



Promoting Critical Awareness in EFL Readings: A Critical Pedagogical Proposal in 11th grade at a
Subsidized School

By

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Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	4
List of Figures.....	5
Abstract.....	6
1. Introduction.....	7
2 Research Questions and Objectives.....	11
2.1 Research Question.....	11
2.2 Objectives.....	11
2.2.1 General objective.....	11
2.2.2 Specific objectives.....	11
3. Theoretical Framework.....	11
3.1 Critical Pedagogy and the EFL Classroom.....	12
3.2 Critical Cultural Awareness in EFL.....	13
3.2.1. Cultural Representations in EFL Material.....	14
3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis in EFL.....	16
4. Methodology.....	18
4.1 Observation and Problem Identification.....	19
4.2 Context and Participants.....	19
4.3 Sampling Techniques.....	20
4.4 Instruments and Data Collection.....	20
4.4.1 Pre-test and Post-test.....	20
4.4.2 Analytic Rubric.....	21
4.4.3 Students' Questionnaire.....	22
4.5 Research design.....	22
4.6 Mixed Methods in Action Research.....	24
4.7 Data Analysis Techniques.....	24
4.7.1 Pre and Post Test.....	25
4.7.2 Student's Questionnaire.....	25
4.8 Material Design Explanation.....	25
4.8.1 Intervention Procedure.....	26
4.9 Ethical Considerations.....	26
4.9.1 Validity and Reliability Criteria.....	27

5. Data Results.....	27
5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis.....	27
5.1.1 Textual Analysis.....	28
5.1.1.1 Pre test.....	28
5.1.1.2 Post test.....	29
5.1.2 Discursive Analysis.....	30
5.1.2.1 Pre test.....	30
5.1.2.2 Post test.....	31
5.1.3 Social Analysis.....	33
5.1.3.1 Pre test.....	33
5.1.3.2 Post test.....	34
5.1.4 Total Score Comparison.....	35
5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis.....	36
5.2.1 Textual Analysis.....	36
5.2.1.1 Pre test.....	36
5.2.1.2 Post test.....	37
5.2.2 Discursive Analysis.....	38
5.2.2.1 Pre test.....	38
5.2.2.1 Post test.....	40
5.2.3 Social Analysis.....	42
5.2.3.1 Pre test.....	42
5.2.3.2 Post test.....	44
5.2.4 Student's Questionnaire.....	46
5.2.4.1 Opinion on the intervention.....	47
5.2.4.2 Importance of reading critically.....	48
6. Discussion.....	49
6.1 Textual domain.....	49
6.2 Discursive domain.....	51
6.3 Social domain.....	53
6.4 Overall Evaluation of the Critical Proposal.....	55
7. Conclusions.....	56
8. Limitations and Projections.....	58

9. References.....	60
10. Appendices.....	64
Appendix A: Cots' Questions for Textual, Discursive and Social Practices...	64
Appendix B: Pre-test Reading: 9 Uniquely British Traditions.....	65
Appendix C: Post-test Reading: Be a Culture Shoch Absorber.....	68
Appendix D: Pre-test.....	69
Appendix E: Post-test.....	72
Appendix F: Analytic Rubric to Assess Pre and Post Tests.....	75
Appendix G: Student's Questionnaire.....	77
Appendix H: Critical Proposal Lesson Plans.....	78
Appendix I: Carta de Asentimiento Informado.....	83
Appendix J: Carta de Consentimiento Informado.....	84

List of Tables

Table 1. Pretest and Post Questions Summary.....	21
Table 2. Summary of Stages, Instruments and Objectives of the AR project.....	23
Table 3. Summary of Critical Intervention' Sessions.....	26
Table 4. Pre-test Textual Analysis Dimension.....	37
Table 5. Post-test Textual Analysis Dimension.....	37
Table 6. Pre-test Discursive Analysis- Text Producer Dimension.....	38
Table 7. Pre-test Discursive Analysis- Context Dimension.....	39
Table 8. Pre-test Discursive Analysis- Target Audience Dimension.....	39
Table 9. Post-test Discursive Analysis-Text Producer Dimension.....	40
Table 10. Post-test Discursive Analysis- Context Dimension.....	41
Table 11. Post-test Discursive Analysis- Target Audience Dimension.....	41
Table 12. Pre-test Social Analysis- Text Purpose Dimension.....	42
Table 13. Pre-test Social Analysis- Cultural Representation Dimension.....	43
Table 14. Pre-test Social Analysis- Cultural Representation Dimension.....	43
Table 15. Post-test Social Analysis- Text Purpose Dimension.....	44
Table 16. Post-test Social Analysis- Cultural Representation Dimension.....	44
Table 17. Post-test Social Analysis- Cultural Implications Dimension.....	45
Table 18. Post-test Social Analysis- Cultural Implications Dimension.....	46

Table 19. Students' Opinions on Intervention.....	47
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List of Figures

Figure 1. Pre-test: Textual Analysis Performance in Analytic Rubric.....	29
Figure 2. Post-test: Textual Analysis Performance in Analytic Rubric.....	30
Figure 3. Pre-test: Discursive Analysis Performance in Analytic Rubric.....	31
Figure 4. Post-test: Discursive Analysis Performance in Analytic Rubric.....	32
Figure 5. Pre-test: Social Analysis Performance in Analytic Rubric.....	34
Figure 6. Post-test: Social Analysis Performance in Analytic Rubric.....	35
Figure 7. Average Score in Pre and Post Test.....	36
Figure 8. Student's Likert Scale post-intervention.....	48

Abstract

Nowadays, teaching English does not only involve teaching the language per se, but it also involves preparing students to question the subtleties of the language in this globalized world. In the Chilean educational system, the opportunities to develop critical reading skills are scarce mainly due to the low amount of time allocated for the English subject and the lack of effective material to foster critical awareness. Thus, critical awareness in readings comes to be a challenge inside the classroom because it requires providing students with the tools to analyze and question the texts they encounter. In this context, this action research gives an account of the results obtained by implementing an online critical pedagogical proposal based on a critical approach to textbook readings. The objective was to promote critical cultural awareness in 12 eleventh-grade students from a subsidized school. The results were assessed by using an analytic rubric to evaluate the critical reading performance at the beginning and at the end of the intervention. Along the comparison of scores, data was also analyzed by the means of thematic analysis. Finally, a questionnaire with open-ended questions and a Likert scale were responded by the students. The results showed that students' scores in the three main types of analysis –textual, discursive and social– improved by the end of the intervention. Also, students' reported that they enjoyed and learned English throughout the implementation of the critical proposal. Further research on longer critical intervention is suggested.

Keywords: *critical reading, cultural awareness, critical analysis, EFL*

1. Introduction

Nowadays, one of the main aims of the English as foreign language (EFL) pedagogy is to ensure that language learners not only communicate effectively in the target language, but also develop cultural awareness to fit into the current globalized era. Thus, there is a need for the EFL field to become critical in terms of the multiple referents of information that students might encounter in the teaching and learning process. In this respect, Kumaravadivelu (2008) states that educators should aim at fostering *global cultural consciousness*, which is related to embracing and respecting cultural diversity in an interconnected world. However, regarding the EFL field,

the task of promoting global cultural consciousness in the classroom can hardly be accomplished unless a concerted effort is made to use materials that will prompt learners to confront some of the taken-for-granted cultural beliefs about the Self and the Other.

(Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 189)

Consequently, English language educators are not only supposed to teach English but also to promote social justice within their classrooms. Moreover, several authors have claimed that language is a powerful device in the construction of intersubjectivities in critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2001; Pennycook, 2001). In fact, one of the aims of critical pedagogy is the promotion of social justice to counteract power imbalance, which can only be achieved through critical reflection. In this sense, English teaching resources are to provide settings for interaction in and with the target language and at the same time offer cross-cultural activities for learners to develop critical thinking skills to counterbalance cultural dominance.

From this perspective, the representation of cultural diversity is key in EFL material. Notwithstanding the issue is not exclusively about what is integrated in course books as ideology, but also what is not contained in it too. EFL textbooks can possibly accentuate prevailing belief systems, and they additionally have the potential for disregarding or subverting different ideologies by not covering them in content (Ulu & Köksal, 2019). One of the most significant resources that Chilean EFL teachers currently have is the textbook provided by the Ministry of Education. However, the promotion of critical cultural awareness is usually challenged by conventional classroom practices adding the fact that teachers are often constrained by the contents of the textbook. Traditional classroom practices tend to have the educator at the center of the transmission of content and information which hinders the development of critical thinking skills to question cultural representations in language material.

As previously stated, the main resource used by English teaching practitioners is the textbook. It is often said that textbooks play a very important role in EFL education, since it is generally through textbooks that learners get acquainted with the target language culture and values. Nevertheless, educators should not only introduce content and language features, but also provide the opportunity for students to assess what they are being exposed to by the means of critical reading. Pirozzi (2003) summarizes the significance of critical reading as the following: “it can help a reader to evaluate textbook material and other types of reading, to uncover motivations and assess arguments, to consider options (...)” (p. 197). In this vein, language learners can be empowered to judge language content and context of textbook readings they are assigned.

In the current EFL scenario, there is a need for addressing critical cultural awareness inside the classrooms to counteract power imbalance. According to Pessoa and Freitas (2012), this means that “teachers must not only teach the contents of a given subject, but also encourage students’ critical thinking so that they can be aware of oppression and learn how to fight against it” (p.753). However, in EFL reading contexts, contending cultural representations is being confronted with traditional classroom practices which have provided limited space for students’ enlargement of critical thinking skills (DeWaelche, 2015). The development of critical thinking is also an imperative skill in the EFL Chilean curriculum since learners are exposed to a wide variety of information. Mora (2013) points out that the Chilean context is one in which a lot of theoretical and curricular efforts have been made to deal with the teaching and learning of critical thinking skills across all school subjects, but these efforts have failed to be successfully materialized in actual pedagogical practices.

In other words, there is a lack of effective learning materials and teaching strategies in EFL contexts that can cement critical cultural awareness with reading activities. Through recent years, high school students across Chile have been assessed in their development of receptive skills for language learning: reading and listening. However, national standardized tests have not revealed a positive prospect for either both skills, reading being the weakest area. Even though reading and listening are the most promoted skills in the EFL textbook, those areas have not reached the benchmarks posited by the English curriculum. In this context, one of the learning outcomes in 11th grade English curriculum is that students can use their knowledge of English in comprehending and producing –written and spoken- texts in order to build a critical personal perspective. Therefore, at the end of their school academic year, students are intended not only to achieve a certain level of proficiency in the English language, but most importantly to develop critical thinking, the latter

being of importance for this action research project. Thus, because of the relevance of the role of the learner's critical consciousness regarding cultural representations in the learning and understanding of a language is that it seems crucial to explore the strategies, resources, and approaches that could contribute to its development.

It is in this context that critical pedagogy arises as a teaching approach which encompasses several elements such as helping students questioning and challenging domination and potential bias in society. In this approach, critical discourse analysis (CDA) arises as a suitable teaching and learning resource for language analysis in the EFL context. Cots (2006) asserts that "CDA offers a new perspective on language, which considers that language use (a) is questionable and problematic (b) reflects social/ ideological processes and (c) constitutes, at the same time, a resource to act upon those processes" (p.336). As the main issue in CDA is to find hidden meanings and to uncover the relationships between discourse, ideology and power, language students can benefit from its resources to analyze language features extracted from their textbooks' readings. Since the promotion of critical cultural awareness should be developed in conjunction with language awareness, the latter can benefit from instruments of analysis used for critical discourse analysis. To illustrate, Fairclough (1989) describes pronouns and adjectives as certain values that are encoded in different formal aspects of language, which can be interpreted by the language learners to study power relations in cultural representations.

In accordance with raising critical awareness, it is essential to incorporate an analysis of texts that range from a textual account to discursive and social practices involved in the reading. Several studies in Asian and Chinese EFL settings have found major benefits from introducing CDA inside their classrooms. For instance, studies have reported that EFL learners became aware of the manipulative nature of texts and students presented a development in intercultural knowledge of self and others (Abbasian & Malae, 2016; Hazaea, 2020). However, relevant practice and research of critical cultural awareness in the EFL Chilean context are still limited (Mora, 2013).

To address this gap in the Chilean context, the present study explores the possibilities of addressing critical cultural awareness through the analysis of language features that may empower learners to think critically about the choices in pronouns and adjectives, text producer's presence and stance, context, target audience, text purpose, cultural representations and consequences in readings. Consequently, this study attempts to explore how a pedagogical proposal based on a

textual, discursive and social analysis can help language learners to critically navigate the complexities of power relations in the field of cultural representations at the levels of both language and content.

The methodological approach that best suits this study is action research since it enables teachers to focus on aspects of their practice that need improvement. In this context, Grabe (2010) asserts that “a further emphasis for language teacher education has been the move to engaging teachers in the practice of action research” (p.38). In this project, the focus is to develop EFL learners’ critical cultural awareness by guiding them to reflect on language choices and contextual evidence in textbook readings that can empower both researcher and students in order to reflect upon our practices. Since language and culture are closely interrelated, the subtleties of the language can be analyzed and taught in the light of tools from critical discourse analysis and unveil how they help to (re) produce and challenge naturalized ideological positions in cultural representations. Thus, the principles and stages of action research can lead to a development in students’ critical awareness of cultural representations in their EFL classes and at the same time broaden and question their linguistic repertoire to promote social justice. Burns (2010) synthesizes the importance of action research mentioning that “[it] can be a very valuable way to extend our teaching skills and gain more understanding of ourselves as teachers, our classrooms and our students” (p. 1). This is a very important fact because it can provide applied linguists and teachers with some different insights into what happens inside the classrooms pertaining foreign language development.

The contributions of this action research project are twofold. On the one hand, it could help language teachers in terms of decision making in language planning at the school, incorporating critical cultural awareness into their classrooms. On the other hand, it could contribute to applied linguistics, particularly from a critical approach, with effective means of instruction to improve critical thinking skills, reading comprehension and thus students’ overall language production. This action research project is intended to pave the way for further methodological and pedagogical changes regarding how the analysis of textual, discursive and social practices can be systematically introduced inside the EFL classrooms to foster critical cultural awareness in language learners. It is our duty as language teachers to help transforming society into a fairer place by fostering critical approaches in our classrooms, questioning inequalities in cultural representations existing in society, and planning materials that represent cultural minorities and diversity.

2. Research Question and Objectives

2.1 Research Question

- In what ways does a critical pedagogical proposal promote 11th grade students' critical awareness of power relations in the field of cultural representations?

2.2 Objectives

2.2.1 General Objective

- To determine and assess the effects of implementing a critical pedagogical proposal to raise critical cultural awareness regarding power relations in the field of cultural representations.

2.2.2 Specific Objectives

- To assess 11th grade students' initial understanding of power relations in the field of cultural representations in textual, discursive and social practices in readings by means of a pre-test.
- To implement a critical pedagogical intervention combining the analysis of textual, discursive and social practices to create awareness on power relations in the field of cultural representations.
- To assess 11th grade students' final understanding of power relations in the field of cultural representations in textual, discursive and social practices in readings by means of a post-test.
- To describe the 11th grade students' perceptions towards the implementation of the critical pedagogical proposal.

3. Theoretical Framework

With the aim of establishing this action research's approach to cultural representations in EFL textbooks' readings, the following section describes the line of study for fostering critical reading. Furthermore, the following three major subfields of research that form central foci of this research will be described: critical pedagogy, critical cultural awareness and critical discourse analysis.

3.1 Critical Pedagogy and the EFL Classroom

Critical pedagogy is led by the premise that in the world there is an unequal and unjust distribution of power and privilege (McLaren, 2003). Several pedagogues and intellectuals including Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux have brought about the notion of criticality in pedagogy. In the early 80s, Freire was the most articulate critic of the traditional education system. He coined the term *banking education* as a metaphor of the education in which the teacher deposits knowledge on students and they receive it, memorize it and repeat it. As Freire (2000) states “knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through restless impatient continuing, hopeful inquiry [we] pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (p.72). In the same line of thought, Giroux (2001) underlines that educators should assume significant roles in helping transform societies by fostering critical approaches in their classrooms. In this context, critical pedagogy entails the promotion of social justice by having students question the inequalities regarding cultural representations that exist in society instead of merely memorizing and repeating content, premises which are at the core of this critical study.

Critical pedagogy in EFL does not arise as another method or a strategy for teaching language learners, rather it is a field in which the teaching and learning processes must be context-bound, and those processes must also help question power relations embedded in society. In this sense, schools are part of societies with unequal distribution of power. Therefore, schools are political places and at the same time they are not neutral spaces; consequently, they usually reflect and reproduce societal power imbalance (Janks, 2008). In this regard, the language classroom is another scenario in which power relations can be discussed in order to raise awareness of their implications in society. In fact, Morgan (as cited in Pennycook, 2001) emphasizes the role of critical pedagogy in EFL saying that it “doesn’t mean neglecting language. It means organizing language around experiences that are immediate to students” (p. 15). This excerpt points out the importance of taking into consideration students’ backgrounds in order to plan language instruction, which is a key element to this critical proposal. In this vein, “language is not simply a means of expression or communication; rather, it is a practice that constructs, and is constructed by, the ways language learners understand themselves, their social surroundings, their histories, and their possibilities for the future” (Norton & Toohey, 2004, p.1). Therefore, since language is a social practice that can be used to construct and deconstruct the way people understand and perceive the world, it is necessary to provide EFL

learners with tools that could allow them to question inequalities regarding the way the world and cultural issues are portrayed in EFL material.

3.2 Critical Cultural Awareness in EFL

It is undeniable that the process of language teaching and learning is closely interwoven with culture. Due to the complexity of the term culture, this study ascribes to the definition provided by Samovar and Porter (2003), who mention that is

...the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, social hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relationships, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. (p.8)

Culture comprehends several elements such as the ones described above, and hence culture is ubiquitous. Within this framework, EFL materials could be regarded as elements that represent cultural objects which are pervaded by a number of ideologies and meanings. These materials can portray and reflect society and cultural aspects embedded into it. Thus, the notion of critical cultural awareness (CCA) is of pivotal importance because it “encourages language educators to craft learning opportunities that guide learners in observing clear connections between classroom lessons and real-world issues while exercising critical thinking skills throughout the process” (Nugent & Catalano, 2015, p.74). Therefore, critical cultural awareness seeks to develop abilities to critically appraise practices and elements that constitute our cultures and nations (Byram, 1997).

Given what has been said about the importance of cultural awareness, there is a clear connection between critical cultural stances and development of critical thinking skills at the same time. In fact, Byram (1997) says that language teaching skills such as analysis and interpretation can be reinforced in relation to the target culture. According to Anderson and Krathwold (2000) the highest order cognitive skills correspond to analyzing, evaluating and creating. This is relevant for the purposes of this study because by providing students with opportunities to foster these skills in relation to cultural elements, “learners can broaden their understanding, increase sensitivity and promote flexibility and tolerance of otherness and cultural diversity” (Reimann, 2009, p.85). To illustrate, analyzing requires learners to draw connections among ideas by seeing patterns and classifying information. Students at this level could be asked to differentiate, organize, relate or contrast and compare information. Moreover, evaluating is related to making decisions or judgments by critically examining information. Students at this level could be asked to appraise, argue, judge,

support, value or critique information. Finally, creating requires students to produce new or original work by reorganizing information into a new structure. Students at this level are expected to design, plan, formulate, conjecture and produce. In accordance with these critical thinking skills, Nugent and Catalano (2015) assert that “tasks promoting CCA present opportunities for students to use higher-order thinking skills in order to become more aware of the ideological component underlying intercultural interactions” (p.19). Given the significant relationship between fostering critical skills and cultural awareness, the three skills -describe, interpret and evaluate- will be considered in this action research in the planning, implementing and assessing stages.

3.2.1 Cultural Representations in EFL Material

Since culture is a broad term and encompasses knowledge, beliefs, values and several other concepts addressed above by Samovar and Porter (2003), this critical proposal addresses two main areas related to cultural representations in EFL: cultural stereotypes and certain English varieties’ hegemony.

On the one hand, an issue in the EFL setting is the portrayal of surface culture which could lead to stereotypical representations of cultures depicted in the learning material. Surface culture refers to facets such as fashion, flags, music, food or festivals. These topics usually comprise many of the themes exposed in language learning material. In fact, EFL materials often include information about holidays, famous people, food or celebrations among others. Atkinson (1999) calls this a “received view of culture” since they are usually static and homogenous facts in which are merely passed on to language learners. In this sense, a sort of *banking* practice —as Freire would call it—since learners act as passive receivers of this information regarding typical cultural information. In this regard, Reimann (2009) adds that “most textbooks are marketed for wide audiences and therefore tend to generalize in terms of skills, acceptable subjects, or cultural content” (p.95). However, Gómez (2015) contends that “these surface forms of culture are not sufficient for students to understand the target culture because they only entail the accumulation of general fixed information” (p.168). Therefore, it is important to promote awareness about how fixed ideas about cultures could become stereotypical representations of people or nations. This critical proposal aims at transcending topics such as celebrations, cities and famous people by guiding learners to question them. Therefore, in order to raise critical cultural awareness, there is a need to address issues related to diversity, cultural stereotypes and power imbalance.

On the other hand, in addition to surface culture portrayal issues in EFL material, there is another concern related to the cultures and English languages that are presented in EFL material. The complex interplay between majority and minority languages and nations in terms of power relations is best explained by Wiley (2000) who highlights that “linguistic hegemony is achieved when dominant groups create a consensus by convincing others to accept their language norms and usage as standard or paradigmatic” (p.113). Usually, the Standard English is used in EFL material and thus students do not get acquainted with other cultures which also happen to have English as their first or second language. In that respect, according to Apple (1984), hegemonic knowledge becomes available

by and large it is through... the textbook. While the text dominates curricula at the elementary, secondary, and even college levels, very little attention has been paid to the ideological, political, and economic sources of its production, distribution, and reception. (p. 309)

This excerpt contextualizes the need for questioning EFL textbook contents in order to uncover naturalized political or ideological background behind the content –in the case of this action research– reading activities that might exacerbate the supremacy of western varieties of English. According to Xu (2013), “the cultures and ideologies that the learners are exposed to may well determine how they perceive the language they learn” (p.5). Teaching only about one culture validates the statement of native authority and hegemony of some English varieties over others looking down on the position of other cultures.

In this vein, Song (2013) found out that Korean EFL textbooks favored American and English cultures. Also, he discovered that most activities in them were restricted to superficial levels of discussion. In the Chilean context, Farías and Cabezas (2015) conducted a study in which –from a critical discourse analysis perspective– the researchers examined the textbooks provided by the Chilean government to teach English to adult learners. They discovered that identity portrayals were decontextualized for the audience they were intended. Moreover, they concluded that the content in the textbooks imposed ideological status quo and neoliberal identities. Ergo, it is indispensable to provide opportunities for language learners to question the existence of English varieties and nations they are exposed to in the EFL classroom, in order to gain a deeper understanding of cultural issues that might derive from only illustrating a handful of countries in EFL material.

3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis in EFL

One of the key tenets of critical cultural awareness is paying attention to language and the way texts are written or said, so that language learners are able to describe, interpret, analyze and evaluate them. Shin and Crookes (2005) remark that “through critical dialogue in class, students can gain control over their learning and gain critical view of their learning and the society (p.114). In fact, this is the role of EFL critical pedagogy in terms of aiding students question and challenge domination instead of merely reproducing and repeating content. This is the reason underlying the importance of placing attention on language features since it is possible to uncover the ideological leanings of discourse by the examination of examples of language decisions that may eventually benefit the interests of certain social groups over others (Wallace, 2003). As a consequence, tools for analyzing language content to reveal connections between language use and power are necessary to foster critical cultural awareness in relation to cultural stereotypes and English varieties hegemony.

One of the fields of applied linguistics that is concerned with how language encodes, propagates and reproduces ideology is critical applied linguistics. It is regarded as “a potentially committed approach to applied linguistics claiming to combat injustice and inequalities” (Cook, 2003, p.126). Therefore, it examines the role of language in power relations, dominance and inequality in order to disclose how social power abuse is exercised, reproduced and legitimated in social contexts (Van Dijk, 2015). In the case of EFL teaching and learning, Wharton (2011) points out that “given the global spread of English, it is particularly important to take a questioning approach to the cultures and values with which it can be associated” (p.223). This action research project aims at using some of the tools for critical analysis to better prepare English language learners with an enduring ability in critical cultural awareness and at the same time improve learners’ language performance.

Fairclough (1995) points out that the choices of vocabulary, grammar and textual structures serve to construct political positions that could portray unequal power relations in discourse. He describes CDA as the following “by 'critical' discourse analysis I mean discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes (...)” (Fairclough, 1995, p.132). Therefore, his framework regards discourse as the result of three dimensions to analyze it: social, discursive and textual practices. At the micro level, there is

textual or linguistic analysis which because of grammatical or lexical choices contributes to conveying a specific message in discourse. The level of discursive practice entails the examination of issues of production and consumption. At the macro level, the sociocultural practice comprises intertextuality and wider social practices that are realized through discursive practice and the texts. Fairclough's framework will be used to guide learners' critical analysis of the texts in the implementation stage and also the same domains will serve us a framework to design the instruments to collect data.

In this vein, at the textual level, the key concepts that will be explored are the language choices for pronouns, nouns and adjectives because these "are perhaps the best-known grammatical category of the expression and manipulation of social relations, status and power, and hence of underlying ideologies" (Van Dijk, 1998, p.203). Pronouns, nouns and adjectives were selected on the basis of its importance to address distinctions of in-groups or out-groups and English varieties. Personal pronouns are very much related to the relationship of power and solidarity. According to Koban (2020), *I* usually refers to oneself as an individual, *we* usually expresses collectivity and solidarity and *they* is used to separate the speaker from other groups. Therefore, the choice of pronouns in readings usually realized this. At the discursive level, critical thinking and analysis of language features regarding the text producer, the context and target audience of readings will be addressed. Reimann (2009) claims that "in considering the implementation of a viable and appropriate cultural awareness raising method, a primary concern involves the content, usage, and goal of texts and materials" (p.85). Therefore, it is important to analyze aspects such as text producer, target audience, context and text purpose. The writer or creator of the text refers to whom it represents through the language choices that help learners to analyze how their stances are expressed in the readings, whereas the context is related to when and where the piece of reading is produced and distributed. The target audience corresponds to the identification of supporters and detractors of the reading by analyzing linguistic choices in pronouns and contextual information. Finally, at the social practice level, the author's intention is analyzed along with the identification of countries, nationalities or cultures described and the implications of their appearance in the reading. Furthermore, at this level of analysis, cultural consequences of the reading and the existence or nonexistence of stereotypes are evaluated in terms of their realization in adjectives or contextual information from the reading. Cots (2006) proposes a series of questions for teachers to use in their language classrooms which are based on Fairclough's framework for critical analysis. These questions will serve as a reference in

order to develop the proposal of this study, the list of questions will be included in the appendix section (see Appendix A).

Concerning the use of CDA inside the classroom, Hazaea (2020) reported in his study at a Saudi university that the development of critical intercultural awareness was enhanced by the use of critical discourse analysis in their critical reading class. One of his most remarkable findings was that their students managed to demonstrate an improvement about appreciation of cultures of self and others. In the same line, Cots (2006) indicates that “the critical approach to language study is consistent with a view of education which prioritizes the development of the learners’ capacities to examine and judge the world carefully” (p.336). These two ideas related to *examine and judge the world* are exactly what critical pedagogy entails, hence, one possible way to enact change is by transforming current teaching practices into critical activities that foster critical cultural awareness and language learning.

In summary, critical discourse analysis has reported to be useful for disclosing power imbalance and also prejudice and stereotypes in EFL material. The key issue is to equip learners with critical tools that could help them discover by themselves the inequity and power imbalance that might arise in textbook readings regarding stereotypical representations and English varieties hegemony in readings. The latter being of relevance “since they [students] may at times be exposed to materials that oversimplify the target culture and tend to present it as homogenous and unproblematic” (Wharton, 2011, p.223). This relationship between CDA and language teaching is made on the assumption that ideologies and social injustice are also part of our daily lives inside the classroom either by teacher discourse or the material presented to the students, thus enhancing and promoting the language learning process at the same time.

4. Methodology

This section deals with the methodological approach to this study, and its aim is to raise cultural awareness of power relations in the field of cultural representations in terms of textual, discursive and social practices. Thus, this section includes the problem identification, context and participants, sampling techniques, instruments, research design, data analysis techniques, material design explanation and ethical considerations.

4.1 Observation and Problem Identification

In Chile, the main resource used by English teachers is the textbook provided by the Ministry of the Education. In 11th grade, students receive a textbook called Get Real English, in which most of the activities foster receptive skills such as listening and reading. In this context, the 11th grade curriculum for English teaching declares that one of the learning outcomes for this grade is that students can use their knowledge of English in comprehending and producing –written and spoken– texts in order to build a critical personal perspective. Therefore, at the end of the school period students should not only reach a certain level of proficiency in English, but also develop critical thinking skills. However, the 11th grade textbook does not bring enough activities in their reading section that could foster students’ development of critical cultural awareness. In this context, in recent years, the Chilean law for inclusion in education was passed, which meant that schools should be a gathering location for students from different backgrounds (MINEDUC, 2016). Thus, more power balanced power relations in EFL materials and activities should be fostered to ascribe to the importance of cultural diversity. Furthermore, according to Herrada, Rojas and Zapata (2012) only 90% of English teachers who take part in the Chilean teacher evaluation system [*Evaluación docente*] raise questions for their learners to show higher level cognitive functions such as analyze, interpret or justify options. Therefore, the EFL textbook readings and their activities have failed to foster critical thinking skills. This becomes evident when 11th grade students are asked to provide their personal opinions and they report low levels of participation and engagement when asked about their opinions on cultural issues.

4.2 Context and Participants

This action research project takes place at a Catholic school girls’ school which is subsidized and it covers from primary to high school levels. The school has 771 students. It is located in Estación Central, Santiago. According to the 2020 school vulnerability rate, the school has an 84% of vulnerability, which means that students are considered to be highly socioeconomically vulnerable within their communities. From 1st to 8th grades the school has two classes per level; to illustrate, 1st grade A and B. From 9th to 12th grade there is only one class per level. There are approximately 38 students per classroom. Students from different countries attend the school, such as Venezuela, Peru, China, Colombia, Haiti and Dominican Republic. Most students live in the surrounding areas of the school in the Estación Central district. The school vision is to educate the whole person in the

academic, social, moral and spiritual domains through a curriculum based on Dominican principles and centered on the needs of the current society.

Concerning the English subject, the English department has two teachers: one for primary-junior school and one for high school. From first to fourth grade, there are two hours of English per week. From fifth to eighth grade, there are three hours per week. In ninth and tenth grades, students have four hours of English; whereas in eleventh and twelfth grades, students have two hours per week. It is noteworthy to mention that during the coronavirus pandemic, students only had 45-minute online meetings twice a month and asynchronous activities were assigned on an online platform. Students have an elementary level of English overall.

4.3 Sampling Techniques

The subjects of this study are 12 females, enrolled in 11th-grade from the above-mentioned subsidized school in Santiago. The 11th grade participants are between 15 and 17 years old. This study uses the non-probability convenience sampling since the sample is provided by the immediate surroundings of the teacher-researcher. Regarding the homogeneity of the sample, the sampling is homogeneous since participants “share some important experience relevant to [the] study” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 127). This 11th grade was chosen since the English curriculum has a learning outcome that is closely related to the nature of this action research which is the development of critical thinking.

4.4 Instruments and Data Collection

The data collection instruments were selected in order to collect relevant records that could provide insights into the implementation of the critical pedagogical proposal. The instruments that will be described are: pre and post-tests, analytic rubric and students’ questionnaire.

4.4.1 Pre-test and Post-test

This instrument consisted of two tests to assess the impact of the implementation on the development of critical cultural awareness. The pre-test is the first activity students completed before the implementation of the proposal. Students were appointed to read the text “9 Uniquely British traditions you must experience in the UK” from the Get Real English book (see Appendix B). In the post test, students were asked to read the text “Be a culture shock absorber” (see Appendix C). These texts were selected because they were part of the unit of the textbook that was appointed for that specific academic period. At the same time, the texts in the unit deal with customs

and traditions which is suitable in order to carry out critical analysis on cultural awareness. Then students were asked to answer 14 questions in written way and then send their answers on the online school platform. These questions were based on Cots' (2006) questions for the three levels of analysis described in the theoretical framework: textual, discursive and social. However, the questions were reworded in order to make them simpler for students to understand. As shown in the table below (see Table 1), part one of the tests was about textual analysis of pronouns. Part two of the tests was about discursive practices analyzing elements such as text producer, context and target audience. Finally, part three of the tests was about the social analysis and the elements to examine were text purpose, cultural representation and cultural implications of the readings. It is worth mentioning that the reading for the pretest (see Appendix D) was different to the reading assigned for the post-test (see Appendix E). They were different texts because the pretest was applied before the intervention whereas the post test was conducted afterwards. The pretest was reused in the sessions of the intervention in order to analyze the interplay among textual, discursive and social practices. Both tests were administered via online because of the suspension of face-to-face classes during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Table 1

Pre test and Post Questions' Summary

Domain	Criteria	Test Question number
Textual analysis	Adjectives	Q.4
	Pronouns and nouns	Q.1, Q.2, Q.3
Discursive analysis	Text producer	Q.5, Q.6
	Context	Q.7
	Target audience	Q.8, Q.9
Social analysis	Text purpose	Q.10
	Cultural representation	Q.11, Q.12
	Cultural implications	Q.13, Q.14

4.4.2 Analytic Rubric

In order to assess the pre and post tests, an analytic rubric was used (see Appendix F). It was created using the three levels of analysis proposed by Fairclough: textual, discursive and social domains, which are also related to critical thinking skills described by Anderson and Krathwold (2000) – describing, interpreting, evaluating. This rubric contains eight criteria to assess. In the textual analysis dimension, there are two criteria: pronouns and adjectives. In the second dimension –

discursive domain– there are three criteria: text producer, context and target audience. Finally, in the social analysis dimension, there are three criteria: text purpose, cultural representations and cultural implications. There are four levels of performance listed across the top row using numbers and descriptive tags: *exemplary* (4), *accomplished* (3), *developing* (2) and *beginning* (1). The rubric has thirty-two points overall. It should be noted that the same rubric was used to assess the pre and post tests.

4.4.3 Students' Questionnaire

A questionnaire was conducted in order to gather 11th grade students' perceptions towards the implementation of the critical proposal. Since action research involves reflection, it was important to collect the participants' opinions regarding the proposal. The questionnaire was in Spanish for students to convey freely their perceptions since their level of English is elementary. It consisted of one yes-no question and the justification of their answer. Participants were asked this type of questions since “open questions [...] enable respondents to write a free response in their own terms, to explain and qualify their responses and avoid the limitations of pre-set categories of response” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p.248). It also included a short Likert scale with 7 items in which students were asked to rate the degree of importance of the statements related to critical reading. There were 5 degrees of agreement: *very important* (5), *important* (4), *neutral* (3), *low importance* (2), *not important* (1). These questions were asked in written way and administered via online. The questionnaire was conducted in the last session of the implementation of the critical proposal (see Appendix G).

4.5 Research Design

An action-research design is used in this research since it aims at taking action in the researcher's own context and social educational practices. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), “action research is a powerful tool for change and improvement at the local level” (p.226). This model of investigation also suits the nature of the study which stands from a critical perspective in applied linguistics. In this context, “applied linguistics can be described as a broad interdisciplinary field of study concerned with solutions to problems or the improvement of situations involving language and its users and uses” (Berns & Matsuda, 2006, p.1). Therefore, an action research design is suitable to approach critical linguistic issues in the EFL classroom.

The proposed methodological design for this action research project is the cyclical model proposed by Anne Burns (2009) based on the model by Kemmis and MacTaggart (1988). This model consists of four stages that can occur iteratively over several cycles. Due to the nature of this study, this action research project consists of two cycles. The stages proposed by Burns (2009) are:

Plan: develop a plan of critically informed action to improve what is already happening

Act: act to implement the plan

Observe: observe the effects of the critically informed action in the context in which it occurs

Reflect: reflect on these effects as the basis for further planning, subsequent critically informed action and so on, through a succession of stages. (p. 290)

Due to the nature of the study and the importance of problem identification, the aforementioned stages were used and renamed with the following stages: diagnosis, planning, implementation, evaluation (see Table 2).

Table 2

Summary of stages, instruments and objectives of the AR project

	Action research stages	Data collection method	Objective
O B S E R V A T I O N P L A N N I N G A C T I O N R E	Diagnosis stage: A pre-test is applied to 11 th grade students. It is assessed by the means of an analytic rubric.	- Pre-test - Analytic rubric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess 11th grade students' initial understanding of power relations in the field of cultural representations in textual, discursive and social practices in readings by means of a pre-test.
	Planning stage: With the data gathered in the diagnosis phase, a critical reading didactic unit is planned. The critical proposal content is congruent with the curricula provided by the Chilean Ministry of Education	Design of critical pedagogical proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To implement a critical pedagogical intervention combining the analysis of textual, discursive and social practices to create awareness on power relations in the field of cultural representations.
	Implementation stage: The critical proposal is put into action inside the classroom. The proposal is carried out in 3 sessions (1 month).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To implement a critical pedagogical intervention combining the analysis of textual, discursive and social practices to create awareness on power relations in the field of cultural representations.
	Evaluation stage: At the end of	- Post-test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess 11th grade

F	the intervention, 11th grade	- Analytic rubric	students' final understanding of
L	students answer a post-test and a	-Final questionnaire	power relations in the field of
E	final questionnaire about their		cultural representations in
C	perceptions towards the readings,		textual, discursive and social
T	topics and cultural		practices in readings by means
I	representations.		of a post-test.
O			To describe the 11th grade
N			students' perceptions towards
			the implementation of the
			critical pedagogical proposal.

4.6 Mixed Methods in Action Research

This action research project seeks to tackle critical thinking inside the English language classroom which is complex phenomena that requires quantitative and qualitative data. This is the rationale behind using a mixed methods methodology in this action research study. Dörnyei (2007) supports the use of mixed methods and points out that “the understanding of the operation of complex environments-such as classrooms-lends itself to mixed methods research, because combining several research strategies can broaden the scope of the investigation and enrich the researcher's ability to draw conclusions” (p.186). Furthermore, because of the nature of this study, a concurrent design was used for the quantitative and qualitative data since both methods were applied separately but in a parallel manner, however, their results are incorporated in the discussion section (Dörnyei, 2007). On the one hand, the quantitative method helps to assess the effects of implementing the proposal. The analytic rubric has four levels of performance with scores in order to evaluate whether students improved or worsened their levels of achievement. On the other hand, the qualitative analysis of the answers to the pre and post tests is of paramount importance since this is a critical proposal and as such, students' responses and views on critical cultural issues matter in order to determine how participants elaborate their ideas on stereotypes, audience, text producer, among other criteria.

4.7 Data Analysis Techniques

In this section, the data analysis techniques will be described. It is divided into the different data collection methods in order to clarify the analysis techniques to treat data. It is important to mention that due to the number of data collection tools that this study involves, it is necessary to triangulate data in order to reach appropriate conclusions.

4.7.1 Pre and Post Test

Since this action research deals with the comparison of scores in order to assess the impact of critical pedagogical proposal in students, the results obtained from the analytic rubrics designed for the pre and post tests were presented through descriptive statistics. Regarding the sample, this research worked with the same group: 11th grade class with 12 students. This statistical analysis used the statistical package SPSS 22. It is important to mention that data from both instruments was also analyzed through thematic analysis in order to enrich the description and discussion of data. The results from the pre and post tests were grouped into codes. Burns (2009) says that “one way of organizing and analyzing open-ended written data that comes from methods such as journal writing is to look for emerging themes or patterns. Are certain ideas or words frequently repeated? (p.122). In this vein, themes or codebooks were hierarchized in order to explain in a better way the relationship among themes in both instruments. The categorizing process was inductive since codes emerged from their occurrence in data.

4.7.2 Student’s Questionnaire

Question 1 from the students’ questionnaire was also analyzed through thematic analysis because it helps to examine patterns in the obtained data that will enable to draw conclusions on the students’ perception regarding their involvement in the critical pedagogical proposal.

4.8 Material Design Explanation

The materials used in every session of this intervention were retrieved and modified from three different sources. First, the 11th English textbook *Get Real English* provided by the Chilean Ministry of Education. The election of this textbook lies on the fact that this is the material that students receive in order to support their language learning process. The other two sources were described in the theoretical framework corresponding to Fairclough’s levels of analysis and Cots’ (2006) questions as reference for analyzing the three levels of critical discourse analysis based on Fairclough’s model.

The implementation consisted of three sessions in which different questions for analyzing texts –based on Fairclough’s and Cots’- were raised and exposed to the students. As students did not

have synchronous classes, the material was sent and then discussed via short online meetings (see Appendix H to see samples of the materials used in each session).

4.8.1 Intervention Procedure

The intervention consisted of three online asynchronous sessions of 45 minutes each. The intervention was divided into the three types of analysis: textual, discursive and social. Therefore, each session was allocated to a different type of analysis (see Table 3 below). In each session, there was a PowerPoint presentation on the type of analysis and also a reading from the textbook in order to contextualize the posed questions (see Appendix H to see samples of the material and lesson plans). Furthermore, students were asked to send back a brief worksheet regarding the appointed reading.

Table 3

Summary of Critical Intervention' Sessions

Session	Domain	Skill	Reading	Date
0	ALL	Description Analysis Interpretation Evaluation	9 Uniquely British traditions you must experience in the UK	Pre test October 12 th
1	Textual Analysis	Description Analysis Evaluation	Sri Lanka to deport British tourist over Buddah tattoo	October 19 th
2	Discursive Analysis	Interpretation Analysis Evaluation	Things you should better not do in...	November 2 nd
3	Social Analysis	Evaluation	What food tells us about culture	November 16 th
0	ALL	Description Analysis Interpretation Evaluation	Be a culture shock absorber	Post tests November 16 th

4.9 Ethical Considerations

Since this research involves teenagers, informed assent (for children) and informed consent (for parents) were provided. In the first place, the informed assent (see Appendix I) was used for students to express their willingness to participate in the research. It indicates the purpose of the study, procedures, withdrawal privilege, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity.

In the second place, parents received an informed consent (see Appendix J) in order to allow their children take part in the research. This consent contains information regarding the objective of the study, a statement depicting their voluntary participation and how they can withdraw at any point without a negative impact or punishment for doing so. Withdrawing from the study will not affect the relationship with the researcher and the information gathered up to point of withdrawal will be destroyed. Besides, it states that no physical or psychological harm will be done throughout their participation. Confidentiality was assured by stating that all the participant data would be kept confidential and all notes in class observation and questionnaire transcriptions would be in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher. Furthermore, it states that all responses are anonymous and that names or identifying information will be replaced with codes and only the researcher will have access to this information. Identifying information will not be shared with others outside this research study. For the dissemination of the findings in articles and conferences, the students' participation will also remain anonymous and confidential.

4.9.1 Validity and Reliability Criteria

First, it is necessary to state that as several instruments were used to study the scope of the same phenomenon, triangulation was required in order to overcome biases in the research.

In this research, content validity will be ensured in this research by means of other researchers who will explore the theoretical constructs and instruments in order to elucidate the trustworthiness of the results. In order to ensure reliability, the study aims at showing internal consistency by grading levels of performance with the analytic rubric so as to yield consistent scores.

5. Data Results

Since this action research project aims at fostering critical cultural consciousness in EFL learners, the investigated phenomena required the integration of quantitative and qualitative data to provide answers for the research questions. On the one hand, the rubric to assess the pre and post tests has four levels of performance with scores in order to evaluate whether students improved or worsened their performance in critical analysis. Consequently, the results obtained from the analytic rubrics designed for the pre and post tests will be presented through descriptive statistics aided by graphs. On the other hand, the qualitative analysis is relevant for the purposes of this study since as it is a

critical proposal, students' answers and views on critical issues need to be taken into consideration. Data provided by the pre and post tests will be also analyzed through thematic analysis.

5.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The results will be presented according to the three dimensions of analysis in the analytic rubric: textual analysis, discursive analysis and social analysis (see Appendix F). The pre and post-tests consisted of 14 questions, which were assessed by the analytic rubric containing 4 levels of performance: *exemplary* (4), *accomplished* (3), *developing* (2) and *beginning* (1). The total score of the rubric is 32.

5.1.1 Textual Analysis

5.1.1.1 Pre test

This dimension includes two criteria: adjectives and pronouns and nouns. The adjectives criterion deals with the identification of the connotation of adjectives in the reading and the justification either for positive or negative connotations. It corresponds to question 4 in the test¹ (see Appendix D to see the pretest). To illustrate, students were asked to gather evidence to support whether adjectives such as *pagan* and *bizarre* had positive or negative connotations regarding the cultural activities they were describing. Most students only stated whether they considered some adjectives had positive or negative connotation but did not justify or provide examples from the text to support their answer. This is the reason underlying the scarce 20% of students who achieved an *exemplary* level of performance while 40% of students is still at a *beginning* level of performance as Figure 1 displays.

The pronouns and nouns criterion refers to the identification of pronouns and to whom they refer in the readings. The students in questions 1, 2 and 3 (see Appendix D) are asked to read a passage from the reading and identify pronouns. To exemplify this, students were asked to whom they thought the pronoun *we* referred to in the following quote “we have an array of festivals, events, and gatherings”. Afterwards, students were asked to analyze if there were any distinctions of in-groups or out-groups and finally state whether they considered the pronoun usage inclusive or not. As the following Figure 1 indicates, only 8% of students reached an *exemplary* level of performance; and most of them (50%) are in the *developing* level of achievement.

¹ Students were asked to write if adjectives *pagan*, *downright*, *awesome* and *bizarre* had positive or negative evaluation or connotation according to them and provide evidence from the text to justify their evaluation.

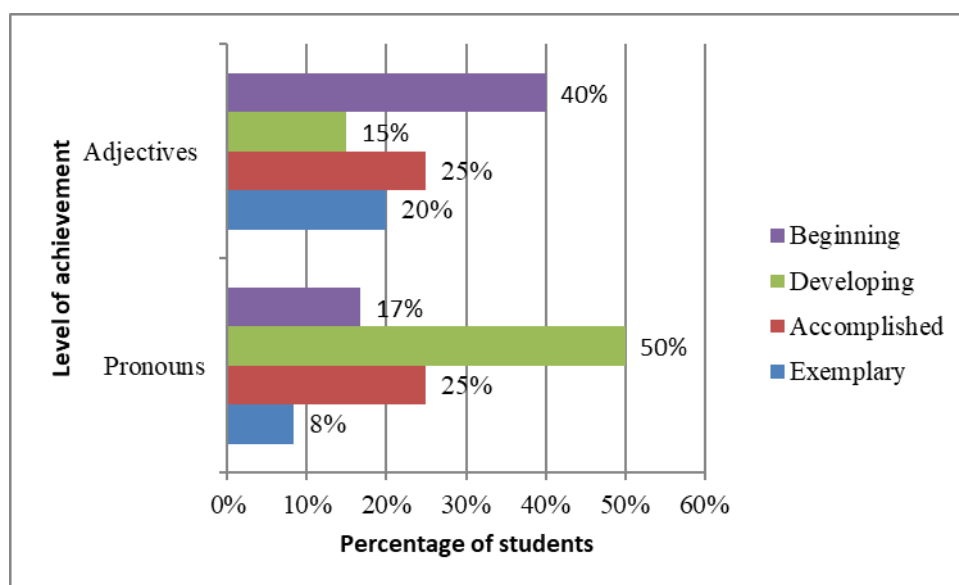


Figure 1. Pre-test: Textual Analysis Performance in Analytic Rubric

5.1.1.2 Post test

First, the adjectives criterion that deals with the connotation of adjectives and justification for the answers will be presented. In this sense, students were asked to gather evidence to support whether adjectives² had positive or negative connotations regarding the traditions and cultural activities described in the reading. In this criterion, 42% of students reached the *exemplary* level of achievement, mostly due to the justification of their answers based on evidence from the readings and connections to background experience (see Figure 2). To illustrate, participant 7 regarded being ethnocentric as something *bad* (See Example 1 below)

Example 1

[The reading] invites “invites us not to be ethnocentric, but it doesn’t explain much of what it means”. As an immigrant I try to not be ethnocentric, because it's bad, sometimes it's hard not to be because I'm used to some kind of stuff that I don't see any more here, and I have to remember that I'm in another country and I try to be tolerant and adapt myself (Participant 7).

Second, in the pronouns and nouns criterion, students were asked about to whom some pronouns in the readings referred to³. As shown in Figure 2, 50% of students reached an *exemplary* level of achievement because they were able to reflect on the consequences of the choice of the pronouns. Participant 9 provided an insightful idea regarding whom the pronoun *someone and one* referred to (See Example 2 below)

² The adjectives in the post tests were preposterous, intimidated, ethnic and ethnocentric

³ The passage was “asking why someone is not yet married or how many children one has might seem normal”. Students were asked to provide ideas regarding to whom *someone* and *one* referred in the reading.

Example 2

[Someone] can be from any country, probably a woman, because marital status is more frequently asked to women. It only depends on the person, the questions might be personal depending on the culture, but the text tries to show that it mostly could appeal to immigrants (Participant 9).

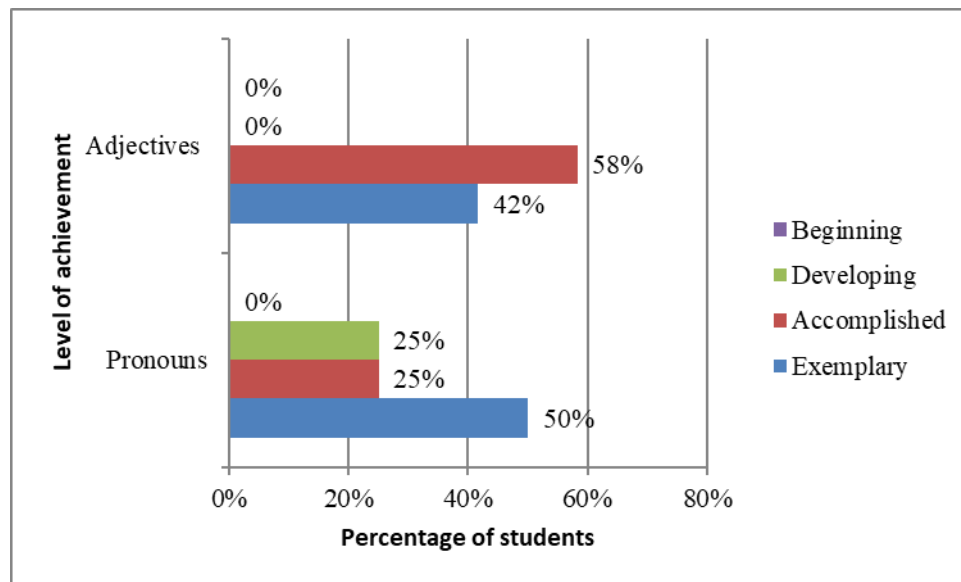


Figure 2. Post-test: Textual Analysis Performance in Analytic Rubric

5.1.2 Discursive Analysis

5.1.2.1 Pre test

This dimension includes three criteria: text producer, context and target audience. The text producer criterion deals with the identification of pronouns and contextual clues that help the reader portray the producer/author/writer of the text. It corresponds to questions 5 and 6 in the pre-test⁴ (see Appendix D for pre-test). Students were asked whether the “author” was present in the reading through the use of personal pronouns and provide examples. Based on that evidence, students were asked to provide their opinion on whom they thought produced the text, and his/her ascription to the culture that is portrayed in the reading. As displayed in Figure 3, most students (75%) are in the *developing* level of achievement due to the lack of evidence to support their answers. For example, some students stated only *yes* to the question and did not provide further explanation to their responses. The implications of this phenomenon will be fully discussed in the discussion section of the paper.

⁴ Question 5 was: are the authors or author "present" in the text through the use of personal pronouns (*I* or *we*)? If present, what are the implications of these pronouns?
Question 6 was: who do you think produced the text? Is he/she part of the culture described? How do you know? (Provide evidence from the text).

The context criterion deals with contextual issues about when and where the text was produced and distributed. It corresponds to question 7 in the pretest⁵. As shown in Figure 3, 42% of students are at an *accomplished* level of performance, and 50% are in *developing* level. Even though some students attempted to provide an explanation of the contextual issues, most lacked ideas either about when or where the text was produced.

Finally, in the target audience criterion, students were asked to provide an opinion on whom might agree or disagree with the ideas of the reading. For students to reach the *exemplary* level of achievement, it was expected that students could be able to justify whether they felt compelled through the text linguistic choices in pronouns⁶. As Figure 3 displays, 42% of students reached *accomplished* level of performance. Most students failed to thoroughly provide an examination of the text supporters or detractors.

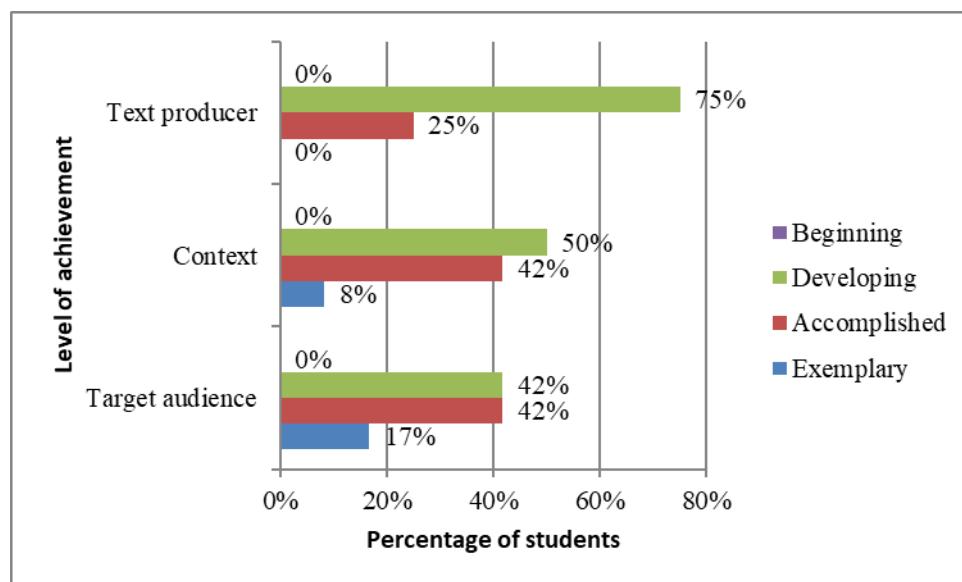


Figure 3. Pre-test: Discursive Analysis Performance in Analytic Rubric

5.1.2.2 Post test

Regarding the post- test, there is an improvement in the levels of performance that students reached in the three aforementioned criteria in the discursive analysis dimension. First, in the text producer criterion, as displayed in Figure 4, 75% of students reached the *exemplary* level of achievement, compared to 0% of students go reached this level in the pre-test. Therefore, students were able to

⁵ Question 7 was: where and when do you think it was produced and displayed (apart from the textbook)? Why do you think this reading was included in this particular textbook?

⁶ The passage in the pretest was “If you want to join on the celebrations, head to any large city (...). Then, students were asked if they felt like they could “join” the celebrations the reading presented and justify their answers.

provide a thorough examination of the text producer based on the pronouns and contextual information (See Example 3 below).

Example 3

The text was produced by a female immigrant, who must be about 30 years old. The truth does not matter so much if it is a man or a woman, although there should be a short story of a man to differentiate how immigrants live in another country and if the male or female sex influences the adaptation (Participant 7).

Second, concerning the context criterion, 58% of students reached the *exemplary* level, compared to the 8% of students who reached the same level in the pre-test. Students reached the level since they were able to identify and provide a well-developed explanation of the contextual issues of the reading. Below in the following section, in the qualitative analysis, there will be a more detailed description of students' answers.

Finally, in the target audience criterion, 42% of students reached the *exemplary* level, compared to the 17% of students who reached this level in the pre-test. Mainly, this is due to more detailed and well-developed explanations on the supporters and detractors that the text might have. Students elaborated further on the idea of feeling compelled or not by the usage of pronoun *you* in the texts; however, as shown in Figure 4, 50% of students are still struggling with providing thorough answers to show evidence from the text in order to support their ideas. Examples of students' answers will be provided in the following section for qualitative analysis.

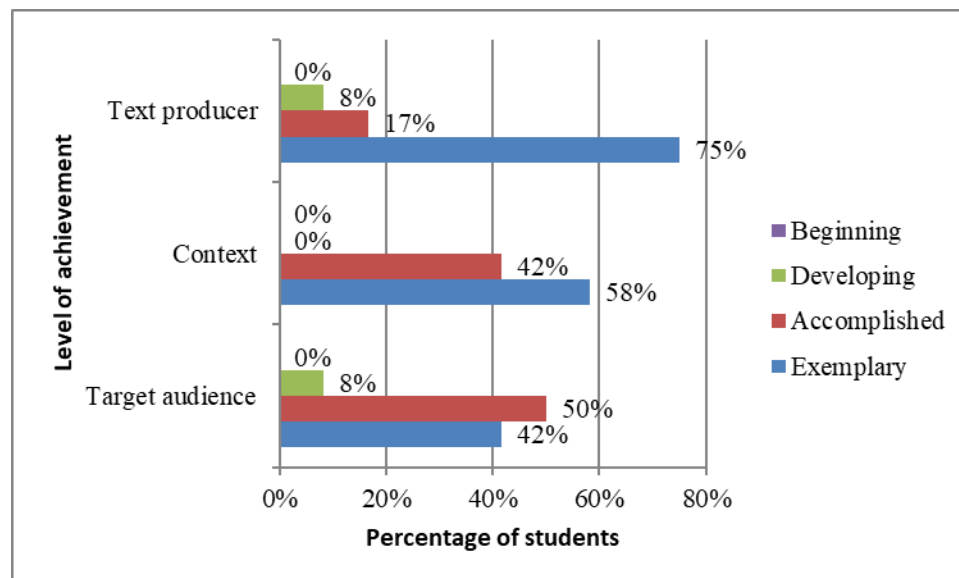


Figure 4. Post-test: Discursive Analysis Performance in Analytic Rubric

5.1.3 Social Analysis

5.1.3.1 Pre test

This dimension includes three criteria: text purpose, cultural representations and cultural implications. In the first criterion, text purpose the test question was number 10⁷, which delved into the author's intention in the reading. For students to reach the *exemplary* level of performance, they had to evaluate the purpose of the text and be able to identify and justify the author's position and or potential bias. In the pretest, 25% of students reached the *exemplary* level, whereas 75% of students reached the *accomplished* level of performance as shown in Figure 5.

The second criterion –cultural representations– deals with identification of countries and nationalities depicted in the reading and reflection on the implications of hegemony. It corresponds to questions 11 and 12 in the pre-test⁸. As displayed in Figure 5, only 8% of students met the *exemplary* level. This mainly lies in the students' lack of justification to their answers. Some students only named the countries involved but did not elaborate further on the implications of their appearance in the text. In the following section, there will be a more in-depth description of students' responses.

The third criterion, cultural implications or consequences dealt with the evaluation of the consequences the text had and it also dealt with the connections based on the evidence students gathered when reading. Furthermore, students were expected to reflect upon any stereotypes that could have appeared in the reading. As shown in Figure 5, only 8% of students reached the *exemplary* level, while 42% reached the *accomplished* level of achievement. Some students did not provide further examples or connections of the consequences of the text with society. To illustrate, several students only replied that the reading (see Appendix D) promoted tourism, but did not justify their answers.

⁷ Question 10 was: what seems to have been the author's intention? Provide evidence from the text to support your ideas.

⁸ Question 11 was: what countries are named in the text? Are some countries more used than others? How do you feel about it?

Question 12 was: is the depiction of cultures diverse or dominated by a specific culture (or nation)? How do you feel about it? What's your opinion on the matter?

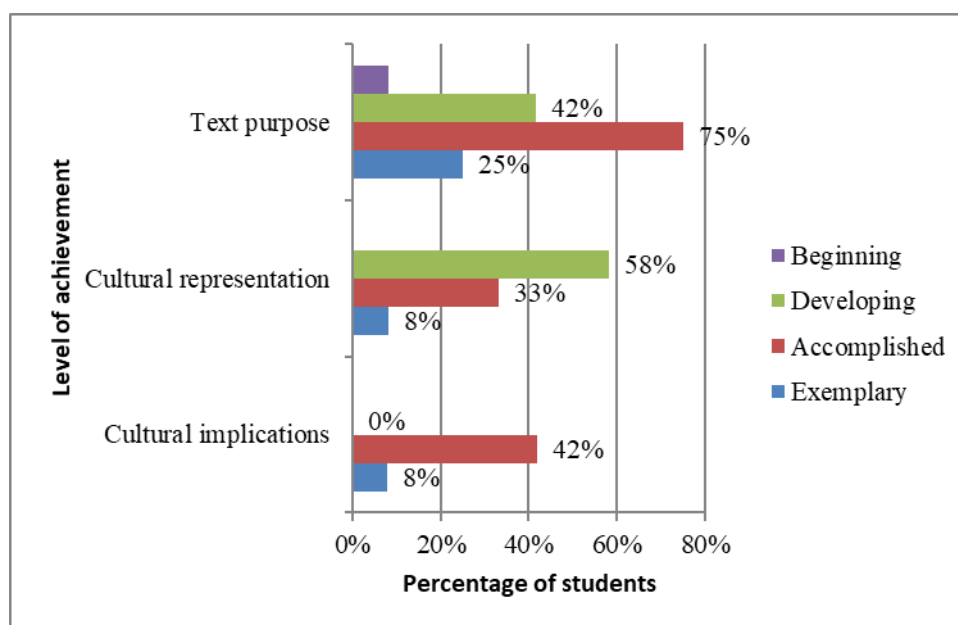


Figure 5. Pre-test: Social Analysis Performance in Analytic Rubric

5.1.3.2 Post test

In the post test, regarding the first criterion -text purpose- there are 58% of students who reached the *exemplary* level of performance compared to the 25% who reached the same level in the pretest as illustrated in Figure 9. This means there is an increment of 33% in the amount of students who reached the exemplary level in the post test. In the aforementioned level of performance, students had to identify and justify the author's position and provide evidence that supported their claim.

Concerning the second criterion –cultural representation- only 17% of students reached the *exemplary* level, whereas 75% met the accomplished level of *achievement* (see Figure 6). Finally, in the third criterion –cultural implications- 50% of students reached the *exemplary* level compared to 8% of participants who reached it in the pretest. The rest of students met the *accomplished* (25% of students) and *developing* (25% of students) level of achievements. Even though there was an increment of students who were able to successfully evaluate the social consequences of the reading and reflect upon stereotypes, half of the class still struggles to consistently provide a thorough examination of their answers. To illustrate, some students just state that the social consequences in the reading (see Appendix C) is to “promote tourism and support immigrants” (participant 8); however, there is a lack of justification or evidence for the student to state this.

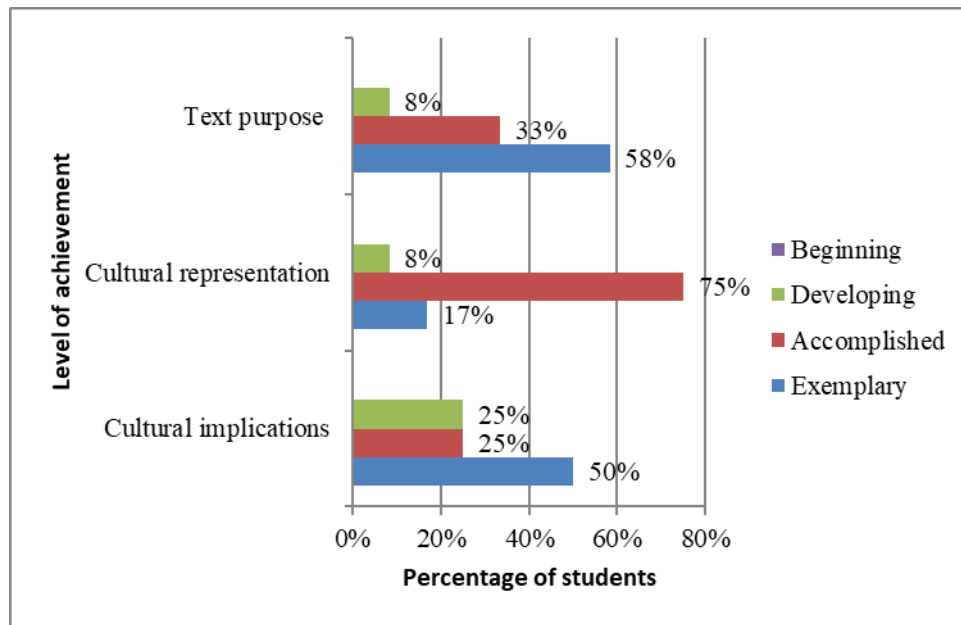


Figure 6. Post-test: Social Analysis Performance in Analytic Rubric

5.1.4 Total Score Comparison

The analytic rubric with its four levels of performance –*exemplary*, *accomplished*, *developing*, *beginning*- helped assess the pre and post tests in order to evaluate whether students improved or worsened their performance in critical analysis in the three main domains of analysis: textual, discursive and social. As it was previously stated, the rubric had a total score of 32 points. As illustrated in Figure 7, in the pre-test the average score was 20.75 whereas in the post-test the average was 25.17. Therefore, there was an increment of 4.42 points in the total score after the intervention. The implications of this increment will be fully explained in the discussion section of the study.

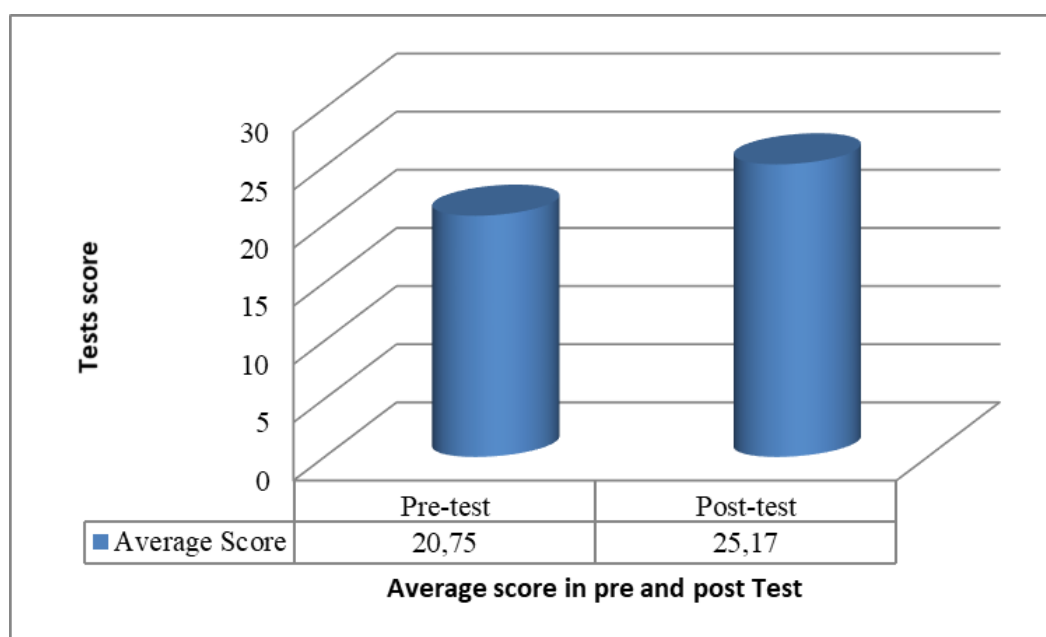


Figure 7. Average Score in Pre and Post Test

5.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Data provided by students' answers in the pre and post tests were also analyzed from a thematic analysis perspective in order to enrich the study and provide a thorough view of the phenomenon of critical reading following action research principles. The main domains of analysis of the textbook readings in the pre and posttest were textual, discursive and social analysis. Therefore, in order to guide the reading, the following section will be divided into the three targeted types of analyses: textual, discursive and social.

5.2.1 Textual Analysis

5.2.1.1 Pre test

This dimension is subdivided into two criteria: pronouns and adjectives. Questions 1 and 2 in the pre and post-tests refer to the pronouns criterion, whereas questions 3 and 4 refer to the adjectives criterion⁹.

Concerning the pronouns criterion, all of the students answered to whom the pronouns *we* and *you* referred in the text, but learners did not elaborate on their answers reflecting on the consequence of the choice of pronouns. Table 4 below displays two main themes recognized in

⁹ Question 1 is to whom do you think the we pronoun refers to? Why? Question 2 is to whom do you think the you pronoun refers to? Why? Question 3 is would you say that this text is inclusive in terms of including a wide array of events from different parts of the world? Question 4 is related to a table in which students are asked to provide de meaning in Spanish and state whether it has a positive or negative connotation providing examples from the reading.

students' answers related to pronouns. Most learners talked about the nationality of the person and also that the pronoun *you* would talk about the reader of the passage¹⁰.

Table 4

Pre-test Textual Analysis Dimension

Main theme	Student's answers samples
Nationality	Participant 1: <i>I think the text refers in general to the <u>British</u>.</i> Participant 5: <i>"We" refers to the <u>British</u>.</i>
Reader	Participant 4: <i>It refers to the <u>readers</u>.</i> Participant 7: <i>It refers to the <u>person who is reading</u> this information.</i>

5.2.1.2 Post test

In the post-test, there are more elaborated answers and there are further attempts to analyze to whom the pronouns might refer to. The following Table 5 illustrates the main themes in students' answers regarding to whom the pronoun someone and the noun newcomers refer to in the passage¹¹. These results will be discussed in the following section of the study.

Table 5

Post-test Textual Analysis Dimension

Main theme	Student's answers samples
Immigrant	Participant 2: <i>It refers to the <u>author</u> herself, according to the text it says that she lived practically 7 years in Dubai but if I focus on how she describes her appearance, I would say <u>she comes from an Arab country</u>. I think she would feel very uncomfortable about people asking very personal questions.</i> Participant 9: <i>The word someone refers to someone who can <u>be from any country</u>. I think there are several cases where a person could feel uncomfortable, for example a person who is older and is asked why he/she is still single.</i>
Newcomer	Participant 2: <i><u>Newcomer</u> refers to the <u>author</u>, which means that she is like someone new in the place where she is now. It could an <u>immigrant</u>. This word can come from several sides, both in countries and also in places that you have not visited or</i>

¹⁰ The passage in question 1 is "All across the year, we have an array of festivals, events and gatherings..."

The passage in question 2 is "If you want to join on the celebrations, head to any large city park, or village fete that will happen around Whitsun"

¹¹ "Asking why someone is not yet married or how many children one has might seem normal" "One of the most difficult obstacles that most newcomers face".

	<p><i>that are new to you. I think I have felt like a newcomer since I emigrated from my native country at approximately 2 years.</i></p> <p>Participant 5: <i>Newcomers refers to the <u>migrants</u> from other countries. It's difficult for them to be in a different culture and it's hard to get used to it. I have felt like a newcomer because I'm a migrant and it's all new for me.</i></p>
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5.2.2 Discursive Analysis

5.2.2.1 Pre test

This dimension is subdivided into three criteria: text producer, context and target audience. The questions 5 and 6 in the pre and post-tests refer to the text producer criterion, whereas question 7 refers to the context criterion. Finally, questions 8 and 9 refer to target audience criterion (see Appendix D).

Concerning the text producer criterion in the pre-test, students had to state if the author or authors were “present” through the use of personal pronouns and mention who they thought produced the text they read ¹². Most learners said that the author does include himself by the usage of the pronoun “I” but did not elaborate on the implications of this. Also, students agree that the person who writes is British but do not state what made them draw that conclusion. The following table summarizes the main themes in students’ answers (see Table 6).

Table 6

Pre-test Discursive Analysis- Text Producer Dimension

Main theme	Student's answers samples
Presence of the author	<p>Participant 3: <i>Yes, he tells us everything from <u>his position as a British</u></i></p> <p>Participant 7: <i>Yes, <u>it is present</u> because part of the text express[es] what he thinks or how he finds the traditions of that country to be.</i></p>
British	<p>Participant 2: <i>The one who wrote the text is <u>a British citizen</u>, since during the text he integrates himself into the culture.</i></p> <p>Participant 6: <i>I believe that the text was produce[d] <u>by a group of people from UK</u> and the author is from the British culture.</i></p>

¹² Question 5: Are the authors or author present in the text through the use of personal pronouns? How can you tell?
Question 6: Who do you think produced the text? Is he/she part of the culture described? How do you know?

Regarding the context, production and distribution of the text¹³, the students in the pre-test stated their ideas about the context of the reading but not all of them explored the issues of distribution and production of the piece of reading. The following table shows the main theme in students' answers (see Table 7).

Table 7

Pre-test Discursive Analysis- Context Dimension

Main theme	Student's answers samples
Travel	Participant 1: <i>I think it's <u>old</u>, about the year 2000, maybe it was written for a poster or a <u>travel website</u>.</i> Participant 6: <i>I think the text was written for a <u>travel magazine</u>.</i> Participant 9: <i>In a <u>travel</u> and culture book.</i>

Finally, in the target audience criterion, students were asked to identify and provide explanations of who might be the audience of the text in questions 7 and 8 from the pre-test¹⁴. Most students identified that British people could disagree with the ideas from the reading, but learners did not provide thorough evidence from the text to support their ideas as shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Pre-test Discursive Analysis- Target Audience Dimension

Main theme	Student's answers samples
British	Participant 1: <i><u>The British</u> [might disagree] because each person has a perspective regarding the traditions of their country and maybe they are in disagreement or do not like the traditions show[n] in the text.</i> Participant 3: <i><u>The British</u> themselves, since they are the only ones who know if everything that this text says is true. I think the author invites us to join in the celebrations and traditions.</i>

¹³ The question was where and when do you think this text was produced and displayed (apart from the textbook)? Why do you think this text appears in the textbook?

¹⁴ The question was who might disagree with this text? Who might support it? Why? The excerpt from question 7 was "If you want to join on the celebrations head to any large city (...) and the question was do you feel you could "join" the celebrations the text presents? In what ways it appeals or not appeal to you?"

5.2.2.1 Post test

Concerning the text producer criterion, students described more thoroughly the producer of the text and also agreed that the author was present in the text through the use of pronouns *I* or *we* as the following table demonstrates. Furthermore, several students point out that the author might be a *female migrant* and provide evidence that supports their ideas (see Table 9).

Table 9

Post-test Discursive Analysis-Text Producer Dimension

Category	Student's answers samples
Presence of the author	<p>Participant 5: Yes, the <u>author includes itself</u> in the text through those pronouns [we-I]. I found a lot of those pronouns. It might be that the author could be a migrant. The way it explains what happened to her makes me think she is the author and is telling us something she lived.</p> <p>Participant 10: Yes the <u>author includes herself</u>. She speaks from her experience and the experience of her acquaintances who also went through similar situations to those of the author.</p>
Female	<p>Participant 2: I think the person who produced the text is a <u>woman</u>, because of the way she expresses herself and also because of the questions about pregnancy and marriage. I think her age is between 27 and 30 years old due to way she expresses.</p> <p>Participant 7: The text was produced by a <u>female immigrant</u> who must be about 30 years old. The truth [is that it] does not matter if it is a man or a woman, although there should be a short story of a man to differentiate how immigrants live in another country and if the male or female sex influences the adaptation.</p>

In regard to the context criterion, in the post-test, the answers concerning context are more elaborated in terms of providing more information about when and where the text was produced and distributed. Moreover, some students attempted to answer the reasons for the inclusion of the specific reading in the textbook. The following table displays information about the main theme in students' answers. In fact, learners refer to the idea of the text (see Appendix C) being published in a magazine and that the text is displayed in the textbook because of the importance of the English language (see Table 10).

Table 10*Post-test Discursive Analysis- Context Dimension*

Main theme	Student's answers samples
English language and magazines or webpages	<p>Participant 2: <i>I think this text was written between 2014 and 2018 since in the text the author gives a few years as reference. I think it was published in digital <u>magazines and webpages</u> because there is a link at the end of the reading. I think this text appears [in the textbook] <u>because English is the universal language</u>, and if we want to go on a trip to any of these countries, it is good to be informed beforehand.</i></p> <p>Participant 7: <i>It must have been written a few years ago, it could first have been published in a <u>magazine or internet page</u> that is dedicated to telling experiences of immigrants in the countries they have lived. [The reading] It is helpful to <u>learn the language</u> and also helps us if we want to go to another country one day, we have knowledge of the differences and difficulties to which we must adapt.</i></p>

In relation to the target audience criterion, students expanded their ideas on who might agree or disagree with the text. In contrast to the pre-test, students provided a more thorough explanation of the supporters and detractors of the reading. Furthermore, students stated whether they felt compelled through the text linguistic choices in a text passage ¹⁵. According to most students, the text portrayed a *migrant*, and most students referred to this idea in their answers as the table below shows (see Table 11).

Table 11*Post-test Discursive Analysis- Target Audience Dimension*

Main theme	Student's answers samples
Migrants	<p>Participant 1: <i>An <u>immigrant</u> who was discriminated against might disagree, an immigrant who was well received [in the country] might agree. I consider that it is a good text but there are more important factors such as discrimination, machismo, and security, among others, that should be considered first when</i></p>

¹⁵ The passage is "So, get out of your comfort zone and blend in! Be a culture shock absorber"

	<p><i>talking about migrants.</i></p> <p>Participant 4: <i>I think the people who might disagree but at the same time support it are the <u>immigrants</u>, because they are the ones who have lived these experiences and all have a different culture, creating different points of view. I have not experienced any of the experiences that are told in the text, but I agree with most of what is said. The text kind of forces us to being [be] a culture shock absorber and even though I agree, I don't like it because it sounds like an imposition.</i></p>
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5.2.3 Social Analysis

5.2.3.1 Pre test

This dimension is subdivided into three criteria: text purpose, cultural representations and cultural implications. Concerning the text purpose criterion, it is worth mentioning that question 10 in the pre and post-tests refer to the text purpose¹⁶. Most learners identified the author's intention stating that was related to "inviting people to travel"; however, learners did not include their ideas on the author's position or potential bias of the text. Also, evidence from the text to support their ideas was not included as shown in the table below (see Table 12).

Table 12

Pre-test Social Analysis- Text Purpose Dimension

Main theme	Student's answers samples
Travel	<p>Participant 1: <i>Invite us to <u>travel</u> to [their] country and enjoy its traditions.</i></p> <p>Participant 10: <i>Invite people to <u>go</u> and see the celebrations in person, call people to go to these traditional celebrations and revive the economy and tourism of the place.</i></p>

Regarding the cultural representations criterion, questions 11 and 12 in the tests refer to this criterion¹⁷. Most students acknowledged that the only country that appeared in the reading is United Kingdom as shown in the table below (see Table 13). This shows that there is a dominance of one country over others, fact that will be fully discussed in the following section.

¹⁶ Question 10. What seems to have been the author's intention?

¹⁷ Question 11. What countries are named in the text? Are some countries more used than others? How do you feel about it?

Question 12. Is the depiction of cultures diverse or dominated by a specific culture (or nation) How can you tell? (see Appendix)

Table 13*Pre-test Social Analysis- Cultural Representation Dimension*

Main theme	Student's answers samples
UK	<p>Participant 2: <i>A European country appears in the text, the <u>UK predominates</u>. I feel that they should have added more information about more festivals around the globe. Only United Kingdom is represented in the text.</i></p> <p>Participant 11: <i>The text speaks mostly <u>of towns in England</u>, but they also speak (to a lesser extent) of Wales. The text talks about <u>United Kingdom</u>, and I think it's normal, but I would like to know about other countries as well.</i></p>

Concerning the cultural implications criterion, questions 13 and 14 targeted this domain¹⁸. As shown in the table below (see Table 14). Most students agreed that the main consequences of the text were that it aimed at promoting tourism and encouraging people to travel, similar ideas to those reported by students when asked for the text purpose in the text purpose criterion. Most learners failed to provide a complete account of the implications of the consequences and also to discuss the presence or absence of stereotypes in the reading.

Table 14*Pre-test Social Analysis- Cultural Representation Dimension*

Main theme	Student's answers samples
Tourism	<p>Participant 1: <i><u>Promote tourism</u>, show traditions. A stereotype I saw was that in Morris Dancing, the dancers are only men.</i></p> <p>Participant 4: <i>The text would have the consequence of showing us traditions in an eye-catching way, which in turn would increase tourism, as people would be more interested in the culture. For me, the <u>stereotypes</u> are mainly presented in <u>the garments people use in some traditions</u>.</i></p> <p>Participant 10: <i>It promotes <u>tourism</u> in rural villages, helps spread their culture. The traditions they showed resemble medieval celebrations, with ancient music and many people dancing, women wear traditional costumes.</i></p>

¹⁸ Question 13. According to you, what are the social consequences of the text? Why?

Question 14. Are there any stereotypical representations of people or cultures involved in the reading? If so, which ones? How do you feel about it?

5.2.3.2 Post test

In the text purpose criterion, students evaluated the purpose of the author. Several students were able to identify and justify the author's position –inform and share from their point of view– and also provide their opinion regarding potential bias. To illustrate –as shown in Table 15 below– participant 11 shares that she “would like to read something from the point of view of female”. It is noteworthy that students' insights will be fully discussed in the following section.

Table 15

Post-test Social Analysis- Text Purpose Dimension

Main theme	Student's answers samples
Inform	<p>Participant 4: <i>The author's intention is to tell their experiences and try to help and <u>inform people</u> that are living something similar, however, it could be to <u>persuade</u> us to properly manage the cultural differences that authors wants because it imposes or suggests to deal good with culture shock and accept the new country if one migrates.</i></p> <p>Participant 11: <i>More than anything, <u>talk from his point of view about customs, differences, among other things, about a country he did not know, let the public know what it is like to go from a very different culture, more conservative like that of Dubai, to a more “free” one, especially for women. I think I would like to read something from the point of view of a female.</u></i></p>

Concerning the cultural representations in terms of countries and nations, most students agreed that only two places are named in the reading (see Appendix E), which are Canada and Dubai. Some students extended their answers by stating that the author could have written “a little more about the customs from where she comes from” as shown in the Table below (see Table 16).

Table 16

Post-test Social Analysis- Cultural Representation Dimension

Main theme	Student's answers samples
Canada and Dubai	<p>Participant 2: <i><u>North America and Asia (Canada, Dubai)</u> appear, but in this case Canada predominates since it is the place where she is when writing the text. I feel like she could write a little more about the customs [from] where she comes from, because then one could have more information and better understand why</i></p>

	<p><i>she felt like a newcomer in Canada.</i></p> <p>Participant 9: <u>Dubai and Canada</u> are the most named, but most of the attention is on Canada because it is where the author currently lives. I think the text is not very varied culturally speaking. <u>We only get the chance to see a couple of countries</u>, and the Arab country is not even totally described.</p> <p>Participant 4: <u>Canada and Dubai</u> are named in the text, but Canada is more used than Dubai because the author resides now in Canada. <u>I think there is not much diversity in the text</u>, as there are only two cultures and Canada [that] predominates.</p>
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In the same line, regarding cultural implications or consequences of the reading, students had more diverse answers in terms of explaining the social consequences of the text they read. To illustrate, in the Table below, some students related the consequences to the promotion of tourism, migration and experience (see Table 17).

Table 17

Post-test Social Analysis- Cultural Implications Dimension

Main theme	Student's answers samples
Tourism	<p>Participant 3: <i>The clearest is to <u>promote tourism</u>, which leaves aside the importance of migration.</i></p> <p>Participant 5: <i>I think that it <u>promotes tourism</u> above all and in a lesser extent support migrants.</i></p>
Migration	<p>Participant 4: <i>The consequences that could be left are the <u>promotion of immigration</u> and the appreciation of new cultures.</i></p> <p>Participant 10: <i>It <u>promotes immigration</u> and tourism, as it invites the reader to get to know other countries, their cultures and customs.</i></p>
Experience	<p>Participant 12: <i>I think that this text helps showing how it feels being a newcomer, <u>it could be a good or bad thing sometimes but you'll always learn something new and that's great.</u> I think I missed more information of the Arab country, for example, the experience of the author being a female in Dubai.</i></p>

Finally, regarding cultural stereotypes, some students pointed out two main stereotypes in the reading that could be divided into two themes: conservative culture and technology. Students mentioned that there was a conservative portrayal of women from Arab countries (see Appendix E). Furthermore, students stated that the reading talked about technology and migrants, however, it generalized the idea that some immigrants could not have “a good technology management” as shown in the Table below (see Table 18). These ideas will be fully discussed in the next section.

Table 18

Post-test Social Analysis- Cultural Implications Dimension

Main theme	Student's answers samples
Conservative culture	<p>Participant 2: <i>I think it could be the stereotype of the Arab or Dubai woman, <u>who is typical conservative and reserved woman</u>. And I think it appears in the reading because “it is supposedly part of their culture”. From my point of view, I believe that stereotypes damage our society, and some should not be so shown in society.</i></p> <p>Participant 3: <i>As in the text there are images of the Arab or Hindu culture, it shows the <u>typical stereotype that everyone dresses in that style, being reserved</u>, being that many times it is not like that, that is why I do not agree with the stereotypes that are promoted.</i></p>
Technology and migrants	<p>Participant 4: <i>The part where it's spoken about technology and social media is kinda [kind of] <u>stereotypical because it generalizes immigrant by saying that they do not have good technology management</u>. I think this stereotype appears because it is easier to “generalize” and it bothers me a little.</i></p> <p>Participant 11: <i><u>The stereotypes are the lack of technology of people who migrate</u>. It's like saying they do not know how to use them because they are born in a different country and this is always like that.</i></p>

5.2.4 Student's Questionnaire

Since this research was carried out under the guidelines of action-research, reflection plays a pivotal role in the process. Therefore, a questionnaire was devised and applied to the students in order to gather their perceptions of the intervention. It is noteworthy that this questionnaire was carried in Spanish in order not to miss any important viewpoint from the students.

5.2.4.1 Opinion on the Intervention

Students were asked if they liked the activities that were carried out with the textbook readings, and 100% of them said yes. When asked to provide justification to their answer, most students talked about the importance of culture and how important it is to respect different cultures by respecting different viewpoints. Furthermore, some other students pointed out that they liked the activities of the intervention because it helped them question some stereotypes in readings. In the same line, several students pointed out that it was interesting to learn English by reading critically as shown in the Table below (see Table 19).

Table 19

Students' Opinions on Intervention

Main theme	Student's answers samples
Culture	<p>Participant 1: <i>Porque nos ayudan a <u>conocer otros puntos de vista</u> y nos incentivan a <u>conocer y respetar distintas culturas</u>. Me gustó analizar sobre todo quien era el autor de las lecturas porque va más allá de solo decir que fue cualquier persona, sino que se piensa en las circunstancias en las que escribe</i></p> <p>Participant 2: <i>Porque gracias a estos textos podemos <u>conocer e informarnos</u> más sobre <u>diversas culturas</u> que puede que no hayamos conocido antes. Las actividades me gustaron porque nos hacían pensar más allá de lo que <u>textualmente dice el texto</u>.</i></p>
Stereotypes	<p>Participant 4: <i>Me ayuda a <u>mejorar mi inglés</u> y al mismo tiempo <u>cuestionarme algunos estereotipos</u> en las lecturas. Por ejemplo, había un tema con la migración y la tecnología que me parece bueno discutir en clases y en actividades.</i></p> <p>Participant 11: <i>Es más fácil deducir ideas principales de la lectura, es más fluido el trabajo y uno puede releer para lograr entender. Me gustó pensar en la <u>migración, en los estereotipos</u> y hacer actividades sobre eso.</i></p>
Learning	<p>Participant 6: <i>Me gustaron mucho ya que es divertido leer en otro idioma y luego al responder las preguntas puedo notar que tanto <u>he logrado entender de lo leído</u>. Me gustó pensar en el contexto de las lecturas e imaginarme quien estaba escribiendo y por qué.</i></p> <p>Participant 8: <i>Porque <u>pude aprender más</u> y me parecía más interesante</i></p>

5.2.4.2 Importance of Reading Critically

In the questionnaire, students had to answer one question that was designed as a Likert scale in order to gather their perceptions towards the importance of some key tenets of this proposal. Students were asked the importance of the statements shown in Figure 8 below. Concerning the presence of the author through pronouns (such as we- I), 50% of students agree that is *very important* to take them into account when analyzing readings. In relation to the text producer, 50% of students agree that is *very important* to bear in mind who writes the texts when encountering a piece of reading. Regarding the context, 75% of participants agree that the reading's context is *important* for critical reading. Dealing with the target audience, 42% of learners agree that to whom the text address is *very important* when reading. With regard to the text purpose, 67% agree that is *very important* to delve into the author's intention in a text. Finally, 100% of students agree that the diversity of countries and cultures and stereotypes are *very important* criteria to be taken into consideration when reading.

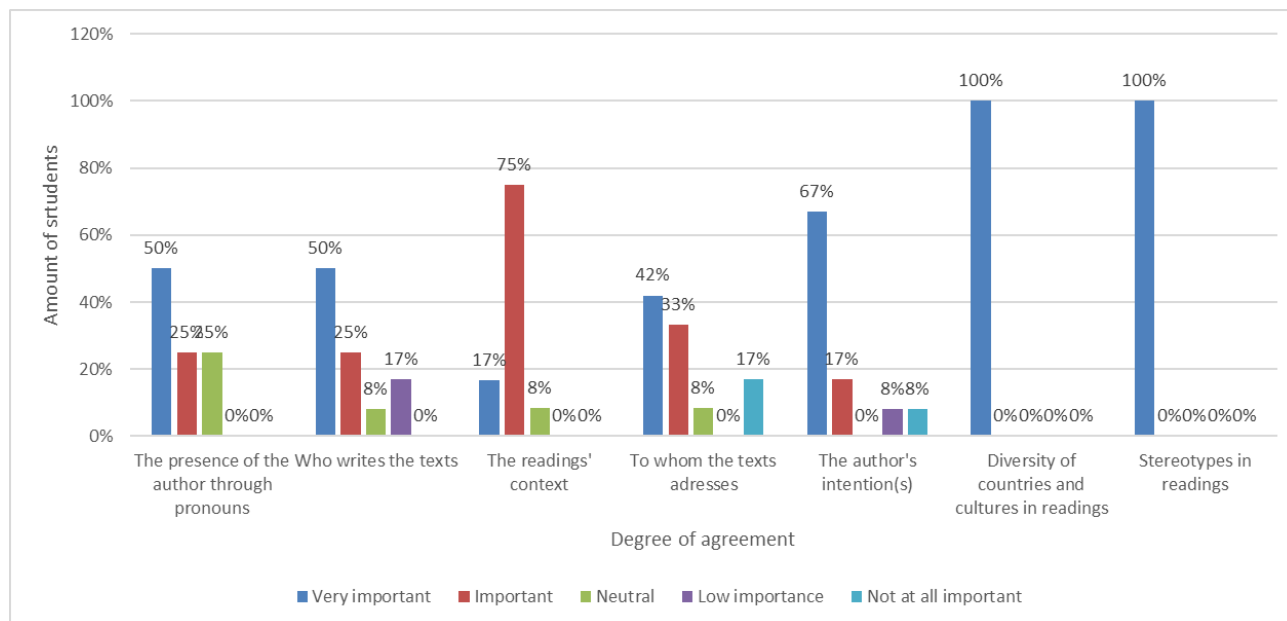


Figure 8. Student's Likert Scale Post-intervention

6. Discussion

This section reports on the results analysis based on the pre and post tests. Moreover, it includes the discussion of the students' perceptions on the critical proposal. It is important to mention that the main objective of this proposal was to determine and assess the effects of implementing a critical pedagogical proposal to raise critical cultural awareness regarding power relations in the field of cultural representations, which will be discussed in the light of the results. This section will be divided into four main elements; on the one hand, textual, discursive and social practices, and on the other hand, overall evaluation of the critical proposal.

6.1 Textual Domain

In this domain, students were exposed to and assessed on two main criteria: adjectives and pronouns and nouns. From the results above described, it is possible to say that in the pre-test most students only stated whether adjectives extracted from the reading had a positive or negative connotation, but not many justified their answer providing examples. This correlates to the percentage of students who reached an *exemplary* level of achievement (20%). After the intervention, 42% of students reached an *exemplary* level. In the post test, several students were not only able to identify positive and negative connotations in adjectives, but also, were able to justify and provide examples related to personal opinion. To illustrate, participant 10 mentions that the adjective ethnocentric has a bad connotation because

Example 4

in the reading they say it's bad but not why. I think I would feel bad if I was called that [ethnocentric], because I think that feeling superior to others because of your culture is not good because we would not respect other people's beliefs.

This excerpt shows that some learners felt compelled to provide their opinion on the adjectives they were shown and thus as Shin and Crookes (2005) claim *gain a critical view* of their surroundings. During the intervention, students were asked to pay attention to how events and people were described through adjectives and provide their opinion on whether they agreed or not with the ways traditions and subjects were portrayed. This means that by the end of the intervention, students showed that they were able to provide their own insights on the connotations of adjectives.

Concerning pronouns and nouns, students mainly focused on answering to whom they thought pronouns such as *we* and *you* referred to but were not able to provide further ideas regarding the consequences of the choice of pronouns presented in the text. Only 8% of students reached an *exemplary* level of achievement, and 50% of them reached a *developing* level, which means that

students were not prepared to provide evidence for their answers based on the linguistic choices of the text. In the extract of the pre test¹⁹, students were supposed to answer to whom the pronoun *we* refer to. Most agreed that it referred to a British person, as participant 5 expresses “*We*” refers to *the British*. However, the implications of this were not raised or discussed by learners. Gómez (2015) says that elements, such as the nationality, are surface forms of culture and they are not enough to critically approach cultural information. In this case, the students only referred to the nationality that they thought revealed who the author was. Yet, on the contrary, after the intervention, students were able to provide more elaborated responses regarding to whom pronouns addressed and the implications of it. As a matter of fact, 50% reached an *exemplary* level of achievement, which means that after the intervention, 42% of students improved their performance on identifying pronouns and analyzing the consequences behind the linguistic choice in pronouns. For example, participant 2 says that in the post test excerpt²⁰, the pronouns *someone* and *one*

Example 5

refers to the author herself, according to the text it says that she lived practically 7 years in Dubai but if I focus on how she describes her appearance, I would say she comes from an Arab country. I think she would feel very uncomfortable about people asking very personal questions like the ones about marriage and children.

Reimann (2009) stated that learners can widen their *understanding* and *sympathy* towards others through critical analysis, and this is exactly what participant 2 above does. The student proves with evidence from the text to whom the pronoun is addressing and ventures to provide her own opinion about why the person in the text might seem uncomfortable when confronted to too personal questions. This is of paramount importance because recognizing pronouns is pivotal for power relations. In fact, Van Dijk (1998) said that they were one of the grammatical elements that could help disclose the expression of social relations and power in discourse. The intervention actually helped learners think beyond of what the text textually said as shown in the following excerpt from a student

Example 6

Las actividades me gustaron porque nos hacían pensar más allá de lo que textualmente dice el texto (Participant 2).

Therefore, the activities posed in the intervention concerning pronouns, nouns and adjectives analysis aided learners in reflecting and providing their own opinions on to whom the pronouns referred and what it entailed in terms of cultural representations.

¹⁹ All across the year, we have an array of festivals, events, and gatherings (...)

²⁰ “Asking why someone is not yet married or how many children one has might seem normal”

6.2 Discursive Domain

In this domain, students had to answer questions related to the text producer, context and target audience. As shown in the previous results' section, in the pre-test students, 75% of students reached the *developing* level of achievement, and none of them reached *exemplary* or *accomplished* levels because most of the students stated that the author was present through the use of pronouns (I or we) but did not provide further explanations to their response. One of the possible reasons behind the lack of further critical analysis is that –as Mora (2013) points out – current pedagogical practices do not enhance critical thinking. In contrast, after the intervention, several students were able to provide a well-developed examination on whom the text producer was. In fact, 75% of students reached the *exemplary* level of achievement. Most students were able to relate their answers to the evidence they gathered from the text. Some students also questioned the lack of appearance of other agents in the reading as the following example shows

Example 7

Yes, the author includes itself in the text through those pronouns [we-I]. I found a lot of those pronouns. It might be that the author could be a migrant. The way it explains what happened to her makes me think she is the author and is telling us something she lived (Participant 5)

The text was produced by a female immigrant who must be about 30 years old. The truth [is that it] does not matter if it is a man or a woman, although there should be a short story of a man to differentiate how immigrants live in another country and if the male or female sex influences the adaptation (Participant 7)

Pirozzi (2003) indicates that one of the functions of critical reading is that it can help learners *consider options*. In the excerpts above, students were able to identify and provide suggestions in order to compare different realities regarding migration; therefore, learners were considering more options to be included in the EFL material they are exposed to. During the intervention, students were exposed to critical questions about the text producer in readings. For example, they were asked what qualified the “author” to write on the subject. In the excerpt above, students show that other agents could have a voice as well to express on the topic of migration and gender, which means that learners reflected on the text producer and reflected also on the implications of his or her stance.

Concerning the context of the reading, before the intervention, only 8% of students reached an *exemplary* level achievement, while 50% of them reached the *developing* level in the same criterion. A couple of students attempted to provide an explanation of the contextual issues in the reading, but most lacked ideas regarding when or where the text was produced and did not elaborate on contextual details, as seen in the following example

Example 8

It was written for a travel magazine (Participant 6)

Once more, this fact could be due to traditional classroom practices which do not provide enough opportunities to foster critical thinking skills (DeWaesche, 2015). In contrast, after the intervention, 58% reached an *exemplary* level of achievement, some students expanded on the pertinence of the text because as shown in the example below

Example 9

it is helpful to learn the language and also helps us if we want to go to another country one day, we have knowledge of the differences and difficulties to which we must adapt (Participant 7).

With regard to the target audience, before the intervention, 17% of students reached *exemplary* level of achievement. Most students failed to thoroughly provide an examination of the text supporters or detractors, as displayed in the following example

Example 10

British themselves, since they are the only ones who know if everything that this text says is true. I think the author invites us to join in the celebrations and traditions (Participant 3)

As shown in the excerpt, the student thinks that the only entity with agency to regard or disregard what is exposed in the text are the British. According to Xu (2013), how students regard the language they learn may be predisposed by the cultures they are shown. It might be that students are so immersed in British or American culture when learning English, that they may think that people from the aforementioned cultures are the only ones who can judge information from texts that seem to be produced by them. Opposed to the results of the pretest, in the post test, 42% of students reached an *exemplary* level of achievement, thus there was an increment of 25% of students who reached this level in comparison to the pre-test. After the intervention, some students were able to state whether they felt compelled through the text linguistic choices in a text passage²¹, as shown in the example below

Example 11

The text kind of forces us to being [be] a culture shock absorber and even though I agree, I don't like it because it sounds like an imposition (Participant 4)

In this respect, Cots (2006) indicates that critical approach to language helps learners to *examine and judge* their immediate environments. During the intervention, students were asked about the consequences of the choices in pronouns when analyzing the target audience. In the sessions, students were asked about the implications of the reading in the current context and their own

²¹ The passage is “So, get out of your comfort zone and blend in! Be a culture shock absorber”

context. In the excerpt above, the student is able to question the nature of the passage and think of it as an imposition because of the choice of pronouns and imperatives, which means that the learner is empowered to provide an opinion based on the linguistic features.

6.3 Social Domain

In this domain, students had to answer questions related to the text purpose, cultural representations in terms of diversity and cultural implications or consequences of texts. With respect to text purpose, 25% of students reached an *exemplary* level of achievement before the intervention, compared to the 58% who reached the same level after the intervention. By the end of the sessions, students were able to evaluate the purpose of the text and provide evidence from the text in order to justify the author's position or bias. For example, in the pre-test, most students linked the author's intention to an invitation for the audience to travel. Reimann (2009) says that as textbooks are intended for larger audiences, they tend to *generalize cultural content*. Once again, travel is a surface element that is usually used in EFL learning, but that does not allow to uncover other hidden elements or purposes in a piece of text. However, after the intervention, more students (58%) reached an *exemplary* level of accomplishment, which means that along stating the author's intention, they were able to provide evidence from the text that allowed them to deduce it, as shown in the example below

Example 12

[it] could inform people, but could also persuade us to deal with cultural differences imposing to be a culture shock absorber (Participant 4)

Even though this student did not state what linguistic aspects made her think that it sounded like an imposition, the student tried to provide a further explanation as to the author's intention.

Furthermore, some students also stated their wish "to read something from the point of view of a female" (participant 11), which is important because it deals with gender issues inside the classroom and EFL material. Probably, the analysis of the author's intention provided a novel viewpoint on language that is *questionable and problematic* as Cots (2006) mentions. This idea means that after the intervention, students were able to think and demand readings that could appeal to different points of views and agents, which also implies that students would like to be exposed to reading material that is meaningful in terms of cultural representations.

In regard to the cultural representation criterion, 8% of students reached the *exemplary* level of achievement before the intervention, whereas 17% of them reached the same level after the

intervention. Students were expected to identify and reflect on the implications of the countries or cultures that appeared in the text. However, not many students justified their answers, which means that some students only named the countries involved but did not elaborate further on the implications of their appearance in the reading as shown in the example below

Example 13

A European country appears in the text, the UK predominates. I feel that they should have added more information about more festivals around the globe (Participant 2).

In this case, the student identifies the country but does not provide further information about the importance to add information about festivals from other parts of the world. Wharton (2011) contends that it is vital to *take a questioning approach* regarding cultures and ideologies, which is somehow missing in the student's response above. This means that after the intervention, students were able to state that more countries needed to be depicted in readings; however, it is still necessary to continue working on elaborating on the reasons behind this idea. After the intervention, only 17% of students reached the *exemplary* level of achievement, which means that it is necessary to provide more activities in which students are actually asked about the implications for some cultures being more present than others in what we consume as readers. For critical pedagogy, schools are not neutral places, therefore there is a need for guiding language learners to reflect on the dominance of some cultures over others (Janks, 2008).

Finally, concerning cultural consequences of texts, before the intervention 8% of students reached the *exemplary* level of achievement. Several students were deficient in providing further examples or connections of the consequences of the text in society. To illustrate, participant 1 said that text "promote(s) tourism, show(s) traditions". In this excerpt, it is possible to see that again students are referring to surface elements such as tourism instead of referring to the impact that the text makes in society. A possible explanation for the aforementioned response, is that the consequences or implications are not usually covered in language content (Ullum & Köksal, 2019). This means that EFL material or resources do not always trigger a questioning approach to the social impact or consequence of readings. In fact, it is the teacher's task to bring the discussion to the classroom in order to foster critical thinking on the materials learners are exposed to.

In this criterion, students were also expected to reflect on the presence or absence of cultural stereotypes, which many students failed to do in the pretest. However, in the post test, 50% of students reached the *exemplary* level of performance, showing that their evaluation on the implications and stereotypes was more complete and based on evidence from the reading. To

illustrate, several students said that there was a stereotype regarding Arab women treating them as a *typical conservative and reserved woman*. Also, some students reported that there were stereotypes concerning migrants and technology as the example below displays

Example 14

it generalizes immigrant by saying that they do not have good technology management (Participant 4).

Stereotypes damage our society (participant 2).

It shows the typical stereotype that everyone dresses in that style, being reserved, being that many times it is not like that, that is why I do not agree with the stereotypes that are promoted (Participant 3).

These results correlate with the ones reported in Asian and Chinese EFL settings, in which after including critical analysis in the classroom, students improved their awareness of self and others (Abbasian & Malae, 2016; Hazaea, 2020). This means that after the intervention, several students could give their opinion on what they thought about those stereotypes in texts. During the sessions, learners were asked about stereotypes that could arise in readings, such as ethnic, gender, religious, cultural, among others, and this might have been helpful for them to recognize them in readings during the intervention and the posttest.

The guiding research question of this action research study, which was to determine and assess the effects of critical pedagogical proposal, could be answered in the light of the results given by the data collection tools. Students reported an increment in their levels of achievement in the three main criteria for analysis: textual, discursive and social practices. The criterion that shows the lowest levels of achievement corresponds to social practices, in which learners had to assess the consequences of readings and any stereotypical representation they could encounter. This fact suggests that more critical activities that address reflection on cultural implications of texts are needed in this particular EFL classroom. Time constraints and the online setting could have also diverted language learners from successfully comprehending the subtleties of language choices regarding cultural representations and implications. Despite this fact, students were able to recognize cultural stereotypes and their implications and could elaborate thorough opinions on their effect on them as readers and also on society.

6.4 Overall Evaluation of the Critical Proposal

At the end of the intervention, students were asked to submit their perceptions towards the implementation of the critical proposal. 100% said that they liked the activities that were carried out during the three sessions. The reasons for being interested in the activities corresponded to three main elements: culture, stereotypes and learning. As a matter of fact, some learners reported that

they learned how important it is to respect different cultures by respecting different viewpoints. Furthermore, other students pointed out that the intervention helped them to question stereotypes in readings. Finally, another iterative idea among student's responses is that the critical proposal helped them learn English. Furthermore, when grading the importance of elements related to the critical proposal in the Likert scale, most students agreed that critical criteria were *very important* or *important*. The statements were related to the presence of the author through pronouns, the text producer, the reading's context, the target audience, the author's intention and diversity of countries and the awareness of stereotypes in readings. This shows that students do regard as relevant key aspects that are essential for critical reading. Nugent and Catalano (2015) mention that offering opportunities for language learners to make links between classroom content and language and real-world issues is key for critical cultural awareness within a framework of critical pedagogy. In the same line, it is possible to state that critical cultural awareness can be enhanced with critical reading activities that lead language learners to question the subtleties of the language and their implications in society. After the intervention, it can be said that it is of paramount importance to provide opportunities for students to question the dominance of some nations or cultures in readings over others. Finally, in relation to the comparison of total scores obtained in the rubric both in the pre and post tests, it is possible to state that there was an increment of 4.42 points in the total score after the intervention (see Figure 7 in the results section). This finding correlates with the study carried out by Hazaea (2020), who concluded that the three levels of analysis (textual, discursive and social) showed statistical significance after their critical interventional program. It can be said that the intervention had a positive effect on 11th grade students' performance regarding critical reading. At the same time, it was an opportunity for learners to improve their performance on the English language and nurture their language learning process along with critical thinking.

7. Conclusions

Nowadays, critical pedagogy is a teaching philosophy that invites educators to challenge their students regarding structures of power and inequalities. In the multicultural world that we are living in, it is essential to encourage learners to respect and value diversity regardless of how different beliefs are. In this context, the English classroom is not exempt from becoming a setting in which it is possible to foster critical cultural awareness and critical thinking. The previous idea laid the foundations for this action research to be conducted. The main objective was to determine and assess the effects of implementing a critical proposal to raise critical cultural awareness regarding

power relations in the field of cultural representations. Thus, three sessions were conducted with 11th graders in order to explore the interplay between language choices and their impact on elements such as the connotation of adjectives and the usage of pronouns and nouns. Students were asked to analyze texts in the light of three domains: textual, discursive and social practices. The criteria that were analyzed were adjectives and pronouns at the textual level. Text producer, context and target audience at the discursive level. Finally, text purpose, cultural representations and cultural implications at the social level.

In order to achieve the general objective, specific objectives were formulated in order to guide the action research project. The first objective was to assess 11th grade students' initial understanding of power relations in the field of cultural representations. This was done by means of a pre-test. At the beginning of the intervention, main results indicated that students were far from reaching *exemplary* levels of achievement at the textual, discursive and social analysis. This fact led to conclude that most learners had not had experience with critical questions to readings, and thus the importance to foster critical activities for students to critique structures of power. It was suggested by the results that there was a need for working on areas such as providing evidence from the text to back up arguments or opinions. In the same vein, there was a need for students to provide more complete answers or justifications to their lines of thoughts. However, most of these initial drawbacks were sorted by the end of the intervention.

Another objective was related to the implementation of the proposal, which was achieved through the three online sessions that students had on critical reading for critical cultural awareness. Also, it was important to assess 11th grade students' final understanding of power relations in the field of cultural representations. This was done by means of a post-test. Main results showed that most students improved their levels of achievement after the intervention. The most descended area after the intervention was the cultural implications of the text criterion. One plausible reason for this is that students might have needed more exposure to critical activities to become able to not only identify countries and cultures involved in readings, but also to reflect on the implications of some countries and cultures being more used than others in the EFL readings they are exposed to. Despite this fact, students were able to advance on their critical reading as sessions were carried out. This means that a critical approach to language learning can enhance students' cultural awareness and at the same time their English proficiency. The last objective was to describe the 11th grade students' perceptions towards the implementation of the critical proposal. Students were asked to complete an online questionnaire. One remarkable result from this is that all of the students liked the activities

that were carried out during the three online sessions. They had varied reasons for their preference. For example, for the importance of becoming aware of cultural differences and respecting different perspectives. Also, learners pointed out the importance of questioning stereotypes, and finally, but not least important, students confirmed that the intervention helped them to learn English. This demonstrates that a critical approach to EFL does not overlook language, but it entails structuring language around students' immediate experiences as Morgan (as cited in Pennycook, 2001) acknowledges.

One key element of the intervention is that students like critical questions and analyze texts from a different perspective –a critical one– as they reported in the final questionnaire. Another important aspect of this action research project was to tackle social implications and stereotypes in reading. Being the main goal to stop naturalizing beliefs regarding surface content and cultures portrayed in readings, students were able to question imposed ideas, the dominance of some cultures over others in readings and more importantly share their stances on these issues. My students come from different backgrounds and countries and thus it is important to let them exercise their agency to question cultural stereotypes in all kind of formats. In this particular research, the focus was reading; however, it is expected that students do extrapolate this critical approach in every sphere of life. As a matter of fact, this is one of the main aims of critical pedagogy: to question, challenge and transform society into a fairer place. Critical pedagogy in EFL does not neglect the teaching of language, but it enriches it by adding critical analysis on linguistic choices. In this sense, this action research project sought to contribute with an effective means of instruction for critical reading in the English classroom, fostering critical thinking and overall language production. Similarly, it could help language teachers to incorporate critical awareness in their lesson plans in order to stop reproducing power imbalance in schools.

8. Limitations and Projections

Limitations were encountered during the process and also in the reflection stage of the AR cycle. First, the results suggest that better outcomes could be expected if more time is devoted to the development of the sessions. It is noteworthy that the online sessions were carried in an asynchronous way since students did not have online classes because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The school is located in a vulnerable context, and not all students had access to a stable internet connection or technological equipment to complete tasks. Thus, the sample of the study was very small compared to the number of students enrolled in 11th grade. Another limitation of the study was

that students' progress during the development of the intervention could not be evaluated systematically because not all the students could go online to discuss or share the activities that were suggested in the sessions. Nevertheless, the positive increment in the levels of achievement obtained by students after 3 online sessions, suggests that a longer critical proposal can impact considerably on students critical reading and English language learning performance. Even though this is a small-scale action research investigation and it is not possible to generalize outcomes for similar studies, it sets a precedent for any critical proposal that could be carried out in both Chile and other EFL communities.

Concerning the projections of the study, further research should try to include a critical proposal for a longer period in order to evaluate its impact in a cross-sectional or longitudinal study. In this way, other instruments to gather qualitative data such as interviews, focus groups could enrich the study. Also, other elements to enhance critical discourse analysis could be covered in a critical proposal by analyzing other linguistic features that realize in the language choices in the different textbook readings. For example, vocabulary/word choice or sentence structure such as passive constructions, modal verbs, among others.

Furthermore, it would be valuable for the applied linguistic field, to develop further research regarding the impact of critical approaches on English language performance by means of formulating instruments that could assess its effects and see if there is any correlation between these two elements. Finally, it would be valuable to extend the field of study to not only cultural representations and diversity of cultures in EFL readings, but also include other power relations in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and suchlike.

The aim of this action research is to help language learners to critically judge readings and it also intends for the classroom to become an inspiring space for exploring intercultural learning. At the same time, it offers language exposure from a critical approach, which it increases the opportunity to learn English. As an action research project within the field of applied linguistic, this investigation complied with one of the discipline's main endeavors, which is to address real-world problems pertaining language. In this context, the problem was the lack of effective critical activities in EFL material that could make students understand and disclose hidden meanings realized through different language choices. In the same vein, it contributes to the applied linguistic field with effective means of teaching to foster critical thinking skills, reading comprehension and thus students' overall language learning. Furthermore, this action research project could help practitioners in terms of language planning to incorporate critical cultural awareness inside the EFL

classroom. It is important that teachers can start systematizing classroom research in order not only to build confidence as professionals but also to transform the EFL classroom into a fairer place. If the material and resources we are provided at schools are not enough to convey real-world issues while exercising critical thinking, then critical approaches to language planning can be used to enhance the language learning process.

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10. Appendices

Appendix A

Cots' questions for textual, discursive and social practices

Table .

Questions related to the three levels of analysis

A Social practice
A.1 What social identities does/do the author(s) of the text represent?
A.2 What is the relationship between the social identities the author(s) represent(s)?
A.3 What is/are the social goal(s) the author(s) has/have with the text?
A.4 To what extent is the text necessary to accomplish the goal(s)?
A.5 In what kind of social situation is the text produced? How conventional is it?
A.6 Does/do the author(s) represent or appeal to particular beliefs?
A.7 What are/may be the social consequences of the text?
B Discourse practice
B.1 How conventional is the text taking into account its situation of use?
B.2 Does it remind us of other texts we have encountered either in its form or in its content?
B.3 Can we classify it as representative of a specific type?
B.4 Is the text more or less accessible to different kinds of readers?
B.5 Does it require us to 'read between the lines'?
B.6 Does it presuppose anything?
B.7 Who are the producer(s) and intended receiver(s) of the text?
C Textual practice
C.1 If the text is co-operatively constructed (for example, a conversation), is it obvious in any way that one of the participants is more in control of the construction than the others?
C.2 How are the ideas represented by utterances, sentences, or paragraphs connected in the text?
C.3 Does/do the author(s) follow any rules of politeness?

Note. Retrieved from Cots, 2006, p. 344-345

Appendix B

Pre-test Reading: “9 Uniquely British traditions you must experience in the UK” Part 1

9 Uniquely British traditions you must experience in the UK (Extract)

All across the year, we have an array of festivals, events and gatherings that mark particular points of history in the UK – Most will guarantee you an awesome time, while others are downright funny and **bizarre!**

1. British Morris Dancing in summer

The earliest records of Morris Dancing date back to the 15th Century, when “peasants” would dance the evening away! With over 500 years of tradition **passed down** through generations, Morris Dancers can usually be found at most Summer **Fetes**, dressed and dancing to **impress** the crowds! If you ask nicely, they will even let you join in at certain points so that you too can try the tradition!



2. British Maypole Dancing on May Day

Predominant in Britain and other parts of Europe, the Maypole is a tall wooden poll that people traditionally dance around on May Day or Whitsun. The earliest records of Maypole dancing occurred in 14th Century Wales! Historians believe that people danced around the Maypole for a number of reasons:

1) To possibly promote fertility



Appendix B

Pre-test Reading: “9 Uniquely British traditions you must experience in the UK” Part 2

- 2) To create a symbolic place where local villages (often feuding) could come together in peace, or...
- 3) Due to the Pagan notion of the universe being related to a tree (which I had no idea)!

Whatever the reason, it's great fun...

If you want to join in on the celebrations, head to any large city park, or village fete that will happen around Whitsun, you're almost guaranteed to be dancing by the end of the day!

3. English Cheese Rolling in spring

Yes, as bizarre as it sounds! Cheese Rolling is held every year at Coopers Hill in Gloucester, usually on the annual spring bank holiday – where thousands of people will literally roll and chase a 9lb barrel of Gloucestershire cheese down the hill! It is thought that this festival comes from the **Pagan** celebrations for the end of winter, whereby barrels and burning bush would be rolled down the hill. Anyone can choose to take part... just be prepared to have a tumble!



Appendix C

Post-test Reading: “Be a Culture Shock Absorber!” Part 1

Be a culture shock absorber!

(Extract)

Based on my experience as an immigrant, here are five aspects of culture shock you may have to overcome:

The language barrier or the communication barrier is, by far, one of the most difficult obstacles that most newcomers face. It is not uncommon, for even those who speak English, to experience some reticence when speaking openly. Sometimes it's not just knowing English, it is how it is spoken or pronounced.

Getting accustomed to new dressing habits is another shocker for some. One of my neighbors, who was so used to wearing a *saree*, initially found it preposterous to wear jeans. But, after a few days of walking in the wind, she shyly brought home a pair of blue jeans. “If it helps my legs to keep warm, why not?” she laughed. “Congratulations, my friend, you have just completed your first adjustment course,” I heard **myself** say.

The technology gap is another area where some newcomers have a hard adjustment, especially for those who are not used to working on computers or applications. A good friend of mine was used to having his assistant draft reports and business correspondence at his job back home and felt intimidated when he had to “do everything” **himself** in his new job in Canada. Personally, I had a tough time accepting that most people prefer to text more, reserving the phone call for more detailed conversations, planning or problem-solving.



Appendix C

Post-test Reading: “Be a Culture Shock Absorber!” Part 2



Socially accepted behavior is another issue. This includes using certain expressions and body language. Asking why someone is not yet married or how many children one has might seem “normal” in certain ethnic cultures, but here, they are just too personal!

For me, it was a totally different shock altogether: the climate shock. Oh yes, after living in Dubai for almost seven years, everything under 20 degrees Celsius felt freezing to me. I landed in Calgary in June 2017 and by July, when people wore T-shirts and shorts, I was still wearing my black jacket and walked around with my hands in my pockets. Needless to say, I stuck out like a sore thumb.

Last piece of advice based on my experience: dealing with culture shock with an open and positive attitude can go a long way in overcoming the shock. While it is perfectly normal to love one’s ethnic culture, try as much as possible not to end up being ethnocentric. It is definitely comforting to hang around with fellow nationals and create a sort of informal ethnic community, but always be cognizant that you have made a choice to immigrate to a new country. It is unfair to expect your new country to accept you when you don’t want to accept it. So, get out of your comfort zone and blend in! Be a culture shock absorber!

Taken and adapted from: <https://bit.ly/2W4rG8p>

Appendix D

Pre-test

Reading Critically- 11th grade 2020

Student's name:

9 Uniquely British traditions you must experience in the UK (p. 38-39)

Learning aim: OA3 Utilizar su conocimiento del inglés en la comprensión y producción de textos orales y escritos breves y claros, con el fin de construir una postura personal crítica en contextos relacionados con sus intereses e inquietudes.

Assessment indicators: - Identificar la o las ideas clave que apoyan la idea principal.

- Reconocer opiniones y consejos

- Reconocer estrategias, como el uso de conocimientos previos sobre el tema

Dear student,

In order to complete this task, you must go to the textbook “Get Real English” and go to **pages 38 and 39**. Read them and answer the following questions. In this text there are no right and wrong answers, that is why this task counts as a “**firma virtual**”. Thank you!

Part 1

1) Look at the following excerpt (page 38).

“All, across the year, **WE** have an array of festivals, events and gatherings...”

To whom do you think the WE pronoun refers to? Why? Provide evidence

2) Look at the following excerpt (page 39).

“If **YOU** want to join on the celebrations, head to any large city park, or village fete that will happen around Whitsun...”

To whom do you think the YOU pronoun refers to? Why? Provide evidence

3) Would you say that this text is inclusive in terms of including a wide array of events from different parts of the world? Why?

4) Look at the table with adjectives from the text and answer.

Adjective	Meaning in Spanish	Positive or negative evaluation or connotation	Evidence from the text to justify your evaluation
Awesome time			
Downright funny			
Bizarre			
Pagan			

Part 2

Text producer

5) Are the authors or author "present" in the text through the use of personal pronouns ("I" or "we")? If present, *What are the implications of these pronouns?*

6) Who do you think produced the text? Is he/she part of the culture described? How do you know? *(Provide evidence from the text).*

Context

7) Where and when do you think it was produced and displayed (apart from the textbook)? *Why do you think this reading was included in this particular textbook?*

Target Audience

8) Who might disagree with this text? Who might support it? *Why? Provide evidence from the text.*

9) Look at the following excerpt (page 39)

“If **YOU** want to join on the celebrations, head to any large city park, or village fete that will happen around Whitsun...”

Do you feel like you could “join” the celebrations the text presents? Why?

Part 3

Text purpose

10) What seems to have been the author’s intention? Provide evidence from the text to support your ideas.

Cultural representation

11) What countries are named in the text? Are some countries more used than others? How do you feel about it?

12) Is the depiction of cultures diverse or dominated by a specific culture (or nation)? How do you feel about it? What’s your opinion on the matter?

Cultural implications

13) According to you, what are the social consequences of the text? Provide a complete reflection on this.

14) Are there any stereotypical representations of British traditions in the reading? If so, which ones? What do you think about the presence (or absence) of them in the reading?

Appendix E

Post-test

Reading Critically- 11th grade 2020

Student's name:

Be a Culture Shock Absorber! (p. 52-53)

Learning aim: OA3 Utilizar su conocimiento del inglés en la comprensión y producción de textos orales y escritos breves y claros, con el fin de construir una postura personal crítica en contextos relacionados con sus intereses e inquietudes.

Assessment indicators: - Identificar la o las ideas clave que apoyan la idea principal.

- Reconocer opiniones y consejos

- Reconocer estrategias, como el uso de conocimientos previos sobre el tema

Dear student,

In order to complete this task, you must go to the textbook “Get Real English” and go to **pages 52 and 53**. Read them and answer the following questions. Thank you!

Part 1

1) Look at the following excerpt (page 53).

“Asking why **SOMEONE** is not yet married or how many children **ONE** has might seem normal”

To whom do you think the **SOMEONE and ONE** refer to? Why? Provide evidence

2) Look at the following excerpt (page 52).

“(…) One of the most difficult obstacles that most **NEWCOMERS** face”

To whom do you think the **NEWCOMERS** refers to? Why? Provide evidence

3) Would you say that this text is inclusive in terms of including a wide array of events from different parts of the world? Why?

4) Look at the table with adjectives from the text and complete

Adjective	Meaning in Spanish	Positive or negative evaluation or connotation	Evidence from the text to justify your evaluation
preposterous			
intimidated			
ethnic			
ethnocentric			

Part 2

Text producer

5) Are the authors or author "present" in the text through the use of personal pronouns ("I" or "we")? If present, *What are the implications of these pronouns?*

6) Who do you think produced the text? Is he/she part of the culture described? How do you know? *(Provide evidence from the text).*

Context

7) Where and when do you think it was produced and displayed (apart from the textbook)? *Why do you think this reading was included in this particular textbook?*

Target Audience

8) Who might disagree with this text? Who might support it? *Why? Provide evidence from the text.*

9) Look at the following excerpt (page 53)

“So, **get out** of your comfort zone and blend in! **Be** a culture shock absorber”

Do you feel like you could be a “culture shock absorber? *Why? How do you feel about it?*

Part 3

Text purpose

10) What seems to have been the author's intention? Provide evidence from the text to support your ideas.

Cultural representation

11) What countries are named in the text? Are some countries more used than others? How do you feel about it?

12) Is the depiction of cultures diverse or dominated by a specific culture (or nation)? How do you feel about it? What's your opinion on the matter?

Cultural implications

13) According to you, what are the social consequences of the text? Provide a complete reflection on this.

14) Are there any stereotypical representations of people involved in the reading? If so, which ones? What do you think about the presence (or absence) of them in the reading?

Appendix F

Analytic Rubric to Assess Pre and Post Tests

Student's name:	Grade: 11th grade
Date:	Score: 32 pts
	Puntaje obtenido:

Assesment Situation: Critical reading of texts

Skill	Domain	Criteria	EXEMPLARY =4 points	ACCOMPLISHED =3 points	DEVELOPING =2 points	BEGINNING =1 point
D E S C R I P T I O N	Textual analysis	Adjectives	Successfully identifies the connotation of the choice of adjectives in the reading. Student is able to justify her answer providing examples.	Most of the time identifies the connotation of the choice of adjectives in the reading. Generally, the student is able to justify her answer providing examples.	Sometimes, identifies the connotation of the choice of adjectives in the reading. Sometimes, the student is able to justify her answer providing examples.	Inconsistently identifies the connotation of the choice of adjectives in the reading. The student poorly justifies her answers providing examples.
		Pronouns and nouns	Successfully identifies to whom pronouns and nouns refer in the readings. Student is able to reflect on the consequences of the choice of pronouns by analyzing whether it makes distinctions of in-groups or out-groups.	Generally, identifies to whom pronouns and nouns refer in the readings. Student is able to reflect on the consequences of the choice of pronouns by analyzing whether it makes distinctions of in-groups or out-groups.	Sometimes, identifies to whom pronouns and nouns refer in the readings. Student is sometimes able to reflect on the consequences of the choice of pronouns by analyzing whether it makes distinctions of in-groups or out-groups.	Occasionally, identifies to whom pronouns and nouns refer in the readings. Student is inconsistently able to reflect on the consequences of the choice of pronouns. The analysis of choices for in-groups or out-groups is vaguely detailed.
I N T E R P R E T A T I O N	Discursive analysis	Text producer	Provides a well-developed examination on whom the text producer is based on the identification of the text's linguistic choices (pronouns used) and contextual information.	Generally, provides a well-developed examination on whom the text producer is based on the identification of the text's linguistic choices (pronouns used) and contextual information.	Sometimes, provides a well-developed examination on whom the text producer is based on the identification of the text's linguistic choices (pronouns used) and contextual information.	Occasionally or never provides a well-developed examination on whom the text producer is based on the identification of the text's linguistic choices (pronouns used) and contextual information.
		Context	Accurately identifies and provides a well-developed explanation of contextual issues about when and where the text was produced and distributed. Provides a thorough examination about the pertinence of the particular reading within the English textbook.	Generally, identifies and provides a well-developed explanation of contextual issues about when the text was produced and distributed. Provides a examination about the pertinence of the particular reading within the English textbook.	Sometimes, identifies and provides an explanation of contextual issues about when the text was produced or distributed. Provides an examination about the pertinence of the particular reading within the English textbook.	Occasionally, identifies contextual issues about when the text was produced or distributed. Occasionally, provides an examination about the pertinence of the particular reading within the English textbook.
		Target audience	Accurately identifies and provides a well-	Generally, identifies and provides a well-developed explanation of the target	Sometimes, identifies and provides an explanation of the target audience of text	Ocasionalmente, identifies and provides an explanation of the target audience of text

			developed explanation of the target audience of text by stating who might disagree and agree with the text. The student is able to justify if she feels compelled through the text linguistics' choices (pronouns).	audience of text by stating who might disagree and agree with the text. The student is able to justify if she feels compelled through the text linguistics' choices (pronouns).	by stating who might disagree and agree with the text. The student is at a times able to justify if she feels compelled through the text linguistics' choices (pronouns).	by stating who might disagree and agree with the text. The student is inconsistently able to justify if she feels compelled through the text linguistics' choices (pronouns).
E V A L U A T I O N	Social analysis	Text purpose	Successfully evaluates the purpose of the text. Identifies and justifies the author's position and or potential bias providing evidence from the text.	Generally, evaluates the purpose of the text. Identifies and justifies the author's position and or potential bias.	Sometimes evaluates the purpose of the text. Sometimes, identifies and justifies the author's position and or potential bias.	Occasionally or never evaluates the purpose of the text. Occasionally or doesn't identify and justify the author's position and or potential bias.
		Cultural representations in terms of countries or nations (diversity)	Accurately identifies countries or nationalities depicted in the text and provides a thorough reflection on the implications of hegemony. The student is able to provide her opinion on cultural diversity and justify.	Generally, identifies countries or nationalities depicted in the text and provides a thorough reflection on the implications of hegemony. The student is able to provide her opinion on cultural diversity and justify.	Sometimes, identifies countries or nationalities depicted in the text and provides a reflection on the implications of hegemony. The student is sometimes able to provide her opinion on cultural diversity and justify.	Occasionally, identifies countries or nationalities depicted in the text and provides a reflection on the implications of hegemony. The student is occasionally able to provide her opinion on cultural diversity and justify.
		Cultural implications or consequences	Successfully evaluates the social consequences of the reading by providing examples or making connections with background knowledge. The student reflects on stereotypes in the reading and is able to provide a thorough examination on the existence or nonexistence of them in the text.	Generally, evaluates the social consequences of the reading by providing examples or making connections with background knowledge. The student reflects on stereotypes in the reading and is able to provide a thorough examination on the existence or nonexistence of them in the text.	Sometimes, evaluates the social consequences of the reading by providing examples or making connections with background knowledge. The student sometimes reflects on stereotypes in the reading and is able to provide an examination on the existence or nonexistence of them in the text.	Occasionally or never evaluates the social consequences of the reading by providing examples or making connections with background knowledge. The student hardly ever reflects on stereotypes in the reading and is able to provide an examination on the existence or nonexistence of them in the text.

Appendix G

Student's Questionnaire

Querida estudiante,

Este breve cuestionario está orientado a conocer cuál es tu opinión sobre la propuesta crítica para acercarnos a las lecturas presentadas en el libro de estudio. Es de carácter anónimo. Responde en base a tus propias percepciones, lo que piensas y sientes. No hay respuestas buenas ni malas. Muchas gracias por tu buena disposición. Aquí puedes responder en español

1) ¿Te gustaron las actividades realizadas en clase con respecto a las lecturas?

- Si

B) No

¿Por qué?_____

2) A continuación se presenta este instrumento que nos ayudara a conocer tu opinión sobre las actividades de lectura crítica realizadas en la clase de inglés. Desde ya muchas gracias por tu sinceridad.

En tu opinión, ¿Qué tan importante son las siguientes aseveraciones para analizarlas cuando uno lee algún texto en inglés? Por favor, marca solo un casillero por aseveración con una X para indicar qué tan de acuerdo o desacuerdo estás con las opiniones.

	Muy importante (5)	Importante (4)	Neutral (3)	Poco importante (2)	Nada importante (1)
1.La presencia del autor a través de pronombres (I-we)					
2.El autor de los textos					
3.El contexto de los textos					
4.La audiencia de los textos					
5.La intención del autor en los textos					
6.Diversidad de países y culturas en los textos.					
7.Stereotypes in readings					

Appendix H

Critical Proposal Lesson Plans

Session 1

Session 1: Textual Analysis Date: October 19th, 2020 Session Objective: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to identify pronouns, nouns and adjectives used to refer to entities or agents.			
Time	Stage	Procedure	Materials
20 min	Pre	<p>In the PPT slide there is an opening question that says:</p> <p>1) "Besides being learners at this school, is there any group or organization to which you all belong?"</p> <p>2) Follow-up questions is "Besides being learners at this school, is there any group or organization to which you belong?" (<i>For example, scout, any juvenile association, political party, music band, artist group, feminist movement, etc</i>).</p> <p>3) Students are asked to create a list of groups that exist in different categories: <i>Personal, school clubs, community groups</i>.</p> <p><i>Then answer the questions:</i></p> <p>4) How do these groups help people form or express a personal identity?</p> <p>5) How does it feel to belong to or not belong to a group?</p> <p>6) Which groups would include anyone who wants to join? Which would not?</p> <p>Students observe the following quote "All across the year, <u>we</u> have an array of festivals, events and gatherings (...)"'. Students are asked to try to guess to whom the underlined pronoun we could refer to in this short excerpt and provide justification to their answers.</p>	Internet connection and equipment/ device for class
30 min	While	<p>Students are asked to read the text on page 62 "9 <i>Uniquely British traditions you must experience in the UK</i>"</p> <p>1) Students are asked to highlight all the pronouns and personal pronouns in the text.</p> <p>2) Take a look at how festivals and events are described, what adjectives are used to describe it? Are there are any with negative connotations according to you?</p> <p>4) How are the people and events portrayed in the text? Do you agree with the way they are portrayed? Why?</p>	Internet connection and equipment/ device for class
10 min	Post	Students are asked to submit their answers in the school platform.	Internet connection and equipment/ device for class

- Look at the following excerpt

“All, across the year, **WE** have an array of festivals, events and gatherings...”

To whom do you think the **WE pronoun** refers to?

In order to analyze this, you have to think or speculate from the evidence given in the rest of the text,

It could lead you to think where could this person come from?

You could also think about is s/he part of the culture described? How do you know?

What are the implications behind the use of this particular personal pronoun?

1.1 Textual level

Session 2

Session 2: Discursive Analysis

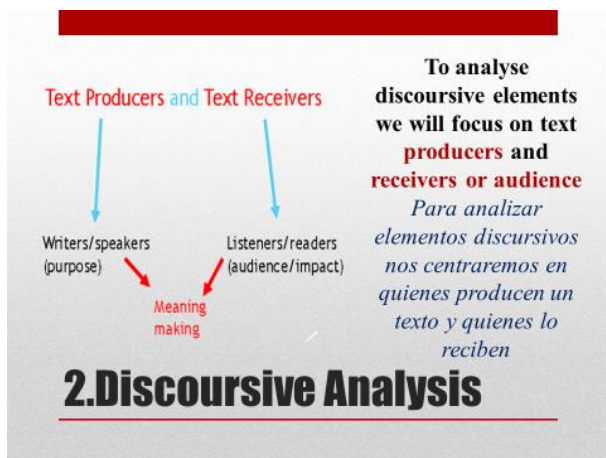
Date: November 2nd, 2020

Session Objective: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to analyze elements such as context, text producer and target audience in readings

Time	Stage	Procedure	Materials
20 min	Pre	<p>Text producer part:</p> <p>Students are introduced to the concepts of “text producer”, “text receiver” and “discourse events”. Students are presented with the following questions to analyze text producer in readings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Who are the authors of the text? 2) Is any biographical information given about them? 3) What qualifies them to write on this subject? 4) Are the authors "present" in the text through the use of personal pronouns ("I" or "we") or self-reference, or are they never referred to? <p>Context part:</p> <p>-Students observe PPT slide about contextual analysis and what it entails (social, political, economic, philosophical, religious, and aesthetic conditions that were (or can be assumed to have been) in place at the time and place when the text was created.</p> <p>- Students are asked: what are the consequences of this reading now? In this times? In this year? In your own context?</p> <p>Target audience part:</p> <p>Students look at the PPT slide some of the features that can help</p>	Internet connection and equipment/ device for class

		discover the intended target audience of a piece of reading: targeted audience: Age, Occupation, Income Level, Gender, Morals/Ethics/Values, Leisure time activities, politics.	
30 min	While	<p>- Students read a short excerpt (page 43 “Sri Lanka to deport British tourist over Buddha tattoo). Students answer to the question</p> <p>-When do you think the text was produced?</p> <p>1) Who do you think produced the text?</p> <p>2) Where and when do you think it was produced and displayed (apart from the textbook)?</p> <p>3) What assumption(s) did the producer make about the audience? What language choices signal this?</p> <p>4) Who might disagree with this text? Who might support it?</p> <p>5) What sort of readers appear to be excluded from the text’s intended audiences? How can we tell?</p>	Internet connection and equipment/ device for class
10 min	Post	Students are asked to submit their answers in the school platform.	Internet connection and equipment/ device for class

Session 2- Sample Material



Authors

When reading a text, we might wonder:

- Who are the authors of the text? *¿Quién o quiénes son los autores del texto?*
- Is any biographical information given about them? *¿Hay alguna información biográfica sobre ellos?*
- Are the authors "present" in the text through the use of personal pronouns ("I" or "we") or self-reference, or are they never referred to? *¿Está(n) el autor "presente" en el texto a través de pronombres "yo" o "nosotros"?*

2.1 Text producer

Audience

When we read anything, we may think that we are the audience. However, when the author wrote the text, he/she was thinking of an intended audience to read it.

Cuando leemos cualquier texto, somos la "audiencia" de ese texto. Sin embargo, cuando el autor escribió su texto, él o ella estaba pensando en una audiencia para leerlo.

Who did the author want to read this text? We can characterize the audience in terms of: ¿Quién idealmente leería el texto según el autor?)

- Age (edad)
- Occupation (ocupación)
- Income Level (nivel de ingreso)
- Gender (género)
- Morals/Ethics/Values (moral, ética, valores)
- Leisure Time Activities (actividades de tiempo libre)
- Politics

2.2.Intended Audience

Context

A contextual analysis is an analysis of a text that helps us to assess that text within the context of its historical, cultural, social setting

Un análisis contextual es un análisis de un texto que nos puede ayudar a evaluar ese texto dentro de su contexto histórico, cultural o social.

When we think of the context of a piece of text we may wonder:

- What is the author saying?
- Why is the author saying this?
- When did the author write this story?
- Where does this story take place?
- How did the author write this story?

2.3 Context

Session 3

Session 3: Social Analysis Date: November 16th, 2020 Session Objective: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to evaluate text purpose, cultural representations and cultural implications in readings by providing evidence from the texts.			
Time	Stage	Procedure	Materials
20 min	Pre	<p><i>Text purpose part</i></p> <p>Students look at PPT slide about the identification of text purpose. They see some functions such as persuade, entertain, inform, etc. They have a look at the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What seems to have been the author's intention? 2) Why did the author write this text? 3) And why did the author write this text in this particular way, as opposed to other ways in which the text might have been written? (why not a letter?, email?, etc) <p>Students look at PPT slide with come clues to identify author purpose in readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – what the author said (the words that have been selected); – what the author did not say (the words that were not selected); <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – how the author said it (as opposed to other ways it might or could have been said). <p><i>Cultural representations</i></p> <p>Students look at a PPT slide with information about how mass media produces (creates) and reproduces (passes on) ways of seeing that at a minimum reflect, and some argue, shape our culture as an example of one means that shape our culture. Students are shown a set of questions to start looking at English diversity:</p>	Internet connection and equipment/ device for class

		1) What countries are named in the text? 2) Are some countries more used than others? 3) Is the depiction of cultures diverse or dominated by a specific culture? <i>Cultural implications or consequences</i> Students look at the PPT slides with the differences between fact and opinion.	
20 min	While	Students read a text on page 47 called “What food tells us a about culture” Students answer in written way at the following questions: 1) What seems to have been the author’s intention? 2) Why did the author write this text? 3) What countries are named in the text? 4) Are some countries more used than others? 5) Is the depiction of cultures diverse or dominated by a specific culture? 6) What are/may be the social consequences of the text?	Internet connection and equipment/ device for class
20 min	Post	Students are asked to submit their answers in the school platform.	Internet connection and equipment/ device for class

Session 3- Sample Material

What seems to have been the author’s intention?

Why did the author write this text? And why did the author write this text in this particular way, as opposed to other ways in which the text might have been written? *¿Por qué el autor escribió el texto? ¿Por qué lo escribió de tal forma y no de otra?*

Remember that any text is the result of *deliberate decisions* by the author. So we need to consider:

- what the author said (the words that have been selected);
- what the author did not say (the words that were not selected); and
- how the author said it (as opposed to other ways it might or could have been said).

3.1 Text Purpose

What countries appear in the text? Is there any dominance of presence of some nations? Is that fine?

When encountering a text, one has to wonder what the social consequences of the reading are.

Are there any stereotypical representations of cultures in the text?


Ethnic group: African-american, african, italians etc.

Gender: Man & women, boys & girls

Culture: Middle Eastern, Asian, Arabian

Religion: Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hinduism etc.

Race: Black people, white people, Chileans, Argentinian, etc.



3.3 Cultural implications

Appendix I

Informed Assent

CARTA DE ASENTIMIENTO INFORMADO ESTUDIANTE PARA PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN EDUCATIVA

Hola soy la profesora de inglés Jocelyn Cuitiño y estoy haciendo un proyecto de Investigación en la Universidad Católica de Chile. Actualmente en el marco de mi proyecto de magister en lingüística aplicada al inglés estoy realizando un estudio para promover una lectura crítica de textos escolares en inglés y para ello quiero pedirte que me apoyes.

Tu participación en el estudio consistiría en permitirme usar tus respuestas a las tareas de lectura que hemos realizado y contestar en noviembre un cuestionario sobre tus percepciones e intereses (será en español). Esta información será confidencial. Esto quiere decir que no diré a nadie tus respuestas, te asignaré un número clave para ocultar tu identidad.

Tu participación en el estudio es voluntaria, es decir, aun cuando tus papá o mamá hayan dicho que puedes participar, si tú no quieres hacerlo puedes decir que no. Es tu decisión si participas o no en el estudio. También es importante que sepas que si en un momento dado ya no quieres continuar en el estudio, no habrá ningún problema.

Si aceptas participar, te pido que por favor pongas una **(X)** en el cuadrito de abajo que dice “Sí quiero participar” y escribe tu nombre.

Si no quieres participar, no pongas ninguna **(X)**, ni escribas tu nombre.

☐

Sí quiero participar

Nombre estudiante: _____

Fecha: _____ de _____ de ____.

Appendix J

Informed Consent

CARTA DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO APODERADO PARA PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN EDUCATIVA

Yo _____, apoderado(a) del estudiante _____, acepto de manera voluntaria que se incluya a mi pupilo(a) como sujeto de estudio en el proyecto de investigación denominado: *Promoting Awareness of Cultural Representations in EFL Readings: A Critical Pedagogical Proposal in 11th grade at a Subsidized School* cuyo objetivo es promover una lectura crítica de los textos leídos en 3ero medio. Ésta investigación inserta en el programa de Magister en Lingüística Aplicada a Lengua Inglesa de la Universidad Católica

entendiendo que:

- la participación de mi pupilo(a) no repercutirá en sus actividades ni evaluaciones programadas en el curso.
- No habrá ninguna sanción para mi pupilo(a) en caso de no aceptar la invitación.
- Mi pupilo(a) puedo retirarse del proyecto si lo considero conveniente a mis intereses, aun cuando la investigadora responsable no lo solicite, informando mis razones para tal decisión en la Carta de Revocación respectiva si lo considero pertinente; pudiendo si así lo deseo, recuperar toda la información obtenida de mi participación.
- No haré ningún gasto, ni recibiré remuneración alguna por la participación en el estudio.
- Se guardará estricta confidencialidad sobre los datos obtenidos producto de la participación de mi pupilo(a), con un número de clave que ocultará su identidad.
- Si en los resultados de la participación de mi pupilo(a) como alumno se hiciera evidente algún problema relacionado con su proceso de enseñanza – aprendizaje, se me brindará orientación al respecto.
- Mi pupilo(a) contestará una encuesta online al final de esta intervención, en la cual, nuevamente será sujeto anónimo
- Puedo solicitar, en el transcurso del estudio información actualizada sobre el mismo, a la investigadora responsable.

Lugar y Fecha:

Firma del apoderado:
