Melina Porto   *Editor*

From Critical Literacy to Critical Pedagogy in English Language Teaching

Using Teacher-made Materials
in Difficult Contexts

With a Foreword by
Audrey Osler and Hugh Starkey
With Afterwords by
Graham Crookes, Hilary Janks and Allan Luke

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Melina Porto

Editor

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Foreword

In our globalized world, the task of educating for human rights and democratic citizenship is increasingly urgent. Language teachers have a moral and professional obligation to help open minds and expand horizons. Importantly they can encourage critical thinking about the xenophobic discourses of populist political figures who stir antagonisms to people migrating because of wars, poverty and injustices. Populists may also target already settled minorities as inadequately conforming to some supposed national stereotype. In offering experiences of critical language learning based on commitments to human rights, language teachers can contribute to what we have called education for cosmopolitan citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2005).

Whilst language learning has undoubted instrumental value, there is also a long tradition of language teaching that emphasizes peace and social justice as core aims. Critical thinking is central to the project of language teaching that promotes democracy and human rights. We strongly endorse Melina Porto's contention in the preface to this volume that: 'critical language education necessarily takes citizenship, social justice and human rights perspectives into account'.

From Critical Literacy to Critical Pedagogy in ELT: Using Teacher-Made Materials in Difficult Contexts responds to an observation that much previous writing on language teaching and learning has neglected an important dimension, namely its relationship to citizenship, human rights and moral values education. Argentinian schools, where this project originates, exemplify many features that are increasingly recognized as salient in contexts across the world. Within Argentinian classrooms and schools there are students with vastly different life experiences, including many who regularly experience discrimination within and beyond the school because of their gender, religion, national, indigenous or migration origin, sexuality, ethnicity, or skin color. As Melina Porto notes:

> One classroom in this province can host learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds such as indigenous children, the descendants of immigrants from neighboring countries, from Peru, Asia (Korea, Taiwan) or some African nations, the children of homeless farmers or rural workers in precarious conditions, learners from neighborhoods usually stigmatized as low or dangerous, gypsies, and migrants from other provinces.

Whilst some characterize such superdiversity as problematic, educators embracing a democratic and critical perspective celebrate diversity as a strength and as a resource. They welcome the diversity of backgrounds and experiences that students bring to their learning.

Language teachers develop intercultural skills, and they are particularly well placed to encourage students to recognize and respect diversity and challenge racism and prejudice. However, such challenges are often perceived as political, and it requires courage to take a moral stance. This is where an understanding of human rights as internationally agreed basic minimum standards is powerful knowledge for teachers.

We have argued that teachers have a professional obligation both to ground their actions and judgements in the normative standards and principles of international human rights law and to tailor their teaching to meet the specific human rights contexts and experiences of their students (Osler, 2015). Human rights instruments such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provide a language for identifying and naming injustices and discriminations, as well as an emphasis on the entitlement of all human beings to dignity and equality of rights. They provide us with a set of principles that enable dialogue across difference. In the classroom, an explicit commitment to human rights entails ensuring that students' different perspectives are recognized and that many points of view are considered and discussed.

From Critical Literacy to Critical Pedagogy in ELT: Using Teacher-Made Materials in Difficult Contexts is both practical and scholarly. It is firmly grounded in the preparation of a curriculum development project extending to over 8000 schools and over 2 million students in its first phase. This regional project within Argentina draws on developments in Europe and North America. However, the book is now offered as a challenge to language teachers in general and ESOL specialists in particular across the world. It is able to do this because it recognizes that citizenship and belonging in our globalizing world is cosmopolitan. Although for many people a feeling of belonging to a nation is powerful and meaningful, students and adults in diverse communities, including schools, are likely to have many identities alongside national identities. Schooling needs to support students in developing such multiple identities. Cosmopolitanism is a perspective that recognizes all human beings as equally entitled to respect. It consequently relativizes the salience of constructed national identities. Language learning can create and facilitate communicative actions that recognize and celebrate diversity as a resource and as a democratic principle. We warmly welcome a book whose purpose is to 'foster literacy development with the ultimate aim of empowering students for active citizenship'.

Citizenship education needs to address learners' identities and to promote and develop skills for communication and participation. Teachers of languages and of citizenship need to promote respect for diversity and the development of a range of critical skills, including skills of what Stuart Hall (2000) called 'intercultural evaluation'. This implies the necessity for intercultural dialogue to be grounded in some normative standards that allow for evaluative judgements to be made. This involves more than intercultural communication. All of us are making some kind of

judgement or evaluation when we encounter a new cultural context, whether this positioning is acknowledged or not. Consequently, intercultural education should include consideration of stance, and a process of self-reflection and self-evaluation, so that both teachers and learners are conscious of this process. As Peter Figueroa (2000) argued, teachers should not embrace relativism, a perspective that refuses to make judgements about behaviors associated with cultural practices. On the contrary, teachers need to know where they stand in relation to injustice, racism, prejudice, discrimination, bullying and intimidation.

Citizenship education promoted by national governments generally aims to promote integration into a set of pre-defined national norms. However, in a globalizing world, national frames of reference, whilst important, may not be accepting of the wide range of identities to which people aspire. We therefore propose education for cosmopolitan citizenship which we define as a *status* deriving from equal entitlement to human rights. It is based on a *feeling* of belonging and recognition of diversity across a range of communities from the local to the global. It is a *practice* involving negotiation, equitable resolution of differences and work with others to promote freedom, justice and peace within and between communities.

Rather than having a unique or primary sense of belonging focused on membership of a nation-state, education for *cosmopolitan* citizenship accepts that learners celebrate multiple identities as well as loyalties and belongings at a range of scales, such as those relating to families, neighborhoods, cities, nations and continents, or, indeed at the global level, to their fellow humanity. Our research confirms that learners' affiliations may well be transnational, including religious, political and cultural dimensions.

Rather than focusing on differences and cultural barriers to be overcome, education for cosmopolitan citizenship starts from our common humanity and a consequent understanding that all human beings are entitled to be considered as 'us'. Human rights instruments are based on the premise that all human beings have equal entitlement to dignity and to rights.

Education for cosmopolitan citizenship is conceptualized, not as an alternative to national citizenship education, nor, as has sometimes been interpreted, as a synonym for global citizenship education. We invite teachers to re-imagine the nation as cosmopolitan. It follows that we re-conceptualize education for national citizenship so that it meets more adequately the needs of contemporary nation states and the global community. It demands we acknowledge there are many ways of being Argentinian or British to take two examples relevant to this book.

We congratulate Melina Porto for her extremely fruitful collaboration with the International Literacy Association. Her strategic vision in associating her project with the development of new *English Primer Readers* has enabled her to offer a comprehensive guide to developing critical thinking, critical literacy and critical

pedagogy in the language classroom. She also brings us four detailed case studies to illustrate the practicality of the approach she has promoted.

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August 2020

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Preface

The idea for this book first occurred to me in 2008, after the paper entitled 'A proposal for the development of critical thinking in the English as a Foreign Language class in Primary School Education' ('Propuesta didáctica para el desarrollo del pensamiento crítico a través de la clase de inglés en la Educación Primaria Básica'), co-authored with my colleague and friend Silvana Barboni, was awarded a prize in the 2007 ABA Contest (Argentine Banks Association) 'Una escuela que enseña a pensar' ('A school that teaches to think').

Since then, the idea has evolved and matured in varied ways. Originally, perhaps because of my influence as researcher, I conceived the book as a historical review of the literature about critical thinking in the language classroom. Then the idea of presenting cases by real teachers in real classrooms gained strength. I was encouraged to explore the value of building cases by Michael Byram (Professor Emeritus University of Durham) in 2009. The cases were conceived as a methodological choice to test the transferability of the rich and varied educational experience in North America, Europe, Africa (South Africa in particular), and other parts of the world about critical thinking in the language classroom. In those times, I submitted several applications for funding the publication, but none succeeded.

In 2012, I re-conceived the idea and combined cases with a professional development proposal for teachers in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom in primary and secondary schools in the Province of Buenos Aires in Argentina. I applied for a *Grant for Literacy Projects in Countries with Developing Economies* of the International Reading Association, now called International Literacy Association (ILA). My proposal entitled 'Developing critical thinking skills in Spanish-speaking Argentina: English as a tool for development through a teacher education project' was one of several projects which were awarded a grant. Its aim was to promote and disseminate the development of critical thinking in language education contexts and to illustrate this with four cases in the EFL classroom in primary and secondary schools in the Province of Buenos Aires. In a moving ceremony at ILA 58th Annual Convention 'Celebrating teachers making a difference' held in April 2013 in San Antonio, Texas, I climbed up the stage to receive a Certificate of Honor and a book gift on behalf of Argentina.

In the 8-year span from 2013 to 2020, the focus of the book evolved from critical thinking to critical literacy more broadly and embraced a critical pedagogy perspective as well. The basis for this development is threefold. First, the project benefited enormously from five postgraduate seminars held at Universidad Nacional de La Plata, taught by leading scholars in the field, which I organized, coordinated, and co-taught and which addressed the following themes:

– Intercultural and international education, with Michael Byram (Professor Emeritus University of Durham) in 2011 (funded by Universidad Nacional de La Plata)
– Translingual practices in ELT, with Suresh Canagarajah (Penn State University) in 2012 (funded by a Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence Program awarded to me by the journal *Language Learning*)
– Intercultural, citizenship, and human rights education, with Audrey Osler (University of Leeds and University College of South East Norway), Hugh Starkey (University College London), Michael Byram (University of Durham), and Suresh Canagarajah (Penn State University) in 2014 (funded by British Council in Argentina)
– Language and symbolic power, with Claire Kramsch (University of California, Berkeley) in 2018 (funded by a Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence Program awarded to me by the journal *Language Learning*)
– Diversification of the language curriculum in higher education, with Anthony Liddicoat (University of Warwick), Bernardette Holmes (University of Cambridge), Micahel Byram (University of Durham), Harry Kuchah Kuchah (University of Leeds), Adrian Holliday (Canterbury Christ Church University), and Leticia Yulita (University of East Anglia) in 2020 (funded by British Council in Argentina)

Second, I introduced a materials writing and development component by building the cases reported in this book using three *English Primer Readers* for the English language primary and secondary classrooms created and written by my Argentinian colleague and friend Dr. Silvana Barboni, an English language teacher who ran the Program of Intercultural and Plurilingual Education of the Ministry of Education of the Province of Buenos Aires from 2010 to 2014. She created these materials on the basis of deep needs analysis, the most driving one being that local English teachers simply lacked classroom materials to support critical language education. They are: *English Primer Reader* for the primary English classroom, grade 4; *English Primer Reader* for the primary English classroom, grade 5; and *English Primer Reader* for the secondary English classroom, year 1. These Primer Readers were specifically designed to serve vulnerable populations in the Province of Buenos Aires and reached 1.004.714 students and 3758 schools of secondary education, and 1.077.233 students and 4316 schools of primary education during 2013. Buenos Aires is the biggest, richest, and most populated and influential (culturally, socially, politically, economically) province in the country. It has historically led the way as far as educational policy and curricular developments in other provinces are concerned. Furthermore, the province portrays the linguistic and cultural diversity of the country well. One classroom in this province can host learners from diverse

linguistic and cultural backgrounds (see Simons & Fennig, 2018) such as indigenous children; the descendants of immigrants from neighboring countries, from Peru, Asia (Korea, Taiwan), or some African nations; the children of homeless farmers or rural workers in precarious conditions; learners from neighborhoods usually stigmatized as low or dangerous; gypsies; and migrants from other provinces. Considering this complex linguistic and sociocultural context, echoed in other parts of the world, the focus on vulnerable populations and teaching in 'difficult circumstances' (Kuchah Kuchah & Shamin, 2018) in this region made the transition to critical literacy and critical pedagogy unavoidable.

Finally, and substantially, a first draft of the book's manuscript was reviewed anonymously by two academics at the request of Springer Nature and their feedback crucially fostered such transition. The current form of this book has been illuminated by their meticulous, insightful, challenging, and constructive feedback. Further detailed feedback by Hilary Janks shaped the book's final contents.

But this project is not only local. It addresses the needs of language educators around the globe in three dimensions: advocacy, professional development, and emerging global issues. Advocacy because the teaching materials used in classrooms in this project, created and written by a language teacher, were designed for disfavored populations and can therefore facilitate access to *quality* literacy in varied contexts worldwide which are traversed by 'difficult circumstances' (Kuchah Kuchah & Shamin, 2018). Professional development because this project stems from the identified need to bridge the gap between the development of critical thinking skills, critical literacy, and critical pedagogy in second/foreign language (L2) education in theory and in practice, and addresses this need in a concrete way, which will improve the professional development of L2 literacy educators in the country and beyond. Finally, emerging global issues such as critical language education necessarily takes citizenship, social justice, and human rights perspectives into account, and this book is an example of how to embed these dimensions in actual classroom practice.

The idea of a professional development book, beyond a book only *about* critical thinking, critical literacy, and critical pedagogy, implied a radical shift in conception. The shift was from a book with content (information) about the topic toward a book anchored in a procedural understanding of the theme. In other words, in this new light, this book aims to stimulate readers' active discovery of what the notions imply both in terms of theory and practice. In this sense, readers will be able to construct different possible understandings of the issues at hand at the time that they will develop a growing awareness of its practical applications and implications.

This is far from an easy task. While a content-based book is a matter of presenting notions and reviewing the scholarly literature, a book intended to allow teachers to make their own discoveries requires a different mindset. This book is consequently designed around sections which present key issues with multiple perspectives for teachers to decide what they believe in with respect to the issue in question and why. All chapters have an 'Engagement Options' final section where a variety of key concerns are introduced in the form of questions and triggers for readers to consider

from their own perspectives, localized ways, and situationality. In this sense, the book addresses critical language education by adopting a critical stance on the topic.

Four cases give life to this book. Anchored to the principles of qualitative research (Cohen et al., 2018), the cases stress the context-boundedness of critical thinking, critical literacy and critical pedagogy, the socially situated nature of the data (i.e., examples, samples, student productions, videos of lessons and so on), their descriptive focus with an emphasis on understanding (not explanation), the natural (classroom and community based) setting of the data types, and an emphasis on process. All this is surrounded by the complexity inherent in the social sciences, involved with people and oriented toward discovering meaning and perspectives from the participants' points of view. In this sense, this book does not escape the limitation that 'representing the multiple layers of human experience is fraught with challenge, alternative, and limitation' (Freeman et al., 2007, p. 30).

On this basis, the value of this book is that it can be thought of as 'work which seeks *understanding* of the experience of people involved in education' as opposed to work which seeks explanation (Byram, 2008, p. 91, his emphasis). 'The truth of objectivism – absolute, universal, and timeless – has lost its monopoly status. It now competes, on more nearly equal terms, with the truths of case studies that are embedded in local contexts, shaped by local interests, and colored by local perceptions' (Rosaldo, 1993, p. 21), or what Widdowson (2006, p. 96) calls the 'domains of folk experience.' 'The goal is (. . .) to describe what people do and say within local contexts' (Freeman et al., 2007, p. 29). The exploratory and interpretive nature of this book, with its focus on the local in this peripheral setting (Canagarajah, 1995, 2006), becomes one significant contribution.

Its value also derives from the 'honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher' (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 133). More specifically, following Maxwell (2002), the cases described here achieve the following kinds of validity: descriptive (in the factual accuracy of what is reported here, nothing of which has been made up, altered, or cut in any way); interpretive (in my ability as well as the teachers' ability to see meaning in students' productions); and generalizability or internal generalizability, which means 'generalizing within the community, group, or institution studied to persons, events, and settings that were not directly observed' (Maxwell, 2002, p. 53). Freeman et al. (2007, p. 29) refer to this as 'particularistic generalizations.' In this specific setting, internal generalizability has been achieved in the possibility to generalize *within* the specific communities, groups, and circumstances explored in the context of the province of Buenos Aires. As Maxwell (2002) states, qualitative cases do not allow generalizations to wider populations. There is no claim here as far as external generalizability is concerned, i.e., 'generalizing to other communities, groups, or institutions' (Maxwell, 2002, p. 53). This would be a matter for further research with larger samples from different institutions and settings both nationwide and worldwide. Maxwell then continues to emphasize that 'indeed, the value of a qualitative study may depend on its lack of external generalizability in a statistical sense; it may provide an account of a setting

or population that is illuminating as an extreme case or 'ideal type" (Maxwell, 2002, p. 54). This book provides such account.

The book is mainly intended for language teachers, but it can also be useful for graduate and undergraduate students interested in critical language education, language teaching in difficult contexts, and materials writing and development. The four case studies represent concrete illustrations blending theory and practice, which teachers, teacher educators, and graduate/postgraduate students may find motivating. Furthermore, as noted before, from a theoretical perspective, these cases represent research that echoes Canagarajah's (2002) call regarding the importance of the individual and the local in classroom-based research that describes how literacy in English is lived in peripheral countries, and in this sense the cases are relevant for the researcher as well. Canagarajah's (2002) call works as a justification for the need to have engaged in research on critical language teaching in this local peripheral context and also for the relevance of the cases portrayed in the book for an international readership.

To conclude, educational policies are being continuously revisited to meet the educational needs of learners in the twenty-first century. Changes in the formulation of educational aims, new definitions of student profiles when leaving school, and curricular innovations respond to the variety of needs that have to be met by compulsory schooling. One current assumption is that schools should provide a common basis to allow for a conscious and critical participation in society, i.e., schools should foster literacy development with the ultimate aim of empowering students for active citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2005). In this sense, critical thinking, critical literacy, and critical pedagogy allow teachers to explore and develop the interconnections among reading, writing, speaking, available resources and multiple modes of communication, body, mind, and thought. Widdowson (1980, p. 242) states that 'our aim must be to develop in learners a capacity for using language for both thinking and acting so that they can exploit its meaning potential in discourse. This is not a simple matter of learning how to express a selection of notions or perform a selection of illocutionary acts. It is, more fundamentally, a matter of (. . .) reconciling conceptual and communicative functions in the discourse process.' This language-thought connection was put forth over a century ago in this way: 'language is an activity of the mind; not a thing thrust upon the individual, but rather the outward manifestation of mental states. Speech without ideas is useless' (Handschin, 1913, p. 600).

Of course, as 'all inquiry is partial, and each partiality has things of interest to reveal' (Widdowson, 2000, p. 23), I conclude with the wish that the things of interest in this book have been revealed.

La Plata, Argentina   Melina Porto
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Foreword

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Melina Porto

Critical Thinking, Critical Literacy, and Critical Pedagogy

The cultivation of thinking and the mind as part of the educational endeavor is not new, and over a century ago, specifically focusing on the teaching of English, Robinson (1909, p. 657) expressed: 'Aside from its practical value in training [men] in bearing and address, English [composition] may be made the basis of logical cultivation of the thinking powers.' This practical value is that 'it is intended to furnish a *tool* for business and professional life' (emphasis added) (Robinson, 1909, p. 658), but there is also an educational value because 'at the same time it should serve to broaden the student's interests, to stimulate [his] power of observation, and to make [him] more alive to [his] inner mental process and better able to control it' (Robinson, 1909, p. 658). Discussing methods of teaching modern languages also over a century ago, Handschin (1913, pp. 600–601) centered on developing habits of mind too.

> The question should not be: Has the learner acquired so and so much of a vocabulary? but rather it should be: Has the learner been acquiring good mental habits while he has been acquiring the vocabulary? (. . .) Good pedagogy should call into activity all the powers of the mind of the learner.

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'Inner mental process,' 'mental habits,' 'power of the mind,' 'observation,' and 'control' form part of recent definitions of critical thinking as higher-order thinking or the type of thinking that regulates and monitors itself, involving processes of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Waters, 2006), which continues to be widely acknowledged as an outcome of education. Although in some settings it may often be thought of as an outcome of higher education, the possibility of introducing critical thinking into schools has been argued and demonstrated in many cases in varied contexts around the globe (Cartwright, 1962; Cots, 2006; Devine, 1962; Madison, 1971; Marzano, 1993; Waters, 2006; among many others). By contrast, in some other contexts, there is little evidence of attention to this significant aspect of education (ABA, 2008; Gvirtz et al., 2007).

The significance of critical thinking in this conceptualization is that it is important in improving learning in school subjects (Cartwright, 1962; Madison, 1971; Marzano, 1993) but also beyond the classroom, as Robinson (1909) pointed out by referring to the 'practical value' of English as a 'tool for business and professional life.' This practical value coincides with the instrumental purpose of much current English language teaching in the world, aimed at facilitating access to knowledge and information, health, education, entertainment, employability, economic growth, and social and economic mobility – among other aspects. In turn, the educational basis for modern or world language education rests on fostering habits of mind and thinking processes for the integral development of the individual and of societies (Handschin, 1913; Robinson, 1909) as Robinson (1909, p. 664) lays out: 'the mastery of an English style is no ornamental acquisition, but the means of *expressing yourself*, *your attainments and your facts*, so as to *become a moving force in the world*' (emphasis added). More recently, Cots (2006), Waite and Davis (2006), and others have also emphasized this educational dimension, explicitly adding a citizenship basis, by highlighting the potential for critical thinking to allow children, youth, and adults to develop fully as individuals, become independent lifelong learners, and grow as responsible and conscientious citizens by empowering them to face the increasingly complex demands of the twenty-first century on different fronts.

A word of caution is in order from the beginning with respect to the naturalized assumption that English is always good for people. With moves toward decolonialization by theorists from South America and elsewhere (Grosfuguel, 2007; Mignolo, 2009, 2013; Mignolo & Escobar, 2019; see the section Critical Dialogues in *Postcolonial Studies*, Volume 23 Issue 4, 2020) taking the lead, this assumption reproduces the hegemony of English and contributes to what McKinney (2017) calls anglo-normativity. The importance of these debates is acknowledged here, and a little more is said in the following chapter. The contribution this book makes to this discussion resides in the illustration of the ways in which critical perspectives can counterbalance such hegemony, described in the four classroom cases that appear in Part II.

The starting point has to be in teacher education, and this book offers a teacher development project for language educators with illustrations from classroom-based cases implemented by English teachers who used locally produced materials to enact critical language education in their Argentinian contexts. The English language classroom is an ideal arena for the development of critical perspectives because of

the unavoidable contact with different languages and cultures that takes place within it, whether face to face or by other means (the Internet, literature, social media, popular culture, the arts, and so on). This contact confronts learners with linguistic, cultural, and other types of diversity and in so doing places them in the position of having to interpret the voices of others and to make their voices heard – using English. Furthermore, there is support regarding the benefits of critical literacy theory in the English as a foreign language class, for instance, in promoting the problem-solving skills and the critical reformulation of issues that characterize critical thinking (Porto & Barboni, 2008; Thelin, 2005; Waters, 2006). In this sense, English is therefore not simply a matter of teaching a basic skill, but also a focus for substantial educational experience with long-term effects. The cases show, however, that the focus is not restricted to English and can become part of any language class.

Furthermore, critical thinking involves more than the development of higher-order thinking skills, and one aim of this book is to raise the awareness of educators regarding this other dimension. It is a dimension related to citizenship, social justice, human rights, and moral values education as described in Osler (2005, 2012a, b, 2013a, b), Osler and Starkey (1996, 2003, 2004, 2005a, b, 2006, 2018), and Starkey (2002, 2005, 2008), which is a responsibility of the language teacher too (Byram, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014; Byram et al., 2017; Porto, 2018; Porto et al., 2018; Byram et al., 2020; Byram & Wagner, 2018; Wagner, Cardetti & Byram, 2019). The inclusion of citizenship, social justice, human rights, and moral values perspectives transforms critical thinking into critical literacy, and the social justice basis in particular articulates a clear link with critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1992). While critical literacy and critical pedagogy have been central in education for decades, they have received less attention in the foreign/second language classroom (Janks, 2000; Moje, 2007). Janks (2000, p. 179) asks 'Why is critical literacy more of an issue in the teaching of English as a primary language than in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL)?' This book redresses this limitation as the four cases presented in Part II address the development of a critical appraisal of reality through children's encounters with issues of cultural and linguistic diversity; population mobility and its impact on people and places; and ecology and local, cultural, and natural heritage. In the four cases, children and teenagers are confronted with reflective tasks which challenge attitudes, behaviors, and representations of others and the self. Through specific tasks, teachers mediate interaction that fosters awareness of diverse perspectives in the treatment of topics with educational value beyond the English class. Classroom interactions show students reflecting on naturalized issues which often undermine the dignity of people with different cultural affiliations in our societies as their teachers invite the respectful, effective, and appropriate communication of ideas. The foregoing represents a critical literacy orientation in English language education. But the book goes beyond that too by linking criticality with a social justice basis, for example, by encouraging students to become involved in their communities or, in other words, to identify a social theme of significance locally, imagine solutions in collaboration with others, and take concrete action. In this way, the cases become exemplary of the ways in which critical pedagogy can be developed in real English language classrooms with locally produced, teacher-made materials.

The focus of this teacher development book is therefore on teachers of English, and language teachers in general, in the first instance. Its aim is to promote and disseminate critical language education and facilitate the enactment of critical pedagogies in the English classroom in particular, illustrating the points with four cases in primary and secondary schools in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, by:

- Stimulating consciousness-raising in educators about the importance of critical perspectives in the language class
- Facilitating access to current conceptualizations of critical thinking beyond higher-order thinking
- Exploring the connections among critical thinking, critical literacy, and critical pedagogies
- Facilitating access to pedagogic proposals to enact critical perspectives in contemporary classrooms, including English classrooms and language classrooms generally, using teacher-made materials
- Illustrating the implementation of critical perspectives in real English classrooms in primary and secondary contexts in the province of Buenos Aires in Argentina using locally produced, teacher-made materials: *English Primer Reader* for the primary English classroom, grade 4; *English Primer Reader* for the primary English classroom, grade 5; and *English Primer Reader* for the secondary English classroom, year 1 – published by the Ministry of Education of the Province of Buenos Aires (http://servicios2.abc.gov.ar/lainstitucion/organismos/lenguasextranjeras/plurilingue/cuadernos.html) and available as supplementary materials here. (https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-5780-1_1)
- Stimulating teachers and teacher educators to create and develop their own critical materials for their specific contexts and use them in their classrooms

This book will consequently blend theory and practice because this is the most effective way of persuading practitioners of the significance and feasibility of the issues.

Organization and Contents of the Book

After the Foreword, Preface, and Introduction, the book has seven chapters divided in three parts, followed by a section with three Afterwords or epilogues. The teacher developed materials are available as supplementary materials and are also freely available at http://servicios2.abc.gov.ar/lainstitucion/organismos/lenguasextranjeras/plurilingue/cuadernos.html.

Part I, entitled 'From critical literacy to critical pedagogy in English language education: The issues,' has two chapters. Chapter 2 describes critical language education and is authored by Melina Porto. Chapter 3 introduces the locally produced materials, namely, three *Primer Readers* for the English class for grade 4 and

5 (primary school) and year 1 (secondary school), comprising the description of their theoretical assumptions and rationale, authored by Silvana Barboni.

Part II is entitled 'Critical pedagogies in action in English language education: A multiple case illustration in difficult contexts.' It includes four cases, authored by classroom teachers of English María Emilia Arcuri, Bárbara Bezuch, Adriana Helver, and Carolina Moirano, in cooperation with Melina Porto. They illustrate the development of critical language education using the teacher-made, locally produced materials described in Chap. 3.

Part III, 'Critical language education: Scenarios, challenges and possibilities,' includes one chapter authored by Melina Porto which integrates the imaginative, ethical, and citizenship dimensions involved in bridging critical literacy and critical pedagogy in the foreign or world language classroom using teacher-made materials.

Finally, three Afterwords close this book. In alphabetical order, Graham Crookes, Hilary Janks, and Allan Luke contribute their rich insights illuminated with their backgrounds, expertise, and trajectories.

Contributions of this Book to the Field

The concerns and educational goals and aspirations focused on in this book are the advancement of English language education using critical perspectives as a foundation. It makes a contribution to the field by presenting the theoretical foundations of three innovative *English Primer Readers*, designed locally by an English teacher and teacher educator, for primary and secondary English classrooms imbued with difficult circumstances (Kuchah Kuchah & Shamim, 2018). The Readers help develop students' critical thinking competencies and critical literacy and enact locally relevant forms of critical pedagogies that encourage learners to engage with the community and take action on various themes of social and civic import. This connection with the community through student social or civic engagement represents a citizenship education perspective in English teaching, which is not only ethically desirable but simultaneously applicable and practical, once relevant materials like these *Primers Readers* are developed. The book reports on four case studies in which these materials were used and focuses on educating and empowering vulnerable students.

The book also engages teachers as contributors to the project through serving as co-authors instead of participating as subjects of the research. It therefore necessitates a different form of writing and communication that combines academic voice and teachers' voices in a harmonious balance that makes it practically useful. This balance was extremely hard to achieve. The four teachers are not academics and had not written for publication before. While previous drafts of their chapters (at least four in each case) in a 3-year period were written in first person, the outcome was not satisfactory. I began to work collaboratively and very closely with each of them to support them in the writing process. With the purpose of highlighting their agency, and considering they were the owners, managers, and implementers of their

classroom projects, we decided to write the chapters using our first names to build the narrative, combining our voices and insights and emphasizing their agentive drives. In this way, the book materializes 'a politics of voice grounded in cultural histories and identities' (Asher Golden & Zacher Pandya, 2019, p. 212; Luke, 2013), which in this case are the voices of these Argentinian teachers and their students.

The recognition of the interface among critical thinking, critical literacy, and critical pedagogy is enacted in teacher-made and teacher-friendly materials that reflect what the scholars of critical matters have advocated. Inspired by the example of Hilary Janks, who oversaw the production of a set of six short books that exemplified and allowed the teaching of critical language awareness in South Africa in the 1990s, and Elsa Auerbach's (1992) work with English as a Second Language literacy teachers who developed a participatory curriculum for limited literacy adult students, this book is one of a handful of cases (see Garton & Graves, 2014) where the practical realities of teachers' classroom needs for materials are delivered on. Although the *Primer Readers* described here follow the principles and practice of English language teaching materials development as articulated by mainstream writers such as Tomlinson, Crookes, and Gray, they foreground a critical thread that is not usually targeted in mainstream English language teaching materials writing and development. Furthermore, the teachers who used these materials in their classrooms, reported in the four cases in Part II, did not take them up without critical analysis of their appropriateness for their particular settings. This means that these locally produced *Primer Readers* were re-contextualized, appropriated, adapted, and re-resourced in each setting by each teacher, in collaboration with myself and the author of the materials. The cases strike a balance between materials that act as resources for teachers while still encouraging teacher autonomy. The process illustrates materials development as 'a collaborative endeavour [which is] is extremely rare' (Tomlinson, 2011, p. 25) and is brought to life in this book. At the same time, for this same reason, the book adds this Argentinian case, underrepresented in the mainstream literature together with the South American perspective, to the body of work on materials writing and development along these lines in Albany, Algeria, Argentina, Bahrein, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Ghana, Hong Kong, Italy, Namibia, Portugal, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey, the UK, and the USA (Garton & Graves, 2014; Masuhara et al., 2017; Tomlinson, 2011).

The implementation of critical language education is not without challenges, even more so in contexts with difficult circumstances. Kuchah Kuchah (2018, p. 4) explains that 'the concept of difficult circumstances is used here to draw attention to, and help us reflect more critically on, the wide range of issues that language practitioners in low- and middle-income countries (…) face.' These issues involve not only sociocultural and material conditions, sociopolitical landscapes, physical environments, and so on but also 'a disturbing reality' (De Costa, 2018, p. 304). In Argentina, they comprise the huge and demanding tasks that critical and citizenship perspectives place on educators in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, many times not addressed at all in teacher education programs; a mismatch between theory and reality in many areas of education due to many factors, including social, cultural, and financial aspects; the educational consequences of the increasing gap between

rich and poor; high drop-out rates in primary and secondary schooling; the clouding of the 'equality of access' to education principle (e.g., free education of quality for all, with no entrance exams in the country) by the failure to take account of 'equality of outcome' (McKay & Warshauer Freedman, 1990, p. 399) or 'equality of opportunity to achieve' (McCarty, 2003, p. 149) for a variety of reasons; low teacher salaries, which force teachers to work in several institutions, having to commute from one school to the next and the next on a daily basis; low reputation associated with being a school teacher in this country; an inflexible and ineffective system of teacher regulation (regarding salaries, compensations, leaves of absence); poor infrastructure in many schools (no heating or fans or air-conditioning, leaking ceilings on rainy days, cracked walls, old and broken desks); under-resourced classrooms, or classrooms with no resources at all; and a teacher culture in some public school contexts that tends to be dominated by a lack of commitment and dedication, absenteeism, and strikes (cf. teaching as a 'sacred vocation,' Hargreaves, 2008, p. 29). Just to give an example, in 2013 the formal school year in state schools began with an 18-day delay due to a teacher strike in the province of Buenos Aires. In Argentina teachers work in this inhospitable context every day, all the time. In this sense, this book adds to the incipient body of knowledge about English language teaching in difficult contexts (Kuchah Kuchah, 2008, 2016; Kuchah Kuchah & Smith, 2011). As Fiona Coplan and Sue Garton warn in the Foreword to Kuchah Kuchah and Shamim's (2018) book *International perspectives on teaching English in difficult circumstances. Contexts, challenges and possibilities,* 'despite the fact that the majority of English teaching happens in classrooms which are in some respect or other difficult, as a profession we continue either to overlook them or brush them under our global TESOL carpet' (Coplan & Garton, 2018, p. vi). This shadowing of difficult contexts also occurs in the field of critical pedagogy as Crookes (2013, p. 47) observes: 'recent accounts of doing, or of how to do, critical pedagogy (. . .) emanate from the first world. Many of them take for granted a well-resourced classroom or school, willing students, a culture of cooperation, good communication skills and willingness on the part of the students, and a bank of excellent library materials (not to mention internet access).'

The notion of teaching in difficult circumstances or contexts, and the fact that this book is an example of it, becomes an opening at the same time. It redresses the observations that 'the direction of learning in TESOL has been from 'the west' to 'the rest'' (Copland & Garton, 2018, p. vii) and that 'the working conditions of the majority of English language teachers around the world (. . . .) are not often included in the ELT literature in northern/western journals or books' (Kuchah Kuchah, 2018, p. 4). Specifically in connection with critical pedagogies, Crookes (2013, p. 47) warns that 'accounts of critical pedagogy produced by North writers usually fail to explicitly acknowledge the resource-limit part of the picture, which is extreme in the very places where critical pedagogies are most greatly needed.' Similarly, López-Gopar (2019, p. 2) states that 'examples of actual classroom practices, both in language classrooms and teacher preparation programs, remain scarce. The few examples that can be found have originated in the so-called inner-circle countries, and these studies largely ignore ELT critical practices conducted by critical teachers

and language educators elsewhere, including the so-called periphery countries, where educators have also reinvented their own critical pedagogies in order to respond to their local realities.' This book challenges the geopolitics of location and knowledge production to give attention to knowledge and experience from the Global South (Díaz, 2018; Guilherme & Menezes de Souza, 2019; Janks, 2019; Macedo, 2019; Pennycook & Makoni, 2020; Santos, 2018) by foregrounding the 'possibilities that emerge from these contexts in order to contribute to existing research, ideas/theory and pedagogy in the field of ELT' (Kuchah Kuchah, 2018, p. 4).

The attention on beginners in this book is also fresh as 'we hear relatively little of the details of working with beginners in the critical language pedagogy literature' and in general the 'default setting concerns[ed] learners who are[were] already in a position to engage in basic communication in the target language' (Crookes, 2013, p. 48; cf. Man-Chu Lau, 2013) (e.g., Auerbach & Wallerstein 1987 who designed materials targeted at intermediate students; also Wallerstein, 1983). Moreover, the attention on children and early teens in this book is also important because of the language-thought connection discussed in the Preface (Handschin, 1913) which means that children and youth are developing their linguistic and conceptual frameworks simultaneously. By contrast, work on critical pedagogies has tended to focus on adults using their native languages (e.g., Freire, 1973), in other words, a population assumed to be linguistically experienced and conceptually developed in different degrees. In turn, while the critical literacy literature does address child learners, it usually does so in L1 classrooms (Janks, 2000; Moje, 2007) or in English as a Second Language contexts in which children are in contact with the second language in the community. In short, the focus on children (9–10 year-olds) and early teens (12 year-olds) who are learning English as a foreign language contributes to filling a gap in the field.

The difficult circumstances that form part of the everyday lives of the teachers and students in these local settings are an opening in another way. For the English teachers in these classrooms, it was unthinkable to teach a lesson using mainly the English language, as one might expect in other contexts. Most of their students saw English as a distant and irrelevant subject, had never used an English course book because there had never been one, did not have books in their homes, were not used to having books in school and taking care of them, had more immediate needs like eating the meal of the day at school, would get easily distracted, and had difficulty following the teacher even in Spanish, as the cases will reveal. As Crookes (2013, p. 49) states, 'children's classrooms in traditional, large, under-resourced (. . .) schools all over the world (but perhaps more so outside of the rich countries) are not normally places where there is group work and an inquiry curriculum.' Consequently, the teachers had to engage all available languages and resources to help their students comprehend and make meaning. So we will see a child narrating a brief family anecdote involving friends and neighbors in which Spanish and Guarani, but not English, were used; two children bringing in elements from their social identifications, one as Paraguayan by identifying with one of the characters in the *English Primer Reader* they were using in class and shouting to the group that he

was from Paraguay too, and another one as Bolivian by drawing a typical Bolivian hat and describing it to his peers; one group of students analyzing, reflecting upon and questioning the habit of hunting animals in their rural town, La Viruta, and designing their own awareness-raising posters about the theme; this group using popular culture (a song by Coldplay) and creating their own poems; and one student describing a lived experience in very simple English and another one writing a welcoming message in English in one word. Interestingly, these are examples of translanguaging, defined as 'the fluid and dynamic practices that transcend the boundaries between named languages, language varieties, and language and other semiotic systems' (Wei, 2018, p. 9). Translanguaging challenges the static focus on language systems (Canagarajah, 2013; Hall, 2013; Larsen-Freeman, 2018; Otsuji & Pennycook, 2011; Taylor & Snoddon, 2013) presupposed by models of linguistic competence based on the native speaker norm. In other words, translanguaging here emerged precisely from the difficult circumstances of the context, which made it impossible to focus exclusively on the named language 'English.' While some of these examples are indeed rich instances of translanguaging, such as the process of designing a bilingual awareness-raising poster against animal hunting or a creative student-made poem, other instances such as a one-word welcoming message can be judged as too simplistic, with little evidence of English language learning, criticality, or translanguaging at all. However, I argue that these instances, as well as many others in Part II with the cases, should be understood in their context, i.e., emerging from the difficult circumstances previously described, and as part of a process that began with each case but did not finish when it was over. If seen from this lens, then nothing was simple, rudimentary, or poor about these students. Everything was instead the outcome of a hard journey.

The cases then contribute to the study of translanguaging in this way and also by adding perspectives from Argentina in a South American orientation that is badly needed as Canagarajah points out in a recent interview article (Porto, 2021):

> translingual practices have been studied largely by scholars working in Anglophone universities. The leading proponents of this model come from the UK (for example, Li Wei), the USA (Ofelia Garcia, Suresh Canagarajah), and Australia (Alastair Pennycook) (…) Note that these are all English-dominant countries. Others in Europe, such as Jan Blommaert in Belgium, have also produced influential scholarship on other European languages. However, this situation has led to some imbalance in knowledge production (pp. 95–96).

This book redresses this imbalance not only from the perspective of the geopolitics of knowledge production in the study of translanguaging but also in terms of the languages that get represented, as Canagarajah also explains in this interview article:

> translingual scholarship has focused largely on how diverse languages mesh with English (…) it begins to appear that translingualism means 'English+ (…) We need more studies from scholars in Africa, South America, and East Asia on how professional and academic contexts involve language contact between diverse local languages (Porto, 2021, p. 96).

This book gives testimony to the multiple languages that these learners used as resources in the classroom and beyond (e.g., the home, the neighborhood), which involved English as a foreign language, Spanish both as a native language and as an additional language, Quechua, and Guarani.

This form of translanguaging emerging from difficult circumstances constitutes a social justice basis for English language teaching in these settings in at least four ways. First, by 'expanding beyond a strictly linguistic repertoire, encompassing all the multimodalities that form part of users' semiotic meaning-making repertoire' (Vogel & García, 2017), translanguaging is liberating as:

> speakers [move] from the cages and boundaries of the languages of nation-states into a space in which they become agents and builders of their own language. Language belongs to speakers, not to political states. And translanguaging is the motor that frees us from the constraints of having to use language only according to certain conventions and privileging only the communicative modes favored in schools—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Linguistic creativity is then given back to speakers and especially students, as they chart their own learning and lives (Vogel & García, 2017, unpaginated).

Second, by facilitating 'meaningful access to 'second-language life worlds,' not least because doing so may help reduce inequity among language learners in the learning process' (Gao, 2019, p. 164). That is, the opportunities to access language learning in these settings is limited, and to access language learning in relevant and meaningful ways in connection with learners' lives and their communities, as the cases show, is even more limited.

Third, by facilitating social justice not only conceived in terms of equity but also as transformative experience. Moje (2007) distinguishes between socially just and social justice pedagogies in this way:

> The call for socially just pedagogy is a call to ensure that all youth have equitable opportunities to learn (…) By contrast, social justice pedagogy, or teaching to produce social justice, involves more than providing equitable learning opportunities (…) From a social justice perspective, opportunities to learn must not only provide access to mainstream knowledge and practices but also provide opportunities to question, challenge, and reconstruct knowledge (…) Social justice pedagogy should, in other words, offer possibilities for transformation (pp. 3–4).

The possibilities for transformation occurred here through the process of this emergent translanguaging, whereby learners engaged in meaning making by using all the languages and resources at hand, linguistic or otherwise (Bradley & Harvey, 2019; Bradley et al., 2018; Cope & Kalantiz, 2015; Moore et al., 2020). The focus was not on English grammar and vocabulary or language competence, but on 'help[ing] language learners develop semiotic resources to assert themselves in challenging contexts' (Gao, 2019, p. 165). The student who drew a typical Bolivian hat to describe one aspect of his social identification tied to a Bolivian background was asserting himself in a Spanish and Argentinian dominant classroom in a country where people with Bolivian, Paraguayan, Peruvian, and Asian backgrounds tend to be discriminated and stigmatized. Furthermore, Moje then continues to say that these possibilities for transformation are 'not only of the learner but also of the social and political contexts in which learning and other social action take place' (Moje, 2007, p. 4) and from this perspective, to give one example, the awareness-raising poster against animal hunting was aimed at enacting change, however modest at the level of awareness, in the learners' social milieu.

Translanguaging theory and pedagogy recognizes these possibilities for transformation in ways that are relevant for critical language education and critical pedagogies, in particular by:

> demonstrat[ing]ed how colonial and modernist-era language ideologies created and maintained linguistic, cultural, and racial hierarchies in society (. . . .) Those ideologies privilege Western European notions of 'one language, one people' and reinforce the power of state-endorsed named languages (. . .) which characterized named languages as static, standardized competencies one might 'acquire.' (Vogel & García, 2017, unpaginated)

This characterization has consequences for people because 'dominant societal language ideologies continue to correspond to and reinforce the racial status of speakers (...) as well as their class positions and other social markers' (Vogel & García, 2017, unpaginated). Consequently, by questioning and rejecting named language systems, their ideologies, and the practices based on them and perpetuated in schools (e.g., academic language, standardized language testing, and so on), translanguaging helps teachers and students alike to gain awareness of these issues and develop their subjectivities in ways that dismantle troubling aspects of power and inequality, for example, by engaging in fluid languaging from their own practices as language users or, in other words, from below (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015).

Fourth, and naturally, no standardized testing for accountability concerns, focusing, for example, on language skills, occurred in these classrooms because it was simply unfeasible. So these teachers engaged in a spontaneous 'translanguaging approach that allows[ed] for the use of different resources from the multilingual repertoire' (Cenoz & Gorter, 2019, p. 134), and this translanguaging approach is recognized as an urgent need for assessment in the field. I say 'spontaneous' because the approach originated from the complexity and difficulty posed by the local context rather than from the development of language assessment literacy (Levia & Inbar-Lourieis, 2020) cultivated in the teacher education programs these teachers undertook. For example, the teachers considered all of their students' productions (posters, drawings, maps, responses to triggers, informal anecdotes, and so on) together with evidence of reflection and language awareness in self-referential assessment that looked at students' progress instead of looking at predetermined outcomes set by a test or a syllabus. This approach is in tune with recommendations by Cenoz and Gorter (2019). At the same time, this is an example of a critical approach to assessment, which also distances from standardized and short-answer tests, as it considers 'multiple sources of evidence' (Crookes, 2013, p. 69) such as observations, self-assessments, mini-projects (e.g., pollution in Chap. 4, bullying and diversity in Chap. 5, animal protection in Chap. 6, heritage appreciation in Chap. 7), and participatory and dialogic forms of alternative assessment for instance emerging through teacher-student or student-student informal conversations. Consequently, this book responds to Crookes' (2013, p. 70) observation that 'it would be nice to have more detailed case-based accounts' considering that 'more local reports and case studies of procedures and practices in testing and assessment of critical language teaching are badly needed.' It does so by contributing four cases. Furthermore, these cases illustrate local, situated, contextualized, internal, collaborative,

and participatory (teacher and student negotiated) assessment, which is considered to be of utmost importance in the critical literature because of the dangers posed by 'high-stakes imperialist English (and other) language testing' (Crookes, 2013, p. 69). In other words, assessment in the cases described in this book was not top-down or imposed from western and rich countries and testing agencies.

Finally, as we will see in Chap. 2, the foregoing has implications for the conceptualizations that emerge in this book of what language learning and foreign language learning mean and involve. In Argentina, as well as in other parts of the world probably, preponderance tends to be given to conceptions of literacy around the print word, heavy attention to reading and writing, views of proficiency centered on linguistic competence and the native speaker as model, little attention to translanguaging, and assessment generally limited to language skills and the acquisition of language systems (Porto et al., 2021). By contrast, in this book the view of language learning that emerges centers on multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Rowsell, 2013) and translingual perspectives (Canagarajah, 2013) that encourage learners to draw on their 'full linguistic repertoires' (Taylor & Snoddon, 2013, p. 440) and to use all available resources in multiple contexts appropriately (García, 2009) in order to satisfy their communicative, interpersonal, and other purposes, in a variety of sign systems and mediums (Bradley & Harvey, 2019; Bradley et al., 2018; Cope & Kalantiz, 2015; Moore et al., 2020). These include print, non-print, visual, digital, multimodal or other mediums, and new multimodal literacy practices (Gee, 2012; Rowsell, 2013; Wolfe & Flewitt, 2010). In short, the 'focus is not on language systems [per se] but on languages as emergent from contexts of interaction' (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2011, p. 418; Pennycook, 2010). The cases in this book provide an illustration.

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Part I
From Critical Literacy to Critical Pedagogy in ELT: The Issues

Chapter 2
Critical Language Education

Melina Porto

Introduction

The twenty-first century has confronted educators with an educational revolution. A multiplicity of social, historical, cultural, economic, and political changes have occurred, which are reconfiguring the role of schools and universities and which in turn demand new teacher roles and professional identities (Garcia et al., 2018; Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016; Luke, 2018, 2019). The learners that schools and universities have historically provided for no longer exist. They are new social individuals who bring languages, cultures, knowledge, backgrounds, histories and stories, attitudes, values, resources, experiences, emotions, aspirations, and much more to the classroom. Furthermore, they are in permanent contact with information and technology; live in the age of the digital, hypertext and intertext; and interact (with information, with others, among themselves) in dynamic and complex ways drawing on available languages, resources, and their backgrounds fluidly. The tradition of the book in the modern school model, which has been at the center of literacy for two centuries (Cassany, 2000), is insufficient now for these children and youth.

Schools and universities around the globe have responded to these challenges in varied ways. In contexts with 'difficult circumstances,' these responses have been limited by such difficulties (Kuchah Kuchah & Shamin, 2018) and have

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foregrounded the fact people learn in other places beyond the school or university, for example, at a local club, a community center, a park or square, a community library, a community kitchen, and so on. These places become valuable 'funds of knowledge' (Moje et al., 2004). However, schools and universities are still important sites of learning. 'The conservative case is that schooling is a means for learning received skills and practices and canonical knowledge' (Luke, 2018, p. xii), in other words, tradition, custom, the print word, reading, and writing. They also provide access to 'knowledge that is not distributed in any other place: teaching to think, to understand, to teach intellectual autonomy, critical thinking, the ability to distinguish true from false information, to use information in problem solving' (Gvirtz et al., 2007, p. 10, my translation). In addition, they give access to 'dominant knowledge' (Garcia et al., 2018; Janks, 2019, p. 237; Luke, 2018, 2019) that learners need in order to avoid the reproduction of 'differential access to the culture of power that produces and labels knowledge as mainstream or marginal' (Moje, 2000, p. 4). In so doing, schools and universities provide 'equitable learning opportunities' as part of 'socially just' education (Moje, 2000, pp. 3–4).

However, this democratization of knowledge in terms of equity of access to learning opportunities and dominant knowledge, for instance, by fostering critical thinking, is not enough to enable children and youth to develop fully as human beings; participate actively in the life of their family, school, community, and beyond; acquire the tools for lifelong learning; and live democratically and respectfully in a world characterized not only by poverty, the unbalanced distribution of wealth and resources, diseases, drugs, and so on (the material conditions of social injustice) but also by troubled sociopolitical landscapes, hatred, segregation, suspicion of the other, conflict, struggle, racism, sexism, xenophobia, human rights abuse, environmental depredation, climate change, and other factors and conditions (De Costa, 2018; Garcia et al., 2018; Luke, 2018, 2019). In this context, De Costa (2018, p. 305) suggests that 'we need to problematize the material effects of social injustice in the lives of [the] people, places, and things (. . .) because we are all inextricably linked in a complex ecological web.' In this regard, the educational question that guides this book is: 'how might educators work with youth and children, families and communities to both defend and prepare them for difficult and unprecedented everyday challenges and problems, and to enable them to voice and build new cultural and political, social and environmental futures?' (Luke, 2018, p. ix). How can literacies 'be reshaped in response to these conditions' (Ibid, p. ix)? The purposes of education centered on integral development, lifelong learning, community bonding, and democratic values demand a critical literacy perspective that allows for the self-transformation of students' lives as they deem necessary given their specific circumstances. Luke (2018, p. xii) explains:

> An education for critical literacies is an invitation to join an intergenerational, intercultural and peer conversation that is about imagining and building what could be, about the utilisation of diverse cultural tools and knowledges to address real and pressing social, economic and environmental problems, about the collaborative dreaming of inclusive, generative and sustainable forms of life, about the engagement and use of cultural wisdom and scientific knowledge to address what appear to us to be insoluble environmental and planetary problems.

In this respect, learners need to become aware that they have possibilities for transformation which are in their own hands and this transformation can happen

when they gain a sense of agency. Agency is a key concept that transforms critical thinking and critical literacy into critical pedagogy, but it is also complex. Learners need awareness that agency is above all achievable, particularly in contexts with difficult circumstances, but also that it is relational, multidimensional, emergent, and spatially and temporally situated (Larsen Freeman, 2019). Awareness that agency is achievable and in their hands is of course not enough. Becoming agentive involves the ability to invest their social identifications with power and self-determination as they engage with others on the basis of their values and worldviews, situated in a broader framework of cultural, political, religious, and other values, using a range of semiotic resources such as the linguistic, the interactional, the nonverbal, the auditory, the performative, and more (Duff, 2019). The possibilities for transformation in this sense are the basis for 'social justice' education as distinct from 'socially just' only in terms of equity of access (Moje, 2000, p. 4).

As Luke (2018, 2019) argues, the foregoing requires an ethical perspective:

> The ethical imperative is not only to enable all citizens and young people to assert and protect their rights and those of others, but it is also to enable them to engage with how their societies and economies are shaped and governed at a time when their diverse standpoints and experiences are badly needed. It is to engage these people with the tools to map out and live gainful lives in ways that are not exploitative and destructive of the very places, communities and cultures where they live. (Luke, 2018, p. xii)

This chapter describes how this move can happen in language classrooms theoretically. It focuses on critical language education, beginning with critical thinking, to address then critical literacy and critical pedagogies. It is not possible to do justice to the wealth of bibliography available on the theme, and what follows is of course a partial picture.

Critical Thinking

What is critical thinking? The idea that to educate in any discipline is to teach to think is not new as I noted in the Introduction (Handschin, 1913; Robinson, 1909). More recently, but still half a century ago, Cartwright (1962), Devine (1962), Madison (1971), and Milton (1960) addressed the need for critical thinking in education. Dam and Volman (2004) point out that any conceptualization of critical thinking draws from the fields of philosophy and psychology:

> From a philosophical point of view, critical thinking is primarily approached as the norm of good thinking, the rational aspect of human thought, and as the intellectual virtues needed to approach the world in a reasonable, fair-minded way (...) Psychologists conceptualize critical thinking first and foremost as higher-order thinking skills and focus attention on the appropriate learning and instruction processes. (pp. 361–62)

Precisely because several disciplines are involved, critical thinking is hard to define, even today (Tian & Low, 2011). So what exactly does it mean to teach to think? Paul (2007) defines critical thinking as the kind of thinking that analyzes, evaluates, and transforms thinking to improve it. It is 'thinking while thinking to

think better' (Paul, 2007). Critical thinking transforms thinking into a more systematic and broader process, consequently reaching higher levels of thought. According to Fisher (1995), there are two types of thinking. Lower-level thinking involves the activities of knowing certain facts, understanding and applying them, using given information. Thought resulting from higher-level thinking, by contrast, involves processes of analysis (separating facts), synthesis (creating something new from those facts), and evaluation (assessing knowledge). Critical thinking is characterized as this kind of higher-level thinking and has a central feature: metacognitive control. The activities that promote it go beyond the level of information (Waters, 2006).

Waite and Davis (2006) argue that critical thinking, reflection, and self-directed learning have gained significance in education due to phenomena such as globalization, the possibility of access to knowledge and information through different media, sources and resources, and the dynamics and fluctuation of this knowledge. In this context, critical thinking is indispensable in two dimensions: learning to learn and learning to live together (Tedesco, 2005). On the one hand, learning to learn refers to the need to educate autonomous individuals, that is, people who are capable of grasping knowledge so as to engage in lifelong learning independently, responding critically to knowledge that is unstable and fluid and is mediated by technologies of information and communication (Cobo, 2013; Cots, 2006). Critical thinking is central to be able to learn to learn because it encourages the continuous monitoring and evaluation of one's own thinking, leading to a deeper appropriation of knowledge. On the other hand, learning to live together refers to the need to educate critical, participatory citizens who uphold democratic values and are respectful of human dignity and the rule of law in the complex societies of our times marked by diversity in terms of ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, age, religion, and so on (Garcia et al., 2018; Luke, 2018, 2019; Osler & Starkey, 2018; Powell et al., 2001). In this dimension, critical thinking fosters the analysis and evaluation of the naturalized basis of one's views, values, beliefs, and actions, and those of others, for example, by gaining awareness of stereotypes, prejudice, and cultural bias. Critical thinking permits the careful examination and revision of one's views, values, beliefs, actions, stereotypes, and prejudices by stimulating awareness and reflection that lead to the consideration of perspectives different from one's own, placing oneself in the shoes of 'the other,' and embracing intercultural perspectives through such perspective-taking and decentering (Byram & Morgan, 1994). This process enables a double consciousness, understood 'as neither binary nor deficit but quite the contrary (. . .) it is an enabling epistemic stance that (. . .) [is] enabling of third and fourth and fifth spaces that come from the juxtaposition of multiple worldviews' (Luke, 2018, p. 7).

Likewise, American philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1998, 2002, 2006) defines critical thinking as 'the capacity for critical examination of oneself and one's traditions' (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 388), 'tak[ing] responsibility for one's own reasoning, and exchang[ing] ideas with others in an atmosphere of mutual respect' (p. 389). The importance of intercultural dialogue to bridge difference is crucial:

democracy needs citizens (…) who can reason together about their choices (…) Critical thinking is particularly crucial for good citizenship in a society that needs to come to grips with the presence of people who differ by ethnicity, caste, and religion. We will only have a chance at an adequate dialogue across cultural boundaries if young citizens know how to engage in dialogue and deliberation in the first place. (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 388)

This vision of criticality builds on Socrates and his idea that individuals need to live an 'examined life' that 'sets the stage for inquiry and questioning' (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 297) and 'produces challenges to tradition' (p. 293). The critical here means:

a life that accepts no belief as authoritative simply because it has been handed down by tradition or become familiar through habit, a life that questions all beliefs and accepts only those that survive reason's demand for consistency and for justification. Training this capacity requires developing the capacity to reason logically, to test what one reads or says for consistency of reasoning, correctness of fact, and accuracy of judgment. (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 293)

A pedagogy that cultivates critical thinking encourages introspection, analysis, reflection, reasoning, deliberation, collaboration, and interdisciplinarity, where:

what is indispensable is the time to sit together and read and work together, learning how the problems of a region of the world look from historical, economic, religious, and other perspectives. (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 298)

Looking at problems in regions of the world different from one's own taking historical, social, cultural, economic, religious, and other outlooks represents an involvement with multiperspectivity, contextualized historicity, and partiality that distinguishes this conceptualization of critical thinking from foundational cognitive-based views in the 1960s centered mainly on the development of abilities, skills, and competences (Cartwright, 1962; Milton, 1960). The reason is that it provides an opportunity to embed social justice aims. Nussbaum recognizes the importance of social justice aims in education (Boman et al., 2002) and suggests that they can be achieved by questioning 'how the [our] inner world can be shaped by forces of racism' (Boman et al., 2002, p. 309) and how specific rights granted to particular groups (women, ethnic minorities, LGBTI groups, and others) can in fact become sources of subjugation and power:

We need to be very sure that benefits that we give to groups do not result in a further subordination of people within those groups. (Ibid., p. 309)

Another important element is the examination of what our conscious or unconscious complicity with such subordination, exploitation, and suffering is. In this way, critical thinking acquires a social justice basis that can be accomplished through multiperspectivity, contextualized historicity, and awareness of partiality. This social justice dimension is central in critical literacy and critical pedagogies.

Critical Thinking in Education, Language Use, and Language Teaching

Madison (1971) defines critical thinking as a generic term that encompasses different types of skills. It is not a single skill. It is, simultaneously, a dynamic process and a capacity that includes attitudes, knowledge, and specific skills. It does not automatically emerge as a result of teaching but it is not likely to develop spontaneously either. Cartwright (1962) introduces the idea that active thinking is a predominant way of dealing with daily life and in this sense, one aim of education is to extend and deepen the ability to observe, analyze, compare, predict, formulate, synthesize, reflect, clarify, and choose, among others, that individuals bring with them. The author also explains that thinking is always tied to the contexts or situations that promote it, is not developed in isolation, and needs to be supported not only by the implicit beliefs and values underlying instruction but also by specific practices designed to promote it. Such explicit approach is important because formal education, it has been argued, reinforces the tendency toward primitive, 'magical,' or irrational forms of reasoning (Benderson, 1990; Milton, 1960, p. 218) through its homogenizing practices, even in higher education.

In relation to how teachers teach to think, Marzano (1993) warns that although the use of elicitation techniques (questions), writing (e.g., diaries and journals), and general information processing strategies (e.g., comprehending gist, relating information, analyzing, representing, abstracting) is common, the development of higher-level thinking is associated with higher-order thinking and with the complexity or degree of difficulty of the task at hand. By contrast, Waters (2006) clarifies that tasks involving complex thinking may be simple and may require simple language from the learner. Marzano (1993) and Wright (2002) explain that fostering higher-order thinking involves more than developing skills. It also requires the cultivation of certain 'dispositions' or 'habits of mind' (Marzano, 1993, pp. 158–159) related to three categories: self-regulation (of one's thinking, resources, feedback), critical thinking itself (clarity of thought, mental openness, low impulsivity, and perspective-taking, with more than 20 identifiable mental habits), and creative thinking (active and enthusiastic engagement with learning, consideration of multiple views, creative self-regulation of learning).

Devine (1962) argues that critical thinking skills (over 30 identified in the literature) are in fact abstract mental constructs developed by researchers and cannot be taught directly in the classroom. He proposes that the development of critical thinking should be transversal to the curriculum across school subjects, meaning that the design of classes, modules, or programs specifically intended to foster it is inappropriate and inefficient. In this view, all school subjects can integrate critical thinking by engaging learners in critical work through the reading and listening of disciplinary content. Teaching *about* critical thinking skills or talking about their importance in the classroom is not enough because learners need to put these skills in use in the specific context of reading and listening, according to the author. What Devine (1962) is saying is that critical thinking skills are involved in the use of

language, be it in a language class or a content class (geography, history, biology, and so on), when learners have a message they wish to communicate. Since critical thinking skills operate in a verbal context, most of them can be taught as language skills (Devine, 1962) through critical language practices.

Bruner (1985), Vygtosky (1978), Wood (1988), and others have extensively referred to the relationship between logical and hypothetical thinking in reading and writing. Reading and writing involve ways of communicating that change thinking in the process since they lead to increasingly analytical forms of thought (Vygtosky, 1978). Readers construct hypotheses from the information in a text, and they corroborate, elaborate, or refute those hypotheses (among other operations), evaluating them and recurrently generating new hypotheses on the basis of the incoming text, the context, the communicative purpose, the writer's intention, and so on. In short, reading requires both high- and low-level thinking operations. In turn, writing is a self-regulated activity characterized by complex thinking operations. Writers imagine their readers and anticipate their reactions in a particular sociocultural context. In this way, they decenter from their own ideas and viewpoints and consider those of their readers. They simultaneously adopt the roles of writer and reader of their text in order to evaluate it. This process involves higher-order thinking skills.

Taking simultaneous and multiple roles when one uses language and imagining what the lives of one's interlocutors are like gives a significant role to diversity in the construction of learners' identities. This diversity encourages them to move away from the naturalized thinking of habitus (Bourdieu, 1990, 1997) toward an intercultural perspective that allows them to place themselves in the shoes of the 'other'; interact with those 'others'; discover, analyze, understand, and accept different perspectives and perceptions of the world; and consciously evaluate the differences (Benderson, 1990; Byram & Morgan, 1994; Byram, 1997, 2021). In this view, language learners become intercultural speakers or intercultural communicators who are able to interpret linguistic and nonlinguistic input critically in a comparative perspective, analyzing and reflecting on their thoughts and actions and those of others, questioning the naturalized basis of their presuppositions, values, and beliefs (Barnett, 1997; Byram, 1997, 2021; Liddicoat, 2021).

This view is consistent with the 'plea (. . .) for a social constructivist approach of critical thinking as an educational aim' (Dam & Volman, 2004, p. 370) considering the general consensus that the linguistic, cognitive, social, and moral development of children and youth is a constructive and active process in which they generate their linguistic knowledge and their knowledge of the world within a matrix of social interaction (Cambourne, 2001). As Byram (1997, 2021) explains, knowledge (linguistic, cultural, and of other kinds) is not enough, and attitudes, values, and skills are also important. In particular, the attitudes of curiosity and openness to otherness; the values of respect, solidarity, and cooperation; and the skills of observation, discovery, analysis, comparison and contrast, decentering, perspective-taking, and evaluation. These are the attitudes, values, and skills of intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997, 2021), which promote the habits of mind that characterize critical thinking such as mental justice (fairness), intellectual humility,

intellectual courage, intellectual perseverance, faith in reason, and intellectual integrity (Paul, 2007).

Dam and Volman (2004, p. 359) explain that the 'characteristics of instruction that are assumed to enhance critical thinking are: paying attention to the development of the epistemological beliefs of students; promoting active learning; a problem-based curriculum; stimulating interaction between students; and learning on the basis of real-life situations.' In the language classroom, project work on themes of interest to learners, approached experientially (learning by doing), gives a genuine communicative purpose beyond the rehearsal of language per se. Language is learned as it is being used. Interdisciplinary project-based pedagogies (Moje, 2000; Hartman, 2000; Tian & Low, 2011) involve learners in collaborative research work on issues, questions, and problems of their own interest in the real world, and the approach is called dialogic inquiry (Rex, 2001) or inquiry learning (Schmidt et al., 2002). As Green et al. (2012, p. 321) state, 'in a classroom community of inquiry the teacher uses children's own questions and concerns as the motivation to engage in shared dialogue (...) The children themselves set the agenda for their discussions.' At the same time, engaging in research requires thinking operations that are typical of critical thinking such as observing, discovering, analyzing, synthesizing, interpreting, evaluating, and so on. Furthermore, project-based pedagogies resort to multiple texts and the discourses of the different school disciplines to learn new concepts and unfamiliar content. In this way, they facilitate the familiarization with different specific genres, access to them, and direct experience with them (Duke, 2000) in a diversity of discourses and a polyphony of voices that are crucial for the development of critical thinking. Finally, Dam and Volman (2004, p. 375) state that 'learning by participation always involves 'reflection'. The quality of the participation can be improved by reflection.' Cooperation is central in this process: 'cooperative procedures are considered to be highly valuable and 'social' instruction techniques such as discussion [and] student-led work groups (...) are frequently used' (Dam & Volman, 2004, p. 372).

In conclusion, it is clear that there are no simple recipes to foster critical thinking in the classroom. Moreover, Benderson (1990), Marzano (1993), and Waters (2006) claim that teachers do not often cultivate or reinforce the mental habits associated with critical thinking in their lessons. In turn, Wright (2002) highlights the difficulties posed by the 'school milieu,' which are related to accountability concerns, standardized testing, and teachers' conceptualizations of critical thinking mainly in terms of skills development:

> The evidence suggests that teachers hold a skills conception of critical thinking and are confused about the differing messages concerning how to teach critical thinking. I further hypothesize that teachers do not have the necessary abilities, dispositions and ethical beliefs that are conducive to critical thinking. Whether they have the necessary epistemology is unclear. Yet, even if teachers had the necessary abilities, knowledge and dispositions, the school milieu mitigates against the teaching of critical thinking. There is far too much emphasis on content coverage (rather than on deeper understanding of fewer topics), and standardized testing in the name of accountability. Censorship and a fear of teaching controversial issues also exist. (Wright, 2002, p. 150)

Teacher preparation to teach for critical thinking is therefore an area of concern addressed in this book.

Critical Literacy

Literacy, of course, involves more than reading, writing, listening, and speaking. As Cassany (2000) explains, schools have tightened their attention to literacy in this sense for two centuries, sometimes restricting the focus even more, to reading and writing alone, and this conceptualization is no longer satisfactory given the complexity of current times. Besides, literacy is not only a cognitive skill. It refers to the use of communicative practices located socially, historically, and culturally, and this is a sociocultural perspective of literacy (Janks, 2014a) in which meaning making transcends written and oral texts to embrace digital, nonprint, visual, artistic, performative, and other kinds (Kern, 2001; Kress, 2000a,b). In the process of creating and comprehending meanings, individuals interpret the world of their interlocutors, collaborate, use conventions of different types and cultural information, solve communication problems, reflect on how language is used in specific contexts, and monitor its use in concrete situations. They must know, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate, among other critical thinking operations.

Furthermore, the creation and interpretation of meanings is not neutral since all discourse contains voices that learners must learn to identify. They must also learn to make their voices heard. Communication is the social process of making meaning in a cultural context understood as a field of struggle for the meaning of life, where different voices and perspectives come into potential conflict. In this sense, learners need the capacity to participate in a plurality of discourses and a multiplicity of ways of understanding and producing significant texts in diverse contexts. The process involves the use of all available means, resources, and languages that enrich learners' lives in transformative ways.

Language plays a crucial role in this process. Janks (1988, p. 88) notes that:

> meaning is not fixed or given but constructed. The recognition that meaning has been constructed from a particular ideological perspective makes room for the recognition of alternative meanings from different positions. Meaning is thus plural not singular. No discourse is neutral. All language is a selection of words and structures and a linguistic analysis of surface-forms is able to show what is revealed and concealed by the selections that have been made.

She illustrates the point by analyzing the meanings that are made available by using nominalizations and passivizations and how agency can be obscured when particular surface structures are used. Because of this, she argues that learners need conscious awareness of the fact that meaning is plural and that 'choosing between alternative meanings is an ideological or political choice' (Ibid., p. 93). Awareness is not enough, and learners also need the tools to notice, and question if appropriate, such uses of language as well as knowledge of the alternative meanings from which they can choose (Janks, 1988).When issues of ideology, power, difference,

and identity are linked to language, literacy is critical. Janks (2010) and Kubota and Miller (2017) offer a historical development of the field where Freire (1972a, b) is identified as the pioneer to remark that literacy is more than being able to read and write and involves the ability not only to read the word but also the world. Janks (2010) explains that linguistic approaches to critical literacy comprise critical linguistics (Fowler & Kress, 1979), critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989), critical language awareness (Fairclough, 1992), critical applied linguistics (Pennycook, 2001), and multimodal literacies (Kress, 2003):

> *Critical linguistics* focuses on linguistic choices in speech and writing and their effects; *critical discourse analysis* focuses on how these choices are affected by the processes and the social conditions in which texts are received and produced; *critical language awareness* is a classroom application of these theories to teaching and *critical applied linguistics* questions the normative assumptions of the whole applied field of linguistics as well as the consequences of these assumptions (Janks, 2010, p. 45, her emphasis) (. . .) the *multiliteracies approach* to literacy asks us to re-examine meaning-making in an age of the visual sign [where] the verbal is just one of many modalities for making meaning [that] has been privileged in the teaching of literacy. (Ibid., pp. 49–50, emphasis added)

Critical literacy then means understanding positioning. It does not only mean reading against a text (critique) and in fact requires the ability to do three things (Janks, 2019):

(a) Read with the text (understanding the positions and meanings offered).
(b) Read against the text (interrogating and challenging the positions offered).
(c) Take a stand (ethically evaluating the interests at stake).

It combines text analysis with an analysis of power (Janks, 2018), for example, by asking whose interests a text serves and whose interests it hides:

> Both kinds of reading require critical thinking, an engagement with the claims, logic, and arguments of the text, which is different from critique, an analysis of how texts maintain or contest relations of power. Readers have to distinguish facts from opinions, the accuracy of facts and the soundness of opinions, the evidence for claims and the quality of reasoning in arguments. (Janks, 2018, p. 96)

In order to decide whether to take up the positions offered by the text (taking a stand), readers need to be able to engage with it (read with the text) and interrogate it (read against the text) (Janks, 2018). In other words, critical literacy is about 'setting the conditions for students to engage in textual relationships of power' (Luke, 2018, p. 170); it is 'about acquiring a disposition toward texts, a learned and inquiring skepticism' (Garcia et al., 2018, p. 77).

Critical literacy education therefore aims at 'teaching learners to understand and manage the relationship between language and power' (Janks, 2000, p. 176). According to Janks (2000), this relationship can foreground one of four dimensions, dominance, access, diversity, and design, and in so doing different realizations of critical literacy emerge. In terms of domination, language is considered a tool that maintains and reproduces relations of domination. Critical discourse analysis and critical language awareness help learners deconstruct issues of power and ideology in language use (Fairclough, 1989, 1992). The question of access involves a

paradox: 'if we provide students with access to dominant forms, this contributes to maintaining their dominance. If, on the other hand, we deny students access, we perpetuate their marginalization in a society that continues to recognize the value and importance of these forms' (Janks, 2000, p. 176). Janks (2000), Luke (2018, 2019), and Moje (2000) in the field of literacy and Kress (2000a, b) and Stein (2000) in TESOL, among others, argue that denying access to dominant knowledge, literacies, and languages is not an option and some pedagogies, like genre and multimodal pedagogies, are particularly suitable to address the access paradox. Genre pedagogies do so by providing access to the generic, prototypical, and obligatory features of relevant genres while allowing flexibility and the expression of identity through the creative handling of their optional elements; multimodal pedagogies do so by encouraging meaning making that resorts to the forms, mediums, and resources valued by schools, associated in general with the verbal, but also others that are particular choices of the individual located socially, culturally, and historically such as the visual, digital, performative, auditory, and more. In turn, diversity and design refer to the importance of valuing linguistic, cultural, and other kinds of diversity by helping learners use this diversity creatively with a variety of semiotic resources to make their own meanings and to challenge and change dominant discourses. Finally, the ways in which dominance, access, diversity, and design are interrelated are important in critical literacy as Janks (2000, p. 178) explains:

> Critical literacy has to take seriously the ways in which meaning systems are implicated in reproducing domination and it has to provide access to dominant languages, literacies and genres while simultaneously using diversity as a productive resource for redesigning social futures and for changing the horizon of possibility.

Critical Pedagogy

The bridge between critical literacy and critical pedagogy rests on two dimensions. One is the possibility for transformation and social action. The other is the ethical foundation. These two dimensions, the activist and the ethical, make critical literacy important for education. Janks (2014b, p. 349, her emphasis) explains:

> A *critical* approach to education can help us to name and interrogate our practices in order to change them. Critical *literacy* education focuses specifically on the role of language as a social practice and examines the role played by text and discourse in maintaining or transforming these orders. The understanding and awareness that practices can be transformed opens up possibilities, however small, for social action.

The possibility for transformation through action involves the ethical decision to care for the self and for others (Luke, 2018). It does so by raising learners' awareness 'about whether words, texts, discourses, policies, and practices help or hurt people,' by engaging them in 'righting what is wrong—in transformative redesign' through literacy practices (such as designing an awareness-raising poster or blog, interviewing people, and giving a talk), and by helping them 'consider ethical ways of being' (Janks, 2018, p. 98). These ethical ways of being encourage learners

'to find hope and well-being for themselves [ourselves] and to contribute to the hope and well-being of others' (Janks, 2019, p. 564). Here lies the social justice basis of critical approaches to education where power can be productive (Janks, 2000) and where 'a vision for change toward greater justice and more equal social relations is indeed central to critical inquiry' (Kubota & Miller, 2017, p. 147).

Likewise, critical ELT foregrounds social action. Crookes (2013, p. 77, 2021) defines critical pedagogy as 'teaching for social justice, in ways that support the development of active, engaged citizens who will, as circumstances permit, critically inquire into why the lives of so many human beings, including their own, are so materially (and spiritually) inadequate, be prepared to seek out solutions to the problems they define and encounter, and take action accordingly.' The goal of critical language pedagogy is to develop active citizenship by socializing students into the ways in which they can become active citizens, including the development of their dispositions and understandings. This action phase is very important because as students engage in activism, they need to use academic and language skills which are simultaneously developed as they are being used, and in turn the social justice aim strongly motivates their acquisition (Crookes, 2013).

Critical perspectives in TESOL emerged with strength about 30 years ago from the discussion of the language-culture relation in ELT with a focus on indoctrination. Language teaching was considered to involve the transmission of particular beliefs (Barrow, 1990; Valdes, 1990), and English teaching was thought of as a form of ideological and cultural colonization (Holly, 1990). As the learners' cultures were 'totally submerged' (Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984, p. 15), the prevailing idea was that language learning became a threat to their 'national' identities. Shortly after, the role of ELT in the world began to be challenged as Phillipson (1992) introduced the notion of linguistic and cultural imperialism and referred to 'the infectious spread of English' (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996, p. 436) and 'triumphant' English (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996, p. 440) emerging through processes of Americanization, Europeanization, and McDonaldization (Phillipson, 2001). He raised concerns about the role of political, cultural, religious, military, corporate, and other organizations, including TESOL, in such hegemony, highlighting its negative effects and pointing to the status of English as 'lingua frankensteinia' (Phillipson, 2008, p. 250, 2009). In this context, forms of resisting this imperialism in localized ways in the English classroom in peripheral countries emerged (Canagarajah, 1999), complemented with discussions in the field of language teaching and applied linguistics (Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pennycook, 1999). The discussion in the field is ongoing, and for example Canagarajah (Porto, 2021) suggests current theoretical and pedagogical issues and geopolitical developments framed in terms of critical pedagogies, translingual practices and research, and citizenship education. In turn, López-Gopar (2019) presents the theoretical and ideological debates around critical pedagogy and illustrates how they can be enacted in classrooms across the globe and particularly in the periphery.

Transformation through action, Janks (2014b, 2018) says, occurs as learners engage in redesign. The important question for teachers then is: how can social awareness be fostered in the classroom so as to stimulate learners' critical

imagination for redesign? In other words, how can their possibilities for transformation through ethically grounded social action be encouraged? Janks (2014b) illustrates critical literacy in practice in a South African context with the theme of access to water and its forms of consumption, in particular the use of bottled water and its detrimental effects on the globe. There are five steps:

(1) Finding and naming the issue (water conservation). Linking the issue to learners' lives (e.g., water elitism through the consumption of bottled water).

   Students make connections between something that is going on in the world and their lives, where the world can be as small as the classroom or as large as the international stage.

(2) Accessing relevant information (researching the theme).

   Students consider what they will need to know and where they can find the information.

(3) Textual design (analysis and interrogation of everyday texts such as water brandings and labels).

   Students explore how the problem is instantiated in texts and practices by a careful examination of design choices and people's behavior. They analyze, interrogate, and challenge local practices and texts through discussion with others and self-reflection (considering the historical, social, cultural, economic, and other root causes of the problem or theme).

(4) The social effects of the theme (e.g., comparing the effects of drinking bottled water in various countries/communities, connection with issues of identity, fashion, profit, climate change, or others).

   Students examine who benefits and who is disadvantaged by imagining the social effects of what is going on and its representation(s).

(5) Imagining possibilities for making a positive difference (design an awareness-raising campaign, stop drinking bottled water).

This last step is essential to enact the social justice basis for critical literacy and critical pedagogy because 'the act of redesigning enables 'readers' to resist textual positioning and to contribute in ways, however small or piecemeal, to the process of creating a world that is both just and sustainable' (Janks, 2014b, p. 355). It should be recalled that Janks focuses on the language arts, L1 literacy classroom, but as she says, the procedure has an interdisciplinary focus as themes can usually be addressed simultaneously from different school disciplines.

In TESOL, redesign in Janks' terms echoes multimodal pedagogies (Kress, 1997, 2000a, b; The New London Group, 1996) that see learners as 'socially located, culturally and historically formed individuals [who are] the remakers, transformers, and reshapers of the representational resources available to them' (Stein, 2000, p. 334). This conceptualization gives agency to learners as meaning makers who 'produce multimodal texts—visual, written, spoken, performative, sonic, and gestural (. . .) across semiotic modes' (Stein, 2000, p. 333). The focus is on multiliteracies, multimodality, creative and artistic expression, and translanguaging (Bradley & Harvey, 2019; Bradley et al., 2018; Cope & Kalantiz, 2015; Moore et al., 2020), which encourage students to use all their available resources, linguistic and

otherwise (visual, digital, auditory, and performative, including movement, music, dance, mimicry, singing, playing, acting, drawing, painting, handwork, crafts-making, collage, tableaux), to comprehend English and make their own meanings. Transformation and design or redesign in this sense are important because they contribute to softening the tension that exists in education between the provision of access to the dominant and the expression of the idiosyncratic, or the access paradox already referred to (Janks, 2000). Stein (2000, p. 335) describes the contributions that multimodal pedagogies can make in this respect in this way:

> Multimodal pedagogies highlight the indivisibility of body and mind, of corporeal communication between the person and the world across modes, senses, and communicative practices. Such pedagogies involve constructing tasks or projects for students that require multiple forms of representation, of which language is only one part. Multimodal pedagogies that work with multiple entry points for meaning making have the potential to hold in tension access to dominant discourses while incorporating the rich variety of representational resources that each student brings to the classroom context.

Returning to the five-step description of critical literacy in practice (Janks, 2014b), it is an example of empowerment education that draws from Freire's work (1972a, b), centered on dialogue and participation to help learners identify significant problems in their lives, assess their historical and cultural roots, imagine a better future for themselves and their communities, and take action to begin to resolve those problems. Wallerstein and Hammes (1991), in the field of health education, use problem-posing as a form of empowerment. It is a six-stage questioning strategy called SHOWED that shares the principles addressed by Janks (2014b):

> S SEE. Name the problem. What problem do we SEE here? Describe the situation.
> H What is really HAPPENING?
> O How does this story relate to OUR lives and how do we feel about it?
> W WHY has this happened? Identify the social, historical, and cultural root causes of the problem.
> E Explore how we can become EMPOWERED with new understanding.
> D What can we DO about these problems in our lives and in our community?
> (Wallerstein & Hammes, 1991, p. 252)

This problem-posing strategy was used in the teaching of English as a second language in the workplace (Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987) where Wallerstein came from public health and Auerbach from ESL adult education and together they engaged in critical reflection and social action in the USA. They worked in collaboration with educators from diverse fields such as community and adult educators, ESL and literacy teachers, public health educators, labor organizers, health and safety educators, community psychologists, high school teachers, and faculty in teacher education programs. Later they revised their work as 'popular education' (Wallerstein & Auerbach, 2004) with a practical guide for teachers.

This conceptualization of critical pedagogy in education has its roots in the French Revolution, which led to a significant transformation of society and of education built around the notion of democracy, freedom, and social change, and

paved the way for progressive and radical forms of education (Crookes, 2013, 2021). In a detailed historical overview of critical pedagogy, Crookes (2013) describes several forms of education that can be considered foundational. For instance, 'integral education,' designed for working people in France and associated with political theorist Proudhon, reacted against industrialization by integrating body and mind and promoting cooperation. It was spread first to Spain by Francisco Ferrer at the beginning of the 1900s and then to Europe, South America, China, and Japan. Ferrer's principles were radical in those times and were centered on coeducation, active learning, a research approach for the whole curriculum, theory and practice in combination, and the use of the surroundings not only as a context of learning but also as its source. Crookes (2013) also identifies the French educator Freinet as another forerunner in radical education. After World War II, the students in his system created their materials, negotiated schedules with the teacher, carried out research work in their communities, and exchanged their work and letters with students in other schools in the network. In the USA, Pestalozzi and Dewey are also associated with progressive education. Dewey is considered the pioneer of an activity-based and experiential curriculum, significant nowadays in language teaching, and his belief that schools should contribute to the improvement of societies resonates with current critical perspectives of education. Finally, the social movements of the 1960s led to social and educational change such as coeducation, the creation of school councils, sex education, and participatory syllabuses. In those times there were also adult education and literacy movements, for instance, in Latin American countries and particularly in Brazil, from where Freire developed his theory and pedagogy.

To conclude, critical theories and pedagogies for language teaching imply a reconfiguration of what literacy and foreign/world language learning mean. There is an instrumental dimension that involves teaching foreign and world languages for work, study, travel, or other purposes and which requires teaching the system of that language as well as communicative and intercultural skills. There is a complementary educational dimension that aims at fostering the development of the self and of democratic and peaceful societies. This combination of instrumental and educational purposes for foreign and world language education has been called 'intercultural citizenship' (Byram, 2008; Byram et al., 2017). Intercultural citizenship encourages learners to work with others collaboratively to imagine solutions to significant problems or issues they themselves identify and materializing those solutions in concrete social or civic action in the community simultaneously with the language learning that takes place in the classroom (Rauschert & Byram, 2017). This vision of language education demands new teacher roles and a new teacher professional identity beyond that of trainer of competences and transmitter of knowledge (Byram et al., 2021; Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016). This teacher sees herself/himself as an educator who is an agent of change and transformation and who has as a moral purpose (Dillon, 2000) to create a significant impact on the lives of learners by empowering them to use all their available languages and resources to transform their own lives in ways they deem necessary and significant. Kubanyiova and Crookes (2016) argue that this role and identity are those of a 'moral agent'

(p. 117) and that they require 'reflection on the philosophies, values, and moral purposes that guide their [teachers'] practices' (p. 124).

Conclusion

Critical language education has a history that can be traced back to the French Revolution. Educationalists in those times and after conceptualized education and learning in ways that we now take for granted, for instance, in terms of development and transformation not only of the self but also of the learner's social milieu. The means to achieve these goals involved autonomous learning; project work; analysis, introspection, and refection; negotiation and discussion; experiential and activity-based work; interdisciplinary content; and an inquiry-based framework, among others. However, as Crookes (2013, 2021) and López-Gopar (2019) warn, critical perspectives pose challenges, in particular in contexts with difficult circumstances (Kuchak Kuchah & Shamim, 2018). These difficulties are of a different kind than simply lacking resources. They comprise difficulties such as staying on topic, understanding and following instructions, understanding and participating in the dynamics of classroom interaction, and seeing the purpose of being in the classroom when your parents are unemployed or you have to take care of your siblings. These difficulties then imply ways of being and feeling, of seeing one's possibilities and potentialities in life. Critical language education in ELT can play a role in fostering in students a sense of self, of satisfaction, of pride, of self-efficacy, and this book shows how this happened in real classrooms in disadvantaged settings using locally produced critical materials.

Engagement Options

This chapter describes what a critical agenda in education might mean for language teachers, in particular English language teachers. It is an agenda with possibilities, challenges, and limitations, which Luke (2018, p. 25) describes as our 'generational challenge as educators, scholars and activists'.

1. Kubanyiova and Crookes (2016, p. 119) refer to 'the turn toward value-oriented, moral, and ethical dimensions' in language teacher identity development and research. However, they remark that the role of teachers as 'moral agents' 'remain[s], despite exceptions, insufficiently supported by contexts of work and societal expectations' (p. 128). Do you have this support in your setting? If so, what does it involve? If not, how can this role be supported and stimulated? What would you need in order to find this support in your own context? In teacher education, how can teachers candidates be helped to 'forge their moral visions and readiness for action' (p. 126)? What contributions can research and the field make?

2. In connection with this ethical dimension, Luke (2019, p. 140, his emphasis) states that 'the task of finding a 'grand narrative' for education and schooling that can embrace difficult debates over diversity and social cohesion, civil rights and civic responsibilities *sans* xenophobia, fear and nationalism still beckons. Education, teaching and, indeed, learning, without a broadly shared vision of 'what could be', and of how we should live, lacks purpose and substance, relevance and, indeed, soul.' What should this vision look like?

3. Luke (2019, p. xviii) argues that 'the neoliberal model of accountability, standardization and assessment' has led to the commodification even of the critical agenda, for instance, when problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking are framed as curricular skills amenable to measurement and verification, leaving behind 'the inconvenience of principle or philosophy, value or ethics' (p. xix). He continues to argue that 'what also has gone missing is education for innovation and originality, experience and experimentation. In the quest to gain efficiency with austerity, the institutional space and provision for human eccentricity, for unpredictable text and discourse, for exploratory digression, for local knowledge, and for diversity of cultural thought and action is falling by the wayside' (p. xx). How can a critical agenda address these needs?

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Chapter 3
Teacher-Made Critical Materials for Primary and Secondary English Language Classrooms

Silvana Barboni

Introduction

When I graduated as an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teacher in Argentina, back in 1994, little was known about the teaching of English in formal schooling in my country. Most of the teaching positions were found in the private sector, in English institutes or language companies. Though English had been taught in secondary education as part of the curriculum since the 1950s, secondary schooling itself was non-compulsory in our system of education. English was viewed at the time as a capital, an instrument that would help upper social classes find a better job, travel abroad and study with international bibliography. It had been so for decades. Needless to say, English was an upper middle class goal, absent from the education of lower working classes.

Most of the preparation that an ESOL teacher required for teaching was, in consequence, of a technical nature. Teacher preparation was limited to knowing the content matter, that is, English, and a set of techniques to be able to apply pre-established class procedures that would eventually make students communicatively competent to operate effectively with English-speaking interlocutors.

In the course of 30 years, deep changes have occurred. New understandings of the nature of knowledge, literacy and language learning and teaching, the massive expansion of ICT (Information and Communications Technology), the expansion

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of compulsory formal schooling and complex sociopolitical drives in South America, among other aspects, have accelerated new needs and demands on ESOL teachers in this part of the world and elsewhere. ESOL teachers are now challenged to develop an expertise that was never before expected in their professional communities.

Today, in my country, the teaching of 2 weekly hours of English is compulsory in 9 years of formal schooling from ages 9 to 17 distributed in 3 years of primary education (ages 9–11) and 6 years of secondary education (ages 12–17/18). Throughout these years it is expected that students will gain an intermediate level of English (B1) by school termination no matter what background they come from.

As Levin and Fullan (2008) point out, educational change is a complex process that generates multiple tensions and contradictions. In the field of ESOL education within systems of education, Wedell (2011, p. 9) states that such complexity originates in the 'significant reculturing' that is required among implementers when challenging the comfortable routines of work (Padwad & Dixit, 2011) of traditional ESOL towards current international trends. Reform agendas require complex theoretical understandings and practical applications of such understandings that are difficult to enact if implementers do not interpret change in the light of their own contextual circumstances or if they fail to develop genuine understandings of the methodological nature of the change that is required.

This chapter reports the process through which materials design can help bridge the zone of proximal development in teachers' expertise by presenting teachers with resources that challenge their understandings of professional activity and help them innovate in the classroom. It reports the criteria through which the collection *English Primer Readers* (available at http://servicios2.abc.gov.ar/lainstitucion/organismos/lenguasextranjeras/plurilingue/cuadernos.html) were developed considering the complex contextual circumstances of teachers of English in the province of Buenos Aires in Argentina. The case presented here relates with the work of other scholars in other continents who have undertaken the design of teaching materials to face the long-standing dilemma of inclusion in formal schooling (Janks, 2010; Crookes, 2013). This chapter will encourage understandings of how ESOL teaching materials can be developed bearing in mind teacher education and students' needs in complex contexts of work in present systems of education in most parts of the world, where struggles for inclusion to formal schooling are in order (Bhatti, 2019).

To do this, I will first refer to the contextual circumstances of the educational change both in terms of ESOL policies and theoretical drives at local and global levels to understand their relationship with and impact on particular contexts of application. Secondly, I will address some of the teachers' dilemmas in our classrooms as an echo of what is happening elsewhere in the world where the underprivileged, immigrant, ethnically different, refugees and other populations attend formal schooling settings. I will describe some of the main difficulties identified by educators with ethical sensitivity (Kuusisto & Tirri, 2019). Finally, in the hope of illustrating to illuminate others in similar situations locally and worldwide, I will discuss how I tackled these difficulties in my own context with the design of critical materials to be used creatively by teachers when deploying their professional expertise and contextual responsiveness.

The Context of ESOL Educational Change in the Province of Buenos Aires

The Legal and Theoretical Frame of ESOL Education

The legal frame that supports the teaching of English is in line with a plurilingual model of an education in languages in which languages are 'never competitive, but are strategic, responding to functional needs' (García, 2009, p. 117). Also, a plurilingual perspective acknowledges multiple identities in present-day societies with individuals drawing upon their 'heritage, faith, language, diaspora and new national identity to create hybrid or multiple identities' (Cantle, 2013, p. 74). This dynamic framework under which English is embraced in compulsory schooling in Argentina builds on the idea developed internationally that languages are a resource for students for two main reasons.

The first one is that plurilingualism, aligned with an intercultural perspective as was settled in the provincial curriculum and other curricula in the country, helps develop the communication and navigation skills required in a world in which people in most societies face the challenge to deploy flexibility and solidarity towards other citizens with diverse linguistic backgrounds. It is important to note that in Argentina, as in most parts of the world, there is an increasing percentage of students in our classrooms who speak indigenous as well as foreign languages – other than Spanish, the official language – as their mother tongue. The pervasive presence of other languages in Argentina is the result of complex migratory movements from neighboring countries as well as certain Asian countries in the last decades. For example, it is not uncommon to find speakers of Guarani, Wichi, Mapuche and Mandarin Chinese in the same classroom (Sürling et al., 2013). In brief, an open attitude towards languages is crucial to help diversity manifest itself in intercultural dialogue alongside with measures that take action to ensure participation and equal opportunities in society.

The second reason is the emphasis given internationally to interactive processes in general and the development of multiliteracies: knowing languages improves communication strategies (García, 2009) in multiple contexts of use for work, study, entertainment or any other purpose. It is well acknowledged that languages, whether it be the mother tongue, a second language or a foreign language, are perceived as a resource for the development of translanguagings, that is to say, 'multiple discursive practices' (García, 2009, p. 45) necessary in a world of constant interaction among people. In this respect, Canagarajah (2013) proposes a translingual orientation to replace the dominant monolingual one in agreement with García's advocacy for translanguaging practices. Canagarajah (2013, p. 6) claims that communication transcends single isolated languages; it also transcends words since it involves diverse semiotic resources and specific ecological affordances. In this respect 'communication involves treating languages as 'mobile resources' (Bloommaert, 2010, p. 49) that are appropriated by people for their

purposes; these resources index meaning and gain form in situated contexts for specific interlocutors in their social practice' (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 7).

A task-based internationally acknowledged pedagogy is promoted as a result of its process-based nature (Richards, 2003). Such pedagogy focuses on helping students learn English by using it and has strong implications for teachers in the ways in which a language class is meant to stimulate learners towards meaning making through English. Such a view understands teachers as mediators, expected to select and shape rich learning experiences through the activities they propose in class (Williams & Burden, 1998). Activities should develop the ability to use English to convey meanings. Tasks of this kind are what Samuda and Bygate (2008, p. 7) call 'holistic activity', that is, tasks that 'involve the learner in dealing with the different aspects of language together, in the way language is normally used'. Holistic activities have also been called 'tasks' (Ellis, 2003, 2009, 2012; Prabhu, 1987, Willis, 1996). Unlike analytic activities in which individual sub-areas of language (e.g. grammar, phonology, syntax, vocabulary and so on) are used and rehearsed, tasks involve using language as a whole for communicative purposes to solve problems. Thus, the language used in a task is a means to achieve a certain communicative outcome (Ellis, 2009, 2012).

The local ESOL curriculum for secondary education adheres to these ideas when it reads:

> Being an effective resource for international communication and the spread of technical-scientific knowledge and literature, English allows access to:
> - advances of science and technology for its use and adaptation in the development of self projects;
> - other cultures and a reflection about self culture;
> - an education in agreement with present day work requirements and with new modes of production;
> - updated information in its original language.
>
> All the above address language as an object of study as well as the construction of knowledge on how to do something, that is to say, knowledge to address communicative situations inside and outside the classroom. (ESOL Secondary Level Curriculum Design, 2009, p. 155, my translation from Spanish)

The global flow of ideas has also contributed to the introduction of certain pedagogic trends in our provincial educational policies apart from the notion of task. This is the case with postmethod pedagogies implicit in our legal framework, which are now a global phenomenon in ESOL. These pedagogies aim at responding to the complexity of addressing the 'real' school trajectories of young people by making English meaningful to the students rather than by responding to method-based prescriptions (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The discussion of postmethod pedagogies was internationally introduced in 1989 by Pennycook in his seminal paper where he states that the concept of method 'reflects a particular view of the world and is articulated in the interests of unequal power relationships' (Pennycook, 1989, p. 589). This postcolonial perspective was taken up in 1990 by Prabhu, who analyzes the concept of method and presents a discussion of the notion of a 'best method', developing with it an analysis of the

relationship between method, context and teacher's sense of plausibility. Prabhu's conclusion created the basis for a deeper understanding of ESOL pedagogy and postmethod conditions:

> The search for an inherently best method should perhaps give way to a search for ways in which teachers' and specialists' pedagogic perceptions can most widely interact with one another, so that teaching can become most widely and maximally real. (Prabhu, 1990, p. 176)

This postmethod condition establishes new relationships between the theory and practice of teaching and claims for what Kumaravadivelu (2003, p. 37) calls 'the pedagogic parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility'. Particularity refers to the deployment of context-sensitive pedagogic strategies which bear in mind the local sociocultural, historic and linguistic realities of learners as well as the complex settings where learners will use the language. The second parameter encourages teachers to theorize from their practice, to develop a body of knowledge from their own experiences and to feed their practice with new theory. It is the praxis dimension of teaching which continuous professional learning echoes. The third parameter 'seeks to tap the sociopolitical consciousness that participants bring with them to the classroom so that it can also function as a catalyst for a continual quest for identity formation and social transformation' (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 37).

The postmethod parameters become core issues to develop adequate teaching projects to address the diverse trajectories that students bring to ESOL classrooms throughout formal schooling because of the reflective processes they trigger in teachers. Reflective processes combine aspects of reflection-in-action, reflection-of-action and reflection-for-action (Edge, 2011) that will help them devise improved teaching strategies to address specific 'real' school trajectories. In such a process, communicational processes and strategies and classroom interaction are considered core features of the class to develop intercultural understandings of reality and better learning conditions and results. The legal framework of educational policies implicitly assigns teachers the role of mediating in that interaction when it says:

> School constitutes that place of intercultural meeting and this implies:
> - generating experiences of integration and exchange;
> - defining the knowledge that circulates in each intercultural context in terms of schooling;
> - valuing the interaction with different 'others' as producing learning;
> - recognizing the knowledge that each subject possesses as an instrument and product of the relationship with others;
> - capitalizing the presence of cultural diversity in all educational situations and not only in some groups but not in others;
> - creating bonds among subjects making sure that diversity and difference do not turn into educational inequality.

(Marco General de la Política Curricular, 2006, my translation from Spanish)

The peculiarity of a postmethod pedagogy is that it is not a fixed prescriptive list of classroom routines or behaviors for teachers to copy. Much on the contrary, it is a frame of reference to understand the highly creative task of teaching which can only be described and explained in culture-specific contexts and communities of practice through an interpretive understanding of teacher activity (Johnson, 2009; Johnson &

Golombek, 2011). Through classroom work, teachers amalgamate in complex ways the technical knowledge they have; the ongoing development of theories they test, appropriate and transform through their everyday practices; and the innovative practices they carry out through their professional engagement in the institutional and cultural settings where they work.

ESOL Teacher Identity in Reform Agendas Internationally

Postmethod pedagogies as explained in the previous section require teachers to transcend method-based prescriptions that in the past seemed to simplify the task of teaching by assigning clear routines of class work. As Akbari (2008, p. 642) notes, '[M]methods in the past provided frameworks for classroom practice by defining a view of learning and language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) and supplied teachers with guidelines as to what presumably worked and did not work in the class based on the objectives set down by the method'. These method-based prescriptions provided teachers with a comfort zone at the time of doing the job and with simple tools for teacher educators to train the new generations of teachers. However, they also restricted their role to that of semi-professionals (Etzioni, 1969). In many respects, teachers were expected to follow a recipe, a set of given procedures developed by theoreticians and presented in teacher training courses both in initial and in in-service programs for them to reproduce (Barboni, 2011). They were submissive to institutionalized authoritarian mechanisms of control and accountability that made them 'operative' (Roberts, 1998, p. 104) in deploying the curricular mandates from a supposedly professional international textbook industry in Argentina (Barboni, 2011) as in other parts of the world (Pennycook, 1989; Canagarajah, 1998; Gray, 2012). The semi-professional teacher was thus reduced to 'communicate rather than to create or apply knowledge' (Etzioni, 1969, p. 14) with the ideal of efficiency, undermining in this way the sense of shared responsibility towards broad educational objectives.

In contrast, postmethod pedagogies define teachers as professionals, since they encourage teachers to use their discretionary judgement to apply teaching strategies. Also, they enhance the intellectual freedom of teachers as problem-solvers in specific contexts of practice where they will apply their professional expertise reflectively. This means that teachers will be 'thoughtful and well informed about their practice setting because they have built up their knowledge of that setting through learning from experience and being open to standing back and considering not only alternative ways of responding to a given situation, but of framing the situation in ways that acknowledge and respond to alternative perspectives' (Loughran, 2010, p. 164).

A postmethod perspective of teacher identity places teachers in the position of transformative professionals, that is, 'serving the best interests of all those interested in and participating in schooling and education' (Sachs, 2003, p. 16). Such a definition of what an ESOL professional 'ought' (Barnett, 2008, p. 198) to do enacts

the notion of a democratic professional that requests from teachers 'to work in tandem with all relevant stakeholders' (Whitty, 2002 in Whitty, 2008, p. 44), leaving behind fixed standardized notions of what should be done in class 'in favor of the identification of practices or strategies of teaching designed to reflect local needs and experiences' (Savignon, 2007, p. 218). Teacher identity is understood in terms of what Hargreaves and Goodson (1996, p. 20) call 'postmodern professionalism', that is, one guided by discretionary judgement, moral and social purposes, collaborative cultures, occupational heteronomy, active care for students, continuous learning and recognition of task complexity.

The Contradictions in Contexts of Application

Policies are clear in that the challenge faced by teachers today is to help students become literate in specific compulsory schooling contexts to guarantee participation and social justice in the knowledge society (Barboni & Porto, 2011, 2013). As clear, or so we think, as the policies which explain the ways ESOL should take place in schools by means of social interactionist practices (Johnson, 2009; García, 2009) that help students use and make English their own in the process of learning to be able to operate in English beyond the classroom context (Janks, 2010; Brice Heath, 2007). Yet, we are faced with research reports that show a shameful truth of our present ESOL educational reality. As Beacon informs, 'in some contexts, teachers are successfully working towards intercultural awareness but in some others, teachers still advocate blindly to a linguistic approach to the teaching of a foreign language, in which cultures are taught in a fossilized and essentialist way, and are unable to see the need to help children develop intercultural awareness' (Beacon, 2012, p. 5). The consequent low motivation of students reported by Gandolfo (2008) and the inadequate teaching practices leading to poor student learning and teacher frustration noted by Mastache (2011) are just some examples of the ways in which a contradiction is revealed between policies and politics, discourse and action.

What is actually taking place in classrooms? Barboni (2012, 2013) reports patterns of dominance in pedagogic communication (Bernstein, 1990) in the classrooms studied that are a relay of cultural reproduction of inequality (Slee, 2010). Although at the macro level policies aim at the creation of a participatory socio constructivist learning environment, the micro levels of classroom practice show heterogeneous forms of teacher awareness of policy prescriptions, differing strategies to scaffold the language based on often contradictory instructional approaches and varying levels of awareness of students' educational needs. These contradictions also account for the differing attainment objectives that teachers consider. For instance, some teachers focus on students' passive recognition of English, while others support a view of teaching for students' active use of English in an international context (García, 2009; Kern, 2001; Widdowson, 2007).

From a postmethod pedagogic perspective, these two worlds come together in educational institutions bringing about huge potential for social change. Yet, under

the institutional conditions this occurs, change undertakes different forms other than knowledge changes for systems of innovation and development, inclusion or intercultural understanding. Why is this happening?

As regards ESOL, the long-standing tradition of method-based prescriptions in the ESOL community in Argentina is partly what makes postmethod pedagogies difficult to grasp for teachers in the local context. The conceptual framework that has traditionally guided ESOL teacher education in Argentina, as in other parts of the world, has been based on the concept of method (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Holliday, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2006), and it has resulted in a strong ESOL tradition difficult to overcome. However, this does not seem to be the only reason why postmethod is resisted in institutional contexts. In this respect, Akbari (2008, p. 4) rightly argues that 'by trying to include more of the realities of learners and learning context in its formulation (in the form of pedagogies of particularity and possibility), the postmethod discourse has lost sight of the reality of teaching and teachers' lives and has made the implementation of pedagogy of practicality (which is, in a sense, the practical culmination of the two other pedagogies) problematic, if not impossible'. In his discussion, Akbari (2008) refers to some of the difficulties teachers face in the profession around the world. He mentions, among others, tight administrative frameworks (restricting teacher autonomy, decision-making and authority), precarious hiring conditions (making teachers work long hours to earn a poor salary), rigid textbook accountability in many institutional settings (where teachers are forced to use specific textbooks in class) and lack of professional preparation and/or willingness to cover a postmethod agenda.

How could teachers be helped? Through the creation of context-bound provisions with mediational tools sensitive to the everyday realities of educators in schools within communities of practice in which different institutional roles are enacted. These provisions require thinking of the ways in which relationships, concepts and materials interact to bridge the zone of proximal development of the teacher knowledge basis considering their present development in the social contexts in which they develop their professional activity. Such a strategy would, on the one hand, require the creation of mentoring systems that would operate at individual and collective levels in institutions. It would also require facilitating materials that can challenge pedagogic thinking at the time of practice. As Apple (2011, p. 24) suggests, 'one way of responding to this issue is to publish books and materials that provide critical answers to teachers' questions about 'What do I do on Monday?'' With this motivation I created the *English Primer Readers* that I describe in this chapter.

English Primer Readers as Critical Answers: Social Justice and Social Practice in ESOL Classrooms

Designing and writing the *English Primer Readers* was part of my professional activity as an ELT officer in the Ministry of Education of the province of Buenos Aires in Argentina from 2010 to 2014. These *Primer Readers* were part of a policy enforced to support teachers in the most vulnerable working contexts in a process of curricular innovation by providing teachers and learners with school materials in places where children cannot buy books and are in danger of dropping out, as is the case with 262 million children and youth around the world (UNESCO, 2016). The materials were developed over a process of 5 years during which information was gathered from schools and teachers. I carried out a needs analysis exploration among the teachers attending teacher education courses provided by the Ministry of Education, and I collected information myself from the schools in the most vulnerable districts. From this needs analysis, it was clear that teachers were in need of supporting materials to facilitate their task in places where students have no possibility of access to printed materials.

The name of the collection *English Primer Readers* (*Cuadernos de Trabajo para el Aula de Inglés*) responds to the fact that, for the addressed populations, these color paper books were the first English books they had ever encountered, their first formal contact with the language. Most of these students had never before had an English course book or reader in their hands. The Readers also contained a variety of texts and tasks that provided a first encounter with the English students were expected to learn in each grade according to curriculum prescriptions.

I was the project leader and author of these publications. The team consisted of myself – the writer –, three illustrators and a graphic designer. The printing of 20,000 hard copies of this material was financed by an International Agency and reached what the Statistics and Planning Department of the Ministry called 'the most vulnerable'. It was heartbreaking to draw the line when the statistical document returned lists that amounted to 40,000 children distributed in schools, namely, in the outskirts of the city of Buenos Aires. The people behind the numbers, I learned about their life biographies through the voice of their teachers. These are the moral dilemmas that educators face in many parts of the world where schooling struggles against deprivation and where financial means always seem insufficient to tackle inequality of opportunities. As Bhatti notes, this is a 'reminder of the chasm between good intentions and everyday realities for many people. Unless challenged, institutional practices will continue to reinforce and reinvent inequalities in education because of many factors such as ethnicity, social class and gender' (Bhatti, 2019, p. 63). Eventually, it was reassuring to know that the digital copies would reach all the schools of the province and that we could reach all teachers by sending the link to access the materials through internal ministerial mailing.

My aim in the task as a project leader and writer was twofold since I established two main principles leading the critical answers that teachers were to find in ESOL materials: social justice and social practice. On the one hand, I was particularly

interested in reaching those classrooms that internal reports of the Ministry highlighted as vulnerable – and which are by no means unique to a South American context. Even though the terminology has been extensively used in the international literature, it is important to describe how it is conceptualized in the local context and what populations it acknowledges. The term 'vulnerable' refers to students who come from homes with a combination of the following measurement variables: unsatisfied basic needs, an adverse educational home climate (AEHC) and background contexts of social vulnerability (BCSV). Unsatisfied basic needs measurements in the developing world, carried out by the UN, are used in South America as in most parts of the world, to analyze poverty indicators in different regions, and are sources of reference for local governments when devising policies. These indicators are developed using the following categories: type of housing and type of housing construction, number of people per square meter, running water availability, sanitation services availability, school attendance of people under 18, and economic capacity (salary) (Feres & Mancedo, 2001). Also, educational home climate is a research indicator of the average schooling years and level of studies reached by the total number of people aged 25 or more living in the home. Those coming from an adverse educational home climate are those students with little educational support from the home. Finally, social vulnerability is a research indicator of people at risk in studied populations. It comprises five components considered to be of risk: illiteracy, malnutrition, poverty, death of children and ethnicity.

Students in situations of vulnerability are present in all schools. For example, simply by considering the data from the last census and other studies on unsatisfied basic needs, the province of Buenos Aires has a 13% of homes under such category. This means that out of 3,921,455 families, 508,671 have incomes below the level of poverty. As expected, those districts comprised in the metropolitan area ('conurbano bonaerense') have the highest percentages on average, 14.5%, which is sensibly higher than the outback of the province with 10.5%. Yet, again as expected, when analyzing school populations under the three described variables UBN, AEHC and BCSV, the school intakes that are at risk are those attending schools which are placed in shanty towns and which are located in the poorest neighborhoods of the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires known as 'conurbano bonaerense'. Out of an intake of approximately 720,000 children in primary education, 240,000 attend these schools.

The principle of social justice for the development of these materials posed the challenge of 'the creation of a learning context which is not threatening to students' identities but that builds multiplicities of language uses and linguistic identities, while maintaining academic rigour and upholding high expectations' (García, 2009, p. 318). Unlike commercial materials, these were expected to show the lives of children in those contexts of vulnerability where books are hardly ever bought and literacy educational practices constrained to what the school can offer. The *English Primer Readers* were conceived as a collection of works to help teachers find ways of making English relevant for these students whose social and contextual situations are neglected by commercial materials. The materials required the introduction of traits of students' multiple linguistic and identity affiliations.

On the other hand, these *Primer Readers* were intended as pilot materials to explore the ways in which the theoretical notions of literacy, interculturality, discourse, cultural affiliations, plurilingualism and critical language education could be expressed in practice in formal schooling in the public system of education. In brief, the principle of social practice was embedded in the materials through a learning by doing problem posing pedagogy based on the use of tasks in language learning. These help students learn English by interacting on themes (or codes in Freirean terms) in ways that are meaningful to them. The materials, as a result, intend to facilitate an environment in the class for students to try out ways of saying and doing in English, as one of the available languages in the school and outside it.

To develop the dialogues and texts included in the *Primer Readers*, I considered Wallerstein and Auerbach's (2003) guidelines of effective code development in the design of dialogues and texts:

- It should present a familiar problem situation immediately recognizable by this group.
- It should be presented as a problem with many sides or contradictions to avoid conveying a specific bias.
- It should focus on one concern at a time, but not in a fragmented way; the historical, cultural, and/or social connections in students' lives should be suggested.
- It should be open-ended and not provide solutions; any resolution or strategies for addressing the problem should emerge from group discussion.
- The problem should not be overwhelming, but should offer possibilities for group affirmation and small actions toward change. (Ibid, p. 35)

I also considered Tomlinson's (2010) principles of materials development by using:

- Texts (both spoken and written) that expose students to rich and meaningful language input used in genuine ways for communicative purposes.
- Tasks that ensure cognitive and affective engagement stimulating emotive responses and inviting participation in controversial and challenging topics.
- Sequences of activity fostering experiential learning and a focus on salient linguistic features.

Developing Materials to Address Social Justice and Social Practice

Multiliteracies for a Plurilingual World

The *English Primer Readers* were created to foster critical literacy development and to challenge teachers' ideas about literacy to help them embrace a multiliteracies understanding of classroom work. To do so, two vital aspects of educational policies

were considered as guiding principles: what counts as literacy and how ICT has operated as an influence to its development.

Firstly, educational policies globally have acknowledged the need to address new literacies in schools, that is, the flexible and sustained mastery of a repertoire of practices through oral, written or multimedia texts containing a variety of semiotic systems used for different purposes in different contexts (Anstey & Bull, 2006; Luke & Freebody, 2000) with different languages. Unlike traditional views which aimed at helping students become users of a language, the literacy perspective embraced in national and provincial policies requires both teachers and learners to become intercultural explorers (Kern, 2001) of a plurality of genres to prepare them for the complex and dynamic literacy identities they will enact when using languages (Gee, 1999, 2012).

Secondly, digital literacy is considered today as one of the pillars of the education that children need to develop in school in an intimate relationship with multimodal perspectives (Kress, 2010; Rowsell, 2013). We understand digital literacy as a complex combination of skills that help people make responsible and sensible choices when searching for, locating, developing and sharing digital materials and information (Facer, 2011; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011).

These notions involve several pedagogic implications when devising materials for an ESOL teaching context. The first one is that the content of materials is created making use of images, text, sound and languages considering diverse communicative purposes and multiple modes. In other words, designing materials involves an explicit focus 'on the mixed modes through which meaning is communicated' (Street, 2007, p. 130) all the time in contexts of language use. This is particularly seen in the way text, typography, image and sound interact in the pages to create meanings in complementary ways. All the elements on the page help add and assort meanings in multiple layers rather than echo the meanings conveyed through other semiotic systems on the same page. An exponent of this multifaceted construction is the following dialogue in the *English Primer Reader* for primary school, grade 5:

> Pedro: No.
> A- Mei: What´s the matter? Are you OK?
> Pedro: Not really.
> Nahuel: Why are you sad?
> Pedro: They are calling me names. The problem is that I like school.
> Daniel: What!
> Pedro: They are calling me 'Nerd'.
> Nahuel: Who?
> Pedro: Those boys from 6th.
> A-Mei: We must tell the teacher!
> (*English Primer Reader* for primary school, grade 5, p. 19)

The dialogue shows an instance of conversation about bullying between children in the school playground. In the dialogue Pedro socializes with his classmates the way he is being victimized by two older boys. Yet, this dialogue is expanded in its meaning by the supporting pictures (Fig. 3.1). Three interrelated stories are taking place from the visual. In the foreground, the two bullies are writing down the word
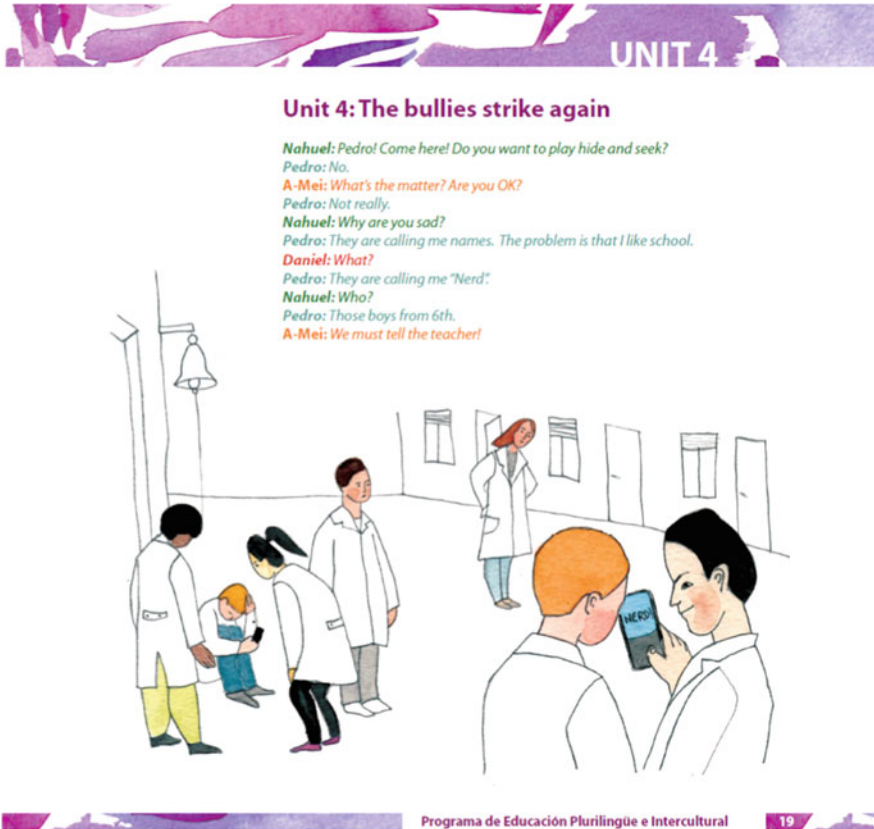
Fig. 3.1 *English Primer Reader* for primary school, grade 5 (p. 19)

'NERD!' in their mobile phones; on a second stage, the characters of the dialogue are interacting among themselves; in the background, the teacher stands with a posture anticipating suspicion. The picture adds to the dialogue in multiple ways. We know the whole incident is an example of cyberbullying and that the teacher is aware that something is wrong even though the children in the picture do not seem to notice. The audio tape of the story also adds new meanings. We come to understand the students' emotional involvement and their attitudes by their intonational choices and their silences.

This page in Fig. 3.1 is an example of how a multiliteracies approach to ESOL education comprises helping students understand and make conscious choices among the diverse available meaning making tools and semiotic systems (Mills, 2011). It also comprises helping them understand how these tools are socially used in dynamic ways 'by human beings who now move constantly across real and virtual borders' (Miller, 2007, p. 174).

Translanguaging to Make Sense of the World

Although ESOL materials will certainly contain texts in English, it is necessary to make an explicit reference to the way in which languages are being flexibly used today. This section will reflect on some of the main decisions taken to explore translingual communication practices as exponents of authentic interactional practices among bilinguals and facilitate critical language awareness.

It is a well-documented fact that among speakers in plurilingual societies, it is highly unlikely that people will stick to one language to convey meanings. Much on the contrary, languages are flexibly used according to contextual circumstances and interlocutors (García, 2009) so much so that languages coexist in everyday use in human interaction. Undoubtedly, communication practices that take place in authentic interaction in contact zones today among bilinguals are impacted by the plurilingual understandings that people bear (Blackledge et al., 2014; García, 2009).

New ideas on second-language acquisition are being presented moving beyond the monolingual towards a multilingual turn (Ortega, 2014). In this trend of thought, Canagarajah's (2013) notion of translingual practice is useful in materials development to explore the strategies deployed by bilingual users of languages and to help facilitate language learning through a deeper understanding of human interaction and the ways languages are used. Translanguaging can be described as a 'systematic, strategic, affiliative and sense making process that shows the multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds' (García, 2009, p. 45) when facing communicative situations with diverse interlocutors. Canagarajah (2013) identifies four distinct translingual macro level negotiation strategies that need to be considered when analyzing the behavior of bilingual people in authentic meaning making interactions. They are envoicing, recontextualization, interactional strategies, and contextualization. They are of vital importance in materials development:

> Envoicing strategies shape the extent and nature of hybridity, as a consideration of voice plays a critical role in appropriating mobile semiotic resources in one's texts and talk; recontextualisation strategies frame the text/talk and alter the footing to prepare the ground for appropriate negotiation; interactional strategies are adopted to negotiate and manage meaning making activity; and contextualization strategies configure codes in temporal and spatial dimension of the text/talk to facilitate and respond to these negotiations. (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 79)

If bilinguals translanguage not only to include and facilitate communication with others but also to construct deeper understandings and make sense of their worlds, why is it that ESOL critical materials neglect translingual practices as they occur among bilinguals?

An interesting example of how translingual practices can be embedded in ESOL materials is the opening dialogue of the *English Primer Reader* for primary school, grade 4. The dialogue reads:

> Andy: ¡Hola! ¿Qué estás haciendo?
> Rebecca: Oh! Sorry! Me... no comprender... Do you speak English?

Fig. 3.2 *English Primer Reader* for primary school, grade 4 (p. 5)

Andy: English? Yes!
Rebecca: Hello! I'm Rebecca.
Andy: Hello! I'm Andy.
Vicky: ¿Qué están haciendo, Andy?
Andy: ¡Shhh, nena! Rebecca no habla español, solamente inglés. Rebecca, this is Vicky, my sister.
Rebecca: Hello, Vicky!
Vicky: Hello!
(*English Primer Reader* for primary school, grade 4, p. 5)

As Fig. 3.2 shows, the interaction is located in a square from a semi-urban village of the province of Buenos Aires, as made evident from supporting pictures. These supporting pictures simultaneously illustrate the complementary layers of meaning conveyed by the visuals on the page mentioned in the previous section. Andy, a

10-year-old child, approaches a middle-aged lady, Rebecca, who is drawing a picture of a hornero bird nesting on a tree in the square. Andy's sister, Vicky, is hiding behind a tree at the beginning of the interaction but then approaches as the conversation proceeds. The official language of the country is Spanish. However, neither Rebecca nor Andy speak Spanish as their mother tongue. Andy is from Paraguay and speaks Guarani, and Rebecca is from Canada and speaks French. Population mobility is made evident in this interaction. The sociohistorical context in which the dialogue occurs makes us understand that Argentina, as other places around the world, is a country with immigration from neighboring countries and international tourism.

Andy initiates the interaction, showing an interest in what the stranger, Rebecca, is doing: drawing a bird that is very well known to him as part of the indigenous landscape. Rebecca responds in English and uses the phrase 'no comprender' indicating that she does not know Spanish. The code switching practice that takes place in the first three lines of the dialogue illustrates what people do in their lives: they negotiate meanings by negotiating the languages in which these meanings are conveyed. Rebecca's initial move with her recontextualization strategy is intended to avoid ambiguity and confusion. Rebecca's initial question 'Do you speak English?' establishes a frame to recontextualize the whole interaction in English, a language she assumes to be a common code and bear the status of an international language in the country. Andy's response shows an interactional strategy of alignment to build up an interactional situation of reciprocity and collaboration in which Rebecca's initiation in English is acknowledged by her interlocutor.

The interaction illustrates how translingual practices operate in authentic contexts. Vicky approaches them in Spanish and Andy responds to her question in Spanish in a bossy tone in Spanish too. He makes clear to Vicky in a language they both share, unlike Rebecca, that Rebecca is not a competent user of Spanish. He could have chosen to say it in English, but he does not. He is an authoritative voice as well as a mediator in this interaction – he is the eldest brother who is also telling her to behave properly. Implicit in the code switching practices identified in this dialogue, it is possible to understand how people operate in different languages to generate different effects with different speakers, envoicing their own identities in communication. Although Andy could have said that Rebecca speaks only English in English, his sticking to Spanish reveals a totally different effect. Spanish turns his statement into a command, not just a statement. The foreigner remains outside this interaction. Rebecca does not understand the emotional dimension of what is being said in Spanish. There is here an intimacy that Andy is purposefully achieving only with his sister that would be lost if the exchange had been carried out in English. Andy only uses English to formally introduce his sister to Rebecca, and Vicky naturally responds in English in a polite greeting to a foreigner using contextualization strategies that help us notice her knowledge of English is limited. She uses simple phrases, the ones available to her in the foreign language, taking advantage of context and revealing in her speech a less competent localized form of English. This move operates as a recognition of Rebecca's initial recontextualization strategy and a clear interactional allegiance strategy: there is an ethics of collaboration in the whole

interaction and a co-construction in the terms and norms of engagement. Still, the complex decisions behind the choice of languages and communicational choices with each language reveal how bilinguals envoice their communication being mindful of the language resources they use in relation to their interlocutors and contextual affordances.

This dialogue, as others in the materials, resorts to the flexible use of languages to achieve different effects while constructing meanings. The flexible use of languages to achieve deeper meanings in communication presents a plurilingual perspective of reality that enriches our understanding of human interaction in this century helping us embrace these hybrid interactions as exponents of joint constructions in contexts of language contact, as exemplars of consensus-oriented practices occurring with English as an international language. It also presents English as one of the possible linguistic codes available to students in a South American context, a language for international communication when other available languages are insufficient for effective understanding. The model of language teaching at the basis of such a position supports an additive perspective of language learning, well documented in the classroom-based case studies presented in this book in the following chapters.

A Plurilingual Context with English as a Language for International Communication

English is taught in Argentina, as in other parts of South America and the world, as a language of international communication. Its social and historical dominance has been debated extensively in the last 30 years (Porto, 2013). Beyond the ideological debate, most systems of education acknowledge English as a language to be taught in compulsory schooling. Using English as a lingua franca is a way of helping people convey their own meanings without any mediation. Knowing English is empowering because it is a *conditio sine qua non* to access and participate in the construction and distribution of knowledge internationally.

However, it is important to acknowledge that there are untranslatable cultural aspects. No matter how proficient a speaker is, there are aspects of material, social and subjective culture (Barrett, 2013) that will require our understanding in the terms and conditions that a specific cultural group and its language can only convey. Hence, there will be physical artefacts, shared institutions and shared knowledge, collective memories, beliefs and cultural understandings which can only be accessed in and through the mother language and which bear relevance in the cultural context where they are located. This is undoubtedly an exponent of the richness and variety present in human societies and languages. As Byram et al. (2009a, p. 17) clearly explain, 'plurilingualism needs to include proficiency in English and an awareness of the limitations of any lingua franca to convey subtleties of culture-specific meanings, as otherwise there may be damage both to democratic participation and devaluation of linguistic diversity'.

The extract below from the *English Primer Reader* for primary school, grade 4, illustrates such untranslatable culture-specific meanings in ESOL materials to facilitate intercultural awareness and discussions on diverse aspects of culture:

> Mailén: ¡Che, Andy! ¿Qué hacés con mi Pichi?
> Andy: ¿Tu qué?
> Rebecca: Is this her bird?
> Andy: Is this your bird, Mailén?
> Mailén: Yes, that's my bird. It's called Pichi.
> Rebecca: Pichi? What does it mean?
> Mailén: It means 'small' in Mapuche. My grandma from Los Toldos gave me the egg of an ostrich. When it hatched, Pichi came out!
> Rebecca: But this is not an ostrich, is it?
> Mailén: Well... it can run very fast.
> (*English Primer Reader* for primary school, grade 4, p. 21)

By reading the interaction, it is possible to identify a set of words that introduce a foreign cultural world: *Che* and *Pichi*. These words, though of frequent use in the Spanish variety spoken in the province of Buenos Aires, come from indigenous languages and have been introduced into Spanish in different ways. On the one hand, *Pichi*, as explained in the dialogue itself, is a Mapuche word that means 'small'. In its everyday use of the term among Spanish speakers in the local variety, it is derogatory; it refers to someone who does not know enough about something, who still needs to know how to do something. On the other hand, *Che*, from Mapuche, is used to designate one's folk. It is also a word from Guarani, a term used to call a person. The use that Mailén gives to the term is a cultural one; it is the nominalization strategy Rioplatense Spanish speakers use in their context of culture to informally and impersonally call someone's attention. Interestingly enough, the term is used by foreigners in many parts of the world as a nickname to stereotype Argentinian people after 'Che Guevara'. In this particular case, readers of the material probably do not know the origin of the term and are unlikely to know the meaning it conveys to foreigners. The material encourages discussion of the different meanings the words bear to help students decenter and understand cultural meanings in language to foster the development of intercultural perspectives.

An Intercultural Understanding of Reality to Facilitate Intercultural Dialogue

The texts and tasks in the *English Primer Readers* help students focus on how language is used in intercultural dialogue as a symbol of cultural identification and cultural variability. Four key principles (Barnett, 2008) were embraced in the materials to convey this intercultural perspective that critically builds on an intercultural understanding of reality and language use so as to help develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes of intercultural competence (Byram et al., 2009b):

1. People participate in multiple cultures in context-dependent and fluid forms, and their multiple cultural affiliations intersect and interact with each other. Culture is defined as cultural affiliation (Sen, 2006, 2009).
2. All cultures are internally variable, diverse and heterogeneous since cultural affiliations are personalized. 'The meanings and feelings which people attach to the particular cultures in which they participate are usually personalised as a consequence of their own life-histories, personal experiences and individual personalities' (Barrett, 2013, p. 150).
3. Identity is defined by how one sees one's own position and meaning in the world and also by how one is 'identified' by others. Identity is essentially interactive. We develop a sense of our own identity in relation to the social world around us and through interaction with other people.
4. All cultures are dynamic and constantly evolving. Cultures do not exist in the singular; instead, they interact and mutually influence one another.

Unit 1 from the *English Primer Reader* for secondary school is a clear exponent of these four principles. The unit is centered around the topic of language as an expression of freedom and identity: 'Language in freedom'. The unit considers how different national symbols can be expressions of diverse cultural identifications for different communities at different moments in history in the same country. The unit helps students explore how perceptions vary in terms of cultural affiliations and how these are personalized and constructed in interaction with others, enriching one another. The unit starts with a Guarani version of the Argentine national anthem whose original version is sung in Spanish, the official language of the country. This activity is an opening to the idea of how national identity can be perceived by different ethnolinguistic groups in a society. Then, the unit introduces an article about the English version developed by a teenage band in Argentina and how other generations of musicians have introduced items of generational identity to the original lyrics. This is done by a reference to the locally well-known Charly García's version in rock music of the 1990s and present teenage remixing practices. The tasks developed for the unit aim at expanding teenagers' awareness of cultural identity as dynamic, interactive, multiple and fluid, not simply related to issues of ethnic identity but also to multiple affiliations (age, social class, gender and so on) through questions such as:

Your own opinion:

  i. Do you like listening to the anthem in other languages and versions? Why? Why not?
  ii. Why is it important for aboriginal communities to listen to the anthem in their own language?
  iii. Why do you think a national song is so important for a country?
  iv. Do you like the lyrics of our national anthem? Do you think it shows Argentina's identity and history?
  v. Find out about other national anthems of countries in Latin America. Are there any similarities with our national anthem?

(*English Primer Reader* for secondary school, year 1, p. 7)

The unit also promotes a recognition of diversity in terms of perceptions, feelings, attitudes and backgrounds. These are revealed through aspects of material, social and subjective culture in national symbols. The unit intends to help teenagers to be open to and interested in cultural differences within the same society, their own society, encouraging processes of self-reflection and analysis of their own perspectives with new eyes. The activities in the Projects Bank of the unit foster encounters with cultural affiliations other than one's own to expand and enrich students' perceptions of their own context and community and facilitate the development of constructive relationships among people of diverse cultural affiliations beyond stereotypes.

Projects Bank

Designing patriotic symbols contest:

Our coat of arms was first designed and used in 1813 with some ideals in mind. Imagine you want to design a new coat of arms which represents our national identity 200 years after the Assembly of Year XIII. Get in groups and decide the following: What symbols would you include? Why? How do they represent our country? Do you think they are appropriate? Once you have some ideas start sketching the coat of arms. You may use the drawing programmes in your computer. When you have finished, present your coat of arms to the rest of the class. Explain your design. You will need the help of your English teacher with any words you may not know. When you have all finished, decorate the class with your coats of arms.

The languages of our national anthem:

Find out different versions of our national anthem and compile them in a CD (or memory stick). These versions can be in different types of music and in different languages. When you have completed the compilation, design a CD cover description explaining the content of the CD. Remember it is important to explain the diversity of voices, languages and styles as examples of our national diversity. Give a copy of the CD to the head teacher of the school so that different versions of the national anthem can be used in patriotic ceremonies along the year in the school.

Symbols of identity athenaeum:

Many of the communities living today in our country were not born in our country, they come from foreign lands where they had their own national emblems. Find out about them in groups and then report your findings to the rest of the students in your class. Reflect all together on the similarities and differences you find between different countries. What is common to all? What do you think?

(*English Primer Reader* for secondary school, year 1, p. 8)

A Task-Based Treatment of Language in Class

The *English Primer Readers* were developed with a task-based treatment of classroom activity. A task is a meaning-focused activity that requires learners to use the same type of communicative processes as those they would use in real-life situations. A task contains pragmatic meaning, that is to say, the learner is a language user who focuses on form but whose primary focus is on meaning. As Bygate et al. (2001, p. 11) say, 'a task is an activity which requires learners to use language, with an emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective'.

The different types of tasks used in the materials are based on two main ways of classifying tasks according to Ellis (2012):

1. A pedagogic perspective: this classification is based on the tasks that may be designed or found in teaching materials. Willis (1996, pp. 149-154) provides a list of the main task types to be found in materials:

   - Listing (involving the generation of a list of items)
   - Ordering and sorting (involving the classification, ranking or sequencing of items)
   - Comparing (finding similarities or differences)
   - Problem-solving (demanding intellectual activity such as solving puzzles or using logic to find the answer)
   - Sharing personal experiences
   - Creative tasks

2. A cognitive perspective: this classification is based on the cognitive operations that different tasks require from learners. Prabhu (1987) provides the following classification with a cognitive explanation of tasks:

   - Information gap: they involve 'a transfer of given information from one person to another – or from one form to another, or from one place to another – generally calling for the encoding or decoding of information from or into language' (Prabhu, 1987, p. 46). Example: sharing information with a partner, reading to answer questions.
   - Reasoning gap: they involve 'deriving some new information from given information through processes of inference, deduction, practical reasoning, or a perception of relationships or patterns' (Prabhu, 1987, p. 46). Example: solving puzzles.
   - Opinion gap: they involve 'identifying and articulating a personal preference, feeling, or attitude in response to a given situation' (Prabhu, 1987, p. 47). Example: giving your opinion, inventing the end of a story.

These different types of task were weaved into project sequences in which Ribé and Vidal's (1993) first-, second- and third-generation description of tasks was considered.

- First-generation tasks are those which are commonly found in communicative classrooms and which are used to develop communicative ability. For example, one would present an information gap task for students to rehearse the use of the present simple to refer to routines. In this particular case, one would be aiming at the development of fluency in use/usage of a specific linguistic item. A linguistic syllabus would be demanding the use of a task at a certain point in the sequence presented.
- Second-generation tasks present more challenge since they require learners both to manipulate language and to use cognitive abilities at the same time:

> Second generation tasks focus primarily on content, procedure and language. The learner is challenged mentally in these areas and the tasks aim at developing not only language skills, but also general cognitive strategies of handling and organising information (...) Language becomes a vehicle for doing a 'real' piece of work. This implies using not one, but a range of structures, functions and lexical sets. Language is then approached globally, not sequentially. (Ribé & Vidal, 1993, p. 2)

- Third-generation tasks are characterized by an educational purpose as well as a cognitive and linguistic one. In this sense, they are more inclusive and become especially appropriate for a school context. In this sense, the authors say that third-generation tasks:

> aim at developing the personality of the student through the foreign language. Third generation tasks fulfil wider educational objectives (attitudinal change and motivation, learner awareness, etc.) and so are especially appropriate for the school setting, where motivation for the learning of the foreign language needs to be enhanced (...) Some of the main characteristics of third generation tasks are a high degree of task authenticity, globality and integration of language and contents and involvement of all the aspects of the individual's personality, previous experience and knowledge; this includes artistic, musical, literary interests, hobbies and concerns. Creativity is usually the factor that links all these elements. (Ribé & Vidal, 1993, p. 3)

The extract quoted below illustrates how task-based principles were bound to develop teaching sequences in the design of the *English Primer Readers*. The sequence is taken from the *English Primer Reader* '*Intercultural Studies*' for schools with a language orientation. Tasks in part 1 and part 2 show different task exponents from both pedagogic and cognitive perspectives and are examples of first- and second-generation tasks. The sequence concludes with third-generation tasks as the closing Projects Bank for the unit:

Part 1: Humane Economics

1. Read the article and decide on the best title for the article. Why do you think it is the best title?

   Microfinance is one of the poverty alleviation mechanisms that the United Nations Millennium Development Project has adopted to meet its goal to eradicate poverty. A typical microfinance loan is small (normally between $30 and $250) and involves a weekly repayment plan. Microfinance loans are mainly used by borrowers to start or expand businesses such as buying wholesale goods to sell in markets, making and selling crafts, raising poultry and farming. Profits from these businesses enable borrowers to repay loans, meet their basic needs and improve their daily living conditions.

   When Nobel Laureate Prof. Mohammad Yunus started the Grameen movement in the 1970s, he concentrated on lending to women not only because women constituted the poorest of the poor, but because he realized that women were more likely to think of the family needs. _____

   Today, the majority of microfinance borrowers (84%) are women. In Bangladesh for instance, women have shown to default on loans far less often than men and enjoy a better credit rating than men._____. As they become wage earners and start managing loans and savings, their status in the family and the community improves, and they are able to assert themselves more. Further, after meeting the basic needs of their family, women start investing their earnings in education, healthcare and nutritious food, thereby making it more likely that future generations will break free from the cycle of poverty.

Microfinance is the most powerful tool we have identified to help the very poor, those living below $1 a day, rise above poverty with dignity. Most commonly, it involves making small loans to poor women to enable them to start and grow businesses. _____Many of them, in due course, pull themselves out of poverty.

Maintaining human dignity is at the core of microfinance. The poor are poor not because they are lazy or incapable of hard work – they are poor because social and economic conditions make it virtually impossible for them to escape poverty. _____They are entirely at the mercy of moneylenders who charge usurious interest rates that ensure that the poor keep coming back to them. A microfinance loan enables the poor to reap the benefits of their own hard work, and create a sustainable source of revenue for themselves and their family.

Microfinance borrowers prefer loans to a charitable handout, because they understand that by repaying the loan, they are creating a credit history that will enable them to access larger loans in the future.

(Adapted from http://www.unitedprosperity.org/us/faqs)

2. Read the text again and decide where these sentences go best in the text.

   a. Women also benefit more greatly from microfinance services.
   b. Also they would reinvest their profits in improving the quality of life of their family.
   c. Most poor people work very hard merely to survive.
   d. The additional income from the business helps a poor family to buy food, access basic healthcare, educate their children, save a little and work towards a better future.

3. Explain with your own words what this means:

   a. 'Microcredit involves making small loans to poor women to enable them to start and grow businesses.'
   b. 'Maintaining human dignity is at the core of microfinance.'

4. Analyze the paragraphs of the article.

   How are ideas organized to give cohesion and coherence to the article? How are paragraphs organized?
   Mark down main ideas and supporting ideas. Is it possible to draw a web of ideas?

5. What do you think? Would this project help in your own country? Why?

   Part 2: Superangel
   When Prof. Yunus started the project people thought he was crazy. Listen to Prof. Yunus giving a lecture to explain his project: 'Microcredit and social business for a poverty-free world'
   Download the video from:
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j57X3idgICU
   Why do you think he is considered an extraordinary man? Discuss with your partners. Then write down a paragraph giving your opinion. Remember to use a main idea and supporting ideas to develop your argument.

   Projects Bank
   Same project, different perspectives documentary:
   Find out how different people around the world understand and speak about this project. Search for different voices in different videos online. Download the videos you think are most representative of the variety of perspectives and make a documentary with the different voices. You may even include your own voice in it. Always remember that effective documentaries give plenty of information in a coherent organised way by compiling different voices in an orderly way for the audience to follow. Choose the best documentary of the class and hand a copy of it to the school library for other students and teachers to be able to use it.

Microcredit activism:

Do you think this could be done in our country? Is it being done? Would it be useful to have this project in our country? Why? Why not? Depending on your analysis of the situation choose one (or why not both?) of the following courses of action:

1. Write a letter to Prof. Yunus asking him to expand the project to our country.
2. Write a letter to our Governor requesting a similar project is developed in our Province to respond to poverty needs in our province.

In both cases you will need to think of the arguments that you will put forward in your letter, based on information you have on poverty in our region. It is also important to show that you know what you are talking about. You might need the help of an economy teacher to give you details on microcredits. Remember that the language you use is as important as the arguments you make, think of the linguistic devices that you will use to help convince the person reading the letter.

(*English Primer Reader* '*Intercultural Studies*' for secondary school, pp. 22–24)

From a pedagogic perspective, the sequence shows an example of listing in part 1 task 4, ordering and sorting in tasks 2 and 4, comparing in part 2, problem-solving in tasks 2 and 4 (part 1) and sharing personal experiences and creative tasks in task 5 (part 1) and in part 2.

From a cognitive perspective, tasks 1 and 5 are examples of opinion gap tasks as students have to provide a personal title to the text though adequate to the content of the reading (task 1) and give their opinion about the possibility of developing this project in the local context (task 5). In contrast, tasks 2 and 3 show examples of information gap tasks in which students have to derive information to complete the activities. Task 4 is an example of a reasoning gap task since learners have to relate the ideas of the article to build a network of the text using their logic to do so through the information presented in the text.

While tasks 1, 2 and 3 are first-generation tasks since they involve the use of language only, tasks 4 and 5 and the task in part 2 comprise cognitive skills as well since students are requested to summarize information and produce a mind map and spoken text using the language available from the text itself.

The tasks in the Projects Bank, on the other hand, are all third-generation tasks. They embrace three distinct dimensions: linguistic, cognitive and educational. Students have to use language in strategic ways, planning their language use for efficacy in order to support a social cause.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been twofold. On the one hand, I have explored ESOL educational change from a pragmatic perspective in a country with profound inequalities and vast student intakes in situations of social vulnerability. The case of the province of Buenos Aires in Argentina I have referred to throughout the chapter is exemplary of some of the multiple variables at play when articulating ESOL educational change in systems of education in the developing world. The case studies documented in the next section of this book illustrate educational change in

action. I have discussed how theoretical ideas and legal frameworks, though essential to generate improved educational conditions and the satisfaction of educational rights, do not automatically and consequentially guarantee educational change for good. I have emphasized the need to acknowledge the ways ESOL educators face their day-to-day professional activity and the complex decisions they make in real contexts of application with restrictions ranging from limited institutional resources to precarious hiring conditions. In so doing, I have described how the series *English Primer Readers* were designed in an attempt to provide some critical answers to ESOL teachers' questions about issues of concrete practice in times of change.

On the other hand, I have referred to a set of five key principles that have guided the design of these materials in response to theoretical and political innovation in ESOL. My main aim has been to show how the notions of multiliteracies, intercultural dialogue, translingual practices, plurilingual practices, task-based teaching and critical language education, among the most relevant ones in ESOL education at present, can be articulated in specific practical responses to specific contexts of application. Through the case of the *English Primer Readers*, I have shown that it is imperative to generate differential strategies to support teachers in their daily work. It is also vital to encourage them to create and recreate theoretical and legal frameworks in the light of their own lived experiences in schools. The chapters that follow are examples of how local teachers in real classrooms have authoritatively used and creatively adapted and changed the *English Primer Readers* to critically empower their learners in formal schooling.

Engagement Options

This chapter describes the contextual circumstances that encouraged the development of the *English Primer Readers* as teacher made critical materials in times of policy innovation. They were conceived as resources to tackle the constraints imposed on teachers working in English language classrooms with vulnerable populations. Among the multiple variables considered when developing these materials for local populations, some were related to production issues and comprised policy, pedagogic and textual decisions; some were related to consumption concerns and involved institutional, teacher and learner profiles. In addition, the chapter has considered both local and international theoretical perspectives.

1. Roudeometof (2019, p. 812) concludes that 'the contested nature of place-making within a locality does not imply the absence of additional arenas. These involve the articulation of global, transnational, trans-local or glocal places, all of which could provide loci of identity, memory and attachment'. What global, transnational, trans-local and glocal issues were addressed during the decision-making process in the development of critical materials as noted in this chapter? Are these issues useful for critical materials development in other contexts?

2. Banegas and Consoli (2020, p. 177, their emphasis) say that 'under the umbrella term of *context* we include the institution, the curriculum, the regulations, authorities, administrators, and the geographical, cultural, and financial conditions that exert different levels of influence on teachers and learners'. Likewise, in an interview article Canagarajah (Porto, 2021, p. 89) says he is 'committed to certain places and people and communities, but not committed to theories (. . .) and pedagogies'. In which ways are the *English Primer Readers* responsive to the local context, their people and their communities? What lessons can be drawn from them for consideration by teachers and teacher educators in other communities and contexts?

3. Oliver et al. (2020) report the ways in which translanguaging practices are present in Australian classrooms where English is not the first language of learners among students of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The authors acknowledge the possibilities and challenges of such practices saying that they require 'a flexibility in approach, both in terms of teaching strategies, and the application of the curriculum and assessment that may prove difficult for some teachers if implemented without sufficient support' (p. 145). In what ways is translanguaging supported by the *Primer Readers* approach?

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Part II
Critical Pedagogies in Action: A Multiple Case Illustration in Difficult Contexts

Chapter 4
Challenging Difficult Circumstances: Appreciating Identities in the Neighborhood, the Classroom, the Home, and the Natural World in Fourth Grade

Carolina Moirano and Melina Porto

Initial Vignette

This state primary coeducational school is situated in a multicultural inner city suburb in La Plata, Argentina, in a poor neighborhood, and offers general education for students from grades 1 to 6 (aged 6–11). English is taught for 2 hours a week. There are 27 children aged 10 in this fourth grade English classroom, many of whom are Argentinian, although some come from Bolivia, Paraguay, and Brazil and represent linguistic and ethnic minorities. A few of them are older because they are re-attending the year. With disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, three of them live in households with unsatisfied basic needs. Every 2 or 3 months, a child joins or leaves the group and some of them rarely attend school. When their parents find a temporary job, they are made to stay at home to look after their siblings. When their parents are unemployed, they attend school again. Violence and drugs are

We have followed ethical guidelines and usual ethical procedures. Consent and release forms from parents have been obtained. All student names are pseudonyms. Permission to name the school has been obtained. Supporting evidence is italicized in all data extracts.

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everyday experiences in some households. The school and the teachers know the context well and follow up on the children. Many times a teacher visits their homes to persuade parents to send their children to school. This is an example of teaching in 'difficult circumstances' conceptualized in nuanced and complex ways beyond usual understandings in mainstream ELT that associates difficult contexts mainly with 'scarce resources and large classes' (Shamim, 2018, p. 244).

The challenges arising from such difficult circumstances are daunting. In her field notes from September 2nd 2013, Carolina, the teacher, states that 'some [children] did not understand the point of the discussion, others kept interrupting and it was hard to make them listen to each other.' Spanish is predominantly heard during the first months as this is the children's first experience with the English language. However, even though little English is used, much is going on.

It is the first day after the 2-week winter break in a cold but sunny July, and Carolina enters the classroom with a pile of new books, the *English Primer Reader* for grade 4. The children are surprised and eager to see what their teacher has brought. She hands in one book to each child. They glare and glare. They have no books at home. It is a colorful little book, brand new, and they own it. They are hilarious.

It is also their first English book. Carolina draws their attention to the book cover, which shows 15 boys and girls their same age but with different physical appearance, clothing, hairstyles, and skin color. These visual differences reflect the wide variety of regional and national identifications that can be found in a state school classroom in the country. The boy in the center of the cover is wearing a woolen hat, called chulo, typical of the provinces in the north of Argentina and in Bolivia and one of the children recognizes it. He is happy, enthusiastic, and proud, and he tells everyone about the chulo, the typical woolen hat worn in Bolivia, where he is from.

Carolina is committed to making this first experience with English significant and relevant to children's lives so she begins by addressing the linguistic and cultural differences among themselves and among people outside their school community, supported by the previous discussion of the book cover. By drawing and painting book characters and themselves, the children engage their imagination and creativity and unfold their own identifications in terms of appearance, clothing, nationality, and linguistic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

Also, initially trigged by the *English Primer Reader*, Melina, co-author of this chapter and project leader, notes that the natural world is the focus of the English class where children analyze ecological problems such as chemical pollution, share their views, look for information to enlarge their knowledge, and imagine possibilities to make their own contributions to society, for instance, by designing awareness-raising posters about the theme. By then, English has gained momentum and the posters are English-Spanish bilingual. With pride, pupils share their posters with the school community.

These snapshots of the first encounter with English in a disadvantaged and profoundly difficult context (Shamim, 2018) reveal Carolina's and Melina's commitment to making a significant contribution to these learners' lives. The affordances and challenges that emerged are described in what follows.

A Difficult Context

In the first day of contact with the *English Primer Reader*, after the initial description of the cover, Carolina invited the children to think about people who were different from them and the places where they could find these people in their everyday lives. Melina noted that the children had difficulty staying focused, talked about the English book and its pages, kept interrupting, and hardly listened to each other (Extract 1).[1] Carolina was unable to begin the discussion:

Extract 1

Teacher: Please be quiet.
Pedro: *Seño, se le rompió la hoja* [al libro de inglés].
Teacher: *Eh.... estamos en clase.* ¿Carla?
(. . .)
Pedro: ¿Este es chino?
Teacher: Sí. ¿Dónde ven chinos?
Martín: En los supermercados chinos... Hay uno que tiene como un gorro... Es de color rojo y tiene cositas...
Pedro: *Seño... seño... las hojas son muy finas y el libro se rompe ni bien lo abro.*
Teacher: *Bueno, hay que tratarlo con cuidado, ¿sí?*
Juan: *Yo lo voy a pegar con cinta Scotch.*
Teacher: *Shh...Be quiet. . .Ok... y ustedes, a ver... chicos... please be quiet.* Como grupo, ¿ven que haya algunas diferencias entre ustedes, como grupo?
Pedro: Sí...
Teacher: Por ejemplo, ¿qué diferencias hay?
Martín: Que un argentino es. . .
Pedro: *Seño mirá...se rompió.*
Teacher: *Bueno, no importa, dejalo ahí.*
Mariano: *Seño, ¿lo puedo hacer anillar?*

English translation

Teacher: Please be quiet.
Pedro: *Miss, this page* [from the English book] *got torn.*
Teacher: *Eh.... we are in class.* Carla?
(. . .)
Pedro: Is this Chinese?
Teacher: Yes. Where do you see Chinese people?
Martín: At Chinese supermarkets. . . There is a Chinese man who has a sort of hat. . . It's red and has got some thingies on it. . .
Pedro: *Miss. . . Miss. . . the pages are very thin, the book tears as soon as I open it.*
Teacher: *Ok, you have to treat it carefully, right?*
Juan: *I'm going to fix it with Scotch tape.*
Teacher: *Shh...Be quiet. . .Ok... and you. . . let's see. . . kids. . . Shh...Please be quiet.* OK, as a group, do you see any differences among you, as a group?
Pedro: Yes...
Teacher: For example, what differences are there?
Martín: That an Argentinian is. . .
Pedro: *Miss, look. . . It's torn.*

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[1] In all data extracts in Chaps. 4, 5, 6, and 7, the evidence for the point made is highlighted in italics.

Teacher: Ok, *it doesn't matter, leave it there.*
Mariano: *Miss, can I have it ring bound?*
(Class discussion, September 2013)

The extract illustrates some of the difficulties Carolina faced, which are different from what mainstream ELT considers 'difficult' such as having large classes or under-resourced classrooms (Kuchah Kuchah & Shamim, 2018; Shamim, 2018). In this case, the difficulty stemmed from the fact that critical teaching takes for granted learners 'who can [could] talk with one another and with an animateur (...) discuss, reflect, and propose solutions to problems; in other words, cooperate' (Crookes, 2013, p. 49). But these children were clearly not accustomed to this. Carolina would have needed to 'explicitly teach the behaviors of cooperative learning' (Crookes, 2013, p. 49) and perhaps allow more time to touch the book, go through its pages together, and express feelings and comments about it. She had her agenda, which was to talk about the different people in their neighborhood, but the children had their own, which was to explore their first English book, if not their first brand new book ever ('se le rompió la hoja' [this page got torn], 'las hojas son muy finas y el libro se rompe ni bien lo abro' [the pages are very thin, the book tears as soon as I open it], 'yo lo voy a pegar con cinta Scotch' [I'm going to fix it with Scotch tape], '¿lo puedo hacer anillar?' [can I have it ring bound?]). In this sense, the extract shows that the 'teaching-learning of English in difficult circumstances' is hard (Shamim, 2018, p. 245) and that 'the ongoing commitment of teachers to the power of critical engagement to enhance the lives of their (...) students' (Alford & Kettle, 2017, p. 182) may sometimes not be enough. It needs to be complemented with 'policy and administrative support' to 'ease the teachers' task' (Shamim, 2018, p. 245) as well as adequate initial teacher education, pre-service and in-service programs, and professional development opportunities that address difficult contexts (Shamim, 2018) and provide 'opportunities for [critical] praxis development' (Nuske, 2015, p. 283). When all this is not possible, 'forward movement could be slow—might legitimately be slow' (Crookes, 2013, p. 49) as Extract 1 shows.

Identities in the Neighborhood

Carolina was eventually able to initiate the discussion about different people by inviting the children to think of people different from themselves that they had seen in their neighborhoods, although she had to explicitly ask them to keep silent in the middle of the conversation ('Shh...Please be quiet...chicos'). They identified four places (Extract 2): the greengrocer's, the home, the grocery store, and the Chinese supermarket, which in Argentina is a small local corner shop. They mentioned examples of people who either dress or look different from themselves, for instance, a lady wearing a poncho, an item of clothing children rarely wear in their city, La Plata; a grandmother wearing a Bolivian skirt; someone with a chulo, the typical Bolivian hat mentioned above; and a Chinese shop assistant wearing another particular type of hat:

Extract 2

Teacher: ¿Ustedes saben en *qué lugares que van generalmente encuentran personas que usan ropa distinta a la nuestra, que tienen rasgos distintos a los nuestros*?
Martín: *Una señora en una verdulería tenía un poncho.*
Carla: *En mi casa mi abuelita usa las polleras que se usan en Bolivia.*
Teacher: ¿Y cómo se llaman esas polleras?
Carla: Polleras.
Teacher: ¿Polleras? ¿No tienen un nombre especial, como el chulo?
Carla: No.
Teacher: No. ¿Qué más? *¿En algún otro lugar se les ocurre?* Por ejemplo, la verdulería.... *¿En qué otro lugar?* Shh. . .Please be quiet...chicos...
Martín: También, seño, *el chulo yo lo vi*...
Teacher: ¿Dónde?
Martín: *En un almacén.*
Carlos: ¿Este es chino?
Teacher: Sí. *¿Dónde ven chinos?*
Martín: *En los supermercados chinos*... Hay uno que *tiene como un gorro... Es de color rojo y tiene cositas*...
Teacher: Ven... Por ejemplo, *una señora en una verdulería tenía un poncho. Y vos no usás poncho acá. Bueno, eso es distinto...* ¿qué más?

English translation

Teacher: Do you know *in which of the places you usually go to you can find people who wear clothes different from ours, who have different features from ours?*
Martín: *A woman at a greengrocer's was wearing a poncho.*
Carla: *At home my granny wears the skirts they wear in Bolivia.*
Teacher: And what are those skirts called?
Carla: Skirts.
Teacher: Skirts? Don't they have a special name, like the chulo?
Carla: No.
Teacher: No. What else? *Where else can you think of?* For example at the greengrocer's. . . *In which other places?* Shh...Please be quiet. . .kids...
Martín: Miss, *I have also seen the chulo* . . . .
Teacher: Where?
Martín: *At a grocery store.*
Carlos: Is this Chinese?
Teacher: Yes. *Where do you see Chinese people?*
Martín: *At Chinese supermarkets*. . . There is *a Chinese man who has a sort of hat*. . . *It's red and has got some thingies on it*. . .
Teacher: You see? . . . For example, *a woman at a greengrocer's was wearing a poncho. And you don't wear a poncho here. Well, that is different*. . . What else?
(Class discussion, September 2013)

By asking the children to identify particular places and associate them with specific people, Carolina and Melina reflected on the fact that she was fostering and modeling the following skills as part of a pedagogy that cultivated critical thinking (Tian & Low, 2011; Nussbaum, 2006):

– observation: 'en una verdulería' [at a greengrocer's], 'en mi casa' [at home], 'en un almacén' [at a grocery store], 'en los supermercados chinos' [at Chinese supermarkets];
– discovery: 'el chulo yo lo vi' [I have also seen the chulo];

– analysis: 'una señora en una verdulería tenía un poncho. Y vos no usás poncho acá' [a woman at a greengrocer's was wearing a poncho. And you don't wear a poncho here];
– reflection: 'Bueno, eso es distinto' [Well, that is different]); and
– collaboration.

These are also the skills of scientific inquiry that encourage children to observe, discover, analyze, and reflect in order to gain new knowledge (Schmidt et al., 2002). Together the pupils realized that although they live in Argentina, they have contact with people with different features and from different origins in their everyday lives.

As can be gleaned in Extract 2, the children spontaneously focused almost exclusively on visible features of difference in terms of clothing and nationality (poncho, Bolivian skirt, Bolivian chulo, Chinese hat). In her reflection notes, Carolina mentioned she was aware that this kind of association with images of cultures through clothing and cultural comparisons at the national level is superficial and can lead to stereotyping. Melina added that it is an example of the five Fs approach to cultural diversity in language education (flags, fashion, food, faces/famous people, festivals/folklore) (Baker, 2012, 2015). This was, however, an initial step and this is how the exchange should be understood.

Carolina and Melina noted the powerful message about learning that she was projecting in her classroom. She valued knowledge gained from personal experience in different places, and in this way the message was that personal accounts and lived experiences at home and in the community are important sites for learning and also that there exist multiple places, or funds of knowledge, beyond the classroom and the school, where people learn and which can serve as intellectual resources for academic learning (González et al., 2004; Moje et al., 2004) such as the greengrocer's, the home, the grocery store, and the supermarket. These explicit connections help learners integrate their prior experiences, existing knowledge, and cultural practices in the community with new academic expectations, demystifying in this way academic language and literacy and motivating students (Hull & Moje, 2012).

Identities in the Classroom

Then Carolina turned the discussion to what made them different in the class, and Extract 3 shows that the children were aware of differences in accent ('hablan diferente' [some speak differently], 'tienen un acento especial' [some have a special accent]). They associated those differences with nationality ('porque vienen de otro país' [Because they come from a different country]), which again is a superficial comparison that can lead to stereotyping and prejudice ('Porque a veces unos dicen...viste esas cosas que dicen' [Because sometimes some say...you know these things they say]):

Extract 3

Teacher: ¿Ustedes como grupo, no presentan alguna diferencia?
Carla: No estamos todos iguales vestidos, algunos se visten diferentes. Como por ejemplo los japoneses se ponen un vestido así grande...
Teacher: Pero acá en la clase, ¿hay alguien japonés?
Children: No.
Teacher: No, yo hablo de acá, del grupo de ustedes, de esta clase.
Martín: *Algunos hablan diferente, seño.*
Teacher: *Algunos hablan diferente dice...*
Martín: *Algunos con acento y otros no.*
Teacher: *Algunos tienen un acento especial y otros no.*
Martín: *Sí...*
Teacher: *¿Un acento de dónde?*
Martín: *Porque a veces unos dicen: 'no ve', viste esas cosas que dicen, 'no ve... ahi chiquitito'* [spoken with an accent].
Teacher: *Ahh, en vez de 'no ves'.*
Martín: *Sí.*
Teacher: *Es como un acento...Bien. ¿Y por qué tienen un acento distinto?*
Martín: *Porque vienen de otro país.*

English translation

Teacher: Do you, as a group, have any differences?
Carla: We are not dressed all the same, some dress differently. For example, the Japanese wear a big dress.
Teacher: But here, in this class, is there any Japanese?
Children: No.
Teacher: No, I mean here, in this group, in this class.
Martín: *Some speak differently, miss. . .*
Teacher: *Some speak differently, he says. . .*
Martín: *Some with an accent, and some not.*
Teacher: *Some have a special accent and some don't. . .*
Martín: *Yes.*
Teacher: *An accent from where?*
Martín: *Because sometimes some say: 'you see', you know these things they say, 'you see. . . there. . . very little'* [spoken with an accent]
Teacher: *Ahh, instead of 'you see'.*[2]
Martín: *Yes.*
Teacher: It's like an accent. . . OK. And why do they have a different accent?
Martín: *Because they come from a different country.*
(Class discussion, September 2013)

Melina highlighted the children's initial misunderstanding of Carolina's question about differences among themselves as a group. One child, Carla, began to mention differences among people in general in terms of clothing and brought in the example of Japanese people. Carolina had to direct the attention to the remark being off-topic ('Pero acá en la clase, ¿hay alguien japonés?' [But here, in this class, is there any Japanese?]) and then rephrase and clarify the focus ('No, yo hablo de acá, del grupo de ustedes, de esta clase' [No, I mean here, in this group, in this class]).

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[2]The student here referred to the mispronunciation of the word 'ves' in Spanish as 've.' He referred to the fact that some people in the class omit the letter/sound 's' because they speak with a different accent. This mispronunciation cannot be reflected in English.

Carolina and Melina realized it was necessary to draw the attention away from superficial comparisons in terms of clothing, accent, and nationality. With this purpose in mind, Carolina fostered discussion about the perception of difference as an asset rather than a hindrance by focusing on abilities (Extract 4) using the *English Primer Reader* as a basis (pages 22–24). The *Primer Reader* introduces the theme of abilities through the skills of comparing and contrasting, in other words, finding similarities and differences in abilities (I can/I can't), associated with usual activities children do like swimming, dancing, and playing football: 'I can swim. We can play football. She can climb trees. And I can dance but I can't swim. What about you? What can you do?' (*English Primer Reader* for grade 4, p. 22). In addition, using one task in the *Primer Reader*, a class survey, the children surveyed class members about their abilities in swimming, playing football, playing the guitar, riding a bike, and dancing, wrote a report of what each member of the class was good at (Extract 4), and drew the situation:

Extract 4
   In my class 6 people can swim.
   In my class 5 people can play football.
   In my class 1 person can play the guitar.
   In my class 6 people can ride a bike.
   In my class 2 people can dance.
   (Class report, September 2013)

Carolina engaged in thorough scaffolding, trying to help the children reflect on how the diverse abilities of each individual in a group can be beneficial for the group as a whole (Extract 5):

Extract 5
   Teacher: *¿Cuáles les parece que son las ventajas, o desventajas de que seamos, nosotros, por ejemplo, todos distintos? Porque somos todos distintos, ¿no? Cada uno es distinto físicamente, de personalidad y cada uno tiene distintas habilidades. Cada uno sabe hacer distintas cosas. Entonces ¿cuáles les parece que son las ventajas de ser todos distintos, de que cada uno tenga distintas habilidades?*
   Carla: *Que algunos pueden bailar y otros no.*
   Pedro: *Que algunos saben una música y algunos saben otra música.*
   Teacher: *¿Y cuál es la ventaja ahí? ¿Cómo podemos sacar provecho de eso? ¿De que yo sepa hacer una cosa y no otra y vos sepas hacer otra cosa?*
   Matías: *Otros que van rápido y otros que van lento.*
   Teacher: Sí, bueno, podemos enumerar un montón de cosas distintas. *¿Qué tiene de bueno eso, que cada uno sea distinto al otro y que cada uno sepa hacer cosas distintas?*
   Children: [silence]
   Teacher: *Por ejemplo... si ustedes van a jugar un partido de fútbol y todos son buenos arqueros, saben todos atajar, ¿está bueno eso? Todos saben atajar pero nadie sabe meter goles, correr rápido. ¿Es una ventaja si somos todos iguales? Todos saben atajar pero nadie sabe meter goles... entonces no podemos jugar al fútbol.*
   Matías: No.
   Teacher: *Entonces... ¿cuál puede ser la ventaja de que cada uno pueda hacer cosas distintas? Piensen... yo les di un ejemplo. ¿Cuál puede ser la ventaja?*
   Juan: *Que uno baile y uno cante.*
   Children: [Silence]
   Teacher: *A ver... ¿Qué es el trabajo en equipo?*
   Pedro: *Hacer todos juntos lo mismo.*
   Teacher: *¿Pero de qué forma?*

Matías: *Distinta.*
Teacher: *Cada uno cumpliendo una tarea, ¿no? Volviendo al ejemplo del partido de fútbol, si todos sabemos atajar, pero nadie sabe meter goles, hacer un pase, correr rápido, no es un partido de futbol eso. Entonces, está bueno que cada uno sepa hacer cosas distintas porque así podemos hacer un trabajo en equipo, ¿sí? Un equipo son varias personas, cada una haciendo una tarea distinta para la cual cada uno es bueno, ¿sí?*

English translation

Teacher: *What do you think are the advantages or disadvantages of us being all different from each other? Because we are all different, right? Each of us is physically different, has a different personality and each one has different abilities from the other. Each one knows how to do different things. So, what do you think are the advantages of being all different from each other, of us all having different abilities?*
Carla: *That some can dance and some can't.*
Pedro: *That some know some kind of music and some others another kind of music.*
Teacher: *And what's the advantage? How can we make the most of that? Of the fact that I can do one thing but not another and that you can do another thing?*
Matías: *Some go fast and some go slow.*
Teacher: Yes, ok, we could list a lot of different things. *What's the good thing about all this? About the fact that we are all different and we can all do different things?*
Children: [Silence]
Teacher: *For example, if you are going to play a football match and you are all good goalkeepers, you all know how to keep goals, is that a good thing? All of you know how to keep goals but nobody knows how to score goals, run fast. Is it an advantage if we are all alike? Everybody can keep goals but nobody can score goals, then we can't play football.*
Matías: No.
Teacher: *So... What could be the advantage of us being able to do different things? Think about it. . . I gave you an example. What can be the advantage?*
Juan: That *one can dance and one can sing.*
Children: [Silence]
Teacher: Let's see. *What's team work?*
Pedro: *Doing the same thing all together.*
Teacher: *But in what way?*
Matías: *In a different way.*
Teacher: *Each one fulfilling a task, right? Coming back to the football match, if we can all keep goals, but nobody can score them, pass the ball, run fast, that's not a football match. So it's good that each one knows how to do different things so we can work in a team, right? A team is different people, each one carrying out a different task that each one is good at, right?*
(Class discussion, September 2013)

The process was not smooth; Carolina had to talk a lot and most of the time using Spanish; the children's contributions were minimal, sometimes just remaining silent; and even the football example as a familiar analogy was not as effective as she had anticipated. The pupils were thinking of different activities ('algunos pueden bailar y otros no' [some can dance and some can't], 'algunos saben una música y algunos saben otra música' [some know some kind of music and some others another kind of music], 'otros que van rápido y otros que van lento' [some go fast and some go slow], 'uno baile y uno cante' [one can dance and one can sing]), and the notion of teamwork was a difficult one for the group to grasp ('hacer todos juntos lo mismo'). The extract illustrates the slow movements forward that sometimes characterize

critical classrooms (Crookes, 2013) and contexts with difficult circumstances (Shamim, 2018) as well as the difficulties posed by the collaborative and reflective nature of critical classrooms (Crookes, 2013).

Still aiming at developing awareness of difference and its perception as an asset, Carolina encouraged the children to think about their individual cases and what each of them was good at, focusing on what made each child stand out for any reason (Extract 6). They discovered that Ayelén was good at decorating, Martín was a good friend and a good student, Pedro was good at dancing a Bolivian dance called 'caporales,' and another child was good at football. In this way, she was foregrounding their strengths and boosting their self-esteem, and this sense of self-efficacy is important for children's development (Man-Chu Lau, 2013):

Extract 6

Teacher: A ver... entre ustedes... ¿se conocen entre ustedes?
Children: No.
Teacher: ¿no? ¿Cómo que no?
Children: Sííí.
Teacher: A ver... ¿quién sabe cuál es la mejor habilidad, qué sabe hacer bien su compañero de banco? A ver... *Melina, ¿sabés qué sabe hacer bien Ayelén?*
Melina: *Ni idea...*
Teacher: *¿Ni idea? ¿En qué le va bien? ¿Es buena estudiando, es buena bailando, es buena en educación física?*
Melina: *En decorar.*
Teacher: *En decorar, le gusta decorar. Ok, a ver... ¿ella?*
Nicole: *Peleando.*
Teacher: ¿Peleando es buena? Bueno, puede ser también... puede ser... ¿y Carla? ¿Ella es buena en qué? ¿Se conocen?
Camila: *No... Es la primera vez que se sienta conmigo.*
Teacher: ¿No? ¿No sabes nada de Carla? A ver... *¿Quién sabe algo de sus compañeros?* (. . .)
Juan: *Él juega bien al futbol.*
Teacher: ¿Qué más?
Matías: *Martín es muy buen amigo y muy buen alumno.*
Teacher: ¿Quién más sabe algo de su compañero?
Juan: *Yo sé que él baila mucho*.
Teacher: ¿Y baila bien?
Juan: *Bien.*
Teacher: *Baila bien Pedro... Pedro baila bien*. Ok ¿Qué tipo de baile hace?
Children: *Caporales.*
Teacher: ¿Caporales? ¿Qué es eso? *¿Típico de dónde?*
Children: *De Bolivia.*

English translation

Teacher: Let's see. . . among yourselves. . . Do you know each other?
Children: No.
Teacher: You don't? How come?
Children: Yessss.
Teacher: Let's see... who knows what's the best ability, what the person sitting next to you is good at? Let's see... *Melina, do you know what Ayelén is good at?*
Melina: *No idea...*
Teacher: *No idea? What's she good at? Studying, dancing, at PE?*
Melina: *Decorating.*

Teacher: *Decorating, she likes decorating. Ok, let's see. . . What about her?*
Nicole: *Arguing.*
Teacher: She's good at arguing? Ok, it might be. . .and Carla? What's she good at? Do you know each other?
Camila: *No... it's the first time she sits next to me.*
Teacher: You don't? You don't know anything about Carla? Let's see. . . *Who knows something about a classmate?*
(. . .)
Juan: *He is good at football.*
Teacher: What else?
Matías: *Martín is a good friend and a good student.*
Teacher: Who else knows something about a classmate?
Juan: *I know he dances a lot.*
Teacher: And does he dance well?
Juan: *Well.*
Teacher: *Pedro dances well. . . Pedro dances well. . .* Ok. What kind of dance does he do?
Children: *Caporales.*
Teacher: Caporales? What's that? *Typical from where?*
Children: *From Bolivia.*
(Class discussion, September 2013)

The group rounded up the discussion by concluding that if they know their strengths, they can reach better results by working in teams or by asking classmates for help when they know more about a certain issue ('te pueden ayudar' [they can help you]):

Extract 7

Teacher: Se dan cuenta de que si se conocen entre ustedes, si conocen en qué cada uno es bueno, pueden lograr mejores cosas. Por ejemplo, si ustedes saben que su compañero es bueno en matemáticas y ustedes no entienden matemáticas, ¿qué pueden hacer?
Pedro: *Te pueden ayudar.*

English translation

Teacher: Can you see that if you know each other, if you know each other's strengths, you can reach better things. For example, if you know that a classmate is good at maths and you are not good at maths, what can you do?
Pedro: *They can help you.*
(Class discussion, September 2013)

Worth noting too is that Carolina did not stick to the *English Primer Reader* rigidly. She used it flexibly, adapting and complementing it as she deemed suitable. For instance, as she stated in her field notes, her awareness of the difficult circumstances of the context led her to bring up the theme of individual abilities and how these can be beneficial in a group to complement one another. Her aim was to foster a sense of achievement, pride, and self-esteem. In other words, she recontextualized, appropriated, adapted, and re-resourced the *Primer Reader* to better serve her students in this setting. In this way, she engaged in materials development as 'a collaborative endeavour' (Tomlimson, 2011, p. 25) involving herself, Melina, and the children themselves. This collaborative outlook on materials development is rare (Tomlimson, 2011), and the chapter offers an illustration. Furthermore, materials development of this kind helps 'EFL teachers (. . .) experience professional development' and enhances their 'motivation, agency, and identity' (Banegas et al., 2020, p. 1).

Fig. 4.1 Pedro's drawing, September 2013
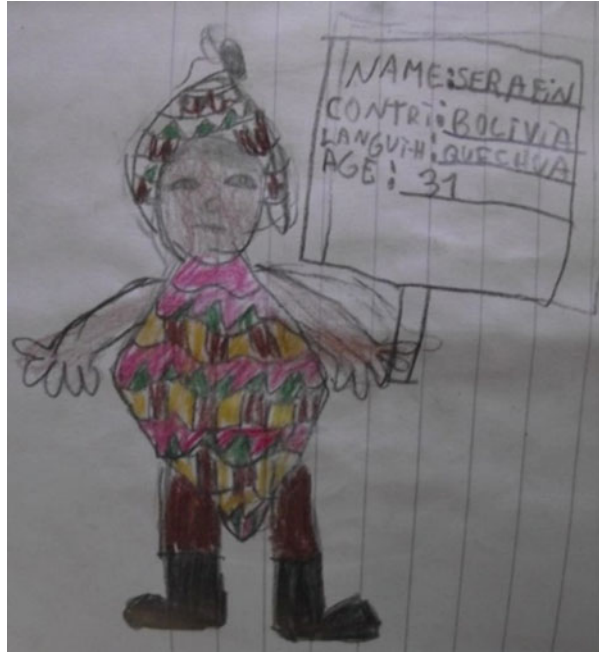
Finally, building on the initial discussion of the *Primer Reader* cover, the theme of the linguistic and cultural differences among themselves and among people outside their school community, and the focus on abilities, Carolina invited the students to create their own book character and draw it with the intention of adding the children's characters to the *Primer Reader*. According to Patton (2010), all children enjoy drawing and painting, benefit from the experience, and reveal their interests, thoughts, feelings, and identities through their drawings. Figure 4.1 shows that Pedro, with Bolivian origin, made decisions about his character's name, gender, nationality, and mother tongue. He drew a man with a Bolivian hat, whom he named Serafin, and decided his country of origin was Bolivia, his language Quechua, and his age 31.

Melina and Carolina reflected on the fact that even though Pedro was born in Argentina and attended an Argentinian school where most of the students were Argentinian, he chose to draw a person of Bolivian origin. They concluded that in this way, he was showing his origin and displaying his own identity in line with Patton (2010) who states that the process of creating art provides an opportunity for children to put themselves into their art by engaging their imagination and creativity. By drawing Serafin, Pedro created an image of self, and his drawing became a window into the way he saw himself, providing a sense of self and identity as he unfolded his own identifications in terms of appearance, clothing, nationality, and linguistic, ethnic, and cultural background.

All in all, this engagement with linguistic and cultural diversity in this classroom as well as the work with abilities using the *English Primer Reader* as a basis, but also

complementing it with the drawing and painting of book characters, fostered discussion of the notion of differences as an asset, replacing its deficit view, consequently stimulating in these children a sense of value in themselves.

Identities in the Home

Carolina then returned to the *Primer Reader* to address the theme of identifications, in particular language. The first page in Unit 1 shows an English-speaking woman called Rebecca, a Canadian biologist who travels the world describing birds in encyclopedias. She is sitting on the grass drawing a bird and a boy called Andy is looking at it. He starts a conversation in Spanish but switches to English on the spot when Rebecca says she does not understand Spanish.

After a brief reflection on why Rebecca spoke English, Carolina brought up the theme of languages in children's homes. Pedro, the child with Bolivian parents, contradicted himself as he first said he was from Bolivia and then from Argentina. Carolina approached him and asked for clarification. He explained he first understood he was being asked about his parents' origin but later he wanted to clarify that he was from Argentina. In Extract 8 Pedro mentioned that his parents talked to him in Spanish, used Quechua among themselves, and reprimanded him in Quechua ('ellos hablan [Quechua] entre ellos' [Between them they speak Quechua], 'cuando me retan me hablan en quechua, si no me retan no, me hablan en castellano' [When they tell me off they speak to me in Quechua, if they don't tell me off they speak to me in Spanish]). The class reflected on the different situations in which the family members in Pedro's home used one language or the other. One of the children was eager to hypothesize why Pedro's parents scolded him in Quechua ('para que los demás no escuchen lo que ella dice' [So that the rest can't hear what she's saying]), but Pedro clarified that the reason was there were neighbors in the house that day as they were celebrating a birthday party ('Hay vecinos... Ese día cuando me estaba retando mi mamá había un cumpleaños' [There are neighbors. . . That day, when my mum was telling me off there was a birthday party]). They concluded the mother did not want the neighbors to understand ('para que no entiendan los vecinos' [so that your neighbors can't understand]):

Extract 8
    Teacher: Por ejemplo, vos habías dicho que vos sos de. . . .
    Pedro: Bolivia.
    Teacher: De Bolivia.
    Pedro: No, yo soy de Argentina.
    Teacher: ¿Y vos decís que hablan otro idioma?
    Pedro: *Ari... Sí.*
    Teacher: Sí... ¿*Qué es eso* [Ari]? ¿*'sí' en qué idioma?*
    Julián: ¡*Quechua!*
    Pedro: *En quechua.*
    Teacher: ¿En quechua? Bueno, y *en tu casa,* por ejemplo... ¿*qué idioma se habla?*
    Pedro: *Quechua siempre.*
    Teacher: *Quechua siempre...* Vos hablas con tus papás en quechua...

Pedro: *No, yo no hablo, pero ellos hablan entre ellos... Entre los dos hablan en quechua.*
Teacher: *¿Entre los dos hablan en quechua y con vos en castellano?*
Pedro: *No, a veces cuando me retan...*
Teacher: A ver... Escuchen esto...
Pedro: *Cuando me retan me hablan en quechua, si no me retan no, me hablan en castellano.*
Teacher: *¿Y por qué crees que cuando te retan te hablan en quechua?*
Pedro: *No sé. . . porque yo también lo entiendo.*
Teacher: *¿Y por qué crees que cuando te retan te hablan en quechua y en otras situaciones en castellano?*
Martín: *Y. . . para que los demás no escuchen lo que ella dice...*
Teacher: *¿Los demás? ¿Quiénes?*
Pedro: *No es por eso.*
Teacher: *Si es adentro de la casa...*
Pedro: *Hay vecinos... Ese día cuando me estaba retando mi mamá había un cumpleaños.*
Teacher : *Ah. . . para que no entiendan los vecinos.*
Pedro: No*, los vecinos escuchaban y se preguntaban. . . '¿qué es ese idioma, qué es ese idioma?'*

English translation

Teacher: For example, you said you are from. . .
Pedro: Bolivia.
Teacher: From Bolivia.
Pedro: No, I'm from Argentina.
Teacher: And you say they speak another language?
Pedro: *Ari... Yes*.
Teacher: *Yes... What's that* [Ari]? *'Yes', in what language?*
Julián: *Quechua!*
Pedro: In Quechua.
Teacher: In Quechua? Well, *and in your house,* for example. . .*what language do you speak?*
Pedro: *Quechua, always.*
Teacher: *Quechua, always. . .* you speak to your parents in Quechua...
Pedro: *No, I don't speak Quechua, but they do between them. . . Between them they speak Quechua*.
Teacher: *They speak Quechua between them but Spanish to you?*
Pedro: *No, sometimes, when they tell me off.*
Teacher: Let's see. . . Listen to this.
Pedro: *When they tell me off they speak to me in Quechua, if they don't tell me off they speak to me in Spanish.*
Teacher: *And why do you think they speak to you in Quechua when they tell you off?*
Pedro: *I don't know. . . because I also understand it.*
Teacher: *And why do you think they speak to you in Quechua when they tell you off and in Spanish in other situations?*
Martín: *So that the rest can't hear what she's saying.*
Teacher: *The rest? Who?*
Pedro: *It's not because of that.*
Teacher: *If it's inside the house. . .*
Pedro: *There are neighbors. . . That day, when my mum was telling me off there was a birthday party.*
Teacher: *Ah. . . so that your neighbors can't understand.*
Pedro: *No, the neighbors heard and wondered. . . 'What's that language, what's that language?'*
(Class discussion, September 2013)

Carolina inquired about language choice in other situations, for example, when Pedro's friends were at his home. He explained his mother used Spanish except when she sometimes wished to call him for some reason ('a veces me dice 'vení'') (Extract 9):

Extract 9

Teacher: *Y si, por ejemplo, vos invitas un amigo a tu casa, ¿en qué le hablas, cómo le hablas?*
Pedro: *En español.*
Teacher: *¿Y tu mamá a vos en qué te habla si está tu amigo?*
Pedro: *En español.*
Teacher: *¿Y a vos solo te dice algo en quechua si está tu amigo ahí?*
Pedro: *Sí, a veces me dice 'vení'.*

English translation

Teacher: *And what if, for example, you invite a friend to your house… what language do you speak to him, how do you speak to him?*
Pedro: *In Spanish.*
Teacher: *And in what language does your mother speak to you if your friend is there?*
Pedro: *In Spanish.*
Teacher: *And does she say anything to you in Quechua if your friend is there?*
Pedro: *Yes, sometimes she says 'come here'.*
(Class discussion, September 2013)

Extracts 8 and 9 show that Pedro was used to switching languages naturally in the home. His parents spoke Quechua between them and also with Pedro when they did not want people to understand what they were saying, for example, when they scolded their son or called him in front of others.

Another student, María, also talked about her situation at home and said that she spoke Quechua all the time ('mi mamá, mis tíos, todos siempre hablan en quechua' [my mum, my uncles, everybody speaks Quechua]) (Extract 10). As the majority of her friends were from Bolivia ('mis amigas son de Bolivia' [My friends are from Bolivia]), she spoke to them in Quechua too. She only spoke Spanish at school and with some Argentinian friends. When an Argentinian friend was at her home, her mother mixed both languages when she addressed her ('en las dos cosas' [in both languages], '¿mezcla?' [She switches?]):

Extract 10

Teacher: *¿Quién más habla otro idioma en la casa?*
María: *Seño... a mí, mi mamá, mis tíos, todos siempre hablan en quechua y yo siempre les entiendo.*
Teacher: *¿Y vos? Hablan todos en quechua, ¿con vos también?*
María*: Sí.*
Teacher: *¿Y si invitas una amiga? ¿Cómo hablas con tu mamá? ¿Hablas en quechua igual o hablas en castellano delante de tu amiga?*
María: *Mis amigas son de Bolivia.*
Teacher: *¿Entonces con tus amigas también hablas en quechua?*
María: *Sí.*
Teacher*: Aha. ¿Ninguna amiga de Argentina tenés?*
María: *Sí.*
Teacher: *¿Y con ellas cómo hablas?*
María: *En español*

Teacher*: En español. ¿Y si está tu mamá adelante, cómo te habla tu mamá a vos? ¿En español?*
María: *En las dos cosas.*
Teacher: *En las dos cosas. ¿Mezcla? Aha...*

English translation

Teacher: *Who else speaks another language at home?*
María: *Miss...my mum, my uncles, everybody speaks Quechua and I always understand them.*
Teacher: *And you? Does everybody speak Quechua to you too?*
María*: Yes.*
Teacher: *And if you invite a friend? How do you speak to your mum? Do you speak Quechua anyway or do you speak Spanish in front of your friend?*
María: *My friends are from Bolivia.*
Teacher: *So do you also speak Quechua to your friends?*
María: *Yes.*
Teacher*: Aha... Don't you have any friends from Argentina?*
María*: Yes.*
Teacher: *And how do you speak to them?*
María: *In Spanish.*
Teacher*: In Spanish. And if your mum is there, how does your mum speak to you? In Spanish?*
María: *In both languages.*
Teacher: *In both. She switches? Aha.*
(Class discussion, September 2013)

Then Gisela, who was from Paraguay, said that her mother talked to her in Guarani all the time, even in front of her Argentinian friends (Extract 11) ('En guaraní siempre. ¿Aunque tu amiga no entienda?' [Always in Guarani. Even if your friend doesn't understand?]). Because some of her friends did not speak Guarani, she then translated into Spanish for them ('¿Y tu amiga no entiende nada?' [And your friend doesn't understand a thing?], 'Después me avisa' [Then she tells me], '¿Te pregunta qué dijeron?' [Does she ask you what you and your mum have said?], 'Sí' [Yes]):

Extract 11
    Teacher: Bueno, *¿hay algún otro idioma?*
    Pedro*: Paraguayo.*
    Teacher: ¿Paraguayo? ¿Cómo es el paraguayo? ¿Guaraní? ¿No es guaraní? Ahhh, ella...
    ¿Vos hablás en guaraní? ¿Y en tu casa hablan guaraní?
    Gisela*: Sí.*
    Teacher: ¿Y con vos, tus papás con vos hablan guaraní? ¿O castellano?
    Gisela: Yo no tengo papá.
    Teacher: ¿Con quién vivís?
    Gisela: Con mi mamá.
    Teacher: *Bueno, tu mamá. ¿Cómo te habla tu mamá?*
    Gisela: *En guaraní.*
    Teacher: *En guaraní. ¿Y si invitás una amiga a tu casa? ¿Cómo te habla tu mamá?*
    ¿También en guaraní o en castellano?
    Gisela: *En guaraní.*
    Teacher*: En guaraní siempre. ¿Aunque tu amiga no entienda?*
    Gisela: *Sí.*
    Teacher: *Aha... ¿y vos a tu amiga cómo le hablas?*
    Gisela*: En español.*

Teacher: *En español. ¿Y a tu mamá, si está tu amiga, cómo le hablas? ¿En español o en guaraní?*
Gisela: *En guaraní.*
Teacher: *¿Y tu amiga no entiende nada?*
Gisela: *Después me avisa.*
Teacher: *¿Te pregunta qué dijeron?*
Gisela: *Sí.*
Teacher: *Ah.*

English translation

Teacher: Ok, *is there any other language?*
Pedro*:* Paraguayan.
Teacher: Paraguayan? What's Paraguayan like? Guarani? Isn't it Guarani? Ahhh, she…
Do you speak Guarani? And do they speak Guarani at home?
Gisela*: Yes.*
Teacher: And to you? Do your parents speak to you in Guarani? Or in Spanish?
Gisela: I don't have a dad.
Teacher: Who do you live with?
Gisela: With my mum.
Teacher: *Ok, your mum… How does she speak to you?*
Gisela: *In Guarani.*
Teacher: *In Guarani. And if you invite a friend to your house…? How does your mum speak to you? In Guarani too or in Spanish?*
Gisela: *In Guarani.*
Teacher*: Always in Guarani… Even if your friend doesn't understand?*
Gisela*: Yes.*
Teacher: *I see….and how do you speak to your friend?*
Gisela*: In Spanish.*
Teacher: *In Spanish. And to your mum, if your friend is there, how do you speak to her? In Spanish or in Guarani?*
Gisela: *In Guarani.*
Teacher: And your friend doesn't understand a thing?
Gisela: Then she tells me.
Teacher: Does she ask you what you and your mum have said?
Gisela: Yes.
Teacher: Ah....
(Class discussion, September 2013)

Melina noted that for several children in this classroom, Spanish was their second language (L2). Their first language (L1) was Guarani or Quechua. This means that English was their third language (L3). For instance, Pedro, María, and Gisela were Spanish-Quechua or Spanish-Guarani bilinguals, and they illustrated their translingual practices in their homes in class discussions. They revealed that they switched languages according to the communicative situation, in particular considering who they were addressing and who else was present. They were well aware that the languages they spoke were used differently according to their interlocutors and the context of situation, with different purposes and in different contexts. By welcoming this discussion in the classroom, Carolina was doing several things simultaneously. First, as mentioned before, she was emphasizing the value and appreciation of the children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In so doing, as Canagarajah says in an interview article, she was also fostering 'very grounded and social experiences with diversity' (Porto, 2021, pp. 90–91). Second, she was

developing language awareness by conveying an implicit message about the nature of language, not to be viewed as a static and homogenous entity, but rather as emerging fluidly depending on diverse contexts of interaction (Canagarajah, 2013; Hall, 2013, 2019; Makoni & Pennycook, 2005). Finally, she was conveying implicit messages about the nature of learning and how languages, backgrounds, experiences, opinions, classroom interactions and tasks, and children's resources in the broadest sense (linguistic and nonlinguistic including embodiment and performativity) are all significant (Bradley & Harvey, 2019; Bradley et al., 2018; Canagarajah, 2018; Cope & Kalantiz, 2015; Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Hull & Moje, 2012; Kress, 2014; Moore et al., 2020).

From Languages in the Home to Languages in Argentina and South America

Once the discussion was over, the children carried out a survey among their class and some other classes in their school to discover how many and which languages were spoken in the school community. They produced a bar chart (Fig. 4.2) with their findings and created a poster that was displayed in the school corridors. Spanish, of course, was the language that the majority in this community spoke. Some minority languages from the north of Argentina and neighboring countries were also used such as Quechua, Guarani, and Wichi. Finally, some foreign languages like English, French, and Japanese were also mentioned.

Then they worked with a map of South America. They searched the languages spoken in each region of Argentina and in the rest of South America, and they wrote arrows with the languages, which they added to the poster of the languages spoken at their school. Figure 4.3 shows the information they collected about the provinces in
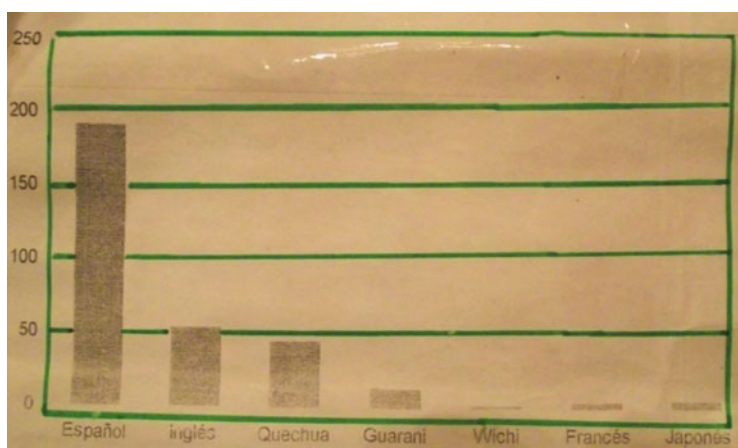

Fig. 4.2 Bar chart with the languages spoken in the school community, September 2013
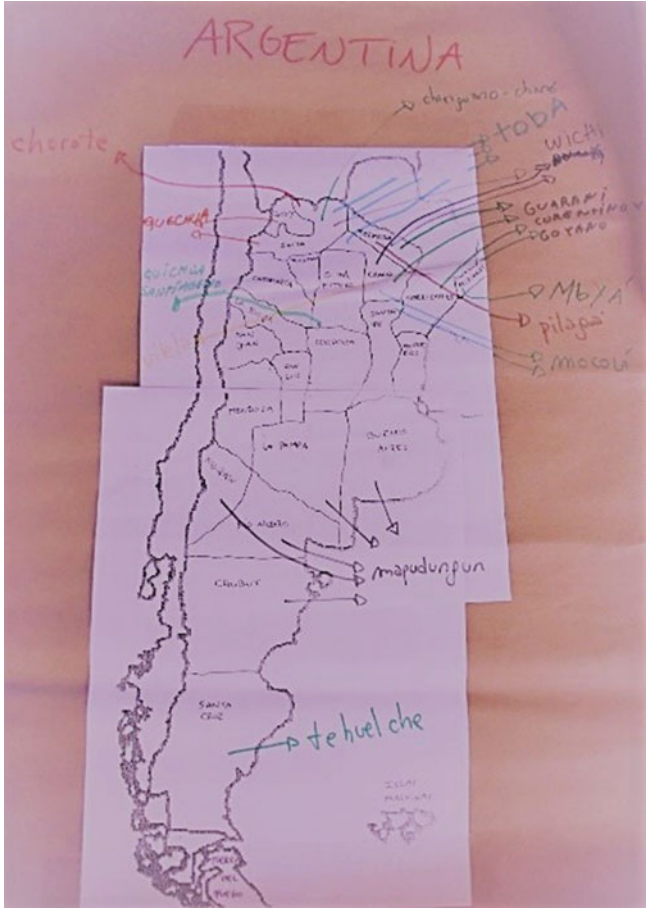
Fig. 4.3 Languages spoken in Argentina, September 2013

Argentina. For instance, they discovered that Chorote is spoken in Salta; Quechua in Jujuy and Salta; Quichua Santiagueño in Santiago del Estero; Vilela in Chaco; Mapudungun in Chubut, Río Negro, and Neuquén; Tehuelche in La Pampa, Buenos Aires, and Santa Cruz; Mocolí in Chaco and Santa Fé; Pilgará in Formosa; Mbyá and Goyano in Misiones; Correntino in Corrientes; Guarani in Chaco and Formosa; Wichi in Chaco, Formosa, and Salta; Toba in Salta, Formosa, and Chaco; and Chiriguano-Chané in Salta.

In turn, Fig. 4.4 shows their findings about South America. For example, they discovered that Spanish is spoken in Argentina, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay; English in Guyana; Dutch in Surinam; Portuguese in Brazil; Guarani in Bolivia and Paraguay; and Quechua and Aimará in Bolivia.

Fig. 4.4 Languages spoken in South America, September 2013

The children shared their work by hanging the posters in the school hall, and in this way they displayed it beyond the classroom and involved the whole school community.

In sum, linguistic and cultural diversity was discussed and explored in the English classroom using the *English Primer Reader* as trigger, which was the children's first brand new English book. By engaging in discussion and reflection, they shared personal experiences with the languages they heard and used in their homes, which the teacher valued and built upon as the basis of an inquiry-based pedagogy that encouraged them to search for information, collect it by carrying out a survey, organize it by creating bar charts, display it by designing posters, and share it with others beyond the classroom by hanging the posters in the school corridors. These activities involve skills associated with the development of critical thinking mediated by language (Banegas & Villacañas de Castro, 2016; Cobo, 2013; Dede, 2010;

Waters, 2006). In addition, the children's inquiry began with linguistic diversity at the micro level of the home and the school community to address later broader macro levels such as their country and the region of South America. In other words, they shared their grounded experiences with diversity, and Canagarajah explains that this is important because 'you can have very limited notions of language and also more complex notions of language. There are some people who develop more complex views of language because of their experiences with diversity. These people are not only looking at language norms but also at functions. Not correctness, but what you do with language' (interview article, Porto, 2021, p. 91). The children were developing language awareness through discussion, participation, collaboration, and reflection, i.e., the citizenship dimension of critical thinking (Dam & Volman, 2004).

Identities in the Natural World

Carolina then explored the concept of difference in the natural world. A lot of work on the theme had taken place and served as foundation. They had identified and analyzed different people in their neighborhoods in terms of appearance, clothing, nationality, ethnicity, and language; differences in their classroom in terms of accent and abilities, focusing on difference as an asset in collaborative work; and different languages spoken in their homes, in Argentina and in South America.

The class read in the *English Primer Reader* that the characters, Vicky and Andy, find a bird in the patio that cannot fly. They ask Rebecca, the Canadian biologist, for help and they wonder whether it is a bird or not. The class found it strange that the characters were not sure whether the bird was actually a bird. They hypothesized that one reason might be that Vicky and Andy did not know that particular bird species (Extract 12) ('no lo conocen' [they don't know it], 'nunca vieron esa especie' [they've never seen that species]):

> Extract 12
> Teacher: *¿Por qué creen que los chicos no saben si es un pájaro?*
> Martín: *Porque no lo conocen.*
> Teacher: *¿No conocen este tipo de pájaro?*
> Martín: *No, nunca vieron esa especie.*
>
> English translation
>
> Teacher: *Why do you think the children don't know whether this is a bird?*
> Martín: *Because they don't know it.*
> Teacher: They don't know this type of bird?
> Martín: *No, they've never seen that species.*
> (Class discussion, October 2013)

Figure 4.5 shows the bird, and in Extract 13 the children reflected on what made it different ('es muy grande' [it's too big], 'tiene las alas muy grandes' [its wings are too big]). It was so different that they considered 'it doesn't look like a bird.' They compared it with a dog and a carpet:
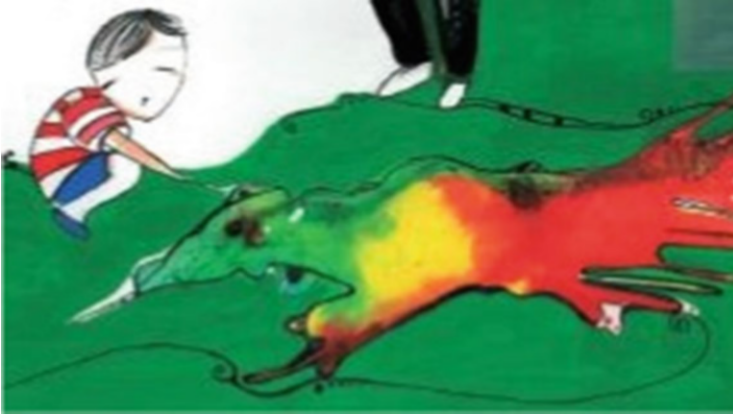
Fig. 4.5 The bird in the patio. *English Primer Reader* for grade 4 (p. 5)

Extract 13
  Teacher: Miren el dibujo. ¿Qué notan de distinto en este pájaro?
  Juan: *Es muy grande*.
  Teacher: Aha. ¿Qué más?
  Martín: *Parece un perro.*
  Pablo: *No se parece a un pájaro.*
  Julián: *Parece una alfombra.*
  Teacher: ¡¿Una alfombra?!
  Mariano*: Tiene las alas muy grandes.*

  English translation

  Teacher: Look at the drawing. What is different in this bird?
  Juan: *It's too big.*
  Teacher: I see. What else?
  Martín: *It looks like a dog.*
  Pablo: *It doesn't look like a bird.*
  Julián: *It looks like a carpet.*
  Teacher: A carpet?!
  Mariano*: Its wings are too big.*
  (Class discussion, October 2013)

Melina and Carolina decided to work with the *English Primer Reader* (pages 17–18) to teach the semantic field of animals' body parts. On this basis Carolina elicited a description of the prototype of bird the children had in their minds, and it was one with two wings, two legs, two eyes, one head, a beak, a tail, and feathers as Extract 14 shows:

Extract 14
  Teacher: An ordinary bird, what is it like? What does it have?
  Matías: *Wings.*
  Teacher: *How many wings?*
  Matías: *Two.*
  Teacher: What else?
  José: *Two legs.*
  Pedro: *Two eyes.*

Santiago: *A head, a beak.*
Teacher: *A tail.*
José: Eggs.
Teacher: Eggs? It lays eggs, but it doesn't always have eggs.
Santiago: *A lot of hair it has.*
Teacher: A lot of hair? Does a bird have hair?
Children: *Feathers*!
Teacher: Feathers.
(Class discussion, October 2013)

The pupils were using the English vocabulary they had learned to name the bird's body parts, but they were also expanding their knowledge. Learning occurs when new content is acquired or when existing knowledge is restructured or expanded (Bruner, 1985; Widdowson, 1979; Wood, 1988). Birds do not have eggs or hair; they lay eggs and have feathers ('Eggs? It lays eggs, but it doesn't always have eggs'; 'does a bird have hair?').

It was clear to the children that this bird in the *Primer Reader* was not like their stereotype of bird. It was very different indeed. The book had encouraged the children to develop their 'love for animals' (*English Primer Reader*, p. 10) by learning about and appreciating their particular features, however different from what they considered usual or 'normal.' The Crazy Animals project in the *Primer Reader* aimed at cultivating this appreciation. The children imagined their own amazing animal with parts of different animals, drew them, and then described them using simple phrases in English following the examples in the *Reader* (pages 16 and 18). They produced a collection of drawings that resulted in a handmade scrapbook of 'Crazy Animals.'

Figure 4.6 shows María's crazy animal with the beak of a chicken, the head of a bird, the ears of an elephant, the body of a zebra, the tail of a lion, and the legs of a
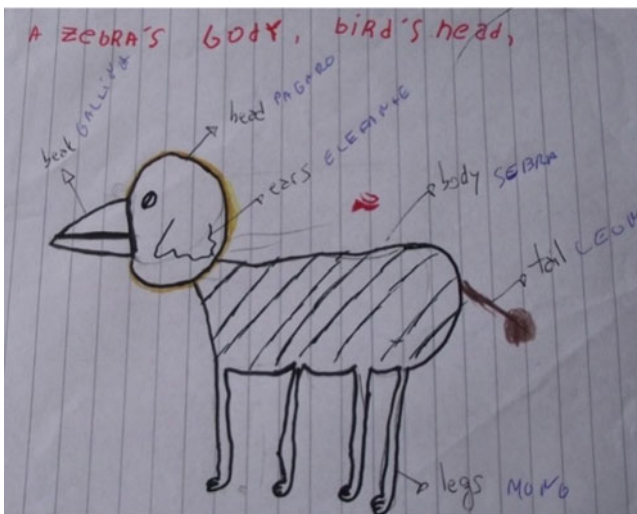

Fig. 4.6 María's crazy animal, October 2013

monkey. She used English to name the different parts of the body and Spanish to name the animals they belong to.

Carla (Fig. 4.7) also used English to describe her crazy animal. It has the tail of a snake, the body of a cow, the head of a cock, the legs of a lion, and the ears of a rabbit.

The animal world was motivational for the group, and the children themselves brought up the theme of animals in danger of extinction. Students' involvement with the choice of themes and activities characterizes critical classrooms (Banegas & Villacañas de Castro, 2016; Crookes, 2013). They decided to create leaflets to raise awareness of the topic and help protect endangered species. They also took action by distributing the leaflets in their school. In other words, they were using their linguistic and other resources to redesign what they had learned and discussed in the classroom, chose to redesign what they had learned in the form of leaflets, and used these leaflets to make a contribution in their social milieu (Bradley & Harvey, 2019; Cope & Kalantiz, 2015; Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Janks, 2014; Kress, 2014).

Figure 4.8 shows the leaflets they designed. The children created their leaflets using the English and Spanish available to them, their own ideas, their imagination, and their resources, for instance, artistic. The choice of a leaflet as text type, together with the use of images and colors, is an instance of multimodality (Cope & Kalantiz, 2015; Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Kress, 2014). Their ideas were against hunting and polluting, in favor of animal protection, and their aim was to spread information and volunteer to take care of nature. The drawings in Fig. 4.8 resemble street signs. Plastic bottles are circled in red and crossed out, meaning that it is not allowed to throw plastic bottles in the streets or the sea because they pollute the environment. Another sign in red shows a gun and a net, meaning that hunting takes animals to
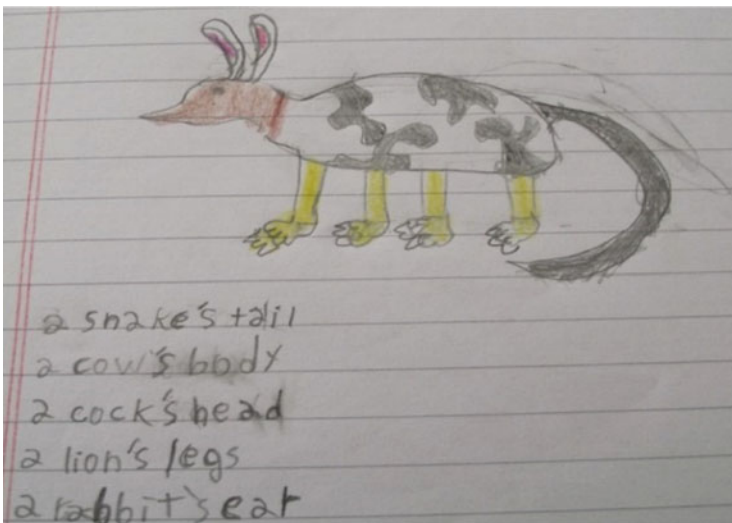

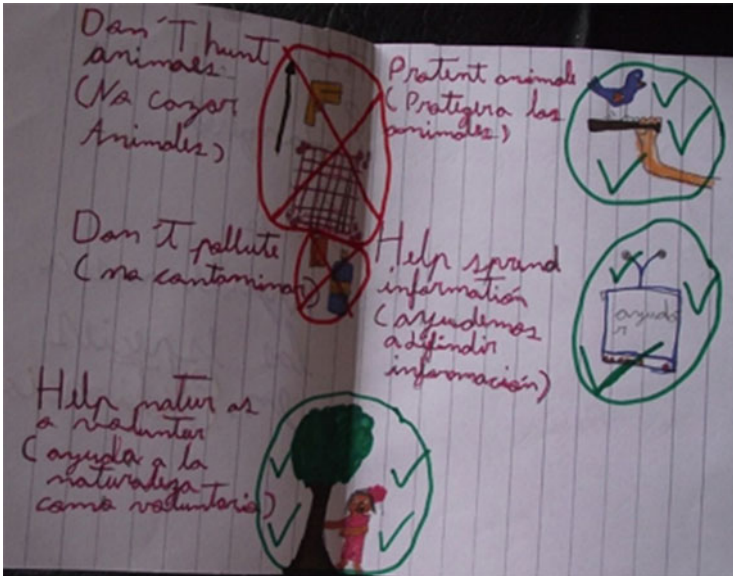**Fig. 4.7** Carla's crazy animal, October 2013

Fig. 4.8 Awareness-raising leaflets, October 2013

extinction. There are three green signs which show environmentally friendly habits that the children were encouraging. One shows a girl taking care of a tree, the other shows a TV with the word 'Help' on the screen in order to help spread information, and the last one shows a human hand with a stick, on which a bird is standing, making reference to the idea of animal protection.

In their leaflets, the children spoke directly to their imagined audience, revealed through the use of imperatives ('Don't hunt animals,' 'Don't pollute,' 'Help nature as a volunteer,' 'Protect animals,' 'Help spread information'). Spanish was used between parentheses with the intention of making the information accessible to the whole school community. The first person plural form 'ayudemos' [let us help] reflects that these children saw themselves as part of a broader community of people who have a commitment towards the environment and take concrete actions to protect nature. A lot of work with the language, with thinking, with ideas, and with imagination and creativity was taking place, and the children's choices for redesign were imbued with their interests, desires, motivations, aspirations, and identifications. In this way, their multimodal creations provided them with access to dominant literacy, for instance, by learning the text type 'leaflet' and its linguistic features, while at the same time taking their diversity and localized ways of being into account (Stein, 2000) as they chose the message to convey and its realization in terms of the use of layout, drawings, colors, and language itself (e.g., imperatives, plural pronoun 'we').

The Natural World as a Springboard for Civic Action with Children's Resources

The conversation returned to the bird in the patio, and the children hypothesized about possible reasons why it might be so strange (Extract 15). Martín first suggested it was an imaginary bird and then that it had been made with potions in a lab ('podría haber salido de un laboratorio' [it might have come out of a lab]; 'con pociones' [with potions]). Carla said it had been exposed to radioactivity together with another animal with feathers, which had resulted in a bird like this one ('una radioactividad, se metió con otro animal con plumas y ahí todo se juntó' [radioactivity, it got inside together with another feathered animal and there everything came together]). As the notion of radioactivity came up, the children attempted to define it prompted by the teacher: 'es como un agua verde' [it is like green water], and 'un tipo de veneno que se contagia y te salen cosas raras' [it's some kind of poison which makes strange things appear on your body]. They continued to say that it is a strange water that comes out of the toilet. Some other students were not convinced and suggested this water comes from labs or factories, from chemical waste:

Extract 15
Teacher: Volviendo al tema del pájaro este que es raro, ¿por qué les parece a ustedes que es así? *¿Por qué les parece que tiene cuatro alas, tres patas?*
Martín*: Porque es imaginario.*
Teacher: No, no es imaginario. Es un pájaro. ¿Qué les parece que le pasó a este pájaro?
Matín: *Podría haber salido de un laboratorio.*
Teacher: ¿Salió de un laboratorio?
Martín: *Sí, con cosas. ¿Cómo se llama? Con pociones.*
Teacher: Con pociones... ah, lo hicieron con una poción, por eso salió distinto. O... a ver...
Carla: *Por ahí una radioactividad, se metió con otro animal con plumas y ahí todo se juntó...y ahí lo agarró...*
Teacher: *¿En una radioactividad se metió? Y salió así...se juntó con otro animal con plumas y salió así... ¿Qué es la radioactividad?*
Juan: *Es como un agua verde que te causa algo.*
Martín: *Óxido.*
Teacher: *¿Qué es un agua verde y de dónde sale ese agua verde?*
Martín: *Es como un tipo de óxido, un tipo de veneno que se contagia y te salen cosas raras.*
Teacher: *¿Y de dónde sale eso?*
Carla: *Del baño.*
Teacher: *¿Del baño?*
Juan: *Noooo, no sale del baño.*
Teacher: *¿Y de dónde?*
Juan: *De... cómo se llama... de...*
Carla: *De las fábricas.*
Matías: *De los laboratorios. Los desechos químicos.*

English translation

Teacher: Coming back to this strange bird, why do you think it's like this? *Why do you think it has four wings, three legs?*
Martín*: Because it's imaginary.*
Teacher: No, it's not imaginary. It's a bird. What do you think happened to this bird?

Matín: *It might have come out of a lab.*
Teacher: It's come out of a lab?
Martín: *Yes, with things. What's it called? With potions.*
Teacher: With potions... ahh, they made it with a potion, that's why it's different. Or. . . let's see. . .
Carla: *Maybe radioactivity, it got inside together with another feathered animal and there everything came together. . . and there it caught it.*
Teacher: *Radioactivity got inside it? And it came out in this shape. . . it came together with another feathered animal and it came out like this. . . What is radioactivity?*
Juan: *It's like green water that causes something to you.*
Martín: *Rust.*
Teacher: *What's this green water and where does it come from?*
Martín: *It's a kind of rust, a kind of poison which is spread and strange things appear on you.*
Teacher: *And where does that come from?*
Carla: *From the bathroom.*
Teacher: *From the bathroom?*
Juan: *Noooo, it doesn't come from the bathroom.*
Teacher: *And where from?*
Juan: *From... what's its name. . . from. . .*
Carla: *From factories.*
Matías: *From labs. Chemical waste.*
(Class discussion, November 2013)

The extract shows that imagination was a key element contributing to the development of thinking processes. According to Lim (2011), logical thinking is not:

all that there is to critical thinking (. . .) ways of thinking that centre on ethics, the imagination, intuition, empathy, etc., even though they are not crudely susceptible to logical analyses, play a pivotal role in understanding and resolving the various problems that democratic deliberation consists in, and a fortiori require a complementary emphasis in critical thinking curricula. (p.793)

The references to Martians, green waters, and potions are evidence of this imaginative dimension. The children discussed several possibilities as a definition of radioactivity ('es como un agua verde que te causa algo' [it's like green water that causes something to you], 'óxido' [rust], 'es como un tipo de óxido, un tipo de veneno que se contagia y te salen cosas raras' [it's a kind of rust, a kind of poison which is spread and strange things appear on you]). They listened to each other and tried to enlarge or change what their classmates had said based on their previous knowledge of the topic ('¿Y de dónde sale eso?' [And where does that come from?], 'Del baño' [From the bathroom], '¿Del baño?' [From the bathroom?], 'Noooo, no sale del baño' [Noooo, it doesn't come from the bathroom]). In attempting to reach consensus, collaboration was important to evaluate the feasibility of the hypotheses they were putting forward. For instance, by interacting with peers, they concluded that radioactivity does not come from toilet water but rather from factories and labs ('¿Y de dónde?' [And where from?], 'De las fábricas' [From factories], 'De los laboratorios. Los desechos químicos' [From labs. Chemical waste]). Imagining different possibilities in creative ways, discussing alternative definitions of a concept, assessing hypotheses, reaching consensus, and collaborating characterize critical classrooms (Banegas & Villacañas de Castro, 2016; Nussbaum, 2006).

In this process, Carolina's questioning strategy guided the direction of children's thinking:

> Why do you think it's like this [the bird]?
> Why do you think it has four wings, three legs?
> What do you think happened to this bird?
> It's come out of a lab?
> Radioactivity got inside it?
> What is radioactivity?
> What's this green water and where does it come from?
> Where does that [rust] come from?
> From the bathroom?
> Where from?
> (From Extract 15)

Paul and Elder (2006, 2008) point out that teachers' questioning strategies are essential to foster critical thinking. Carolina deployed this kind of questioning as part of her teaching practice in a systematic way as all the conversation extracts in this chapter show.

Then the children read in the *Primer Reader* that Vicky, Andy, and Rebecca take the strange bird to be examined by Dr. Lynch in the character of an Argentinian zoologist. They learned that Dr. Lynch was a real zoologist born in 1856, who became renowned and died in 1935. Dr. Lynch says that the bird is an example of chemical pollution. Carolina linked the theme with the previous discussion about radioactivity and asked the children to define 'chemical waste,' a term that emerged from their own ideas. They again used their creativity and imagination to suggest that 'chemical waste is like Martians' or that it comes 'from a myth' (Extract 16). Carolina's questioning strategy (Paul & Elder, 2006, 2008) is evidenced once more ('What is chemical waste?,' 'Who throws away the rubbish?,' 'Is that chemical waste?,' 'From a myth?'):

> Extract 16
> Teacher: *¿Qué son los desechos químicos?*
> Carla: *Son las basuras que tiran.*
> Teacher: *¿La basura que tira quién?*
> Matías: *Las personas, como el plástico, latitas.*
> Teacher: *¿Esos son desechos químicos?*
> Martín: *No, no son. Los desechos químicos son como...*
> Carla: *Como los marcianos.*
> Teachers: *Los desechos químicos son como los marcianos.*
> Matías: *De un mito.*
> Teacher: *¿De un mito?*
> Martín: *Algo que se cree pero no se ve... eso... un mito.*
>
> English translation
>
> Teacher: *What is chemical waste?*
> Carla: *They are the rubbish they throw away.*
> Teacher: *Who throws away the rubbish?*
> Matías: *People, like plastic, cans.*
> Teacher: *Is that chemical waste?*
> Martín: *No, they aren't. Chemical waste is like....*
> Carla: *Like aliens.*

Teacher: *Chemical waste is like Martians.*
Matías: *From a myth.*
Teacher: *From a myth?*
Martín: *Something that is believed but it can't be seen... that...a myth.*
(Class discussion, November 2013)

Carolina welcomed children's imagination and creativity and fostered it through effective questioning strategies as shown in Extracts 15 and 16 as a first experiential approach to the theme but also encouraged them to investigate the topic. She complemented this initial experiential approach with a scientific basis initially provided by Dr. Lynch in conversation with Rebecca in the *Primer Reader* (Extract 17):

Extract 17
Dr Lynch: This is clearly a case of chemical pollution.
Andy: Chemical pollution?
Vicky: What's that?
Dr Lynch: *In our world today, people use chemical substances both in the country and in the city. These substances contaminate our air, waters and land.*
Rebecca: *These chemicals are sometimes present in pesticides when farmers grow crops. The chemical substances in pesticides can cause deformities and illnesses when they are used constantly and without control.*
(*English Primer Reader* for grade 4, p. 28)

The children read about chemical pollution in the *Primer Reader* and also searched information about the theme and researched it at home. They first learned about its devastating effects on the animal world as Dr. Lynch explains that Pichi, the bird, cannot be saved:

Extract 18
Dr Lynch: Probably Pichi's mother is exposed to chemical substances.
Mailén: Oh! No! *Can we help Pichi and her mother?*
Dr Lynch: *I'm sorry. It's too late.*
(*English Primer Reader* for grade 4, p. 28)

Moved by Pichi's inescapable death, the children immediately felt a commitment to take action to stop chemical pollution. In the classroom, they analyzed the information they had researched at home and began to plan the design of awareness-raising leaflets to be distributed in the school community. Figure 4.9a, 4.9b, and 4.9c shows one collaborative leaflet.

Figure 4.9 shows a leaflet with a cover (Part A) and two sections inside (Parts B and C). The cover (Part A) has a picture of a ship which is spilling a black liquid into the sea. This liquid represents oil, which is polluting the sea. Inside the leaflet (Part B), there is a question: 'What is chemical pollution?' The children decided it was transparent for the rest of the school community to understand so they kept it in English. Using bullet points and Spanish, they listed different examples of chemical pollution such as pesticide residues in food, extensive mining, industrial and urban activities, oil spills, and oil tankers. Part C addresses the question of 'how to fight chemical pollution' by listing the group's recommended actions such as buying local
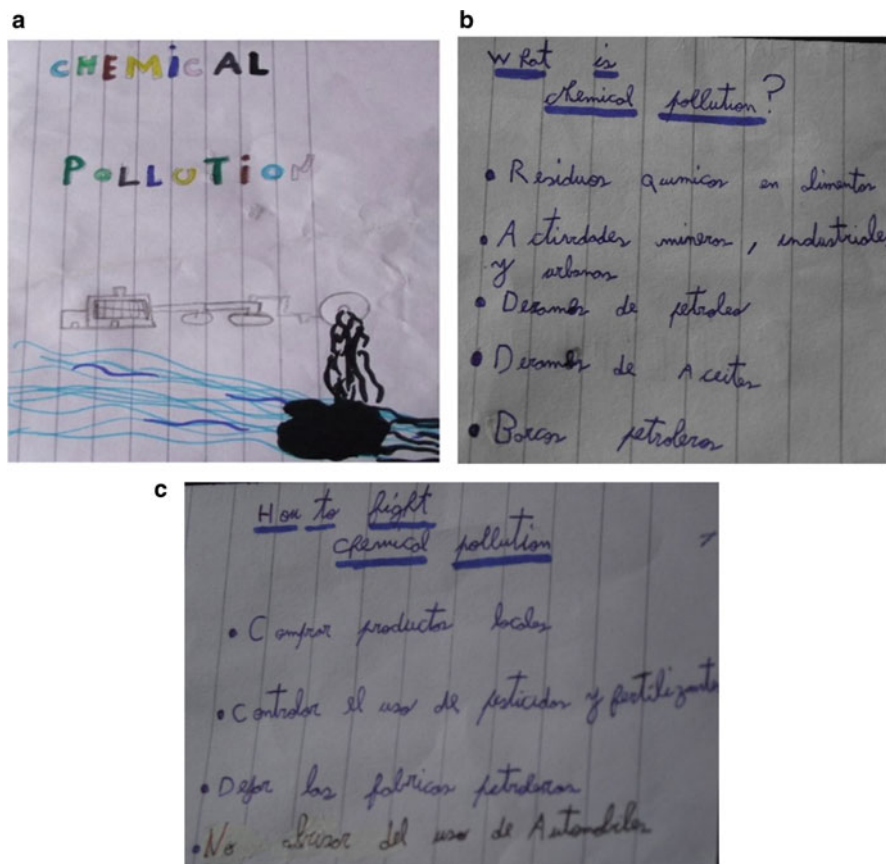
Fig. 4.9 (**a**) Cover of collaborative leaflet, November 2013. (**b**) Inside page of collaborative leaflet: What is chemical pollution? November 2013. (**c**) Inside page of collaborative leaflet: How to fight chemical pollution. November 2013

products, reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers, stopping production in oil factories, and limiting the use of automobiles.

In creating their leaflets, the children engaged in discussion and collaboration with the purpose of making their small contribution to improving the world. They used all their available resources and means, linguistic and nonlinguistic, involving the arts, creativity, imagination, and plurimodal semiotics (Bradley & Harvey, 2019; Bradley et al., 2018; Cope and Kalantiz, 2015; Moore et al., 2020). In other words, they were becoming agentive and were gaining awareness of the fact that the possibilities for transformation were in their hands (Larsen Freeman, 2019). In this case, this transformation happened by addressing a current social justice theme like chemical pollution, imaging possible contributions they could make, taking action to raise the awareness of their school community (Janks, 2014, 2018), and gaining in this way 'a sense of efficacy for social change' (Man-Chu Lau, 2013, p. 1).

Conclusion

This chapter is an illustration of the kind of critical work that can be undertaken in a difficult context (Kuchah Kuchah & Shamim, 2018) characterized by poverty with unsatisfied basic needs sometimes; nonexistent literacy environments or support in the home; linguistic, ethnic, and cultural diversity; and learner unfamiliarity with the behaviors and attitudes needed in critical classrooms (discussion, negotiation, collaboration). Initially, Carolina faced very simple but significant difficulties such as the children's lack of attention and their difficulty to stay focused and follow class discussions. Little English was heard or used except for that appearing in the *English Primer Reader*. However, she was able to begin to instill change little by little. The long and exhausting scaffolding she engaged in at all times illustrates the tenor of the difficulty. This change was possible because she began by bringing in only what the children could contribute at a particular point: their ideas and imagination using Spanish, little English, and their artistic abilities; their lived experiences and personal anecdotes about the languages used in their homes; their curiosity, imagination, creativity, and experiences as a first approach to address scientific themes such as radioactivity and chemical pollution and problematize them; and all their resources, linguistic and multimodal, to imagine that they could make a contribution, however piecemeal, to fight chemical pollution as their civic action to take care of animals and birds. This is an example of a critical classroom, only that it is not the usual mainstream ELT classroom in privileged contexts reported in the literature (Crookes, 2013; Kuchah Kuchah & Shamim, 2018; López-Gopar, 2019). This is why this experience cannot be judged or evaluated by the usual parameters of how much accurate English the children used and produced, i.e., in terms of competence, grammar, and proficiency (Canagarajah, 2018; Hall, 2019; Porto, 2021), because this is simply not relevant. What Carolina and Melina were doing instead was creating the conditions to 'prepare learners for using language structures as semiotic resources to create meanings and assert themselves (. . .) in challenging contexts' (Gao, 2019, p. 165). In other words, they were providing a social justice basis for language education in this context (Gao, 2019).

Engagement Options

The children in this classroom with difficult circumstances got in contact with English for the first time, initially through the locally produced *English Primer Reader*. During the semester that the experience lasted, they used and learned little English if judged in terms of usual constructs like language competence, language repertoire, grammar, and proficiency (Canagarajah, 2018; Hall, 2019).

1. What views of language and learning do teacher education programs in specific contexts project? How are the notions of language and learning theorized in these programs? How can they be critically challenged? Considering that 'language

teacher education programs should focus on developing language teachers who are committed to social justice and equity in teaching, who are critically aware of the significant impact that inequitable contextual conditions may have on language learners' learning' (Gao, 2019, p. 165), how can teacher education programs address these goals? What can teachers do to become agentive in this respect?

2. In response to the first engagement question, Canagarajah (2018), Canagarajah in Porto (2021), Hall (2019), and Gao (2019) propose replacing the notions of competence, grammar, and proficiency by repertoire, semiotic resources, and register. Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) and Canagarajah (2018) propose the concept of spatial repertoires which emerge from the learners' participation in their social worlds. Makoni and Pennycook (2005, p. 150) recommend strategies of disinvention and reconstitution 'in which languages are subordinate to their speakers' and speakers/users accounts in localized contexts are paramount. What does all this mean pedagogically? Has this chapter illustrated these proposals? If so, in which ways? What else could Carolina have done in this setting?

3. Shamim (2018, p. 245) foregrounds 'the pivotal role of teachers working in difficult circumstances in 'making a difference' in their students' lives' but warns that their agency alone is not enough and needs to be supported by responsive policies, institutions, staff, materials, professional development options, and so on. In particular, there is a need for initial teacher education, pre-service and in-service programs, and professional development opportunities that address difficult contexts (Shamim, 2018) and offer 'praxis development' for critical approaches and pedagogies (Nuske, 2015, p. 283; López-Gopar, 2019). In which ways can this praxis development be fostered in specific contexts?

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Chapter 5
Critical Thinkers in the Making: Exploring the World and Enhancing Human Relations in Fifth Grade

María Emilia Arcuri and Melina Porto

Initial Vignette

It is the beginning of March 2013, and the school year starts for this group of fifth graders aged 10–11 except for one aged 12. They are 21 in the group, and they meet their English teacher, Emilia, with caution and reservations. They have hardly been exposed to the English language and are reluctant.

Situated in the city of La Plata, Buenos Aires, school *N° 43 Juan José Atencio* offers general education for children from first to sixth grade during the day. In the evening, it runs a program for adults who have not received formal education. On Saturdays, children participate in extracurricular activities such as watching movies,

We have followed ethical guidelines and usual ethical procedures. Consent and release forms from parents have been obtained. All student names are pseudonyms. Permission to name the school has been obtained. Supporting evidence is italicized in all data extracts.

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playing football or attending different workshops. The school staff share a keen sense of generosity and commitment to social inclusion ideals and are particularly responsive to the needs of these children and their families.

In September, Emilia brings brand new English books to the class. Melina, co-author of the chapter and project leader, notes that the children are eager and enthusiastic but also a little bit impatient and anxious. They are curious and flick through the pages with keenness. They stop at the book cover for a while. They recognize the Spanish word *escuela* (school) and an Argentinian flag. In a second, they are totally in. They imagine the book will be about an Argentinian school and they feel glad.

That day the class reads the first page, *New at school*. The setting is a school; it looks familiar. It resembles their own school. There is a new student and the teacher in the book speaks Spanish! By now, the children are relaxed and comfortable. The book introduces an everyday situation they have experienced themselves. With joy, they begin to join Emilia in the reading.

For these children, this is their first contact with the *English Primer Reader*, grade 5. As language is introduced by resorting to commonplace situations in their lives, they can easily make connections. This chapter shows the different ways in which Emilia exploits these connections to foster critical literacy and enact a critical pedagogy.

Engaging with English Through Everyday Situations

As the children read the text about A-Mei's first day at school in the *English Primer Reader*, they learned that she comes from Taiwan and does not speak Spanish. As a first step towards fostering curiosity and openness towards otherness, Emilia invited her students to welcome A-Mei, and Fig. 5.1 shows their responses in simple English.

Emilia then aimed at fostering empathy by asking the children to place themselves in A-Mei's shoes and imagine how she might be feeling. Everyone envisaged she was feeling 'nervous' and 'happy' as Fig. 5.2 illustrates. Emilia immediately linked that situation to her students' lives by exploring their feelings about their own first day at school and asking them to draw their experiences. As Fig. 5.2 shows, it was clear to Melina and Emilia that the children identified with A-Mei's feelings of nervousness and happiness.
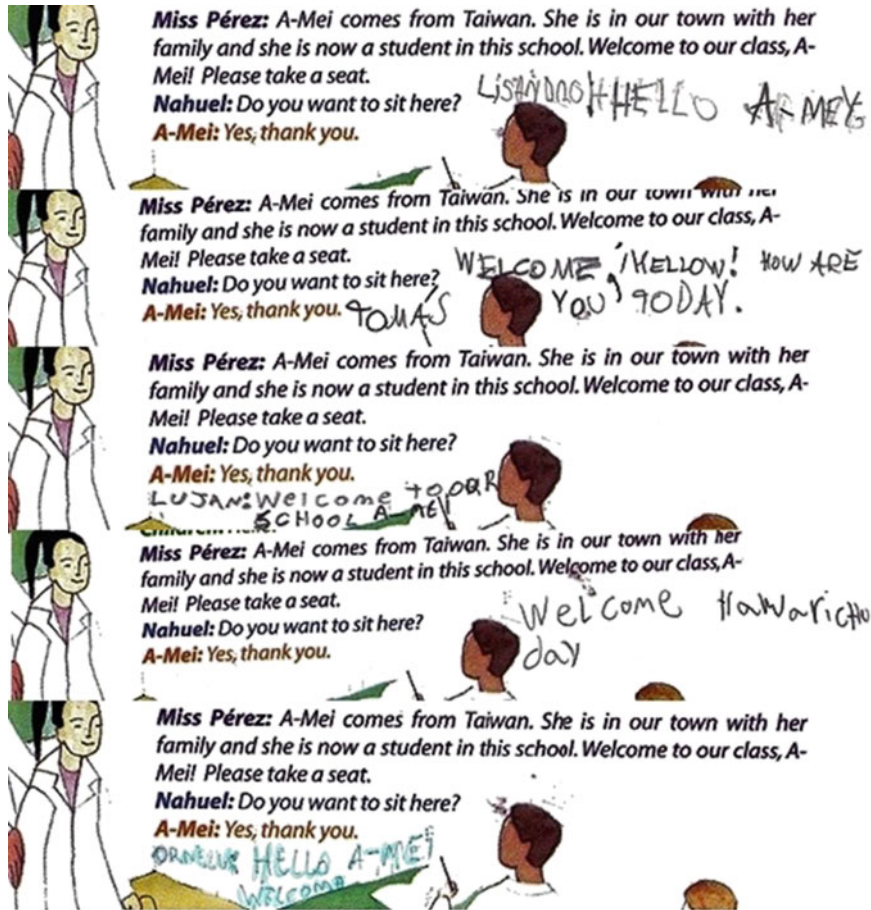
Fig. 5.1 Children's welcome messages to the new student from Taiwan, A-Mei. September 2013

Melina highlighted that the feeling of uneasiness was predominant, revealed, for example, by the adjective 'nervous' in Fig. 5.3 and the expression 'pero tres compañeras nos decían cosas' [but three partners teased us] in Fig. 5.4. The children reflected on the similar feelings A-Mei and themselves had experienced.

Fig. 5.2 A-Mei's feelings and my feelings. September 2013

Fig. 5.3 Feelings about the
first day at school.
September 2013

Fig. 5.4 Writing about personal experiences. September 2013

English translation
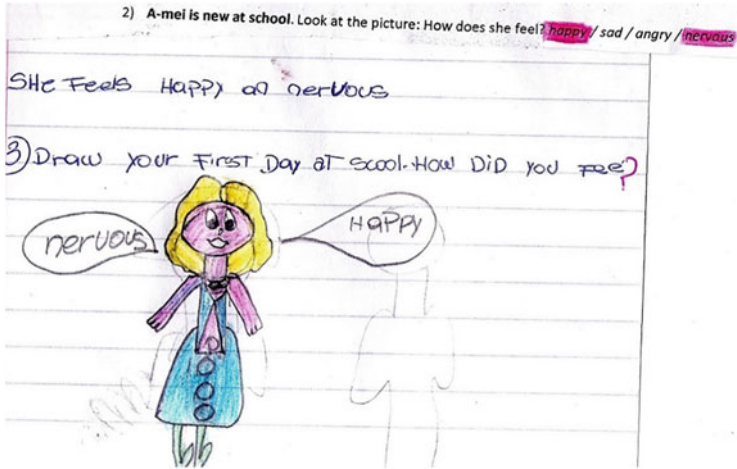　　I went into the classroom and they invited me to sit next to them and from then on, we became good friends but I liked it a lot but three partners teased us.

Although Emilia modelled the use of English to accomplish the task, some children preferred to write about their experiences in Spanish. In any case, Figs. 5.2 and 5.3 show that sometimes they found a voice in A-Mei's words to name their own feelings ('nervous' and 'happy'). Yet, other times they expressed their feelings and adopted a reflective mood as Fig. 5.4 shows ('me gusto mucho pero' [I liked it a lot but]). In her field notes (Extract 1), Emilia explained her rationale behind the fostering of a reflective spirit:[1]

Extract 1
　　I recognized the children's right to develop as critical citizens. My rationale for *encouraging this reflective attitude as a first step* toward the development of critical thinking skills was based on Wright's (2002, p. 150) conceptualization of the concept: 'The evidence suggests that teachers hold a skills conception of critical thinking (…) [and] the school milieu mitigates against the teaching of critical thinking. There is far too much emphasis on content coverage (…) The belief is widespread that either all students need to fully understand a topic before they can think critically about it, and/or that some students are incapable of critical thought.'
　　(Teacher field note, September 2013)

Emilia wrote field notes on a regular basis where she expressed her theoretical perspectives, vision of education, moral purpose as an educator and educational aims, and this reflection is significant in critical approaches to education

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[1]Supporting evidence has been italicized in all extracts.

(Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016; Luke, 2019). In this field note, she presented her vision and moral purpose, based on her recognition of 'children's right to develop as critical citizens'. Instead of considering the little English and the Spanish used by the children as a deficit view of their English language skills, she was motivated to find value in their reflective attitude from the beginning ('encouraging this reflective attitude as a first step') and foster it with the resources available to them at the moment. These resources were verbal (English and Spanish) and non-verbal (drawings).

All in all, despite the fact that little English was used or that sometimes feelings and reflections were conveyed in Spanish, Melina and Emilia agreed that the classroom sequence aimed at developing the dispositions that are involved in critical thinking such as curiosity, openness to otherness and empathy (Ennis, 2011). These dispositions, or habits of mind, have been recognized as being as important as the cultivation of specific skills or capacities (Ennis, 2011; Sergi, 2017). At the same time, by asking the children to identify, compare and evaluate feelings and situations (the character's and their own), Emilia was simultaneously developing higher-order thinking processes (Green et al., 2012; Paul & Elder, 2006).

Overall, by encouraging the children to put themselves in A-Mei's shoes, imagine her feelings, and analyze their own feelings in the same situation (the first day at school), Emilia was fostering a capacity that is essential in critical thinking according to Nussbaum (2002, 2006), called narrative imagination or imaginative understanding, defined as:

> the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have. (Nusbaum, 2006, pp. 390–91)

This capacity is difficult to develop because it involves:

> see[ing] the meaning of an action as the person intends it, the meaning of a speech as it expresses something of importance in the context of that person's history and social world. (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 299)

Even though 'the first day at school' is an ordinary situation all children have experienced, A-Mei's position introduced the context of immigration and population mobility and what it means in terms of adjusting to a different language, new people, local customs and cultural habits. The fact that A-Mei comes from Taiwan and speaks another language makes her an outsider. For these children to wholeheartedly place themselves in her shoes, they needed to engage their imagination using the skills of comparing, contrasting, relating, de-centering and perspective-taking – skills that characterize narrative imagination:

> . . .through the imagination we may attain a kind of insight into the experience of another that it is very difficult to attain in daily life – particularly when our world has constructed sharp separations and suspicions that make any encounter difficult. (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 391)

In other words, because the children had not experienced anything similar to A-Mei's situation, they needed to develop their imagination. Furthermore, in this process of imagining an 'other', emotions and affects played a significant role

('nervous', 'happy'). Melina and Emilia discussed the important role of emotions and feelings in education, highlighted in the literature (Boler, 1999; Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Dewaele, 2013; Fleming, 2012; Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014), and Emilia welcomed and prioritized their expression in the classroom both verbally (writing) and artistically (drawing).

Developing Research Skills

The children were intrigued by Taiwan, and Emilia exploited their curiosity with the aim of developing research skills and reading informational texts – an infrequent text type in the primary grades as Melina noted (Duke, 2000). They investigated about Taiwan and Buenos Aires, in particular information about location, population, capital city, geographic features, climate and languages spoken in the country/province, and they completed the fact file in the *English Primer Reader* (Fig. 5.5).

Fig. 5.5 Fact file about Taiwan and Buenos Aires. October 2013

Melina observed that it was not easy for the children to complete this fact file. Emilia did preparatory work. She invited them to the school library. It was their first time there. Extract 2 shows the kind of student-teacher interaction that took place during the visit. Emilia used a globe of the world to spot Taiwan and La Plata ('Where's La Plata?', 'Where's Taiwan?'). When the children started exploring the books in the library, she helped them think about what type of book would be relevant to find the information they needed ('which book should we read?'). They suggested atlas and encyclopedias:

Extract 2
[The children sit on the floor and look at a globe of the world].
Teacher: *Where's La Plata?* [Students point to it and Emilia elicits the word 'here' together with the gesture]. *Where's Taiwan?* [Emilia elicits the country and the continent too). Where's…? [Emilia repeats the procedure with other countries and cities].
Teacher: Ahora, *si necesitamos buscar información sobre todos estos lugares, ¿en qué libro buscamos?* [Now, *if we need to look up information about all these places, which book should we read?*]
Student 1: *Atlas*.
Teacher: Yes, what else?
Student 2: *Enciclopedia*. [*Encyclopedia*]
Teacher: Yes, that's right.
(Class conversation, October 2013)

Emilia also helped her students develop research skills by checking whether the sources they were selecting were in fact about Taiwan. Again, Melina observed the difficulty they were experiencing, which proved teacher scaffolding was necessary ('Is that information about Taiwan or China?', 'Where's the information?', 'How can you tell that information refers to China?'). Emilia drew their attention to the use of titles to save time and organize their search ('This title, does it tell you anything about China?'). They realized they were looking at a source that was not useful ('Is the information on this page useful?', 'No') and that they needed to look for a different one ('let's keep on looking then'):

Extract 3
Teacher: What did you find?
Lautaro: La Formación del Mundo Moderno. [He reads the title]
[The Formation of the Modern World]
Teacher: *Is that information about Taiwan or China?*
Lautaro: [Student makes a 'don't know' gesture]
Tobias: Yes.
Teacher: *Where's the information? ¿Cómo se dieron cuenta que hablaba de China?*
[How can you tell that information refers to China?]
[Students hesitate]
Teacher: *El título este, ¿les dice algo sobre China?*
[This title, does it tell you anything about China?]
Tobías: No, dice cómo se formaron los países.
[No, it talks about the formation of countries]
Teacher: *Bueno, y ¿dónde aparece la información específica de China? ¿Les sirve esa hoja que ustedes están mirando?*
[Well, and where's the specific information about China? Is the information on this page useful?]

Lautaro: No.
Teacher: Bueno, *sigamos buscando…*
[Well, *let's keep on looking then…*]
(Class conversation, October 2013)

Emilia reflected on this process and her aims in her field notes. These aims comprised encouraging the children to 'think critically' and 'reflect on the way they acquire knowledge' and involved several skills such as 'searching for specific information', 'selecting a good source', and 'deciding whether the information is appropriate or not'. These are critical thinking skills (Ennis, 1985; Paul, 2007; Paul & Elder, 2006):

Extract 4
My intention in asking questions such as 'How can you tell that information refers to China?' or 'Is the title related to China?' was to train students. I wanted to *motivate them to think critically and reflect on the way they acquire knowledge, uncovering the kind of thinking process that underlies the task of searching for specific information, from the act of selecting a good source to the moment of deciding whether the information is appropriate or not by using different strategies.*
(Teacher field note, October 2013)

The same group of students started a new search, and Extract 5 shows that the scaffolding process proved to be effective since the children shifted their attention to more relevant sources ('Acá está la información' [Here's the information]). First, they looked for titles and subtitles which were connected to Taiwan ('Porque habla…el título' [Because here it says…the title]), such as Asia, and then they inferred that a text about this continent might contain the information they were looking for ('Which continent?', 'Asia'). As in the previous extracts, Emilia's questions were important in the process ('¿Y por qué eso puede ser información que nos sirva?' [And, why do you think this is useful information?]):

Extract 5
Teacher: So now…
Lautaro: *Acá está la información.* [He points to it]
[Here's the information]
Teacher: *¿Y por qué eso puede ser información que nos sirva?*
[And, why do you think this is useful information?]
Lautaro: *Porque habla…el título.*
[Because here it says…the title]
Tobías: Porque dice…habla de cómo se formó el continente. [They overlap/Lautaro echoes his partner's words]
[Because here it says… it talks about the way the continent was formed]
Teacher: *Which continent?*
Tobias: *Asia.*
(Class conversation, October 2013)

In this way, in a process that was slow and that required a lot of scaffolding, the children got familiar with different specific genres and text types, and accessed them in the library, getting direct experience of world maps, atlas and encyclopedias (Duke, 2000) to solve a task they considered interesting and were curious about such as finding information about Taiwan, A-Mei's country of origin.

This section also reveals the important role of Emilia's questioning strategies, which have been acknowledged as crucial in the development of critical thinking. Paul and Elder (2006, p. 4) refer to 'the art of deep questioning' as they highlight 'the importance of questioning in teaching'. Following Paul and Elder (2006, 2008) and Ennis (1985, 2011), the questions Emilia posed in this section can be classified in different types, all stimulating different skills involved in critical thinking. For example:

> Where's La Plata?
> Where's Taiwan?
> Which book should we read?
> What else?
> What did you find?
> Is that information about Taiwan or China?
> Where's the information?
> How can you tell that information refers to China?
> This title, does it tell you anything about China?
> Where's the specific information about China?
> Is the information on this page useful?
> Why do you think this is useful information?
> Which continent?

Even though the use of questioning might seem more natural when the aim is the development of research skills using informational sources, the chapter will show that this questioning strategy was an inherent part of Emilia's practice.

Learning About Others to Enhance Human Relations

Another aim Emilia had was to foster awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity ('a teaching sequence sensitive to linguistic and ethnic minorities', 'acknowledging diversity within students' communities') by getting to know others ('interaction about their own lives'). These 'others' were not distant but close ('most of his classmates did not know José's background'). They were these children's classmates and teacher, their friends, family members, and other children and teachers in their school. Emilia also reflected on this aim in her field notes (Extract 6):

> Extract 6
> There are many different ways in which students can learn to think critically as Dam and Volman (2004) claim:
> Characteristics of instruction that are assumed to enhance critical thinking are: paying attention to the development of the epistemological beliefs of students; promoting active learning; a problem-based curriculum; stimulating interaction between students; and learning on the basis of real-life situations (. . .) Learning to think critically is conceptualized as the acquisition of the competence to participate critically in the communities and social practices of which a person is a member. (Dam & Volman, 2004, p. 359)
> I decided to *focus on student interaction about their own lives.* So I asked my students: 'Are you from Argentina?' and one of them said 'José es de Paraguay' [José is from Paraguay]. I used this piece of information to address José and ask him: 'What language
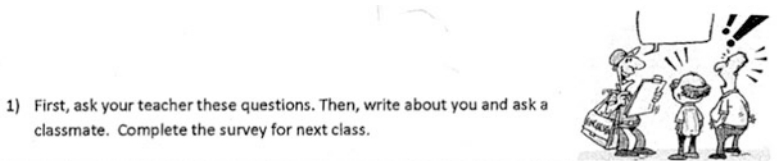
do people speak in Paraguay?' and he said 'Guaraní'. However, when I asked him if he could speak this language, he simply nodded and I realized he was not feeling comfortable. *I also discovered that most of his classmates did not know José's background* so I told him that he could teach us some Guarani words whenever he wanted to do so. On the basis of this exchange, *I decided to develop a teaching sequence sensitive to linguistic and ethnic minorities with the belief that acknowledging diversity within students' communities in order to foster respect for linguistic and cultural diversity should be part of every school curriculum.*

(Teacher field note, October 2013)

The children learned that 'José is from Paraguay', and in order to find out information about everyone's backgrounds, they carried out a survey inside and outside the classroom so as to learn more about each other and stimulate interaction among themselves, Emilia and family members. For instance, Figs. 5.6 and 5.7 show that the children discovered that some of their classmates' relatives came from other countries, for instance, Peru and Paraguay, and could speak other languages apart from Spanish such as Guarani and English.

After sharing their findings, the children located the places where their families came from in a map. When they had to locate Paraguay, José shouted: 'Me! A mi me toca señalar, yo soy de Paraguay' [Me! It's my turn, I'm from Paraguay].

In the survey, the children focused exclusively on their class and their families. In order to stimulate interaction among members of the school community, they suggested creating a Facebook account. However, the idea had to be dropped immediately as most of them did not have access to a computer, cell phone or Wi-Fi connection at home and the school did not have a computer lab either. Since the children really liked Facebook and talking about it in class aroused their interest, the class collaboratively used their imagination to redesign their idea. They decided to design an opinion poll poster (Fig. 5.8) and put it up in one of the school corridors

Fig. 5.6 Linguistic and cultural backgrounds

1) First, ask your teacher these questions. Then, write about you and ask a
   classmate. Complete the survey for next class.

Questions	My teacher	Me	A classmate	mother	father
What's your name?	Emilia Arcuri	Eomos	Rocho	Nieida	Marino
Where are you from?	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	Peru	Peru
Where do you live?	In La Plat.	In 'La Plato	Berisso	La Plata	La Plata
How many languages do you speak?	English and Spanish	inglish and spanish	spanish	spanish	spanish
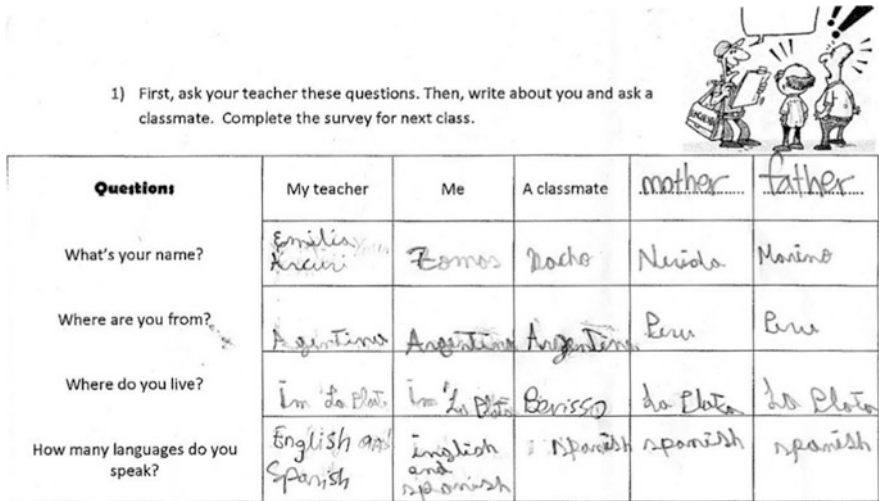
Fig. 5.7 Linguistic and cultural backgrounds

Fig. 5.8 Going beyond the
classroom: reaching the
school community with an
opinion poll

in order to exchange points of view with other children and teachers in the school. In
this way, a new space to speak up and share their opinions with the rest of the school
community emerged. To carry out this task, each child selected different pictures of
the province of Buenos Aires, according to the places they liked best. Then Emilia
put all the images on the board, and, as a whole class, the children chose only seven
to make the poster and comment on them (using 'like/don't like') as if they were
giving their opinions on Facebook. In general, they chose pictures that showed

different sights of their own city, La Plata, but there were also pictures of other cities, such as Tandil and Mar del Plata.

Melina noted that the children worked enthusiastically, collaboratively and creatively to complete this simple yet motivational and real-life classwork. They were faced with a limitation, namely, the lack of computers, cell phones and WI-FI, echoing the characteristics of low-resourced classrooms (Gao, 2019; Kuchah Kuchah & Shamim, 2018). However, they used their creativity and imagination in the redesign of an alternative (Janks, 2014, 2018), an opinion poll poster, with the multimodal resources available to them, which comprised the use of printed images and drawings to resemble Facebook (Bradley & Harvey, 2019; Kress, 2014). Social ties (with classmates and the school community), mutual understanding (through a genuine interest in others) and democratic practices (to decide on an alternative to Facebook, design it, choose the pictures to include in the poster) were enhanced. Melina and Emilia reflected on the fact that social bonds, mutual understanding and democratic deliberation require an emphasis on criticality (Lim, 2011), and they concluded that the focus on redesign (Janks, 2014, 2018) using the multimodal and semiotic resources available to Emilia's students (Kress, 2014) is an example of critical literacy development in English language education.

Emilia was also particularly interested in encouraging the children to learn more about themselves and develop mutual understanding and bonds. She returned to the *English Primer Reader* and explored the section *A-Mei in our school* by asking them to describe the scene: A-Mei is at break time, in the playground, talking to her new friends and eating biscuits. Everyone agreed that the playground during school breaks is the best place to interact with others and make friends. Emilia initiated the discussion about whether they knew their classmates: 'Do you think you really know your classmates?', 'What else would you like to know about them?', 'What would you ask them?' She invited her students to write their own questions in slips of paper, and they used both languages, English and Spanish (Fig. 5.9).
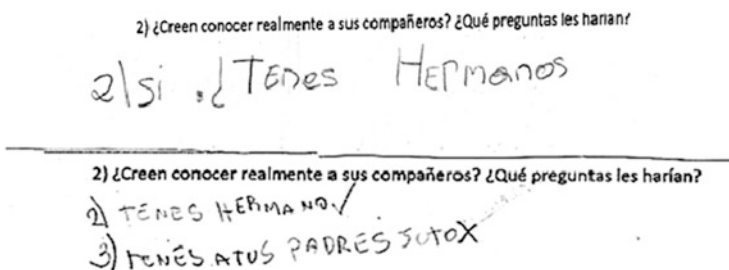
Fig. 5.9 Students write questions to ask their partners

English translation
2) Yes. Have you got any brothers or sisters?
2) Have you got any brothers or sisters?
3) Are your parents together? [That is, not divorced]

Some of them were interested in knowing more about their partners' families as Fig. 5.9 illustrates. Yet, others were curious about their classmates' likes and dislikes. A few examples appear in Fig. 5.10. The English translation of the Spanish used in Fig. 10 appears next:
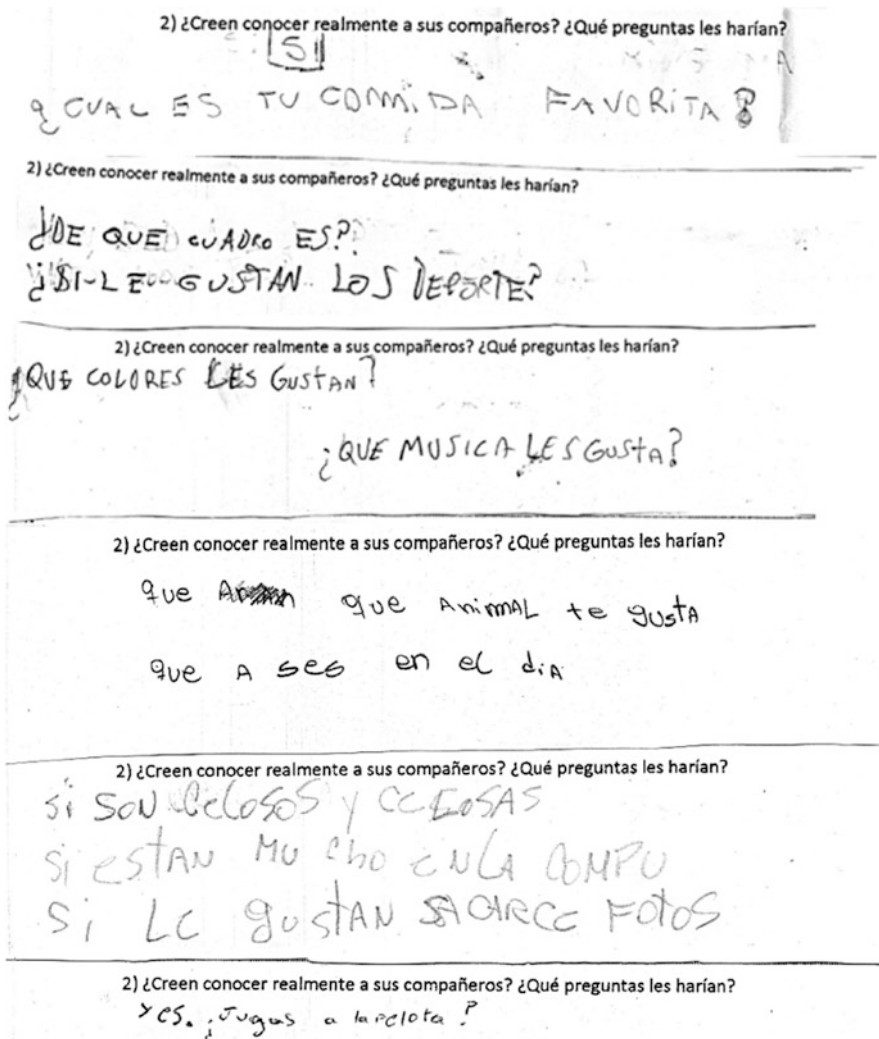
Fig. 5.10 More questions written by other children

English translation
   What's your favorite food?
   What football team do you support?
   Do you like sports?
   What colors do you like?

What music do you like?
What animal do you like?
What do you do during the day?
Are you jealous?
Do you spend long hours in the computer?
Do you like taking pictures of yourself?
Do you play with balls?

While many times the children used Spanish, sometimes they attempted to convey their meanings in English as Fig. 5.11 shows.

The children addressed topics that clearly belonged to their everyday lives, and it was precisely within these familiar contexts that English began to make sense. Starting from their genuine interest in their partners, they exchanged their points of view and opinions, acknowledging the similarities and differences that existed among them. Emilia purposefully built on their previous knowledge and experiences and created a safe environment where they could express themselves. Melina and Emilia were well aware that familiar contexts and situations, connections with students' lives, safe environments, self-expression and possibilities for self-affirmation are characteristic of critical literacy classrooms (Wallerstein & Auerbach, 2003).

Emilia then drew the children's attention back to the story in order to stir their imagination, focusing on A-Mei again and inviting them to ask questions to her. She reflected on the triggers for discussion in small groups in her field notes (Extract 7) and stated that her aim was 'to promote mutual understanding' by fostering 'imagination, empathy and intuition':

Extract 7
What would you ask A-Mei if you saw her at school?
What would she answer?
Why?
I want to encourage the children to imagine a conversation with A-Mei but also to take her place and rehearse a possible response on her part. Following Lim (2011), my intention here is to *motivate students to focus their thinking on imagination, empathy and intuition in order to promote mutual understanding and, in so doing, foster critical thinking.*
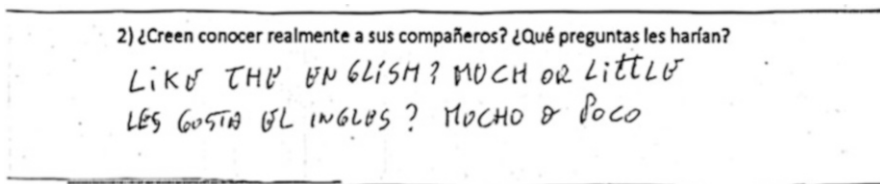(Teacher field notes, October 2013)

Fig. 5.11 A child begins to attempt meaning making in English

Figure 5.12 shows the questions that the children wished to ask A-Mei. Melina highlighted that the fact that the questions came from the children themselves is significant in critical literacy classrooms (Wallerstein & Auerbach, 2003). While they asked about animals, sports and food, they also adapted their questions and linked them to A-Mei's life, for example, by asking about her parents' job at the supermarket and her new school. In this way, they were able to step into A-Mei's shoes, showing empathy for her and an understanding of what they imagined was important for her then. They were developing their imaginative understanding or narrative imagination, that is, the capacity to imagine A-Mei's feelings, wishes and desires (Nussbaum, 2002, 2006).

In their questions in Fig. 5.13, the children acknowledged A-Mei's background (Taiwan) and took interest in learning about it. They were also curious about her perception of Argentina.

Moreover, by focusing both on the children's personal experiences and those of others, including their classmates' as well as A-Mei's, Emilia was also fostering an understanding among cultures, as UNESCO (2002) states:

> Respect for each other through understanding (…) implies[y] learning about other cultures and other languages and becoming aware of the fact that there are more ways than one of interpreting the world in which we live.

The children were learning about different ways of 'interpreting the world in which we live' (UNESCO, 2002).

Then the children worked in groups to step into A-Mei's shoes once more in order to answer the questions from her perspective and support their answers. Of all the questions they collaboratively wrote, they chose the following: Is Taiwan nice or horrible? Do you like animals? Do you like Argentina? Are you happy at school? Do you like cars? Choosing these questions was part of the process of democratic deliberation that contributes to critical thinking development (Lim, 2011). Figure 5.14 shows one group's responses and the English translation appears next:

> English translation
> 1) Because the decision of going to Argentina was made by her parents.
> 5) Because **she** can play with her friends at school and she likes studying.
> 4) **She** likes Argentina because she can go to the beach peacefully, not like when the tsunami took place in Japan.
> 7) **She** likes cars because her father, her grandfather and her uncle did that sport.

As the children attempted to support their answers, Melina and Emilia acknowledged their efforts to place themselves in A-Mei's shoes, imagining her wishes, feelings and desires and how such wishes, feelings and desires motivated her actions and triggered her emotions. In other words, they were mobilizing the capacity of narrative imagination or imaginative understanding in Nussbaum's (2002, 2006) conception of critical thinking. For example, they wanted to know what A-Mei thought about Taiwan ('Is Taiwan nice?', 'Is Taiwan horrible', Fig. 5.13) because that would help them understand the reason why she had left her country: 'porque la

Fig. 5.12 Students write questions for A-Mei, the story character

Fig. 5.13 More questions for A-Mei

Fig. 5.14 Students answer questions from A-Mei's perspective

decision de irse a Argentina fue de los padres' [the decision of going to Argentina was made by her parents] (Fig. 5.14). They imagined A-Mei would involve her friends and family in everything she did and the way she was: 'le gustan los autos porque ese deporte lo hizo su papa, su abuelo y su tio' [she likes cars because her father, her grandfather and her uncle did that sport]; 'puede jugar con sus amigas en la escuela y le gusta estudiar' [she can play with her friends at school and she likes studying] (Fig. 5.14). Melina noticed that this group imagined what A-Mei would think or say and referred to her by using the third person singular pronoun. The pronoun **she** appears in the English translation, whereas in the students' productions in Spanish, the reference is revealed in verbs like *puede* and pronouns like *le*.

Another group, by contrast, impersonated A-Mei by using the first person pronoun **I** which appears in the English translation, whereas in the students' productions in Spanish, the reference is shown in pronouns such as *me*, *mis* and *mi* (Fig. 5.15).
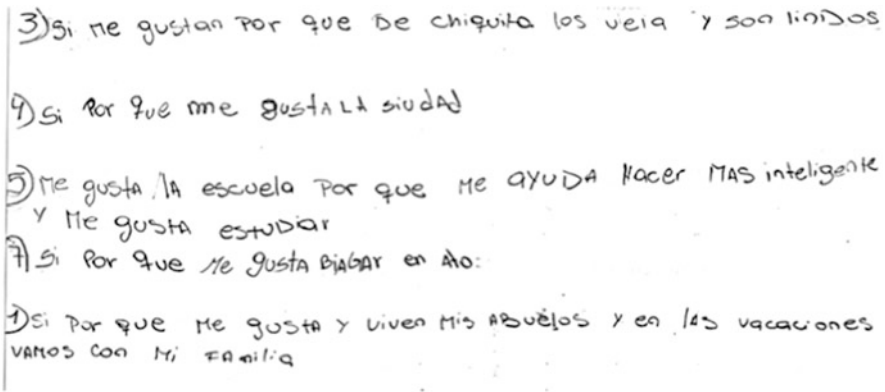
Fig. 5.15 Students impersonate A-Mei

English translation
3) Yes **I** like them because when I was a child I saw them and they are cute.
4) Yes because **I** like the city.
5) **I** like school because it helps me be more intelligent and I like studying.
7) Yes because **I** like travelling by car.
1) Yes because **I** like it and my grandparents live there and we visit our family during the
   holidays.

By entering A-Mei's world, the children deployed a sense of family ('viven mis abuelos y en las vacaciones vamos con mi familia' [my grandparents live there and we visit our family during the holidays]), used their imagination ('de chiquita los veia y son lindos' [when I was a child I saw them and they are cute]) and engaged their intuition as almost all children love travelling by car ('me gusta biagar en ato' [I like travelling by car]) (Fig. 5.15). They also made connections ([I like it and my grandparents live there]) (Fig. 5.15) and compared and contrasted ('Le gusta Argentina porque puede ir a la playa tranquila, no como cuando estuvo el sunami en Japon' [She likes Argentina because she can go to the beach peacefully, not like when the tsunami took place in Japan] (Fig. 5.14).

In the *English Primer Reader*, the characters are shown doing different activities during weekends. The children read that A-Mei loves having picnics on Saturdays and his friend, Nahuel, stays at grandma's every weekend. Emilia used this as an opportunity to encourage them to learn more about their habits and engage in comparing and contrasting (Extract 8):

Extract 8
    What do you do at the weekend?
    Do you do that alone?
    Do you do that with your family or friends?
    (Sample questions, teacher field note, October 2013)

In general, Emilia's students referred to the same topics that had been at play in the *Primer Reader* and in previous lessons, but they varied according to the people

involved in each activity. Figures 5.16, 5.17, 5.18, 5.19, and 5.20 show what some of the children (Pedro, Carola, Lucía, Renata and Felipe) liked doing. For instance, Pedro said (Fig. 5.16): 'I play football with friends. I go to the stadium'. He drew a football match between two local teams, Estudiantes and Racing. Felipe (Fig. 5.20) wrote 'Football with friends. I go to the market' and told Emilia that his parents worked at the market and that was the reason why he spent some time there.
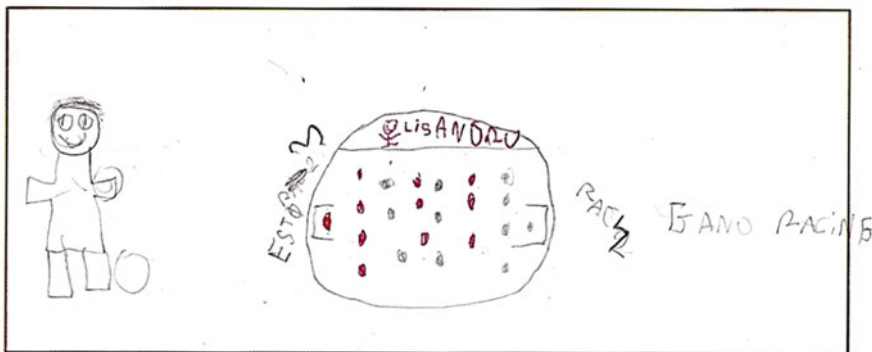
Fig. 5.16 Students' productions. Individual work. Pedro's drawing
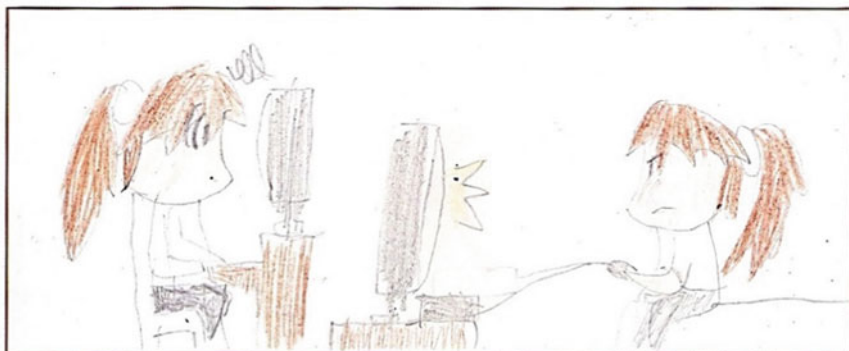
Fig. 5.17 Students' productions. Individual work. Carola's drawing

Write about you. Use your answers. Then draw.

I Play Outball like Camili
I play like Daiens
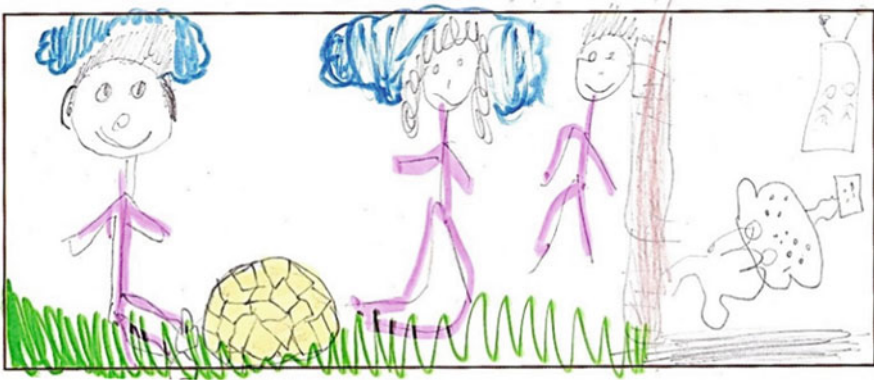
Fig. 5.18 Students' productions. Individual work. Lucía's drawing

Write about you. Use your answers. Then draw.

Stay At GRADMS

Fig. 5.19 Students' productions. Individual work. Renata's drawing

Fig. 5.20 Students' productions. Individual work. Felipe's drawing

In sum, by carrying out surveys, a poll and asking questions about each other's interests, likes and habits, as well as A-Mei's, Emilia enhanced human relations in the ways described here and got her students involved in the construction of societal ties: listening to each other telling about the things they liked or the things they usually did, sharing their life experiences in the classroom and placing a high value on each of them, and working collaboratively to collect information to know their school community better. Emilia explained her rationale (Extract 9), which was connected with the aim of 'helping them overcome potential conflicts' and 'deal with social tension in the future'. She was working towards the cultivation of democratic citizens in her English classroom (Byram, 2008):

> Extract 9
> In this way, *I was helping them overcome potential conflicts.* As Osler and Starkey (1996, p. 58) suggest, 'young people need opportunities to explore the complex factors which can undermine societal tolerance, acceptance of diversity and democratic pluralism.' In other words, my students experienced real life situations inside the classroom, something that enhanced human relations and prepared them to *deal with social tension in the future.*
> (Teacher field note, October 2013)

Using English to Take Action

Building on the previous work about getting to know each other and discovering similarities and differences in actions, habits, customs and feelings, Emilia read Todd Parr's (2011) *It's Okay* book to the class. They discussed the different situations suggested in this book, shared their own life experiences and decided to create a new book to synthesize their points of view. The four pages in Fig. 5.21 belong to the *It's Okay* book written by fifth grade students at N° 43 School in La Plata.
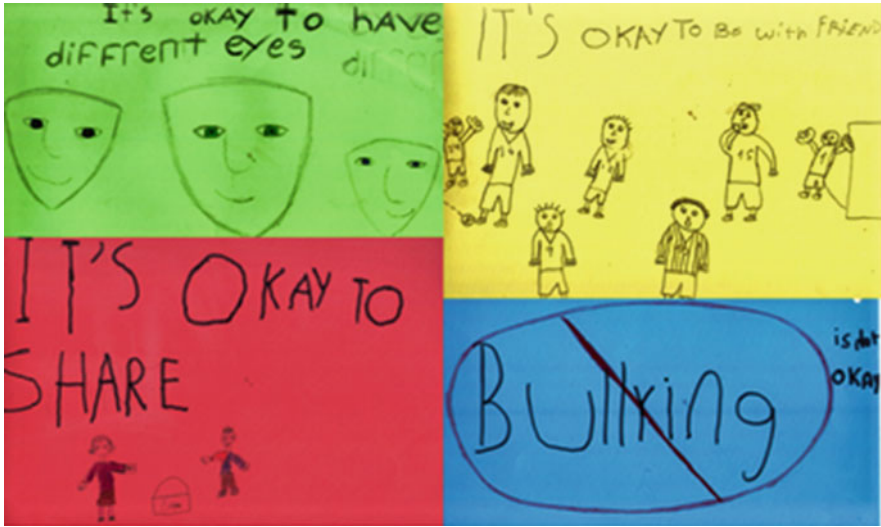
Fig. 5.21 The children take action: sample pages from their newly created book

This instance of shared writing involved the use of deep processing skills (Ennis, 1985, 2011; Paul & Elder, 2006, 2008) such as connecting, for example, when the children had to think beyond the story in order to analyze and find examples in their own lives; synthesizing, when they had to summarize, select and compile personal and shared experiences; and creating, when they actually designed the book. This final outcome illustrates the use of English for the creation of their own meanings, or redesign in multimodal ways (Janks, 2014, 2018; Kress, 2014), which involved anti-bullying ideals ('bullying is not Okay'). The children displayed their book in a slide presentation at the end of year celebration. In this way, they created their own response to the theme of diversity they had been addressing in the English class for a few months. This response, which emerged from themselves, their interests and group discussion, 'offer[ed] possibilities for group affirmation and small actions toward change' (Wallerstein & Auerbach, 2003, p. 35) and illustrates critical literacy and critical pedagogy in English language education.

Conclusion

This chapter shows how the theme of mobility and migration and its consequences in cultural and linguistic terms was addressed in a fifth grade primary English classroom using teacher-developed materials. The children were encouraged to connect with what they learned in their own lives, to explore different feelings and to share their experiences of migration and social integration with others. In this way, they developed empathy and mutual understanding by engaging their reflective skills to

make sense of their own worlds and also understand other people's worlds. The use of multiple materials (*English Primer Reader*, maps, atlas, encyclopedias, pictures, drawings, poster), contents (the school, countries and continents, everyday activities, bullying) and tasks (to identify, to classify, to compare, to find out, to survey, to collect information and display it, to create, to give an opinion, among others) helped the children develop deep processing skills, essential to foster critical literacy. By sharing what they had learned with others (friends, family members, classmates, the school community), they felt motivated and enthusiastic about English and learning English. Finally, as they helped others acknowledge, understand and respect diversity, they took concrete action in their small local community to enact change, in this case, the value and appreciation of diversity through their own *It's Okay* book. This is an example of critical pedagogy in English language education in this setting.

Engagement Options

This chapter shows how critical perspectives in English language education were implemented in a fifth grade classroom by doing simple tasks, closely connected with children's lives, such as writing an account of the first day at school, finding out about habitual activities classmates do at weekends, and imagining the feelings of a book character, asking questions to her and answering those questions from her perspective in writing. The children also engaged in the more complex task of designing an *It's Okay* book to appreciate diversity locally.

1. Following Huang (2012, p. 283), 'critical writing enables[d] the students to understand their lives in relation to the world (. . .) allowing[ed] them to become socially relevant and locally/globally involved'. Did this happen in this case, in your opinion? Why or why? Why are students' lives and worlds so important in critical approaches to education? In which ways is the writing that took place in this classroom, however modest and simple, an example of 'the power of critical writing to affect the writer's understanding of society and to enable the writer to rethink and revision the possibilities of a better world' (Ibid, p. 283)?
2. Kubota and Miller (2017, p. 130) say that 'today's worldwide spread of racism and hatred contradicts the three-decade effort to promote criticality in education'. In tune with this problem, Emilia in this classroom expressed in her field notes that she aimed at 'helping them [children] overcome potential conflicts' and 'deal with social tension in the future'. Considering the local conditions, has Emilia been able to address her goal? In which ways? What else could she have done? How could this goal be achieved in more well-resourced classrooms and less difficult settings?
3. Huang (2012, p. 283) claims that 'critical literacy remains very much marginalized' in English language education. In this respect, Ramanathan and Morgan (2009, p. 163) point to the need to 'link[ing] concepts/ideas to concrete practices and settings'. Emilia's field notes included in this chapter reveal how she did this,

supported by her theoretical perspectives, educational aims, discussion and collaboration with Melina and framed within her broad vision of education and the moral purpose she attached to her role and professional identity. This reflection on her philosophies, values, theoretical perspectives and aims is essential in critical approaches to education (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016; Luke, 2019). Did Emilia's reflective writing illustrated in this chapter contribute to bridging concepts and practices? If so, how? In which other ways (beyond field note writing) could such reflection be stimulated and developed?

Concerning the need to bridge theory and practice, in which ways has this chapter linked key concepts in critical literacy and critical pedagogy to specific practices and contexts? Examples of key concepts are the need to present familiar situations and problems, encourage responses and solutions from the students themselves, offer possibilities for self-affirmation, and enable small actions towards change (Wallerstein & Auerbach, 2003). In which ways have these key critical concepts been enacted in concrete practices in this setting? What happens in your own context? What about other concepts and different settings?

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Chapter 6
Localized Ways and Experiences: Making a Positive Difference in a Rural Multigrade Primary Classroom

Bárbara Bezuch and Melina Porto

Initial Vignette

It is the end of a hot November in 2013 in Verónica, a small town 100 km south of La Plata, and nine children between 8 and 11 years of age are strolling around their multigrade school playing the song 'Paradise' by Coldplay, showing photographs of animals imprisoned in zoos, sharing the entries to an animal encyclopedia they had created themselves, showing the poems they had written about their favorite animals in their habitats, and displaying their awareness-raising posters to prevent animal hunting in the community. It is their awareness-raising campaign about the importance of protecting animals' natural habitats and against animal hunting. They feel pride and happiness.

In the previous months, they read an animal poem written by Bárbara, their English teacher, which they used as inspiration to create their own poems in English

We have followed ethical guidelines and usual ethical procedures. Consent and release forms from parents have been obtained. All student names are pseudonyms. Permission to name the school has been obtained. Supporting evidence is italicized in all data extracts.

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in small groups and illustrate them. Most of the poems focused on animals' natural habitats and one in particular addressed the theme of animals' rights. They had discussed the theme with Bárbara and with peers, and also with their Natural Sciences teacher. They had worked on animals' habitats in both classrooms, and they had designed encyclopedia entries in English in groups. Bárbara had read *The Mixed-up Chameleon* by Eric Carle with the class. They had learned about different animals and their different body parts. She had encouraged their creativity by inviting them to create crazy animals cutting images from magazines, sticking them on paper, and describing their animals.

The natural world had been the theme in other interdisciplinary projects taught collaboratively between the English and the Natural Sciences teachers. In August, the children created an inventory of local birds in the area. To this aim, they explored the countryside and took photos of the birds they could spot. They described each bird in English using simple sentences: 'It has got black eyes. It has got brown feathers'. They compiled an encyclopedia of birds from the area. Several themes emerged and were discussed, supported by the *English Primer Reader* Bárbara was using: animal protection, animals in danger of extinction, and animal hunting. These themes were close to the lives of these children as animal hunting was a common custom in town and everyone had an opinion and an experience. They wondered 'can we do something to stop that?', and the awareness-raising campaign with which this vignette begins is their contribution.

The Mixed-up Chameleon had also raised the theme of the importance of accepting oneself. One child had drawn a crazy animal with body parts of a kangaroo, a duck, an owl, a seal, an elephant, a chicken, and a fish, and had expressed his animal longed to be something it was not. Bárbara grasped the opportunity to reintroduce the topics of identity and difference in relation to languages, linked to the *English Primer Reader* she had been using in the classroom in the previous months. Back then, in cooperation with the Social Sciences teacher, the children listed the languages spoken in Argentina and the names of the communities that speak them, and displayed the information on a big map. The class learned that one of the girls, Tamara, spoke Guarani at home. Tamara taught everyone how to greet in Guarani and made a comparative chart with greetings in Spanish, English and Guarani. She was excited, and her mom was invited to school to speak some Guarani and teach some words to the children, who were eager to learn the words for different animals. They created a poster with animal names in Spanish, Guarani and English, which they added to their animal encyclopedia.

These are glimpses of a multigrade school located in a rural area called La Viruta, a small town near Verónica. It is the only school in the area in which fourth, fifth and sixth grade children study together in the same room, without resources or technology. This is their first experience with the English language. In fourth grade, there are three students aged 8 and 9, two boys and one girl, and one of them comes from a nearby city called Chascomús. The girl was born in Paraguay, is a Spanish-Guarani bilingual and lives in La Viruta. In fifth grade, there are four students aged 10–11, three girls from Vieytes, a town near La Viruta, and one boy from Verónica. In sixth grade, there are two girls aged 11 who live in the countryside near La Viruta. As rural

roads are not well kept in the area, Bárbara goes to school in her own van, which gets completely muddy when it is rainy or wet. The staff at primary school EP N°1, including the head teacher, know this is the only contact the children have with formal learning and do not miss a day, whatever the weather conditions or other factors. The students call the van 'the magic machine' and speak of a 'magic bag' from where Bárbara takes books, visuals, temperas, paintbrushes, fibre-tip pens, glitter and other teaching aids she brings from home. They act, dance, sing, draw, paint, play, walk around the countryside, and learn. Every day they greet each other with a 'Hello' song to the rhythm of samba, a piece of local music and dance, to begin the English class.

Assumptions: Views of Education in This School

This vignette illustrates the philosophy of education of this school, which builds on the diversity these children bring with them not only in terms of age and school experience because it is a multigrade school but also backgrounds, everyday experiences, origins, languages, feelings, and more. The focus is not only on providing access to dominant knowledge (e.g. the languages spoken in Argentina in different communities, natural habitats of birds and animals) but also on developing the students fully as human beings (Zovko & Dillon, 2018). This development is encouraged by stimulating their imagination through literature and art; developing bonds with other children and also with their surroundings and the environment based on empathy, solidarity, respect, hospitality, care, love and inclusion (Zembylas, 2020); and encouraging environmental, cultural and geographical awareness and citizenship skills working in cooperation with others in interdisciplinary projects in which the English, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences teachers address generative topics across subjects that transcend the school and reach the local community. In so doing, these teachers develop ethical perspectives with children by problematizing themes such as animal hunting from the perspectives of different disciplines in an atmosphere of sharing and collaboration.

Languages, Difference and Identities

Figure 6.1 shows a map of some of the original populations in Argentina and their languages, which the children produced in the English class in collaboration with the Social Sciences teacher.

The map is the collaborative outcome of a series of lessons that began with the reading of page 6 from the *English Primer Reader* for grade 4 in which the characters introduce themselves and say where they are from, what language they speak, and how old they are. Bárbara invited the class to provide this information about themselves, and everyone discovered that one of the girls, Tamara, had been born

Fig. 6.1 Poster in
cooperation with the Social
Sciences teacher. (Tamara,
Alfredo and Luciano,
August 2013)
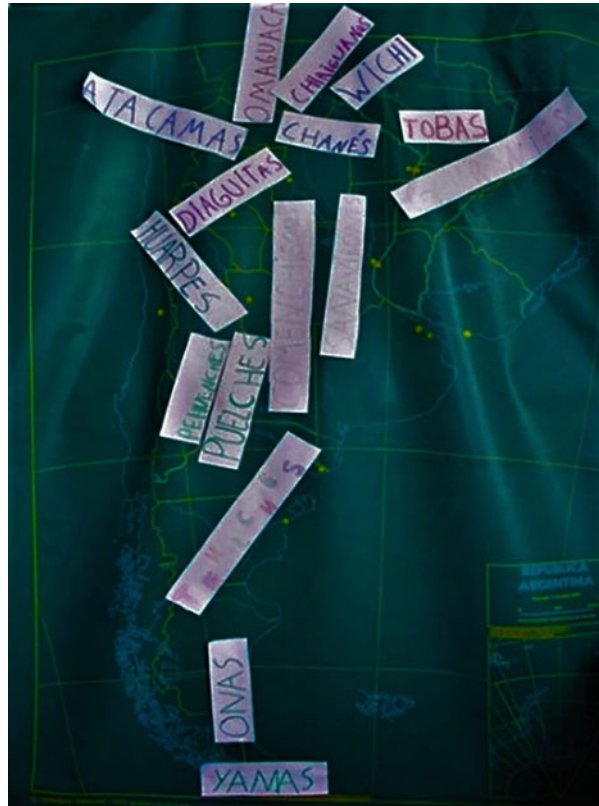
in Paraguay, a neighboring country, and spoke Guarani at home. The children became excited and asked Tamara to teach them greetings in Guarani. She accepted enthusiastically and also designed a trilingual poster with greetings in Spanish, English and Guarani, which the children used from then on to say hello every morning.

Through discussion, the students became aware of the variety of languages spoken in Argentina as Extract 1 shows:[1]

Extract 1
    Teacher: Children, how many languages are spoken in Argentina?
    Children: Spanish
    Teacher: Ok! Right, anything else?
    Girl: Con la seño Marce vimos que en Argentina vivían muchos aborígenes que nosotros les sacamos las tierras. [With Miss Marce, we saw that a lot of aborigines lived in Argentina and we took their lands]
    Teacher: OK, so what happens with these languages? ¿Se continúan hablando? [Are these languages still spoken/used?]
    Children: Yes!!! Algunos nada más, Seño. [some of them, Miss]

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[1] Supporting evidence is italicized in all data extracts in this chapter.

Teacher: Now we are going to make a map showing all the aboriginal populations in Argentina and the languages they speak.

Alfredo: Wow! *¡Cuántos lenguajes hablamos! Al final hablamos más que en Europa.* [*Wow! How many languages we speak! After all, we speak more languages than in Europe*]

Children: [Laughter]

(Class conversation, July 2013) [Miss Marce is the Social Sciences teacher]

The expression of surprise ('Wow!'¡Cuántos lenguajes hablamos! [Wow! How many languages we speak!]) reveals the discovery of information new to them, which one of the children, Alfredo, related to his preconception that more languages are spoken in Europe, signalled by the comparative 'más que en Europa' [more languages than in Europe]. Melina and Bárbara commented that discovering new information and relating it to previous knowledge by comparing and contrasting are key skills involved in critical thinking (Paul, 2007). Bárbara acknowledged there was a missed opportunity here to build on Alfredo's preconception by challenging it with facts with the aim of developing the capacity to 'test what one reads or says for consistency of reasoning, correctness of fact, and accuracy of judgment' (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 293) – a capacity that characterizes the kind of Socratic thinking involved in critical thought (Nussbaum, 2002).

The conversation then returned to Tamara and Guarani. The students were curious about the language and wondered what it might sound like. So they invited Tamara's mom, María, to school, and that day Spanish, English and Guarani were heard in the classroom (Extract 2). The children learned greetings and asked María about animal names. They then made a trilingual poster in Spanish, English and Guarani with the words that they had learned:

Extract 2

Teacher: Hello children! How are you today?

Children: Fine, thanks, and you?

Teacher: Fine, thanks! Today we have another teacher! María is here to teach us some words in Guarani.

Children: [Laughter]

Teacher: Tamara taught us some words in Guarani last class, which ones?

Children: *mba'éichapa* [Hello] *porâite* [Welcome]

Teacher: Very good! Excellent!

María: *¿Qué palabras quieren saber? Me siento nerviosa.* [Which words do you want to know? I feel nervous]

Teacher: *No, María! No estés nerviosa, solo te vamos a preguntar algunas cositas y te dejamos libre.* [Please María do not feel nervous. We only want to know how to say some words and then you are free to go]

Children: [Laughter]

Luciano: *¿Por qué hablás guaraní?* [Why do you speak Guarani?]

María: *Porque es mi idioma. Cuando nací en Paraguay mi mamá me enseñó español y guaraní.* [Because it is my language. When I was born in Paraguay my mother taught me Spanish and Guarani]

Alfredo: *¿Te enseñaban con un pizarrón y tizas el guaraní?* [When you learnt Guarani, did your mother teach you with a board and a piece of chalk?]

María: *No, me enseñaron hablando.* [No, they taught me by speaking the language]

Tamara: *Como nosotros aprendemos inglés, hablando y jugando* [The same way we learn English, talking and playing]

María: *Así.* [Yes, in the same way]

Teacher: Ok, *María cómo podemos decir perro por ejemplo.* [*María, how do we say dog?*]
María: *Jagua.*
Children: And *cat, pig, bird, mouse, fish.*
María*: Mbarakaja, kure, guyra,anguja, pira.*
Children: Wow! *Y ¿cómo decimos tree?* [*How do we say tree?*]
María: *Yvyra.*
Luciano: Como el video que vimos el otro día seño! [Like the video we saw the previous class Miss!]
Teacher: Children, say goodbye to María. She has to go home.
Children: Goodbye! *¿Cómo se dice goodbye en guaraní?* [*How do we say good bye in Guaraní?*]
Teacher: Chau. [goodbye]
María: *Maitei.*
(Class conversation, August 2013)

Not only did the children learn new animal words and greetings in Guarani. María's visit also triggered their curiosity about the reasons why she spoke that language ('¿Por qué hablás guaraní?' [Why do you speak Guarani?]), and she provided a personal account, historicized and contextualized, stating that Guarani was 'her language' ('Cuando nací en Paraguay mi mamá me enseñó español y guaraní' [When I was born in Paraguay my mother taught me Spanish and Guarani]). Melina and Bárbara commented that this contextualizing and historicizing in María's testimony was brief but constituted a first step to challenge local dominant knowledge about the privileged status of Spanish in Argentina, where indigenous and other languages tend to be devalued and stigmatized. It involved multiperspectivity (other languages are spoken in Argentina, close to the children), contextualized historicity (Paraguayans are Spanish-Guarani bilinguals), and awareness of partiality (Spanish coexists with Guarani and is not the dominant language for some people like Tamara and her mother). Melina highlighted that multiperspectivity, contextualized historicity and partiality are characteristic of critical thinking with a social justice basis (Boman et al., 2002). Another child inquired about the teaching method that María's parents used to teach her Guarani, assuming it had involved board and chalk. Her testimony challenged that preconception ('No, me enseñaron hablando' [No, they taught me by speaking the language]), and Tamara related and compared the information to their own experience with English language learning in their context ('Como nosotros aprendemos inglés' [The same way we learn English]). These children were examining their own beliefs and assumptions and were testing them against the evidence provided by Maria's account. In other words, they were engaging in Socratic thinking (Nussbaum, 2002).

Importantly, Extract 2 is an example of the kind of classroom ecology (Creese & Martin, 2003; Canagarajah, 2012, 2017) that Melina and Bárbara cultivated. It welcomed the linguistic resources, experiences, family backgrounds and other resources that the children brought with them to create significant learning opportunities. The class conversation with Tamara and her mother María reveals that Bárbara recognized, welcomed, valued and respected this child's linguistic identity as a source of information to deepen and expand everyone's academic learning, for example, in terms of new vocabulary and language awareness. In this translingual

pedagogy (Bradley et al., 2018; Canagarajah, 2012, 2017; García & Li, 2014; Moore et al., 2020), Bárbara was also conveying profound implicit messages about languages, language learning and use, and communication (Porto, 2021): there are no strict boundaries between Spanish, Guarani and English; people can make meaning using all available languages but also other resources such as posters, comparative charts, maps, and personal testimonies; and meaning takes precedence over correctness and accuracy.

Ethical Relations with the Natural World: Making a Positive Difference

One project with the Natural Sciences teacher involved the creation of an inventory of birds in the area called the Administrative Area *Punta del Indio*. The project invited learners to explore and discover their surroundings as an instance of outdoor learning (O'Brien 2009; Waite 2011), in particular the environment and nature, by going outside the classroom and walking around in the countryside. Accompanied by their English and Natural Sciences teachers, they photographed the birds they could spot. This outdoor experience was complemented in the classroom with an inquiry-based curriculum (Rex, 2001; Schmidt et al., 2002) that encouraged the children to research each bird and learn about its characteristics, habitat and customs. They stuck their pictures of birds sorted according to their natural habitats in the same map they had completed before with the languages spoken in Argentina. They also used their pictures to make an encyclopedia of birds from the area. They described each bird using simple sentences, for instance, 'It has a big peak and it is very tall and thin'. English was used and learned meaningfully by exploring a relevant and familiar topic in the community.

The content of learning was important for Melina and Bárbara. Bárbara knew that the theme 'local birds' was close to these children's everyday lives. Everyone had an opinion and an experience because it was familiar as they all lived in this rural area. But Melina noted that familiarity with the topic is not enough to learn English. For learning to be meaningful, the conceptual and the linguistic functions of language need to be combined (Bruner, 1985; Vygtosky, 1978; Widdowson, 1979; Wood, 1988). In other words, it is not enough to duplicate in English what one already knows in the first language. Existing frames of reference must be expanded and new ones developed. So here Bárbara integrated the conceptual function, i.e. content (birds), with language learning (the semantic field 'local birds', language for descriptions, the text type 'encyclopedia entry') in a cross-curricular project that connected two school subjects, English and Natural Sciences, to give significance to learning by proposing the collaborative and creative task of designing an encyclopedia of local birds. Learning English was not an aim in itself. Learning English to use it in this real context and for this genuine purpose was. The integration of content and language, called CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), was a motivational driving force (Banegas, 2012) for Melina and Bárbara.

Fig. 6.2 *English Primer Reader* (p. 9)

For this CLIL interdisciplinary project to become transformative in Freire's (1972a, b) and Janks' (1998, 2000) sense, Bárbara decided to return to the *English Primer Reader* to address the theme from another perspective. Rebeca, a Canadian biologist, stops a boy who is trying to kill a bird with a catapult, and she says: 'No, stop! Don't do that!' (Fig. 6.2).

The scene moved the children immediately, and the classroom sequence that follows illustrates critical literacy in practice (Janks, 2014) as an example of empowerment education (Freire, 1972a, b) centered on dialogue and participation to help learners identify significant problems in their lives, assess their historical and cultural roots, challenge tradition, imagine a better future for themselves and their communities, and take action to begin to resolve those problems. In particular, what follows illustrates Wallerstein and Hammes' (1991) problem-posing strategy called SHOWED:

S SEE. Name the problem. What problem do we SEE here? Describe the situation.
H What is really HAPPENING?
O How does this story relate to OUR lives and how do we feel about it?
W WHY has this happened? Identify the social, historical, and cultural root causes of the problem.
E Explore how we can become EMPOWERED with new understanding.
D What can we DO about these problems in our lives and in our community?
(Wallerstein & Hammes, 1991, p. 252)

First, the children noticed ('Teacher, ¿qué pasa acá?' [What is happening here]) and named the problem ('a boy matando a bird'):

Extract 3
    Children: Teacher, ¿qué pasa acá? [What is happening here, in this picture?]
    Teacher: What can you see? [Uses gestures]
    Luciano: A boy matando a bird [a boy killing a bird]
    (Class conversation, August 2013)

S SEE. Name the problem. What problem do we SEE here? Describe the situation.

Then (Extract 3 below) they reflected on 'what was really happening', that is, the common local custom of killing birds. Bárbara encouraged multiple perspectives ('what do you think?', repeated twice): the connection of the theme with pupils' lives, for instance, Tamara's and Luciano's cases; their feelings ('Uhhh Seño, me siento mal' [Uhhh miss, I feel bad]); the social, historical and cultural root causes of the problem, in this case associated with habit and tradition ('yo lo hago todo el tiempo' [I do so all the time]); and the discussion of the moral dilemma involved ('está bien' [it is all right]; 'está mal' [it is wrong]) (Adami, 2014; Osler & Starkey, 1994):

Extract 3 (continued)
Teacher: And what do you think?
Luciano: *Está bien Seño, yo lo hago todo el tiempo.* [*It is all right Miss, I do so all the time*]
Teacher: Tamara, what do you think?
Tamara: *Está mal Seño, vos podes cazar para comer una o dos pero no matar por matar.* [*It is wrong Miss. You can hunt only to eat one or two but killing for the sake of killing is wrong*]
Luciano: Uhhh Seño, me siento mal, *yo mato por matar...* [Uhhh miss, I feel bad because *I just kill...*]
Teacher: Don't feel bad. You can do something to tell other children what things we can do and what things we cannot do.
(Class conversation, August 2013)

H What is really HAPPENING?
O How does this story relate to OUR lives and how do we feel about it?
W WHY has this happened? Identify the social, historical, and cultural root causes of the problem.

Discussion revealed that the students had different attitudes towards animals and their protection. While Tamara was self-conscious of the importance of taking care of them ('no matar por matar' [killing for the sake of killing is wrong]), Luciano realized that he was used to killing birds and animals without a reason because of habit and tradition in his family ('yo lo hago todo el tiempo' [I do so all the time]), and this made him feel bad ('Uhhh Seño, me siento mal, yo mato por matar' [Uhhh, miss I feel bad because I just kill]). The children gained conscious awareness of good and evil ('Está mal' [It is wrong]) in connection with animal protection as they considered different possibilities ('vos podes cazar para comer una o dos pero no matar por matar' [you can hunt only to eat one or two but killing for the sake of killing is wrong]). The underlying basis for this kind of discussion of moral dilemmas in the classroom, supported by Melina and Bárbara, is that awareness of this moral dimension and the development of ethical skills cannot be gained only by accessing information (for instance, learning about legal systems or rights declarations) but requires discussion, negotiation, and the sharing of feelings, experiences and opinions (Adami, 2014; Osler & Starkey, 1994) in the way shown in Extract 3.

Fig. 6.3 Drawing showing that horses should be free in the countryside. (Alfredo, September 2013)

But the children did not only gain conscious awareness. Encouraged by Bárbara's words 'you can do something to tell other children what things we can do and what things we cannot do', they felt the need to take action and do something as a group to protect animals, and this is 'empowerment' and 'action' in the SHOWED strategy. For instance, based on this class discussion, the children decided to include information in their encyclopedia about where animals should live and how they should be treated. They reflected on how to treat local animals such as deer, ostriches, horses, and armadillos, among others. They concluded that animals should live freely in their habitats, and they expressed their conclusions using artwork. Figure 6.3 shows one drawing by Alfredo about horses, which illustrates empowerment and action through a 'flexible and localized' curriculum that 'takes into account learners' diversity and experiences' (Ramezanzadeh & Rezaei, 2019, p. 812) as every child chose to focus on different animals.

> **E** Explore how we can become EMPOWERED with new understanding.
> **D** What can we DO about these problems in our lives and in our community?

The exploration then turned global as the children addressed the questions 'what is really happening?' and 'how does the issue relate to your life?' beyond their local community. Bárbara introduced the related theme of animals in danger of extinction in the whole world using a video as a trigger (www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAK2 JxLP1gw), and together they identified and discussed 'the social, historical, and cultural root causes of the problem' in this way:

Extract 4

    Luciano: Wow teacher! Es incredible! *Cuántos animals que se mueren!* [Wow teacher! It is incredible! *How many animals die!*]

    Tamara: *No se mueren Lucho, los matamos nosotros, los matas vos, los mato yo.* [*Lucho, these animals do not just die. We kill them, you kill them, I kill them*]

    Luciano: *Yo no mato, nena!* [*I do not kill, girl!*]

    Tamara: *Sí, qué te crees, cuando vas con tu papá a una carneada o cuando lo haces vos, no matás?* [*Yes, you kill them. Think about when you go with your father to the slaughter, don't you kill?*]

    (Class conversation, September 2013)

The group reflected on their own actions and attitudes towards animals in very explicit terms ('cuántos animals que se mueren' [how many animals die]; 'No se mueren Lucho, los matamos nosotros, los matas vos, los mato yo' [Lucho, these animals do not just die. We kill them, you kill them, I kill them]). Luciano acknowledged his surprise because animals die ('Wow, es incredible cuántos animals mueren!' [Wow, it is incredible how many animals die!]), and Tamara immediately corrected him and pointed out that animals do not just die but are killed by all of them, including herself ('no se mueren Lucho, los matamos nosotros, los matas vos, los mato yo' ['they do not just die Lucho, we kill them, you kill them, I kill them]). Luciano's use of the impersonal 'se mueren' in Spanish, as if animals just happen to die without any responsibility on his part, contrasts with the active voice that Tamara used, which recognizes the agent of the killing in herself and her classmates. Although Bárbara did not explicitly point to these differences in surface form as an instance of critical language awareness (Fairclough, 1992), something that Janks (2010) suggests is essential for literacy to be critical, Tamara's remark reveals her awareness of the fact that the decision to obscure an agent is never innocent (Janks, 1998): 'we kill them, you kill them, I kill them'. Despite Tamara's observation, however, Luciano denied killing animals ('Yo no mato' [I do not kill]), and then Tamara contradicted him by illustrating with their local custom of slaughtering in this rural area as a form of killing ('no matás?' [don't you kill?]). Through discussion and reflection, the children realized that this local custom was the social, historical and cultural root cause of the problem in their community. What is happening here is that the students were collaboratively and critically examining the local tradition of slaughtering 'tak[ing] responsibility for their [one's] own reasoning, and exchang[ing] ideas with others in an atmosphere of mutual respect' (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 389).

At the same time, even though Bárbara did not draw attention to the surface structure passive-active as an indication of the user's decision to foreground or hide an agent, the discussion shows the group was in the direction of collaboratively understanding positioning, essential in critical literacy and critical pedagogy (Janks, 1998, 2010). According to Janks (2019), this understanding involves the ability to:

(a) Read with the text, which in this case is not a written text but the video about animals in danger of extinction they had previously watched (www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAK2JxLP1gw), complemented with their own discussion in Extract 4, which is also a text. In particular, the discussion focused on Luciano's

initial reading of the video, summarized in the exclamation 'Cuántos animals que se mueren!' [How many animals die!], which reveals his position and meanings.

(b) Read against the text, Luciano's text, made available by Tamara's interpretation that 'no se mueren Lucho, los matamos nosotros' [they do not just die Lucho, we kill them]. Tamara was interrogating and challenging the position offered by Luciano.

(c) Take a stand, which means ethically evaluating the interests at stake, in this instance the realization that the local cultural practice of slaughtering equates with killing ('cuando vas con tu papá a una carneada, no matás? [when you go with your father to the slaughter, don't you kill?]). It is important to recall that in previous class discussions of personal experiences and feelings (Adami, 2014; Osler & Starkey, 1994) (Extract 3 above), Luciano had assessed the moral dilemma involved in slaughtering as 'right' and Tamara as 'wrong'.

This critical examination of their local traditions inspired a change of perspective in Luciano and in the other children, who had up to then naturalized the practice of killing birds and slaughtering as a habitual practice in their town ('yo lo hago todo el tiempo' [I do so all the time]). Empowered with a new understanding (Wallerstein & Hammes, 1991), they were able to place themselves in the shoes of the animals ('pobres animales' [poor animals]). Taking a perspective different from one's own is difficult, and it is what Nussbaum calls 'imaginative understanding', i.e. the cognitive exercise of imagining the world of others, human and non-human. The little comment 'poor animals' indicates that these children were gaining an 'insight into the experience of another [which is] very difficult to attain in daily life' (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 391), made possible by the 'space for ethical experience' (Boman et al., 2002, p. 308) available in this classroom. This ethical experience involved perspective-taking as the first step to imagine the suffering of others ('poor animals'), in this case animals, by developing bonds with the surroundings and the environment (O'Brien 2009; Waite, 2011) based on empathy, solidarity, respect, care and love (Zembylas, 2020).

Furthermore, taking the perspective of animals was the springboard for beginning to think about 'taking action' ('¿podríamos hacer algo para que no pase más? [could we do something to stop this?]):

Extract 4 (continued)
    Luciano: No, *pobres animales*. Teacher, *¿podríamos hacer algo para que no pase más?*
    [Oh no, *poor animals*. Teacher, *could we do something to stop this?*]
    Teacher: Yes, we can do lots of things to be conscious in order to stop! *What can we do?*
    Children: *Usemos the computers.* [*Let's use the computers*]
    Teacher: Ok!
    Teacher: To do what?
    Children: *Podemos poner frases e imágenes para mostrar lo que NO debemos hacer.*
    [*We can write sentences and put images to show the things that we must NOT do*]
    Teacher: OK! Great!
    (Class discussion, September 2013)

Their collective action involved redesign (Janks, 2014), a necessary element in critical literacy and critical pedagogy, in this case 'writing sentences and putting

NO, STOP!
YOU CANNOT DO THAT!

Fig. 6.4 A man hunting ostriches. (Luciano, September 2013)

images to show the things that we must not do'. They also decided to start a campaign against indiscriminate hunting in the local area, especially animals from the countryside such as ostriches and other species which are chased and killed by local hunters, who are members of the community. The children made posters and leaflets which they later added to their animal encyclopedia. For instance, Luciano drew a man hunting an ostrich with an explicit call to stop that action (Fig. 6.4).

Luciano, as well as the other children, used their imagination in critical redesign (Janks, 2014). This means that after identifying and naming the problem (bird killing), they linked it to their lives (bird killing and slaughtering in their community), accessed relevant information by engaging research and inquiry skills (about animals' natural habitats), analyzed and interrogated these local practices through class discussion and reflection (slaughtering is killing), evaluated the social effects of their local traditions (animal extinction and suffering), and imagined possibilities for making a positive difference (designing an awareness-raising campaign with self-created and self-illustrated posters). In this way, they engaged in 'righting what is wrong—in transformative redesign' (Janks, 2018, p. 98) through literacy practices such as designing posters. At the same time, Bárbara was fostering their consideration of 'ethical ways of being' (Janks, 2018, p. 98), in this case towards animals, involving respect for their natural habitats, active work in their protection, and the prevention of animal hunting and extinction by examining and questioning their compliance with animal harm and suffering in their community. This dimension constitutes a social justice basis for critical literacy and critical pedagogy in English language teaching that encourages learners to 'contribute in ways, however small or piecemeal, to the process of creating a world that is both just and sustainable' (Janks, 2014, p. 355; Lim, 2011; Wright, 2002).

Literature and Art to Take Civic Action Using the Imagination

While work in the project with the Natural Sciences teacher had involved mainly informational texts, in this phase Bárbara and Melina aimed at fostering the imaginative dimension of critical thinking and critical literacy by using literature, narrative, art, and popular culture. Bárbara read *The Mixed-up Chameleon* by Eric Carle (1988) to the class that tells the story of an animal that wants to be like other animals and finishes so mixed up that it cannot eat without help so it decides to be a chameleon again. The students learned about different animals and their body parts, expanding their knowledge of birds gained in the previous project. Bárbara also connected the theme with the collaborative project between English and Natural Sciences about animals, and she reminded the children about the encyclopedia of animals they had created then. She stimulated interest by inviting them to organize a school fair to share their entries with the school community. Figure 6.5 shows one of the entries about mammals displayed in the fair.

Fig. 6.5 Encyclopedia entry. (Tamara, September 2013)
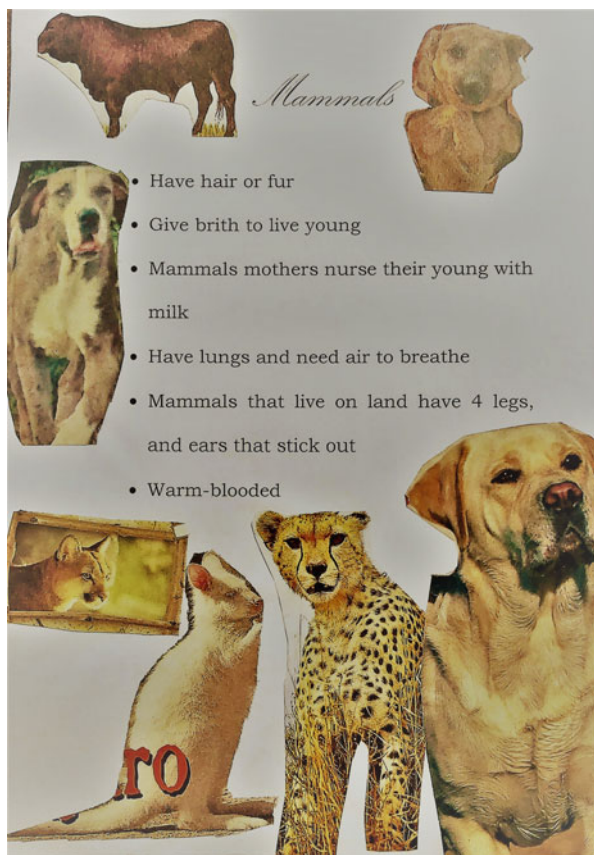
Fig. 6.6 Amazing animal. (Alfredo, October 2013)

Melina noted that the children were motivated, and Bárbara returned to *The Mixed-up Chameleon* to change the scientific, research and informational focus of the encyclopedia entries by engaging their creativity and imagination in the design of crazy animals like the chameleon. They cut images from magazines, stuck them on paper and described their animals in English.

Figure 6.6 shows Alfredo's amazing animal. He used the expression 'I wish I could' to express his animal's longing to be something it was not, with body parts of a kangaroo, a duck, an owl, a seal, an elephant, a chicken, and a fish.

Transcription
    I wish I could be like kangaroo,
    I wish I could be like dark [duck],
    I wish I could be like owl
    I wish I could be like seal
    I wish I could be like elephant
    I wish I could be like kangaroo
    I wish I could be like chicken
    I wish I could be like fish

The discussion of Carle's book in class, together with the crazy animals project, encouraged the children to reflect on the importance of being oneself instead of trying to act or be like somebody else. One student, Alfredo, made a connection between the story and the local practice of slaughtering and hunting they had discussed in previous months (Extract 5). He identified with the chameleon very strongly and came to the realization that he was being positioned by his father's hunting practices to engage in that practice himself, although he did not like it. He said, sadly:

Extract 5
    Alfredo: Teacher, mi papá caza animals, y a veces *yo tengo que cazar pero a mí no me gusta.* Al final *soy como este animal, el camaleón*. Tendría que decirle que *no quiero*, que *no me gusta.*

[Teacher, my father hunts animals, sometimes *I have to hunt but I do not like it*. In the end, *I am like this animal, the chameleon.* I should tell him that *I don't want to*, that *I don't like it*].

(Class discussion, Alfredo, October 2013)

Alfredo compared himself to the chameleon and to his crazy animal, for being something he did not want to be ('al final soy como este animal' [in the end I am like this animal]). He realized he was acting following family tradition and habit ('yo tengo que cazar' [I have to hunt]), but he did not identify with that practice ('a mí no me gusta' [I do not like it]). He adopted a critical, evaluative stance revealed by the use of 'pero' [but] and the modal 'tendría' [should] ('tendría que decirle que no quiero, que no me gusta' [I should tell him that I don't want to, that I don't like it]). He was beginning to challenge tradition and habitual actions in his family and his community (Nussbaum, 2006) by problematizing this habitus as a springboard for making a personal transformation ('no quiero' [I don't want to]). This transformation was a process that began thanks to the experiences in this school reported in this chapter and over a long period of time since classes had started in March, and this awakening occurred in October. By questioning his father and himself, Alfredo engaged in deep moral and ethical reflection about his father's actions as well as his own on the basis of a critical appraisal of his local and familiar reality. This critical appraisal led him to become aware of the need for a personally significant transformation in his life (Freire, 1972a, b) by raising his voice against the practice of animal hunting in his family ('I should tell him that I don't want to').

In addition, Bárbara used popular culture, in particular, the video called 'Paradise' by Coldplay

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1G4isv_Fylg), to bring to the foreground a dimension of the theme they had previously addressed in the project with the Natural Sciences teacher, namely animals' natural habitats. The video shows the journey of an elephant that escapes from a zoo and strives to find its natural habitat and live in freedom. The children connected the theme with their experiences, in particular with what they had observed in a local zoo in Buenos Aires (Extract 6). The use of the denial and the modal 'no tendría' [should not] is evidence of their critical evaluation, and expressions such as 'no está bien' [it is not right] indicate a moral standpoint in the dilemma around zoos, animal imprisonment, animal freedom, and natural habitats:

Extract 6

Alfredo: Teacher, *no está bien* esto de los zoos, porque hay un oso polar, que *no tendría que vivir acá*, en Buenos Aires. [Teacher, this thing about zoos *is not right* because there is a polar bear and *it should not live here* in Buenos Aires]
Teacher: Exactly, pandas need their natural habitat, which is...?
Children: Cold, the North Pole!
(Class discussion, October 2013)

Once more Bárbara was welcoming and encouraging discussion of the moral dilemma involved in the theme by drawing on children's experience with the zoo in Buenos Aires, their experiences, and their opinions as a way of gaining awareness and developing ethical skills (Adami, 2014; Osler & Starkey, 1994).

The students then created poems to show their favorite animals in their habitats. They had read some poems for inspiration (Extract 7), for instance, one Bárbara had written herself entitled 'How my animals live' (Bezuch, 2011):

Extract 7
    How my animals live (Bezuch, 2011)
    My cat lives in my house
    My dog lives in my bed
    My duck lives in my lake
    The horse lives in my countryside
    The cow lives in the forest
    The pig lives in his house
    What a wonderful day
    All the animals live well.
    (Poem written by Bárbara)

The children then created their own poems in groups with the aim of raising awareness of the fact that animals need to live in their own habits. Sometimes they focused on the characteristics of particular animals and pets. Figure 6.7 shows one of these poems.

Fig. 6.7 Poem written by the children. (Tamara and Luciano, November 2013)
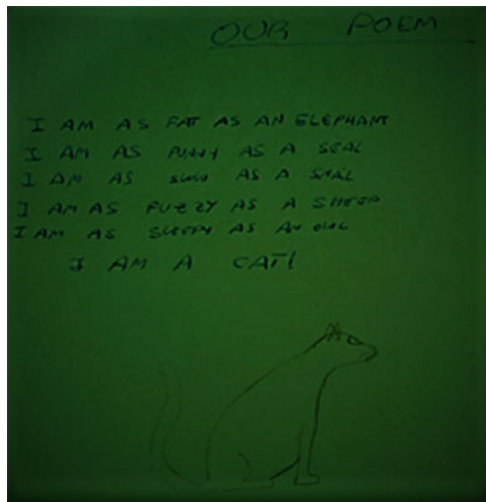
Discussion and reflection about natural habitats ('los animales deben vivir en sus hábitats' [animals must live in their habitats]) led to the theme of animal rights (Extract 8), and the children thought they could 'create' these rights ('¿Podemos crear derechos para los animales?' [can we create animal rights?]):

Extract 8

Tamara: Teacher, *los animales deben vivir en sus hábitats*, no donde queramos nosotros. *No está bien tener un chancho jabalí o un carpincho en cautiverio.* [Teacher, *animals must live in their habitats* rather than in the place we want to. *It is not good to hold captive a wild boar or a capybara*]

Alfredo: Eso es verdad! Como dice el poema, *cada animal en su casa.* (risas) [That is true, as the poem we read before, *every animal in their own home* (laughter)]

Luciano: Teacher, si nosotros tenemos derechos, *¿podemos crear derechos para los animales?* [If we have rights, *can we create animal rights?*]

Teacher: Yes!

(Class discussion, November 2013)

Bárbara welcomed the initiative so Tamara and Alfredo wrote a poem about animal rights (Fig. 6.8) centered on the right to have food and live in a home. In this case, they focused on their pets, cats, that live in their homes ('In my house he is'). They compared that with life in a cage by drawing the cage.

Fig. 6.8 Poem to raise awareness of animal rights. (Tamara and Alfredo, November 2013)
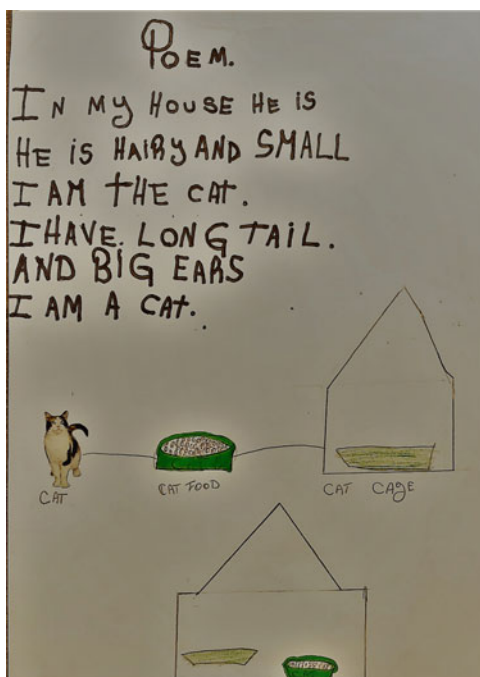
What the children were doing by using popular culture, reading animal stories and poems, becoming involved in discussion with peers and Bárbara, and creating and illustrating their own poems was engage in redesign (Janks, 2014) using multimodality, multiliteracies and creative artistic expression (Bradley & Harvey, 2019; Bradley et al., 2018; Kress, 2000a, b; The New London Group, 1996). This means that they transformed, reshaped and re-signified the representational resources available to them in a variety of semiotic modes involving not only the verbal but also the visual and the artistic in order to make their own meanings with the representational resources that each one brought to the classroom.

From July to November, these children engaged in several moments of redesign in Janks' (2014) terms in order to make their own meanings as this chapter shows. Through redesign, English language teaching in this context became critical as the pupils were encouraged to explore the relationship between language, difference, identity and power (Janks, 2000). They gained access to dominant knowledge (languages spoken in Argentina in different communities; natural habitats of birds and animals; animals in danger of extinction; encyclopedia entry, poster, and poem as text types) but appropriated and re-signified it in their localized and diverse ways (Ramezanzadeh & Rezaei, 2019) through redesign. Using these creations, they collectively imagined possibilities for making a positive difference in their context. They planned and designed an awareness-raising campaign about the importance of protecting animals' natural habitats and against animal hunting. Filled with pride and happiness, they strolled around their school playing the song 'Paradise' by Coldplay, showing photographs of animals imprisoned in zoos, and sharing the entries in their animal encyclopedia, their illustrated poems of animals in their habitats, and their posters against animal hunting. This possibility for transformation through social action had an ethical dimension based on love and care for others (Janks, 2018; Zembylas, 2020), in this case, animals. These activist and ethical dimensions turned critical literacy into critical pedagogy (Janks, 2018) in this English language classroom (Crookes, 2013).

Conclusion

This chapter describes how critical literacy and critical pedagogy were realized in a rural multigrade primary classroom in Verónica, a small town in Argentina. Working in cooperation with the Social Sciences teacher, the children learned about the variety of languages spoken in the country as well as the communities that speak them. They got to know about their linguistic backgrounds and discovered that one girl had been born in Paraguay and spoke Guarani. They invited her mom to the classroom and were eager to learn greetings and animal names in Guarani. By enacting this translingual approach, Bárbara welcomed and valued the children's linguistic and cultural backgrounds and implicitly conveyed a powerful message: meaning making, in life but also in the school context, involves using all available languages and resources to make meaning with a genuine purpose beyond that of

learning vocabulary or grammar in isolation. In turn, with the Natural Sciences teacher, they addressed the theme of hunting and animal protection and created posters and poems to raise awareness of the dangers of indiscriminate hunting and the importance of protecting local fauna like ostriches. In this way, Bárbara provided access to dominant knowledge mainly using and producing informational texts, but she also made room for personal meanings and diverse experiences by engaging the students with literature, poetry and the arts (self-drawn posters) and encouraging redesign, i.e. the children re-signified the resources at hand, in this case to take action. They designed awareness-raising posters about the importance of taking care of animals and local fauna, and this action phase addressed the citizenship and social justice dimension of critical literacy and critical pedagogy.

Engagement Options

This chapter describes how Bárbara, an English language teacher working in a difficult context involving a rural multigrade school, enacted a critical and translingual pedagogy in cooperation with the Social and Natural Sciences teachers.

1. By welcoming the indigenous language Guarani in the classroom and in the academic tasks, by strengthening home-school relationships as Tamara's mom was invited to school to share her expertise in Guarani, and by inviting the children to re-signify languages and resources through redesign with a real awareness-raising purpose in their local community, Bárbara valued their localized ways, diversity, and experiences. In this way, she reconceptualized the notion of 'authenticity in TESOL' by centering on learners (Ramezanzadeh & Rezaei, 2019, p. 794) instead of focusing on something external to them, to be found in materials, course books, projects, lessons and so on. In which other ways can a flexible and localized curriculum of this kind be enacted?

2. Discussing moral dilemmas about topics that emerge from learners' localized practices (e.g. slaughtering) (instead of emerging from history or literature for example) is significant in critical pedagogies, in particular when it leads to action. The ethical and activist are central dimensions in critical pedagogies (Janks, 2014). What teacher identity and roles are implied? What difficulties, challenges and risks should teachers consider in advance?

3. Engaging with popular culture in the classroom (Coldplay song) is not mere entertainment. It is a way of taking into account learners' emotions, desires, identities (ways of speaking, being, learning and more), and localized ways (Pennycook, 2010). How does this view question ways of teaching languages as bounded entities? What can the implications be in terms of informal learning, affective engagement, the performance of new identities, and local conditions?

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Chapter 7
A School Visit to the Ecological and Cultural Park William Henry Hudson: Outdoor Learning in Secondary School to Cultivate an Ethical Relationship with Nature and Take Action

Adriana Helver and Melina Porto

Initial Vignette

> Teacher: Amanda, why don't you tell your classmates about Strawberry Day at Hudson's Park? Amanda has come back to the museum with her family. Do you remember we were given some leaflets about Strawberry Day, which is celebrated on November 10th? Amanda: Yes. I told my dad about it and we went there with my siblings, too. It was great.

Amanda is a 14-year-old teenager attending second year at state Secondary School N° 49 located in a poor neighborhood in Florencio Varela in Argentina. This family visit to the Ecological and Cultural Park William Henry Hudson in town to experience a local celebration, Strawberry Day, was inspired by a school visit to the Park with Adriana, the English teacher, on October 25th, 2013. Amanda was not aware that the celebration existed and had not heard of the Park or Henry Hudson until then. The school visit triggered bonds between the school, the community and its local heritage, and the family in ways Adriana had not anticipated.

We have followed ethical guidelines and usual ethical procedures. Consent and release forms from parents have been obtained. All student names are pseudonyms. Permission to name the school has been obtained. Supporting evidence is italicized in all data extracts.

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The neighborhood and the school are poor. The *Dirección de Planeamiento* [Planning Office] of the province of Buenos Aires identifies it as a school with a high vulnerability rate. There are 17 teenagers between 13 and 16 years old in the second year English class. Many of their relatives have not finished secondary school and attend adult education centers to do so. The attendance rate is low as students help their families by taking care of their siblings or doing informal work. They have serious learning problems in most school subjects, lack interest in school content, do not have the habit of doing homework, and have no literacy support at home. They perceive the English lesson as totally irrelevant to their lives. Their everyday concerns and worries take precedence. There have been violent attacks among these teenagers and the school building has been vandalized.

These difficult circumstances motivated Adriana to focus on the promotion of dialogue and the building of a solid bond with the school as a place students could identify with and where they could develop themselves and connect with their community in emotionally significant ways. With this commitment she planned the school visit to the Ecological and Cultural Park William Henry Hudson described in this chapter.

The Legal Vision and the Language Teaching Perspective

Melina highlighted that the difficult circumstances (Gao, 2019; Kuchah, 2018) described in the initial vignette indicate a mismatch with the priorities of the education policies of the province of Buenos Aires where the school is located. For example, provincial Law of Education N°13,688 (2007) prescribes critical thinking and critical literacy as one of the aims of education ('interpelación de la realidad, su comprensión' [comprehend and question reality]), and the reference to 'herramientas para incidir y transformarla' [tools to have an impact on and transform that reality] indicates a focus on action that is aligned with critical pedagogies:

> Asegurar una educación para todos los alumnos que favorezca la construcción de *un pensamiento crítico para la interpelación de la realidad, su comprensión y la construcción de herramientas para incidir y transformarla*. (Ley Provincial de Educación, Capítulo 2, Artículo 16, emphasis added)

> Guarantee the development of *critical thinking in all students to comprehend and question reality as well as the necessary tools to have an impact on and transform that reality.*

This legal framework has been accompanied by the introduction of citizenship education as a compulsory subject in secondary school as well as the intercultural perspective for the teaching of languages as a basic principle. The national curriculum guidelines for languages designed in 2012 provide general principles for the teaching of English, French, German, Italian, and Portuguese as foreign languages both in primary and secondary schools. This document, designed by leading experts in the field and passed by the Federal Education Council, aims at the unification and harmonization of the linguistic and cultural practices associated with language education in the country. It is concerned with the development of the necessary

knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help children and youth shuttle among the languages at their disposal in order to function in increasingly multilingual, multi-cultural and complex settings (see Porto, 2016 for details). The development of intercultural citizenship (Byram, 2008; Byram & Golubeva, 2020; Byram et al., 2017) is explicitly acknowledged as important. Although the document is prescriptive, it offers different flexible trajectories of language learning of variable length for the different cycles of primary and secondary school, intended to cater for the different contextual realities of language education in the country. Despite the fact that these legal and theoretical foundations describe well what a classroom such as Amanda's would need, the difficult circumstances described in the initial vignette challenge and threaten the possibilities.

Adriana's Vision, Moral Purposes and Aims

Adriana was conscious of the difficulties. During the implementation of the project, she wrote field notes where she combined descriptive, interpretive and reflective text related to the school, the students, the context, and the project. For example, she reflected at length on her vision of education and the possibilities for the setting. She believed in critical literacy and critical pedagogy, and reflected on the cognitive, citizenship, ethical, and political dimensions of language teaching in this way:

Extract 1

From a cognitive perspective, the promotion of critical thinking and the learning processes involved in the English class are closely related. The premise is that there is a close relationship between knowledge and thinking, and between language learning and thinking processes (Beyer, 1995).

From a citizenship perspective, particular aspects of cultural identification, characteristic of language learning, are revealed during the learning process, making English language teaching a potentially meaningful opportunity for the development of thinking skills that stand beyond the instrumental dimension of learning a foreign language. This educational dimension is grounded on the political and ethical responsibilities of language teachers (Byram, 2016) and encompasses a citizenship dimension put forward by Starkey (2005) in these terms: 'The pedagogy associated with language learning provides many opportunities to develop citizenship skills as well as familiarize learners with key concepts associated with democracy. In many aspects communicative methodology is in itself democratic. The skills developed in language classes are thus directly transferable to citizenship education' (p. 32).

From an ethical and political positioning, the experience of using a foreign language for authentic communication involves the responsibility to develop competences that allow students to learn about global issues and to communicate their local concerns globally, encouraging the development of a new form of consciousness that promotes participation in the global democratic community. My aim is that students realize that their intervention as citizens who exercise their rights may clearly transform their context with respect to issues of social good.

I believe that the cognitive, ethical, and political dimensions of critical thinking are crucial for the development of healthy democratic practices that generate the capacity to recognize and overcome social injustice, a conception that is framed by critical pedagogies (McLaren, 1998). The school visit I planned aimed to avoid reproductive learning and to promote possibilities for change in students acknowledging at the same time the wealth of their own natural and cultural heritage which they seemed to overlook and

ignore, and which becomes fundamental in this outdoor experience to encourage pride and respect for their own backgrounds –often devalued in disadvantaged contexts such as Florencio Varela.
(Teacher field note, September 2013)

This field note reveals, as Melina noted, that Adriana had a solid theoretical background and was committed to overcoming the challenges of the difficult circumstances of her context. Shamim (2018) acknowledges that this commitment is pivotal in settings with these characteristics. She saw herself as a moral agent of change and transformation for her learners and the setting (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016) with a vision of 'what could be and of how we should live' (Luke, 2019, p. 140) supported by continuous reflection in her field notes, as the chapter will show, on the philosophies, values, and moral purposes that guided her practices. This reflection is the basis of teachers' conceptualization of their role and identity as moral agents (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016). She conceived the school visit as 'an opportunity for students to discover and appreciate the local natural environment and cultural practices, to value them as a legacy from previous generations, and to acknowledge their right to their natural and cultural heritage' (teacher field note, September 2013). She was convinced that 'the treatment of the topic by engaging in this school visit to Hudson's Park can foster students' motivation, self-esteem, and a long lasting ethical commitment to these rights' (teacher field note, September 2013).

On this basis, Adriana designed a first outline of a project called 'Our school visit to the Ecological and Cultural Park William Henry Hudson'. It comprised a visit to the place where William Henry Hudson had been born in Florencio Varela, which is now preserved as a museum and an ecological park. The project was welcomed enthusiastically by the head of the school. In this way, Adriana's commitment and agency were supported not only by the legal framework mentioned above but also by the institution and the authorities, and Shamim (2018) emphasizes how this support is indispensable when teaching English in difficult contexts.

The ultimate purpose of the project was to 'promote possibilities for change in students' by helping them 'realize that their intervention as citizens who exercise their rights may clearly transform their context with respect to issues of social good' (teacher field note). She envisioned that she could achieve this aim by promoting the appreciation of the community's natural and cultural heritage, specifically by becoming familiar with the local writer and scientist William Henry Hudson, his literature, and ecology works. Starting from the recognition of students' individual rights, the project aimed to raise awareness of their local community heritage, which the writer had made famous in the English language, his mother tongue. His parents came from New England and settled in Florencio Varela in 1836, 5 years before his birth. This particular aspect contributed to making the topic relevant for the English class: a local author that described the local land, the Pampas, in his novels and scientific works, in English.

In her field notes, Adriana set the following learning aims for her project:

Extract 2
   My students will be able to:
- learn actively 'on the basis of real life situations' (Dam & Volman, 2004, p. 359);
- participate in healthy interaction with peers, the community, and the school;

- develop habits of mind that stimulate the exploration of issues and themes, collaboration, deliberation, introspection, analysis, reflection, and reasoning (Nussbaum, 2002);
- develop 'the competence citizens need to participate in a plural and democratic society, and that enable them to make their own contribution to that society' (Dam & Volman, 2004, p. 360);
- engage 'in deliberations over issues of social good, and allow them to think of themselves in ways that fundamentally tie them to other members of society' (Lim, 2011, p. 783); and
- 'act and behave responsibly and adequately in society with the support of domain-specific knowledge and skills' (Frijters et al., 2008, p. 67).

    (Teacher field note, September 2013)

With the idea of bridging the gap between school content and students' lives meaningfully, Adriana fostered work with multimodal material about the author, in English and Spanish, such as websites, extracts of his novels, leaflets, comics, and videos. One specific aim was to link the content of school learning with the heritage of the community since Hudson was one of the first South American naturalists. Nowadays this reserve organizes community activities to cultivate the love of and care for the local environment, and to develop the local culture. It hosts a public library, and it organizes local festivals such as *Pachamama Day* (celebrated in August by local aboriginal communities) and *Strawberry Day* (celebrated in November by the local farmers that cultivate this fruit).

Learning *about* Human Rights and *for* Human Rights

The introduction of the *English Primer Reader* for secondary school (https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-5780-1_1) begins with an explicit recognition of education *about* human rights, which involves informing students about their own rights and those of others (Osler, 2012a, b; Osler & Starkey, 2010). Adriana read the introductory sentence of the first activity in the *Primer Reader* (p. 3), 'In Argentina secondary education is a right of all young people'. She wanted to make sure that the students understood the meaning of the word *right* in all its dimensions. They did not recall having heard or read the word recently and remained silent. Adriana played the song by Bob Marley *Get Up, Stand Up* and wrote its first stanza on the board:

    Extract 3
        Get up, stand up, stand up for your rights!
        Get up, stand up, stand up for your rights!
        Get up, stand up, stand up for your rights!
        Get up, stand up, don't give up the fight!
        (Blackboard notes, September 2013)

Immediately everyone recognized the song and the lyrics, and identified the meaning of the word, which they translated into Spanish. From one moment to the next, they felt highly motivated as they realized that their everyday knowledge of popular culture, in this case a famous song, was meaningful and welcomed at school. They were so interested that they translated the whole stanza. Melina noted that the

song worked as a way of involving students emotionally and connecting these initial emotions with their localized ways around the theme (Pennycook, 2010), as shown below.

They then read an informational text called *Secondary education in numbers* (*English Primer Reader* for secondary school, p. 3) which compares the situation of secondary education as a right in different parts of the world drawing on data from UNICEF. Students were surprised to discover that in some parts of the world, only 20% of teenagers attend secondary school, or that girls are not allowed to study in some countries. One student raised her hand and said 'Education, the right to education'. Adriana wrote the phrase on the blackboard and elicited other rights. The class compiled the following list:

> Extract 4
>   The right to have good medical care
>   The right to express opinions
>   The right to have an adequate nutrition
>   The right to play and have fun
>   The right to an identity and a religion
>   The right to a comfortable home and a family
>   (Blackboard notes, September 2013)

Then Adriana focused on education *for* human rights which involves 'the development of skills and attitudes to strengthen human rights, which in turn implies respect for diversity, a sense of solidarity with others, particularly the oppressed, and skills to effect change and bring about greater justice' (Osler, 2012a, p. 6; 2012b). So she introduced the idea that each right carries certain responsibilities with it. As an outcome of rich class discussion, the students decided to create bilingual posters in English and Spanish with the aim of raising awareness of the fact that each right also involves one or several responsibilities. For example, Fig. 7.1 shows a poster in
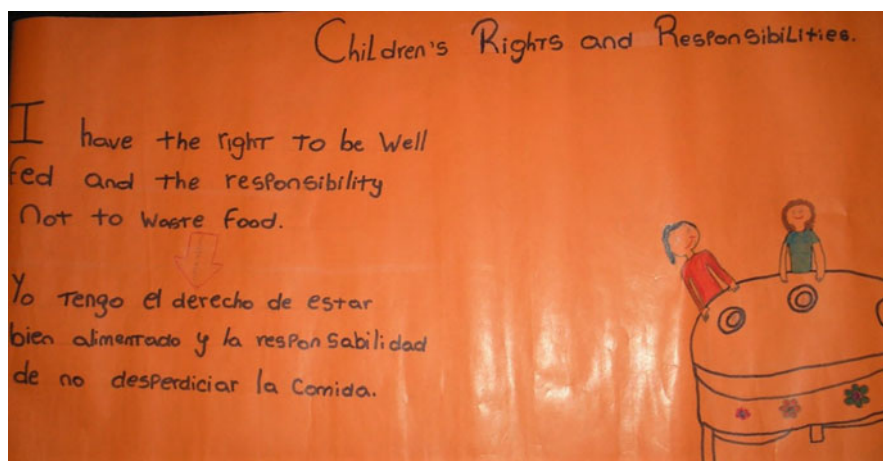
Fig. 7.1 Awareness-raising bilingual poster (September 2013)
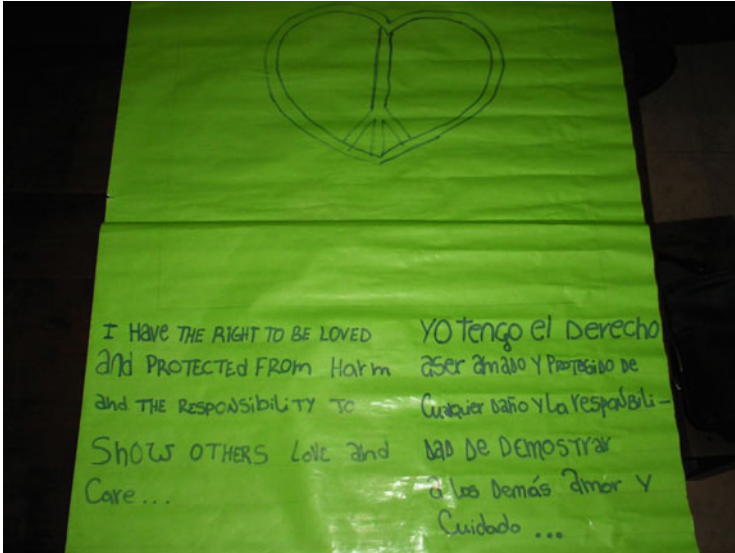
Fig. 7.2 Awareness-raising bilingual poster (September 2013)

which one group of students connected the right to be well fed with the responsibility not to waste food. In Fig. 7.2 another group reflected on the right to be loved and the implied responsibility to love and care for others.

These posters show that these students were able and willing to see their rights from two perspectives, namely, the rights themselves but also the implied responsibilities. Melina and Adriana reflected on Osler and Starkey's (2005a, b) remark about the capacity and willingness that young people have in terms of reciprocity and responsibility:

> It is sometimes argued that, if informed about their rights, young people will begin to demand rights without acknowledging their responsibilities. Moreover, it is sometimes asserted that young people do not want responsibilities, and that they see these as the preserve of adults. Not only is this a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of children's human rights, which are based *on the principle of reciprocity, that is to say, respecting and upholding the rights of others* (...) but it is also, perhaps, to underestimate *young people's capacity and willingness to acknowledge their responsibilities*. (pp. 165–166, emphasis added)

The students identified a particular right and related it to their everyday lives. In other words, they connected the theme of rights with their local context (Pennycook, 2010). They hung the posters in the classroom. In this way, the English class acquired a different significance. It became a place to address a global theme with their local perspectives, where English was used as social practice (Gee, 1999, 2011) in a meaningful way and where these teenagers invested their situationality, their identities, and their emotions (Pennycook, 2010; Zaidi & Rowsell, 2017). The designers of these posters began to better understand power, inequality and injustice

in human relationships, and appreciate their own role in contributing to address these issues in their lives in concrete ways, for instance, by not wasting food and by caring for others and showing love to others. Underlying the posters was the identification of social issues from a critical perspective and the enactment of specific, feasible, tangible possibilities for change, such as the call not to waste food and care for others. This engagement with the local reality for social change taking 'the prismatic character of [the students'] lives [and] their own backgrounds' into account (Zaidi & Rowsell, 2017, p. 11) may seem small if perceived through mainstream English language teaching. However, when these actions are located in their context, which in this case was a difficult context (Kuchah, 2018), they become significant for those involved, illustrating that 'literacy provides a referent and a form of social criticism for engaging those conditions necessary for (. . .) students to learn the knowledge and skills essential for self-reflection and collective agency' (Giroux, 1992, p. 1). Furthermore, not wasting food and loving and caring for others are actions that are grounded on ethical relations with others (Ferri, 2014, 2018; Zembylas, 2017a), particularly 'the ethical relation of responsibility for the other' (Dasli, 2017, p. 676; Dasli & Díaz, 2017).

Engaging with Global Themes in Localized Ways

Adriana wanted to foster ethical relations not only with humans (peers and herself) but also with the non-human world, including nature and places. Consequently, as preparation for the school visit to Hudson's Park, she turned to the theme of environmental citizenship introduced in the *English Primer Reader*. She wanted to foster awareness of the importance of taking care of the environment not only for the present generation but for those to come and to build a sense of love and care for nature, the environment, the planet and its resources. This perspective represents a posthuman orientation in applied linguistics (Pennycook, 2018a, b) and in education (Zembylas, 2017b; Zembylas & Bozalek, 2017). These aims aligned with those in the *English Primer Reader*. Unit 4, called 'blue treasure', begins with a poem by the English poet Coleridge (1797), born in 1772 and dead in 1834, about water:

> Extract 5
>   Water, water, every where,
>   And all the boards did shrink;
>   Water, water, every where,
>   Nor any drop to drink.
>   (*English Primer Reader* for secondary school, p. 21)

Discussion of the poem's meaning triggered the students' interest, who continued to read an informative text in Spanish describing the functions of Instituto de Limnología [Institute of Limnology], a government organization that deals with the observation and control of water sources in the province of Buenos Aires. The text is a screenshot of the Institute's webpage in Spanish (*English Primer Reader*, p. 22), and the students immediately realized it was located in the near city of La

Fig. 7.3 *English Primer Reader* for secondary school (p. 21)

Dr Benitez: *There is a fragile natural balance in our world. Anything we do can break this balance. We can all contribute to keep the balance or to break it. We need to be conscious of the impact. We must think twice! There are two key questions we must ask ourselves. The first one is: "What impact can this have?" and the next question is: "How can I help?". Just by reducing rubbish, for example, we can help a lot to stop water pollution. The toxic substances in rubbish filter through the land and affect the water running under our land.*

Plata. Reading about a local institution, close to their town, was engaging. They were curious to read an interview to the person in charge of the Institute, Dr. Benítez, a researcher and a biologist who describes his job and gives a message to young people about the impact of everyone's actions on the environment (Fig. 7.3). Dr. Benítez' message is built on the sense of ethical responsibility for the non-human world mentioned above, for instance, when he says 'We can all contribute to keep the balance or to break it. We need to be conscious of the impact. We must think twice!' (*English Primer Reader*, p. 23).

The students found connections between the theme Dr. Benítez addressed in the interview and the topics they were working with in the school subject Biology, mainly about ecology and the natural world in the province of Buenos Aires. Adriana focused the discussion on the two key questions he posed, of an ethical kind (Zembylas, 2017b): 'what impact can this have?' and 'how can I help?' (Fig. 7.3) Melina noted that both questions are also significant in critical pedagogies: 'What problem do we see here? What is really happening? How does this story relate to our lives? What can we do about these problems in our lives and in our community?' (Wallerstein & Hammes, 1991, p. 252).

Adriana also linked the theme with other global environmental concerns by eliciting famous ecology slogans, and the class came up with the following list:

Extract 6
Stop acid rain
Meat is murder
Support one world
Save the whale
Say 'no' to nuclear power
Save the rainforest
(Blackboard notes, September 2013)

The students chose the slogan 'support one world' to begin the discussion and reflect upon the theme, and concluded that 'it refers to the community and the care of the planet'. The discussion was erratic as they addressed all the slogans in a superficial way as Extract 7 shows, but Adriana and Melina did not worry. They

were interested in raising general awareness, beginning to think ethically about the non-human world, linking themes to the local context whenever possible, and increasing students' motivation to investigate environmental themes in preparation for the school visit to Hudson's Park:

> Extract 7
>   Acid rain is rain with toxic substances
>   Chernobyl is a city polluted by nuclear power in Russia
>   'Support one world' refers to the community and the care of the planet
>   There is a rainforest in Misiones [a province in Argentina]
>   (Blackboard notes, September 2013)

Becoming Familiar with the Local Engaging Multiliteracies and Multimodality

Adriana encouraged her students to relate the previous general discussion about global environmental topics to the local context, in particular to one local case in Florencio Varela where community work for the preservation of the environment can be observed directly, namely, the Ecological and Cultural Park William Henry Hudson. In this Park there is a water source within 54 hectares. She introduced the Park to the students, who were not aware of its existence.

The class read informative leaflets and texts about the Park, a significant place in their town, in Spanish, English, English-Spanish, and English-Spanish-Italian. They researched about William Henry Hudson's life and his scientific and literary works. Adriana and Melina noticed they were filled with surprise, joy, enthusiasm, and pride. They could not believe that someone born in Florencio Varela had written about their town in English. When Adriana first mentioned the school visit to the Park, they were hilarious.

The organization of the formal aspects of the school visit took about 3 weeks, and Adriana used this time to build background knowledge and experience about the Park and Hudson himself. She worked with a variety of texts in class, for instance, a passage from Hudson's most famous autobiographical novel *Far Away and Long Ago: A History of My Early Life* (1918), which describes the place where he had been born in Florencio Varela. The novel excerpt surprised the students because of the presence of local terms such as *pampa* and *ombúes*, and the reference to sheep and cattle, which are all typical of their region. They learned facts about the *ombúes*, for instance, details about habitat, size, age, and location:

> Extract 8[1]
>   The house where *I was born on the South American pampas*, was quaintly named *Los Veinte-cinco Ombúes* which means 'The Twenty-five Ombu Trees', there being just *twenty-five of these indigenous trees – gigantic in size, and standing wide apart in a road about 400 yards along. [...] Our trees were about a century old and very large,*

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[1] Supporting evidence is italicized in all data extracts.

and, as they stood on an elevation, they could be easily seen at a distance of ten miles. At noon in summer *the cattle and sheep, of which we had a large number, used to rest in their shed*; one large tree also afforded us children a splendid play-house, and we used to carry up a number of planks to construct safe bridges from branch to branch, and at noon, when our elders were sleeping their siesta, we would have our arboreal games unmolested. (Hudson, 1918, pp. 4–5)

The class also read part of an American comic based on his novel *Green Mansions: A Romance of the Tropical Forest* (1904), which is an exotic romance about a journey to the Guyana jungle in south-eastern Venezuela and the encounter between an explorer and a jungle girl named Rima. In the comic adaptation, Rima does not look like a jungle girl from Venezuela but rather like an American superheroine. She is portrayed as a tall and strong Anglo-Saxon girl with blonde hair and blue eyes. The students were triggered by the different characterizations in the novel and the comic, and began to notice them. They compared, contrasted and related those representations of Rima, and issues of stereotyping, bias and prejudice came up. They also watched a video with another recreation of this literary work. The video is the trailer of the film *Green Mansion* starred by Audrey Hepburn and Antony Perkins, also based on Hudson's novel (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkTar7VJ4xg). Adriana explained that the protagonists had been very famous artists in the 1950s and their interest in the school visit grew. In her field notes, Adriana explained her rationale for working with the novel, the comic and the trailer – tied to the development of a critical spirit by getting in contact with multiple perspectives:

> Extract 9
> By working with the novel, the comic and the trailer, the students had the opportunity to *access information from different kinds of sources and perspectives, fostering in this way a critical analysis of the different artefacts* according to their needs and interests. My rationale for using these sources is based on Osler and Starkey (2002):
> Teachers have a responsibility to ensure that the child not only has skills of reading and writing to gain access to information but is able to interpret visual images critically, in newspapers, video and other media. Skills involved in the development of visual literacy include questioning, recognition of bias and discrimination and those skills associated with the design and production of visual materials, for example a photo sequence or video (pp. 155–156).
> (Teacher field note, September 2013)

Outdoor Learning to Cultivate an Ethical Relationship with Nature and Take Action

The school visit was an opportunity to have direct experience with William Henry Hudson's life and his legacy. When the class arrived at the ecological park, an expert guide welcomed the group and told them about its historical and cultural aspects. The students were able to live the history of the place inside Hudson's natal house, a building of the eighteenth century, as they observed some of the original typical

objects of *gauchos* of the *pampas* that Hudson himself had used at that time in their town. They also appreciated some of the first editions of the writer's books, in English and in other languages, including Japanese.

The guide focused on Hudson's innovative scientific studies related to the local environment and the importance of recognizing and continuing his work. This part of the visit also involved the analysis of the local flora and fauna, and a workshop to learn to plant trees. The students registered information in their new netbooks which they had received through a government plan called *Plan Conectar Igualdad* aimed at guaranteeing one netbook per student in all state secondary schools of the country. Figure 7.4 shows one of the students, Blanca (13 years old), using her new computer to register data in the Park. Despite the recognition of 'the importance of the outdoor environment as an educational resource' (Leather, 2013, p. 170) and the support that exists in the literature about the benefits of outdoor experiences of this kind to improve learning in school subjects as well as at university level (see, for instance, *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*), these experiences are scarce in South America (Marinho & Reis, 2017) and particularly rare in the field of language education (Norling & Sandberg, 2015).

In her field notes, Adriana explained her vision of how the school visit complemented the work on rights she had done with the *English Primer Reader* in

Fig. 7.4 Blanca with her netbook in Ecological and Cultural Park William Henry Hudson in Florencio Varela (October 25th, 2013)

the classroom. The complementarity occurred by engaging students in learning beyond the classroom:

Extract 10

We went through different stages in the development of this important aspect of critical thinking, namely *learning about rights but also becoming involved in a school visit that encouraged work beyond the school*, as Osler and Starkey (2002) state:

Human rights are made known in two ways in schools: first by opportunities to learn about human rights in a formal structural way; second by the ethos and the climate of the school expressed in public documents making specific reference to human rights. The formal teaching approaches need to be combined with *an active approach to learning. Project work involving contacts with the world beyond the school is an important element* (p. 171).

(Teacher field notes, October 2013)

The guide's explanations about the topography of the Park encouraged the group to observe the place and infer ideas based on what they could see and what they could not perceive prima facie. For example, in Extract 11, Dante's remark 'No, porque baja' [No, because it runs down] makes Magdalena reconsider the guide's explanation ('Ahh') in light of empirical evidence, i.e. the water itself running down:

Extract 11

Magdalena: ¿Y el arroyo que usted había dicho, profe?
Guide: ¿Ven que baja el terreno?
Students: Sí
Guide: El agua baja en la parte baja.
Magdalena: *Pero yo no vi agua.*
Dante: *No, porque baja. ¿No ves?*
Magdalena: *Ahh*

English translation

Magdalena: And the stream you've told us about, teacher?
Guide: Can you see the ground?
Students: Yes
Guide: Water runs down to the lower area.
Magdalena: *But I haven't seen any water.*
Dante: *No, because it runs down, don't you see?*
Magdalena: *Ahh*
(Recorded conversation of the group visit to William Henry Hudson Ecological Park, October 25th, 2013)

Upon reflection on the flora in the area, the students were surprised by the age of some species and their relationship to the history of the place: 'Este ombú tiene 250–300 años. Es de la época de Hudson' [This ombu tree is 250–300 years old. It is from Hudson's times]; '¿Años?' [Years?]; '¡Faaaa!' [Wow!]; '¿De verdad?' [Really?]. They also showed a responsible attitude towards the value of these trees. In other words, these teenagers were able to apply the sense of responsibility for others, including nature, that they had previously acknowledged in class when they analyzed their own rights and designed awareness-raising posters (Fig. 7.2, 'the responsibility to show others love and care'). Extract 12 shows their sense of responsibility for the preservation of an old species that represents the community's heritage – sense that was based on an ethical relationship with the natural world

(Pennycook, 2018a, b; Zembylas, 2017b), as Melina and Adriana noted. As one student shook one of the branches of the tree, the rest immediately told him to stop ('Nooo!'):

Extract 12
Guide: *Este ombú tiene 250-300 años. Es de la época de Hudson.*
Gabriela: *¿Años?*
Enzo: *¡Faaaa!*
Magdalena: *¿De verdad?*
[A student shakes one of the branches and the other students react immediately]
Students: *¡Nooo!*

English translation

Guide: *This ombu tree is 250-300 years old. It is from Hudson's times.*
Gabriela: *Years?*
Enzo: *Wow!*
Magdalena: *Really?*
[A student shakes one of the branches and the other students react immediately]
Students: *Nooo!*
(Recorded conversation of the group visit to William Henry Hudson Ecological Park, October 25th, 2013)

Furthermore, they also developed an aesthetic sense towards the vegetation they observed in the Park during one of the guide's explanations (Extract 13) ('¡Qué lindos los árboles con la enredadera!' [How nice the trees with the climbing plants!]; '¡Ay, son hermosos!' [Oh, they are beautiful!]; '¡Me encantan los árboles!' [I love trees!]). Aesthetics and emotions have been recognized as playing a central role in education (Fleming, 2012) as well as in critical perspectives (Griffin et al., 2017):

Extract 13
Guide: **Mucha gente vino con el hacha queriendo** . . . **querían cortar los árboles pero acá había caseros**. . .
Dante: Shh. ¡Escuchen!
Guide: . . . y no los dejaron. Si no, no estarían esos árboles ahí. Los hubieran hecho leña.
María: Ahh
Dante: *¡Qué lindo los árboles con la enredadera!*
Gabriela: *¡Ay, son hermosos!*
Patricia: *¡Me encantan los árboles!*

English translation

Guide: **A lot of people came here with an axe in order to** . . . **they wanted to cut the trees down but there were house-keepers here**. . .
Dante: Shh. Listen!
Guide: . . . and they did not allow them to. Otherwise, these trees wouldn't be here. They would have made firewood from them.
María: Ahh
Dante: *How nice the trees with the climbing plants!*
Gabriela: *Oh, they are beautiful!*
Patricia: *I love trees!*
(Recorded conversation of the group visit to William Henry Hudson Ecological Park, October 25th, 2013).

Melina and Adriana acknowledged the guide's effort to relate the outdoor experience with the history of the place (evidence in bold in Extract 13), for instance, by mentioning that the Park had suffered deforestation threats ('Mucha gente vino con el hacha queriendo. . . querían cortar los árboles' [A lot of people came here with an axe in order to. . . they wanted to cut the trees down]) but had been preserved by local people ('pero acá había caseros' [there were house-keepers here]). Melina and Adriana spotted a missed opportunity here to cultivate ethical relationships with others, including nature, by examining the contextual, social, historical, and cultural histories and experiences of people and nature in the Park. For instance, Adriana could have addressed the following questions in her project: How is language learning as implemented in this school visit to Hudson's Park entangled with the ethics and politics of globalization, including human and non-human suffering? How do these teenagers understand 'human', 'humanity', 'nature', and 'being'? The examination of the contextual, social, historical, and cultural dimensions involved in answering these questions is essential in critical pedagogies (Janks, 2018; Wallerstein & Hammes, 1991), in decolonizing and posthuman frameworks in education (Zembylas, 2010; Bozalek & Zembylas, 2016), and also in language education (Porto & Yulita, 2019; Porto & Zembylas, 2020a, b).

Despite this missed opportunity, the students participated in a plant workshop that addressed these concerns. They planted the *tarumá* and learned that this tree represents their town ('El árbol se llama tarumá. Es el árbol símbolo de Varela' [This tree is called tarumá. It represents Varela]) (Extract 14). This was a simple way of learning something about the history of their town. Moreover, they committed themselves to taking care of the plant at home for future generations, illustrating an ethic of care in this context (Zembylas, 2010). The extract shows the sense of pride and fulfilment that Carlos developed by planting the tree and taking care of it ('Yo planté el tarumá y ahora voy a esperar que crezca' [I've planted the tarumá and now I'm going to wait for it to grow]). He felt the tree belonged to him as revealed by the use of the personal pronoun **mi** ('Filmame **mi** tarumá' [Film **my** tarumá]). Carlos and his classmates were developing an appreciation of nature based on an ethical bond of care and responsibility for others (Pennycook, 2018a, b; Zembylas, 2010):

Extract 14
> Guide: *Acá les va a crecer grande así. Cuando crezca al mismo tamaño, lo pasan a la maceta. Y cuando tenga un metro y medio o dos, lo plantan en la tierra.*
> María: Listo.
> Guide: *¿Ya lo sembraron? Bueno vamos a ir a dejar lo que ya sembraron. Lo van a dejar allá para la vuelta y ahora se van a jugar.*
> Gabriela: *¿Cómo es?*
> Guide: *El árbol se llama tarumá. Es el árbol símbolo de Varela.*
> Carlos: *Filmame **mi** tarumá.*
> Gabriela: *¿Lo pongo así acá?*
> Teacher: *Claro, y después lo cubrís con tierra.*
> Carlos: [to the camera]: *Yo planté el tarumá y ahora voy a esperar que crezca.*

English translation

Guide: *Here it will grow this high. When it grows the same size, you must plant it in a flower pot. And when it reaches a meter and a half or two meters you must plant it in the ground.*
María: Done.
Guide: Have you planted it? Well, we'll leave the seeds you've planted. You will leave them over there until we return and now you can play.
Gabriela: What is it?
Guide: *This tree is called tarumá. It represents Varela.*
Carlos: *Film **my** tarumá.*
Gabriela: *Shall I put this here this way?*
Teacher: *Right, and then you must cover it with soil.*
Carlos: [to the camera]: *I've planted the tarumá and now I'm going to wait for it to grow.*
(Recorded conversation of the group visit to William Henry Hudson Ecological Park, October 25th, 2013)

The class took three of those plants to the English classroom for their daily observation and care. Figure 7.5 shows how one of the seeds planted during the workshop germinated in the classroom after 2 weeks of love and care.

By planting the *tarumá*, the students took concrete actions to protect the species; in other words, they were learning by participation (Dam & Volman, 2004) – a

Fig. 7.5 The *tarumá* planted by the students

characteristic of critical literacy and critical pedagogies (Janks, 2018; Wallerstein & Hammes, 1991). In addition, this participation in the form of an outdoor experience was highly motivational, and this motivational dimension has also been pointed out by Houge Mackenzie and Kerr (2017) in their account of a 3-day outdoor adventure trek in Peru as well as by others (Fägerstam, 2014; Richmond et al., 2018; Wistoft, 2013). The students' motivation favored their appreciation of the local heritage and the development of a sense of responsibility and care for the trees they had planted (Pennycook, 2018a, b; Zembylas, 2010, 2017b). They identified with Hudson's legacy ('tree that represents Florencio Varela') and considered that this legacy belonged to them ('Tarumá, 2B'). The natural environment became not only a setting but also a resource and an educational experience (MacQuarrie et al., 2015). In this way, the school visit to Hudson's Park contributed to including a posthuman orientation in English teaching in this setting, however modest and simple, by participating in an outdoor learning experience.

Reaching the School Community and the Family

After the visit, back into the classroom, and based on the premise that 'experiences in the outdoor environment could become a valuable starting point for subsequent indoor learning' (Fägerstam, 2014, p. 56), the class read the extract from *Far Away and Long Ago* again, where the students recognized some of the elements they had seen in the Park such as Hudson's house, the trees, and the elevation the text describes, and this connection outdoor-indoor learning proved to be highly motivational (Fägerstam, 2014).

They decided to share their experience with other members of the community by writing a summary of the visit with information about the Park in English. In this way, they used English as an authentic tool for communicating what they had learned in the project to the school community. For instance, Pablo wrote a summary of Hudson's life and of the history of the Park with his new computer. He used the leaflets he had read before the visit and the data he had collected in the Park as a springboard. His idea was to design a bilingual leaflet in English and Spanish to share information about Hudson and the Park with the rest of the school, drawing on the various sources of information the class had previously analyzed. Extract 15 shows the first part of Pablo's leaflet where he synthesized the most significant aspects for him regarding Hudson's life:

Extract 15
(First part of leaflet about Hudson's life, Pablo, October 28th, 2013)

October 28th

Our School Visit

Historia

William Henry Hudson wos born in Florencio varela in the estancia called 'los venticinco ombues' on the 4th of august of 1841. he was a dedicated naturalist and an excelleent writer. his most inportant sciense books 'birds of la plata' and 'birds and man'. his most famous literature book were 'far away and long ago, A history of my early life' (1918)

and 'Green mansians: A romance of the tropical forest' (1904). 'faraway and long ago' is a very famous autobiographical novel and 'Green mansians' inspired a famos american film and a comic. In 1957 the province of Buenos Aires created the 'museum William henry Hudson' in honour to this local oouthor.

The students had video-recorded the visit, and they collaboratively made a video clip describing and synthesizing their experience in the Park. They played the video clip in class and shared it with the school community using social media such as Facebook.

At the end of November, when school classes were almost finishing, some students told Adriana in casual conversation during a break that they had talked about the place with their families and that they had returned to the Park for the celebration of the *Día de la Frutilla* on November 10th with their parents and siblings. This new visit added an unexpected dimension to the project as it involved students in family outings stimulated by the interest that the project had developed ('Le dije a mi papá y fuimos con mis hermanos también' [I told my dad about it and we went there with my siblings, too]):

Extract 16

Teacher: Amanda, contales a los chicos sobre el Día de la Frutilla en el parque Hudson. Amanda fue con la familia de vuelta al museo. ¿Se acuerdan que nos dieron unos folletos sobre el Día de la Frutilla, que se festejaba el 10 de noviembre?
Amanda: Sí. *Le dije a mi papá y fuimos con mis hermanos también. Estuvo re bueno. Venden dulces y otras cosas aparte de frutillas.*
Teacher: Claro, cosas que los productores de acá hacen con lo que plantan.
Amanda: Sí. Estaba lleno de gente. *Yo quiero volver a ir.*
Teacher: ¿Y a tu papá le gusto? ¿Conocían el museo?
Amanda: No, no lo conocían.
Teacher: ¿Y qué les pareció?
Amanda: *Sí, les gustó. También quieren volver.*

English translation

Teacher: Amanda, why don't you tell your classmates about Strawberry Day at Hudson's Park. Amanda has come back to the museum with her family. Do you remember we were given some leaflets about Strawberry Day, which is celebrated on November 10th?
Amanda: Yes. *I told my dad about it and we went there with my siblings, too. It was great. They sell jams and other things apart from strawberries.*
Teacher: Of course, things that farmers produce with the plants they grow.
Amanda: Yes. It was full of people. *I want to come back.*
Teacher: And what about your dad? Did he like it? Did they know the museum?
Amanda: No, they didn't know it.
Teacher: What did they think about it?
Amanda: Yes, they liked it. *They want to come back, too.*
(Class conversation, November 2013)

All in all, the school visit to Hudson's Park turned out to be highly motivational, in tune with current research that points to this motivational dimension of outdoor learning (Fägerstam, 2014; Houge Mackenzie & Kerr, 2017; Richmond et al., 2018; Wistoft, 2013). It also fostered the students' desire to share the experience with the school community and also with their families, fostering bonds among the school,

the community, and the families. In this way the project connected different spheres of these students' lives, giving importance to the experiential and informal learning that takes place beyond the classroom and the school (Moje et al., 2004).

Conclusion

The experience reported in this chapter illustrates the exploration of students' local context using their knowledge of global issues and of related school content as a springboard. After an outdoor learning experience planned as a school visit to the Ecological and Cultural Park William Henry Hudson in Florencio Varela, these teenagers saw their surroundings and everyday lives in a different way and realized they had a role to play in this context, for example, by planting the local tree *tarumá* and committing themselves to taking care of it.

From a linguistic point of view, the contact with reality through the work with alternative discourses in different codes gave students the opportunity to interact with the complexity of that reality presented from a variety of perspectives, generating a holistic view of issues through the analysis of different sources of information. An example of this is the use of leaflets, videos, comics, novel excerpts, and the visit itself to study the important work that William Hudson had developed in their community and its influence around the world. Furthermore, the students perceived English in a new way, namely, as a language of authentic communication to learn about their local community and make it known to others. Discovering that their hometown, Florencio Varela, had become known in other continents thanks to Hudson's writings in English proved to be highly inspirational.

Finally, learning about the history of their town and its heritage from a critical perspective was the starting point to build up a strong identification with their surroundings as a context where these teenagers developed as responsible citizens with a specific purpose of collective cooperation. Their initiative to plant and grow the *tarumá* in their school is evidence of this collective sense of responsibility towards the environment in general and towards their local heritage in particular. Furthermore, by sharing the knowledge they had gained during the school visit with their families and peers, they were also contributing to the preservation of this local heritage by spreading their interest and enthusiasm with others. The family visits to the Park during Strawberry Day, organized out of their own initiative and in their own free time with parents and siblings, are an example of the bonds among the school, the families, and the community that this outdoor experience triggered.

Engagement Options

This chapter illustrates a progressive pedagogy that stimulates student community engagement by means of an outdoor learning experience. Action in the form of student initiatives to affirm their heritage and improve their local conditions does not usually follow from cognitive-oriented critical thinking. Action in schools, by students and teachers, is not what usually happens unless teachers have theoretical understanding, a moral purpose, a deep vision of education, solidarity, commitment, and a sense of agency (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016; Luke, 2019).

1. Where did this pedagogy come from? How did Adriana arrive at her project idea and focus? Was it triggered by the *English Primer Reader*? Does a teacher like Adriana have only English teaching related training? Did her pedagogy emerge from some other teacher education besides the world of English language teaching? Considering that the Argentinian Colleges of Education that prepare the language professionals of the future tend to prioritize instrumental and disciplinary objectives in language teaching (see Porto, 2019), where does her goal to develop 'a new form of consciousness that promotes participation in the global democratic community' as stated in her field notes come from? What developmental trajectories and support are necessary in teacher education programs so that teachers visualize their students 'as citizens who exercise their rights [and] may clearly transform their context with respect to issues of social good' (from teacher field notes)? How is it that her school has a commitment to this?

2. Informing students about their rights using locally produced materials; encouraging education not only *about* human rights but *for* human rights; addressing stereotypes resorting to multimodality; implementing a field trip into the community; fostering the appreciation of the local heritage; and encouraging community action and sharing the experience with the school community. How much English did the students learn? Many times the evidence in the chapter can be considered insufficient to claim that any substantial English learning occurred. What notion of language competence does this project support? (See Canagarajah, 2018; Gao, 2019; Hall, 2019; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015; Porto, 2021)

3. Outdoor learning experiences are a significant component of learning in many disciplines. Among the benefits identified in the literature, the following can be identified: 'experience and enjoyment. The outdoor learning programme (…) provides[ing] the possibility of interdisciplinary and enjoyment-based learning (…) the pupils who participate in the (…) programme develop a desire to learn' (Wistoft, 2013, p. 125); 'increased student motivation and enjoyment [and] increased on-task communication between students' (Fägerstam, 2014, p. 78); 'social connectedness, self-efficacy (…) and a recalibrated sense of self and personal potential' (Richmond et al., 2018, p. 36); and 'increased self-perceived life satisfaction' (Mutz et al., 2019). The conclusion is that 'there is research evidence that adventure education and outdoor learning can affect a participant's sense of self and that this can have transferable benefits to other contexts, and as

such it can be regarded as a powerful developmental tool' (Leather, 2013, p. 174). However, outdoor learning in South America (Marinho & Reis, 2017) and particularly in language education is scarce (Norling & Sandberg, 2015). How can outdoor learning experiences become part of the language teaching landscape?

4. Beames et al. (2017, p. 278) state that 'if adventure education has the capacity to be as powerful as many argue it to be, then surely it needs to be accessible to all and its efforts directed towards addressing some of humanities biggest problems'. It is worth noting that while this case is an example of teaching in difficult and disadvantaged contexts where resources are scarce, Adriana provided an outdoor learning experience redressing in this way the potential limitation in terms of access identified by Beames et al. (2017). She also addressed significant concerns with humanity in connection with nature and cultural heritage. In which specific ways can the school visit to Hudson's Park be considered an example of 'critical outdoor learning' (Beames et al., 2017)?

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Part III
Critical Language Education: Scenarios, Challenges and Possibilities

Chapter 8
Bridging Critical Literacy and Critical Pedagogy in the English Language Classroom Using Teacher-Made Materials

Melina Porto

Integrating Imaginative, Ethical, and Citizenship Perspectives in Critical Language Education

The scholarly literature reviewed in Chap. 2 shows a variety of conceptualizations of critical thinking, enriched by views from different fields. It also presents practical suggestions for the classroom, found in the relevant bibliography too. Some of these conceptualizations and applications make an explicit connection between the development of critical thinking as a habit of mind (Benderson, 1990; Milton, 1960; Paul, 2007) and language learning.

Furthermore, the benefits of critical literacy in particular in the English class have also been put forward by a number of scholars (Banegas & Villacañas de Castro, 2016; Cobo, 2013; Cots, 2006; Dede, 2010; Devine, 1962; Madison, 1971; Porto & Barboni, 2008; Lim, 2011; Thelin, 2005; Waters, 2006, among others). It is argued that English language teaching promotes the problem-solving skills and the critical reformulation of issues that characterize critical thinking.

This book explores new dimensions of critical thinking, not usually addressed in foreign and world language classrooms. They involve imaginative, ethical, and citizenship perspectives. In some areas of the curriculum, these dimensions have traditionally been given due attention, and Wright (2002, p. 138), for example, states

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that 'in social studies it has been recognized since 1916 that critical thinking is central to citizenship education.' In all cases, as Dam and Volman (2004, p. 360) explain, 'the central tenet is that critical thinking is a crucial aspect in the competence citizens need to participate in a plural and democratic society, and that enable them to make their own contribution to that society.' There is a link with agency and social justice here, and it has been suggested that 'the problems on critical thinking curricula need to both engage individuals in deliberations over issues of social good, and allow them to think of themselves in ways that fundamentally tie them to other members of society' (Lim, 2011, p. 783). This is the basis for critical literacy and critical pedagogy and 'critical thinking refers here to the capacity to recognize and overcome social injustice' (Dam & Volman, 2004, p. 362).

The main argument has been that critical thinking involves more than the development of higher-order thinking skills. It also comprises citizenship, social justice, and human rights dimensions (Osler & Starkey, 2018) which are the responsibility of the language teacher too (Byram, 2008, 2014; Byram et al., 2017; Byram et al., 2020, 2021; Byram & Wagner, 2018; Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016; Porto, 2018; Porto et al., 2018; Porto & Houghton, 2021; Wagner et al., 2019). The inclusion of citizenship, social justice, and human rights concerns transforms critical thinking into critical literacy, and the social justice basis in particular articulates a direct link with critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1992). A recent Special Issue in *Language Teaching Research* addresses the connections among citizenship, intercultural dialogue, community engagement, the arts, and language education (Porto & Houghton, 2021), and this book has shown the ways in which the imaginative and creative dimensions of meaning making can be enacted in critical language classrooms. In addition, critical literacy and critical pedagogy have been central in the field of literacy but have received little attention in TESOL (Crookes, 2021; Crookes & Abednia, 2022; Janks, 2000; Moje, 2007). This book redresses this limitation by presenting four cases that illustrate critical literacy and critical pedagogy in action in English classrooms in contexts with difficult circumstances in Argentina using locally developed materials. The cases addressed the themes of cultural and linguistic diversity; population mobility and its impact on people and places; ecology; and local cultural and natural heritage. The children and teenagers involved were confronted with reflective tasks that challenged their attitudes, preconceptions, and representations of themselves and others. Through the proposed tasks, the teachers mediated interaction that fostered awareness of diverse perspectives around the themes in question. They invited the respectful and appropriate communication of ideas, examining and challenging ideas, values, and information. This is a critical literacy orientation in English language education.

The book went beyond critical literacy by linking criticality with a social justice basis (Banegas & Villacañas de Castro, 2016; Crookes, 2021; Crookes & Abednia, 2022), for example, by encouraging students to become involved in their communities. Community engagement involved them in the identification of a social theme of significance locally, the imagination of solutions in collaboration with others, and the taking of concrete action. The cases become exemplary of the ways in which

critical pedagogy can be developed in real English language classrooms in contexts with difficult circumstances with locally produced, teacher-made materials.

The *English Primer Readers* for primary and secondary classrooms, written by Silvana Barboni, produced in the province of Buenos Aires in Argentina, described in this book, and available freely at http://servicios2.abc.gov.ar/lainstitucion/ organismos/lenguasextranjeras/plurilingue/cuadernos.html and as Electronic Supple ment files, specifically foreground these imaginative, ethical, and citizenship dimensions.

For instance, in the *English Primer Reader* for primary school, grade 4, the imaginative, ethical, and citizenship dimensions are addressed in the following ways:

(a) Children are asked to make a list of the languages people speak in Argentina and in South America with the aim of developing awareness of language diversity as a first step towards building ethical relations with others based on appreciation, recognition, and respect.

(b) The familiar theme of birds is addressed by showing a protective action towards them, namely, encouraging children not to kill them (a habitual custom in rural areas in the country), fostering in this way an empathetic and ethical relationship with nature.

(c) The 'crazy animals' project that encourages children to imagine and draw their amazing animals focuses on emotions, imagination, and creativity.

(d) The exploration of amazing fauna in Argentina and South America through research skills is an instance of cross-curricular or interdisciplinary learning (CLIL, Content and Language Integrated Learning) applied to the local context.

> Argentina has got an amazing fauna. In different parts of the country you can see wonderful animals in diverse habitats. In the northwest we can find pumas, condors, llamas and vicuñas. In the northeast there are ant eaters, tapirs, toucans, monkeys and a variety of fish. In the south there are penguins, whales and seals on the coast and deer and wild cats in the mountains.
>
> Find out about our region. What animals are there in South America?
>
> Stick a map of South America and identify the typical animals you can find in the countries that make up our region.
>
> (*English Primer Reader* for grade 4, pp. 19–20)

(e) The theme of chemical pollution, introduced as the book characters find an injured bird in the patio, is another example of cross-curricular or interdisciplin- ary learning (CLIL) aimed at developing environmental citizenship.

(f) Children are encouraged to take local civic action in concrete ways through project work on themes of immediate social relevance. Community engagement, which means taking action in the social milieu, is one pillar of critical pedagogies

(Janks, 2018) and of citizenship education in foreign/world language education (Byram et al., 2017).

Choose your classroom project. Use as many languages as you can to help people in your school community understand and participate.
Project 1:

Start a recycle-reduce-reuse campaign in your school. What can children do to protect nature? Design slogans, posters, leaflets. Explain younger children in your school how they can help. Talk with teachers and head teachers to decide on a school strategy to recycle-reduce-reuse.
Project 2:

Write a class book about our wonderful flora and fauna. Include information about endangered species. Show the book to parents and other children in your school.
Project 3:

Campaigning through drama. Act out the complete story in your school. Invite the people in your community to the play. Decorate the school with posters to make people aware of pollution.
Project 4:

Invite specialists to your school to talk about the consequences of pollution on people, animals and plants. Ask them questions to know more.
(*English Primer Reader* for grade 4, p. 30)

Along similar lines, in the *English Primer Reader* for primary school, grade 5:

(a) The theme of linguistic and cultural diversity is introduced with an everyday school situation in which a girl from Taiwan, called A-Mei, joins a class for the first time. In an instance of translanguaging, the teacher introduces her and asks the class to greet her in English as she knows little Spanish. The *Primer Reader* encourages children to place themselves in A-Mei's shoes and see through her eyes in order to foster empathy and understanding of otherness.

(b) Departing from A-Mei's background, the *Primer Reader* encourages the building of knowledge of geography by researching about Taiwan and the province of Buenos Aires (where the school is located). Using maps to locate the country and the province, children search information about location, population, capital city, geographical features, and climate, and display the collected information in comparative charts.

(c) After learning the vocabulary of buildings, places, and spaces in a town (supermarket, bank, park, school, bookshop, hotel, cinema, baker's, post office, town hall), children are asked to draw and describe their own town, developing in this way their creativity and imagination, spatial awareness, the semantic field of buildings and places, and language for place descriptions and directions.

(d) To develop a genuine interest in others (Osler, 2012b), the *English Primer Reader* includes a conversation between A-Mei and two local children. As they share biscuits during a school break, they find out about each other's

lives. A-Mei's family has a supermarket in town and another child has relatives living in Spain. In this way, children acknowledge the immigration tradition of the country and learn about their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

(e) The book characters are shown doing different activities during weekends as a springboard for discussion and reflection on children's culturally determined habits: What do the children in this class do at weekends? Do they all do the same activities? Do habits vary? How? What can be learned from this diversity? The *Primer Reader* extends the theme to involve family members and a focus on eating habits. The local context is mirrored in the activities and food that serve as illustration. For example, grandma feeds the hens, and the family cook *torta frita* [fried pie], a local treat for tea time made with a dough (flour, butter, milk, sugar) that is fried and served warm. In this way, children identify with content that is familiar and close to their everyday lives.

(f) The *Primer Reader* engages children with literature to develop their imagination, creativity, and understanding of otherness. For example, the poem 'Grandpa the vegan cook' adapted from Goldfish (1996) to focus on the family and eating habits; 'In' adapted from Michael Rose (1974) to reflect on life in a town building; and 'Billy doesn't like school really' by Cookson (2007) about bullying.

(g) Children are encouraged to take local civic action in concrete ways, essential in critical pedagogies (Janks, 2018) and in intercultural citizenship in language education (Byram et al., 2017), in this case through project work.

Projects bank
Project 1:

Making schools better for a better world. Develop a diversity friendly atmosphere in your school. Do all children feel represented? Draw posters with poems, rhymes, photos, pictures and any other texts that show we are all unique and beautiful. Show different activities children do in their lives. Post your productions around the school. Make sure all children in your school can feel represented in the pictures and the texts. This is not enough to make your school a diversity friendly place, but it is the first step.
Project 2:

Develop an anti-bullying campaign at school. Make posters for your school walls with information about bullying and bullying prevention. Design leaflets with information on bullying. Go to other courses in groups and with your teacher tell the children in other courses about bullying and distribute the leaflets. You can use as many different languages as necessary for other children to understand.
Project 3:

Library search for thought-provoking-drama. Go to the library with your teacher and ask the librarian for books with stories on the importance of diversity in our world. They can be stories in different languages. Develop a reading out loud session in the library. Choose the stories you like best and with your teachers, both the English and Spanish teachers, transform them into short plays. Act them out in your school for different courses in different languages.

Project 4:

   A literary café for parents. Take up the poems in this book. Ask your teacher to
bring some more poems. Rehearse them until you know them by heart. Develop a
literary café in English for your parents. Prepare to recite the poems in front of your
parents, you can use posters, costumes, real objects, etc. You can also include poems
in Spanish or any other languages present in your school community to turn it into a
plurilingual literary café. If you want you can invite your Music teacher and you can
also include songs in different languages.
   (*English Primer Reader* for grade 5, p. 28)

(h) A whole section of the *Primer Reader* is devoted to the theme of bullying. The
    development of the topic can be seen as an instance of education *about* human
    rights and *for* human rights in the foreign and world language classroom (Osler,
    2012a, b, c, d, 2013; Osler & Starkey, 2010; Starkey, 2002, 2008). Osler (2012d,
    p. 6) says (I refer to the *Primer Reader* between brackets): 'Education *about*
    rights implies knowledge about their own rights and those of others [e.g.
    different kinds of bullying identified in the *Primer Reader* such as verbal,
    indirect and technological bullying], and about how they can respond if those
    rights are not recognized ['Don't suffer in silence', 'Tell an adult about it',
    Primer Reader, p. 27], which necessarily includes some understanding of legal
    frameworks and mechanisms for seeking redress ['If you see someone bullying
    another person...Tell an adult the 4 W (WHAT happened, WHEN, WHERE and
    to WHO)', *Primer Reader*, p. 27]. Education *for* rights involves the development
    of skills and attitudes to strengthen human rights ['Help stop bullying NOW!,
    Primer Reader, p. 24], which in turn implies respect for diversity, a sense of
    solidarity with others, particularly the oppressed [A-Mei from Taiwan, an ethnic
    and linguistic minority in the country], and skills to effect change and bring
    about greater justice ['Report bullying to stop it', 'Ask the bullied person if
    he/she is OK', *Primer Reader*, p. 27].'

Osler also clarifies the importance of taking into account not only the horizontal
dimension of bullying, for instance, the expression of solidarity among peers when
faced with the problem, but also its hierarchical dimension, which involves the need
to hold institutions and governments responsible and seek redress. Osler (2008,
pp. 13–14) states: 'One key difference between HRE [human rights education]
programs and citizenship education is that effective human rights education neces-
sarily requires learners to be made aware of the need to hold governments to account.
Governments are responsible for securing our human rights. While we may only be
able to claim our rights if others are prepared to defend them, we should not see
human rights as an exclusive contract between individuals. Some HRE programs in
schools might be criticized for placing too much emphasis on the responsibilities we
owe to each other (horizontal ties) and insufficient attention to the responsibilities
which nation-states have towards their citizens and towards others living under their
jurisdiction. So, for example, a program which encourages young people to address

bullying, stressing the need of young people to look after each other's interests, is emphasizing the horizontal obligations of citizens to defend each other's rights. If the program fails to explain how specific forms of bullying are abuses of human rights and how the law has been developed to protect the individual from such abuse; how teachers, schools and other agencies have specific legal duties to protect young people from racist, sexist or homophobic bullying; and that failure to protect young people leaves authorities open to processes of legal redress; such a program would be ignoring the duties of the nation-state to protect and guarantee rights.' The *English Primer Reader* aims to consider this dimension of human rights as well, initially by engaging children in project work beyond the classroom to raise awareness of the issue in their school and the community.

Finally, in the *English Primer Reader* for secondary school:

(a) There is an explicit recognition of education *about* human rights, which involves informing students about their own rights, in this case the right to education.

> More than one million teenagers go to secondary school in our Province. Secondary Education is now a right for all the teenagers in Argentina but still some young people are not going to school.
> (*English Primer Reader* for secondary school, p. 4)

Osler (2012d, p. 6) says: 'education *about* rights implies knowledge about their own [learners'] rights and those of others.'

(b) The significance of language to national identity is addressed as youth read and listen to versions of the national anthem in Guarani and English in different rhythms such as rock. They are encouraged to think critically about nationalism and patriotism, and this is called 'critical patriotism' (Osler, 2008, p. 12). It involves critical analysis of the rationale behind national emblems, patriotic symbols, and festivities, away from their irrational adoption, with a sense of loyalty to the nation regarding its rights, but also specific actions to redress its wrongs.

(c) Issues related to identities and identifications are explored using literature (stories, poems, diaries, comics), drawings, and biographical methods in language comprehension and production tasks. Diversity is welcomed by uncovering processes of comparison and contrast, and youth are encouraged to discuss their own identifications. They create their meanings using their creativity and imagination in multimodal ways, for example, turning a diary into a play, writing a magazine, designing posters, and so on.

(d) Projects also traverse the *Primer Reader* as a way of involving students with their local community through civic action. On the theme of critical patriotism, the following projects are suggested:

> Projects Bank
> Designing patriotic symbols contest:
> Our coat of arms was first designed and used in 1813 with some ideals in mind. Imagine you want to design a new coat of arms which represents our national identity 200 years after the Assembly of Year XIII. Get in groups and decide the following: What symbol would you include? Why? How does it represent our country? Do you think it is appropriate? Once you have some ideas start sketching the coat of arms. You may use the drawing programs in your computer. When you have finished, present your coat of arms to the rest of the class. Explain your design. You will need the help of your English teacher with any words you may not know. When you have all finished, decorate the class with your coats of arms.
> The languages of our national anthem:
> Find different versions of our national anthem and compile them in a CD. These versions can be in different types of music and in different languages. When you have completed the compilation, design a CD cover explaining the content of the CD. Remember it is important to explain the diversity of voices, languages and styles as examples of our national diversity. Give a copy of the CD to the head teacher of the school so that different versions of the national anthem can be used in patriotic ceremonies along the year in the school.
> Symbols of identity athenaeum:
> Many of the communities living today in our country were not born in our country, they come from foreign lands where they had their own national emblems. Find out about them in groups and then report your findings to the rest of the students in your class. Reflect all together on the similarities and differences you find between different countries. What is common to all? What do you think?
> (*English Primer Reader* for secondary school, p. 8)

(e) Environmental citizenship is fostered by addressing the theme of water resources. Teenagers research the theme by contacting a local research center, Instituto de Limnología Dr. Raúl Ringuelet (http://www.ilpla.edu.ar/en/institutional/limnology/), situated in their city, and interviewing a scientist. Students are encouraged to take action, in this case by going green: 'We all need to reduce the amount of water we use and help save natural water reserves. What can you do?' (*English Primer Reader*, p. 25).

In this way, the *English Primer Readers* address the imaginative, ethical, and citizenship dimensions of critical thinking in the foreign and world language classroom by fostering critical literacies and facilitating critical pedagogies in contexts with difficult circumstances. They were developed embracing the tenet that 'an education in critical thinking (. . .) nurtures a citizenry that is empowered with the necessary faculties to address social problems and redress social wrongs, ultimately serving as the critical consciousness of, and the voice against, systems of class, race,

and gender oppression' (Lim, 2011, p. 802). In turn, this book has shown how these ideas were implemented in real classrooms in contexts that are not mainstream.

Chapter 2 by Melina Porto has presented the theoretical underpinnings and connections among critical thinking, critical literacy, and critical pedagogies.

Chapter 3 by Silvana Barboni has offered the theoretical rationale for the locally produced *English Primer Readers* for primary and secondary school, illustrated with key extracts, and has described the process of creation. It is an example of materials development by a local teacher that shows what a critical orientation in English language education looks like in local contexts with difficult circumstances.

Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7, co-authored between Melina Porto and local teachers (Carolina Moirano, María Emilia Arcuri, Bárbara Bezuch, and Adriana Helver, respectively), have described how the materials were used in real classrooms. Chapter 4 focused on a fourth grade English language classroom in a poor suburban context. The teacher welcomed, valued, and appreciated the use of Spanish, English, Guarani, and Quechua, developing in this way children's awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity in this local setting. This consciousness was raised through the imaginative dimension of critical thinking, in this case art and creativity in a collaborative atmosphere (Martin et al., 2002). For instance, when asked to create and draw a character, Pedro, a child with Bolivian origin, drew a man with a Bolivian hat who spoke Quechua. Later a group of students discussed their understandings of radioactivity and used their creativity and imagination to suggest that 'chemical wastes are like Martians' or that 'they are like a myth.' They explored alternative, simultaneous, and sometimes conflicting definitions of radioactivity through collaboration, participation, and reflection – key critical thinking skills. The teacher implemented a cross-curricular approach that involved language, art, history, geography (in the exploration of the languages spoken in the school community and the languages spoken in South America), and chemistry (through the topic of chemical pollution).

In Chap. 5, fifth grade children gained awareness of different languages and cultural backgrounds drawing on geography and engaging their research skills. One child in this classroom, José, was from Paraguay and spoke Guarani, and he was encouraged to use his mother tongue in the English class. By using maps, atlas, and encyclopedias, and visiting the school library for the first time, these children expanded their knowledge of continents and countries, developed spatial awareness, and cultivated their research skills, for instance, by paying attention to book titles to predict and anticipate content, judging the suitability of a source, discerning between useful and irrelevant sources, and becoming aware of different genres and text types. Furthermore, they developed the skills of perspective-taking and decentering by being encouraged to place themselves in A-Mei's shoes, a character in the *Primer Reader* who is from Taiwan.

Chapter 6 has described a rural multigrade primary classroom where one student spoke Guarani and where, in cooperation with the Social Sciences teacher, the children learned about the languages spoken in Argentina. Furthermore, in cooperation with the Natural Sciences teacher, they addressed the topic of hunting and animal protection in connection with the local custom of bird killing and slaughtering in

their community. As they discussed ethical perspectives on the issue raised by the children themselves, for example, whether those children whose families practised slaughtering were in fact 'killing,' they decided to take action. They created bilingual posters in Spanish and English to raise awareness of the dangers of indiscriminate hunting and the importance of protecting local fauna like ostriches. In addition, they drew and described crazy animals, and they also read animal poems and created their own. In this way, they used art, imagination, and literature to develop not only their language skills but also their thinking skills.

In Chap. 7 the teacher also worked with literature, in particular the literary works by Henry Hudson, a local writer and scientist from Florencio Varela – the town where her second year secondary school classroom was located. Through a multimodal and plurilingual pedagogy, she used novels, comics, videos, and other resources about the writer to develop knowledge about and empathy for the local context, in this case appreciation of the Ecological and Cultural Park William Henry Hudson located in Florencio Varela. The project led to a school visit to this park, which is part of the local heritage and was unknown to the students.

In foreign and world language education, the ethical and citizenship dimensions of critical thinking are based on the idea that language teaching has educational as well as instrumental purposes, i.e., it can foster the development of ethical beings and a sense of citizenry (educational side) in addition to the linguistic, intercultural and other skills needed to able to use a foreign or world language appropriately for different purposes (utilitarian or instrumental side) (Byram et al., 2021; Porto, 2016, 2018; Porto & Byram, 2015). In the recently developed theory of intercultural citizenship education in foreign and world language teaching (Byram, 2008, 2010, 2014; Byram & Golubeva, 2020; Byram et al., 2017, 2020; Porto et al., 2018), one key pillar is the development of criticality and involvement with local civic action in concrete ways. It is in this criticality and civic action where intercultural citizenship articulates with critical literacy and critical pedagogy (Janks, 2018; Luke, 2018, 2019). In the four cases described in this book, this was achieved through:

(a) Leaflets designed in collaboration among the children and intended to raise awareness of the importance of taking care of the environment. The children focused on ideas against hunting and polluting and in favor of helping protect animals and the environment, spreading information, and volunteering to take care of nature. In this way they showed a strong commitment toward the environment and took concrete actions to protect nature (Chap. 4).

(b) A book created by the children, called *It's Okay*, where they described and illustrated the various ways in which it is okay to be different. They shared the book with the school community and began an anti-bullying campaign by displaying it in a slide presentation at the end of year celebration (Chap. 5).

(c) A campaign against indiscriminate hunting in the rural area of Verónica, where ostriches and other species are hunted without regulation and control. The children made posters and leaflets aimed at raising awareness of this local

problem. For instance, one child drew a man hunting an ostrich as an explicit call to stop that action (Chap. 6).

(d) Bilingual posters in English and Spanish focusing on children's rights. The students' aim was to raise awareness of the fact that each right also involves one or several responsibilities. For instance, one group introduced the right to be well fed and highlighted the need to accompany that right with the responsibility not to waste food. Furthermore, these secondary school teenagers, after the school visit to William Henry Hudson Ecological Park in Florencio Varela, decided to take responsibility for the preservation of an old tree that represents the community's heritage, the Tarumá, for future generations. They planted one and took it to their school where they took care of it on a daily basis, developing an ethical bond with nature and a strong sense of identification with their local community (Chap. 7).

In the ways summarized in this chapter, this book has provided an answer to the educational questions that motivated and guided it in the first place: 'how might educators work with youth and children, families and communities to both defend and prepare them for difficult and unprecedented everyday challenges and problems, and to enable them to voice and build new cultural and political, social and environmental futures?' and how can literacies 'be reshaped in response to these conditions' (Luke, 2018, p. ix)? To close, if there is one conclusion that can be reached, it concerns the important role of teachers to contribute to making a significant impact on students' lives, particularly in contexts with difficult circumstances. Their moral and ethical visions and their commitment seem to be essential to make a difference. Whether teachers have or cultivate such visions and commitment depends on many factors, of which personal integrity, ethical commitment to others (human and nonhuman, including the planet and nature), and the conceptualization of teaching as a sacred vocation are only a part. Teacher preparation in teacher education programs and support from their institutions (administrative, legal, procedural, developmental, curricular) also seem to be indispensable. This book aims to make a small contribution from an underrepresented region of the world, South America; with a focus on usually forgotten contexts such as those identified as contexts with difficult circumstances; and with locally produced, teacher-made materials which were appropriated, contextualized, re-resourced, and re-signified by each of the teachers involved in this project.

Engagement Options

This chapter integrates imaginative, ethical, and citizenship perspectives in critical language education, particularly in English language teaching in contexts with difficult circumstances using locally produced, teacher-developed materials.

1. Garton and Graves (2014), Masuhara et al. (2017), and Tomlinson (2003, 2011) address different aspects involved in materials writing and development for

specific purposes, learners, and contexts, with attention to the needs and demands involved in teacher preparation in this respect. Banegas et al. (2020) have found that 'engaging the university EFL teachers [in a Colombian context] as materials developers boosted their professional knowledge (linguistic, content, and peda-gogical knowledge), motivation, identity, and agency as CLIL teachers and material designers.' What kind of preparation have you received in this area as a teacher candidate? Have you been involved in materials development as a teacher? If so, what was this experience like? What dimensions, arising from the discussion in this book or from your situationality, are in need of further research in this area?

Look at the *English Primer Readers*. What insights can you offer in terms of their suitability to foster a critical agenda in English language education? Could they be adapted to become appropriate to your specific context? How?

2. Garcia et al. (2018, p. 77) affirm that '[T]he current situation requires a remaking of citizenship, ethics, and a renewed social contract. This will require an ongoing 'problematization' (. . .) of these conditions [current social, cultural, economic, political, religious, and others] as focal in the curriculum, thematically crossing social studies, the arts and sciences.' How can this remaking be achieved in practical terms in particular settings?

3. Luke (2018, p. xi) makes the following call:

> If ever there was a time to reconsider the nature and purposes of education and schooling in society, it is now. If ever there was a time in which a common institutional experience where the children of peoples of diverse histories, cultures, languages, standpoints and beliefs were brought together in common interest and common cause, it is now. If ever there was a need for critical literacies, for a universal, free education that includes an ongoing dialogue and conversation about how the worlds that we live in are selectively represented and portrayed, by whom, in whose interests and to what ends, it is now. If ever there was a time to debate, discuss and make problematic questions about the material effects and social consequences of texts and discourses, it is now. If ever there was a need to get a grip on the differences between the known, the real and the factual and how it can be misrepresented and distorted, it is now.

Do you feel compelled by this call? Is it not overwhelming for the ordinary, busy, overworked, and badly paid teacher in many contexts around the globe? How can you make your piecemeal contribution? How can researchers and the field make their contribution?

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Correction to: From Critical Literacy to Critical Pedagogy in English Language Teaching

Melina Porto

Correction to:
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The original online version of Chapters 1 and 2 of this book was inadvertently published with incorrect abstracts. The abstracts have now been amended with this correction.

Afterwords

Afterword by Graham V. Crookes, University of Hawai'i

This is the beginning of the end, or, as has been said before, perhaps it is just the end of the beginning. I am happy to have been asked to write a few words, as an 'epilogue,' for this valuable book. And who am I to do so? I am a professor of second language studies who is very interested in critical language pedagogy and its associated areas. Originally from the UK, I am based in the Pacific island (US) state of Hawai'i, and though I have never visited Argentina, I have spent some time in another part of South America (Colombia). In my professional life, I have had the opportunity to pull together many other people's ideas and summarize the work of those who have gone before us in explorations of critical pedagogies of additional languages, with particular emphasis on materials.

One of the things Melina Porto's book has done for us, its readers, is show us examples of critically oriented materials in action in real-world contexts, in particular those of the global South. The global South is actually everywhere with us, in the north, east, west, and indeed south of this temporary location (planet Earth) we are all currently involved with. The inner cities of the richer nations, and their rural areas as well, disclose such global or local 'South' locations; even in the geographic South, the rich suburbs and gated high rises of the poorer nations, or their estancias, manifest the rich, privileged conceptual North.

Now, critical pedagogy, or critical language pedagogy, if I can frame the present work in those terms, primarily should be of relevance to the marginalized, but looked at from a global perspective (or particularly from the viewpoint of English language teaching) it has been more visibly developed and written about from and by those who are relatively privileged. Thus a first point to celebrate is just that this book is coming from Argentina, not the global North, and yet, as it is written in English and published with an international publishing house, the work will truly be globally visible. Perhaps it is a good move on Dr. Porto's part, to have it fronted by two UK

academics and backed (if that is the correct term) by one nominally US academic, as well. More to the point, Dr. Porto has herself been internationally mobile, and her engagement with international academic networks represents a strategy that critical language teachers should take up to the maximum extent possible, whether in person or through distance technology. We will never bring to light the stories of the global South unless we are very deliberate, strategic, even cunning, and organizing collectively and through international networks to push back against oppressive mainstream discourses that dominate the 'air waves' (to use an ancient term from the 20th century).

Part of the function of an epilogue is to look back at the story and in some cases reveal what happened to the characters in the end (beyond the climax of the story and its immediate conclusion). There are many vital details that have emerged in this story, this edited book. Let us first celebrate, especially, the accounts of the teachers herein, who have explored, experimented, and reported honestly on their efforts to implement a critical pedagogy of language in the very sites that need it most. In my own writings, I have often pointed out that this kind of teaching (critical language teaching) is difficult, much harder than regular language teaching. The considerable groundwork that is needed to get to where a class can work together to think against the mainstream, the teaching against the grain that is needed to get there – all that has gone into getting even to the positions depicted in this book is difficult. But it is probably more persuasive to see the imperfections presented, honestly, as they have been here, than gloss over the challenges. Critical pedagogy is at home in the under-resourced, overfilled, badly equipped classrooms of poverty. It must therefore be comfortable with imperfection (even as it strives for social change which will ameliorate such conditions). We as teachers simply cannot expect our classes to go off well when our children come to school hungry and make their way to school across gang boundaries through streets filled with danger. We cannot expect smoothly run classrooms when on the one hand, the topics existing textbooks provide us with are bland and boring to our students and, on the other hand, materials hardly exist to support us and our students in our drive to ask the difficult questions and think critically. In particular, we cannot hope to have entirely satisfactory explorations of critical language pedagogy when we have almost never in our professional lives seen or experienced such classrooms ourselves. But in this book, nevertheless, we get the kind of glimpses we need, *with* their imperfections, which makes us see that the goals we seek are in fact attainable, particularly when we don't set ourselves up for failure by believing they can be attained perfectly. We do, at the same time, need to see those examples in conditions that are the dominant ones around the globe, that is, in the conditions of the global South.

Looking back (even to the very beginning of this work), it might be important to remind readers again that although this is importantly located in certain special parts of Argentina, it has benefited from international connections, or cross-border dialogue. To some extent, as language specialists, perhaps we take these matters for granted (especially in the Internet era). But not just any connections; extended visits, going from one center of learning to another, and involving special, selected, scholars whose dedication, commitment, and experience have supported the growth

of others, perhaps younger, equally dedicated but who needed to be assured that their intuitions were right and had solid ground to build to and from. Setting up these relationships, planning for them, and accumulating the personal and institutions resources that support them requires time, foresight, and even luck, but without them the present project would probably not have happened. I mention this because the theme, this area, is probably not addressed formally in teacher development programs but is vitally needed. It comes, from a critical point of view, under the heading of 'organizing.' (We should do more to make this area part of formal critical language teacher development.)

A particular place where I am 'on the same page' as the editor and contributors to this volume is materials. As I have explained in a few writings elsewhere, critical language pedagogy (and critical literacy, and critical language awareness as well, I think) has been in a problematic position on this topic. The strongly student-centered, local orientation of critical language pedagogy, its valuing of negotiated curriculum and student-made materials or jointly developed lesson plans, takes it well away from mass-produced, conventionally published textbook materials. And its interests in topics and content that would seem marginal, challenging, or even offensive to mainstream publishing houses likewise militate against the production of textbooks. So despite 50 years of work in this area, we have few tangible products that can be used even to exemplify critical language pedagogy practice. While no one textbook should be expected to work without substantial adaptation in another area, having *no* textbooks to show teachers who might try out this area is a disadvantage. So it is important, looking back here, to reflect on the development of the three *English Primer Readers* which were used in the case studies reported in this book. If the *Readers* had not come into existence, perhaps some of the cases reported here would not have either. I have had the opportunity to read them all. They are charming, age-appropriate, and focused. With them in hand, a teacher in this specific area could forge forward much more confidently to explore critical language pedagogy. We need more of this sort of thing; not universal, not national, but area-, class-, and context-specific, built on critical needs analysis and structured so they can be jumping off points for negotiated syllabuses and participatory assessment, and all the more difficult parts of critical language pedagogy; a scaffold is not an unreasonable request here.

An epilogue *is* the place to make some points, so that the reader will go forth, departing from this last stop in the journey the work has provided us with, ready to keep their eyes open for other similarly significant but still rare features of our language teaching world.

One such would be the emphasis on interculturality or the cultural dimension, and especially intercultural communication, is obviously important for applied linguistics and for critical language pedagogy, it has not been made enough of, or internal sub-disciplinary borders have not been crossed enough, even though the direct connection between Porto and Byram has tried to make that crossing repeatedly (as citations and references show). Another would be that throughout the book, the authors do not shrink from theory and fully engage with the substantial academic and professional literatures in their areas. For that I commend them, and I would

encourage future readers, who may write or report their own work, inspired by this one, to follow the examples made here on this matter. The emphasis on citizenship is another obvious feature of the book that deserves further celebration. I have always thought that citizenship education is an obvious location for critical pedagogy, but perhaps it has not been until the work of Osler and Starkey, which informs this book, that this has really come to fruition. (The lack, until recently, of citizenship education in the UK and the continuing lack of citizenship education worthy of having the word critical attached to it in the USA, not to mention other countries, might have been one obstacle for this.)

Here I want to write again the names of the local teachers Carolina Moirano, María Emilia Arcuri, Bárbara Bezuch, and Adriana Helver who, as I have read, contributed to describing how the materials were used in real classrooms. This is a remarkable feature of the book. Too much of the time we only hear the voices of teachers and students in special cases of complete success of new materials, which tend to be special projects with substantial external funding in favorable conditions. We don't hear the day-to-day struggles involved in doing new things under difficult circumstances. It is essential that we do hear about these things; otherwise the bulk of teachers (most of whom, basically, do not teach under favorable circumstances, given the overall distribution of resources on this planet) will be discouraged, thinking that perfection is the only option, one that they cannot attain.

If this epilogue fulfilled all the conventions, in authoring it I would report how these characters are getting on, and what happens to them, in the end. But this is not the end, and actually these are not the only characters in, or implied by the story, because you, the readers, are those who now much take over the story and advance it; a sequel is called for.

An epilogue quickly concludes – but looks forward. The work goes on – the struggle continues. Bravo and let us advance!

Graham Crookes
January 2021

Afterword by Hilary Janks, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

How written words travel never ceases to amaze me. Writers try to imagine who their audiences might be, so as to share what they have to tell in such a way that their readers can engage with their thinking. What do these audiences know already? What might they want to know? What about our ideas might interest them? But writers don't always think about *where* their writing will be read. I for one never imagined that people who speak Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, and Arabic might find and read my writing, so it was both a surprise and a delight to discover that colleagues in Argentina are using some of my ideas. Given that I work with the relationship between language, literacy, and power, I should perhaps have realized

that because I write in English, a powerful global language, my words have a privileged status not shared by many of my fellow South Africans or colleagues around the world. The hegemony of English has resulted in what I have called the 'access paradox.' It is paradoxical that the growing demand for access to English, so as to be part of an international community, reproduces its hegemonic status.

The writers of *From Critical Literacy to Critical Pedagogy in ELT* are educators committed to teaching English in Argentina, which like other countries require students to learn English to enable increased capacity for international interaction. For example, Rwanda, which has only one African language, Kinyarwanda, and a well-established use of French in schooling, experimented unsuccessfully with English as the language of teaching and learning from the start of formal schooling, even though many of the teachers could not speak the language. In South Africa, where I live, there are 11 official languages, and although parents have a right to choose the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) for their children's schooling, English is the de facto choice in most schools from Grade 4 onward. The remaining schools use Afrikaans, a language derived from Dutch, also a colonial language. None of the nine African languages that are official have been chosen as LOLT, nor has the state provided resources to support their use as LOLT. Even in a country like Sweden, in the global North, students study English in school, and doctoral students are now required to submit their doctoral theses in English. This will undoubtedly diminish the use of the academic register in Swedish in the longer term. This is why English has been described as a 'killer' (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2013) or 'omnivorous' (Pennycook, 2017) language, an existential threat to other languages. It is for this reason that educators need to think carefully about how to teach English in multilingual contexts. The aim should be to increase students' ability to use the language without increasing its symbolic value (Bourdieu, 1991) or over-valorizing it in relation to the other languages spoken by students and in their communities. One of the joys of reading this book is that it is respectful of the languages students speak and shows how teachers welcome them into the English classroom. English is seen as an additional resource alongside the students' other communicative resources.

To this end translanguaging is a valued method for teaching English. Translanguaging recognizes that multilingual speakers use their linguistic resources flexibly and that the notion of named languages as bounded entities is an effect of monolingual ideologies (McKinney, 2017). Languages are socially and politically constructed entities. Makalela's (2015) work in South Africa shows how missionaries produced different orthographies for what were essentially different geographical varieties of the same language and in so doing separated Sesotho into three named languages: Sesotho, Sepedi (also known as Sesotho sa Leboa or Northern Sotho), and Tswana. The Ngugi varieties are separated into different languages more by ethnicity than geography. Proposals to harmonize the languages (Alexander, 2001) for the purposes of written communication have been fiercely resisted although this would constitute a move against separation by ethnicity as practiced under apartheid. This resistance is despite the evidence that speakers living in urban areas are highly multilingual and code switch between English, Afrikaans, and the Nguni and Sotho languages. Some even grow up with a mixed language as their first

language. Standardization is another practice that privileges an elite variety of a language over others and constructs our understanding of 'correctness.' When English is used as a lingua franca by non-native speakers, communicative competence is more highly valued than correctness or the ability to stick to English only (Graddol, 2006). Melina Porto and the teachers whom she writes with provide wonderful examples of effective translanguaging that validates the communicative resources that children bring to school while simultaneously helping them to acquire English.

Another remarkable feature of this book is the complete absence of deficit talk. The students are seen as creative, capable of critical imagination, and engaged. Difficulties that exist are located in what are ascribed to the context of teaching and learning in communities that have been marginalized by poverty or geography. These 'difficult circumstances' provide the sociohistorical backdrop for the book and help us to understand what teachers have to overcome to provide their students with a critical approach to their learning of English. I believe that this book will resonate with teachers, teacher educators, and researchers accustomed to the challenges of teaching in 'difficult circumstances.' The book will speak to others like me, working in the global South in decolonial contexts; to teachers working in poor, immigrant, or communities in urban contexts; as well as to teachers who have to overcome the obstacles of rurality. In South Africa, schools had to choose between spending their budgets on sanitizer and soap during the Covid pandemic or on basic stationery as there was not enough money for both. In South Africa, it is researchers and nongovernment organizations that have seen the development of stories in African languages and their availability in print in schools, given the state's failure to do so.

Here instead we see a proactive state department of education in Argentina. Silvana Barboni, who was the author and project leader of the team of illustrators and graphic designer that produced the *English Primary Readers* (*Cuadernos de Trabajo parael Aula de Inglés*) for grades 4 and 5 and the first year of secondary education over a period of 5 years, is employed by the Education Department responsible for the province of Buenos Aires. The project was funded by an International Agency which limited the print run to only 20,000 hard copies. These were assigned by the Department to students considered 'the most vulnerable' mainly in the outskirts of Buenos Aires. The materials were designed to teach critical thinking and critical practice as part of the teaching of English and to deal with issues, ideas, and material that the students would find interesting and relevant to their lives. In this book we see a really productive collaboration between a government-employed materials writer, a researcher, and teachers who used the materials. Teachers were widely consulted in the writing of the *English Primary Readers* and their accounts of using the readers in their classrooms, providing a wonderful example of productive consultation and feedback.

It is unusual for teachers' work to be taken so seriously that they are invited to be research authors and not just research subjects. Melina Porto in writing with the teachers has supported them, enabling their voices to be heard. The accounts show the teachers dealing with the lived realities of the specificity of their different difficult circumstances and their particular students – their setbacks and their

triumphs. The materials are not intended as scripts but as resources that the teachers are free to adapt as they see fit. As a result, even when the teachers make use of the same page in a reader, what happens in their classes is different. Whatever reservations one might have about teachers using materials developed for them by others, there is no doubt that these materials serve important functions without preventing teachers from exercising their professional judgment and agency in the choices they make. These functions include supporting those teachers without previous experience of critical literacy teaching, multimodal literacies, and critical pedagogies to use these approaches successfully in their teaching of English. It provides teachers with engaging materials in print poor contexts. Most significant, in my view, is that it puts a book in the hands of students who may never previously have owned a book, much to their delight.

And now it is time for this book to travel. I have no doubt that both in-service and preservice teachers in South Africa and other decolonial contexts in the global South will find the book inspiring. Teachers and researchers and material developers working in multilingual classrooms anywhere will find much to learn from the accounts of context, materials development, and classroom practice in *From Critical Literacy to Critical Pedagogy in ELT*. Teachers of English as a foreign language will see that it is possible to teach a powerful language such as English while maintaining students' pride in their own identities and their own languages. And critical literacy and critical pedagogy educators everywhere will be confirmed in their understanding that a critical perspective is not an occasional add-on but an overall, consistent, and ongoing orientation to language and literacy teaching – an orientation that is sorely needed in times when critical thinking, the importance of argument and evidence, and science itself are under attack and social justice is hard to find.

Hilary Janks
November 2020

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Critical Literacy Finds Its Way Home: An Afterword

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As schooling has moved toward a transnational model of standardized curriculum, teaching, and testing, critical approaches to education often have been greeted with criticism and skepticism by state and provincial systems. These begin with critiques by conservative educators and the press that teaching children to be critical is part of a postmodern, leftist agenda of ideological indoctrination. They extend to other claims: that such approaches neglect the 'basics' and systematic approaches to teaching and learning. That models of critique and social analysis might be appropriate for young adults and university students, but are beyond the developmental reach of young children. That models of critical literacy are impossible to implement in larger educational bureaucracies and systems, and that they are beyond the professional capacity and knowledge of teachers. Finally, the general critique is that critical education is theoretical and philosophic hot air from academics and social reformers that does not work in practice and is of little real value in real classrooms and children's lives.

From Critical Literacy to Critical Pedagogy in ELT is a decade-long project that takes all these claims head on and shows how critical educational approaches can work in a diversity of urban and rural communities and schools in Buenos Aires province. The authors here work from a powerful normative approach to curriculum with clear goals and aspirations. Young people and teachers here are working together toward responsible citizenship, the respect for the rights of all cultures and languages, a community ethics of care, and knowledge about planetary and ecological sustainability. This book is a fascinating introduction to these Argentine plurilingual classrooms and multicultural communities, these innovative teachers, and their inspiring students. It is at once both a new synthesis and advance in research on critical education and, at the same time, a practical, introductory volume for student teachers and researchers internationally.

I first met Melina Porto two decades ago as we worked together to open up the International Reading Association to broader global perspectives on language and literacy. Like much of the field at the time, that organization was then focused on monolingual, English language, and psychological approaches to 'reading.' Dr. Porto was an early and strong advocate on behalf of Argentinian educational

research and reform and on behalf of research on multilingual and non-English-speaking contexts. Her collaborators here, outstanding women educators all, have built bridges across the traditional divides of educational systems. Silvana Julieta Borboni is a scholar who has worked as a senior teacher educator and curriculum developer in a large provincial education ministry. María Emilia Arcuri, Bárbara Bezuch, Adriana Helver, and Carolina Moirano are all practicing teachers in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. These women's work, then, cuts right through the theory/practice, university/school, school system/classroom, bureaucrat/teacher barriers that often deter real educational and curriculum reform. The case studies here bring together the fields of preservice teacher education, curriculum development and reform, language and literacy development, and classroom ethnography. This, then, is a unique and bravura accomplishment – a model intervention that yields sustainable approaches to practice and useful materials not just for Argentina, but for all of us to weigh and consider.

It is worth recalling that the critical and constructivist education explored here did not have its historical origins in the North America or the UK. Nor was it originally conceived in the English language. Lev Vygotski and Paulo Freire both began by working with and around societies and communities in historical transition and struggle. Vygotski, his students, and colleagues founded the social constructivist approaches used by Porto and colleagues here in Russia. Their work was only accepted by the American and British educational research establishment much later, after long paradigm battles for legitimacy. Freire, as readers will know, began his work in Brazil working with poor and Indigenous communities who had long been excluded by traditional schooling systems. Both of these approaches to education were based on historical materialist and dialectical philosophies that viewed individual learning and cognitive development as intrinsically social and cultural, linked to the evolution and struggles of communities and societies.

Flash forward a half century or more to these current, troubled times. The combined social and economic crises of pandemic, climate change, and economic and cultural turmoil have placed in sharp relief the limits and problems of educational systems of the USA and UK. At this historical moment, it would be easy to assume that the cosmopolitanism, democratic citizenship, and human rights described here by Audrey Osler and Hugh Starkey in their forward and critical education more generally would be on the back foot in the face of resurgent ethnonationalism, fascism, and racism. Ironically, it is in those 'advanced' educational systems like the USA and UK where increasing inequality and poverty, systemic racism, and White backlash have underlined the need for educational systems that not only address economic inequality but as importantly work to build ethical citizenship, intercultural relations, and sustainable forms of life.

At the same time, a next generation of innovative and energetic work in critical literacy and critical education is well underway across the Americas, most notably in Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina, where economic inequality sits side by side with multilingualism, Indigenous/settler/migrant relations, ecological and environmental risk, and political conflict. Melina Porto and her colleagues here have made an original, generative contribution to this next wave. Working in

classrooms across the province of Buenos Aires – this is not an 'application' of critical approaches to the Argentinian context; it is a regrounding, a return home of such approaches to their local places, communities, and contexts. These include multilingual but Spanish-dominant-speaking communities struggling with their own local forms of inequality, discrimination, and marginalization.

From Critical Literacy to Critical Pedagogy in ELT reframes English language teaching as a site for teachers and students to engage with English as a second or additional language, while developing new understandings and insights into how languages and power are intertwined in everyday life (Kubota & Lin, 2009; Norton & Toohey, 2004). Over the past half century, ESL, ELT, EAP, ESP, and all of its applied variations have often been deployed as modes of linguistic assimilation and cultural hegemony, rationalized as part of a human capital model for the training of migrants and the poor, transnational guest workers, corporate expertise, teachers, and executives (Iyer et al., 2014). The actual acronyms used to describe English language teaching are interesting in themselves, with underlying linguistic ideologies and not so hidden curricula for the formation of particular kinds of working identities and political economies. Here Porto and colleagues have developed an approach that is about multilingualism, about acquiring proficiency in English, but also about talking about and understanding which translingualism, cultural resources, and knowledges will count and how and why these are made to count.

Porto begins the volume with an excellent introductory overview to critical literacies and pedagogies that covers the field and its current challenges well in a format accessible to both experienced researchers and student teachers. Barboni's second chapter introduced the social, cultural, and linguistic context of Buenos Aries province's diverse communities, schools, and linguistic resources. At the same time, it provides a sense of the sheer complexity and bureaucratic challenges of curriculum reform in a large school system, which Barboni takes on directly with the development and implementation of the *English Primers* series. The sheer scope of this curriculum project across the province and the approach to curriculum and teaching as entailing the recognition, enhancement, and expansion of hybrid linguistic and semiotic resources is unique, and I actually don't think we'd find many reforms of comparable difficulty to this project in the current curriculum studies field. This foundational and contextual work done, the book turned to the matters at hand in classrooms.

These teachers provide a readable, practical overview to critical approaches in their classrooms. I was taken by the diversity of student voices and broad palate of issues covered. We read of Tamara and her mother María introducing students in their rural community to the Indigenous language Guarani – and the classroom extending this to discussion of Indigenous peoples and the hunting of endangered species. Here the classroom work weaves together of understanding of endangered species in the local ecosystem with teaching and learning about the linguistic ecology of their community – both are at risk and the pedagogy actually becomes work at species *and* language sustainability. Across these stories, the English language primer implemented by Barboni is used as a jumping off point to critique monolingualism and language ideology and to examine and question cultural

practices and resources. Across these classrooms – urban and rural – we find direct engagement with Indigenous and immigrant languages; with elders, families, and community cultures; and with local environments and ecosystems. Teachers actively encourage translingualism in reading, writing, and conversational exchange. In the rural multiage classrooms of La Viruta, for example, this all comes together into a progressive educational focus on ethical relationships with the natural and cultural worlds, where young people are learning how to use 'redesigning' as a form of community and environmental activism.

Los colegas de Porto están trabajando con niños de escuela primaria que se ocupan de problemas clave del desarrollo de pertenencia, identidad, familia y comunidad, y el desarrollo de los sentidos del lugar y el medio ambiente. y nación. Al hacerlo, ofrecen una lección práctica para devolver la alfabetización crítica a sus raíces históricas y culturales: un enfoque en estudiantes y maestros que aprenden juntos a leer y escribir, releer y reescribir sus vidas, sus familias y comunidades, sus mundos y el civismo. Sociedades en las que viven. En estas clases argentinas, en los momentos más difíciles para las comunidades, Porto y sus colegas y estos jóvenes traen a casa la alfabetización crítica, la pedagogía y la educación, a sus propósitos, medios y fines originales.

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Brisbane, Australia
19 September 2020

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