USING A CRITICAL MEDIA LITERACY APPROACH TO ANALYZE MEDIA TEXTS IN AN ENGLISH CLASS FOR CHILDREN

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Submitted to the School of Languages of
Universidad de Antioquia, Medellin in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MAGISTER EN ENSEÑANZA Y APRENDIZAJE DE LenguAS EXTRANJERAS

February 2017

Master’s in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning
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DEDICATION

To my family who supported me during the process.

To my students who allowed me to learn from them.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research project would not have been possible without the support of many people. Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor Dr. Paula Andrea Echeverri for her patient guidance, invaluable constructive criticism and continuous support. Secondly, I would also like to thank my family for their wise counsel. They were always there for me. Thirdly, I thank my dearest classmates, very especially to Cruz, Nats, Lau and Mabel who offered me unconditional support in times of discouragement and showed me that doing a Master’s is not just an academic matter; it is about life. Finally, I also want to thank the group of students and parents who participated in the study, for their commitment and insightful comments that significantly contributed to the development of this project.
ABSTRACT

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FEBRUARY 2017

M.A, NATALIA ARIAS PATIÑO, B.A. UNIVERSIDAD DE ANTIOQUIA MEDELLIN, COLOMBIA

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This paper aims at presenting the results of a study about how a Critical Media Literacy unit about food could foster young English learners’ critical analyses of media texts related to food. Considering that the teaching and learning of a foreign language involves the processes of reading (consuming) and writing (producing) texts in multiple forms; I decided to use food ads as class material to teach the content of an English level four course to problematize the topic of ‘food’. In order to promote the critical analysis of this material, I used the Empowerment Spiral and the questions proposed by Jolls (2008) to design and organize activities for the unit. These activities were intended to examine cultural artifacts in a way that exposes how these texts reproduce relations of power and serve the interests of ruling groups (corporations) (Funk, Kellner & Share, 2016, p. 29). Results suggest that using the texts students normally consume and implementing activities following the stages in the Empowerment Spiral facilitated students’ critical analyses of food advertising. In fact, as a result of the CML unit about food, students were able to identify different purposes in those texts and understand the constructed nature of media texts. This research is intended to contribute to the conversation about language learning
strategies in the context of media literacy that invites students to “question authority, express their own views and provide them with the skills and time for self-reflection” (Hammer, 2009, p. 167).
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Introduction

There I was, teaching my children some vocabulary about food using a YouTube video clip. After watching the video, one of my children commented: “teacher, they [videos] always show junk food”, and another student replied: “yeah, but that food makes you gain weight!” Situations like this one got me the feeling that I was missing opportunities to move beyond students’ responses/interpretations to the material used in class. Later on, my feelings were confirmed when I began reading and participating in a study group about Critical Pedagogy\(^1\). From there I could comprehend that situations like the one I just described are precious moments that educators can use to unveil/question students’ readings of the world, discuss social issues, criticize the status quo and learn from each other. I could also conclude that one of the roles of education, and maybe the most important one, is to empower students so that they evolve the abilities to perform in the world they live in. Precisely, students inhabit a world mediated by technology of mass communication that determines the way people relate with the world (Kellner, 1995). If educators, like I do, use media to teach our classes and overlook opportunities to question what they read in that material, we are probably reproducing and reinforcing messages that affect our students’ appreciation of the world.

This responsibility as educator led me to look for information about the influence of mediated information on children, the public I teach. From that search I found that, according to Steinberg and Kincheloe (2004, p. 15), children are no longer dependent on adults’ supervision to approach the adults’ world. Rather, children are already accessing ‘adult’ information that frees them from parental control. This relationship with

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\(^1\) I participated in a study group, with English teachers, in which we read and discussed about Critical Pedagogy. The research project, as it turned out later, reported on how our discourses and attitudes were, somehow, impacted after participating in the study group.
information favors marketers who take advantage of it to “direct more and more advertising budget toward [media products] for children” (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004, p. 13), sell products/services and shape their desires.

Seeing that children are becoming the target of advertisers, educators, as much as parents, have an important role in creating/adapting strategies that help children develop the ability to analyze, critique, and change messages in media (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004, p. 9). To that end, it is crucial to recognize children’s capacities to deal with critical questions about power (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004, p. 24); provide spaces for questioning, analyzing, experimenting and discovering the world; and take advantage of media texts, both as unlimited sources of real world learning (Jolls, 2008, p. 9) and as pedagogical sites “where power is organized and deployed” (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004, p. 15).

Thus, taking into consideration my personal interest, children’s position as targets of advertisers and my particular context: An English program for children that encourages the use of authentic material (not intended for English teaching) and gives academic freedom to address the content of the levels; I found out Critical Media Literacy (CML) as one of the approaches that addresses the concern about the use and abuse of mass media to control people, especially children (Torres & Mercado, 2006, p. 262) and aims at helping children analyze, critique and change media messages.

CML is a multidisciplinary approach that expands the traditional view of literacy by including “different forms of mass communication, popular [and corporate] culture, and new technologies” (Kellner & Share, 2007b, p. 8) and recognizes people’s intimate relationship with them. It should be noted that, although CML is not an approach to teach foreign/second language, there is a strong connection between them in the sense that FLT is closely related to culture ‘teaching’. Accordingly, media, as cultural products and
pedagogical sites, “offer real interaction with the target language and culture, and is a valuable instructional resource” (Tanriverdi & Apak, 2008, p. 6) that “should be integrated into ESL curriculum in order to (…) enhance students’ critical thinking and language skills and (…) to have a better understanding of culture” (Tanriverdi and Apak, 2008, p. 2).

To the extent that I could make connections between CML and L2 teaching and learning, I looked for experiences of teachers implementing it. Even though experiences reporting on CML application are manifold, very few of them were conducted with children. That is the case of Gainer, Valdez-Gainer and Kinard (2009) who present a study conducted in a fourth-grade classroom where teachers used CML in a bubble project to guide students through a process of inquiry to finally ‘talk back’ to ads. The other experiences report on the use of a CML approach as means to teach different subjects with high school students and preservice teachers. For instance, Gainer (2010) presents an experience at an after-school club that used CML to analyze representations of youth in different movies. In this club students “analyzed and critiqued dominant narratives” (p. 364) in an attempt to learn to transform schooling and society. Likewise, Morrell, Dueñas, Garcia and López (2013) describe various experiences whereby teachers at a public high school in the United States used Critical Media Pedagogy not only to teach different subjects, but also to encourage students to create their own representations of the world. Begoray, Wharf-Higgins, Harrison and Collins-Emery’s (2013) study on adolescent reading/viewing of advertisements provides examples of activities and discussions, in the health curriculum class, when analyzing food ads. Lastly, Garcia et al. (2013) propose a framework and present experiences for CML Pedagogy with high school youth and preservice teachers that focus on the production of media products as an essential part of CML.
Some other authors advocate for the use of CML as a means to teach language. For example, Cooper (2002) states that L2 classroom practices should aim at understanding the ‘culture’ where the language is spoken so that students master the L2. In particular, she argues that authentic material like newspapers, magazines and other media products can give English learners a glimpse of US lifestyles and perspectives. Citing Ernest Boyer, she claims that education is no longer about just learning how to read and write but rather, it is about becoming literate about visual images, about learning how to identify an stereotype, separate facts from propaganda, among others in media products. Similarly, Lin and Cheung (2014) report the design of an English arts curriculum for EFL students in Hong Kong. This curriculum included the analysis of popular culture as a way to engage students in their own learning process including out-of-school and formal English language resources. Also, the Chileans Farias and Araya (2014) propose a Critical Visual Literacy approach to understand multimodal texts in language education as a way to: a) critically reflect about the power of multimodal texts and their non-neutral construction; b) assume a rhetorical awareness as readers and producers of texts; and c) develop an active participation, not only as consumers, but also as producers of media messages. And finally, Madrenas (2014) reports the results from her Master’s research about Ontario’s ESL curriculum. She found out that this curriculum basically disenfranchises students as subjects through ‘banking education’. To counteract this, the author proposes a media literacy-based curriculum to validate students’ experiences and empower them to become critics and producers of media texts.

Local experiences, as evidenced in five of the most renowned Colombian ELT journals, report the inclusion of multimodal texts like music, movies and TV programs in the EFL class at public institutions mainly for two purposes: to enhance students’
motivation to learn the language (Amado, 2002; Duarte, Tinjacá, & Carrero, 2012), and to help students develop language skills such as listening comprehension and writing (Casallas & Londoño, 2000; Cuestas, 2006; Escobar, Gómez, & Arboleda, 2005; Morales & Beltrán, 2006; Pérez, 2010).

Despite the fact that a big number of local experiences evidence the inclusion of different forms of mass communication and new technologies in the EFL classroom, a few articles refer to the use of media from a critical stance. Rodríguez and Hine (2009) present a school project in which newspaper, radio, television, images, video and ICT were used as input to enhance literacy skills and output to help students express ideas and concerns in the target language. Likewise, Barragán and Gómez (2012) propose a theoretical basis that explains the cognitive processes that accompanies the reading of images (political cartoons) and how these processes, as well as written texts, promote critical thought. The authors do not establish connections with L2 teaching and learning. Finally, Vargas (2010) offers a framework that advocates for the analysis of language in mass media in the L2 classroom so that students can learn the necessary skills to critically interact in the world. This last author, unlike the others, acknowledges that as an important portion of information young people consume is in English; it is L2 teachers’ affair to help them critically read that information so they have more tools to navigate the world.

There are also recent reports of pre-service language teachers implementing the CML approach in their classes to help students read media texts more critically. Guapacha (2015) analyzed the representations of women in newspapers with a group of eleven graders. Guerra (2015) examined body images in advertisements with tenth graders. Aristizábal (2016) fostered tenth graders’ critical readings of fashion advertisements and, Orrego (2016) deconstructed news articles with fifth graders. All things considered, very
few articles, either local or foreign, report and/or advocate for the implementation of CML with children. This gap might indicate that teachers disregard/ignore that children are becoming the target of advertisers and media producers, and then, need to develop abilities to face that reality.

Given that attempts to create strategies to foster children’s ability to analyze, critique in the EFL classroom are still scarce, this study advocates for the implementation of the CML approach in language classroom and aims at understanding how this approach can foster young English learners’ critical analysis of media texts. To that end, I developed a CML instructional unit to problematize the topic of ‘food’, which was already set out in the English program, using Corporate Culture related to food as class material. Participants in this study were a group of fourth-level male and female students whose ages ranged between 9 and 11 years old.

The present paper includes six sections, namely theoretical framework, setting, research design, findings, discussion, and conclusion. Firstly, in the theoretical framework, I will start by briefly presenting the theoretical base of the study, namely Critical Literacy, Cultural Studies and Critical Pedagogy; and the framework that guided the design of the instructional unit. Secondly, I will describe the English program where the study was conducted and the group of children who participated in it. Thirdly, in the research design section, I will offer further information about the methods I used to collect data, describe the process of analyzing the data and the design of the unit. Fourthly, I will present the main findings that resulted from the implementation. Fiththly, I will discuss the factors that could have influenced students’ examination of media texts and offer suggestions for further research. And finally, I will refer to the implications, limitations, significance of the study and my learning from the experience in the conclusion.
Theoretical Framework

Alvermann and Hagood (2000a) suggest that *Media Literacy* of a critical nature (also known as CML) can be described in distinct ways relying upon whether one uses lenses of postmodernism, feminism, cultural studies, and so forth. For this study, I mainly drew on principles of *Cultural Studies, Critical Literacy* and *Critical Pedagogy*. In this section, I will present such principles, synthetize studies carried out in the area and summarize main debates in relation to the implementation of the CML approach. Lastly, I will briefly present the pedagogical elements that I took into account in the design of the instructional unit.

Before presenting the principles that guide the CML approach, it is important to understand how language teaching and learning is conceived in EFL education. Historically, language teaching and learning in ELT has had an instrumentalist connotation, as language has been used as a tool to produce capable human workforce for globalization (Pennycook, 1994, as cited in Luke, 2004, p. 25). It has also reflected the “dynamics of power and patriarchy within the TESOL (…) that entail social relations between teachers and students that reproduce larger social and economic relations between economically mainstream and marginal, (…) subjects” (Luke, 2004, p. 25).

Contrary to this perspective, critical perspectives of language teaching and learning are based on the premise that language teaching and learning move beyond helping students comprehend the texts they consume; it should help them critically read [and rewrite] the world they live in (Freire & Macedo, 1987) and understand how language is used for “the production and reproduction of social differences” (Pennycook, 1990, p. 305). As such, EFL education goes beyond facilitating students’ language acquisition process. It involves literacy practices in which English learners use English as a means for them to unveil “the
inequitable structures of their societies and the ideological dimensions of texts, institutions, social practices and cultural forms” (Pennycook, 1990, p. 309).

Media literacy, as aforementioned, has derived from different disciplines; one of them is the field of Cultural Studies. From cultural studies perspective, CML follows these principles: it recognizes the nature of texts as non-neutral conveyors of messages, it involves the analysis of conventions in texts, it takes for granted that audiences are active meaning-makers, it problematizes issues of power in texts and it includes the examination of the institutions that structure media industries to gain profit (Kellner & Share, 2007b, p. 12). Besides these principles, cultural studies not only “promotes a […] media pedagogy that aims to make people sensitive to how relations of power and domination are ‘encoded’ in cultural texts”, but also “specifies how people can resist the dominant encoded meanings” (Kellner, 1995, pp. 3-4).

Regarding cultural studies and FLT, the literature establishes a close relation between them since language learners’ success has not only determined by the mastery of the L2, but also by the capacity to negotiate the L2 culture (Tanriverdi & Apak, 2008, p. 2). Culture understood as “the particular ways in which a social group lives out and makes sense of its ‘given’ circumstances and conditions of life” (Giroux, 1988; McLaren, 1989, as cited in Pennycook, 1990, p. 309). Hand in hand with Culture, texts/cultural artifacts materialize these particular ways and reflect ideological interests that construct and shape worlds (Luke & Woods, 2009, p. 9). Thus, an FLT field that acknowledges its connection with Culture must also consider how to use cultural artifacts as tools to enhance language learning and cultural awareness.

In effect, CML analyzes “how media culture and the new tools of communication technology induce ideology and social control” (Kellner & Share, 2007b, p. 11);
characterizes audiences as active in the construction of reality; acknowledges that texts readings depend on readers’ perspectives; addresses how society is organized to one’s benefit or hindrance (Kellner, 1995) and analyzes how power and ideology produce different cultural artifacts (McRobbie, 1997, as cited in Alvermann & Hagood, 2000a, p. 194). In brief, CML in the context of FLT can be understood as a type of education in which students not only strengthen academic skills, but also raise awareness about Culture and its products.

Media literacy of a critical nature draws upon Critical Literacy which promotes the analysis of the ways in which language represents or misrepresents reality, privileges or excludes certain values, beliefs, etc. and preserves hegemonic discourses (Evans, 2005, as cited in Berry, 2007, p. 690). In fact, as evolving from Critical Literacy, CML follows these principles: a) It has to do with power relations and advocates for reflection, transformation and action; b) It focuses on social issues; c) It uses different strategies that can be adaptable depending on context; and d) It considers different points of view of the same issue (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004, pp. 54-55). Consequently, CML involves a multiperspectival critical inquiry of the different forms of mass communication that address issues, for instance, race, gender, power, among others; and fosters the production of alternative media (Kellner & Share, 2007b, pp. 8-9).

Media literacy rooted in Critical Pedagogy means experiencing the Media differently with democratic and even emancipative implications. That is to say, this type of pedagogy, according to Apple (1982) and Freire (1985), aims at “raising awareness of how everyday lives and actions are constructed and constrained through the apparatus of power” (as cited in Burnet & Merchant, 2011, p. 43) and provides students with spaces for questioning the status quo, expressing their ideas, opinions and reflections (Hammer, 2009, p. 167).
Therefore, CML, from a *Critical Pedagogy* perspective, is a project for democratic social change that promotes the analysis of how the products displayed in media construct our views of the world, and even our values (Kellner, 1995) and uses ICT as tools for empowerment as people use these tools to voice their concerns (Kellner & Share, 2007b, pp. 8-9).

By and large, the critical analysis of media texts involves “examining a text (whether a media representation, cultural artifact, practice, or other communicative act) for the purpose of considering its myriad connections/intersections with contextual factors and the ways that culture reproduces dominant relations of power and subordination and thus serves the interests of ruling groups” (Funk et al., 2016, p. 29). This endeavor implies that language educators must be aware of the ways in which the media texts students commonly consume, either in English or Spanish, reproduce relations of power that favor or harm them. It is through language that people express ideas, it is through language that ideas are reproduced or criticized; it is language educators’ role to be aware of the power of language and open spaces to analyze its effects.

CML advocates for democracy in the sense that teachers and students share power, ideas, perceptions and insights as they collaborate in the process of unpacking messages and challenging mainstream ideology. In addition, CML concerns with how people understand media messages differently, depending on interests and positioning (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000a, p. 194). In coherence with this, teachers should promote an atmosphere of critical respect for difference when guiding the process of analysis of issues that may affect them. Thus, they are called to respect the pleasures youth experience as fans while simultaneously creating spaces to engage them in a deeper understanding of messages in media texts (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000b, p. 443; Gainer, 2007, p. 112).
Besides promoting democracy, CML advocates that media education should be transversal to all curricular areas. Kellner and Share (2007a), for instance, suggest that CML “should be a common thread that runs through all curricular areas since it deals with communication and society” (p. 68). Similarly, Garcia et al. (2013, p. 119) suggest that CML serves as a bridge between discussions about media representation, power and ideology and any content area given that it is based on theory and students’ real-world experiences.

There are a significant number of pedagogical interventions that report experiences using the CML approach as a means to teach different subjects from k-12 to university level. At the school level, Gainer et al. (2009) examined advertisements with fourth graders to finally ‘talk back’ to ads. Gainer (2010) analyzed representation of schooling in various movies in an after-school club with high-school students. Begoray, Wharf-Higgins, Harrison and Collins-Emery’s (2013) analyzed food ads as part of the health curriculum class with seventh-graders.

At the university level, Flores-Koulish and Deal (2008) and Deal, Flores-Koulish and Sears (2010) examined master students’ reactions to a CML course. In the two studies, students were not analyzing media texts but were exposed to theories about CML and were invited to create CML projects to carry out with their own students.

From these studies I identified three issues going on regarding the implementation of the CML approach. Firstly, CML precursors agree that although students are not critical of media messages by nature (Gainer et al., 2009, p. 681), some manifest from the onset “a deep involvement in the artifacts of media culture”, and still others “are often eager to discuss their views, [and] often have interesting insights” (Kellner, 1995, p. 60). For this reason, teachers should become familiar with what students can read and understand
criticality so that they can assist them respectfully in moving deeper (Flores-Koulish, 2006, pp. 247-248). Indeed, the present study is based on the premise that children are capable of “dealing with the complexities of power, oppression, and exploitation” (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004, p. 24) using the texts students frequently read such as food advertising.

Secondly, there is a false assumption that “participation in a potentially short and typically limited curriculum will make an immediate and profound difference in how [people] respond to the Media we encounter every day” (Scharrer, 2002, as quoted in Flores-Koulish & Deal, 2008, p. 11). In response to that, CML proponents suggest that media education of a critical nature should be offered regularly in curriculum, and continued to undergraduate and graduate programs, so that critical readings are “groomed, honed, and integrated into [students’] citizenship skills” (Wharf Higgins & Begoray, 2012, as cited in Begoray et al., 2013, p. 129).

And thirdly, there is a discussion on the type of resources that should be included into the curriculum. On the one hand, the protectionist approach that seeks to “protect or inoculate people against the dangers of media manipulation and addiction” (Kellner & Share, 2007a, p. 60); reinforces the use of traditional (printed) texts into the curriculum. One the other hand, CML acknowledges the influence of media and characterizes them as texts that help us read the world (Freire, 1970). From there, various authors favor the inclusion of media texts and students’ resources in the classroom for different reasons. According to Gainer (2007), it is important to include the resources students are familiar with into curriculum so it is more relevant to them (p. 113). Similarly, Morrell (2004) maintains that merging EFL curriculum with students’ literacy resources can “bridge the gap between out-of-school informal literacies and formal school literacies” (as cited in Lin & Cheung, 2014, p. 140). In essence, including students’ interests in the classroom can
result in a way to engage them with the class, prepare them with the capacity to live the world they inhabit and help them adopt critical stances towards their own literacy resources.

The unit implemented as part of this study drew on the principles previously described. More specifically, to create this unit I used the framework proposed by Thoman and Jolls (2003) and adapted it to the aims of this study. Considering that CML “involves deconstructing, analyzing, and creating media texts” (Trier, 2006, as cited in Gainer, 2007, p. 108), Thoman and Jolls (2003) provide four steps to organize media literacy learning called the Empowerment Spiral. This spiral “outlines how to break complex topics or concepts into four short term learning steps that (…) enhance our ability to evolve new knowledge from past experience” (Thoman & Jolls, 2003, p. 31). The four steps are: awareness, analysis, reflection and action. In brief, these four steps presented in the MediaLit Kit™ served as the basis to guide the analysis of media texts in my English class.
Setting

The study was carried out at an English program for children as part of the extension programs offered at a public university in Medellín, Colombia. The program follows a topic-based approach to language teaching and learning that aims at helping children use English to share experiences, access media and socialize with different people. The topic of each of the 12 levels was defined taking into account students’ ages, interests and socio-emotional needs (http://idiomasudea.net/). For instance, the central topic of the course where this study was developed, level 4, is ‘food’. The program offers additional learning activities that complement class instruction like a visit to the computer lab, a reading aloud session per semester, and tutoring sessions to support students’ learning of the topics presented in class.

Besides connecting students’ interests with content, the English program also aims at developing English communicative competence. During the 12 levels, students are expected to develop an English communicative competence that allows them to perform in a situation where English is used in an oral or written form. To do so, teachers are encouraged to plan student-centred lessons using authentic material so that students are exposed to real use of language. Although the use of this material plays an important role in the program, no efforts have been made to encourage teachers to use these texts to teach English within a critical perspective (pedagogical workshops track record). Under those circumstances, I took advantage of this material to problematize the topic of food by analyzing and reflecting about the messages conveyed by food advertising.

As mentioned before, the course where this study was carried out was level 4. The main objective of the level is to help students express opinions about different options to eat with family in English. Together with the main objective, the course has specific
content and objectives to be developed during the 32 hours of class along the semester, two per week. During this time, teachers should also plan and apply different evaluative activities to assess students’ performance in English language. These include: follow up activities, two oral tasks, a final written exam and a project. All these activities should account for students’ knowledge in terms of: identifying and naming different kinds of food, classifying food taking into account nutritional characteristics, researching and discussing about places to eat with family, expressing likes and dislikes and describing the steps to prepare a recipe.

Participants

Participants in this research included eleven level-four male and female students. These nine-to-eleven year olds had been studying English for a year and a half which means that they had a basic knowledge of English at the time of the study. The selection of this group of participants was based on: class schedule, content of the level and availability of media texts related to the level’s topic. Most parents of these children had an undergraduate/graduate degree and exposed their children to different out-of-school activities such as sports, arts and English (Parents’ questionnaire, 2014); this exposure granted contact with different people and a myriad of experiences. The majority of students in this program belonged to a middle-high socio economic background which implied that they had computers and access to Internet at home, as well as the possibility to go out with family and visit different places, for instance, restaurants.

I participated in this study, not only as a researcher, but also as the class teacher. As I explained in the introduction, the implementation of the CML unit was a continuation of a personal interest that began when I made part of a research project about *Critical Pedagogy*. From this project, I ended up fascinated with Paulo Freire’s philosophy of
teaching and I felt a strong passion to align my teaching practices with that philosophy. The CML approach was one of the options I had to accomplish my objective. I found the approach relevant in this context since I had been working in that program for five years and consequently, I had the knowledge of the program’s methodology and the students that allowed me to propose an alternative approach, not intended to teach languages, and teach English at the same time.
Research Design

For the purpose of contributing to the growing body of knowledge that explores the application of critical approaches into the language classroom and, aiming at understanding how the implementation of the CML approach may help English young students critically read media; this section includes the description of the research paradigm in which this study is inscribed, the type of study, and how Jolls’ (2008) *Empowerment Spiral* was used in the design of the instructional unit. This section also provides information about the methods of data collection and analysis that I used to answer the research question: How can the implementation of a *Critical Media Literacy* (CML) unit foster young English learners’ critical analysis of media texts related to food?

This study is inscribed in the critical paradigm as it follows these four principles. First of all, critical researchers aim at challenging fixed understandings, engaging participants in a dialogical relationship that may facilitate the unpacking of power relations and raising awareness in a way that leads to break oppressive structures (Richards, 2003, p. 40). On the basis that children are becoming the targets of advertisers and that I could take advantage of authentic material such as food advertising to teach my English class, I decided to implement a CML unit to involve students in discussions to analyze how media texts related to food could serve the interests of ruling groups (corporations).

Second, educators, through critical research, carry out studies that focus on the impact of various educational approaches that privilege “attention to critique and to social justice as much as it does the development of sanctioned academic skills” (Morrell, 2009, p. 99). This research studies children’s responses to the application of a CML unit that intends to question students’ ideas about food advertising. By the same token, it also analyzes the use of English that took place while doing this work.
Third, the analysis of students’ work from a critical perspective can not only show the development of academic skills; but also “how students are learning to think differently about the world” (Morrell, 2009, p. 99) but in a different linguistic code. In fact, the different methods of data collection that I used, for instance transcriptions of whole class discussions, students’ produced artifacts and questionnaires; accounted for their readings and reflections of the texts we were analyzing, as well as their language development.

And fourth, classroom practitioners and their students develop projects that exemplify how humanizing education also improves literacy skills given that this education promotes social critique (Morrell, 2009, p. 99). As CML is based on Critical Pedagogy principles, one of the objectives of the unit was to open spaces for students to question ideas represented in these texts, express their readings of the world and voice their opinions about the issue of food advertising targeting children. In doing so, students strengthened literacy skills in their native and foreign language.

This research classifies as a single case study as it is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin, 2003, p. 13). In this particular case, the phenomenon I wanted to focus on is how the implementation of a CML unit in an EFL class could foster children’s critical analysis of media texts related to food. This study can be considered instrumental as it provides insights into the implementation of the CML approach in the EFL classroom and includes a framework that may serve as a referent for further adaptation (Stake, 2000, as cited in Glesne, 2006, p. 13). Case studies seek to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group (…), social, political and related phenomena (Yin, 2003, p. 1). As stated at the beginning, this study contributes to the FLT field as it presents a pedagogical experience using the CML approach to teach English. In addition, it discusses how the application of this particular approach can favor
the language learning particularly in the context where I conducted the study and with the children I had as participants.

The preparation of the unit

In the design and implementation of the unit I followed the *Empowerment Spiral* proposed by Jolls (2008) to analyze food advertising with my students. This spiral is comprised of four stages: The first one is *Awareness* (activities that lead to observation and personal connections to media and a particular issue); the second one is *Analysis* (activities and questions that help students understand how an issue came to be). The third one is *Reflection* (activities and questions to consider philosophical principles that guide individual and group decision-making); and the fourth one is *Action* (opportunity for students to think of action ideas) (pp. 31-32). It is worth mentioning that due to time constraints (activities took longer than I expected) I could not implement the activities that corresponded to the *Action* stage.

Along with the *Empowerment Spiral*, I took into account the questions proposed by Jolls (2008) and displayed in the Center for Media Literacy web page. The questions inquire about authorship (Who created the message?); format (What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?); audience (How might different people understand this message differently?); content (What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in or omitted from this message?) and; purpose (Why is this message being sent?) (p. 47).

The *Empowerment Spiral* and the questions served as the framework for the design of the unit. Although the framework was created for Media Literacy curriculum in the United States, it adheres to the CML principles as well. From the application of the unit, I was able to gather information from the different actors: students and teacher. Transcriptions of whole class discussions, questionnaires and students’ written work
evidenced the process, while the interview exemplified their impressions about the unit and finally, my journals depicted my reflections and interpretations of what was going on with students. All this information gave me some global picture of what happened in the classroom to understand to what extent this framework could foster young English learners’ critical readings of media texts.

Data Collection

Given that the study aimed at understanding how an approach could foster critical readings of media texts, the data was collected through an implementation of a CML unit that took place from August to November, 2015. I gathered data from ten, out of the 16, class sessions that made up the course. The other sessions corresponded to the preparation of other activities related to the program. During these ten sessions I collected information from five different methods.

Questionnaires. Two open-ended questionnaires, one administered at the beginning and the other one at the end (see appendix A), were applied to all students to collect data about students’ background information (e.g. favorite food and places to eat and age), behavior (e.g. habits in relation to media consumption) and attitudes (e.g. what students think about the media text presented in the questionnaire) before and after the implementation (Dörnyei, 2003, pp. 8-9). Although the questionnaires were not piloted, my advisor and I did several checks and paid careful attention to the types of questions and the information I expected to gather from them. Answers from the two questionnaires were useful to compare students’ analyses at the beginning and at the end of the study. These procedures contributed to understanding the effect of the implementation on participants and to come up with hypotheses that were contrasted with other data.
**Transcriptions of class discussions.** I did selective verbatim transcriptions of the ten video-recorded sessions, particularly whole group discussions, as I omitted pauses, repetitions and speech sounds. These transcriptions served as primary sources of data as they provided me with information about students’ ideas, interactions, analyses and reflections during the implementation of the unit (Glesne, 2006, p. 69). Class transcriptions helped me understand and evidence students’ process during the implementation and describe how the unit helped them critically analyze media texts.

**Journal.** In my weekly journals, which were filled in after class, I collected descriptions, reflections and interpretations about what happened during the development of the CML unit, for instance, students’ spoken and non-spoken responses to the activities and discussions. Most of these reflections accounted for my role as researcher and also as the teacher of the class. Information from the journal was useful to determine changes in the pre-planned activities for the unit, to create hypothesis that could explain what I observed in class, to raise questions for the interview, to contrast hypothesis from with other data and to come up with ideas/suggestions for future adaptation (Holliday, 2002, as cited in Glesne, 2006, p. 68).

**Students’ written work.** I selected four of the written works students did during the implementation (see appendix B) that provided me with evidence of students’ analyses and reflections throughout the implementation of the unit, especially from the students who did not have an active participation in class. As recommended for critical research, students’ work was considered not only as source of data, but also as the essence to understand students’ processes in reading media texts differently (Morrell, 2009, p. 99). That is, a reading that reveals how cultural artifacts favor “dominant patterns of power and authority
that (…) become normalized through routine or everyday activity” (Burnett & Merchant, 2011, p. 43).

**Interview.** I interviewed eight students, at the end of the implementation, with a semi-structured format to collect students’ voices about in and out-class activities and their impressions about them (see appendix C). According to Glesne (2006, p. 79), interviews provide information about participants’ dispositions (interests, values, responses, concerns, etc.) that help the researcher make sense of what she/he has observed. In this case, the interview offered data about students’ reactions to class-discussions and about the origin of their interpretations. Some of the questions in the interview made reference to the activities that were or were not interesting to them, the experience of working with the CML approach and the problems/difficulties they faced with this approach. As explained by Morrell (2009, p. 98), interviews are useful to gather data from the participants’ perspective themselves so that researchers complement and inform their own analysis.

**Ethical Considerations**

At the beginning of the implementation I held a meeting with parents, guardians and participants in this study. In this meeting, I fully informed them about the study, the procedures to collect the data and the considerations to maintain children’s privacy. For example, I mentioned that in this thesis and in future publications or presentations I will use the pseudonyms that participants chose to protect their identity. I also mentioned that only my advisor and I had access to the information gathered from video recordings, questionnaires, students’ written-work and interviews. Parents and/or guardians signed a consent form (see appendix D) where they approved the participation of their children and testified being informed about the details of the study.
**Data Analysis**

To analyze the data collected, I took into account different steps: first, I collected and transcribed information from the ten video recordings of class sessions, students’ written work, the two questionnaires, my journals and the interview. Then, I proceeded to carefully read and analyze the data inductively by assigning short names/codes to chunks of information with similar ideas from the different sources. From these codes, I established themes based on recurrences and went back to the research question to check if themes actually answered it. When themes were consistent enough, I went back to theory to regroup them, made sense of the data in the light of the theory and established patterns. Again and again, I looked at the patterns from all sorts of different angles and came up with more refined patterns that better described the phenomenon observed in each one of them.

Subsequently, and going back to the research question, my advisor and I established more connections between the patterns and the theory about CML (deductive analysis) and refined patterns into categories. After repeating the process a couple of times, I uploaded the data into the qualitative data analysis software NVivo10 (see appendix E for more details), classified the information into nodes (categories) and triangulated the data using the software.

In order to enhance trustworthiness, I considered three different elements: one, I used five different methods of data collection (methodological triangulation) (Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2002) to compare results and establish commonalities. Two, although I am aware that what I found can be shaped by the fact that I was the teacher of the course and the way students reacted to me, I continuously looked for the cases that contradicted what I had found. And three, I had member checks with my advisor who helped me develop new ideas and interpretations (Glesne, 2006, pp. 66-67).
Design of Unit

Considering that the CML approach “involves deconstructing, analyzing, and creating media texts” (Trier, 2006, as cited in Gainer, 2007, p. 108), I decided to use the stages suggested by Jolls (2008) to create and organize the activities to deconstruct and analyze Corporate Culture. Despite of the fact that the stages are organized in what Jolls calls the Empowerment Spiral, the stages do not evolve one after the other one. In fact, activities that aim at raising awareness can also facilitate reflection or analysis and so forth. The spiral, an adaptation of Paulo Freire’s model ‘Action Learning’, is comprised of awareness, analysis, reflection and action activities that leads to “increased comprehension, greater critical thinking and ability to make informed judgments” (Jolls, 2008, p. 65). A description of the materials I selected and the activities I prepared according to the stages will be provided in the following paragraphs (see appendix F for more details).

The materials. Having in mind that, according to the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) (2003), food companies use particular tricks (advertising techniques) to “entice children to buy or nag their parents for food products” (p. 25) and becoming the preferred targets of advertisers; I took advantage of the content of the level to use food advertising as the class material for the unit. During the selection of this material I paid special attention to the food, characters, brands, emotions displayed and the language used in the texts. As possible, I selected ads intended to children that advertised the food commonly exhibited in national TV channels and in different media products such as magazines, newspapers, posters, billboards, and so on. From this process, eleven food ads were selected: McDonalds’, Subway, El Corral, Frisby and Nesquik. Five food ads, as befits an English class, were in English: McDonald’s-Got Milk 2001 ad, McDonald's UK Flyer, Nesquik’s Happy Place ad, McDonald's Free Wifi Served at all Restaurants Ad and
Pay With Lovin McDonald's Super Bowl 2015 commercial. These media texts were mainly used in the analysis stage to unveil hidden messages and to practice the content of the level: description and classification of the foods.

The other six texts were in Spanish: Frispecial ad, Hamburgers El Corral ad, McDonald's ad, Subway Pollo Apanado ad, Firsby’s ad and Kids Eating Hamburgers pic.
The activities. As explained before, I based the design and organization of the activities for the implementation on the Empowerment Spiral. The spiral guides teachers in breaking down complex topics into short term steps. I will describe the activities I designed in each one of the stages in the following lines.

Awareness stage. The Literacy for the 21st Century guide establishes that during this stage teachers design activities that prompt students to establish personal connections with the concept of media, their various formats, how they experience it and the impact that media may have on their lives. Besides, activities should also provide ‘ah-ha’ moments that give relevance to the study of a particular issue. In this stage, I included questions such as: What is media? Who uses media? Who produces media? For what purpose? Written-works that required students to identify types of media texts they commonly consume and their habits; assignments in which students looked for food wrappers, described the food in them and drew conclusions about types of food. Finally, students did presentations about the most advertised food items and drew conclusions about why food advertising favors one kind of food over another.

Analysis stage. Jolls (2008) proposes that teachers in this stage create activities that help students figure out how an issue came to be. She recommends using the Key Concepts and Questions to analyze the complexity of the issue. To help students with the language to approach the questions, I implemented a strategy for language scaffolding that includes three steps: the instructor does it (modeling), the class does it (guided practice) and the individual does it (independent practice). For each set of questions that I chose, I also selected three different food ads to scaffold students’ language. Students and I usually held discussions to talk about the questions. The independent practices, mostly in written form,
contained the same questions we discussed in class but asked students to analyze a different media text. The first set of questions was:

- What type of media is this one?
- What’s the food presented in this ad? (Content)
- Describe the flavor, shape and color of the food presented in the ad
- What else do you see, apart from the food presented in the ad? (Format)
- What’s the reason for having those things in the ad? (Format)
- Who made this? (Authorship) (Jolls, 2008)

The second set of questions was:

- What type of media is this one?
- What type of food does the Fast-Food Chain sell? (Content)
- What else do you see, apart from the food, in the media text? (Content)
- What are people doing? (Content)
- What is the intention of this media text? (Purpose)
- Who paid for this? (Authorship)
- Classify the food in the food pyramid
- What kinds of people prefer this media text? (Audience)
- Who benefits from this message? (Audience) (Jolls, 2008)

**Reflection stage.** This stage intended to connect the issue with the people doing the analysis. For doing so, Jolls (2008) proposes that teachers in this stage design activities that lead students to conclude how an issue affects them and how it makes them feel. As a result, students can take distance from what they see to how they feel. In this stage, I included a video that had two purposes: to demonstrate one of the tricks food advertisers frequently use in food ads and to practice how to give instructions to prepare recipes (one of the objectives of the level). I also took advantage of written productions such as the final exam to inquire about what students saw in media texts and how they felt about them. As a final activity, I implemented a gallery walk in which I simulated a “food court” with various posters of familiar food ads displayed around the classroom. Students walked through, observed the ads by themselves (I was not in the classroom) and freely expressed their opinions while walking through the food ads gallery.
Findings

The purpose of this case study was to understand how the implementation of a CML unit could foster young English learners’ critical analysis of media texts related to food. As described in the setting, the unit was carried out at an English program for children that follows a thematic syllabus; that is to say, every level focuses on a theme related to students’ lives. Given that the topic of level four is food, I used food advertising as class material to prompt students’ ideas, opinions and feelings and to describe processes related to food. In order to promote the critical analysis of this material, I used the Empowerment Spiral and the critical questions proposed by Jolls (2008) to design activities for the unit. The steps in the spiral and the questions were useful to elicit students’ opinions and analyses of class material and to empower them to “question authority, express their own views and provide them with the skills and time for self-reflection” (Hammer, 2009, p. 167). Data suggest that students were able, to a certain extent, to critically analyze Corporate Culture related to food as a result of the activities we developed in class. That is, following Funk et al. (2016, p. 29), students were able to expose how Corporate Culture reproduces power relations.

Categories from data account for students’ critical analyses of media, particularly related to food, as well as their experiences and opinions when analyzing the class material in the activities I implemented. To define the categories I employed a procedure called pattern matching. The procedure involves “an attempt to link two patterns where one is a theoretical pattern and the other is an observed or operational one” (Trochim, 2000, as cited in Suter, 2012, p. 365). In my case, I created a concept map to match the theoretical with the observational realm (see appendix G) and established correlations between them.
The first category demonstrates students’ progress while participating in the analysis and the way they identified elements in the materials that gave them clues about purposes of media. Once they were more aware of embedded messages in class materials, students exhibited that their awareness had an effect on their attitudes towards media messages. Then, the second category refers to students’ attitudes as result of their analysis of food advertising. Finally, although I had the data to analyze students’ gains in terms of English language, I focused on understanding how students used the target language as a means to analyze the class material.

**Becoming More Aware of Purposes behind Corporate Media**

Considering that one of the aims of critically analyzing media texts is to expose how certain texts serve the interests of dominant groups, I implemented some activities to help students move from identification with media texts to a more critical analysis of embedded messages in these texts. That is, realizing and exposing personal connections with the products and the food ads I presented in class and analyzing possible purposes and beneficiaries of these texts as proposed by Kellner and Share (2005, p. 376). Data evidence that some students were aware, since the beginning of the course, of mainly two purposes of food ads: to influence people’s choices and to gain profit. Other students demonstrated this awareness after participating in CML activities and interacting with their peers.

The initial activities I applied aimed at establishing identification with the class material for two functions: to familiarize students with the content of the level and to reveal their relation with the products (food) that were advertised and the types of texts depicting those products. With the first activity I intended to activate students’ background knowledge about media in general. In an effort to do this, I showed them images of media and asked them questions to lead the discussion.
What’s media?
What’s the purpose of media?
Who uses media?
Who produces media?

Without major input, a couple of students mentioned that media use techniques to attract people’s attention and influence their choices. One of the students, Saskes, made reference to how the appearance of food in the ads was used to persuade people to buy a product: “you also like that stuff [advertisements], for example, ice-cream, you like it because they show the ingredients… the ads, so you see ice-cream and you want to eat it because of the ad… the ad and the ice-cream, they show make you want to eat it”. Miku was another student who mentioned attention-getting purposes of media: “they [media] are trying to get our attention” (Class Transcription, Aug 23\textsuperscript{rd}; my translation). The rest of the class did not elaborate further on this idea during this initial activity.

Similarly, a second activity was implemented to move from reflecting about media in general to focus on advertising. Besides narrowing the type of texts to use in class, the activity also intended to help students establish personal connections with the products in the ads and the type of texts that usually advertise food. To this end, I showed students some examples of ads (see figure 1) and asked them questions (see figure 2) about the products and the texts they observed.

![Figure 1. Slide Used to Establish Personal Connections with the Products and Types of Texts.](image-url)
Figure 2. Slide Used to Help Students Establish Personal Connections with Media and Advertising.

Data show that the images I presented and the questions I asked helped students make personal connections with the products in the ads as students began expressing food preferences and familiarity with these texts (posters, flyers, ads, commercials, among others.). But, in two cases, students went further not only establishing the previous connection, but also finding out that advertisers use ‘tricks’ to attract potential buyers. For example, Emma explained how advertising techniques like special offers and enticing the younger audience with toys have influenced her choices: “when I see a flyer, I almost always buy the products on sale. I see the product and, if I like it, I buy it, and if I don’t…” (Transcription of Class Discussion, Aug 30th; my translation). Unlike advertising, Emma recognized that movies are also used as means to get children’s attention and influence their choices: “after the release of the film Barbie and the Princess Charm School, Barbie dolls and Kens begin being sold” (Transcription of Class Discussion, Aug 30th; my translation).

In a succeeding conversation during this second activity, Emma expanded her previous ideas by exemplifying that media producers use toys as tricks to get children’s attention: “near my house there is an ad that says, if you buy a burger, you get a Simpson
"toy" (Transcription of Class Discussion, Sept 6th; my translation). Cristina, in tune with Emma, also made reference to the use of tricks to influence buyers but added that in some cases special offers are not true: “sometimes you watch a commercial and when you go there, you find something different… they [advertisements] have an offer and it’s not true” (Transcription of Class Discussion, Sept 6th; my translation). Although the intention of the second activity was to reveal students’ relation with the products and the class material, the questions I asked also motivated a couple of students to provide examples of how advertising uses hooks to accomplish its purpose of influencing people’s choices.

Once students were more familiar with the content of the level, the products and the class material, I implemented a second set of activities to analyze explicit and hidden messages in this material by applying questions suggested by Jolls (2008). It is important to clarify that, as typical of a language class; I needed to provide students with sufficient practice and use of the vocabulary to analyze the class material. To that end, I applied three language scaffolding stages: modeling, guided practice and independent practice to analyze the food ads. I will refer to in more detail in the category about using English as means to analyze messages in media texts.

During the second set of activities to analyze class material I asked questions for students to practice the content of the level (name, describe and classify food) and to deconstruct messages in food ads. Some of the questions I asked were:

- What type of media text is this one?
- What’s the food presented in this media text?
- Describe the flavor, shape and color of the food presented in the ad
- What else do you see, apart from the food presented in the ad? (Format)
- What’s the reason for having those things in the ad? (Format)
- Who made this? (Authorship)
Data evidence that questions about format and purpose elicited more responses about attention-getting and manipulative purposes of media. For instance, a couple of students determined, throughout the analysis of one of Nesquik ad (see figure 3), that there was a relation between the product, the character and the audience targeting a text. In the case of Nesquik ad, Saskes and Miku interpreted that since the ad was targeting children, advertisers use hooks (*Enticement with Toys* and *Familiar Characters*) to attract their attention, create identification with the product and influence choices.

Teacher: what’s the reason for having a bunny in the ad (see figure 3)?
Saskes: we [children] drive the market, because the ad reads “buy the product and get a toy”, so **the boy will ask his father to buy it**.
Emma: for instance, the rabbit [see figure 3] represents an energetic person, a person who jumps a lot…children, for example…**children love rabbits**.
Miku: it is a drink for children… rabbits jump a lot, so they [advertisers] **show a rabbit to make children think they will have more energy**… like the Milo commercial, teacher, they show James [a famous Colombian soccer player] drinking Milo, so children think they will be like him… and because parents want their children to be energetic, so **they buy them those drinks**.
(Transcription of Class Discussion, Sept 27th; my translation).

It was clear for students that most ads targeting children depict familiar characters or toys to get their attention. But two students went further warranting that the use of familiar characters and toys actually induced children to buy the product.
The analysis of Burnett’s (2015) Pay With Lovin’ commercial, in which some customers were allowed to pay with ‘big family hugs’ and ‘I love yous’ instead of dollars, and the questions about format and purpose aroused even more responses about tricks (Family Fun) used in food ads to influence people’s decision making. To analyze this commercial I asked these questions:

What type of food does the Fast-Food Chain sell?
What are people doing? (Format)
What is the intention of this media text? (Purpose)
Who paid for this? (Authorship)
Classify the food in the food pyramid
What kinds of people prefer this media text? (Audience)
Who benefits from this message? (Audience)


When asking about the intention of Burnett’s (2015) commercial, most students recalled family situations (fights, lack of communication, etc.) and argued that the intention of the commercial was to ‘solve’ these situations. Thus, they concluded that the intention of the commercial was to bring people together.

Teacher: What is the intention of the commercial?
Emma: la intención de ese comercial era que las personas se sintieran atraídas por la… pues por lo que ellos estaban festejando y así se hubieran… pues pudieran alegrarse el día si algunos estaban tristes… y por ejemplo esa familia que mostraban ahí… pues que hubieran estado peliados y ahí se hayan reconciliado… la intención era como unirlos.
Miku: ehhh… teacher se la voy a decir en español porque es muy difícil tratar de hablar en inglés. La intención de McDonald’s era como… o sea, hay muchos problemas que la mamá y el hijo están peleados o… como se van de la casa por algo… la intención de McDonald’s es como reunir otra vez ese sentimiento entre el hijo y la madre entonces por eso le decía que llamara a la mamá y le salía gratis la compra.  
Camila: the intention is people love mothers.  
(Transcription of Class Discussion, Oct 11th).

Conversely, inquiring about intentions of media did lead Simon, another student, to make a connection between the actions that bring families together, featured in the commercial, and how these actions influence people to consume products in that food company.

There are two things. The first one is to make two friends, who are angry at each other, reconcile. And the second is to make people go there more often, so they have more offers.  
(Transcription of Class Discussion, Oct 11th; my translation).

Interestingly enough, the questions about format did not have the same effect when analyzing the McDonald’s-Got Milk (2001) ad (see figure 5). Even though students recognized Ronald McDonald in the ad and demonstrated being familiar with the food company and its products, only one student interpreted the use of the clown as a trick to attract people.

Figure 5. McDonald’s-Got Milk (2001) ad. Retrieved from http://goo.gl/wnkkpO
Teacher: What is the reason for having these people in Got Milk’s ad?
Miku: it is the reason… because for the kids and the… primero empieza small, luego medium y luego super-size… entonces… estan diciendo como… si usted toma leche, puede volverse más big...
Teacher: there should be a reason why the clown is in the media text.
Saskes: el conejo es otra parte para poder promocionar… el mercado… si el conejo… todos necesitan una mascota… puede ser un ser humano, como McDonald’s’ tienen un payaso…
Cristina: to make money.
Catalina: because… attract people… Los commercials… a unas personas les gustan los payasos y los atraen…
Mia: the people comercial.
Teacher: Ustedes saben qué tipo de personas aparecen en los comerciales?
Goku: gente famosa.
Teacher: Is the clown famous?
Miku: Yes… porque McDonald’s es como que siempre está en todo… profe, es porque… como McDonald’s tiene… es una… por todo el mundo se ha extendido, entonces ese payaso es pero muy reconocido ya que es el representante de la marca.
(Transcription of Class Discussion, Sept 27th).

Aiming at revealing more personal connections with the issue (food advertising targeting children), I implemented a series of actions that went from the identification of types of food in food advertising to the reflection about its effects on students’ choices. As a result, a student determined other trick advertisers and food companies take advantage of to persuade people, but the majority of students could not establish personal connections with the issue.

One the series of actions included asking students about commonly advertised food items and classifying them using the food pyramid (see figure 6). In order to help students ‘unpack’ possible hidden messages in food advertising, I inquired students about corporations and advertisers’ responsibility to publicize products (fats, oils, sugar and salt) that could damage people’s health.
Saskes, Catalina, Cristina, Simon and Emma concluded that advertisers and food companies’ are not to assume any responsibility of the products they advertise or produce; instead, they stated that people need to be well informed about the food they consume.

Emma: the candy factories only care about…they don’t care about people’s health. For instance, **they don’t care if a child gets sick after eating so much sugar**. Children will eat lots of candies, so they profit from that, and, if, for example, I get sick, **they won’t assume any responsibility for what I ate**.

Catalina: but **it’s not the company’s fault if we eat lots of candies**…

Simon: I was going to say that. **We get sick because we eat too much**.

Saskes: but if we don’t pay attention to the candy’s expiration date, we could get sick and die and we could sue them.

Cristina: teacher, but **we should know what we are eating**…

(Transcription of Class Discussion, Sept 20th; my translation).

Miku, another student, clarified that people’s lack of attention to nutritional facts in food wrappers could represent a big advantage to food companies and advertising.

Teacher, I wanted to answer that question… How can we realize that… maybe **advertisers have a little bit of responsibility**, that’s it… because they [advertisers] are testing **how responsible we are when we eat**, because nobody sees that the packages bring a periodic table [nutrition facts] that informs the fat and calories we are consuming.

Teacher, the media play their part, because they [advertisers] make people feel attracted to products that contain much sugar and people, well, they don’t think about their health and they [corporations] **use media to make people buy things without thinking**…

(Transcription of Class Discussion, Sept 20th; my translation).
Students who participated in the discussion seemed to have an agreement about people’s responsibility in food choices. However, Miku took it further claiming that advertisers take advantage of people’s lack of information to influence their choices.

After unpacking hidden messages in food advertising, I asked questions for students to draw conclusions about the effects of this advertising into their own choices. To begin, students and I practiced how express food preferences (as part of the content of the level) and created a list with those answers. Then, I inquired about the relation they found between commonly advertised foods and their food preferences. Only one student, Catalina, concluded that children’s food preferences were actually influenced by food ads, the rest of the students did not express anything similar.

Teacher: do you notice any relation among the columns [students’ favorite restaurants and food and most popular food items]? Cristina: Everything is junk food. Catalina: Because many things are unhealthy. Mia: Because it is what most people like. Teacher: why is junk food your favorite food? Catalina: Because they are advertised everywhere. Teacher: is that the reason why you like that food? Miku: I mean, the companies, well, yes, restaurants do it… they make people eat that and… we ourselves are responsible for buying [the products] and this helps the company grow.

(Transcription of Class Discussion, Oct 4th; my translation).

In order to confirm students’ dispositions (attitudes and concerns) at the time of making choices about food, I asked them the following questions during the interview:

Teacher: do you really take responsibility for what you eat? Do you inform yourselves about what you are eating or you just eat whatever you want? Emma: I eat whatever I want… Saskes: …and as much as I want! Teacher: OK, but do you investigate about what you are eating or you only eat whatever you like? Mia: Whatever I like.

(Interview, Nov 29th; my translation).
Results suggest that defining media, discussing about advertising and analyzing the class material not only helped students practice the content of the level, establish personal connections with products and texts, and analyze explicit and hidden messages in media; but also facilitated that Emma, Cristina, Saskes, Miku and Simon ascertained that corporate culture uses tricks to attract and persuade children to buy a product. However, activities seemed not to be enough for my children to transfer that information into their own experiences as buyers.

When discussing the purposes behind food advertising, there was one more that students continually mentioned throughout the implementation. In particular, “to make money” and “to invite people to buy a product” were some of the ways in which students referred to profit-making purposes of media. Though profit-making purposes might be connected to manipulative purposes, the latter one focused more on the techniques advertisers use to get attention whereas the former one emphasizes on the idea that most media messages are organized to gain profit.

In essence, I observed that although some students were clear about profit-making purposes of media before the implementation, CML activities and questions about beneficiaries behind a media text facilitated the analysis of why the messages in media texts were sent and where they came from. In addition to finding purposes and authors behind the texts, the activities helped almost all students, whether discussing or writing the analysis of media texts, hint commercial interests behind media and, therefore, food advertising favors the interests of food corporations, not the public in general.

Early in the implementation, I applied a questionnaire to collect base-line data about students’ awareness about purposes of media, among others things. Five students, out of eleven, accounted for commercial purposes in media texts.
Instruction in Questionnaire: what’s the purpose of the media text (see figure 7)?

Martina: They [advertisers] want you to eat hamburgers.
Miku: advertisers want us to eat junk food, because they want to make money.
Catalina: they [advertisers] made that ad to show the food and make us buy the product.
Camila: to eat it!
Saskes: They [advertisers] want to seduce us to make publicity.
Goku: to make us go to that restaurant and eat.
Cristina: they encourage me to eat hamburgers.
Emma: I think they [advertisers] advertise to make people buy their food.
Mia: advertisers want us to buy it because they make it look good.
Mariana: to make me eat because it is appetizing.
Simon: they [advertisers] want us to eat more in the street, because few people are eating junk food now.

(Questionnaire beginning of process, Aug 2nd; my translation).

Besides mentioning tricks to attract the audience’s attention, Saskes, who did not identify any profit-making purposes in the questionnaire, referred to this purpose during the activity (previously drawn) to arouse students’ background knowledge about media in general.

Saskes explained that one of the ultimate purposes of media is to benefit themselves (media producers and corporations) by making money out of advertising products: “they [corporate owners] want to make profit, no matter if the consumer knows that the product doesn’t taste good, they are still influenced” (Transcription of Class Discussion, Aug 23rd, my translation). In this case, the student also declared that advertising might be
accomplishing its objective even at the expense of acknowledging that the quality of the product is not the best.

Inquiring students about the logic in favoring fats, oils, sugar and salt over other types of food stimulated different interpretations. On the one hand, Cristina and Miku coincided on affirming that advertising junk food makes people get fat. On the other hand, Miku went even further stating that not only food advertising might be favoring other corporations who benefit from making people get fat.

Teacher: Considering your presentations, the food ads you brought and the most popular food items, why do you think advertisers privilege this type of food?
Miku: to advertise [the product] and then, he/she starts **getting fat**.
Teacher: Why are companies selling a lot of junk food?
Miku: **so they can sell products to lose weight**.
Samuel: because these are fast foods and moms don’t want to cook.
Mia: because they [advertisers] show people eating it [fast food], so we buy it.
Cristina: **to make us fat**.
(Transcription of Class Discussion, Sept 13th; my translation).

Even though Cristina and Miku showed an increased level of awareness about profit-making purposes of food ads, neither I counter asked Cristina and Miku to understand the origin of their interpretations nor I asked the rest of students about the interest of corporations in making people gain weight.

Data indicate that most students easily identified beneficiaries from food ads. In different activities like discussions about commonly advertised food and analyses of class material, most children affirmed that corporate owners and advertisers were the ones who benefited from the products they advertise, no matter the effect the product may have on consumers’ health.

Mia: as we like them [candies], they [corporate owners] profit from that…we like candies so much that… **they make money because children buy candies**.
Miku: yes, because **children are the biggest buyers of candies**. What child doesn’t like candies?
(Transcription of Class Discussion, Sept 20th, my translation).
Instruction in the handout: Who benefits from the message in the media text (see figure 8)?
Emma: The advertising of McDonald’s [sic].
Martina: because attract people.
Goku: McDonald’s.
Camila: a McDonalds’.
Catalina: McDonalds’.
Mariana: the people who need wifi.
Miku: the benefits is the people free wifi.
(Handout, Oct 18th).

![Figure 8. McDonald's Free Wifi Served at all Restaurants. Retrieved from http://goo.gl/Zcu4k5](http://goo.gl/Zcu4k5)

Although the profit-gaining purpose of corporate culture was clear for the majority of students, attracting people’s attention was another purpose they also were aware of. Thus, students fluctuated between the two purposes throughout the CML implementation. Miku was the only student who consistently mentioned commercial interests of corporate culture since the beginning to the end of the implementation.

Instruction in Final Exam: what’s the purpose of creating Frisby’s ad (see figure 9)?
Mariana: to buy.
Emma: attract of the people.
Cristina: the purpose of creating this is for call attention.
Martina: the pourpose [sic] is attracts person.
Catalina: the purpose is attract.
Mia: it is big and delicious.
Saskes: atraer.
Goku: is atracc [sic] people.
Miku: the purpose is the people is comprer esto y se vuelvan faths [sic].
(Final exam, Nov 15th).
Questionnaire instruction: What is the purpose of the Kids Eating Hamburgers pic (see figure 7)?
Martina: to people go the **buy food**.
Miku: the purpose is the kids tell parents **to buy**.
Catalina: the intention is people **to buy**.
Camila: the intention an people **buy**.
Sasokes: to **attract peapol** [sic].
Goku: to **attract people**.
Cristina: the purpose is **call attention**.
Emma: **attract of the people**.
Mia: the **attract people**.
Mariana: to advertise the food.
(Questionnaire end of process, Nov 22nd).

In conclusion, the CML activities I described served as spaces for students to demonstrate and gain some level of critical analysis of food ads given that they were able to find out manipulative and profit-making purposes in this material. That is, my children were able to determine tricks advertisers use to persuade people and expose corporate interests behind media and its beneficiaries. Nevertheless, it appears to be that most students could not establish personal connections with food advertising targeting children and its effect on their daily life; which is one of the aims of the awareness stage.

**Expressing Deception towards Messages in Familiar Ads**

CML experts suggest that media education should include activities that promote the reflection about what people think and feel towards media texts (Jolls, 2008, p. 66). By
the same token, Kellner and Share (2005) suggest that to facilitate this interpretation among younger students, teachers can create activities to separate “what students see or hear from what they think or feel” (p. 374) given that media consumers have the capacity to interpret texts not only in ‘preferred’ ways, aligned with dominant ideas, but also in oppositional ways (p. 375). Having this suggestion in mind, I implemented activities to guide reflection about the content in the food ads I used as class material and what they thought or felt about them.

In doing so, I found out that a few students acknowledged, since the beginning of the implementation, that media do not present reality (Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 374) and therefore, expressed deception (feeling ‘tricked’) towards familiar food ads. Some others made it visible after observing one technique commonly used in food advertising called Food Make Up.

In particular, there were two students who shared their feelings of deception towards food advertising during the first activities I carried out to familiarize students with the content, the products and the texts that advertise food. At that point, I did not plan to elicit students’ answers about their feelings towards media; however, these activities roused Miku and Cristina’s reflection about messages in media. Miku, for instance, referred to misleading advertising. She mentioned that “they [advertisers] also cheat. When you want to eat a ‘lenguileta’ [a type of ice cream that resembles a tongue and its movement] and you lick it, it doesn’t move. They are misleading people to make them buy the product, they cheat the audience” (Transcription of Class Discussion, Aug 23rd; my translation). As evidenced, the student spoke about ‘deceiving the audience’ without requiring any direct input from my part. Similarly, Cristina expressed that “sometimes you watch an ad and when you go to buy it, you find something different to what was expected. Or they
advertise an offer and it’s not true” (Transcription of Class Discussion, Sept 6th; my translation). These two students based their analysis on their experiences with food advertising to conclude that messages (promising properties in a product or special offers) in these texts do not correspond to reality.

I must say that, in addition to the development of activities that promoted interaction between peers, using media students were familiar with played an important role in helping them reflect about media messages. In fact, the more familiar children were with class material, the easier it was for them to express their feelings towards the material. In the following paragraphs I will illustrate how this happened.


One of the activities I planned for the reflection stage was the analysis of Newman’s (1989) video clip Food ad tricks (see figure 10). The video clip illustrates the trick Food Make Up and describes the procedures a lady follows to prepare a burger look delicious in advertisements (describing the steps to prepare a recipe also makes part of the content of the level). The effect that the video produced on students could be observed in three different events. One of them was the Final Test in which students analyzed Newman’s
(1989) video clip and a Frisby’s ad (see figure 9) regarding descriptions of the food (as part of the content of the level) and what they felt/think about the two media texts.

Instruction in Final Exam: What ingredients does the lady need to prepare the recipe in Food Ad Tricks’ video clip?
Camila: bread, lettuce, tomato, pinture.
Cristina: bread, cucumber, sauces, tomato, lettuce, cardboard.
Martina: meal, lettuce, tomato, cardboard, bread.
Mia: the ingredients is break, tomato, lettuce, painting and seeds.
Miku: tomato, paint, beef, lettuce, cardboard, bread.
Simon: bread, tomato, sauce, tomato, meat.

Instruction in Final Exam: How do you feel after watching the Food Ad Tricks’ video clip?
Mariana: bad.
Emma: I my feel fooled.
Camila: very good is advertising.
Cristina: I feel fooled.
Martina: I feel angry and desagrado.
Catalina: fool ed [sic].
Mia: mal because nos engañan.
Saskes: feel after bad.
Goku: me siento fool.
Miku: bad for this is false.
Simon: angry [angry] because is lies.

Instruction in Final Exam: What is your opinion about this Food Advertising Trick?
Mariana: engañar a las personas.
Emma: opino que not deben de engañar a las peoples.
Camila: not fool apple and trick.
Cristina: my opinion about this is a bad trick.
Martina: my opinion is no se puede hacer trapa para buy.
Catalina: is good this advertisement trick.
Mia: my opinion is que queda bonita pero no es agradable of eat.
Saskes: is in big truco, para atraer.
Goku: esta [sic] mal.
Miku: super bad is horrible because le miente a the people para que lo compre.
Simon: my opinion is that is an very trick because the peoples se lo creen.

Instruction in Final Exam: Describe what you see in the Frisby’s ad.
Mariana: burger, chips, soda
Cristina: the description that I see is a burger, a soda, a french fries
Martina: lettuce, tomato, cheese, meat, frein frace, soda, ice
Catalina: I see frisby products
Saskes: me see food, soda con logo of frisby, burger, fries
Miku: I am see food so delicious, this is not healthy
Instruction in Final Exam: Describe of how you feel when watching Frisby’s ad.
Mariana: emotion [excited].
Emma: ancient [anxious].
Cristina: I feel hungry.
Martina: my feel disgusting.
Catalina: fool ed.
Mia: I my feel bat [bad] because not I like.
Goku: me siento fool.
Miku: I am feel hungry for que se ve delicious.
Simon: angry [angry] because is lies and hace that the peoples no sigan llendo because not is truth [sic].
(Final exam, Nov 15th).

Another event was the one I called ‘food court’ (drawn in the design of unit). During this activity the majority of students expressed deception towards the food images they were observing. Singularly, one of them openly described how the Food Make Up trick was used in the posters referring to Newman’s (1989) video clip.

Goku: …that’s made of cardboard [pointing at McDonalds’ ad] the bread seeds are glued, the meat is cut to make it bigger…and the fries are something weird…but the images look good.
Mariana: Subway’s sandwich is a lie, they are not that big.
Camila: aha!
Catalina: the price is also a lie, it is actually more expensive.
(Food court, Nov 22nd; my translation).

Other students like Martina, Cristina, Mia, Miku and Emma did not show any interest towards the food in the posters. Conversely, Saskes, who in previous activities expressed awareness about purposes behind media texts; was the only one who strongly showed attraction to the food in the posters. He constantly said: “images look good… why can’t we eat this?” (Food court, Nov 22nd; my translation).

The interview at the end of the implementation was the third event in which students confirmed the effect of the video clip. When asking them about the use of media texts in the English class, some of them asserted that analyzing media texts was necessary given that media deceive people with tricks and that using media texts was enlightening for
them, in Saskes’ opinion, learning about media was something good. Furthermore, one of them even shared the video clip with her classmates to change the way they think.

Teacher: what do you think about learning with media texts?
Miku: I think it was very good because kids, let’s say we’re in a bubble where everyone lies us [...] media texts also lie... I mean... not everything is reality; not everything is about believing what the texts say but also about having your own opinion.
Cristina: media texts teach us a lot, for example that they tell us lies, as Miku said.
Saskes: eh, I learned about the existence of media texts… well, I didn’t know their names and… In this course my knowledge was centered and I liked that a lot because children as us should learn… well… good things, and this is something good because our mind is open to many things and we have to use it to... learn! Miku: teacher, I wanted to add something… I liked a lot the topic of media. I mean, people are influenced by lies. For instance, I showed my school classmates the commercial [Newman’s video clip]… and they changed their opinion…even some of them were becoming vegetarians, I don’t know why.
(Interview, Nov 29th; my translation).

In sum, the activities I developed to guide students to reflect about what they think and feel towards media messages had a positive effect. Indeed, most of them were able to separate what they thought/felt towards food in the ads from what they saw in them. It is worth mentioning that not only the activities, but the texts were essential for students to rely on previous experiences and conclude that media texts do not represent reality (Kellner & Share, 2005).

Using English as a Means to Analyze Messages in Media Texts

As exposed in the theoretical framework, although the CML approach is not intended for foreign/second language teaching and learning, CML scholars claim that media education should run through all curricular areas. In fact, media literacy becomes a concern for FLT considering two major facts: the amount of information that students access in the foreign language through cultural artifacts and technology of mass communication and the close relation language teaching has had with culture. Therefore, in the hope that this study broaden the research done in relation to media literacy in the
language classroom, this category presents the results of a closer look at students’ use of English in the context of media literacy development from a critical stance.

Taking into account students’ ages, English proficiency level and the content of level four, I designed activities that had predominantly two purposes: to help students appropriate the content of the level (naming and classifying different foods according to nutritional characteristics, expressing likes, discussing places to eat with family and describing the steps to prepare a recipe); and to arouse emotions, feelings and responses in the L2 that could help students read messages and decode cultural traditions in food advertising.

In general terms, activities and questions that included pre-determined responses from students were the ones in which students used English the most; for instance, building up vocabulary related to food, describing what they saw in the class material, naming the food and the type of media text and expressing preferences about food and places to eat with family.

Teacher: Describe the flavor, color and shape of the food in McDonald’s ad.
Martina: it is sweet.
Miku: it is a simple… o sea… Teacher: neutral?
Emma: it is salty.
Goku: drink.
Catalina: not have a defined shape.
Teacher: it does not have a defined shape because it is a liquid.
Martina: it is white.
(Transcription of Class Discussion, Sept 27th).

Independent practice instruction: Describe the flavor, color and shape of the food in McDonald's UK Flyer?
Camila: burger is round, has diverse colors: green, red, yellow light brown skin, etc.
Catalina: it is salty, it does not have a defined shaped, various color.
Simon: it is wavy, colorful, it does not have a defined shape.
Goku: it does not have a defined shape
Martina: the hamburger is swe [sic] and salty, the shape is oval or circle
Miku: this is a flavor is neutral, it is does not have a defined shape
Emma: it is neutral/salty, it is not have a deffinet [sic] shape, it is a brown, green, white.
Mia: the burger has many flavor, the burger not have defined shape.
Cristina: it has many flavors, it does not have a define [sic] shape, it has many colors.

(Independent Practice, Sept 27th).

Teacher: Describe the flavor, the color and the shape of the food presented in the media text.
Cristina: it have [sic] many flavors, it do not have a defined shape, it have many colors. Teacher: instead of ‘have’ write ‘has’.
Miku: it is a flavor neutral, it is a not defined shape, and it is a different colors.
Teacher: how is the accurate way to say it?
Some students: it does not have a defined shape.
Martina: the hamburger is sweet and salty. The shape is oval or circle and the colors are green, red, yellow and brown.
Saskes: profe… seria different colors, porque hay diferentes colores… o sea, hay rojo, verde. Teacher: you can mention the different colors or say it is colorful or it is multicolor.
Emma: the burger is neutral and salty, it is a brown, green and red. Teacher: you can erase the ‘a’.

(Transcription of Class Discussion, Oct 4th).

Teacher: What else do you see apart from the food?
Cristina: I see love.
Mia: I see people.
Goku: people dance. Teacher: I see people dancing.
Martina: I see buy. Teacher: I see people buying.
Camila: I see happy people.
Miku: I see the people calling of the mothers. Teacher: I see people calling mothers.
Mia: I see attract. I see lyrics. Teacher: I see text.
Emma: I see people smile. Teacher: I see people smiling.

(Transcription of Class Discussion, Oct 11th).

Besides using English to give pre-determined responses, students also demonstrated being able to use the L2 to communicate opinions when they were allowed to use a combination of English and Spanish in their responses. This was the case of the Final Exam in which students analyzed two media texts (Newman’s (1989) video clip and a Frisby’s ad) using English and Spanish.
Martina’s example:

2. Listen and watch the video again and answer the questions. (10 points, 2 point each correct answer).

- What is the lady doing in the video? She is cooking.
- What is the lady preparing? A burger.
- What ingredients does the lady need to prepare the recipe? Bread, tomato sauce, tomato, meat.
- How do you feel after watching the video? Hungry because I like it.
- What is your opinion about this advertisement trick? My opinion is that it is a very good trick because the people get very hungry.

Mia’s example:

2. Listen and watch the video again and answer the questions. (10 points, 2 point each correct answer).

- What is the lady doing in the video? The lady is cooking.
- What is the lady preparing? The lady is preparing a burger.
- What ingredients does the lady need to prepare the recipe? The ingredients are: bread, tomato, lettuce, onion, and seeds.
- How do you feel after watching the video? Bad, because it is false.
- What is your opinion about this advertisement trick? I don’t agree with it. I feel angry and I don’t like it.

Miku’s example:

2. Listen and watch the video again and answer the questions. (10 points, 2 point each correct answer).

- What is the lady doing in the video? The lady is cooking.
- What is the lady preparing? The lady is preparing a burger.
- What ingredients does the lady need to prepare the recipe? The ingredients are: bread, tomato, lettuce, onion, and seeds.
- How do you feel after watching the video? Bad, because it is false.
- What is your opinion about this advertisement trick? I don’t agree with it. I feel angry and I don’t like it.

Simon’s example:

2. Listen and watch the video again and answer the questions. (10 points, 2 point each correct answer).

- What is the lady doing in the video? She is cooking.
- What is the lady preparing? A burger.
- What ingredients does the lady need to prepare the recipe? Bread, tomato sauce, tomato, meat.
- How do you feel after watching the video? Hungry because I like it.
- What is your opinion about this advertisement trick? My opinion is that it is a very good trick because the people get very hungry.
These excerpts indicate that allowing students use a combination of English and Spanish to analyze media texts can help children incorporate words and sentences from the target language and at the same time keep on expressing their own views. This result confirms what LoBiondo (2010) found in her study about code-switching in SLA. Code-switching, as established by the author, refers to the situations in which a “speaker changes languages at sentence boundaries, (…) changes languages within a sentence, (…) changes languages for only one word or phrase within the sentence” (Grosjean, 1982, as cited in LoBiondo, 2010, p. 7). The author found that code-switching could definitely be beneficial to L2 learners, especially the ones in the initial stages of L2 learning, as they profit from both: having the teacher translate new vocabulary into students’ L1 and being able to use the L1 and the L2 to comply with their academic goals (p. 22).

Precisely, in order to help students use the L2 to express their own ideas, students were allowed to code-switch as “means of transferring knowledge from L1 to L2, especially syntax and vocabulary” (LoBiondo, 2010, p. 40). Together with code-switching, I selected a Language Scaffolding strategy to guide students’ use of English so that they perform certain activities without the teacher’s help. By scaffolding I mean

Temporary support structures (…) to assist students in accomplishing new tasks and concepts they could not typically achieve on their own. Once students are able to complete or master the task, the scaffolding is gradually removed or (…) the responsibility of learning shifts from the instructor to the student (Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center (FDIDC), p. 1).

The scaffolding strategy that I implemented comprises three stages: the instructor does it (modeling), the class does it (guided practice) and the individual does it (independent practice). During the modeling stage, I explained the questions to analyze one media text and offered examples, then, students discussed their interpretations in Spanish and we constructed the sentences in English on the board. During the guided practice students were exposed to the same questions than in the modeling stage, but using a different media text;
there were no further explanations of questions and students were expected to use some of the lexicon and forms they had on the board as models to express their ideas. Again, students and I constructed sentences with their conclusions on the board in English. Finally, the independent practice (usually in written form) did not include major explanations, students were to answer to the same questions but using a third text and, as they already had some repertoire from the previous stages, learners were expected to answer only in English (FDIDC, pp. 1-2). Here are some examples of the way I applied the Language Scaffolding strategy.

Teacher: What is the reason for having a rabbit and a text in Nesquik’s ad?
Miku: porque los papás quieren que los hijos tengan energía… por eso de dan cosas… y ellos están en entrenamiento… cierto, los papas de uno le dan milo… o cosas similares.
Emma: el conejo es familiar de la liebre… por ejemplo liebre es más rápida, entonces los papás creen que ellos [children] van a ser más rápidos…
Saske: el conejo es otra parte para poder promocionar… el mercado… si el conejo… todos necesitan una mascota… puede ser un ser humano, como McDonald’s’ tienen un payaso…
(Transcription of Class Discussion, Sept 27th).

Teacher: What is the reason for having these people in McDonald’s ad?
Miku: it is the reason… because for the kids and the… primero empieza small, luego medium y luego super-size… entonces… estan diciendo como… si usted toma leche, pode volverse más big…
Teacher: if you drink milk, you grow.
Catalina: because… attract people… Los commercials… a unas personas les gustan los payasos y los atraen… a mí no me da miedo…
Mia: the people comercial.
Teacher: the people in the commercial… ustedes saben qué tipo de personas salen en los comerciales?
Goku: gente famosa.
Teacher: is the clown famous?
Miku: Yes… porque McDonald’s es como que siempre está en todo… profe, es porque… como McDonald’s tiene… es una… por todo el mundo se ha extendido, entonces ese payaso es pero muy reconocido ya que es el representante de la marca.
(Transcription of Class Discussion, Sept 27th).

Data suggest that, although code-switching and Language Scaffolding helped students use English to communicate their opinions, students’ responses in the L2 were much more
limited compared to the ones in the L1. That is, students’ readings in English, mostly during the independent practice, were not as detailed as the ones in their L1 or using a combination of the two languages (English and Spanish).

Instruction in Questionnaires: What is the purpose of the media text (see figure 7)?

At the beginning
Martina: quieren que comas amburges
Miku: quieren que comamos comida chatarra por que quieren ganar dinero
Catalina: estaban haciendo una publicidad para comercializar la comida y comprar el producto
Camila: comerla
Saskes: antojarte para hacer publicidad
Goku: que fueramos a ese restaurante y comiéramos
Cristina: me invitan a comer hamburguesas
Emma: yo pienso que están publicando para que la gente compre esa comida
Mia: quieren que la compre porque la ponen muy rica
Mariana: comiera porque antoja
Simon: que comamos mas cosas en la calle porque casi ya nadie come comida chatarra
(Questionnaire beginning of process, Aug 2\textsuperscript{nd}).

At the end
Martina: to people go the buy food
Miku: the purpose is the kids tell parents to buy
Catalina: the intention is people to buy
Camila: the intention an people buy
Saskes: to attract peapol
Goku: to attract people
Cristina: the purpose is call attention
Emma: attract of the people
Mia: the attract people
Mariana: to advertise the food
(Questionnaire end of process, Nov 22\textsuperscript{nd}).

Teacher: What is the intention of the Pay with lovin McDonald’s super bowl 2015 commercial?
Emma: la intención de ese comercial era que las personas se sintieran atraídas por la… pues por lo que ellos estaban festejando y así se hubieran… pues pudieran alegrarse el día si algunos estaban tristes… y por ejemplo esa familia que mostraban ahí… puede que hubieran estado peleados y ahí se hayan reconciliado… la intención era como unírlos
Miku: ehhh… La intención de McDonald’s era como… o sea, hay muchos problemas que la mamá y el hijo están peleados o… como se van de la casa por algo… la intención de McDonald’s es como reunir otra vez ese sentimiento entre el hijo y la madre entonces por eso le decía que llamara a la mama y le salía gratis la compra
As could be observed, when students were asked to answer only in English, their responses were either repetitive or lacked forethought. Another conclusion from the previous excerpts is that, as students and I were analyzing class material and constructing these analyses in English together, they ended up memorizing the ideas we constructed in the L2 and therefore, provided the same answers to the same question while analyzing different media texts.

Teacher: what’s the intention of media?
Miku: están intentando como llamar la atención de nosotros.
Saskes: nosotros comer en ese lugar.
We concluded: to attract people’s attention and to buy in a particular place.
(Transcription of Class Discussion, Aug 23rd).

Instruction in Handout: What is the intention of this media text? 
Emma: Attract of the people
Martina: the intention is to talk, the intention in to hugging
Goku: the intention is to attract people to McDonalds’
Camila: the intention is to attract people to McDonalds’
Catalina: the intention is to attrac people to McDonalds’
Mariana: the intention is offer free wi-fi at all McDonalds’ owners
Miku: the intencion is the attract the people of the wifi free
(Handout, Oct 18th).

Instruction in Questionnaire: What is the intention of the media text?

Simon: para mí que son dos cosas. La primera es hacer que las personas... así pues que se están peleando... o por ejemplo que un amigo ya no es amigo del otro, entonces ahí le dice que... pues que le diga que lo quiere mucho y así y todo eso... y la otra es que para... como con las promociones hacer que la gente vaya más allá... más promociones...
Mia: comer gratis!
Camila: the intention is people love mothers
(Transcription of Class Discussion, Oct 11th).

Instruction in the handout: What is the intention of this media text (see figure 8)?
Emma: Attract of the people
Martina: the intention is to talk, the intention in to hugging
Goku: the intention is to attract people to McDonalds’
Camila: the intention is to attract people to McDonalds’
Catalina: the intention is to attrac people to McDonalds’
Mariana: the intention is offer free wi-fi at all McDonalds’ owners
Miku: the intencion is the attract the people of the wifi free
(Handout, Oct 18th).
Martina: to people go the buy food
Miku: the purpose is the kids tell parents to buy
Catalina: the intention is people to buy
Camila: the intention an people buy
Saskes: to attract peapol [sic]
Goku: to attract people
Cristina: the purpose is call attention
Emma: attract of the people
Mia: the attract people
Mariana: to advertise the food
(Questionnaire end of process, Nov 22nd).

Instruction in Final Exam: What’s the purpose of creating this media text?
Mariana: to buy
Emma: attract of the people
Cristina: the purpose of creating this is for call attention
Martina: the purpose is attracts person
Catalina: the purpose is attract
Mia: it is big and delicious
Saskes: atraer
Goku: is atracc [sic] people
Miku: the purpose is the people is compr esto y se vuelvan faths
(Final Exam, Frisby’s ad, Nov 15th).

It is worth describing here the constant internal battle I had while implementing the unit.

On the one hand, I had all the theories I learned about SLA, mostly influenced by positivist perspectives, in the teaching program. And on the other hand, I had this very recent approach I was applying in my practices by the first time. Even though I acknowledged that students were using English or code-switching to refer to the content of the level and express their ideas; I could not avoid feeling frustrated by having my students hold discussions in Spanish and not knowing how to manage the situation.

As this being the modeling stage of the analysis, students are mostly speaking in Spanish, except for the first part [naming and describing media texts and food] in which they [...] knew how to answer in English. I recognize that students did not have the language to express their opinions. As I have mentioned before, I could not anticipate what they were to say in every class [...], mostly when they are opinions. I am still considering what would be a good way to anticipate such answers and give students more resources to use English while having a discussion. For now, the discussions are happening in Spanglish, I ask questions in English, give examples, and they answer in Spanish (Journal, Sept 27th).
On top of this internal battle, some students also demonstrated this frustration when they recognized that they did not have the language to hold discussions.

Miku: ehhh… teacher se la voy a decir en español porque es muy difícil tratar de hablar en inglés. La intención de McDonald’s era como… o sea, hay muchos problemas que la mamá y el hijo están peleados o… como se van de la casa por algo… la intención de McDonald’s es como reunir otra vez ese sentimiento entre el hijo y la madre entonces por eso le decía que llamara a la mama y le salía gratis la compra.

(Transition of Class Discussion, Oct 11th).

All in all, and regardless the frustration students and I faced, data demonstrate that my novice language learners were able to use English to talk about the content of the level and to “decode ideological dimensions of texts, (...) social practices and cultural forms” and “analyze and challenge the oppressive characteristics of the society” (Pennycook, 1990, p. 309). Results indicate that when language teachers allow students to first give voice to their opinions in the L1 and then transfer them into the L2 and/or use a combination of English and Spanish, students can actually use the target language as a means to create meaning from their own perceptions of the world.
Discussion

Considering Steinberg and Kincheloe’s (2004) proposal of a type of education that responds to children’s unlimited access to information in multiple forms and their capacities to unveil the power embedded in media messages, the purpose of this case study was to understand how a Critical Media Literacy (CML) unit fostered young English learners’ critical analysis of media texts. That is, the study intended to make sense of the factors that could have influenced young students’ examination of how cultural artifacts (Corporate Culture related to food) reproduce relations of power and serve the interests of ruling groups (Funk et al., 2016, p. 29).

Findings suggest that using the texts students are familiar with facilitated their analysis; in addition, implementing the CML activities furthered, to some extent, children’s critical analysis of food ads. Findings also evidenced that activities also facilitated students’ use of English as a means to express their views of the world. These are the themes I will discuss next.

In the first place, results from the study suggest that using the texts students are familiar with facilitated their analysis of food ads in two ways. Firstly, students could easily recall previous experiences with food ads to support their interpretations. In detail, children in my class frequently turned to previous experiences (i.e., examples of food ads they saw in their neighborhoods, in the school, on TV or in the street; and anecdotes with food companies and their products) to draw conclusions about commercial interests in food ads and to express that, in many cases, these texts deceive people. For example, one of the conclusions students constantly arrived to was that one of the purposes of food ads was to make money. As an explanation to that logic, they brought about past experiences with food ads and people trying to convince them to buy a product.
A possible explanation for this response could be what Alvermann and Hagood (2000a, pp. 200-201) called ‘the deconstruction of a school discourse’; that is, when viewing and validating media culture as relevant to academic pursuit, students have the possibility of entering the classroom with the lived experiences, fears, pleasures; with their everyday life. This validation recognizes that texts, as exposed in the theoretical framework, come in many multiple forms: “they are oral, visual, printed, auditory and digital; in Paulo Freire’s words, “the world is a text” (Berry, 2007, p. 690). The fact that I used the types of texts students constantly interacted with (advertisements, commercials, posters, video clips and flyers related to food) as class material, involved them in the analysis process and connected their background knowledge to the content of the class.

Secondly, students’ diverse experiences resulted in a variety of interpretations which enriched discussions and influenced peers’ analysis of class material. Put differently, while some of my children were able to easily identify techniques used in food ads and/or find out commercial interests in these texts, some others did it as a result of their participation in class activities or interaction with peers and, a few ones, did not do it at any point in the implementation. As an illustration, the analysis of McDonald’s-Got Milk (2001) ad stimulated diverse interpretations about the format of the ad, based on their experiences. While Saskes referred to Ronald McDonald as a mascot to advertise products, Catalina inferred that advertisers place familiar characters, like clowns, to attract people and, Miku related to Ronald McDonald as a highly recognized icon that represents the worldwide brand McDonalds’.

This variety of interpretations corroborated what Sholle and Denski (1995) define as CML concerns. The authors state that CML considers individuals’ different interpretations of cultural texts to be true and recognizes that these interpretations might depend on
people’s interests and experiences (as cited in Alvermann & Hagood, 2000a, p. 194). As a matter of fact, individuals’ different interpretations of cultural texts obey one of the key concepts of CML: different people experience the same media message similarly or differently depending on multiple contextual factors (Funk et al., 2016, p. 7). On that account, disparity of interpretations is not problematic; instead, it nourishes conversations and expands students’ perspectives on topic at hand.

On the whole, using the material students normally consume helped my students critically analyze food ads in two ways: First, students could bring up their extensive experience and knowledge on these texts to back their conclusions up about food advertising interests and their feelings about the texts. And second, students’ readings of texts were as varied as their experiences and, then, students could build up new ideas from peers’ interpretations. In the two ways, the material was used as excuse to reflect about ideological interests represented in it and its way of constructing and shaping worlds (Luke & Woods, 2009, p. 9), which is a characteristic of critical work.

In the second place, results of the study also indicate that not only familiarity with media texts facilitated students’ analyses of food ads, but also the CML activities I implemented and the critical questions I asked. In particular, adopting the Empowerment Spiral (awareness, analysis and reflection) to organize activities helped my students identify forms of media manipulation, purposes of media and establish a separation between what they see from what they feel. As an illustration, even if two students expressed deception towards familiar food ads since the beginning of the implementation, most of them ended up communicating the same feeling after participating in reflection activities.
There are three plausible reasons for this. One of them is that the CML activities I implemented were contextualized and relevant to participants as expected from an approach that follows *Critical Literacy* principles: the adaptation of different strategies depending on context (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004, pp. 54-55). Besides adapting strategies, I also took into account that topics, class material and activities were based on students’ ages, interests and needs (program’s premise). Consequently, the instructional unit included activities like giving information about their hobbies and food preferences, describing food in food wrappers, watching YouTube video clips to fill information in a worksheet (see appendix B), cooking, making Power Point Presentations about most publicized food items and, discussing about familiar food ads; among others. The relevance of the activities was confirmed by students when speaking about them in terms of “interesting” and “fun” (Interview, Nov 29th; my translation).

Another reason could be that the practice of media education is based on a close analysis of media texts through discussion-based activities. This type of analysis, questions and discussion, helped my young students gain confidence of their own capacities as message-interpreters (Hobbs, 2007, p. 4). Despite the fact that not all students in my class had an active participation in discussions, almost all of them demonstrated determination to talk about the questions I proposed. Indeed, in many cases I had to end a discussion seeing that there were many hands asking for the floor and I needed to move on into other activities concerning the unit.

A third explanation could be that the critical questions I posed helped students further their analyses of media and food ads. According to Alvermann, Moon and Hagood (1999, as cited in Hobbs, 2004, p. 46), using critical questions to analyze a variety of texts, for example, popular and corporate culture; can elicit students’ active interpretation responses.
To give an example, questions about format (What else do you see, apart from the food presented in the media text? What’s the reason for having those things in the media text?) stimulated students’ responses about tricks in food ads and even took them further stating that tricks attract people’s attention and manipulate their choices. Questions about purpose and audience (What is the intention of the media text? Who benefits from that message?) elicited responses about corporations’ interests and people behind media texts.

Nonetheless, it bears mentioning that activities could have moved students even further in their analyses of class material. There are two main reasons for this. First, during the implementation I realized that the questions proposed by Jolls (2008) were kind of complex for my children; so I had to paraphrase them in a way that were linguistically and semantically clear so that they could effectively answer to them. A similar situation was experienced by one of the students of a Media Literacy course in a Literacy Master’s Program in the United States. Emily, the student-teacher, designed and implemented a CML unit with her second graders. She concluded that the media literacy key questions (Hobbs 1998 as cited in Deal, Flores-Koulish & Sears, 2010) were too elaborated for her children and admitted the need to understand questions very well so she could re-word them for students (Deal, Flores-Koulish & Sears, 2010, p. 125). This difficulty is highly connected to the little experience I had with CML. This lack of expertise caused that activities take much more time than I expected and thus, I could not implement the action stage of the unit. From my experience, it is advisable to break questions down into simpler ones so that students build up on their answers little by little. As an illustration, instead of asking: What’s the purpose of the text? A teacher can ask: What is purpose? Make a list of synonyms of “purpose”, what are some examples of purposes? What are some of the purposes of different texts? And so on.
And second, there were many opportunities (‘critical incidents’) that I overlooked. Critical incidents, according to Vasquez (2000), are moments that “create opportunities for conversations that might lead to some form of social action” (p. 9) and/or critical awareness. In my case, I did not counter ask (create more questions to understand the logic of interpretations) students to guide them through the analysis of how food ads reproduce relations of power. For example, when inquiring about why food advertising favors junk food over healthier foods, Miku answered “so they [advertisers] can sell products to lose weight”. If I would have asked her why food advertising is doing so, she would have made other connections with the topic. Another example is including other activities like asking children to pay attention to commonalities in food ads: colors, characters, captions and brands in the ads and then, questioning about the most common brands in ads and establishing connections between brands and food ads.

And in the third place, although the development of students’ English proficiency was not the focus of this study, results suggest that activities facilitated students’ use of English as a means to express their views of the world. Findings indicate that students were able to use English to name, describe, classify, express likes and dislikes about food preferences and restaurants and to describe processes related to food, as established by the English program; and also used a code-switching and a combination of English and Spanish to decode cultural traditions represented in food ads. In fact, students used their L1 to transfer information into the L2 when discussing critical questions about format, purposes or even audiences.

One explanation could be that while designing the unit, I considered different ELT principles that could favor language learning/use in the context of media literacy of a critical nature. One of them was the use of the native language to support L2 learning.
According to Kumaravadivelu (2003), the native language is one of the most useful resources students can use in the language classroom as it “helps learners make the connection between the home language and the target language, thereby ensuring social relevance to classroom aims and activities” (p. 254). So, allowing students to use the L1 to deconstruct messages in media texts and then giving them time to transfer that deconstruction into the L2 actually empowered students to criticize the status quo, express their own readings and gave them the time and skills for self-reflection (Hammer, 2009, p. 167).

Indeed, acknowledging the importance of empowering students to express their own readings for media literacy approach, I decided to implement a Language Scaffolding strategy like the one I described in the findings session. I find this strategy coherent with the CML approach since it draws from students’ reflections to build on the syntax and vocabulary they need to communicate ideas. Put differently, CML in the L2 teaching and learning context favors the language use that allows students give voice to their ideologies into de L2.

However, there were three situations that deserve discussion. To begin, results demonstrated that students’ responses in English were more limited than in the L1. This result confirms what Shohamy (2011) concluded in her paper about bilingual assessment: language learners had the knowledge, except that the code to express ideas in the L2 was scarce (p. 423). Thus, the CML approach within the context of L2 learning and teaching cannot underestimate students’ capacity of critically analyzing messages in media texts by forcing them to use only the L2 in their responses. Instead, students need to be given more opportunities and tools to fully communicate their readings. To continue, when students were asked to answer to questions in English, they ended up repeating the answers we had
already constructed in class. This situation, instead of being negative, is rather positive in
the sense that students implemented the syntax and vocabulary learned from transferring
information from the L1 to the L2. More gains in terms of vocabulary may come after a
constant contact with critical questions and the judicious and progressive use of the L2.

To finish, the frustration I experienced in having my students holding discussions in
Spanish indicated that I was not sure about ways to support L2 teaching and learning on the
L1, in the context of the CML approach. Language learning, within a critical perspective,
means using the L2 to unveil “the inequitable structures of their societies and the
ideological dimensions of texts, institutions, social practices and cultural forms”
(Pennycook, 1990, p. 309). I see now, at the end of this research, that having more
experience on language teaching from a critical perspective of teaching, where you
purposefully address issues of power, helps a teacher make explicit the role of the native
language in the process of learning a foreign language.

In the context where this study was conducted, students used the language to
express likes and dislikes about food, name and describe food, classify the food according
to properties and describe food processes. To help students with these tasks, we practiced
simple language structures such as simple present and imperative. Moreover, as we
engaged in the analysis of media texts about food, students purposefully used more
complex structures to express ideas, opinions and interpretations of the texts; students used
a combination of English and Spanish, and then, we constructed these ideas in English.
However, a more judicious scaffolding process is necessary to help students have more
language resources to express ideas.

On the whole, there were a series of factors that favored students’ critical analyses
of media texts and the use of the L2 to make sense of the world such as the use of the
resources students commonly consume, the activities I implemented and the questions I asked and, a critical perspective of language teaching. However, there were material and activities that could also be implemented to further students’ analyses even more. By and large, I hope that this study will benefit those working in the field of second language teaching so that they might view CML as a plausible approach and one that we should care about.
Conclusions

Considering the results of the present study, it can be concluded that using the texts students are familiar with and analyzing them through discussion-based activities fostered young English learners’ identification of messages and conventions, non-transparent nature, purposes and feelings towards media texts. By the same token, they became more skeptical of messages about food in the ads they commonly consumed and expressed deception towards them.

Given that children are becoming the target of advertisers, the analysis of advertising with them is of paramount importance. In fact, “the increasing influence of brands in pop culture brings to the discussion the need to incorporate the critical analysis of the messages conveyed through brands in the concept of literacy” (Bengtsson & Firat, 2006, as cited in Costa, 2015, p. 124). This concept refers to a type of education that, more than preparing students to read and write, is about using these skills for life: reading the word and the world, in Paulo Freire’s words. Precisely, one way to bring students’ worlds into the class is including the resources they use on a day-to-day basis into formal paper work. But, it does not stop there. It is also fundamental to acknowledge the power that these resources exert on people and therefore, implement a series of activities to guide students to expose how media

Provide materials out of which we forge our very identities; our sense of selfhood; our notion of what it means to be male or female; our sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, of sexuality; and of "us" and "them." Media images help shape our view of the world and our deepest values: what we consider good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil” (Kellner, 1995, p. 1) even the choices we make. An education that embraces the critical analysis and production of texts in multiple forms could be a way to become more aware of its influence, make more informed decisions and
empower students to have a more active participation in society which, to me, embodies the purpose of education.

In the hope that this study contributes to the debate on language learning and teaching in the context of CML, it calls on a need in the field to broaden ELT research done about local experiences and construct knowledge from them. Regarding language teaching and learning within a critical perspective, language education should help students understand how language is used for “the production and reproduction of social differences” (Pennycook, 1990, p. 305) and, as such, EFL education must entail practices in which students use the L2 as a means for them to consume, question, express and re-write information in different cultural forms.

It is important to highlight that even if students used the language forms they needed to express their ideas and there were constant corrections in class; a more judicious language scaffolding process could have been done. Consequently, besides focusing on students’ interpretation of media texts, teachers should also pay attention to accuracy. Thus, it becomes necessary to implement language activities in which students practice the structures and the vocabulary that may help them expand their initial ideas.

In like manner, the study contributes in raising awareness about the use of materials in the language classroom. Notwithstanding that efforts to implement CML in the L2 classroom have been prospering, Colombian English teachers, for most part, keep on using media texts (songs, video games, films, etc.) to develop language skills and enhance students’ motivation to learn the language. Thus, it is fundamental that more studies adhere to the growing body of knowledge about the use of multimodal texts, not only as input and output for language development, but also as means to understand how these texts that help us learn about the world and our place in it.
It is also important to highlight that the study portrays children as “social actors that participate in social transformation and, in that process, also transform themselves” (Costa, 2015, p. 125). Accordingly, when students were given opportunities to discuss, analyze and express their feelings towards media texts, children demonstrated being able to read between the lines of mainstream messages (Gainer et al., 2009, p. 681). In sum, neither the age of students nor their language proficiency is conditions for not guiding them through the critical analysis of media texts. There is not a specific age, academic profile or language proficiency to express experiences/readings of the world. On the contrary, CML can offer students great opportunities to learn a foreign language and use it for contextualized and relevant purposes.

Limitations in the Study and Further Research

Limitations in the present study lie mainly on the time allocated for the study, the size of the sample, the methods of data collection and the data analysis. Firstly, given that I had to devote a significant amount of time explaining questions and scaffolding students’ language, I could not implement the last part of the Empowerment Spiral which was the action stage. This stage focused on the production of texts and it was intended to give students the opportunity to materialize the ideas discussed in class, promote self-expression and embody empowerment to voice their own ideas. Had I implemented it, I would have gathered data to understand how the production stage, after a process of analysis and reflection, can enhance the production of ‘counter-hegemonic’ texts. Kanpol (1992) explains that Counterhegemony “is a process of meaning making and/or alternative knowledge, the activity, creativity and hope of a possible way out of the determined reproductive aspects of knowledge” (as cited in Flores-Koulish, 2006, p. 247).
Secondly, considering that the site of the study was an English program and I depended on the students registered in the course, it is advisable to consider the application of the CML approach in other contexts, with different actors and analyzing other texts to bring about a richer discussion from different points of view.

Thirdly, although I tried to gather information from both students and teacher and using different procedures, I did not collect students’ reflections about the process. Asking students to write reflections based on discussions and activities carried out in class would have given me another perspective of the process students were going through: the food they consume, the restaurants they visit and the media texts they see. Diaries, for example, would allow me to know if content was transcending the class and had some echo in their own worlds.

And fourthly, although I collected the data that would have given me information about students’ gains in terms of language, I did not analyze this information as it was not the focus of this study. Further research could focus on the rigorous analysis of students’ language acquisition process in the context of CML.

**Implications for teaching**

Teachers implementing the CML approach with young English learners may take into account children’s capacities and honor them. By honoring them I mean challenging students with activities and questions that would push them to give a second thought to ideologies that have become ‘normalized’ in everyday activities and texts, for instance, problematizing topics like family or body parts by asking children to look for media texts that portray those topics, find commonalities and question them (Why are generally nuclear families represented in flyers and magazines? Are there other types of families? Why aren’t they represented? And so forth). Another example could be including more experiential
activities such as producing texts right after analyzing a media text or asking children to visit supermarkets or restaurants and look for foods similar to the ones mentioned in class, observe nutritional facts, cross information with the quantity of advertising promoting those products and analyze if there is any relation. This could be a way for students to extrapolate the information from discussions into their own lives.

Although the study reported how the unit actually fostered, to some extent, young students’ critical analysis of media texts, becoming critical consumers and producers of texts is not an overnight process. Therefore, language programs, such as the one in which the unit was carried out, should redesign their curricula, throughout the 12 levels, in a way that opens up spaces for analysis, discussion and production of media texts “to help students become subjects in the process of deconstructing injustices, expressing their own voices, and struggling to create a better society” (Kellner & Share, 2007b, p. 20).

As well as redesigning curriculum, it is also fundamental to offer English teachers spaces to read, discuss and try out different ways to approach language teaching and, particularly, the role of materials in the process of FLT, for instance, study groups and pedagogical workshop where teachers can share reading and experiences with CML. It also implies that teachers should be given the time, support and accompaniment to assimilate critical perspectives into language teaching.

**Implications for research**

In the case of applying a similar study, it is advisable to take into account different aspects. Firstly, in order to get more information about students’ process of critically analyzing media texts, researchers may consider gathering data during a longer period of time. Collecting more data about students’ analyses may give the researcher a better idea of the effect of discussions in students and if their analyses are consistent throughout the
implementation. Secondly, researchers may also consider gathering data from students’ journals and parents’ conferences. Having this information could give the researcher a clearer idea of the processes students were going through as to manifest such analyses. Thirdly, a different process of data analysis that focuses on what students say, discourse analysis, for instance, could give the researcher a deeper understanding of what students meant with their interpretations and/or assumptions.

**Learning from the Experience**

Although it was difficult for me to implement the CML approach in a foreign language classroom, I become every time more interested in learning more about this approach. The whole experience from reading, designing, looking for materials to implementing the unit, was very enriching. I learned so much from this particular group of students and their capacities to create hypothesis from their experiences. I could confirm that children do question what they see. I really feel like creating and implementing more CML units in every one of the courses I teach. Still, there is a long way to go.

As a language teacher, I want to learn more about how to conjugate language learning strategies with CML activities so that students can effectively use the target language to express their feelings either when analyzing the media texts or create their own. Here is where I see the absolute relevance of English as children use English to let the world know their ideas and vice versa. I imagine myself doing more projects that involve the production of media texts in the future. By now, I need to keep on learning.

I highly value the awareness I gained about class materials to teach English. I have learned that CML is not about the materials, but about the way I use them. Reading about CML expanded my understanding of texts and the power they have on people. While designing the unit, I reflected on the way I used materials (pictures, videos, songs, posters,
etc.) and considered how, without being aware, I reproduced hegemonic ideologies that could have hindered some students.

As a researcher, I learned that transparency is a number one value when carrying out projects. This transparency implied, among other things, letting students voice their ideas without judging or permeating them with my own ideas. I recognize that I was used to openly express my thoughts with students and I noted that they ended up parroting what they heard from me. Certainly, that is not the critical work I believe in. This time I tried as much as possible not to answer the questions I asked. But, as I needed to paraphrase or exemplify the questions, in some cases, I offered answers and this may have influenced students’ responses. Transparency in critical research is focusing on students and on what they say more than on the data I should collect. I missed many critical incidents that could have given me more insights about students’ interpretations and also given them the possibility to make further connections with the issue of food advertising targeting children.

As an educator, I learned that I should not push people to think similarly about the same topic. Every person learns at a different pace so my children did. It was amazing for me to understand that I can, and should, expect that students interpret media messages differently and that it, in most cases, corresponds to life experiences and interests. This new idea also led me to think about education and how, in many cases, teachers expect to homogenize what students learn. Is it possible to think of an educational system where the process of every person is respected and valued?

I am glad I could participate in this study with my beloved students. It was a great life experience.
“Rather than sorting students based on so-called academic abilities, schools interested in the promotion of radical democracy should take active measures to ensure diversity of thought and experience in all classrooms” (Gainer, 2010, p. 372).
REFERENCES


CML, Center for Media Literacy (empowerment through education) (http://www.medialit.org/)


Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center [http://www.niu.edu/facdev/resources/guide/index.shtml#principles](http://www.niu.edu/facdev/resources/guide/index.shtml#principles) [accessed 07/10/16].


Querido(a) estudiante,

¡Bienvenido(a) al 4to nivel de inglés!

En este curso hablaremos de temas relacionados con la comida, así que hablaremos de tus gustos y preferencias, investigaremos sobre restaurantes y el origen de su comida y analizaremos los mensajes que encontramos en nuestra vida diaria relacionados con este tema. Te invito a que te sientas libre de expresar tus ideas: no voy a decirte que una idea es buena o mala, solo me interesa conocer tu opinión.

Para comenzar a conocer más sobre lo que te gusta, te pido que por favor completes la información que solicito debajo de la imagen. Recuerda que no es un examen, solo quiero saber tu opinión. Te pido que seas muy honesto(a) con tus respuestas.

¡Gracias!

Tu profe Natalia.

De la siguiente lista, escoge las 3 actividades que más prefieres hacer en tu tiempo libre.

- Ver televisión
- Escuchar música
- Ver videos musicales en YouTube
- Ver revistas
- Buscar información en Internet
- Jugar en Internet
- Revisar Facebook
- Ver películas

¿Qué tipo de comida prefieres? (Escoge tus 3 opciones favoritas)

- Comida casera (sopas, arroz, ensalada, carne asada)
- Comida rápida (perro, hamburguesa, gaseosas, papitas fritas, etc.)
- Comida saludable (ensaladas, verduras, frutas)
- Comida tradicional (frijoles, sancocho, sudao, etc.)
- Pastas
- Pollo
- Otra: _____________________________

¿Por qué prefieres ese tipo de comidas?
¿Quién decide en casa a donde ir a comer o qué comida comprar?

Escribe los 5 lugares a donde más te gusta ir a comer

○
○
○
○
○

Observa la imagen y responde las preguntas:

¿Qué comida se muestra en la imagen? ¿Te gusta este tipo de comida? ¿Por qué?

Crea una historia donde describas como se creó la imagen. Ten en cuenta: quién tomó la foto, con qué propósito, para qué y qué pasa en la imagen.
¿A quién crees que le gusta más esta imagen, a niños, adolescentes, adultos o personas mayores? ¿Por qué?

¿Cuándo sales de paseo por la ciudad, dónde puedes encontrar imágenes similares a esta?

¿Cuál crees que es el mensaje de esta imagen?

¿Qué crees que los creadores de esta imagen quieren que tú pienses y hagas? ¿Por qué?

Imagina que eres publicista y debes crear una valla para vender tu comida favorita. Dibuja esa valla y explica dónde la pondrías.
Querido(a) estudiante,

Ahora que estamos al final de este proceso, te invito a que observes y reflexiones sobre las respuestas que habías dado al cuestionario que te presenté el primer día de clase y que respondas a las preguntas que te presento a continuación incluyendo tu respuesta y como en que ha cambiado tu respuesta. Recuerda que no es un examen, solo quiero saber tu opinión. Te pido que seas muy honesto(a) con tus respuestas y que trates de escribir en inglés lo más que puedas ;)

¡Gracias! Tu profe Natalia.

Imagen tomada de: https://goo.gl/NeP2bV

What is the food presented in the media text? Do you like that food? Why?

What do you see in the media text? What is the reason of including those things?

Who made this media text? What for?
Who prefers this media text? Why?

What type of media text is this one? Where can you find it?

What is the purpose of the media text?

How does the media text make you feel? Why?

Imagine that you are an advertiser and you want to advertise your favorite food. Draw an advertisement and explain where you will place it.
# APPENDIX B: WORSHEETS

**Worksheet: 10 Biggest Fast-Food Chains In The World**  
**Level: 4**

**Task 1:** Number the Fast-Food Chains mentioned in the video and write the type of food they sell.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fast-Food Chain</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Type of Food They Sell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subway</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pizza Hut</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starbucks Coffee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KFC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy's</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunkin' Donuts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Task 2: Answer the questions:

- ✓ Are those Fast-Food Chains located in Colombia?

- ✓ Are Fast-Food Chains in the video part of your list of favorite restaurants?

- ✓ Where are those Fast-Food Chains located?

Possible answers:
- ✓ Yes, they are located in Colombia
- ✓ No, they are not located in Colombia
- ✓ Yes, they make part of my list of favorite restaurants
- ✓ No, they do not make part of list of favorite restaurants
- ✓ Those Fast-Food Chains are located in...
Worksheet: Top 10 Most Popular Food Items in the World!  Level: 4

Task: Number the food items mentioned in the video.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Item</th>
<th>Name of the Food Item</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Chocolate" /></td>
<td>Chocolate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Chicken" /></td>
<td>Chicken</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Pizza" /></td>
<td>Pizza</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Ice Cream" /></td>
<td>Ice Cream</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Rice" /></td>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Curry" /></td>
<td>Curry</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image7.png" alt="Burger" /></td>
<td>Burger</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Task: look at the ad and answer the questions:

What type of media is this one?

What’s the food presented in this media text?

Describe the flavor, shape and color of the food presented in the media text

What else do you see, apart from the food presented in the media text?

What's the reason for having those things in the ad?

Who made this?
**Worksheet: Analyzing Food Ads**  
**Level: 4**

**Task:** look at the ad and answer the questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the intention of this media text?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who paid for this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s the food presented in this media text?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the flavor, shape and color of the food presented in the media text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classify the food in the food train</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kinds of people prefer this media text?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who benefits from this message?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pretend you are a producer and McDonald’s hires you to create an ad to sell and persuade people to buy their product. Consider:**

- Target of audience
- Type of food
- Your intention with the media texts
- Who benefits from this
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Universidad XXXXXXX
Master en Enseñanza y Aprendizaje de Lenguas Extranjeras

Protocolo de Entrevista

Título del estudio: La literacidad crítica de textos mediáticos y la producción de textos alternativos.

Pregunta de investigación: Como la implementación de una unidad sobre literacidad crítica de textos mediáticos puede promover en niños que aprenden inglés el análisis crítico de textos mediáticos y la producción de textos alternativos.

El propósito de esta entrevista es explorar la experiencia de los participantes del estudio y la implementación de literacidad crítica de textos mediáticos, sus opiniones, experiencia y actitudes después de la participación en el estudio. La entrevista durará 30 minutos a una hora aproximadamente.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preguntas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sobre CML</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ¿Cuáles actividades te gustaron más? ¿Por qué?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ¿Cuáles actividades te gustaron menos? ¿Por qué?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• En momentos percibí que estaban cansados… a qué se debía? Qué te cansaba?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experiencia en la implementación</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ¿Qué esperabas al principio de esta experiencia y qué pasó al final?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ¿Qué te pareció la experiencia de trabajar con media texts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ¿Qué tanto te ayudó lo que hicimos en clase para que pudieras usar inglés? O responder las preguntas en inglés?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ¿Qué dificultades tuviste con esta manera de aprender inglés?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ¿Qué aprendiste de esta experiencia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sugerencias y comentarios</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ¿Qué cambiarías de la experiencia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ¿Qué sugerencias le harías a la profesora?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

Medellín, Agosto 2 de 2015

Apreciados padres

Cordial saludo,

Mi nombre es Natalia Arias Patiño y soy la profesora del nivel ___ donde está matriculado su hijo(a). En este momento soy estudiante de la Maestría en Enseñanza y Aprendizaje de Lenguas Extranjeras en EALE. Para mi tesis voy a desarrollar una investigación en donde quiero explorar con los estudiantes como un enfoque que se centra en el análisis de los textos que nos presentan los medios de comunicación se pueden usar no solo para aprender inglés, sino también para desarrollar una mayor conciencia de los mensajes que allí se presentan. Su hijo(a) ha sido invitado(a) a participar en el estudio que estaré llevando a cabo desde agosto hasta noviembre del presente año, bajo la supervisión de la asesora Paula Andrea Echeverri Sucerquia, docente de la Universidad de Antioquia.

Como parte de mi investigación, debo aplicar un cuestionario, grabar algunas clases (video y audio), hacer una entrevista a mediados del curso y analizar algunos de los trabajos de los estudiantes con el fin de examinar las reacciones de los estudiantes frente a la metodología de enseñanza que voy a implementar. Si usted está de acuerdo con que su hijo(a) participe de esta investigación, puede firmar al final de este formato. Con su firma, usted da su autorización para que su hijo(a) responda un cuestionario, sea grabado(a) (en video y/o audio) para efectos de descripción de las actividades realizadas en clase, algunas de sus producciones escritas sean recogidas y participe en una entrevista, con algunos estudiantes, para registrar sus opiniones con respecto a la implementación.

La información proveniente del cuestionario, grabaciones, producciones de los estudiantes y entrevista será borrada cuando el estudio haya llegado a su final. Sólo la asesora del estudio y yo tendremos acceso a la información que se produzca a lo largo del estudio, además no tengo autorización de publicar ninguno de los datos recogidos durante el estudio. Por lo aquí descrito, la participación de su hijo(a) no implicará ningún riesgo personal y de igual manera, los resultados de este estudio no tienen relación con el desempeño/notas de su hijo(a).

Los resultados de este estudio serán presentados en un trabajo final de investigación que será guardado en la Biblioteca Central de la Universidad de Antioquia y en la Biblioteca de la Escuela de Idiomas. Igualmente, podrán ser presentados en conferencias locales y/o nacionales, y/o publicados en un artículo para una revista de investigación. El nombre de su hijo(a) no aparecerán en ninguna publicación o presentación oral, se utilizará un seudónimo para proteger su identidad.

92
La participación de su hijo(a) en este proyecto es completamente voluntaria y usted y su hijo(a) tienen la libertad de retirarse del mismo cuando lo considere. De ocurrir esto, no tendrá ninguna repercusión para su hijo(a).

Permiso para que un niño(a) participe en el estudio:
Como padre/madre o acudiente, he leído la información arriba consignada y entiendo la naturaleza de este estudio. Autorizo a ________________________________ (nombre del niño(a)) a participar en el estudio y acepto las condiciones.

Firma de padre/madre o acudiente ________________________________ Fecha __________

Información de contacto
Si tiene preguntas acerca de este trabajo, por favor contacte a Natalia Arias por teléfono al celular 3002832589, o por correo electrónico a: natalia.ariasp@udea.edu.co o a la profesora Paula Andrea Echeverri por teléfono al 2195799 o por correo electrónico a: paula.echeverri@udea.edu.co
APPENDIX E: NODES IN NVIVO 10
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Nodas</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX F: UNIT PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH QUESTION</th>
<th>How can the implementation of a CML unit foster young English learners’ critical analysis of media texts related to food?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **GENERAL UNIT GOALS** | **LANGUAGE GOALS:**  
- Use a variety of vocabulary related to food (color, shape, flavor, cooking tools and ingredients).  
- Use the linguistic structures needed to communicate simple information and feelings about close experiences and opinions.  
- Describe a media text using a range of vocabulary.  
- Express food preferences using simple sentences such as simple present.  
- Describe food using simple sentences such as simple present.  
- Give instructions about how to prepare a recipe using simple sentences such as imperative.  
- Analyze and reflect about media texts using simple present.² |
| | **CONTENT GOALS:**  
- Identify and name different kinds of food (ingredients and dishes).  
- Classify food taking into account nutritional characteristics.  
- Research and discuss about places to eat with family.  
- Describe the steps to prepare a recipe.³  
- Name types of media texts.  
- Judge the presence of media related to food in the city.  
- Generate hypotheses about how media related to food may affect us.  
- Analyze the purposes and techniques that underlie the advertising of food in our society.  
- Hypothesize about corporate interests that underlie food advertising.  
- **ATTITUDINAL GOALS:**  
- Research information on their own.  
- Cooperate in group and whole group activities.  
- Participate in class discussions and contribute with opinions.  
- Demonstrate an attitude of respect towards others’ opinions.  
- **RESEARCH GOALS:**  
- Gather data about students’ reflections from questionnaire, discussions, generated artifacts and interview.  
- Reflect on the process of implementing a CML approach considering students’ and teacher struggles and/or successes.  
- Analyze students’ opinions about the implementation of a CML unit in a language classroom.  
- Lead students to observe and establish personal connections with food advertising.  
- Give opportunities to react in response to food advertising. |

² Language goals were created for the purposes of the unit.  
³ Content goals were adapted from original source.
**READING ALOUD SESSION**
What’s media? Do media have an impact in my life? How? → **Awareness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESSON GOALS</th>
<th>LANGUAGE GOALS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use the linguistic structures needed to communicate simple information about close experiences and opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CONTENT/ATTITUDINAL GOALS:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name types of media texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>ATTITUDINAL GOALS:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooperate in group and whole group activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in class discussions and contribute with opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate an attitude of respect towards others’ opinions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH GOALS</th>
<th>Gather baseline data about students’ preferences and readings of media texts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>August 23rd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESSON MATERIALS</th>
<th>Slides 1 to 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY 1</th>
<th>Teacher inquires students about the meaning of “media” while displaying several images exemplifying media.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher and students attempt a definition of media based on the examples. Teacher may ask questions like: What is media? Who uses media? Who produces media? For what purpose?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ACTIVITY 2                 | Book → "A BAD CASE OF STRIPES" by David Shannon with teacher Zorida’s help. |
|---------------------------|Students are to imagine that they are journalists and should report the piece of news informing the “bad case of stripes”. They should consider the person, the product, the media they will use and the information they will communicate. |

| ACTIVITY 3                 | **Homework**: students are to create a list with examples of media texts they find in specific places (see appendix B: examples and frequency of media texts). |
### LESSON 1

**What’s media? Do media have an impact in my life? How? → Awareness**

#### LESSON GOALS

**LANGUAGE GOALS:**
- Use the linguistic structures needed to communicate simple information about close experiences and opinions.
- Use a variety of vocabulary related to food (color, shape and flavor).
- Describe food using simple sentences such as simple present.

**CONTENT GOALS:**
- Identify and name different kinds of food (ingredients and dishes).
- Name types of media texts.
- Judge the presence of media in the city.

**ATTITUDINAL GOALS:**
- Cooperate in group and whole group activities.
- Participate in class discussions and contribute with opinions.
- Demonstrate an attitude of respect towards others’ opinions.

#### RESEARCH GOALS
- Reflect on the process of implementing a CML approach considering students’ and teacher struggles and/or successes.
- Analyze students’ opinions on how and why food advertising is an issue.

#### DATE
August 30th

#### LESSON MATERIALS
Slides 1 to 9

#### ACTIVITY 1
- Teacher writes the lists of examples students dictate under each of the labels: home, street and school.
- We analyze commonalities among the lists.
- Considering the activities students do during the day, we discuss how much of those activities involve the use of media.

#### ACTIVITY 2
- Teacher asks students to discuss some questions about the influence of media in their lives (other questions are expected to come up).

#### ACTIVITY 3
- Teacher asks students to attempt a definition of advertising. She shows examples of ads and media where ads are displayed. She presents a definition and asks students to list the most commonly advertised products. Teacher explains that as the content of the level is food, we will analyze advertising related to food.

#### ACTIVITY 4
- Task → students choose one of the food wrappers they brought and describe it in their notebooks considering: unhealthy or healthy, name the food, describe the color, flavor and shape.

#### ACTIVITY 5
- **Homework:** based on the examples they mention about media texts in different places, students are to find and bring 3 different media texts related to food (taken from magazines, newspapers, fliers, etc.) for the following class (printed or digital).
### LESSON 1 & 2

**What's media? Do media have an impact in my life? How?** **→ Awareness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESSON GOALS</th>
<th>LANGUAGE GOALS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use the linguistic structures needed to communicate simple information about close experiences and opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use a variety of vocabulary related to food (color, shape, flavor and ingredients).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe food using simple sentences such as simple present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTENT GOALS:</td>
<td>Identify and name different kinds of food (ingredients and dishes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name types of media texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generate hypotheses about how media related to food may affect us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTITUDINAL GOALS:</td>
<td>Cooperate in group and whole group activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in class discussions and contribute with opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate an attitude of respect towards others’ opinions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| RESEARCH GOALS | Reflect on the process of implementing a CML approach considering students’ and teacher struggles and/or successes. |
|                | Collect information about students’ reactions to the influence of media. |
|                | Analyze students’ discussions on how and why food advertising is an issue. |

| DATE | September 6th |

| LESSON MATERIALS | Slides 1 to 10 |

| ACTIVITY 1 | Revise  → students choose one of the food wrappers they brought: label if the food is unhealthy or healthy, name the food, describe the color, flavor and shape. Students present their descriptions. |

| ACTIVITY 2 | Teacher asks: what relation do you see between food and ads you find in the city? |
|            | Teacher asks students to attempt a definition of advertising. She shows examples of media texts and she asks of the texts are advertising or not. Then, she presents ads and media where ads are displayed. She asks students to list the most commonly advertised products and explains that as the content of the level is food, the kind of advertising we will analyze is related to food. |

| ACTIVITY 3 | Teacher uses the media texts related to food that students brought (2 per student) and places them on board. She asks students to observe them and conclude what are the most common food items in advertising. Teacher writes answers on board. Teacher may use a game to motivate students to participate. |

| ACTIVITY 4 | **Homework:** students should do some research about the most advertised food in our city. They should take pictures of media texts related to food in their neighborhoods, means of transportation, street, etc. and display them in a Power Point presentation. Besides, they should describe the food in the media text (name, color, flavor and shape). |
**LESSON 2**

*What's media? Do media have an impact in my life? How? ➔ Awareness*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESSON GOALS</th>
<th>LANGUAGE GOALS:</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use a variety of vocabulary related to food (color, shape and flavor).</td>
</tr>
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<td>Use the linguistic structures needed to communicate simple information about close experiences and opinions.</td>
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<td>Describe a media text using a range of vocabulary.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Describe food using simple sentences such as simple present.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT GOALS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and name different kinds of food (ingredients and dishes).</td>
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<td>Name types of media texts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participate in class discussions and contribute with opinions</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH GOALS</th>
<th>Lead students to observe and establish personal connections with food advertising.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>September 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESSON MATERIALS</th>
<th>Slides 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY 1</th>
<th>➢ Task ➔ students present information they found about the most advertised food.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Teacher constructs the rubric to assess this activity with students. For that purpose, teacher asks students: If you were teachers, what would you take into account to grade the presentation? Example: pronunciation, complete information, materials, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ After everyone has finished the presentation, teacher and students draw some conclusions about: types of texts, types of food (healthy or unhealthy) and restaurants in the texts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY 2</th>
<th>➢ Teacher plays a video about the Top 10 Most Popular Food Items in the World! And students compare these top 10 foods in the video with the presentations they just did: what items are common, what are different (see <em>appendix B: 10 Most Popular Food Items in the World Activity</em>).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Teacher asks students the reason why media privilege a specific type of food (the one they listed). Teacher may ask other questions depending on students’ answers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LESSON 2
What’s media? Do media have an impact in my life? How? → Awareness

LESSON GOALS
LANGUAGE GOALS:
Use a variety of vocabulary related to food (color, shape and flavor).
Use the linguistic structures needed to communicate simple information about close experiences and opinions.
Describe a media text using a range of vocabulary.
Describe food using simple sentences such as simple present.

CONTENT GOALS:
Identify and name different kinds of food (ingredients and dishes).
Classify food taking into account nutritional characteristics.
Name types of media texts.
Generate hypotheses about how media related to food may affect us.
Hypothesize about corporate interests that underlie food advertising.

ATTITUINAL GOALS:
Research information on their own
Cooperate in group and whole group activities
Participate in class discussions and contribute with opinions
Demonstrate an attitude of respect towards others’ opinions

RESEARCH GOALS
Lead students to observe and establish personal connections with food advertising.

DATE
September 20th

LESSON MATERIALS
Slides 1 to 46
Media texts related to food

ACTIVITY 1
Students play a game (board game honey) to practice the vocabulary about food.

ACTIVITY 2
- Teacher explains that each food belongs to a classification called the “food pyramid”. Teacher uses a Power Point presentation to show students the food that belongs to each layer. While teacher explains, students classify different foods in a worksheet: Food Pyramid Lesson 2.
- When finished, students and teacher compare the 10 most popular food items with the food pyramid; discuss on the reason why advertising is privileging healthy or unhealthy foods and why not other type of food. Teacher and students may come up with more questions depending on the discussion.
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<th>LESSON GOALS</th>
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<td>Describe food using simple sentences such as simple present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analyze media texts using simple present.</td>
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<td>CONTENT GOALS:</td>
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<td>Classify food taking into account nutritional characteristics.</td>
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<td>Name types of media texts.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analyze the purposes and techniques that underlie the advertising of food in our society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hypothesize about corporate interests that underlie food advertising.</td>
</tr>
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<td>ATTITUDINAL GOALS:</td>
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<td>Demonstrate an attitude of respect towards others’ opinions</td>
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| RESEARCH GOALS | Lead students to observe and establish personal connections with food advertising. |
|                | Gather data about students’ analysis of some media texts, their connections and conclusions. |

| DATE | September 27th |
| LESSON MATERIALS | Slides 1 to 46 |
| Media texts related to food |

| ACTIVITY 1 | Teacher invites students to read food ads and try to find what’s there... |
| Model: teacher shows 1 food ad and asks the proposed questions (emerging questions are expected according to students’ interpretations). Teacher models analysis and language (think-aloud), asks questions to students and writes students’ answers on board in English. Teacher and students construct answers, grammar explanation may take place if needed: |
| ✓ What type of media is this one? |
| ✓ What’s the food presented in this ad? |
| ✓ Describe the flavor, shape and color of the food presented in the ad |
| ✓ What else do you see, apart from the food presented in the ad? (Format) |
| ✓ What’s the reason for having those things in the ad? (Format) |
| ✓ Who made this? (Authorship) |
| Guided: teacher shows a different food ad and teacher asks the same questions (this time teacher does not think aloud but guides discussion) to analyze the ad. Students are expected to answer in English, based on the answers they already have on the board. Teacher writes answers/additional information on board. |
| ACTIVITY 2 | Homework: Independent practice: task | students analyze another media text related to food on their own answering the same questions. Teacher passes around answering questions and/or formulating questions to help students further their analysis (see appendix B: analyzing food ads lesson 2 act 10). |
**LESSON 2**

*Is media an issue? Finding out what's there… → Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESSON GOALS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use a variety of vocabulary related to food (color, shape, flavor and ingredients).</td>
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<td>Use the linguistic structures needed to communicate simple information about close experiences and opinions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe a media text using a range of vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Express food preferences using simple sentences such as simple present.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe food using simple sentences such as simple present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analyze media texts using simple present.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONTENT GOALS:**

- Identify and name different kinds of food (ingredients and dishes).
- Name types of media texts.
- Discuss about places to eat with family.
- Analyze the purposes and techniques that underlie the advertising of food in our society.
- Hypothesize about corporate interests that underlie food advertising.

**ATTITUDINAL GOALS:**

- Research information on their own
- Cooperate in group and whole group activities
- Participate in class discussions and contribute with opinions
- Demonstrate an attitude of respect towards others’ opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH GOALS</th>
<th>Gather data about students’ analysis of some media texts, their connections and conclusions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>October 4th</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESSON MATERIALS</th>
<th>Slides 1 to 46</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Media texts related to food</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY 1</th>
<th><strong>Independent practice: task →</strong> students socialize the independent practice (see appendix B: analyzing food ads lesson 2 act 10).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY 2</th>
<th>Teacher shows a video to illustrate how to talk about likes called ESL rap song &quot;Do you like it?&quot; and asks questions using the structure: do you like…? Teacher also models how to give short and long answers to the same question.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY 3</th>
<th>Teacher hands a <strong>worksheet</strong> (find a classmate who lesson 2) that students will use the language to fill out information about themselves.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students share their answers and teacher makes lists on board of students’ favorite foods and restaurants. She asks questions like: Why do you prefer those restaurants? How did you get to know about them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher asks students to connect information on the board with the list of most popular food items. She also inquiries about the type of food in those places, neighborhoods where restaurants are located, quality of food, prices, etc. and draws some conclusions from this discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY 4</th>
<th><strong>Homework:</strong> Teacher sends the video about the 10 Biggest Fast-Food Chains In The World and students compare their list of their favorite restaurants with the video (see appendix B: 10 Biggest Fast-Food Chains In The World Activity).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
# LESSON 2

**Is media an issue? Finding out what’s there… → Analysis**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use the linguistic structures needed to communicate simple information and feelings about close experiences and opinions.</td>
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<td>Describe a media text using a range of vocabulary.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Analyze media texts using simple present.</td>
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**CONTENT GOALS:**
- Identify and name different kinds of food (ingredients and dishes).
- Classify food taking into account nutritional characteristics.
- Research and discuss about places to eat with family.
- Name types of media texts.
- Analyze the purposes and techniques that underlie the advertising of food in our society.
- Hypothesize about corporate interests that underlie food advertising.

**ATTITUDINAL GOALS:**
- Cooperate in group and whole group activities
- Participate in class discussions and contribute with opinions
- Demonstrate an attitude of respect towards others’ opinions

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<th>RESEARCH GOALS</th>
<th>Gather data about students’ analysis of some media texts, their connections and conclusions.</th>
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<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>October 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESSON MATERIALS</td>
<td>Slides</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY 1</th>
<th>Revise worksheet (see appendix B: 10 Biggest Fast-Food Chains In The World Activity). Unexpected questions may come up with the flow of the discussion.</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY 2</th>
<th>As a whole group activity, teacher and students analyze ads considering different questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Model:</strong> teacher shows a food advertising and asks the questions below (emerging questions are expected). Teacher models analysis and language (think aloud) and writes students’ answers on board in English. Teacher and students construct the sentences together. Grammar explanation is expected according to students’ needs:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ What type of media is this one?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ What type of food does the Fast-Food Chain sell?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ What else do you see, apart from the food, in the media text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ What are people doing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ What is the intention of this media text? (Purpose)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Who paid for this? (Authorship)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Classify the food in the food pyramid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ What kinds of people prefer this media text? (Audience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Who benefits from this message? (Audience)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Independent practice: task** → students analyze a different media text and answer the same questions (see appendix B: Analyzing Food Ads).
| ACTIVITY 3 | **Homework**: students are to look for information about the origin of a particular food chain restaurant, type of food offered at that place, neighborhoods where it is located, origin of food and an example of media that promotes the products in that Food Chain. They should display this information in a Power Point presentation. |
## LESSON 3

How does it relate to me? How does it affect me? How does it make me feel?  → Reflection

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<td></td>
<td>Use a variety of vocabulary related to food (cooking tools and ingredients).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use the linguistic structures needed to communicate simple information and feelings about close experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Give instructions about how to prepare a recipe using simple sentences such as imperative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analyze and reflect using simple present.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONTENT GOALS:</td>
<td>Research and discuss about places to eat with family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe the steps to prepare a recipe.</td>
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<td>Name types of media texts.</td>
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<td>Analyze the purposes and techniques that underlie the advertising of food in our society.</td>
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<td>ATTITUDINAL GOALS:</td>
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| RESEARCH GOALS | Foster the analysis and reflection about media related to food. |
| DATE | October 18th |
| LESSON MATERIALS | Slides 1 to 11 |

### ACTIVITY 1
Students present their research about a restaurant. We take into account the criteria we agreed on for oral presentations.

### ACTIVITY 2
Teacher displays several food ads. Students should describe what they see and choose the one they prefer and explain why. Students try to infer the techniques producers used in those food ads.

### ACTIVITY 3
- Teacher explains that they will watch a video that shows one of the techniques advertisers use in food advertising, in this case, preparing the food for ads.
- **Model** → Students watch the video about food ads tricks and organize the procedure the lady follows to prepare the burger (*handout: Food Ad Tricks*).

### ACTIVITY 4
**Homework:** Students are to practice the vocabulary related to cooking verbs and tools (*worksheet: cooking verbs & tools lesson 3*). Students should choose a recipe, bring the ingredients and cooking tools and prepare the recipe in the following class explaining each of the steps as the lady in the video.
### LESSON 3

**How does it relate to me? How does it affect me? How does it make me feel? → Reflection**

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<tr>
<td><strong>RESEARCH GOALS</strong></td>
<td>Analyze students’ discussions on how and why food advertising is an issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DATE</strong></td>
<td>November 22nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LESSON MATERIALS</strong></td>
<td>Slides 1 to 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTIVITY</strong></td>
<td>Teacher prepares a “food court” in which various images of food ads will be displayed around the classroom. Students are to walkthrough and observe the ads by themselves (teacher will not be in the classroom). Students are free to express their opinions while walking through the food ads gallery.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How can the implementation of a CML unit foster young English learners’ critical analysis of food advertising?

General objective

Identify/recognize young English learners’ expressions that account for the critical analysis of food advertising?

Theoretical realm

Observational realm

1. **Principle of Non-Transparency**: All media messages are “constructed” challenges the power of the media to present messages as non-problematic and transparent. Media do not present reality like transparent windows or simple reflections of the world because media messages are created, shaped, and positioned through a construction process.

2. **Codes and Conventions**: Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules. How signs and symbols function. Dual meanings of signs: denotation and signifier and connotation and signified. With younger students the terms are simplified into separating what they see or hear from what they think or feel.

3. **Audience Decoding**: Different people experience the same media message differently. The ability of audiences to produce their own readings and meanings and to decode texts in aberrant or oppositional ways, as well as the “preferred” ways in tune with the dominant ideology.

4. **Content and Message**: Media have embedded values and points of view. Question ideology, bias, and the connotations explicit and implicit in the representation. Media representation of food habits.

5. **Motivation**: Media are organized to gain profit and/or power. Why the message was sent and where it came from. Too often students believe the role of media is simply to entertain or inform, with little knowledge of the economic structure that supports it.