that are connected to the teaching practice in ELT. The first pedagogical implication is Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and findings in this study underscore the importance of this approach in EFL classrooms. By acknowledging and integrating students' cultural backgrounds into the curriculum, educators can create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment (Gay, 2000). This approach helps to validate students' identities and experiences, fostering a sense of belonging and respect.

Another implication in this research is promoting critical thinking and social awareness (Selman, 2011). Encouraging critical thinking and social awareness through activities is essential for helping students to grasp and challenge social injustices. Educators should design lessons that invite students to reflect on their biases and the societal structures that perpetuate inequality. This can be achieved through discussions, creative projects, and collaborative learning experiences focused on real-world issues.

The last pedagogical implication is empowering student voice. The concept of students' voices in educational qualitative research emphasizes the importance of listening to and valuing students' perspectives, experiences, and insights to enhance teaching practices, curriculum design, and overall educational equity (Fielding, 2001). Furthermore, empowering students to voice their opinions on social justice issues is crucial for their personal and academic development. By creating opportunities for students to share their viewpoints and produce change, educators can foster a sense of agency and responsibility. This can be facilitated through activities such as debates, presentations, and creating visual and written works that address social issues. Consequently, the study contributes to the research line of the master's program Literacy Studies and Local Pedagogies for Social Transformation by showing how English language learners use language and literacy practices to construct and express their cultural meanings. The

integration of social justice themes into literacy instruction contributes to English language learners' critical thinking and communication skills, making literacy learning more relevant and impactful. The research aligns with the master's program focus on local pedagogies for social transformation by highlighting how Culturally Responsive Pedagogy can foster social awareness and change. Hence, the study provides evidence that educational practices grounded in local cultural contexts and social realities can empower students to become active participants in their communities and advocates for social justice.

Finally, this research gave my students a platform to have their voices heard, something critical in their development as both learners and individuals. By providing opportunities to express their thoughts on social issues, they were able to develop a sense of agency and contribute to classroom discussions with confidence. They learned that their perspectives matter and that they have the power to influence change, both inside and outside the classroom.

Limitations of the research and suggestions for future research

One limitation of this study was its duration, which may have been insufficient to capture the long-term development of students' social awareness and cultural understanding. Short-term observations may capture immediate responses and attitudes, but may miss the deeper, more gradual processes of change and development of students' cultural awareness and social justice perspectives. Extending the research over a longer period can provide a more complete picture of how these constructs evolve over time and the sustained role of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in their learning processes.

Future research could delve into the longitudinal effects of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy on students' social awareness and cultural understanding. Examining these dynamics

over an extended period would offer valuable insights into the enduring effectiveness of these pedagogical methods. Researchers could explore questions such as: How does continued involvement in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy shape students' perspectives on social justice over time? What are the lasting impacts on their cultural awareness and empathy towards others?

For future research, it would be valuable to explore the impact of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy on social awareness in different educational contexts, such as public schools and rural areas. Investigating the experiences of a more diverse student population could provide a richer understanding of how various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds influence the construction of cultural meanings and social awareness. Moreover, expanding the age range to include both younger and older students could help us to identify developmental differences in social awareness and empathy. Lastly, examining the role of teachers' cultural competencies and their influence on the effectiveness of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy would be an important area of study, contributing to the development of targeted professional development programs aimed at fostering inclusive and socially aware classroom environments.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Pedagogical proposal

Unit "Building strong, positive relationships between students, family and communities"				
Stages and time	**Topic**	**Objectives**	**Activity**	**Role of the language**
September 13th – 18th 21st – 26th Fourth sessions	Building bonds between friends	Students will construct and co-construct knowledge in groups. Students will explain their personal position on a proposed topic.	To start this activity, Students are going to fill a mind map answering When I hear the word "racism" I think of… Then, I will ask students why they write those words. Students' awareness: looking through different perspectives. After that, we are going to watch a video about children's stories related to racism. The video is going to be presented into 3 parts for students to understand the content. I will ask some questions such as: • "Who is the person in the story? • How does she look like? • Where is she? • What is happening to her? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGORSEGv9O8&t=107s	Grammar: can, can't, prepositions, questions Vocabulary: feelings, likes and dislikes, times of day, adjectives. Functions: stating and

		Literacy development: reading, writing and speaking.	After finishing watching the video, we're going to work on building vocabulary. • Students are going to develop a matching exercise in which they have the picture on the left and the word on the right. • The next step in the activity, students are going to create a story. Instructions: "create a cartoon in which you draw a story about racism that you heard or faced. • Then students are going to work in pairs and share their stories. After that, they will prepare two questions they would like to ask about the story their partner did. • To end the session, I will ask students, how can we help stop racism? Working in small groups, students are going to create a poster. After that, students are going to explain the content of their poster and what is means to them.	asking opinions, describing, reporting
October 4th, 5th, 6th Three sessions	Listening to other voices	Students will listen other voices with different opinions about a topic. Students will construct and co-construct knowledge between classmates	To develop this first session, students will find images posted on the board. These images will be of people from different cultures, and I will ask students to write on post-it notes words that describe what they think of these people. Then each student will paste the post-it notes underneath the images. We will do a socialization in which students will explain why they wrote those words. After this, I'm going to use the parts of the story "a beginning, a plot and an ending" to explain the life of Juan Guillermo Cuadrado, a Colombian soccer player who suffered the loss of his father when he was 4 years old, and his mother had to work in different jobs to support her children. Juan Cuadrado did not have many economic comforts and lived in an area full of violence. Despite this, he did not give up and was passionate about soccer. His mother helped him with what she earned to pay for school and soccer expenses.	Grammar: components of a story: begging, the plot and the end. prepositions, questions. Vocabulary: feelings, likes and dislikes,

		Literacy development: Listening, writing, reading.	Juan Guillermo was a very disciplined child and despite receiving rejection from some people, he remained focused on his studies and sports to get ahead. His courage and passion led him to play in Colombian leagues, where he perfected his moves and currently plays in the European league, being an excellent player, living with his family and helping his mother. Students will develop an inquiry related to Afro-Colombian people. This inquiry aims to demonstrate the culture, customs, work, lifestyles, and statistics of Afro-Colombian people in Colombia. For this, the students will show exhibits, explaining to their classmates what they have researched and what they have learned about this topic. What means did you use to find the information? What conclusions did you draw from your inquiry? In the next session, the students will show their inquiries through exhibitions, draws, posters in the classroom, and we will develop a dialogue between the students and me by answering some questions related to the students' artifacts.	adjectives, places. Functions: stating and asking opinions, describing, reporting

October 17th – 19th 23rd Three sessions	Knowing other cultures	Students will learn about other cultures. Students will develop comparisons between cultures. Students will construct cultural meanings in small groups.	For the first session, I will bring to class different objects that are related to indigenous ethnicities. To generate curiosity among the students and listen to their opinions and previous knowledge about this culture. According to the objects and music that I place, some questions will be asked: - Do you know any of the objects? - Do you know their names? - Do you identify the rhythm of the music that is playing? - Have you ever listened to this song? With this type of questions, the objective is to identify the knowledge and ideas that the students have about this topic. The following session, to learn more about the culture of the indigenous ethnic groups in Colombia, I will show a story about their beliefs, through the following video. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vp89juEjZWI As the video progresses, I will ask students questions that are related to the story. At the end of the video, we will discuss the story with open-ended questions asked by students and others that I will ask. The stories and activities about the Colombian ethnic groups can be found through videos or in the following link, which has activities, stories and games for children. https://www.memoriaycreatividad.com/home/sai/guias-de-aprendizaje/ In the next session, students will draw a parallel between their culture and the indigenous culture. Considering different aspects such as clothing, food, buildings, instruments, among others. The main objective of the activity is for students to recognize the different cultural meanings that exist in the diversity of cultures. For the exhibition of the artifacts the	Grammar: pronouns and possessives pronouns, prepositions, questions. Vocabulary: musical instruments, clothes, animals, countries. Functions: stating and asking opinions, describing, reporting

			students will talk about what they drew, the differences they found and what they learn from the differences between cultures.	



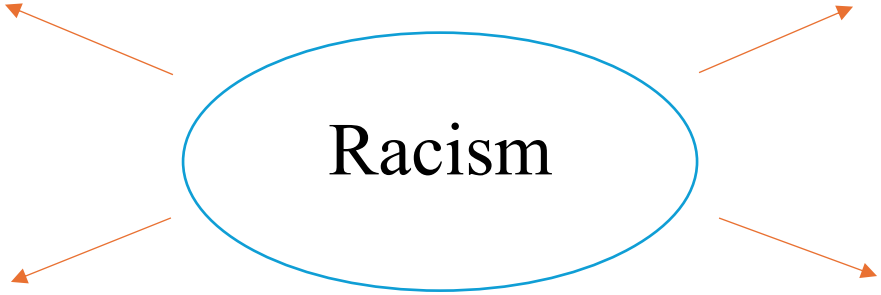
Appendix B: CRP Activities

Fostering social awareness through Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

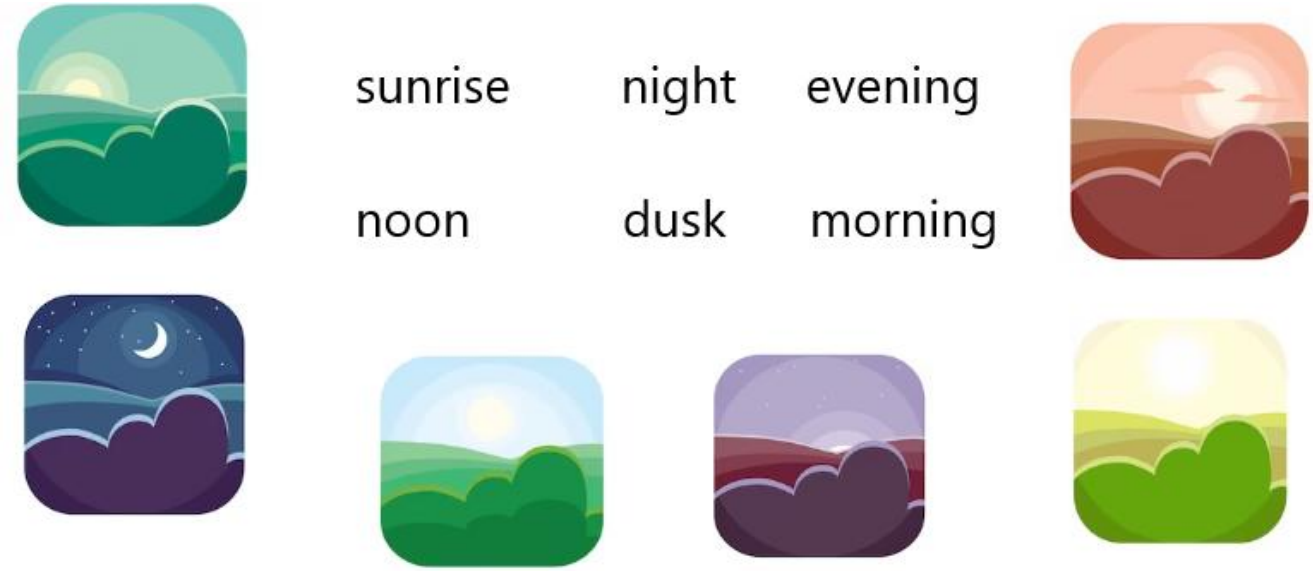
Name: _____ Date: _____

Queridos estudiantes, a continuación, encontrarás algunas preguntas y actividades relacionadas con el tema que veremos en esta sesión "racismo", te invito a que contestes las preguntas, resuelvas las actividades y aprendamos juntos sobre este tema.

When I hear the word "racism" I think of…



Match the pictures with their names.



Unscramble the words related to the story

Mindihtg	
Nono	
Kydra	
Sudk	
Tsar	
Yks	
Yad	
Bhtgri	





Fostering social awareness through Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Name: _____ Date: _____

Querido estudiante, a continuación, encontrarás diferentes actividades para reforzar el tema visto.

Write words that describe this great boy.



-

-

-

-

-

Find the words in the puzzle and choose some adjectives of Juan Guillermo Cuadrado.

PERSONALITY ADJECTIVES

E	N	G	S	U	O	R	U	T	N	E	V	D	A
V	E	O	N	A	U	N	S	O	N	H	L	S	R
I	E	M	H	N	T	Y	Y	T	O	S	G	E	G
T	I	E	D	F	G	T	H	R	O	I	N	N	U
N	I	U	N	Y	O	E	S	E	Y	F	I	S	M
E	W	I	T	O	I	U	I	A	L	L	C	I	E
V	E	W	S	S	N	S	R	N	D	E	M	T	N
N	V	I	I	U	G	R	R	O	N	S	E	I	T
I	Y	T	V	R	O	V	A	H	E	N	A	V	T
E	S	T	T	G	U	R	R	T	I	T	N	E	I
U	U	Y	A	U	E	M	E	A	R	O	T	Y	V
E	R	N	R	Y	E	I	A	N	F	U	H	R	E
I	T	T	C	O	U	R	A	G	E	O	U	S	N
V	N	U	S	W	G	A	A	R	U	G	I	N	G

MEAN
GENEROUS
OUTGOING
SENSITIVE
COURAGEOUS
WITTY
INVENTIVE
FRIENDLY
ARROGANT
ARGUMENTTIVE
SELFISH
SHY
ADVENTUROUS



Play this puzzle online at : https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/380647/

SOCIAL AWARENESS AS A BASIS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS' CUI MEANINGS



Fostering social awareness through Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Name: _____ Date: _____

Indigenous groups in Colombia

For this activity, it is necessary that you make comparisons between cultures. By means of drawings you will represent the indigenous culture and your culture.

Appendix C: Coding

Study: Social awareness as a basis for the construction of students' cultural meanings Teacher: Lizeth Espinosa Classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. Date: September 13th Interaction Sulwe's story	Question: How do English language learners construct cultural meanings through the lens of social justice when engaging in a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the EFL classroom? Objective: To unveil English language learners' construction of cultural meanings through their social awareness. To describe the ways through which English language learners develop their social awareness.	
In this session, the students watched a video which showed a story related to the topic of racism. This video was entirely in English, as the video progressed, sometimes I paused it to ask the students questions about what they have understood and what was happening. **In this part of the story, I ask the students questions that are related to the feelings and actions of the main character of the story "Sulwe".** T: a Sulwe le decían darky, como oscurita, o le decían solo black o dark, algunos colores. ¿Cómo se sentía Sulwe? Ss: se estaba sintiendo mal todo el tiempo. T: ¿Qué está haciendo Sulwe? Ss: Ella está soñando		Codes Demonstrating understanding Demonstrating understanding

T: Porque ella quiere ser … Ss: ella quiere ser igual a la hermana T: porque tiene diferente tono de piel. T: ¿Qué está intentando hacer Sulwe? Ss: ella se quiere quitar el color de piel. Ss: Ella se quiere quitar el color de piel para que los amigos no la critiquen. Ss: quiere cambiar su color a blanco Ss: ella está tratando de maquillarse pa' ser como la hermana. Ss: ella se maquilla y se quiere quitar el color de piel de ella para que no le pongan esos apodos, ser igual a la hermana, tener amigos y demás. T: muy bien, ¿el primer intento con que fue? Ss: borrador T: ¿y en este segundo intento que va? Ss: maquillaje T: ¿qué fue lo tercero que hizo Sulwee? Ss: comió comida blanca para intentar volverse blanca T: ¿Después del dolor de estómago, Sulwee se fue temprano a la cama y oró a papito Dios y que le pidió? Ss: que por favor le cambiara el color de piel T: el cuento nos dice una frase muy importante: "brightness is not in your skin, my love, brightness is just who you are" Ss: quiérete con el color de piel que seas. T: muy bien, puede ser, lo que le dice la mami le está diciendo es: tu brillo no se encuentra en tu tono de piel, tu brillo se encuentra... Ss: en tu corazón	Demonstrating understanding Making connections to reasons for rejection Demonstrating understanding Demonstrating understanding Making connections to reasons for rejection Becoming aware of the role of nicknames Demonstrating understanding Demonstrating understanding Demonstrating understanding. Using semantic connections Demonstrating understanding Gaining awareness of self-acceptance Showing Gaining awareness that the color of the skin is not defines you

T: aja, por tu quien eres como persona, como eres con otras personas, como te comportas, como hablas. Ese es el brillo que tiene cada persona, la belleza de cada uno. T: ¿la verdadera belleza de dónde viene? Ss: de la mente y del corazón.	Gaining awareness of self-acceptance Gaining awareness that the color of the skin is not defines you
In this part of the story, Sulwe is taken by a star on a journey in the sky to tell her the story of the two sisters, the day and the night. T: la estrella le empieza a contar una historia Ss: de dos hermanas, el día y la noche. Ss: Ya entendí, Sulwe era como la noche y su hermana era como el día, de la historia.	Demonstrating understanding Understanding differences through the story
T: Al finalizar la historia, ¿cómo se sentía Sulwee? Ss: se sentía bonita por dentro y por afuera. **At the end of the story of the two sisters, Sulwe understands that everyone has a different skin tone and that their beauty does not depend on this.**	
T: ¿vamos a pensar como relacionamos el tema de racismo con el cuento, vimos racismo en el cuento? Ss: si mucho, todo era de racismo T: ¿por qué? Ss: porque, por ejemplo, racismo es por decir, Dylan, Ana, Felipe no van a ser mis amigos porque son negros, eso es racismo. Porque por ejemplo pronunciar el color.	Exemplifying and connecting the history to their own relationships with peers.
T: muy bien, exacto. Aquí cuando estaban hablando en el cuento de racismo, en que situación ustedes vieron el racismo ahí, que momentos vivió sulwe que se sintió discriminada por…	Identifying the role of nicknames

Ss: En el colegio. T: ¿por qué? Ss: porque le decían blackie T: muy bien le decían dark, ¿y por eso ella se sentía cómo? Ss: triste. T: y eso hizo que ella se sintiera triste en su interior Ss: era como un agujero negro T: si, como un agujero negro en su interior. ¿Algo más que quieran decir del racismo? T: ¿y ella no se creía que era importante por su tono de piel, por qué? Ella quería ser como otras personas Ss: quería ser blanca, quería cambiar su color, quería ser como la hermana. Ss: blanca como Hellen, nosotros no tenemos la posibilidad de decir, yo quiero ser blanco con ojos verdes. T: No, ¿nosotros tenemos que ser muy agradecidos por qué? Ss: por nuestro tono de piel.	Identifying the consequence of using nicknames Using metaphors to describe feelings Demonstrating understanding Totally consciousness of biological origin

Study: Social awareness as a basis for the construction of students' cultural meanings Teacher: Lizeth Espinosa Classroom observation and semi-structured interviews.	Question: How do English language learners construct cultural meanings through the lens of social justice when engaging in a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the EFL classroom?	

Date: September 18th Students' artifacts: cartoons created by students related to racism.	Objective: To unveil English language learners' construction of cultural meanings through their social awareness. To describe the ways through which English language learners develop their social awareness.	
In this session students talked about cartoons that they created based on cases they heard about racism. Ss: un día mi prima, estaba en un coro, y se encontró a una niña morenita, entonces mi prima se asustó y gritó y lloró. Entonces un día mi tía le regaló una muñeca que era morenita, entonces ella ya jugaba con la muñeca. Y después un día fuimos a una pescadería y se encontró a una niña morenita y ya no se asustó. T: ok, ¿qué podemos aprender de esta anécdota? Ss: que no hay que discriminar a las personas por su color de piel. Ss: que todos somos iguales. T: muy bien, ahora vamos a escuchar la historia de Sam. Ss: La historia es de mi prima salome, mi prima le dijo a mi tía que si le compraba una muñeca. Mi tía dijo que sí. Entonces fueron a una juguetería y había unas muñecas blancas y unas morenas, entonces mi prima dijo: mmm solo quiero una bonita y escogió las blancas y las morenas no las escogió T: ¿y por qué tú crees que no las escogió? Ss: tal vez porque es racista y no le gustan los negritos, cada vez que ve a un negrito le da asco.(the boy made a gesture of disgust) T: ¿le da asco, ella qué hace? Ss: ósea como que hace uuuuffuu (gestos). T: gracias, ahora Sara cuéntanos el tuyo. Ss: lo que pasó fue que mi mamá me contó, que cuando ella era pequeña había un niño que lo discriminaban por su color de piel. Y	Codes: Resorting to personal experiences Discursive rules Building stories around fear regarding race Statements of rejection towards discrimination Becoming aware of the behaviors of others Emerging Equality concepts Building stories around fear regarding race Recognizing traits of race in discriminatory practices Recognizing traits of race in discriminatory practices Connections between words and body expressions Discursive rules (discursive forms to soften discourse) Connections between words and body expressions Body language	

una vez vio que un grupo de tres niños que lo trataban mal, no lo dejaban jugar con él, lo callaban, cosas así…pero después cuando el negrito les dijo que todos éramos iguales, pues entonces ellos ya se quedaban pensando y pues lo entendieron y al final él vio que todos se volvían amigos.	Building stories around fear regarding race Recognizing traits of race in discriminatory practices Discursive rules (discursive forms to soften discourse)
T: muy bien, hay veces las personas se ofenden cuando uno les dice	
Ss: que es negro.	Discursive rules (discursive forms to soften discourse)
Ss: en vez de negro toca decir moreno.	co-constructing vocabulary
Ss: o afrocolombiano.	recognizing alternatives ways to label people
T: muy bien, ese es un término que debemos adoptar en nuestro vocabulario, porque hay personas de color como lo vimos en el cuento de Sulwe, a ella no le gustaba que le dijeran…	demonstrating understanding
Ss: dark porque es oscuridad	
Ss: blackie	
T: entonces qué tal si nosotros le decimos a una persona es que usted es negro	become aware of the feelings of others
Ss: se va a sentir mal, uno dice moreno	demonstrating understanding
Ss: mejor decir afrocolombiano.	Discursive rules (discursive forms to soften discourse)
T: Listo, muy bien, la historia que va a contar Juan fue una noticia que todos escuchamos. Vamos a ver si se acuerdan.	recognizing alternatives ways to label people
Ss: Profe es que se me olvida el nombre del país siempre.	familiarization with discrimination events
Ss: Fue en Estados Unidos.	
Ss: En Estados unidos, una vez llegaron dos policías, y los policías frenaron y vieron a un negrito, y le dijeron que se acostará, bueno voy a decir lo que recuerdo	Discursive rules (discursive forms to soften discourse)
T: está bien, cuéntanos lo que recuerdas.	familiarization with discrimination events
Ss: el policía le puso la rodilla en la nuca y se estuvo ahí, y a él le faltaba el aire y se estuvo ahí hasta matarlo. Solo por el color.	
T: ok, ¿recuerdan?, ¿alguien vio esa noticia?	
Ss: si yo.	interprets the relationship of actions to racism
Ss: los policías están en la cárcel.	
T: No estuvo bien lo que hizo la policía.	showing that there are alternative solutions demonstrating prior knowledge

Ss: no estuvo bien para matarlo porque le pudo haber pedido los documentos.	Making connections to reasons for rejection
T: bueno y ustedes que opinan de esa situación.	Rejection of racist actions
Ss: que está mal	
Ss: yo pienso que está mal discriminar a la persona y matarla por el color de piel, no?	Raising their own voice Rejection of racist actions
Ss: yo pienso que eso no se puede hacer, pues uno no debe matar a las personas por el color de piel.	Rejection of racist actions
Ss: yo pienso que estaba mal, porque lo mataron porque era negrito, en vez de matarlo lo podían llevar a la estación de policía, interrogarlo, investigar más de él.	showing that there are alternative solutions Rejection of racist actions Rejection and construction of ideas
Ss: yo pienso que está mal, porque ósea una persona que no había hecho casi nada malo, lo mataron.	Equality
Ss: pienso que está mal porque somos diferentes por fuera, pero por dentro somos iguales.	Justifying strong behaviors
Ss: Teacher, a veces a los policías no los autorizan matarlos, porque si tienen un arma para disparar pueden amenazar. Porque si están amenazando a los policías ahí si tienen derecho de matarlos.	Justifying strong behaviors
Ss: o pegarles con el bate ese.	
T: bueno, más allá de matarlos, ¿ellos tienen unas normas cierto? Obviamente, aquí hubo abuso de poder por parte de la policía.	Recognizing the influence of power
Ss: si ellos abusaron de su poder.	
T: claro, abusaron de su poder y no midieron las consecuencias ni la fuerza y las consecuencias fueron que la persona murió.	
T: Ahora escuchemos a esteban.	Assuming a proactive attitude towards racism
Ss: Esta es la historia de un niño moreno que quería tener amigos, y pues un día en el colegio el saludo a sus compañeros y ellos lo discriminaron diciéndole cosas como que quieres negro, entonces el niño les dijo que lo respetaran, pero los otros lo trataron mal.	Assuming a proactive attitude towards racism
Entonces el niño les dijo que todos eran iguales y los otros niños se quedaron pensando en esa frase.	Assuming a proactive attitude towards racism Promoting equality and consciousness
T: ¿cuál frase?	Assuming a proactive attitude towards racism

Ss: la de iguales. Y después entendieron que no importa si tienen muchas cosas o plata, o si no tienen nada todos somos iguales y somos iguales ante Dios. T: ahora yo me pregunto, ¿qué haríamos nosotros para detener el racismo aquí en Colombia, en nuestra ciudad? Ss: debemos convencer a las personas. T: ¿y cómo convencemos a alguien? Ss: le podríamos decir que todos somos iguales. Ss: les diríamos que no hay que discriminar a las personas. T: podríamos hacer por ejemplo un poster, imágenes… Ss: podríamos imprimir y poner como frases que digan: no importa el color de piel, igual todos somos iguales y no importa el color. Ss: podríamos hacer posters para entregárselos a las personas. T: ¿y cómo más podemos detener el racismo? Ss: No hablar mal de las personas. Ss: haciendo carteles de parar el racismo. T: también. Ss: ayudarlas T: ¿cómo? Ss: no sé, a reflexionar o algo así. Ss: ayudarlas a reflexionar que por el color de piel no somos diferentes ante Dios. Ss: todos somos iguales por dentro. Ss: no hacer sentir mal a las personas. Ss: no hablar mal de las personas, no decirle que esta feo. Ss: no reírnos por el color de piel. T: muy bien, entonces vamos a organizarnos en grupos y vamos a crear un poster.	Personal decisions to stop racism Assuming a proactive attitude towards racism Emphasizing on the need to promote reflection Assuming a proactive attitude towards racism Emphasizing on the need to promote reflection Including a religious perspective Promoting equality and consciousness Thinking about people's feelings Thinking about people's feelings Stopping mocking/bullying attitudes Establishing positions

<table>
<tr>
<td>Study: Social awareness as a basis for the construction of students' cultural meanings
Teacher: Lizeth Espinosa

Classroom observation and semi-structured interviews.
Date: September 21st, 26th
Posters created by students to stop racism.</td>
<td>Question: How do English language learners construct cultural meanings through the lens of social justice when engaging in a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the EFL classroom?
Objective: To unveil English language learners' construction of cultural meanings through their social awareness.
To describe the ways through which English language learners develop their social awareness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">In this session the students created posters with phrases and drawings alluding to stop racism.
The main questions to start the conversation with the students were:
Why did they draw and write what is on the poster?

Ss: Para enseñarle a las otras personas que no le hagan bullying a las otras personas que no son iguales a nosotros de diferente piel, pero en realidad todos somos iguales.
Ss: emm, para que la gente deje de hacerle bullying a las personas por su color de piel y su región.
T: ¿cómo así región?
Ss: ósea de donde viene.
T: Listo, ¿ustedes qué aprendieron haciendo este cartel?</td>
<td>Codes:

Stopping mocking/bullying attitudes
Assuming a proactive attitude towards racism
The need to raise awareness among others
Promoting equality and consciousness
Stopping mocking/bullying attitudes
Assuming a proactive attitude towards racism
The need to raise awareness among others
Promoting equality and consciousness
Being aware of the socio-cultural context of others
Stopping mocking/bullying attitudes</td>
</tr>
</table>

Ss: aprendimos que no debemos hacerle bullying a las otras personas porque todos somos iguales en realidad	Assuming a proactive attitude towards racism Promoting equality and consciousness
Ss: todos somos iguales por dentro y por fuera.	Promoting equality and consciousness
T: Listo del siguiente grupo. ¿Por qué dibujaron y escribieron lo que está en el cartel?	
Ss: pues para representar a los morenos y no les hagan bullying, porque, aunque tengamos defectos todos somos iguales.	Recognizing that there are not reasons for discrimination Demonstrate awareness of the issue
Ss: nosotros hicimos estos dibujos para defender a las personas a las que les hacen bullying por su tono de piel y su cultura ya que todos somos iguales ante Dios.	Assuming a proactive attitude towards racism Promoting equality and consciousness
T: Listo, kathe	
Ss: nosotros también decidimos hacer esta cartelera por que representa entre los morenos y los blancos, entre los dos no hay diferencia. Osea, como una vez que yo escuche, en la calle escuche a una señora que decía: los negritos son amigos de los negritos y los blancos son amigos de los blancos, pero eso no tiene nada de diferencia porque yo soy amiga de artas personas y soy morenita y lo que nos enseña aquí en la cartelera es que no importa el tono de piel todos somos amigos, somos casi como hermanos,	Taking others' positions as your own Assuming a proactive attitude towards racism Promoting equality and consciousness
T: muy bien, listo y ustedes que aprendieron	
Ss: yo aprendí que este tema es ósea este tema es muy triste porque pues uno no debería ser asi, ay viene tal persona asi de color de piel, no. Uno tiene como dijo kathe cada uno es igual asi tenga sus defectos todos somos iguales.	Stopping mocking/bullying attitudes Demonstrating their personal emotions about the social issue.
T: muy bien, gracias. Vamos con el grupo de los cuatro. Quien empieza	
Ss: hicimos este dibujo como para enseñar a las personas que no debemos criticar por el color de la piel ni siquiera por otros colores de la piel. Yo soy blanquita el resto de los niños son de diferentes colores, son morenos, afrocolombianos y todos estos colores y morenitos.	The need to raise awareness among others Promoting equality and consciousness Stopping mocking/bullying attitudes

Ss: esta cartelera la hicimos eeemm para enseñar que no debemos burlarnos cuando una persona morenita pasa y empiezan a hacerle bullying, obvio que esa persona se va a sentir mal. Todos por dentro somos iguales.	
Ss: no hay que criticar el color de piel porque gracias a Dios nos dio un color de piel y vida. Hay que entender de que todos somos diferentes, pero por dentro todos somos iguales.	
Ss: yo aprendi que hay que entender que las personas pueden ser diferentes, pero somo iguales.	
T: ¿por qué somos iguales?	Demonstrating understanding
Ss: todos somo iguales frente a Dios.	Showing interest for others to learn about the topic
Ss: somos iguales ya que Dios nos ve iguales, porque por dentro y por fuera somos como uno mismo. Nosotros asi tengamos defectos y asi seamos de diferente color de piel de los demás siempre vamos a encajar en el mundo.	Showing acceptance of how we are
Ss: o como diferente religión, de país, de color, de pelo, de ojos, de todo. Algunos somos altos, bajitos, pero tenemos como que las mismas capacidades para sentirnos iguales.	Accepting the differences of others
T: muy bien, siguiente grupo. ¿Por qué dibujaron y escribieron lo que está en el cartel?	
Ss: nosotros hicimos este poster para liberar a las personas afrocolombianas y que no haya más racismo porque el mundo y Dios nos dieron vida, pero, el racismo no debería estar primero que todo porque algunas personas se sienten mal, el racismo como por ejemplo daña las emociones.	Showing acceptance of how we are Showing acceptance of how we are Showing relation between social reality and the people's life.
T: muy bien	
Ss: hicimos esta cartelera para que dejen de criticar a las personas afrocolombianas.	Linking capabilities and emotions
T: ¿que aprendieron con este tema?	
Ss: yo aprendí a no criticar y no, bueno si, no criticar a las personas por su tono de piel porque todos somos iguales.	Showing concern for others
T: muy bien, vamos con el ultimo. ¿Por qué dibujaron y escribieron lo que está en el cartel?	Raising a voice for others

Ss: porque hay muchas personas que han ofendido a personas afrocolombianas.	Being consciousness of other feelings
Ss: aprendí que no toca ofender a las demás personas por su color y que todos somos iguales por dentro de los sentimientos.	Raising a position
Ss: yo aprendí que no hay que ofender a la otra persona por su tono de color.	
Ss: yo aprendí que uno no se tiene que burlar de las demás personas.	Showing understading
Ss: yo aprendí que yo no debo de ofender a las personas por lo que son en realidad y pues que hay que seguir metiéndole en la cabeza a la gente que esto puede lastimar a las demás personas nada más por ser como Dios los creo.	Showing understanding of the consequences of the topic
T: aja, muy bien.	Raising a self position
Ss: osea no importa por el color de piel, debemos ser amigos porque lo importante son sus acciones, no ser envidioso y no ser grosero.	Raising a self position
T: listo, muy bien. Nosotros terminamos este tema de racismo, vamos a empezar a ver otro tema muy interesante que está pasando y que afecta nuestra sociedad.	Showing understanding
	Showing understanding on social interactions

Study: Social awareness as a basis for the construction of students' cultural meanings Teacher: Lizeth Espinosa Classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. Date: October 19th children's story: the Jaguar's eyes	Question: How do English language learners construct cultural meanings through the lens of social justice when engaging in a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the EFL classroom? Objective: To unveil English language learners' construction of cultural meanings through their social awareness. To describe the ways through which English language learners develop their social awareness.	
For this semi-structured interview, the students observed a story called "the eyes of the jaguar", which related how important this animal was for the indigenous culture. With this story the students gave their opinion about the traditions and meanings of the indigenous people in relation to these animals. T: Bueno, la historia de los ojos de jaguar nos está hablando del jaguar, siendo el animal, un animal. ¿Doméstico o salvaje? Ss: salvajes. T: estamos viendo que es un animal muy importante para la cultura indígena. ¿Por qué? Levanten la mano. Ss: Porque es un Animal sagrado que puede llevar a personas a otros lugares. ¿Por ejemplo, a Guanajuato, cómo se llama? T: Ok Sara sigue.		Cultural significance Cultural significance

Ss: porque puede guiar a las personas y pues que es un animal sagrado para muchos.	Respect for other cultures Cultural significance
Ss: porque puede ver el corazón de las personas y también puede verse si las personas son amables son.	Equality
T: Ajá por eso también es importante este animal para ellos sí, porque los puede llevar a otro lugar, pero nos está diciendo que para ellos el jaguar es sagrado, ¿por qué?	Indigenous art expression and indigenous practices
Ss: Porque uno de los dioses del arte, le pinto los ojos y con esos ojos puede ver el alma, el corazón y la mente de un humano.	Cultural significance Respect for other cultures
T: OK listo. ¿Por qué creen que él dejó entrar? Le permitió ir a Guanajuato.	Cultural significance Equality and social justice
Ss: Porque tiene un buen corazón. Porque es noble.	
Ss: Por qué los espíritus se lo concedieron.	
T: Ok, por eso también podemos decir que las personas tienen esta cultura de cuidar a los animales, ¿cierto? ¿Bueno, qué más podemos aprender de la historia de los ojos del jaguar?	Respect for nature and spiritual beliefs
Ss: Hay muchos animales que no las cazan porque son sagrados para ellos.	Indigenous art expression and indigenous practices Cultural significance
Ss: como las Pinturas sagradas de la cueva.	Respect for other cultures
T: ¿Ahora quién me ayuda a crear, recordar, pensar en unas cuantas diferencias entre la cultura de ellos y nuestra cultura? dices una diferencia, una característica de ellos y la comparas con una característica nuestra.	
Ss: Pues que ellos cazan, en cambio nosotros compramos los alimentos	Comparison of cultures Cross-cultural exchange
Ss: La vestimenta. Nosotros usamos Jean, así de cuero y eso y ellos allá se ven, pero cuero, pero de animales.	Social awareness for other cultures
Ss: Por su hablar porque ellos hablan diferente y nosotros hablamos diferente.	
T: Explícate.	
Ss: Ósea, nosotros no sabemos hablar indígena y ellos no saben hablar nuestro idioma. Español.	Respect for indigenous art expression and indigenous practices

Ss: Por como sus pinturas que son sagradas y acá unas pinturas como ah bueno tan bonita y así. T: OK tú dices pinturas sagradas en donde ¿Dónde ellos ponen sus pinturas sagradas, donde pintan? Ss: En cuevas, paredes y a veces en el piso. T: OK, Nico nos hace pensar que ellos también pintan, pero ellos no solo pintan los espacios. ¿Dónde más ellos reflejan su cultura? Ss: En el baile. Ss: En la piel. T: Muy bien, porque ustedes creen que ellos pintan su rostro o pintan su cuerpo. Ss: Por su cultura. Ss: Por su creencia. T: Que más chicos. Ss: por su forma de ser.	Cultural significance indigenous art expression and indigenous practices Cultural significance Respect for other cultures Cultural significance Equality Acceptance of other personalities

Study: Social awareness as a basis for the construction of students' cultural meanings Teacher: Lizeth Espinosa Classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. Date: October 17th	Question: How do English language learners construct cultural meanings through the lens of social justice when engaging in a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the EFL classroom? Objective: To unveil English language learners' construction	

students' opinions on multiculturalism in schools	of cultural meanings through their social awareness. To describe the ways through which English language learners develop their social awareness.	
To introduce the topic of indigenous culture, I ask students a question about children of indigenous culture and their adaptation in urban schools. T: ¿Estamos hablando de estos niños que están en el colegio que vienen de una cultura indígena, ustedes porque creen que ha sido difícil para ellos adaptarse a un colegio? Ss: Porque ellos hablan un idioma muy diferente y enseñarlos a hablar este idioma o sea el español es como muy difícil. Ss: También por su ropa T: ¿Bueno por qué crees que es difícil para ellos por su ropa? Ss: Porque como vienen de otro, eh pues no podría conseguir ropa. Ss: por la economía Ss: Por la cultura, porque nosotros tenemos nuestra cultura diferente a la de ellos y pues acostumbrarse a cosas diferentes pues muchas veces no es fácil. T: ajá Ss: Yo creo que se les hace difícil por su discriminación. T: ¿Por qué? Ss: Por el color, por qué a veces en Bogotá y en Colombia discriminamos mucho a todos los de esa región y no pensamos en los que le harían. T: Ok, muy bien. Ss: Porque sufrirían bullying por su cultura		Language culture Dressing way Economical context Cultural manners Discrimination actions Racism suffering bullying because of their culture

T: ¿Porque creen ustedes que sufrían bullying por su cultura? Ss: Por la ropa, por su color de piel. Ss: Por su hablar. T: bueno pues imagínese que la cultura indígena nos ha enseñado a través de los años nos ha enseñado mucho y nosotros hemos aprendido muchas cosas de ellos. En cuanto a la naturaleza, la medicina, la vida salvaje y silvestre de los animales y algunas prácticas que nosotros usamos en nuestro diario vivir. Sin embargo, lo que ustedes dicen es verdad, la ropa, la cultura, sus costumbres, las palabras, el idioma es muy diferente a lo que es esta región Andina. Quiero mostrarles una mirada diferente sobre la cultura indígena, miren este cuento que vamos a hablar, es los ojos del jaguar y de ahí a partir de este cuento vamos a hablar que entendemos, que aprendemos de su cultura. Vamos a mirar lo que ellos opinan de los animales, porque la opinión de ellos es muy diferente de la nuestra. Ss: Teacher es como la leyenda del dorado, que le tiraban ofrendas al Jaguar.	racism and dressing way speaking manner

<table>
<tr><td>Study: Social awareness as a basis for the construction of students' cultural meanings
Teacher: Lizeth Espinosa

Classroom observation and semi-structured interviews.
Date: October 23rd
cultural parallels created by the students</td><td>Question: How do English language learners construct cultural meanings through the lens of social justice when engaging in a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the EFL classroom?
Objective: To unveil English language learners' construction of cultural meanings through their social awareness.
To describe the ways through which English language learners develop their social awareness.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">For this session the students developed a parallel between the indigenous culture and their culture, highlighting different aspects.

T: Entonces esta es la guía de la cultura indígena y mi cultura hecha por Gaby y Mariana, ¿por qué dibujaron lo que tienen ahí?
Ss: Porque es que yo vi entre la cultura indígena y nuestra cultura yo vi una diferencia la ropa.
T: La ropa muy bien, ¿qué más? Mariana qué quieres decir tú, porque la ropa?
Ss: La ropa porque ellos a veces se ponen como ropa de vestidos y eso, pero los hombres también se ponen a veces vestiditos pero la diferencia de los hombres de mi cultura es que los hombres se ponen pantalón.
Ss: Los instrumentos por que la flauta los huecos los tiene más abajo que la de nosotros.</td><td>Dressing way as a difference in cultures

Dressing way as a difference in cultures

Musical instruments</td></tr>
</table>

T: Ok y ustedes creen que por haber una diferencia entre la ropa y los y los instrumentos, ellos no son iguales a nosotros o ustedes qué opinan de esas diferencias. ¿Las personas de las culturas indígenas como las habíamos visto, ustedes creen que son diferentes o iguales a nosotros para pensar o será que ellos pueden tener las mismas oportunidades que nosotros? o ustedes qué piensan de eso.	Equality and acceptance of other positions
Ss: Yo pienso que todos debemos tener el mismo trato y creo que piensan diferente.	Relationship between structures
T: ¿Piensa diferente de nosotros, porque creen que piensan diferente?	
Ss: Porque a ellos se les ocurrió hacer la cueva, pero los de mi cultura hicieron la casa, las hacen como los constructores.	
T: qué bien, gracias. Ahora voy con la de Juan y Esteban. ¿Qué dibujaron ustedes y porque lo dibujaron?	Dressing way as a difference in cultures
Ss: por ejemplo, su ropa, ellos utilizan ropa, así como de animales y nosotros utilizamos ropa así normal de jean, de tela y todo eso. Nosotros tenemos otra, nosotros tenemos otras comidas a diferencia de ellos. Tal vez nosotros comamos pescado y todo igual que ellos, pero ellos pueden tener un animal que no coman que nosotros si comamos.	Food Respect for other cultures
T: Ok, ¿entonces será que el hecho de que ellos coman cosas diferentes se vista diferentes los hacen muy diferentes a nosotros para que nosotros los tratemos de una forma diferente o cómo sería nuestro trato hacia ellos?	Students' social positions Empathy and respect for others
Ss: No, aunque tengan cosas diferentes a la de nosotros no nos toca juzgar.	
T: muy bien, muy bien eso está perfecto. Voy con el siguiente grupo, vamos con Alan. ¿Qué dibujaron?	Recognizing differences between cultures
Ss: dibujamos nuestras culturas y las de los indígenas. sí eh pues nosotros tenemos las casas hechas de cemento y ladrillos, y en cambio ellos están hechas con paja o barro. También la vestimenta porque eh nuestra cultura tiene más diferente la ropa,	

por ejemplo, tela porque está tejida, tiene pelo como artificiales, así es la de nosotros en cambio la de ellos, sí son de hojas normales y de animales. Los instrumentos son muy diferentes, como las flautas, las guitarras. Bueno las guitarras eléctricas no hay allá por ejemplo como acá si hay, las flautas son de madera.	interest in other cultures
T; ustedes creen que, si ellos estuvieran viviendo aquí en nuestra ciudad, ¿a ustedes qué les gustaría saber de la cultura de ellos?	interest in other cultures
Ss: saber su idioma sí y saber cómo es su día cómo es que hacen las cosas a cada rato.	Cross-cultural communication
Ss: pues el idioma, los animales sagrados y las pinturas, porque me llama mucho la atención.	Recognizing differences between cultures
T: listo, perfecto. voy con el grupo de Sara y Samuelito. ¿Ustedes qué dibujaron?	
Ss: nosotros dibujamos como las costumbres de ellos y todo lo de ellos eh comparándolo con lo nuestro, encontramos muchas diferencias en bastantes cosas y pues acá, por ejemplo, dibujamos a ellos cazando, pero si nosotros vamos a un restaurante ya nos sirven la comida sin tener que hacer ningún esfuerzo. Acá pues es la ropa, acá ellos se pintan la cara cosas así. Nosotros nos vestimos así con camisa con pantalón, vestidos y tenis. Mientras que ellos hacen como su propia ropa como con piel de animales o con cosas de la naturaleza. Aquí son los instrumentos, hay 2 instrumentos que por ejemplo ellos este cosito lo usan como una flauta y este pues como también. Mientras que nosotros usamos guitarras, tambores, pianos todo eso.	Cross-cultural communication Interest for cultural exchange Equity and respect for other cultures
T: ¿a ti qué te gustaría aprender de ellos, si tuvieras la oportunidad de conocer o de convivir en un contexto como el colegio con un estudiante que sea de cultura indígena?	Students' positions: social agent
Ss: a mí me gustaría aprender como sus costumbres, su idioma para yo poder comunicarme con ellos y pues ellos explicarme qué es lo que hacen cada día, que hacen, como cazan cosas así, como sus creencias.	Friendship promotion Equality and inclusion Rejecting discriminatory acts

T: ¿y tú que le enseñarías de nuestra cultura a ellos? Ss: yo les enseñaría como a hacer amigos, por ejemplo, porque es que hay mucha gente que los discrimina por nada más su color de piel o por su cultura o costumbres eh entonces pues yo creo que eso no debería ser así porque todos somos iguales. T: ¿listo Katherine y paulis ustedes que diferencias encontraron? Ss: primero la ropa de ellos es muy diferente a la de nosotros porque la de nosotros son como faldas y ombligueras, camisas largas. Eh la región, la región de ellos es cómo pintarse la cara, pintarse el cuerpo en cambio nosotros no hacemos eso, es como algo especial para mí se siente como especial. T: ¿porque crees que ellos se pintan el rostro? Ss: por las creencias Ss: otra es la comida, ellos cazan y a veces cultivan. Ellos son como vegetarianos, ellos cuidan a los animales y si ellos cazan es para mandar a la ciudad para que nosotros comamos. Los instrumentos, pero no me acuerdo, cómo era que se llama este instrumento. T: ¿las claves? Ss: sí este sí, lo utilizan que uno lo bate y suena como un ruidito y parece una maraca. En cambio, nosotros utilizamos tambores, guitarras, piano. T: ¿qué pasaría si tuvieras aquí un amiguito de cultura indígena? Ss: no le discriminaría y le preguntaría cuáles son creencias y por qué se pinta la cara. T: ¿Dylan ustedes que encontraron de diferencias? Ss: pues la ropa y también la comida, los instrumentos y todo eso. T: ¿y por qué crees que son diferencias entre nosotros y ellos? Ss: porque primero ellos son colombianos, pero a la vez como que no hablan el español. T: ¿porque crees que no hablan español?	Interest for cultural exchange Equity and respect for other cultures Belief systems Interest for other cultures Respect for other cultures Cross-cultural communication Interest for cultural exchange Equity and respect for other cultures Rejecting discriminatory acts Promoting fairness and equality Cross-cultural communication Interest for cultural exchange Equity and respect for other cultures Rejecting discriminatory acts

Ss: pues como son indígenas, todavía no saben hablar en el español. pues si yo me encontrara a uno de ellos. Yo sería su amigo, le preguntaría qué de dónde viene y cuáles son sus costumbres y su cultura, más de su cultura. T: ¿y le enseñarías de tu cultura? Ss: sí, le enseñaría el fútbol, le enseñaría a hacer cosas de nuestra cultura, más de más cosas que ellos todavía no saben hacer muy bien.	

Study: Social awareness as a basis for the construction of students' cultural meanings Teacher: Lizeth Espinosa Classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. Date: October 4th student's opinion posts- it	Question: How do English language learners construct cultural meanings through the lens of social justice when engaging in a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the EFL classroom? Objective: To unveil English language learners' construction of cultural meanings through their social awareness. To describe the ways through which English language learners develop their social awareness.	
In this session, students interact about the images in the wall related to different kind of Colombian people, and the students' words in the posts its. T: Bueno aquí hay una niña de una cultura de cultura indígena, unos niños que viven en un pueblo, aquí está Mariana Pajón y Juan Guillermo Cuadrado. Ahora yo les pregunto, ya entendemos que es racismo, ¿cierto? ya entendemos también que es discriminación. qué diríamos sobre el racismo? Ss: irrespetar el color de piel del otro. Como por decir, si Alan fuera negro, yo diría ay mira ese negro, nunca jugaría con él. Ss: es como ofender a una persona afrocolombiana. T: ¿ok, y que entendemos por discriminación? ¿Que será discriminar a alguien?		Rejecting Discriminatory Acts Social awareness for the skin color of others Recognizing the effects of racism and discrimination

Ss: discriminar a alguien por no saber tanto.	Addressing issues of discrimination and racism
Ss: por su región.	Addressing issues of discrimination and racism
Ss: por su color de piel.	Addressing issues of discrimination and racism
Ss: o por su idioma	Addressing issues of discrimination and racism
Ss: o por una enfermedad como algunos que tienen cáncer.	
T: ¿Que más podría ser la discriminación? por ejemplo yo les hago una pregunta en base a estas imágenes, ustedes creen que en algún momento estos niños sufrieron discriminación.	
Ss: sí.	
T: a ver Gabi, ¿cuál crees y por qué? si quieres puedes venir y tocar la imagen. ¿En cuál?	
Ss: por su tono de piel.	Addressing issues of discrimination and racism
T: Alan tu turno.	
Ss: ella por su región.	Addressing issues of discrimination and racism
T: ¿porque por su región?	
Ss: por qué hay diferentes regiones acá en Colombia, porque como acá es como más o sea es como una región grande.	Acceptance of other cultures
T: Katherine tu turno.	
Ss: yo creo que ellos sufrieron por sus condiciones de vida y por su color por ser un poco oscuro.	Self- acceptance and acceptance of others Rejecting racism acts
T: samuel.	Rejecting discriminatory acts
Ss: por qué el es moreno y tal vez le hacían bullying.	Rejecting bullying acts
Ss: yo creo profe que también les pusieron apodos.	Addressing issues of nicknames
T: ven Nicolas.	
Ss: yo creo que el, porque como es morenito, tal vez en todos los lugares le decían ay no, no lo vamos a dejar jugar porque es un negro asqueroso y así.	Addressing issues of social justice Addressing issues of discrimination and racism
Ss: yo creo que ella por su idioma.	Addressing issues of discrimination and racism
T: ¿cuál idioma crees que ella habla?	
Ss: no lo se.	
T: ¿pero tú crees que no es el español?	
Ss: aja.	

Study: Social awareness as a basis for the construction of students' cultural meanings Teacher: Lizeth Espinosa Classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. Date: October 5th students' opinion about the life story of Juan Guillermo Cuadrado	Question: How do English language learners construct cultural meanings through the lens of social justice when engaging in a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the EFL classroom? Objective: To unveil English language learners' construction of cultural meanings through their social awareness. To describe the ways through which English language learners develop their social awareness.	
After the posts its activity, the students listened to Juan Guillermo Cuadrado's life story and gave their opinion about the challenges the player faced throughout his life. T: alguien sabe de dónde viene, ¿dónde nació, como se llama la ciudad de Juan Guillermo cuadrado? Ss: de Colombia. T: ¿sí, pero en qué lugar de Colombia? Bueno, hoy quiero contarles la historia de Juan Guillermo cuadrado. El nació en un pueblo que se llama Necoclí, ¿cómo se llama este pueblo? Ss: Necoclí. T: este es un pueblo que está ubicado en el departamento de Antioquia, la mayoría no todos, pero gran parte de este pueblo		Cultural knowledge Cultural knowledge

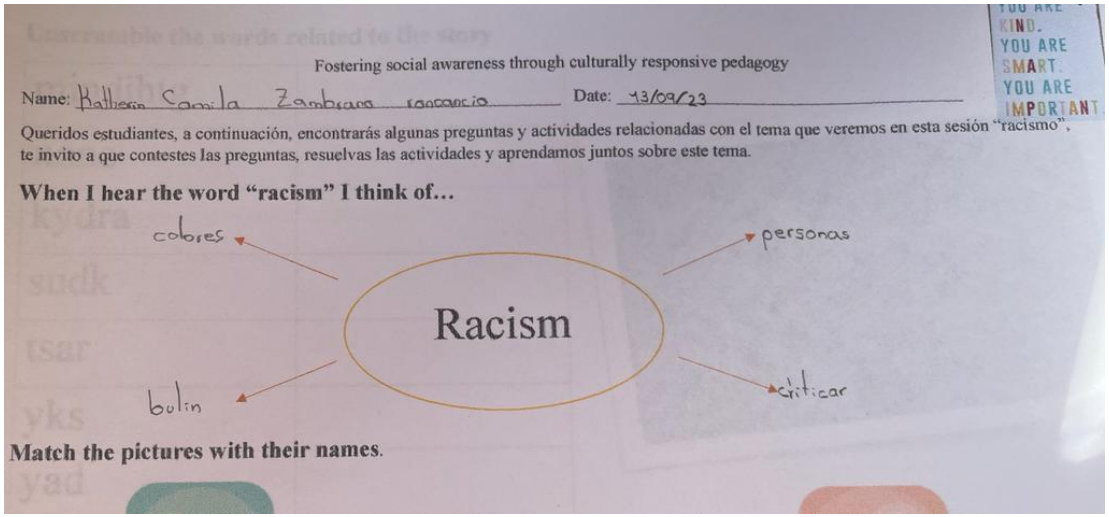
tienen este tono de piel, son afrocolombianos. Ahora que sucedió con Juan Guillermo cuadrado, el nació en 1988, a esta fecha él tiene 35 años.	
Ss: ¿sigue jugando?	
T: sigue jugando, claro. Tiene 35 años, pero cuando Juan Guillermo cuadrado nació en esa época eso era como el que hacia los años 90. imagínese que Colombia estaba atravesando un periodo muy fuerte de violencia. Había grupos rebeldes.	Addressing issues of social justice
Ss: grupos armados.	
T: como de la guerrilla, estaban atemorizando, amedrentando a las personas de los pueblos y las estaban asesinando. Algunas personas estaban muriendo.	Rejecting acts of violence
Ss: esas personas van en contra de los otros, de Colombia.	Rejecting acts of violence
Ss: pelean por la región o por religiones.	Comparison with other cultures
Ss: como lo que sucede en Israel,	
T: Ok, explícate más. qué pasa están en guerra, contra quién es?	Recognizing violent groups
Ss: si contra Hamas.	
T: si, muy bien. Entonces que sucede para no desviarnos tanto. Imagínense que similar a lo de Israel, pero no tan fuerte, había mucha violencia, mataban a las personas, iban a los pueblos y cobraban plata a las personas por tener tiendas. Por cruzar una montaña cobraban un peaje. Todo lo que estaban haciendo era ilegal, tanto fue así que cuando Juan C cumplió 4 años, él estaba en la casa y su padre fue asesinado. Los papás le habían enseñado a Cuadrado que cuando él escuchará disparos él ya sabía que tenía que esconderse, meterse debajo de la cama o esconderse en un armario. Pero el ese día escucho los disparos frente a su casa, se escondió, pero lo que no sabía fue que tristemente su padre había sido herido y murió. Después de eso a la mamá de Juan Guillermo le tocó criarlo sola. Su mamá no había terminado sus estudios y no tenia muchas posibilidades. La mamá se dio cuenta que Juan era muy inteligente y le gustaba jugar fútbol. Para poder ingresarlo en una escuela, así una	

escuela como la de Samuel, es necesario pagar una cuota mínima. Así que, su mamá trabajaba y lo dejaba con sus tíos mientras ella se iba a trabajar. Ahora les voy a mostrar la imagen de cómo era Juan Cuadrado con la mamá cuando era pequeño. Aquí hay otra cuando él empezó a jugar. Entonces la mamá se dio cuenta que Juan Guillermo podía ser un buen futbolista, de pronto no pensaba que fuera a ser un futbolista como ahora lo es, pero ella se esforzó por pagarle un estudio y al mismo tiempo pagarle la escuela. En la escuela Juan Guillermo sufrió discriminación porque no tenía a los papás, su padre había muerto y su madre tenía que trabajar. También sufrió discriminación y lo rechazaron por su tono de piel. Pero algo muy importante y que yo quiero que nosotros tengamos en cuenta y podamos aprender de la historia es que Juan Guillermo cuadrado nunca se rindió, siempre estudió nunca se atrasó, nunca perdió años. Siempre fue uno de los mejores estudiantes, siempre esperaba que la mamá llegara para mostrarle las buenas calificaciones y esto hizo que la mamá también se motivará. porque qué tal el ser un mal estudiante pues la mamá diría ya no le pagó más la escuela de futbol. Juan Guillermo cuadrado empezó jugando en estas escuelas cuando después los entrenadores de esas escuelas vieron que él tenía un gran potencial y ya empezaron fue a inscribirlo en otras escuelas. Ss: aunque no les gustara su color de piel, les gusto como estudiaba y como hacia todo. T: entonces él estuvo en el club atlético de Urabá y luego hizo parte del Río negro de Colombia y luego su buen desempeño fichó con el deportivo independiente Medellín. A los 20 años ya había logrado estar en diferentes equipos, y en el equipo de la primera A de Colombia debutó el 14/09/2009 frente al Boyacá chico, partido en el que anotó su primer gol como profesional. Luego de haber terminado sus estudios siguió entrenando ya en las ligas deportivas ya estaba en Colombia en la selección	Recognizing equality Social awareness of others

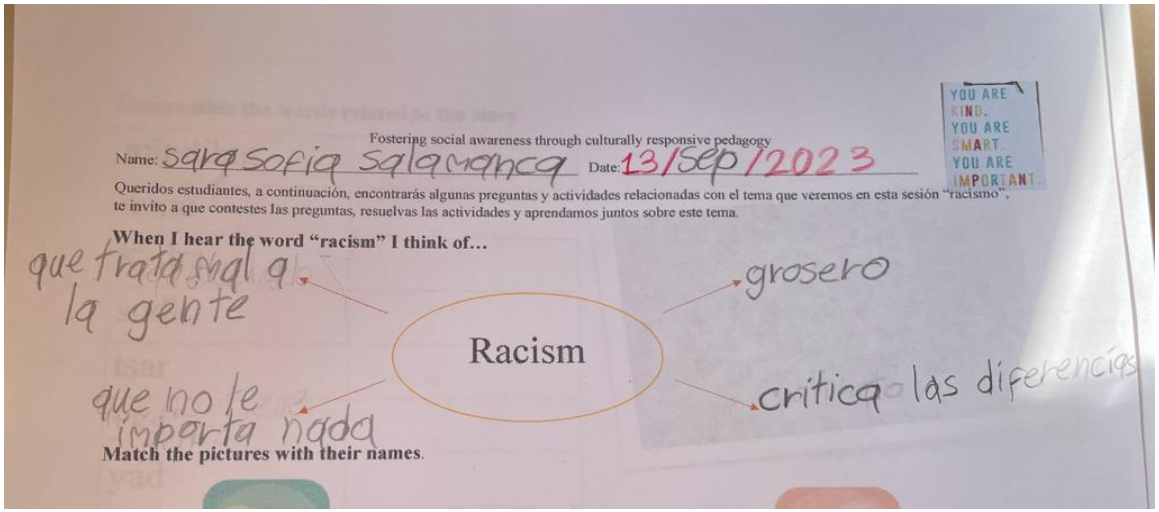
Colombia. Lo vieron tan bueno en Colombia que lo llamaron a jugar a Europa y su primer equipo fue la Fiorentina. En la fiorentina estuvo también después del 2012 hizo muchos goles, luego estuvo un tiempo en el Everton en un equipo inglés luego en el equipo italiano y luego estuvo también en la Juventus. Ahora pues ya se cambió de equipo. ¿Que nos enseña la historia del cuadrado? Cuadrado nunca olvidó a la mamá y dijo que apenas él pudiera ser, ¿cuál era la meta de cuadrado? Ss: ser uno de los mejores futbolistas. T: para ayudar a su mamá. que dijo el? él dijo que apenas él tuviera dinero le iba a comprar una casa, iba a ayudar mucho a su mamá y eso hizo cumplió el sueño de su mamá, los ayuda y él ahorita pues está casado y tiene varios hijos. ahora pregunto de todo lo que hemos hablado de Juan Guillermo cuadrado ustedes creen que su tono de piel fue un impedimento para salir adelante o todas las críticas o todas las burlas? Ss: no porque él nunca se rindió y siempre siguió adelante. Ss: aunque le pusieron apodos el siguió adelante. Ss: él nunca se rindió sin importar que le dijeran. T: exacto.	Sociocultural inspired actions Self- empowerment Rejecting discriminatory acts Opposing discriminatory acts

Appendix D: Students' artifacts

Students' artifacts September 13th



Students' artifacts September 13th



Students' artifacts September 18th



Students' artifacts September 18th



Students' artifacts September 18th



Students' artifacts September 21st



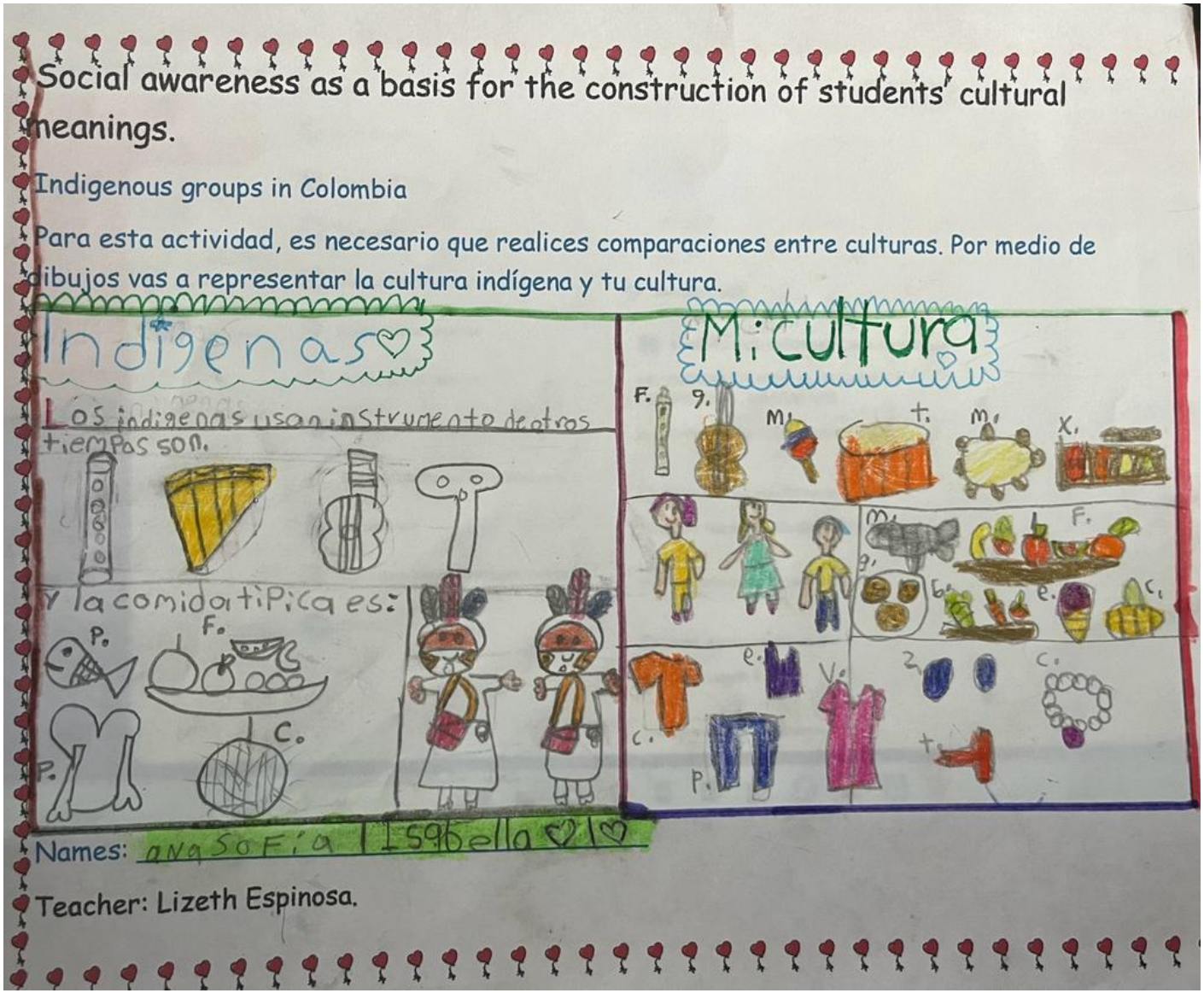
Students' artifacts September 21st



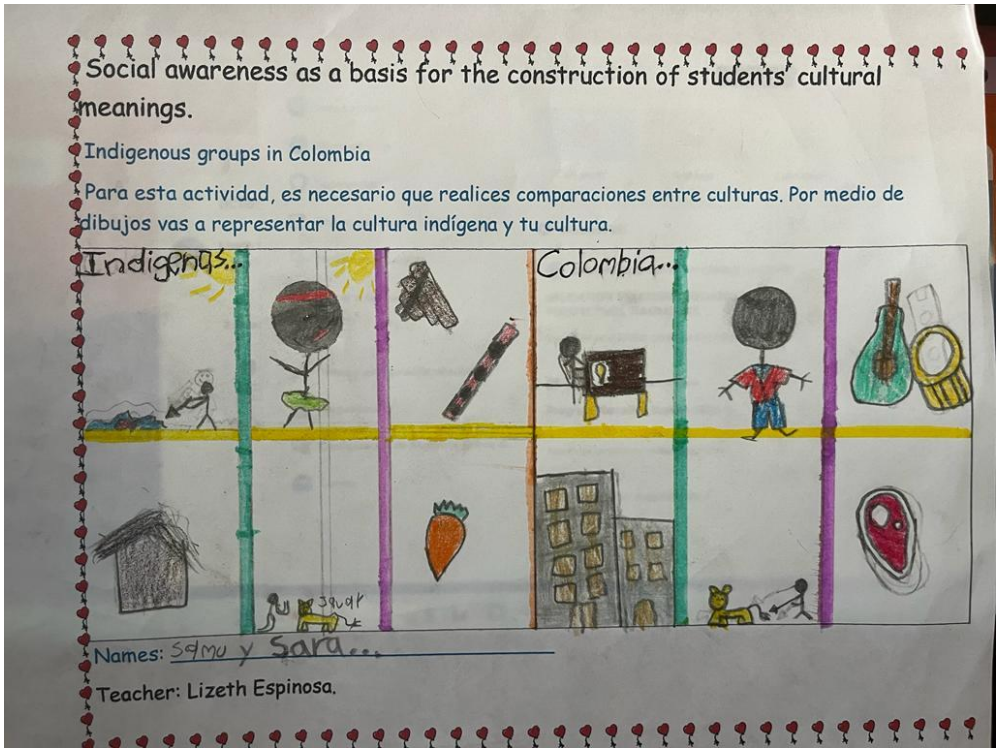
Students' artifacts October 4th



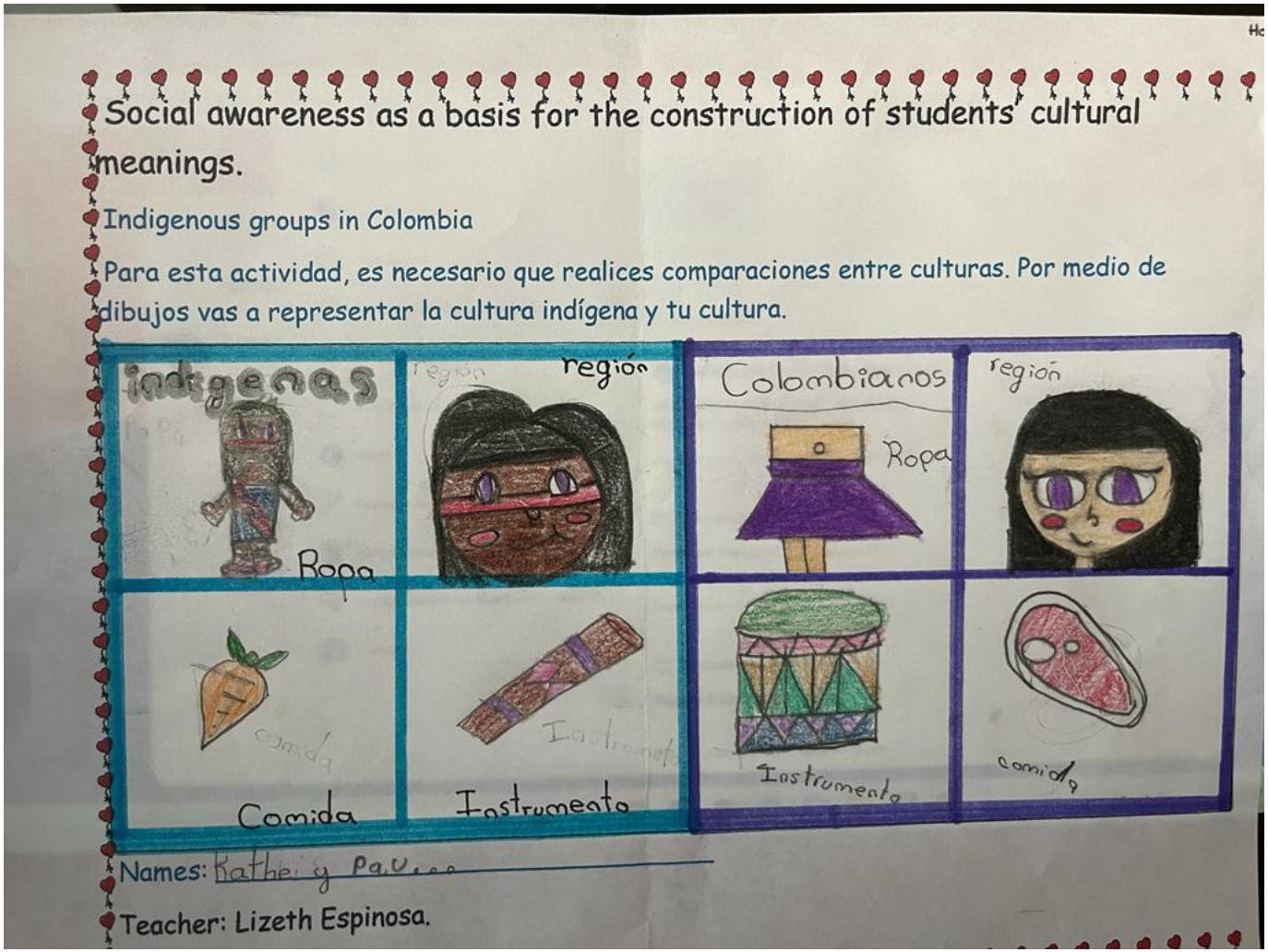
Students' artifacts October 23rd


Social awareness as a basis for the construction of students' cultural meanings.
Indigenous groups in Colombia
Para esta actividad, es necesario que realices comparaciones entre culturas. Por medio de dibujos vas a representar la cultura indígena y tu cultura.
Indigenas
Los indigenas usan instrumento de otros tiempos son.
Y la comida tipica es:
Mi cultura
Names: ANASOFIA ISABELLA
Teacher: Lizeth Espinosa.

Students' artifacts October 23rd



Students' artifacts October 23rd


Social awareness as a basis for the construction of students' cultural meanings.
Indigenous groups in Colombia
Para esta actividad, es necesario que realices comparaciones entre culturas. Por medio de dibujos vas a representar la cultura indígena y tu cultura.
indígenas
Ropa
región
Comida
Instrumento
Colombianos
Ropa
región
Instrumento
Comida
Names:
Teacher: Lizeth Espinosa.

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA MENORES DE EDAD

Fostering social awareness by means of using Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Estimados padres de familia o representantes legales:

El Liceo Infantil Le Fountain esta interesado en fomentar la conciencia social en los estudiantes por medio de actividades basadas en una pedagogía culturalmente responsable, que les permitirá reflexionar, tomar conciencia y fortalecer su posición frente a temas cotidianos que se viven día a día. Este estudio se realizará en las áreas de inglés y español. Para ello, la profesora Lizeth Espinosa del grado 2 ha creado una serie de materiales que pretenden motivar a los niños y niñas a expresar sus ideas sobre algunos temas propuestos por medio de escritos, dibujos entre otros. Uno de los objetivos es sistematizar las actividades, examinarlas y desvelar cómo incide en las posiciones de los niños. El proyecto que se ha diseñado se llama *"promoviendo la conciencia social a través de una pedagogía culturalmente responsable"* y forma parte de las actividades que se harán en la clase de inglés y español.

El proyecto es respaldo por las directivas del Liceo Infantil Le Fountain y se realizará durante las clases del presente semestre académico. Forma también parte del trabajo de investigación de la profesora a cargo de este curso y es parte de su formación como maestra que busca mejorar las practicas de enseñanza en el colegio.

Para examinar el impacto de este proyecto necesitamos recoger las historias que los niños escriban y hacer algunas grabaciones en video o audio durante la realización de las actividades. Queremos contar con su autorización para emplear esta información y así dar cuenta de cambios en las competencias y de convivencia de los estudiantes. Como maestra investigadora la docente garantiza lo siguiente:

- No habrá consecuencia favorable o desfavorable por participar en el proyecto
- Se emplearán nombres ficticios para proteger la identidad de los niños
- El proyecto no representa riesgo alguno para su integridad física, intelectual o emocional
- Todos los niños recibirán el mismo tratamiento aún si ustedes deciden que los datos no formen parte del proyecto
- Usted puede hacer cualquier pregunta sobre el proyecto en cualquiera de sus etapas
- Los datos que se recojan se trataran con respeto
- Si se emplean imágenes de los niños, están serán pixeladas para proteger su identidad

Por favor firme esta carta y comuníquese con la profesora Lizeth Espinosa para más información

Yo _____ identificado(a) con cédula _____ acepto que mi hijo(a) _____ participe en este proyecto.

Firma _____
PROFESORA Lizeth Espinosa

Learner observer 2023

LICEO INFANTIL LE FOUNTAIN
RESOLUCIÓN 1573 DEL 30 DE MAYO DE 2003
"INSTRUYE AL NIÑO EN SU CAMINO, Y AUN CUANDO FUERE VIEJO NO SE APARTARÁ DE ÉL"

FOTO	AÑO ESCOLAR: 2023	BIMESTRE:
	GRADO: Segundo	TELÉFONO:
	ESTUDIANTE: E	EDAD: RH:
	NOMBRE DEL DIRECTOR DE CURSO: Lizeth Espinosa	
NOMBRE DEL PADRE:		CONTACTO:
NOMBRE DE LA MADRE:		CONTACTO:
NOMBRE DEL ACUDIENTE:		CONTACTO:

CONCEPTO DEL DOCENTE

- Eimy debes mejorar tu comportamiento ya que has agredido físicamente a un compañero.
- Se realiza llamado de atención por incumplimiento con tareas, llegadas tarde a clase.
- Debido a las llegadas tarde para recoger a la estudiante, Proxima llegada tarde se activa ruta de atención.
- Entrega informe académico. /NO asistio a la reunión

FECHA: 24/04/23 FIRMA DEL DIRECTOR DE CURSO:

CONCEPTO DEL DOCENTE

26/04/23 Se realiza reunión con la mamita, explicandose el rendimiento academico y de convivencia de Eimy. Se genera un compromiso academico para mejorar rendimiento de eimy.