

CRITICAL INTERCULTURAL LEARNING THROUGH TOPICS OF DEEP CULTURE IN AN EFL CLASSROOM

APRENDIZAJE INTERCULTURAL CRÍTICO MEDIANTE TEMAS DE LA CULTURA PROFUNDA EN LA CLASE DE INGLÉS

APPRENTISSAGE INTERCULTUREL CRITIQUE AU TRAVERS DE THÉMATIQUES DE LA CULTURE PROFONDE EN CLASSE D'ANGLAIS

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ABSTRACT

This article reports a qualitative research study in an advanced EFL (English as a Foreign Language) class of the language program at a public University in Bogotá, Colombia in 2013. Through a critical multiculturalism approach to education, the study explores how EFL pre-service teachers addressed complicated topics of *deep* culture rather than studying usual congratulatory topics of surface culture. Deep/complex elements of the target culture, the United States, and EFL pre-service teachers' own culture, Colombia, were discussed through the reading of authentic literary short stories of the U.S. in order to build pre-service teachers' critical intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Findings show that participants built critical thinking and intercultural awareness when they read and talked about controversial topics present in the short stories, and related them to their own culture and life experiences. Among others, they discussed issues dealing with the loss of cultural identity, the difference between cultural assimilation and acculturation, social injustice, prejudice, and social class struggles. The study indicates that deep culture should be a relevant teaching content in the professional preparation of EFL pre-service teachers.

Keywords: surface culture, deep culture, critical multiculturalism, intercultural communicative competence, EFL pre-service teachers

RESUMEN

Este artículo describe una investigación cualitativa realizada en una clase de inglés avanzado perteneciente a un programa de lenguas modernas en una Universidad pública en Bogotá, Colombia, en el 2013. Desde el enfoque de multiculturalismo crítico, el estudio muestra cómo un grupo de profesores de inglés en formación abordaron temas complicados de la *cultura profunda* en lugar de temas "admirables" y representativos de la cultura superficial. Se discutieron elementos profundos y complejos de la cultura extranjera, los Estados Unidos, y la cultura de los docentes en formación, Colombia, a través de cuentos literarios auténticos de EE. UU. con el fin de construir la competencia comunicativa intercultural. El estudio indica que los participantes construyeron pensamiento crítico y conciencia intercultural cuando leyeron y hablaron de temas controversiales que se desarrollan en los cuentos y los relacionaron con su propia cultura y sus experiencias de

vida. Entre dichos temas se destacan la pérdida de la identidad cultural, la diferencia entre asimilación cultural y aculturación, la injusticia social, los prejuicios y la lucha de clases. El estudio indica que la cultura profunda debería ser un tema de enseñanza relevante en la formación de docentes de inglés.

Palabras clave: cultura superficial, cultura profunda, multiculturalismo crítico, competencia comunicativa intercultural, docentes de inglés en formación

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article décrit une recherche qualitative menée dans un cours d'anglais de niveau avancé d'un programme de langues modernes dans une université publique à Bogotá, Colombie, en 2013. À partir d'une approche de multiculturalisme critique, cette étude montre comment un groupe d'enseignants d'anglais en formation abordent des sujets compliqués de la *culture profonde* au lieu de thèmes « admirables » et représentatifs de la culture superficielle. L'on a discuté les éléments profonds et complexes de la culture étrangère, les États-Unis, et la culture des enseignants en formation, la Colombie, par le biais de contes littéraires authentiques des États-Unis dans le but de construire la compétence de communication interculturale. L'étude montre que les participants ont construit leur pensée critique et leur conscience interculturale lorsqu'ils ont lu et parlé des thèmes polémiques qui ont lieu dans les contes et ont fait le rapprochement avec leur propre culture et leurs vécus. Parmi ces thèmes, l'on trouve la perte de l'identité culturelle, la différence entre assimilation culturelle et acculturation, l'injustice sociale, les préjugés, et la lutte des classes. Les résultats suggèrent que la culture profonde devrait être une thématique pertinente d'enseignement dans le contexte de la formation des enseignants d'anglais.

Mots-clés: culture superficielle, culture profonde, multiculturalisme critique, compétence de communication interculturale, enseignants d'anglais en formation

Introduction

Teachers have often ignored the inclusion of culture in the EFL classroom, and if they include it, they mainly direct it to the study of *surface culture* (Atkinson, 1999, Byram, 1997, 2000, Gómez Rodríguez, 2013). Surface culture or “visible culture” is understood as those elements that can easily be observable and are often inalterable and representative of a country, naming celebrations, tourist places, geographical sites, national symbols, food, and famous people. The teaching of these elements that usually might appear in the EFL curriculum maintain a “received view of culture” (Atkinson, 1999) because learners only act as passive receivers, filling their minds with representative cultural information that proudly distinguishes a nation from the others.

Likewise, teaching surface culture perpetuates fixed ideas about other ethnicities that sooner or later become hazardous stereotypes. Stereotypes can be conceived as standardized labels assigned to groups based on prejudgments and exaggerated concepts, rather than seeing the individualities of the people that conform a group (Brown, 2000; Macrae, Stangor, & Hewstone, 1996; Stangor, 2000 cited by Buttaro, 2012). Thus, ideas such as that Americans are materialistic and only eat fast food, that British have good manners but are cold and serious, and that Canadians only love hockey and live among polar bears, are just superficial generalizations of those Anglo-Saxon cultures. Paradoxically, teachers’ interest in creating cultural awareness in the EFL classroom have involuntarily caused the spread of these stereotypical labels in their attempt to study the visible elements of the target culture only.

In addition to stereotypes, the target culture tends to be studied through a safe, neutral, and congratulatory learning in order to avoid attitudes of resistance, contestation, and disagreement that the teacher might not be able to deal with appropriately. Congratulatory and neutral teaching implies that culture is studied from joyful and naive perspective through which learners are instructed

to value the representative elements of the target culture in deifying and idealistic terms. With this view, students only learn that people from different communities of the world live all happily together through values of mutual understanding and harmony. For instance, ideas such as all Americans are easy-going, Spanish are friendly, French are romantic, and Latinos are happy constitute safe and celebratory notions of diverse societies. However, this celebratory scenario of positive characteristics, understanding, and bliss among nations is a far fetch from reality. In fact, Olaya and Gómez Rodríguez (2013) have analyzed that culture is often taught uncritically because it only focuses on its surface and celebratory level and, therefore, it fails to promote critical thinking and reflective knowledge in the EFL classroom.

As an opposed perspective to the increasing dissemination of surface culture from a received and neutral view, this article presents the results of a research study that focused on how EFL pre-service teachers studied elements of deep culture in order to foster their critical intercultural competence through a model of critical multiculturalism.

The study claims that critical intercultural competence can be achieved through controversial issues of deep culture (e.g. social class struggle, poverty, cultural loss, prejudice, and diverse views of life related to individualism, the American dream, masculinity, and femininity, among others) that challenged learners to react critically about the *status quo* of deep-rooted cultural constructs.

Research Design

The study was supported by a theoretical framework, a pedagogical intervention in an EFL classroom, and a data collection procedure that are described below.

Theoretical framework.

The main theoretical constructs that led this study were the vision of culture, the vision of

critical multiculturalism, and the vision of critical intercultural competence.

Vision of culture.

This study sees that one important reason for including culture in the EFL classroom is that culture is closely related to language. Hymes (1996) points out that the learning of culture is an essential part of language learning because it determines speakers' appropriate understanding of the socio-cultural relationships, norms, and behaviors of a cultural community. Similarly, Prieto (1998) asserts that culture is mediated through a process of communication because most of the beliefs, social norms, and ideologies of a nation are shared, learned, and transmitted by language. Thus, when EFL learners use the language they also learn the foreign culture as the two aspects are inseparable. They should not learn language separately from the sociocultural implications that language conveys. It is through the exposure to the foreign language that students should be involved in speaking about elements of the target culture as this study proposes.

Instead of focusing on the study of surface culture, this research centers on the inclusion of elements of *deep culture* or "invisible culture." Hilken (2001) and Trujillo Sáenz (2000) claim that deep culture embodies complex meanings related to sociocultural norms, lifestyles, beliefs, assumptions, and values. The complexity of these elements relies on the fact that they contain diverse facets and manifestations. For instance, the fact that the majority of people of a particular community might believe that getting married is a way to legalize a love relationship between a man and a woman does not mean that everybody might agree with this cultural paradigm. Others might think that the free union based on love and commitment does not need the legal recognition by the state or the church. The same might happen with a young boy that values education as a springboard for personal and intellectual growth while another man might see it as a way to scale a higher socioeconomic status.

The previous examples lead to observe that culture is not static and homogenous, but rather transformative and heterogeneous. Not all the members of a cultural group necessarily follow and value the established ideologies and social canons of seeing life in the same way, and this implies that culture is by no means fixed and uniform. In fact, Spencer-Oatey (2008) defines culture as a set of assumptions, values, orientations to life, and conventions that are recognized and shared by a group of people, but that might influence, rather than strictly determine each individual's behavior. From this definition, it can be asserted then that although each person is influenced by his/her own culture, he/she might react and disagree with certain cultural impositions that he/she might find oppressive, unjust, and even ridiculous.

Greenblatt (1998) asserts that "the ensemble of beliefs and practices that form a given culture, function as a pervasive technology of control, a set of limits within social behavior must be contained, a repertoire of models to which individuals must conform" (p. 437). In this sense, Greenblatt (1998) recognizes that when a culture is based on a framework of limits and strict conventions that people must accept and obey, it inevitably suffers transformations. Cultural changes inexorably happen from one generation to another because individuals are always looking for a way to improve society or for modifications that can transgress obsolete and oppressive constructs. What one generation accepts as a cultural value in one period of time (e.g. women are born to take care of children and do the housework) can be seen as a cultural restriction to new generations in other periods, and want to react against it (e.g. Women can become independent, work, and earn money to raise their children). Therefore, culture cannot be conceived as a static product because it is in constant movement and evolves gradually over time.

In light of these issues related to the transformative characteristics of culture, this research study attempts to propose ways to encourage EFL

pre-service teachers to deal with complex topics of the target culture, the United States, and their own culture as a means to enhance their critical intercultural competence. The main claim is that the notion of culture in the EFL classroom should not continue to be seen in static and congratulatory terms through the study of surface culture only, but that it should be envisioned as a dynamic entity in constant transformation, and this can be done by incorporating the study of complex and conflicting topics of deep culture as students use the target language to discuss them.

Vision of critical multiculturalism.

The principles of critical multiculturalism to education seem to serve as an ideal frame to approach elements of deep culture in the EFL Classroom. Kubota (2004) argues that most teachers in the field of language learning have not properly recognized how relations of power might increase inequality and prejudice not only in the classroom, but among cultural groups. Therefore, she proposes critical multiculturalism which is a basis to question irregular and unjust issues of race, gender, class, ideologies, politics, and power of a cultural group. In other words, it advocates students' conscious awareness about unfair social practices and oppression. Kubota argues that if EFL teaching helps second language learners understand social inequality, they will become active agents for social change. Therefore, she believes that education also needs to address and to promote issues of equality and social transformation in language learning as learners are invited to discover that social realities are dynamic, heterogeneous, and inherent in unfair historical and political contexts, far away from a congratulatory and neutral culture.

Kubota (2010) warns that a main struggle in language teaching is that it ironically promotes monolingualism because students are encouraged to assimilate into the monolingual English-speaking community due to the fact that the teaching of the target culture, the Anglo-Saxon, inclines to focus

on the study of the dominant group as a norm or model to follow. It also promotes normatism because ESL/EFL learners are requested to learn the standardized English as opposed to nonnative and nonstandard varieties including dialects. Paradoxically, this way of teaching culture eliminates possibilities to promote cultural diversity. Because of this contradictory approach, Kubota believes that it is necessary for language teachers to advocate critical pedagogies for social transformation in which ESL/EFL learners are encouraged to become critical about issues of exclusion and social injustice.

Critical multiculturalism is also supported by Pennycook (1999) and Kumaravadivelo (2001) who indicate that TESOL¹ requires the advancement of critical awareness as a crucial footprint to produce social change and to make people aware of their oppression. They suggest that learners can critically discuss issues of power, marginalization, exclusion, and oppression, and reflect on their own histories to see how they have been defined as not only members of other races, but as nonnative speakers of English.

Therefore, several salient aspects should be reformulated when teaching culture in the EFL context: First, to balance the study of surface culture and deep culture; second, to avoid the proliferation of stereotypes; third, to see that culture is transformative and heterogeneous rather than static and uniform, and fourth, to examine culture critically from more realistic basis than from a celebratory and neutral perspective.

Vision of intercultural communicative competence.

The ideas stated by critical multiculturalism of helping language students to become critical in order to transform society, embraces the goals of Intercultural communicative competence (ICC).

1 TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

ICC is understood as the individual's ability to interact with and accept others' perceptions of the world through the conscious reflections and evaluations of what he/she understands is different (Byram, Nichols, Stevens, 2009). As the name Intercultural *communicative* competence suggests, Byram (1997) recognizes that it is through language use in social interaction/communication that the learner is able to deal with cultural differences, since language production and culture are inseparable. ICC consists of three components:

1. *Knowledge* of surface culture (emblematic and representative elements) and deep elements of culture (beliefs, values, and ideologies).
2. *Skills* of discovery, of relating, and of interpreting through which an individual is able to detect, compare, contrast, and make sense of cultural meanings that are different and unknown to him/her.
3. *Attitudes* such as openness, readiness, and curiosity that will allow a person to come up with others' cultural practices in a more tolerant and positive way.

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as Byram (1997) explains, serve as constituents to help learners build a *savoir* known as critical cultural awareness. Through this *savoir* learners can appreciate, evaluate, and examine critically the similarities and differences of their own and the target culture. From this model of ICC, this research suggests that critical cultural awareness/critical ICC can endow learners with the ability to analyze the complex and heterogeneous elements of *deep culture* such as collective and individual variations of attitudes to life, ideologies, and values. That is to say, learners are challenged to value, favor, disagree, and even resist impositions of the dominant culture based on the analysis they do of why differences exist.

The previous theoretical constructs helped this research study to embrace a more realistic readiness to study deep culture in a Colombian EFL classroom. It counterpoises the congratulatory

and traditional views of surface culture that quite often are taught to EFL learners.

The pedagogical intervention.

This research study was supported by a pedagogical intervention that took place in an advanced EFL classroom at a public University in Bogotá, where, according to previous needs analysis carried out by Olaya and Gómez Rodríguez (2011), learners were only taught elements of surface or visible culture. Therefore, the idea was to confront learners with elements of deep culture of the United States and how they might relate them to their own Colombian culture. The pedagogical intervention was carried out in the first term, 2013. We met every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., for two months, from March 5 to May 2.

Setting.

The study was conducted at a public University in Bogotá, Colombia. This university offers education to Colombian students coming from dissimilar communities and it respects individual and collective idiosyncrasies. The mission of the University is to prepare students for teacher education. One of its main study programs is the Foreign Language Program, which trains learners to become language teachers in the subjects of English, French, and Spanish. This research was conducted with students of this language program in an advanced English course. In this class, students were challenged to read authentic literary texts in which they could find topics dealing with deep culture of the foreign language, as it will be later explained.

Participants.

Led by the principles of critical multiculturalism, this study sees the EFL classroom as a small-scale multicultural site. The participants involved in this study were 27 EFL pre-service teachers, 17 females and 10 males, who took an advanced English course in the first term of 2013. They

were aged between 18 to 26. They were studying English in order to get a B. A. This degree qualifies them to teach English and Spanish in many institutions all over the country. The participants came from different geographical and cultural sites (the coast and the center of the country): two of them were African descendants, and others came from Bogotá, the neighboring towns of Cundinamarca, Los Llanos, and Tolima. There were two young single mothers, a partially blind girl, and a pregnant woman. Also, one student was a member of a Goth urban subculture and another one was a Christian man. They came from different socio-economic levels. Some of them had to work in order to pay for their education, while others were supported by their parents. The particular and diverse characteristics of this group constituted a significant starting point to discuss deep issues of the U.S. culture and their own as their different origins, life experiences, and perspectives of life could contribute to analyze critically cultural content in the EFL classroom. It is important to say that since they were pre-service teachers in EFL instruction, deep culture was definitely an essential theme to be studied as part of their qualified preparation to become English teachers.

Procedure

Selection of materials of deep culture.

Based on the perspective of critical multiculturalism, it was decided that the main resource for discussion would be four multicultural short stories of the United States, the culture of which was the target of this study. The rationale for this choice was because these stories primarily deal with deep controversial cultural topics that transgress traditional congratulatory and neutral notions of culture (see table 1). In fact, McKay (2001) and Zafeiriadou (2011) say that works of literature help students to value and raise cross-cultural awareness linked to ethnic practices and ideologies different from their own in time and space. Also, these short stories come from writers belonging

to diverse cultural backgrounds. Therefore, their inclusion in this pedagogical intervention had three main advantages: First, the authors and their stories underpinned the vision of the classroom as a site for critical multiculturalism because they represented the voices of their own cultural communities. Second, the stories encouraged learners to discuss topics of deep culture, related to social injustice, inequality, and dissimilar ideologies. Third, EFL pre-service teachers were able to express their critical opinions about the topics presented in the stories as they discussed the U.S. culture and related those topics to their own cultural practices and ideologies. In this sense, the voices of the authors, the voices of the characters in the short stories, and the voices of the EFL pre-service teachers delineated a critical multicultural space in this research study. With all these resources, pre-service teachers were expected to develop ICC.

Tasks and activities to discuss the stories and the aspects of deep culture.

The discussion of the U.S. multicultural stories had three modalities: group work, short presentations, and written response papers:

Group work.

Pre-service teachers came to class with the material read and had answered some questions posted in study guides that would guide them to understand the story and to think critically about the issues of deep culture displayed in table 1. They worked in small groups in order to focus on the topics led by the questions. When doing so, they shared and expressed their personal and critical opinions about the topics related to deep culture. After that, as a whole group they expressed their opinions and addressed conclusions. Thus, the stories were discussed through a process of meaningful negotiation as students used the target language, English, to construct meaning based on the cultural content, rather than on the formal study of language structures. Examples of the

Table 1. Culture-based Materials and Topics of Deep Culture

Literary short story/ author/ ethnicity	Plot	Target topics of deep culture to be discussed
“Hair” by William Faulkner White author	A 45 year-old man, Hawkshaw, and a rebellious young girl, Susan, fall in love with each other. They are the object of sardonic gossip in a Southern, patriarchal American town. Susan is seen as a transgressor of the moral code given to women because she gets pregnant with one of the men she often hangs around with, and later aborts the baby. Hawkshaw also breaks cultural standards imposed on men as he decides to marry Susan despite her tarnished conduct.	The way women and men are expected to behave in patriarchal southern societies of the U.S. Taboo regarding love affairs between a mature man and an adolescent girl. Unconventional characteristics of masculinity and femininity. Gossiping as a social defect that creates prejudice.
“Shame” by Dick Gregory African-American Author	A young African-American boy named Richard is a victim of oppression and marginalization at school because of his appearance and low economic level. He is shameful for his impoverished condition. The school teacher humiliates him in front of his classmates.	Social class struggles. Discrimination of unprivileged people. Oppression and prejudice at school. Individual views about poverty and education. How poverty affects children's academic performance.
“Grandma’s Wake” by Emilio Díaz Valcárcel Puerto Rican author	Uncle Segundo, a Puerto Rican Man, travels to the U.S. in search of the American Dream. When he comes back to bury his mother, he has lost his Puerto Rican identity. He becomes despotic and violent with the members of his family as he looks down on them.	Loss of cultural identity. Cultural assimilation. Self-hatred Moving up to social class scale. The influence of a dominant culture (the U.S.) on a colonized culture (Puerto Rico). Views about individualism and self-sufficiency The American Dream
“Lullaby” By Lisley Marmon Silko Native-American author	Ayah, a Native-American Navajo woman, remembers through flashbacks tragic events of her past life: Her son Jimmie died in the war, some white doctors take her children away from her, and her husband, Chato, is exploited by the white rancher he works for.	Racism and discrimination of unprivileged Native-American people. Social alienation. Labor exploitation. Social injustice as the white men’s authorities abuse Native-Americans.

50

critical opinions they provided are shown in the findings section.

Formal presentations.

Small groups gave oral presentations in the target language to discuss topics of deep culture. They had to create a thesis statement, explain the arguments critically, and comment on evidence taken from the short stories. For instance, participants who had to give a presentation on “Shame” provided the following thesis statement: Richard experiences

social shame at school because there he learns that he belongs to an underprivileged socio-economic class (field notes, March 26, 2013). Presenters also involved the rest of the class in the presentations as they requested their classmates to express their personal opinions about the thesis statement, the arguments, and the evidence they had addressed.

Short written responses.

Once pre-service teachers had discussed orally and in groups the conflicting and non-congratulatory

topics of deep culture presented in each story, they wrote short responses in which they argued about and commented on their critical views. The purpose of this activity was to have students reflect on the issues of complex culture in a more conscientious way as they had already listened to other voices in the classroom and, therefore, could finally address their own conclusions.

These activities aimed at helping learners address deep cultural issues of equality and social transformation in language learning as they were encouraged to discover that social realities are not only transformative and heterogeneous, but also show unjust historical, social, and political contexts that do not strictly relate to simple views of congratulatory and neutral culture. Therefore, the classroom was a site of critical multiculturalism in which pre-service teachers became intercultural critics of intricate socio-cultural phenomena.

Research question.

The previous theoretical framework and the pedagogical intervention were accompanied by a research methodology with the purpose of answering the following research question:

How could EFL pre-service teachers develop intercultural communicative competence (ICC) when being exposed to studying non-congratulatory topics of deep culture in the EFL classroom?

In order to answer this research question, a qualitative case study was designed. The study was conducted to identify and analyze the participants' critical opinions, reactions, and comments regarding deep topics of culture, and in this way, to observe how they developed ICC.

Data collection instruments.

In order to collect qualitative data from the participants' voices, three data collection instruments were used:

Field-notes.

Through direct observations, field-notes were taken every class (from March 5 to May 2) about students' interaction with the short stories and about the discussion of the topics of deep culture. EFL pre-service teachers' voices were the central focus of the notes. Field-notes were chosen because they document and describe complex interactions in social settings (Marshall and Rossman, 2006) like in this case, a classroom envisioning a critical multicultural terrain.

In-depth interview.

Students were interviewed at the end of the pedagogical experience so that they could express their opinions about the contents of deep culture that they had discussed in class. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed and kept in a file (See Appendix A). Transcribed interviews were used because as Burns (1999) suggests, they are a technique for capturing in detail naturalistic interactions and verbatim utterances. The interview was held the last week of the pedagogical intervention.

Response papers (artifacts).

Participants' response papers were also collected, which they wrote right after the discussions of each story. The written responses gave full evidence of the critical analysis EFL learners had made of the aspects of deep culture. Four papers were collected, one for each story read.

Data analysis.

This is a qualitative study that collected data from the participants' critical responses about issues of deep culture (social class struggles, prejudice at school, loss of cultural identity, cultural assimilation, acculturation, gossiping, etc., see table 1) and field notes during the pedagogical intervention. By taking into account the research question,

the data were analyzed through a coding process suggested by Patton (2002), which is used to identify participants' production of similar opinions, themes, and thoughts that gradually became representative patterns of the whole data. That is to say, the coding process is a grounded approach method (Freeman, 1998) through which the researcher examines the data several times in order to triangulate it among the data collection instruments and define patterns. Triangulation guarantees an accurate analysis because patterns emerge and are confirmed from three different instruments. Once the patterns were identified from participants' opinions about topics of deep culture, the researcher proceeded to state themes in such a way that those themes represented the common patterns that were found from participants' critical voices. Participants' identities were kept confidential by using fictitious names in the findings. The following are the themes based on this data analysis.

52

Findings

First theme of deep culture: social prejudice and social injustice.

Data show that through reading "Shame" (see Table 1, for details), pre-service teachers addressed critical opinions of deep culture related to unequal social differences. Instead of seeing justice and social relations in a congratulatory way, they discussed how the main character, the African-American boy named Richard, was discriminated against by his teacher and classmates at school because they knew about his impoverished economic condition. For instance, some participants debated that the boy in the story wanted to demonstrate that, despite his lower social position, he could give money donations to the poor. However, when he was doing so, his teacher, who had the fixed idea that he was poor, humiliated him by saying "I don't have time to be playing with you . . . We are collecting this money for you and your kind." (This quote was mentioned by students during the discussion, field notes, March 21, 2013). Pre-service teachers

reacted critically to these words by affirming that Richard was not only marginalized at school, but condemned by people's prejudice because of his situation, and he had not been given the opportunity to demonstrate that he could improve his economic condition. He was already "categorized" as a boy that belonged to his "kind," and he could do nothing to move up a better social class (Field notes, May 21, 2013). Some of the participants' critical opinions regarding this issue were:

Martha: "Shame" by Dick Gregory is a, a . . . very . . . sad short story because Richard is seen as an inferior and insignificant person just because he has no money (Interview, May 30, 2013).

Felipe: The teacher's words "for you and your kind" reflect the level of rejection and exclusion that the teacher and many people in the real world think of underprivileged human beings (Field notes, May 21, 2013).

Under the orientation of critical multiculturalism, the arguments above show that learners critically discussed and analyzed existing complex dynamics of socio-cultural relations based on discrimination and unjust prejudices. Therefore, participants became reflective on exclusion and marginalization.

Data from interviews (May 2, 2013) also indicate that learners acquired critical ICC with respect to social differences as they related Richard's experience to similar situations in their lives. For instance, one learner said that in Colombia, people from a lower social class are usually marginalized because of their economic condition, and it is quite difficult for them to have the chance to go to school and pay for their education. Another participant explained that social prejudice against humble working classes in Colombia was not only expressed through pity, but through disgust and indifference. He said that he had been looked down on and rejected by his friends when they discovered that his father was a mechanic working in a popular area in Bogotá City. He explained that he had told his friends that he did not need any pity from them, and that he was very proud of his father's job.

A similar situation happened when EFL pre-service teachers read “Grandma’s Wake.” This time they discussed the fact that uncle Segundo, the main character, had become a materialistic and tyrant man once he had come back from the U.S. to visit his family in Puerto Rico. One participant commented that the social criticism in the story was that uncle Segundo had forgotten his family ties and cultural heritage because he had gained economic stability in the U.S. Another participant said that uncle Segundo’s unpleasant attitude toward his compulsory visit to his mother showed his selfish materialistic attitude since he believed that visiting his sick mother was a waste of time and money, and that his family was inferior to him (field notes, April 4, 2013). Similarly, other reactions taken from interviews and response papers were:

Samuel: I was surprised because uncle Segundo created social prejudices against his own family just because he had earned money in the U.S. I think his American dream was based on money and not on feelings. He lost the value of loving his mother, and preferred business and possessions (Interview, April 2, 2013).

Enrique: Instead of having compassion for his family who had economic problems on the island (Puerto Rico), uncle Segundo wants to go back to the mainland as soon as possible to take care of his business . . . He does not help his family, he thinks it is a burden for him because he is now part of a higher social class in the U.S. (Response paper, April 11, 2013).

Therefore, from the data collected during the pedagogical experience, pre-service teachers were encouraged to discuss controversial aspects of deep culture such as social class struggle, prejudice against underprivileged people, and the effects of poverty. These topics led participants to a conscious development of critical ICC because they realized that these problems happen in the United States, in Colombia, and in many other cultural settings. Along this important finding, it is relevant to say that learners were able to express all these opinions about prejudice and injustice in the English language. They used language communicatively and in context, rather than studying grammar forms for the sake of language.

Second theme of deep culture: cultural domination and cultural loss.

Following the model of critical multiculturalism proposed by Kubota (2004), the data collected during the pedagogical intervention show that learners were able to address complex discussion of the cultural domination of one group on another, more explicitly, white men’s domination on multiethnic, minority groups. When pre-service teachers read the Native-American short story “Lullaby” (see Table 1 for details), they expressed the following critical comments:

Oscar: Chato, Ayah’s husband, was exploited by a heartless bad rancher. After working for many years on his farm, the white rancher fires Chato because he thinks Chato is now too old and slow to work for him (Interview, April 30, 2013).

Camila: The white doctors treat Ayah violently and force her to sign some legal papers to give the custody of her children to them. This is unfair because the doctors intimidate Ayah and take advantage of her because she does not understand the English language (Response paper, May 2, 2013).

These examples reveal participants’ critical opinions about cultural domination. They explicitly argued that the white American culture in “Lullaby” displayed abusive power by imposing arbitrary rules on native-American communities. For the learners, those rules were infested by attitudes of superiority, violence, and injustice. According to field notes (April 25, 2013), pre-service teachers were not only shocked because of the family conflicts Ayah had to face, but because her sick children were taken away without her consent and without respecting her cultural traditions related to family and healing. One participant said that the white men’s most unjust action was to destroy Ayah’s family because they had taken her children away from her and had not given any explanation in her native language as she did not speak English. Another learner pointed out that the white men had imposed western medicine practices to cure Ayah’s children’s illness through violence, and had not respected the healing methods that Ayah and

her Native-American community had to cure them. She also said that both Ayah and the white doctors had lacked appropriate procedures to address the issue of sickness between these two cultures and, as a result, the cultural supremacy of a more powerful group had destroyed the cultural values of a weaker one (field notes, April 25, 2013).

The story “Lullaby” led pre-service teachers to relate situations of current cultural domination that were close to their life experiences as seen in these examples:

Mauricio: The imposition of a dominant culture also happens in Colombia as we want to impose our official language, Spanish, and western customs to the Indian groups that live in remote areas in this country (Interview, May 2, 2013).

Cecilia: But in any way, English as an international language is being imposed in our country because of the policies of the Ministry of Education and the Common European Framework. We are expected to follow a model of good English speakers, but what about our own language? (Field notes, April 23, 2013).

Nelson: We are bombarded with many cultural messages of the U.S. such as American food, music, clothes . . . It is good, but it is also a kind of imposition, and we might lose our cultural traditions for imitating the foreign ones (Interview, May 2, 2013).

The topic of cultural dominance presented in the short story “Lullaby” led learners to discuss critically how they were also subjects of domination in other ways. All these examples show that learners became aware of complex issues of deep culture as they realized that their own Colombian culture is not homogeneous and static, but is built by the influence of the Spanish heritage, the current American influence, and its own cultural dynamics with minority groups in the national territory.

Pre-service teachers also discussed the theme of cultural loss when they read “Lullaby” and “Grandma’s Wake.” Critically, they pointed out that Chato, Ayah’s husband in “Lullaby,” had renounced his Native-American heritage as he

wanted to imitate whites and adopt their western traditions. One group that gave a presentation on this short story commented that Chato acted like a white man when he was allowed to enter bars, get drunk, and leave in the bartenders’ hands all the money he had earned on the ranch. Another member of the group mentioned that because of his alcohol problems, Chato had become an irresponsible father and a selfish person because he only thought of satisfying his pleasure for drinking. Other students said that this problem would have not happened to Chato if he had not been influenced by the drinking behavior he saw in whites. The conclusion addressed from this fact was that Chato, a Navajo Indian, was negatively influenced by some models of western modern society (alcohol, money, individualism) and, because of that, had lost his cultural identity (Field notes, April, 25, 2013).

Similarly, in the response papers on this short story, EFL pre-service teachers wrote:

Viviana: Chato learned to speak English, and step by step wanted to forget his Native-American language. Because Chato could speak English, he served as the bridge between the white authorities and his family. However, he did not defend his children when they were taken away from the white authorities, being the only one in the family that spoke English. This fact shows that he has lost his cultural identity and the love for his family (May 2, 2013).

Jorge: Chato loses his sense of belonging to his Native-American community and family. He becomes selfish and individualist, and only wants to spend his salary on drinking. The fact that he abandons Ayah and his home, demonstrates that he becomes enchanted by the western world. However, at the end, he dies on the street and no white man comes to assist him (May 2, 2013).

Through these examples, learners addressed how Chato wanted to assimilate to the dominant culture, and for them, it was a mistake because he lost his cultural identity and his family.

The loss of cultural identity was also explored by participants when they read “Grandma’s Wake”

(see Table 1 for details). It can be seen in the response papers they wrote:

Daniel: Uncle Segundo loses his Puerto Rican cultural identity because he is caught between his family values and the materialistic values he has learned in the U.S. He is not worried about his mother's health, and wants her to die soon so that he can come back to the U.S. to keep doing his business. His materialistic view of life is stronger than his feelings, and he becomes cruel with his mother (April 11, 2013).

Juanita: Uncle Segundo seems to assimilate to the American mainstream culture. He only comes back to Puerto Rico because his mother is going to die, but he is not sad about this and does not help his family economically. He rejects his Latino roots as he wants to go back to the U.S. as soon as possible (April 11, 2013).

These critical opinions about the problem of cultural loss and cultural assimilation indicate that participants examined intricate aspects of culture that are rarely observed in the EFL context. They were able to consider strong reasons such as the negative result from the craving for money, immigration, and the loss of family values because of the influence of materialism, individualism, and selfishness as a means to achieve personal goals. In fact, learners argued that Uncle Segundo assimilated into the American culture as he finally integrated in it, absorbed a new system of values, and forgot his Latino, Puerto Rican identity. His cultural loss was based more on a process of assimilation into the dominant culture than on a process of acculturation (field notes, April 4, 2013). Indeed, as Kottak (2007) explains, acculturation implies an intercultural exchange in which people from different backgrounds interact with each other in a multicultural site and might be influenced by the other groups, but their own features, traditions, and identity remain distinct. This was not Uncle Segundo's situation due to the fact that he denies his own Latino features and embraces the foreign culture instead of keeping his Puerto Rican values.

All these aspects that emerged from the discussion of cultural domination and cultural loss are

vivid examples of deep culture. They are not part of a celebratory, static, and neutral culture, but rather a part of controversial and heterogeneous culture that ultimately challenged learners to develop critical ICC in this learning experience. Moreover, the participants talked about deep culture in the foreign language, and this fact relates to Hymes (1974), who states that culture is necessarily bounded and defined by the language the individuals share. In this aspect, EFL students were not only able to understand the language in which the culture-based materials were written, but produced critical knowledge in English, the target language. English worked as a means for students to understand, interpret, and criticize complex cultural meanings of the U.S. and Colombia during the process of communication in the classroom, instead of merely practicing language forms.

Third theme of deep culture: female and male roles based on cultural constructs of femininity and masculinity.

Data revealed that when pre-service teachers read "Hair" (see Table 1 for details) they debated male and female roles in agreement with cultural constructs established by patriarchal societies. As field notes indicate (March 13, 2013), one learner commented that Susan transgressed the social constructs that dictate that women have to be submissive, respectable, and morally correct. By contrast, Susan is rebellious and immoral because she disobeys her mother, quits school, and has love affairs with several men, being a subject of scandal and gossip around town. Even though many learners did not totally agree with Susan's behavior, some of them commented that she had the right to make her own decisions and find her own way even though she made mistakes like aborting a baby. Other voices in the classroom, a Christian student and the pregnant woman, commented that quitting school, having sexual relationships with different men, and having an abortion were immoral ways for Susan to become independent, and that she would have demonstrated her independence with a different system of values to life like getting a job,

being responsible, and furthering her education. These polemic views caused disagreement and conflict in the classroom, being a clear example of how participants' divergent ideologies about femininity are not necessarily congratulatory and suitable to strict patriarchal norms and therefore, hold multi-layered meanings of deep culture.

Participants also mentioned that Hawkshaw, Susan's admirer, had challenged patriarchal roles imposed on men:

Carlos: Hawkshaw was in love with Susan, even though people created a bad reputation about her. He only gives love to her and he never hurts her or never has a bad reaction about her behavior (Field notes, March 13, 2013).

Maria: Hawkshaw marries Susan and both leave the town because everybody speaks badly about Susan's behavior (she had left school and had been with many men). In this way, Hawkshaw defies the patriarchal system. Instead of marrying an innocent and morally correct woman, he marries a rebellious and immoral woman because he really loves her and can forget her mistakes (Response paper, March 14, 2013).

Diego: I think that Hawkshaw is a strong man because, because, he does not care . . . the social norms imposed on women. He loves Susan and is obsessed with her blond hair, and then, it is not important for him if the whole town agrees with his decision to marry her. He only wants to have Susan (Interview, May 2, 2013).

These comments indicate that EFL pre-service teachers were encouraged to deal with non-congratulatory aspects of culture in regards to concepts of feminine and masculine roles in the western, patriarchal society when they discussed and problematized variations and even "deviations" of what male and female identities imply. Learners considered that Hawkshaw goes against moral and social standards because of his feelings and obsession for a woman with a bad reputation. However, the unconventional action from this man reveals at the same time that he is humanitarian and self-sacrificial because he saves Susan from social scorn and evil gossiping in contrast to the other men in the story who condemn and judge her.

Moreover, students established relationships between the story "Hair" and their own roles as women and men in their own culture, and critical and controversial ideas were brought to the conversation. These opinions provide evidence of participant's development of critical ICC.

David: I wouldn't be able to do what Hawkshaw did, I would never marry a woman with a bad reputation. It is a difficult decision for me as a man because . . . because then my friends . . . didn't respect her and would make fun of me (Interview, May 2, 2013).

In fact, all the male participants in the classroom said that they would never marry a woman like Susan, and that they admired Hawkshaw's action of challenging the chauvinism of the southern American society in which the short story takes place, but they would not do a deed like that in real life. In response, the girls in the class started to ask boys the question "But if you were completely in love with a woman without a good reputation, would you marry her because of love and not because you were afraid of what people said?" Females in the classroom were more in agreement about marrying a person regardless of his/her reputation, because of real love instead of adhering to the moral norms and prejudices imposed on women and men. Boys, on the other hand, said that they would not marry a woman like Susan because they had to protect their own social image as men and serve the established norms of their societies (Field notes, March 13, 2013).

Thus, Susan's and Hawkshaw's cultural transgression led learners to reveal diverse positions about the definitions of femininity and masculinity, and in this sense, it became an issue of deep cultural difficulty to assimilate and embrace. Nonetheless, this topic challenged learners to see culture from a more critical standpoint. They discovered that resisting cultural norms and ingrained moral principles of patriarchal societies, requires a person to be open-minded, have a sense of independence, and crave for emancipation, like the case of the two characters Susan and Hawkshaw. This topic also helped learners to understand that culture is

not always superficial and easily observable, and that it is not always celebratory and static, but that it is a transformative, dynamic, and a complex entity. Moreover, masculinity and femininity, as can be seen, enhanced learners' ICC as they compared and interpreted these concepts in the target culture and the Colombian context.

Conclusion of the Study

This research experience provides important conclusions:

With regards to the research question, the participants involved in this study, who come from diverse cultural settings and socioeconomic levels in Colombia, were able to address topics of deep culture of the United States and Colombia under an agenda of multicultural criticism. They discussed complicated topics such as social prejudice and social injustice, cultural domination and cultural loss, and female and male roles in patriarchal societies based on cultural constructs of masculinity and femininity. This is one of the main contributions of this research, since these topics are not generally addressed in the EFL context. Students' diverse experiences enriched the cultural meaning and deep implications of the topics discussed in class.

Findings indicate that EFL pre-service teachers were capable of developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as they provided critical opinions about non-congratulatory topics of deep culture, including collective and individual ideologies of poverty, underprivileged people, marginalization, jobs, money, materialism, labor exploitation, health, drinking, masculine roles, gossiping, and restraints of patriarchal societies. All these issues of deep culture were analyzed critically by EFL learners through a process of discovering, comparing, and interpreting the target culture and the native culture with the help of the literary texts. The knowledge they acquired, the skills they developed, and the attitudes they created (openness, readiness, and curiosity) are vivid instances of learners' development of critical ICC.

The study suggests that EFL teaching practices should be more oriented to involve learners in the study of deep elements of culture rather than just studying the conventional timeworn topics of surface culture such as celebrations, food, geography, celebrities, and tourist places. It will reduce perpetuating false stereotypes and misrepresentations of the target culture and the native culture.

Teaching approaches to deep culture in the EFL classroom might be supported by Kubota's (2004) theory of critical multiculturalism and Byram's (1997) model of ICC. These frameworks can help teachers to involve learners in deeper analytical awareness that question issues of race, gender, class, ideologies, power, and oppression.

It is also significant to point out the close relationship between language production and cultural learning in the EFL classroom, due to the fact that students developed their communicative language skills at the same time that they fostered their intercultural awareness. They read the stories, spoke critically about them, listened to others' opinions, and wrote critical responses. In fact, this is the main purpose of ICC: to be able to deal with different perceptions of the world through the conscious reflections and evaluations of those differences, which can be achieved through language use in social interaction.

According to students' responses in the data collection instruments, elements of deep culture seem to be a necessary component for EFL pre-service teachers who will soon become in-service teachers. They will have to be prepared to not only teach language forms, communicative functions, and visible topics of culture, but invisible or deep aspects of culture. In this way, once they become in-service teachers they will contribute to enhancing other learners' critical thinking and critical ICC, which is becoming a relevant competence in the ongoing process of globalization. Thus, the inclusion of deep culture in the EFL syllabus is one of teachers' and learners' main priorities.

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Appendix: Semi-structured Interview

Description: The interview should last 6 to 12 minutes. It should be an individual interview as this format provides a deep, rich view into the participant's behavior, reasoning, and experience with the reading of the aspects of deep culture. The questions suggested below would lead the discussion, but it should be open, allowing to participant's personal opinions bring up during the interview. So, other questions might be asked, depending on how the conversation flows. The interviewer should focus on the data that is planned to be collected.

Target questions for the interview

1. What did you learn from the short stories? What cultural content do the short stories include?
2. What cultural topics called your attention the most? Why?
3. What is your opinion about the characters' conflicts in the stories?
4. What personal, social, economic, historical, and/or cultural situations do the stories describe?
5. Choose one of the short stories you read and explain the cultural issues it develops.
6. What is it your opinion about the topics discussed in the study guides and in the English class?
7. What do you think about the inclusion of aspects of deep culture in the English class?

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