

**CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY AND CRITICAL LITERACIES IN PRE-
SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION: AN EXPERIENCE AT UPB-MEDELLÍN**

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Resumen

En Colombia, en los últimos 10 años, ha habido un gran interés por las políticas bilingües, la enseñanza del Inglés y se han modificado prácticas y pensum de las universidades alrededor del país. Pero, ¿cómo son tomados en cuenta los conceptos teóricos por los estudiantes de licenciaturas en sus prácticas docentes? Esta investigación documental presenta una propuesta para incluir Literacidad Crítica, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy e Interculturalidad en la educación de los licenciados.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Critical Literacy, Interculturalism, Preservice Education

Abstract

In Colombia, over the past ten years, there has been a growing interest in the English learning, teaching and bilingual policies and the same time, that interest has modified the teaching practices and practicums in universities all over the country. However, how have theoretical concepts been taken into account by students for pre-service teachers' practices? This research paper tries to present a framework on using and including Critical Literacy, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Interculturalism in pre-service teacher education.

Introduction

In Colombia, over the past ten years, there has been a growing interest in the English learning, teaching and bilingual policies (González, 2010; Usma Wilches, 2009b; Ayala Zárate, 2012; Bonilla & Tejada-Sánchez, 2016). At the same time, that interest has modified the teaching practices and practicums in Universities all over the country (Alonso, Gallo, & Torres, 2012; McNulty Ferri & Usma Wilches, 2005). This has happened because of the different globalization processes that require societies to meet the market demands (Varón, 2014; Bastidas, 2017). As Varón (2014) stated, Colombian government has increased and intensified English hours in schools in order for students to be more competitive with their communicative competence once in Universities or works.

To accomplish the demands, the Colombian government decided to invite to the country native speakers to achieve the objectives of the National Bilingual Program (2004), consequently students would have direct access to language and culture at the same time. In fact, the government has been implementing education policies to fulfill international objectives not taking too much into consideration the context of the country, nor of students in schools and what pre-service teachers need in order to be better second language teachers besides knowing methods and approaches for second languages.

In fact, there are some incongruences within the policies which regulate second language teaching in Colombia. There are nine documents issued from 1991 to 2016, twenty-five years in which the country has had changes and has been influenced by worldwide events. Actually, those documents have also changed the way teachers think language teaching in Colombia and pre-service teachers' education in university programs. Those incongruences need be transformed into new ways of thinking second language teaching and learning in Colombia in order to create

meaningful environments by using Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP; Ladson-Billings 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2014; Gay, 2002, 2010; McCarty & Lee, 2014) concepts, Critical Literacy (CL; Beck, 2005; Morgan, 1997; Cope & Kalantzis, 2016; Janks, 2014; Morrell, 2009) and Interculturalism, three concepts that should be ingrained together by teachers. After all, Colombia is a diverse country (afro descendants, different indigenous tribes with many languages, white people, immigrants, just to name a few) and CRP, CL and Interculturalism are concepts that go into learning and teaching practices changing the way students think second languages (Mora, 2013; Uribe & Gómez, 2015).

Thus, the real problem with all policies that the Colombian Government established through these years is that Colombian English teachers think that culture and students' backgrounds are not what matters in English classes but other content such as grammar or just communication. In today's educational scenarios in Colombia, we need to acknowledge increasingly the importance of including students' cultural references and contexts in all aspects of learning, ideas that both CRP and CL have at their core, including a resignification of the concept of Interculturalism.

In the case of future English teachers, some might be confused on how to put into practice all the theoretical concepts that we study at the University. Therefore, how do future language teachers conceive concepts as CRP, CL and Interculturalism in order to apply them in their practices?

This is an important problem to inquire about because it concerns what Colombian future language teachers will do in their second language classes. Sometimes we take for granted that students learn culture in Social Studies subject or at home and that English teachers are in charge of teaching English culture that is shown in text books used in class. Nevertheless, are teachers conscious of the different cultures that they can have in class? Do they know how to take advantage

of students' backgrounds for learning purposes? This are just two questions that CRP and Interculturalism try to solve.

Some English education majors in Colombia usually last between 9 to 10 semesters. At the University where I conducted my research, the student teaching experience happens in the 8th and 9th semesters. So, it is important that this population of future teachers understand and conceive the notions of Interculturalism and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) ingrained with some ideas about Critical Literacy (CL) in order to undertake a post within how they will teach English in the country.

During my study the questions of what theoretical concepts are being taught at the university or what concepts are implementing 8th and 9th semester students during their practicums began to surface. I was also curious to find out what my peers knew about CL, CRP and interculturalism in order to understand their consciousness about those concepts and how they would manage them in class. Moreover, I was interested in knowing what are experienced teachers telling the new generation, because we need models to look at for inspiration.

In this research paper, I will discuss some concerns about the language policies that Colombia has, which I read doing a critical analysis finding incongruences I was mentioning before. This analysis brought my attention to the meanings that culture has for Colombian government, but when bringing it to practice those definitions are not taken into account in order to prove that culture is central in learning. This awareness brought me to explain why, in my opinion, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Critical Literacies and Interculturalism need to work together in order for students in 8th and 9th semester in the BA program at Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana to be conscious of their importance in educational scenarios. Thus, I conducted semi

structured interviews and made an analysis to the answers to make a proposal for including in some subjects the topic of CRP in the BA curriculum at Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana itself.

Colombian Educational Policies: What Do They Say About English Teaching And Culture?

Nine documents regulate English language teaching in Colombia issued between 1991 and 2016. This is the result of the necessity of the Country to have a stronger presence of a global foreign language teaching. In fact, foreign is not new in Colombia because, for instance, Catholic missionaries brought languages such as Spanish, Latin, and French because the Church attempted to “humanize” the indigenous populations using God’s spell (Zuluaga, 1996). Later on, after the independence process, the elite who ruled the Country used to send their children and relatives to study overseas, preferring foreign education (Usma, 2009a). This brought to a preference for foreign education instead of creating one that was appropriate for the country.

As Varón (2014) states, only the Colombian privileged class, in the early XX century, had access to knowledge and to classical literature and they were devoted to translating those texts in order to have access to what they thought universal knowledge was. The aforementioned aspect means that only the elite could read and decide what was good or not for the country, cultural aspects included. In fact, in *Ciro Guerra’s film “Embrace of the Serpent”* (Gallego & Guerra, 2015), the director shows that Spanish monks prohibited indigenous children to use their language and their cultural heritage in their daily life because it could affect their relation with the Christian God.

It is also after both World Wars that national identities grew, as well as the importance of culture, and how to teach a second language. The early decades of XX century were important worldwide in second language teaching because of the rise of methods and approaches that helped teachers to have a better idea on how to teach a language. Those are the ones cited in one of the documents that the Colombian Government has for English Teaching.

The nine documents are:

Table 1

Official documents related to language education in Colombia

Name of the document	Year of issue
Colombian Constitution	1991
Colombian Educational Law (115 law)	1994
Proyecto COFE (Colombian framework of English)	from 1991 to 1996 (not valid anymore)
Foreign Language Curriculum Guidelines	1999
Basic Standards of Foreign Language Skills: English (Guide 22)	2006
National Bilingual Program	2004
Ministerial Decree number 3870	2006
Basic English learning rights (from 6 th grade to 11 th grade)	2016
Suggested curriculum (from 6 th grade to 11 th grade)	2016
Curriculum Expedition Foreign Language	2016 (Valid for the city of Medellín)
Humanities Area Plan – English	

These nine documents have changed the way Colombian teachers think Language Teaching in Colombia and preservice teachers' education (Alonso, Gallo, & Torres, 2012; McNulty Ferri & Usma Wilches, 2005). As Usma (2009a) and González (2010) stated, the Constitution of 1991 does not refer to second languages or foreign languages teaching. Instead, it states why education is a right and the ethnic and cultural diversities of the country. In fact, in 1994 the Colombian educational law (from here on referred to as *Law 115*) was issued with the intention of renewing the previous one which was issued in 1903. The need for a new law of education was seen after the issue of the Colombian Constitution in 1991, which says in articles 44 and 67 that education is a right of kids and adults as well as culture. Moreover article 67 says that education seeks access to knowledge, science, technology and other values of culture making explicit that Education will shape the respect for human rights and democracy.

The Colombian Constitution also states that “The Nation protects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the country” (art. 7). As per language, article 10 establish that Spanish is Colombia's official language, but that languages and dialects of ethnic groups are also official in their territories. The education provided in communities with their own linguistic traditions will be bilingual. Moreover, article 70 states,

The State has the duty to promote access to the culture of all Colombians in equal opportunities, through lifelong education and scientific, technical, artistic and professional education at all stages in the creation of national identity. Culture in its various manifestations is the foundation of nationality. The State recognizes the equality and dignity of all those who live in the country. The State shall promote research, science, development and dissemination of the cultural values of the Nation.

Law 115 is the one that is in charge to explain deeper what the Constitution says about education and what it is expected for the Colombian context. In fact, the article 13 states eight common objectives for all levels, some of them are integral development, the capacity to assume with responsibility rights and duties, provide an ethical and moral formation, practice and respect human rights, promote interest and respect for the cultural identity of ethnic groups. Articles 16, 20, 21 and 22 in the same law elaborate on the objectives for preschool, primary and high school education. Only article 23 the Colombian Government explicitly express that a foreign language has to be one of the subjects at school, but it does not say specifically that English should be the chosen one.

In 2004 the Colombian Government established the National Bilingual Program (*Programa Nacional de Bilinguismo*. From here on referred to as PNB) as a strategy to improve English teaching and learning. The Ministry of Colombian Education (from here on referred to as MEN) in 2004 stated that PNB was for competitiveness in academic, cultural and economic global fields. However, as Jabba (2013) and Usma (2009a) state, it was a political strategy in order to strengthen bilingualism in the Country for economical purposes. The previous statement means citizens that are able to have a good level of communicative competence to have social mobility and better working conditions, fact also confirmed by Fandiño-Parra et Al (2012).

According to the authors, the implementation of PNB in Colombian education is because the dominance of a foreign language is considered a fundamental factor for any society interested in being part of big changes in all the aforementioned fields in order to have recognition of other cultures and collective growth (Ministry of Education, 2005a; Usma, 2009a; Fandiño-Parra, Bermúdez-Jiménez, & Lugo-Vásquez, 2016). Thus, MEN does not inform English Teachers nor Universities about how to take into consideration Colombian context or culture using PNB.

Among the latest documents, which are Guide 22 (2006), the Basic English Learning Rights (2016), The Suggested Curriculum (2016), Basic Learning English Rights and Curriculum Expedition (2016), there is clarity about some aspects such as bilingualism, second and foreign language, learning and acquisition. The suggested curriculum, to mention the last of the documents issued by MEN in 2016, is more complete compared with the previous ones. It gives clarity of concepts such as bilingualism, diversity, intercultural communication, among others. This is good because the previous documents had some misuses of words such as foreign or second language (used as synonyms in Foreign Language Curriculum Guidelines), learning and acquisition (same here, used as synonyms). It is also an important document for new and experienced teachers, because it is a new starting point for students in universities and is a more complex point of view for those teachers who have been doing the same activities or used the same texts books just as instructions.

Nevertheless, just in one of the aforementioned documents, Basic Learning English Rights (BLR) (2016), one can understand, reading throughout the document, that Colombian culture is present but just with name of places or, as an example in p. 16, description of Colombian cities or folklore. These rights “are an essential tool for ensuring quality and equity in education for all children in Colombia. These rights describe the knowledge and skills that students must learn in English class in grades 6th to 11th in the Colombian educational system.” (p. 8) Therefore, BLR aim to develop the communicative competence in English through some criteria written in the document in order to help Colombian English teachers. However, the BLR do not specify what the role of culture is and does not go deep into that topic. There is not even a clear perspective on what is the role of culture in second language learning.

The analysis through the Colombian policies lead me to look for some definitions of culture using different perspectives and authors, necessary to understand that it is not an obvious topic in this chapter, since culture is central in learning. For further information and a deeper critical analysis of second language and bilingual policies in Colombia read “Bilingual education policies in Colombia: seeking relevant and sustainable frameworks for meaningful minority inclusion” Mora, Chiquito, Zapata (forthcoming).

Some Definitions of Culture

There are quite a few definitions of Culture from different spheres of knowledge such as anthropology, sociology, and economics, among others. However, the mainly used is the one by Taylor (1871), used by UNESCO as well, which says that "[Culture] is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [humans] as a member of society." Also, the definition by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) says that culture is “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life” (p.89). Following another example, Gay (2016) states that “Cultures provides the tools to pursue the search for meaning and to convey our understanding to others and thereby has strong shaping influences on the communication styles prominent among different ethnic groups and their children”. So, this becomes a reason for including culture in all aspects of learning.

Said (2005) and Canclini (2012) argued that all cultures are hybrids, because there is no such thing as purity. Both authors stated that is important to establish that culture is bonded with

places, times and societal groups. In that point of view, all the places in the world are potential places where cultures encounter one another in order to have a dialogue. As Gay (2010) explained, culture is that point of reference, a dynamic system that we have as human beings to give meaning to our lives, because it determines how we behave and think affecting our teaching and learning.

Hence, culture is central in learning and “at the heart of all we do in the name of education” (Gay, 2010, p. 9), especially when there is a second language involved because some books have cultural corners inside them where English culture of English speaking countries is presented with some readings, videos, and so on. In this way, students are invited to learn about culture through the activities inside book texts. Nevertheless, what about learning the Colombian culture through English first and maybe after a cultural awareness compare it with others? Alternatively, what about learning and comparing different cultures that Colombia has through English and then compare it with others?

The topic of culture in teaching second languages is not new, but it is implicit since the academic separation on the perspectives of teaching a second language has allowed it. And, at the same time, it has affected in diverse ways the idea of culture like a natural knowledge or like a knowledge teachable in school contexts, indirectly causing culture to be conceived, even today, as an appendix in curricula,” as Paez (2010, p. 302) explained.

According to Kramsch (1993) the cultural aspect in second language teaching is considered a fifth competence because language is taught in a structural and functional way. This is why there is a shift between second language teaching and culture, especially because according to Páez (2010) language and culture seem to have the same origins, when it is not. It is the teachers’ responsibility to fulfill that aspect of learning when they have to choose which components of culture they will teach in a second language class. In fact, Páez (2010) argues that:

This demonstrates a common teaching practice, in which culture does not seem to be present in the language, an obvious tendency in curriculum designs of textbooks for the teaching of foreign languages, and in which, as already explained, appendixes are dedicated to the cultural themes of certain regions, or speaking countries, of the language studied. (p.305)

However, before giving my point of view about to the questions and talking about the context of Colombia, it is necessary to talk about a pedagogical proposal that it would be a good choice for the English curriculum in the country.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

As Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2014) argued, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (from here on referred to as to CRP) recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning. I will use CRP as the main term to cover also ideas from Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2002), Culturally Sustainable Pedagogy (Paris, 2012), or Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014). Each concept has conceptual differences, however I noticed that the first acronym used was CRP and that is the one I am going to use as a broader term.

CRP is a pedagogy that acknowledges, responds and celebrates cultural aspects in students from all cultures and backgrounds. Geneva Gay (2010; 2016) posited that CRP uses cultural heritage and experiences as resources to help teachers serve students' needs much more effectively. Particularly to serve the needs of those populations who feel that they are marginalized and their identity does not have representation in society.

Ladson-Billings (2014) explained, in her talk "Getting Serious about Education: Culturally Relevant Teaching for New Century Students" at Loyola University of Chicago, that CRP has three components which are: (a) develop students academically, (b) cultural competence, and (c) socio-political consciousness. The first one deals with social relations and the responsibility of encouraging all students to do their best and learn collaboratively. It means that is not important the individual achievement and the competitiveness with one another, but rather to learn in community and solve problems together.

The second one, cultural competence, is the ability to be grounded in one's own culture of origin and fluent in at least one other culture, in other words to affirm self-identity in order to understand diversity. Thus, second language teachers need to go through a conscious process within themselves to teach and understand students in a better way. This does not mean that English teachers in Colombia should be all foreigners; on the contrary, Colombian English Teachers have to be fluent in their own culture(s) and open to understand and teach it through English. However, do teachers value their own culture of origin (in this case Colombian) in order to interact with others and talk about differences?

The third one, socio-political consciousness, is teaching students that their learning is connected to the everyday problems and living of the society and be critical about social inequities. To make it simple, teachers should first recognize themselves as part of a world that they transform every day, and then they should present those multiple voices and perspectives to their students in order for them to connect each other's experiences and have their own arguments.

The challenge is that students, most of the time, live in cultural bubbles in universities and at schools, because those are transit places changed constantly by all its inhabitants. In the case of

pre-service teachers at Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana (UPB) in Medellín, Colombia, we need to be in deeper contact with other cultures and, at the same time, to develop that cultural competence of our own culture that is needed to be conscious of our roots. We do have some program subjects that give us an introduction for doing it, but, as you will see later on in the chapter, the link between theory and practice in classrooms is missing.

The important questions at this point are, how can teachers shape students' thinking process, as group and individuals, using culturally responsive pedagogy? Why did university teachers at UPB in charge of teaching interculturalism and multiculturalism not name CRP? How can I include CRP in my practices as a pre-service teacher? Surely, I needed to understand more what the roots of CRP and other concepts linked to it are, such as interculturalism and multiculturalism, which I develop in the next part of the chapter.

Interculturalism

In order to define the concept of interculturalism it is important to establish its relationship with multiculturalism, since they are two concepts with a close proximity and, their indiscriminate use, can lead to misunderstandings. The term multiculturalism is the fact that we as social groups (Poblete, 2009) are different and we have different cultures. Human differences have led, in the past as at present, to multicultural conflict. Interculturalism means "between cultures", but not simply a contact, it is also an exchange that it is established in equitable terms, under conditions of equality. It includes the bases of the previous concept, which is the diversity of populations and countries, but it is also recognizes symmetrical relationship between equals, different by background (even from the same city or country) and not exclusively by culture, to try to break the hierarchical prestige (Vélez Verdugo, 2002) of these differences. In other words, it is the

process by which inequalities are left aside to learn to live together and engage in dialogue with one another.

Interculturalism should be understood as a permanent process of relationship, communication and learning between people or groups, in order to have knowledge, values and traditions, aimed at generating, building and fostering mutual respect and full development of capacities above people cultural and social differences. Interculturalism itself tries to break with the hegemonic history of a dominant culture with a subordinate one in order to reinforce the identities traditionally excluded to build "a coexistence of respect and legitimacy among all groups of the society " (Walsh, 1998, p.8).

However, the current problem is that intercultural conflicts arise because different social groups live simultaneously in the same area and with close contacts. This is due to several situations like migratory movements, increase of the world population, wars, globalization processes among others. Thus, it is necessary to think, especially in the educational field, a way of overcoming these conflicts for a good coexistence without practicing processes such as cultural assimilation, enculturation and acculturation.

UNESCO (2005), in article 8 of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, defines interculturalism as, "the presence and equitable interaction of different cultures and the possibility of generating cultural expressions shared and acquired through dialogue and an attitude of mutual respect." De Mejía (2006) also cites the reference that it is preset in the Curricular Guidelines for Foreign Languages (1999) in which states interculturalism as a vision "which accepts and promotes all cultural manifestations, requiring a receptivity towards the contributions of the language under study and the guarantee of the knowledge and ownership of our language and culture" (p. 23).

In this sense, interculturalism is conceived as a tool of cohesion and social interaction that promotes active and permanent processes of relationship, communication and meaningful learning and, throughout collaborative work among different cultural groups, it seeks constructive and positive solutions to form citizens who learn to coexist peacefully in society. Also, citizens who accept the importance of knowledge and culturally distinct practices and thus transform their notions of reality, their living conditions and perceptions of the social world, in order to contribute to the well-being and progress of the country. Through interculturalism, teachers intend to go beyond a passive coexistence; on the contrary, with commitment, justice and equal opportunities, the aim is not to discriminate, not to be racist, to include in society through the mutual knowledge, respect and dialogue of the different cultural groups of a country. Interculturalism requires self and others knowledge to achieve a greater goal.

It is proper to say that Colombian future second language teachers have many challenges in today's education scenarios, mainly because this profession requires passion, knowledge and strength. But to do so, there is one aspect that all teachers should put into practice, which is being critical and teach students how to bringing to class topics that students hear daily on the news, on social media or on books. To do so, preservice teachers need to know what critical literacy is in order to use it in their practicums.

Critical Literacy

Critical literacy (CL) is a concept that comes from Critical Social Theory and its interest in topics of ethnicity, class, or gender, to name a few (Janks, 2008; Morrell, 2003; Morgan, 1997). However, CL focuses more on developing critical reading in students; it is, as Freire (1970) cited

by Beck (2005) argued, “an attitude towards texts and discourses that questions the social, political, and economic conditions under which those texts were constructed” (p. 392). In addition, Morgan (1997) stated that “critical literacy critics and teachers focus on the cultural and ideological assumptions that underwrite texts, they investigate the politics of representation, and they interrogate the inequitable, cultural positioning of speakers and readers within discourses.” (p.1). CL operates in a similar way as CRP, which means that CL is the umbrella term I am going to use as reference for this section.

Cope and Kalantzis (2016), in a series of videos recorded by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, states that to understand Critical Literacy is necessary to compare it to didactic literacy, which is learning mechanical facts. Students are passive and learn formal rules of language in order to read and write in a basic way to preserve the world as it is. Critical literacies, instead, is bringing real matters to class about social justice, oppression in the world, things that happens in student’s lives and students that are active participants in class.

In the field of language teaching Morrell (2003) and Janks (2008) have argued that language is not a neutral tool for communication because who have the power to manipulate language have the power to rule the world. In fact, we as human beings are language and we produce knowledge with dialogues through a language, we build our identities and contexts with language and culture. In fact, as Freire (1970) claimed, “dialogue is the encounter between humans, mediated by the world, in order to name the world” (p.69).

A teacher who practices Critical Literacy in the classroom is someone who wants to be a transformative one, in order for students to learn meaningful facts for their lives and have a critical perspective about it. A critical literacy teacher is one that teaches students to go beyond what is written in a text or taught in a class. Therefore, a second language teacher who is also critical

about their own practices in the classroom is someone who is conscious of the context and, their students' background and wants students to be empowered of what they learn. As Freire (1970) and MacLaren (1989) would say, we need to empower students to generate the courage to transform the world.

Teachers have the responsibility to remind their students about their cultural roots in order to be wider and sustain students' identity, intercultural dialogues, ideas and questions they might have along their lives to be responsive with their environment. Thus, is important that preservice teachers start their conscious process about putting into practice critical literacy concepts during their practicums in order to be able to use them once as full teachers in schools.

Comber (2001), stated that there are several approaches to critical literacy in the classroom, some of them are that students should be researchers of their language, teachers should explore minority culture constructions of literacy, students should problematize classroom and public texts and, the most important for me, "CL needs to be continually redefined in practice" (p.100). This is because, as Morrell (2000) remarks, in CL teachers and students are engaged in their classroom practices in order to develop analytical skills to transform themselves mutually.

All these previous elements justify why all CL lessons, especially the ones of a second language teacher, are students centered. It involves debates and controversial issues in order for students to discover their own voices and ethical responsibilities with the society they live in, especially in a country where the government has implemented bilingual policies taking into consideration just English learning (Mora, Chiquito, & Zapata, forthcoming).

Methodology

For this research paper, I chose to use qualitative research methods. I inquired international documents for CRP, because I did not find the term in local references, local and international ones about CL and Interculturalism. Moreover, I used recorded conferences on YouTube about the same topics to have a broader perspective about what authors have been recently saying in the academia regarding CRP, CL and Interculturalism, especially because recorded conferences and talks uploaded on the internet are an easier way of having additional information, it is listening to the author instead of reading. For local references, I read about Colombian policies and authors who made critical analysis to the context of the country.

After reading and inquiring about Critical Literacy, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Interculturalism, I had my own ideas about those concepts and their importance for my teaching practicums. Nevertheless, I wanted to interview my peers at the faculty of education at Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana about their understandings about those concepts, because 8th and 9th semester students perform their two teaching practicums, Spanish and English. I chose this three concepts because two of them (CL and Interculturalism) were the focus of two subjects in our BA. However, CRP was not mentioned by any of my university teachers or professors. I came across the concept of “intercultural communication” many times, but not a concept that included pedagogical and social aspects. That is when inquiring I came across the concept of CRP, and I wanted to check if my peers might have an idea just hearing the name.

For the purposes of my research, I conducted semi-structured interviews (Chiquito, 2015; Drever, 1995) to twenty pre-service teachers belonging to 8th and 9th semester during 2016 and 2017. They were selected because all of them were already pursuing or starting their teaching practicums in different schools around Medellín. I created an interview protocol with nine

questions and asked participants to sign a consent form for research purposes. The participants were assured with confidentiality and assigned pseudonyms. It was important for me doing interviews because of the narratives of being pre-service teachers and the process in becoming reflective practitioners (Pedro, 2005; Manuel & Hughes, 2006).

I mainly wanted to solve two main objectives. The first one was to inquire about the nature of the concepts of CRP, CL and Interculturalism from different perspectives in order to have theoretical knowledge. The second one was to hear the narratives of my peers about being preservice teachers in Colombia trying to use theoretical knowledge in their practicums. For the analysis, I chose to transcribe the interviews in an Excel chart because it was easier to cross check for patterns in my peers' answers having all them on columns and lines.

Preservice Teachers at UPB: Answers and Analysis

I thought about some questions for 8th and 9th semester students at the Faculty of Education at UPB. Questions aimed to inquire two main issues:

- 1- What is the importance that pre-service teachers give to theory once they are in their student teaching experiences?
- 2- How do they use theory in their student teaching?

The core of my questions was to know what the interviewees knew for literacy, critical literacy, interculturalism and which authors they read to support those concepts (if any).

Moreover, I wondered what ideas they had about Culturally Responsive Pedagogy or what that term evokes in them. Besides, I asked my participants about the concepts they use when planning and how do they think concepts as CRP, CL and Interculturalism could help us as future second language teachers.

I also asked follow-up questions to find out what recent concepts (not more than 40 years in the academia) during the BA and what authors or experienced teachers were their references for planning. Regarding experienced teachers, I asked my participants what kind of observations or suggestions give them their cooperating teachers.

Reading Through the Participants' Answers

Checking the answers from all my participants, I could see that they do not have one clear definition of Literacy nor Critical Literacy. Some of them just mentioned reading and writing; some others related it to literature (they could not tell me how) and some to all the skills students are able to perform in class. There was two common terms that all used which were reading and writing, just one told me that is a definition which is just an instrumental way of referring to literacy. Concerning Critical Literacy, interviewees answered with common definitions too, such as critical thinking and teaching students how to create their own ideas.

In relation to Interculturalism, Alberto, Martha, Enrique and Daniela, agreed in told me that it is a concept about being in relation and dialogue with different cultures because for them is the connection we create with cultures in order to interchange knowledge. Tania, Max, Alejandro and Luisa added that the concept for them meant also a mixture of cultures and how they converge in a same place to have a diverse environment. Leonardo answered that is important to take into account people background when establishing a dialogue in order to mind what people say.

The term CRP was the most confusing one for them, because it was the first time that my participants heard it. However, the interviewees tried to give an answer and they connected it to Interculturalism. Most of my peers answered that CRP is to “respect the culture of your students according to the context” (Alberto), and “from the name I would imagine is to do with cultures. Responding to people's cultures, so looking to Student's own cultures and how teacher involves in

it” (Daniel). Antonio, Luisa and Carlos said that culture is important and that you carry it with you all the time to your classes, Tania, Max and Alejandro answered that CRP is the way we as teachers are going to present culture using texts.

As far as I could see in my peers’ answers, they still have some misunderstandings and mixtures about theoretical concepts, and for others they have an instrumental knowledge about theory, which means, as Mora (2016) explained, students replicate what they hear or read from others instead of making self-ideas and self-statements. The reason is that more than the half of the interviewees admitted that they do not focus in learning for themselves or going deeper into concepts they hear in classes or in inquiring more authors. They accept that they do not devote enough time to studying or have study habits and consequently they are not conscious of the importance of applying theory into practice. In fact, it should be cooperating teachers during the practicum the ones in charge of helping students with doubts and assist them in creating that necessary connection between theory and practice.

Luisa said:

I think that the majority of students are not aware of new concepts or the importance of those ones because they try to be part of new ways of teaching but once in their practicums students just do the same as experienced teachers, which is being traditional.

About their practicums, Martha, Daniel, Alberto, Carlos, Maria, Luisa and Julio said that their cooperative teachers do not support them and never allow the preservice teacher to give the class, but just to prepare worksheets. Nevertheless, some other tutors have been a great support for preservice teachers because they have helped with many topics regarding being teachers, but still my peers feel lost on how to link theory with practice.

When asking which authors my peers knew about each concept, both 8th and 9th semester students could remember Geertz, Alsina and Nussbaum. This raises questions about how prospective teachers pay attention to intellectual property of the concepts risking plagiarism or having the feeling of being lost when starting research. Daniela, Tania and Maria told me that they do not know authors and they do not care and the reason is research. I asked more arguments, and the common answer I got was that if they were not going to do research then is just learning the theory for its sake.

However, when talking about the importance of using CL, CRP and Interculturalism as second language teachers all the participants replied in a positive way saying that we have to face new realities inside our classrooms and those concepts “can represent tools for us in order to complement and boost the process of learning of students” (Maria). Also that “second language teachers should take into account students cultures and contexts in order to understand their needs for their learning process” (Daniela), but especially recognize that “behind every idea of education there must be a philosophical matter that we as teachers can use in our classrooms” (Luisa).

Conclusions: Including CRP, CL And Interculturalism in the BA Program Curriculum at Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana In Medellín

As a manner of conclusion, it is important for me to go back a little bit from the start. The purpose of this research study is to propose a framework for including CRP ingrained with CL and interculturalism in the BA program curriculum in Spanish and English education at Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana in Medellín. Moreover, it is also emphasizing the importance of using those concepts from the teaching practicums in order to start an internal conscious process to be reflective teachers. This is because it is important that future Colombian language teachers think about the aspect of culture in second language teaching, fact that is not that obvious and most of the times is forgotten.

The Faculty of Education at UPB is trying to balance students and government demands. That is why the current curriculum at UPB is focused on literature, methods and approaches, pedagogues that created the foundations of pedagogy, narratives and research. I think is good, but pedagogies such as CRP and CL should be included as well during the 5 years of studies and make clearer the connection between theory and practice, which is not clear to 8th and 9th semester students. It would be proper to include CRP from subjects in second or third semester when pre-service teachers at UPB start to inquire about their identity and start permeating the whole curriculum.

It is important that we overcome traditional models and teaching methods in Colombia, because if we understand our students as those who can transform the world, then we can help them. If we take into account that an educational system has context, practices, people and policies which need to interact for the benefit of student, then we can be part of the change, or at least this is what is expected to happen. In terms of second language teaching we have the biggest

responsibility, because here in Colombia we are learning English just for business and not as a means of communication or interaction.

We have to create also our own materials for teaching Colombian culture through English first and then compare it with English speaking countries culture in order to develop that cultural awareness first and then consciousness that is expected in students in CRP and the dialogue that is expected in Interculturalism, without forgetting to be critical readers. Trujillo (2006) argued that there are three visions of the language: language as an instrument, language as a form of artistic expression and language as subject of study. According the Common European Framework of reference (2001), there are three levels of competence in a language: linguistic, socio-linguistic and pragmatic. This is just an example of how culture is not the core of second language teaching, moreover according Páez (2010) the linguistic character of the theoretical assumptions of second language teaching, makes it difficult to define culture.

Authors such as Lee Whorf (1956), Kramsch (1993; 1998), and Byram and Fleming (1988) recognized that teachers cannot separate culture from teaching and learning. The relationship between language and culture has become a transversal axis that crosses the human sciences in various ways. This leads to understand that second language teaching needs to have a broader interpretation and point of view, so CL, CRP and interculturalism need to work together as concepts for second language teachers in Colombia.

Thus, another challenge for teachers in Colombia is that we need to be aware how we use second language in the classroom and as pre-service teachers, we need to experience that in our teaching practicums, because it is the first contact that we have as teachers and not anymore as students. Moreover, we need to be aware that we deal with language daily, especially if is used as a means of communication in a country where there is a bilingual policy that is pushing schools to

change their curriculum. Thus, we need to affirm and improve the link between theory in the university and practice in the teaching internship, otherwise we are going to be swallowed up by the system as Nieto (2013) argues, because it is “(a system) that replicates power and privilege” (p.15). Furthermore, we have to be critical readers of our tutors and practicum places in order to be responsive with our students.

We have also to include students’ lives in our teaching planning because as Max, one of the participants, said, “We are not recreationist, we are not here to entertainment within class; we are, in fact, second language teachers.” We have an ethical principle to try to make changes in our context. Therefore, as educators, we have to strengthen our conceptions of interculturalism and multiculturalism in order to teach our students in a context that encompasses both concepts, in order to strengthen democracy and the peaceful coexistence of the various cultural groups within a classroom. To do so, it is necessary to ingrain the previous aspects with other ones, such as critical literacy and culturally responsive pedagogy.

Consequently, in order to establish basic criteria for developing and promoting interculturalism within education, it is necessary to take into account three main notions: the socio-cultural context of the school environment, the sociocultural reality of students and their families, and the profile of teachers and their relationship with the community made up of parents and students. This indicates that educational contexts are not all the same and that differences between schools, students and teachers should guide approaches, methods and content.

Including interculturalism as a fundamental element of the educational system implies assuming cultural diversity from a development perspective, social transformation for the construction of knowledge based on respect and homogeneity and democratic coexistence. That is to say, as Haro and Vélez (1997) expressed, certain kinds of knowledge about others - formal

knowledge / traditional knowledge - should not be hierarchized and that it is not only the weak actors in society who are obliged to know the culture of the dominant ones, but that education is given in terms of equality of conditions, without discrimination.

It is also necessary to take into account the "UNESCO World Report for Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue" (2009), which proposes a reflection on culture highlighting the dynamic nature of cultural diversity and its capacity to renew perspectives on sustainable development, the effective exercise of universally recognized human rights, social cohesion and democratic governance. The acceleration of the processes of globalization enhances the value of intercultural competences, both individual and collective, that enable us to tackle cultural diversity more effectively and to follow cultural change closely. Without cultural competence, misunderstandings rooted in identity problems are likely to proliferate, since cultural diversity is linked to the dynamic process by which cultures change but retain their identity, in a state of permanent openness to others.

Thus, it is necessary to review what is really in the Curricular Standards and Guidelines of Colombian education that allow an education where the multi-ethnic diversity of the country is recognized, with teaching methodologies that address the multiple elements of knowledge and wisdom of the different cultures and contexts that the country has. Intercultural education would be a more effective and practical way for the training of children and young people and also in teacher training. It is necessary to develop social, political, procedural and metacognitive processes to encompass the students' experience and the reality of their socio-cultural milieu, as are the inequalities, contradictions and internal, intra and intergroup conflicts that they confront.

This leads me to talk about my experience as a student. I grew up in different cities of the country until I turned eight. Here I studied in different schools (private and public) from first to

third grade and I remember that the education I received was superficial and teachers were not interested in students but in content. Then, I moved to Italy where I needed to learn a new language, a new culture and I went to extra classes with a woman who was not a teacher. She talked to me in Italian and tried to help me with homework, but at school I had to find a way to communicate. In other words, instead of facing a process of cultural integration, I made a process of acculturation, acquiring characteristics typical of the Italian culture at the expense of forgetting the Colombian one, so much that at present I recognize as belonging to both cultures, but not completely.

If I had passed through an intercultural curriculum, as proposed by Walsh (2005), or through teachers who were aware of being responsive taking into account my background, I could have taken advantage of my cultural heritage to compare both my culture of origin, the Colombian, and the "host", the Italian one. I could have participated effectively in the resolution of concrete problems that I encountered in the course of my education, in the recognition of the diversity of the context where I was living in order to create a critical-reflexive communication with my classmates to avoid a cultural shock.

Nevertheless, it is not necessary to go so far as to observe cases of lack of a responsive curriculum. In fact, in my same university we see how students from other cities and departments must face certain difficulties when arriving in Medellín and meet the culture and the slang of this city. The same might happen also to students from different socio-economic sectors of the city. A student living in the north of the city who belongs to a low resource family might have a cultural shock if immerse in a school where the majority belongs to wealthier families.

The spaces for promoting a learning environment, as suggested by Walsh (2005), in which students can express themselves and communicate from their own identity, cultural practice, to enrich each other with the experiences of one another, are very few at UPB. Although there is the

figure of the tutor who accompanies the student in the process of insertion into university life in the first semester, it is not evident in all other teachers or in all spaces. That is, not all teachers take responsibility, through constant dialogue, to follow up in the course of the career, since the figure of the tutor is from the first to the last semester.

Therefore, it is necessary to reflect on the pedagogical and social criteria on which these practices are based in order to strengthen cultural integration based on the diversity of subjects. Thus, it is important to encourage motivation, dialogue and participation in such a way that students do not feel afraid when they present their points of view without detracting from other opinions. In addition, teachers should use their knowledge as a tool to enhance students' skills and integral formation in order to enrich the Faculty of Education and Pedagogy at UPB.

Pedagogy alone is not enough to understand the need for an intercultural education. It is necessary to engage other disciplines and concepts with pedagogy to have a global understanding of what intercultural education is and why it is necessary. This is because, as Dietz (2012) puts it, "multicultural discourse is the basis of intercultural education, the latter being understood as a differential approach to the education of non-native minorities" (page 13). However, the educational policies of the Colombian context and, in general, of Latin America, are aimed at ethnic minorities and indigenous groups.

According to Dietz (2012) there is an educational debate on what is a multicultural education in the Anglo-Saxon world and European continental space. The Anglo-Saxons claim that ethnic minorities are empowered through their identity, whereas in continental Europe there is a need for intercultural education because of "the growing complexity of sociocultural and diversity as a characteristic of future European societies" (p. 15). This way of thinking education, influences Latin America which is still under a post-colony age, and the discourse of intercultural

education is thought of as a postindigenist phase. In fact, Schmelkes (2009), quoted by Dietz (2012), exposes South America's efforts for "intercultural and bilingual education" to overcome pedagogical shortcomings with other countries and political pressures for new economic agreements.

Gimenez (2003), cited in Dietz (2012), proposes two plans in which interculturalism and multiculturalism move. On the one hand, the factual, multiculturalism is the cultural, linguistic, religious diversity of a social group. That is, the difference of the other should be recognized. On the other hand, interculturality at the normative level is based on interethnic, interlingual and interreligious relations. That is, we should live in diversity. Both terms work under principles of equality, difference and interactions.

This leads me to talk about identity. Identity is important because it directly influences social movements because "the individual is no longer conceived as a fully coherent, rational agent [...] and reduced to a set of potentials." (Dietz, pp. 32-33). Social movements have cultural nuances of identity. This first process of identity is limited and influenced by power, understood as the relationship between state institutions and society, as well as the inequalities that exist because individuals receive the effects of power.

The boundaries, then, between "us" and "the others" are in an antagonism of identities because, as the author points quoting Lamo de Espinoza (1995), "every identity is rather against someone than in favor of someone." Therefore, the topic of minority and majority groups should be addressed. The former are such if placed in front of a majority but, at the same time, the majority can become a minority if the same relation is applied with another major group, whereas a set of non-sentient pluralities should be taken into account to build new identities, because it would fall into recycling (Bauman, 1996). Rather, the importance of difference in the development of the

current "resistance identities" (Castells, 1998) should be recognized as a result of social mobilization over the decades.

However, as de Mejia (2006) argues, identities are seen as something that one possesses and that can be lost or found when entering in contact with other cultures. But Barbour (1996), quoted by de Mejia, states that human beings are complex and have parallel identities (family, religious, regional, etc.). Thus, we are not static, we change and evolve in accordance with the experiences we live and the cultures we meet.

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