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Promoting Critical Spoken Reflections about Women Farmers Using Community-Based
Project

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Abstract

This action research aimed determining to what extent Community-Based Projects provided opportunities for students to reflect critically about women farmers using spoken language. It was conducted in a rural institution located in El Carmen de Viboral, Antioquia with 10th graders. The actions implemented integrated the combination of Community-Based Pedagogy and Project-Based Learning. Data instruments used were a journal entry, a focus group, and a checklist. Findings present evidence gathered from five case-participants, such as, Students Critically Reflect on Issues Affecting Women Farmers in their Community by Identifying their Stereotypes, Becoming Active Agents by Proposing and Contributing to Solutions to the Issues Affecting Women Farmers and, Enhancement of Student's spoken Production Through Linguistic Resources as Codeswitching and Sentence Starters.

Keywords: Community-Based Project, Project-Based Learning, women farmers, oral skills, reflection.

Título en español: Promover reflexiones críticas y orales sobre las mujeres campesinas a través de proyectos basados en la comunidad.

Degree requirement

This action research project is submitted as a requirement to obtain a bachelor's degree in foreign language education (English- French) at the Escuela de Idiomas, Universidad de Antioquia, El Carmen de Viboral, Colombia.

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Table of Contents

Preface

I am a student of foreign languages teaching program from University of Antioquia, Colombia. I am a teacher interested in including the community as one of the paths to follow to apply a critical perspective in the English class. My motivation to do this research came from my willingness to research about the community as the textbook to promote critical reflections and explore the applicability of critical approaches for language acquisition in the EFL context. This research study was carried out from late August 2022 to late June 2023. As a pre-service teacher, I conducted the project in a rural and public institution located in El Carmen de Viboral, Antioquia and I decided to observe a group of 28 graders from tenth grade. This research project is mainly addressed to educators, who are interested in exploring the Community-Based Approach in EFL context framed in the field of critical pedagogies to promote critical spoken reflections about issues affecting women farmers in the local area.

Maria Isabel Castro Bedoya

El Carmen de Viboral, Antioquia, June 30th, 2023

Description of the Context

This action research was carried out at a rural institution located in El Carmen de Viboral, Antioquia. Its mission sought to educate responsible and respectful students committed to the preservation of the environment. Moreover, the institution promoted significant learning in the construction of learners' life project and in the transformation of their community context. As for its vision, the institution proposed to be the best mid-level educational option in eastern Antioquia, committed with the formation of respectful, responsible, competent people academically, socially, and professionally. (Proyecto Educativo Institucional-PEI-, 2010, Trans).

Regarding the English class, they used the book English Please for 10th, which is aligned with Guide 22: "Basic Standards of Competences in Foreign Language: English" and took as reference the pedagogical principles and Methodologies of the "Proposal of Suggested Curriculum of English" (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2015).

Participants in this action research were 28 tenth graders whose ages ranged between 14 and 17 years old, most of them from the rural area. The English class was taught twice a week in 120 minutes sessions. The students' English proficiency level ranged between A1 and A2; they were very good at listening comprehension since they understood what the teacher explained and attempted to imitate some of the expressions. Students also were very talkative and participative and were able to transmit their ideas by writing short paragraphs and working in collaborative groups. (Journal entry, August 3, 2022). They were interested in games, movement activities, dynamic activities, songs, and videos for the English class (Students' Questionnaire, October 12, 2022). Regarding the

cooperating teacher (CT), she holds a bachelor's degree in Languages: Spanish and English and a master's degree in Process of Teaching and Learning Languages. She has been teaching for 16 years.

The English classes were framed by the content proposed from the textbook emphasizing on the linguistic content. Students were played passive roles who did not have spaces to problematize on issues of their territory, leading them to reproduce instead of produce. Therefore, Community-Based Projects could give the student the possibility to become agents by addressing issues of their territory and generate oral reflections.

Statement of the Problem

 In this context, English is reduced to the linguistic aspect, which can restrict the opportunities for students to produce meaningful ideas either written or spoken. Students' oral production was limited to reproducing instead of producing; the topics addressed in class did not connect with students' contexts particularly local issues and lack of opportunities in the class to produce orally in a meaningful and critical way about certain issues could affect the way they communicate in English.

Although some of the activities addressed in class were oriented to promote oral production, there were no opportunities for students to reflect on the situation, make connections with their context, and express opinions, which is something Freire (1970) defined as significant learning. Their oral production was limited to reproducing in a mechanical way instead of producing opinions, thoughts, and reflections. To illustrate, in the development of one class task, which was a class project, the students had to do an interview to a famous singer, despite it aimed at fostering oral production, students resorted

to translation and reading from their cellphones instead of presenting their ideas

spontaneously (Journal entry excerpt, September 6, 2022). Another example is that

students were repeating fragmented sentences used in class or reading paragraphs aloud

(Journal entry, August 23, 2022). They were following a determined structure, which

prevented them seeking oral production as something that could be flexible.

Another issue is that the topics addressed in class did not connect with students'

contexts and the possible issues that might affect their community. In that way, students did

not see a significant use of English in their real-life context. According to Kumaravadivelu

(2003), addressing topics related to local issues could provide them with first, a perspective

of English in a purposeful way, second, it connects students' reality with the way they can

use English in a communicative setting, therefore it becomes an opportunity to foster their

oral production and finally, it leads students to perceive English in a useful and

contextualized manner where the language is a means. To exemplify, the topics addressed

in most classes were the ones provided by the textbook (Journal entry excerpts, August 2,

11, 16, 23, 2022). Topics that were quite general for this specific context and did not fit to

the students' environment, such as the seasons, the type of celebrations, the sports

practices, and the traditional food from other countries and cultures different from

Colombia (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2015).

Additionally, class discussions and activities did not allow students to analyze the

topics, in a critical and reflective way but presenting and developing activities that include

certain topics might permit students to analyze them critically, to reflect, to build

community through the topics addressed; to question and problematize what is presented,

which is another way to foster oral production where students can express opinions and reflections about their social reality, which is something Brown (2015) stated as message-oriented oral production. To illustrate, the topic addressed in the class were limited to be analyzed only in a linguistic way by identifying the parts of speech and lexicon of different resources, letting aside the aspects or content that could be analyzed in a critical manner (Journal entries, August 4, 18, 23, September 1, 15, 2022).

To conclude, fostering oral production in terms of spoken reflections implies a social construction with the student's background. In that way, Community-Based Language Teaching within a critical framework can contribute to motivating students to produce critical and meaningful spoken reflections. Understanding meaningful speech as an opportunity for students to address local issues and learn about their community.

Theoretical Background

This section aims to address the theoretical bases of the core concepts that support this action research. First, it introduces the concept of Critical Pedagogies (CP). Second, it defines the concept of Community-Based Teaching (CBT) and its advantages and challenges. Third, the term Critical Reflection (CR) is stated and its contributions in fostering local connections. Finally, it explores the concept of Project-Based Learning (PBL) and the relation between Community-Based Project (CBP) and Critical Spoken Reflections (CSR).

The concept of Critical Pedagogy is addressed from different perspectives. To begin, Freire (1970) proposes a pedagogy that promotes social transformation. It means, students as active participants in their learning process, students as investigators and

transformative agents of their reality. Likewise, Kumaravadivelu (2003) states in his proposal of the 'Post-method Pedagogy' that the parameter of possibility "Seeks to empower classroom participants so that they can critically reflect on the social and historical conditions contributing to create the cultural forms and interested knowledge they encounter in their lives." (p. 544). In similar fashion, Pennycook (1999) establishes that Critical Pedagogies involves several factors such as the need of a "transformative dimension as well as a critical one" (p. 341); implies going beyond than techniques, methods, or approaches; means understanding the political interests that are behind; involves connecting theory and practice, problematizations, question the assumptions, relations of power and the promotion of awareness and transformation.

Regarding the definition and purpose of Community-Based Teaching, theorists frame it as the path that will take learners to assume a critical position. According to Freire (1970), most of the content we provide the students with, is "alienated from their existential experience, are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance. Words are emptied of their concreteness and become a hollow" (p. 71). In like manner, Kumaravadivelu (2003) when proposing the parameter of 'particularity', he states that "Language teaching must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers, teaching a particular group of learners, pursuing a particular set of goals, within a particular institutional context, embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu" (p. 34). Therefore, Community-Based Teaching should be understood as an approach whose purpose is to integrate the community and the local knowledge that surrounds student's contexts. In that way, learners cannot be subtracted from their realities, on the contrary, the community is their textbook. Based on this idea of 'learners', Sharkey et al. (2016)

proposed the inclusion of 'local knowledge' in the curriculum of each institution. It means a curriculum that integrates the realities of the students, and consequently makes it significant and meaningful as well as a manner to exalt the knowledge of the community and recognize it as equally important.

As cited by Sharkey et al. (2016) Community-Based Teaching brings with it many advantages and challenges. In the case of advantages, this approach builds a closer relationship between teachers-students and among students. This makes curriculum more motivating and meaningful for students since they feel included and as a result, promotes that students assume a critical position. It also increases interest as well as the appreciation of local knowledge and fosters engagement. Otherwise, the challenges for applying this approach are in terms of the curriculum since it might represent a standardization and lack of flexibility which limit the teacher's autonomy. Additionally, teachers often struggle in making connections with students' contexts if learners come from different communities.

The third concept that supports this actions research is Critical Reflection which relates to other concept Dewey (1910) defines as 'reflective thinking', that is the process in which the student analyzes and makes judgements of a belief to arrive at conclusions. In that way, reflection is the basis that gives support and validity to thought, "Reflective though implies conscious inquiry into nature" (p. 5). From Freire's perspective (1998), the practice of critical reflection on teaching, implicit in a correct way of thinking, involves a dynamic and dialectical movement between "doing and reflecting on doing." (Critical Reflection on Practice section, para. 1) . Reflection is a process in the construction of critical thinking on students as well as a tool to assess their teaching process, it is the

process where teachers think on one's practice to advance from "spontaneous teaching practice to epistemological curiosity of a reflecting subject". (Critical Reflection on Practice section, para. 2)

Another perspective of reflection is the one presented by Moon (2004) who defined reflection as an internal experience that is closely related to the notion of learning and thinking. According to her, reflection is the bridge that allows students to learn. "Learning is the result of reflection. Reflection is a process of re-organizing knowledge to achieve further insights" (p. 80). In that way, reflection is a complex mental process that implies structuring ideas whose solution is not evident and "it's largely based on the further processing of knowledge" (p. 82). According to the author, reflection can lead to outcomes such as actions, critical review, solving problems, empowerment, emancipation. Moon (2004) also proposed different levels of reflection, from the more superficial to the deepest one. Defining deep reflection as critical-oriented whose purpose is to transform "Critical reflection demonstrates an awareness that actions and events are not only located within and explicable by multiple perspectives but are located in an influenced by multiple historical and sociopolitical contexts" (p. 97).

Therefore, for the purposes of this action research we focus our attention on the following characteristics of critical reflections: Problematization of issues, justifications of points of view and proposing possible solutions. Problematizing issues implies asking questions in order to arrive at further insights, asking questions related to the topic and problematizing assumptions or what is taken for granted. Justifying point of view is also a way to reflect because the student takes a position and gives arguments. Thus, to identify

students' ability to justify points of view we focused on the following items: The student explains their reasons why they think that, provides examples of his/her thoughts, connects his/her point of view with others, recognizes multiple perspectives, gives evidence from their context, explains from their personal experience. Finally, when proposing solutions, we explore the manners students provide possible ideas to solve the situation, if the student thinks about the consequences, the ability of students to seek ways to transform or solve the problem by asking: What can I do? How can I contribute?

Finally, the concept of Project-Based Learning is stated by Thomas (2000), as cited by Saenz et al. "Projects are complex tasks, based on challenging questions or problems, that involve students in the design, problem-solving and decision making which give the opportunity to work autonomously and culminate in realistic products" (p. 277). Additionally, according to Stoller (2002) some of the features of projects are the following: Project work focuses on content learning rather than on specific language targets, real-world subject matter and topics of interest to students can become central to projects, is student centered, is cooperative rather than competitive, leads to the authentic integration of skills and processing of information from varied sources, culminates in a product, is potentially motivating, stimulating, empowering, and challenging. (p. 11).

Stoller (2002) also proposes some steps when developing a Project-Based process, which are the ones we intended to use in this action research project. The steps are: Agree on a theme for the project, determine the outcome, structure the project, prepare students for the language demands of information gathering, gathering information, prepare students for the language demands of compiling and analyzing information, compiling and

analyzing information, prepare students for the language demands of the presentation, presentation of the final product and evaluation of the project.

Ultimately, Community-Based Project aims at students exploring their social and cultural experiences and connecting them with the classroom; presenting the 'community' as the textbook and the project is the structure that gives the basis to integrate the Community-Based Approach in an EFL course. The content that comes from the community does not limit itself to being included in the EFL course but is also predisposed to be analyzed critically, hence, critical spoken reflections could be the way that content is addressed from different perspectives, leading to further insights and as a manner to shape and model the reflection. Consequently, oral production is mainly focused on what students want to transmit, as Brown, (2015) suggested, oral production is message-oriented, meaning that it puts emphasis on those ideas students want to transmit using different linguistic resources (e.g., using their mother tongue as a tool in their oral production) than on linguistic aspects –language use-, stimulating the 'natural flow' of the language.

To conclude, the implementation of Community-Based Teaching represented the path that would provide opportunities to students to construct critical reflections by addressing local issues and improve their speaking abilities. It establishes the need to include the community in the learning process as a strategy that can promote critical reflections on local issues in oral way.

Research Question

How can Community-Based Projects provide opportunities for 10th graders to reflect critically about women farmers in the local area of El Carmen de Viboral?

Objectives

General Objective

To determine to what extent Community-Based Projects provide opportunities for 10th graders to reflect critically about women farmers using spoken language.

Specific Objectives

1. To monitor the level of construction on critical reflections about women farmers in the local area.

2. To evaluate how critical reflection enhances students' spoken skills.

Action Plan

The action plan was designed based on the 10-step cycle for projects proposed by Stoller (2002) and applied in a period of three months. Nevertheless, the implementation of the cycle was hindered by time constrains due to school academic and extracurricular issues that affected the course of actions, hence, I only had the possibility to lead 7 out of the 17 classes and applied 5 of the 10 steps of the cycle. Each class cancelation is summarized and justified for ethical purposes (See chart with classes cancelation report). In the following paragraphs, I detailed the 5 steps applied and a short description of the 5 missing steps to maintain the process clear.

The first action consisted in students making a brainstorming of ideas regarding issues affecting farmers in their community to shape the theme of the project. The purpose was to problematize issues affecting farmers in their community and to make a diagnosis of students' ability to reflect on local issues. During the second action students proposed different ideas to determine the outcome of the project, which was an English fair. The

third action was about structuring the project where students organized their groups, and

different roles were assigned to each member of the group. The fourth action was preparing

students for gathering information, where students learned the variety of sources, they can

collect data from. The fifth action was collecting information by designing and applying an

interview. Up to this step, the purpose was to identify students' ability to reflect in terms of

problematizing issues, justifying points of view, and proposing solutions.

The following steps were planned but not implemented for reasons previously

explained. The sixth step, preparing students for analyzing information by using prompts,

guidelines, categories as different manners to organize and classify information. The

seventh step, analysis and reporting of information. The eighth step, preparing students for

presenting the information. The ninth step, preparing students for the oral presentation in

the English fair. The tenth step, evaluating the project where students would have had the

opportunity to reflect on the process and make a self-assessment.

To gather information, I collected information from 5 participant-cases following

the strategy of 'Key-informants samplings' proposed by Patton (2015). I identified that

some students could provide meaningful information to my research since they knew the

context and manifested to have experience on issues related to the topic.

The data was collected through teacher' journals, audio recordings, a focus group

and two checklists. The journal was written and codified weekly; the audio-recordings of

the focus group were transcribed and codified. The two checklists were used when

analyzing students' oral productions, these were applied at the beginning and at the end to

contrast and observe improvements in oral performances.

Development of Actions

To begin, action one refers to 'Shaping the theme of the project', where I introduced the topic: "Farmers in my community" showing the students some cartoons that represented issues affecting farmers in the country. The purpose was for students to analyze them and design their own by representing an issue affecting a farmer in their community. At the end we all agreed on the most relevant issue in their community, 'Women Farmers' since they identified inequality as an issue affecting farmers in their local area.

Action two was 'Determining the final outcome of the project', where I showed a video about an English fair done in other institution for them to have as sample. I clarified that the English Fair was the outcome of the project, with the possibility to invite people from their community to the fair. After that, I gave the students I mind map for them to complete with the name of the group, topic of the project, researchers, participants, and ideas for the outcome. That, with the intention of involving the students in the research process and collect ideas for the English fair. They proposed three ideas: (a) art galleries where they would use images of women farmers, (b) bringing products cultivated by women farmers of their community, and (c) inviting women farmers for sharing their experiences, bringing posters, and designing comics to enrich their presentations.

Action three was 'Structuring the project', where I asked the students to establish the groups of the project, to model the distribution and understand the roles and responsibilities they had (taking the photos, searching on internet, searching on books, doing the interview, organizing the information, and presenting the information). Then, each group had to choose images, from magazines, related to the role that was assigned, to

later explain to the other groups the characteristics they found about the role assigned. This aimed at pushing students to get an active role since they had to inform their role to their classmates. After understanding the roles, they assigned the roles withing the groups and they had to do a presentation with the following aspects: name of the group, role of each student, type of information they needed to collect, audience to collect that information, the resources needed, and the way they wanted to organize and present that information.

Action four was 'Preparing the students for the language demands of information gathering', I showed the students an interview carried out to a women farmer. The purpose was to analyze the type of questions and the type of information the interviewer wanted to collect. We did a practical exercise, that consisted of asking and answering some questions, to discover what types of sources of information students served from, and we reviewed some grammar aspects.

Action five was 'Students' gathering information', in this step, I asked the students to design the interview based on the four of the questions proposed by the teacher and three questions proposed by them: What type of activities do women farmers do in your territory? What type of crops do women farmers grow in your territory? Do people in your territory think there are some activities women farmers can't do? Why? Do women farmers suffer of discrimination in your territory? Why? Each group had to choose a person from their community to interview, for which most of the students were willing to do it to a women farmer. After going home and attempting to carry out the interview, they had to report the information by presenting the results to the rest of the class. Finally, as mentioned earlier, the last five steps of the cycle could not be carried out.

Data analysis

Data was analyzed by following the stages proposed by Burns (2010): Assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building interpretations, and reporting the outcomes. I assembled data, I transcribed the audios and the focus group in the journal. These were uploaded in the Software Atlas.ti to assign sub-codes and codes following the strategies 'sub coding' and 'process-coding' proposed by Saldaña (2013). I organized the codes and subcodes in an Excel chart identifying categories to understand the codes easily. I compared the categories to find similarities, contradictions and propose themes to build the interpretations. Finally, I reported the outcomes by considering first the information that provided more evidence to my research question.

Findings and Interpretations

The purpose of this action research was to determine to what extent Community-Based Project provided opportunities to students to critically reflect on issues affecting women farmers in their community using spoken language. The findings present evidence from the five case-participants that were named as Leo, Lucas, La Maga, Penélope and Alicia. Analysis revealed three findings; namely: Students Critically Reflect on Issues Affecting Women Farmers in their Community by Identifying Women Farmers' Stereotypes, Becoming Active Agents by Proposing Solutions to the Issues Affecting Women Farmers and Contributing to those Solutions, and Enhancement of Student's spoken Production Thanks to the Linguistic Resources Used such as Codeswitching and Sentence Starters. In the following paragraphs I provide an in-depth explanation of the three findings.

Students Critically Reflecting on Women Farmers Stereotypes

Data demonstrated that students problematized issues affecting women farmers in

their community by identifying the stereotypes in terms of women farmers' efficiency,

capacity, and multi-skillfulness. To illustrate, while students were discussing on the first

steps of the project, shaping the theme, they were questioning themselves and other

classmates about women farmers' performance, faculty, and ability to execute different

tasks in the domain, as the following excerpt from the journal reported:

> Penélope**:** Una mujer agricultora rinde lo mismo que un hombre.
> Leo: No es por ser machista, pero como las mujeres no rinden tanto como un hombre, entonces demás que les pagan menos.
> Penélope: ¿A usted le consta eso?
> Leo: Si me consta, porque he trabajado con varias y por eso... Hay personas que trabajan a contrato -se gana por kilos- o al día, entonces a contrato se gana más, entonces demás que es por eso también.
> Penélope: ¿Y entonces las mujeres que trabajan en una empresa?
> Leo: Aquí hay un conflicto, yo lo digo desde lo que he vivido, he visto y trabajado.
> Penélope: Pero es que él dice que todas y está generalizando como si todo el campo laboral de una mujer en la agricultura fuera así.
> Leo: Pero hay algunas mujeres que tienen varios cargos y otras que solo tienen un cargo, mientras que nosotros los hombres tenemos que hacer de todo, variao [*sic*].
> Penélope: Pero ¿Por qué son machistas y no valoran todas las capacidades de uno?
> Leo: No sé […] (Journal entry, February 27th, 2023)[1]

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[1] Penélope: A woman farmer is as efficient as a man.
Leo: I do not want to be chauvinist, but since women are not as efficient as men, perhaps they are paid less.
Penélope: Are you sure about that?
Leo: Yes, I am sure because I have worked with several women farmers and that's why... There are people who work under contract, it means, you earn by the quantity or per day. So, you earn more by contract, then that's the reason why.
Penélope: And what about women farmers who work in a company?
Leo: There is a conflict there, I say this because of what I have lived, seen and worked.
Penélope: But he says that all of them and he is generalizing as if the entire labor field of a woman in agriculture was like that.
Leo: But there are some women who have several positions and others who only have one position, while men have to do everything, a variety of things.
Penélope: But why are they chauvinist and don't value all of one's capabilities?
Leo: I don't know […] (My own translation)

According to Moon (2004), reflecting about certain issues implies problematizing, justifying points of view and proposing solutions. Data revealed that students were problematizing the issues affecting women farmers in the region, they were asking questions, replying to classmates' comments, and problematizing what is taken from granted. In addition, when justifying their points of view, they served from their experience or from what they had observed in their context. In the focus group students also recognized the persistence of these stereotypes in their community, like Alicia expressed:

> Realmente el machismo no es como por regiones, si no que el machismo sigue ahí, solo que está desplazado, porque realmente eso es lo que es. Ya se ha avanzado mucho en los últimos años, pero sigue ahí. Siempre se va a ver porque hay muchas personas que son conservadoras y creen que una mujer está para estar en la cocina. (Focus group, March 28th, 2023)[2]

This piece of evidence shows that this student recognized stereotypes as something that has spread around the regions and persists, specifically in conservative environments. In that way, this student identified and problematized the issue of reducing women's role to some type of activities. Contrary to this other opinion, where other students proposed a different perspective:

> Leo: Es que básicamente siempre dicen que los hombres son los malos del cuento, y pues, en todo momento no es así ¿Por qué las mujeres dicen que los hombres siempre son los machistas –los malos del cuento-?
> Alicia: Porque realmente no son pues así. Yo conozco mujeres que no sé cómo se llamaran, no sé si es machismo también, pero dicen: No es que usted le tiene que servir al hombre, la misma mujer. Entonces ya es como muy normalizado que nosotros somos las que le servimos a ellos. (Focus group, March 28th, 2023). [3]

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[2] In fact, chauvinism is not limited to the region, but chauvinism is still there, it's just that it is displaced, because that's really what it is. Much progress has already been made in recent years, but it is still there. It will always be there because there are many people who are conservative and believe that a woman is meant to be in the kitchen. (My own translation)

[3] Leo: Basically, they always say that men are the bad guys in the story, and well, it's not like that all the times. Why do women say that men are always the chauvinist ones –the bad guys in the story-?

The first comment presents other perspective where he proposed not to generalize or believe that all man act that way. Hence, he showed another scenario by posing the question and problematizing what was taken for granted, and Alicia attempted to respond by expressing that there are other actors that intervene: Women. Asserting that women are victims but also active participants of the perpetuation of those stereotypes. As the student mentioned, it became something normal. Students also identified issues affecting women in the school as it is presented in the following excerpt where Leo declared that there was inequality at school in terms of sports:

> Leo: Ahí si hay machismo. Porque, digámoslo así, las mujeres son como más débiles para jugar el futbol y los profesores no las meten ni nada, no las tienen en cuenta pues.
> Lucas: Un ejemplo es acá en el colegio que solo sacan el torneo de hombres en futbol. Hay muchas mujeres que vienen a jugar, pero como que no es suficiente como para sacar un torneo de niños y niñas, entonces deciden en no meterlas, y dejar, así como mixto, y dejan solo a los hombres. (Focus group, March 28th, 2023).[4]

The example evidenced that they were connecting the topic of the project, which was a topic they identified in the community, with a closer context that was the school. Thus, they were justifying their point of view by giving evidence from their context, providing examples and explanations from their experience. Figure 1 represents students' progression when justifying their point of view. Even though we can see notable progression in all of them, in Penélope's case, we can see significant change, since at the

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Alicia: Because they really aren't like that. I know women, I don't know how they are called, I don't know if it's also chauvinism, but they say: You must serve the man, the same woman. So, it is already very normalized that we are the ones who serve them.

[4] Leo: There is chauvinism there. Because, let's put it this way, women are like weaker than men when it comes to playing soccer and the teachers do not include them, I mean, they are not taken into account.
Lucas: An example is here at school where the men's soccer tournament is the only one considered. There are many women who come to play, but since it is not enough to launch a tournament for boys and girls, they decide not to include them, not to mix it up, and leave only the one for men. (My own translation)

beginning of the process she had difficulties in providing examples to enrich their explanations, to connect her point of view with their classmates and consequently to recognize other perspectives, to give evidence from their context and explain from her personal experience. But at the end of step 5, she improved in those features at least 3 or 5 points in the scale.

Figure 1

Results of the Rubrics Assessing Progress on Students' Ability to Justify Points of View
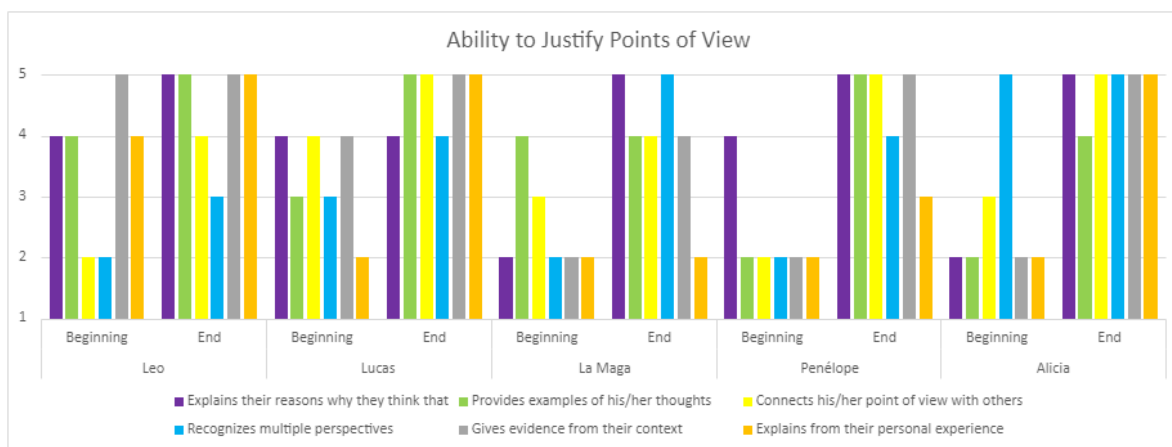
Note. Five cases progress from beginning to end of step 5, when having the opportunity to justify their points of view.

Another question of the focus group aimed to address the stereotypes assigned to women farmers, which students could evidence and recognize from their context; they mentioned, women are weaker, are more passive, are slower, are obedient, are not so committed with the activities they carry out in their job. As shown in the following excerpt:

La Maga: Que son débiles, que no son capaz de hacer el trabajo que haría un hombre porque no tiene la suficiente fuerza.
Moderador: ¿Y usted qué opina de ese estereotipo?
La Maga: No estoy de acuerdo, porque de cierta manera, el ser humano si se lo propone es capaz de lograr todo. Entonces yo digo que no importa si es hombre o mujer, porque los dos son capaces de lograrlo.

Leo: Otro sería como la tranquilidad. Pues como muy pasivas, muy lentas, digámoslo así. Pues, son muy tranquilas, echaitas [*sic*] pues. Pues es que ese es el ritmo de ellas.
Lucas: Todas no.
Leo: A no, todas no. Hay algunas que sí. Es lo que he visto.
Alicia**:** Que son muy sumisas, cuando en realidad no son así. Hay mujeres que tienen carácter y que no se dejan pisar.
Penélope: Que no tienen sentimiento para hacer las cosas, o sea, minimizan todo el trabajo de ellas, o sea por el hecho de no estar en la casa cumpliéndole a un hombre no puede llegar a ser, y pues no me parece. Porque como decía La Maga, si uno se lo propone lo puede lograr. Y pues se ha disfrazado muchísimo el machismo, entonces se ve como algo normal, pero no lo es. (Focus group, March 28th, 2023).[5]

That piece of evidence demonstrated the variety of stereotypes students were aware of and their position towards them as they recognized that women and men have the same capacities. Students were also able to question those stereotypes when Lucas intervened by saying "not all of them" and Leo reconsidered his position and agreed with Lucas, which also helped them to recognize other perspectives, by emphasizing on not normalizing those situations. Students also mentioned other stereotypes by making visible the important role of women farmers, and when asked about the things they can learn from women farmers, they refer to them as strong, persistent, creative, careful, delicate and perfectionist. To illustrate, their discussion is presented in the following excerpt:

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[5] La Maga: That they are weak, that they're not capable of doing the work that a man would do because they do not have enough strength.
Moderator: And what do you think of that stereotype?
La Maga: I disagree, because in a certain way, the human being, if they set their minds to it, they are capable of achieving everything. So, I say that it doesn't matter if it's a man or a woman, because both can achieve it.
Leo: Another would be like the tranquility. Well, they are like very passive, very slow, let's put it that way. Well, they are very calm, let' say lazy. Well, that is like their rhythm.
Lucas: Not all of them.
Leo: Oh no, not all of them. But some do. It is what I have seen.
Alicia: That they are very submissive, when in reality they are not like that. There are women who have character and who do not let themselves be stepped on.
Penélope: That they don't have the sensitivity to do things, that is, they minimize all their work, that is, because they are not at home obeying to a man, they are not, and well, I don't think so. Because as La Maga said, if you set your mind to it, you can achieve it. And well, chauvinism has been disguised a lot, so it looks like something normal, but it is not. (My own translation)

Leo: Yo he trabajado con mujeres, y así pelaitas [*sic*] de 15 años y son muy guerreras, no se rinden muy fácil, entonces eso le enseña a uno a no rendirse tan fácil.
Alicia: Son muy creativas para las cosas y también cuidan mucho su [*sic*] entorno en el que trabajan. O sea, para lo que nosotros es algo normal, a ellas les tocó cultivarlo, cuidarlo.
Lucas: Hay muchas cosas que las mujeres saben hacer que los hombres no, que es como la delicadeza y como más perfeccionista, entonces uno puede aprender de ellas viendo. (Focus group, March 28th, 2023).[6]

In that excerpt, students are recognizing the value of women's role in their community; they are uplifting their effort, creativity, perseverance, and their perfectionism while doing their job. Moreover, while expressing those attitudes they gave examples connected with their experience and their context.

Regarding the ability of problematizing issues affecting women farmers, Figure 2 evidence that all the participants either remained stable or progressed in several of the features. We can see significant variation in Lucas and Alicia's cases showing difficulties when asking questions and problematizing what was taken for granted, which resulted, in students questioning and at the same time doubting their classmates' claims.

Figure 2

Results of the Rubric Assessing Progress on Students' Ability to Problematize

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[6] Leo: I have worked with women, 15-year-old girls and they're very strong, they don't give up very easily, so that teaches you not to give up so easily.
Alicia: They are very creative with things, and they also take great care of the environment in which they work. It means, for what is normal for us, they had to cultivate it, take care of it.
Lucas: There are many things that women know how to do that men don't, which is like the delicacy, and they are like more perfectionist, so one can learn from them by watching. (My own translation)
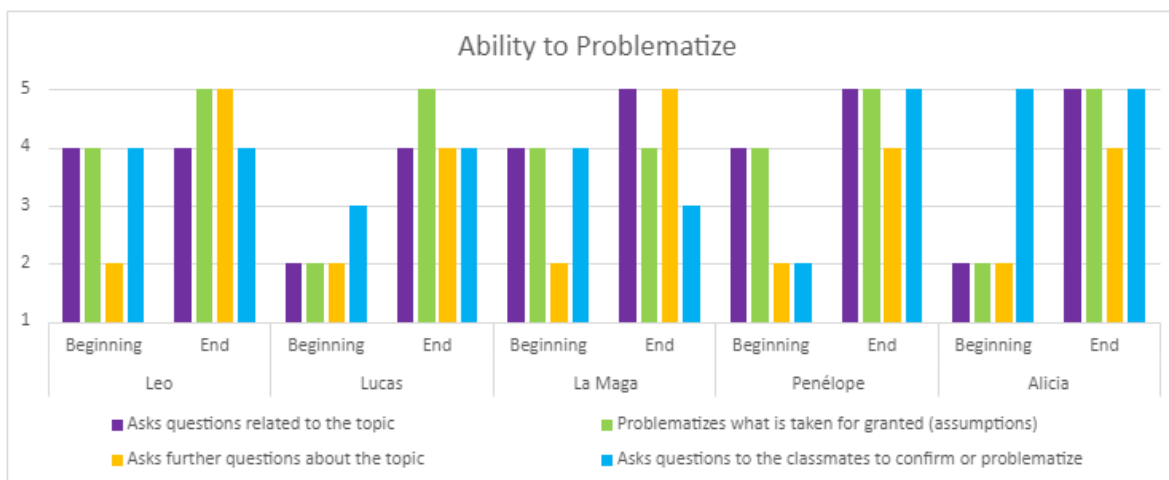
Note. Five cases progress from beginning to end of step 5 when having the opportunity to problematize about issues affecting women farmers in their community

Students Becoming Active Agents by Proposing Solutions to the Issues

Affecting Women Farmers and Contributing to those Solutions

Data revealed that students also became active agents by not only proposing solutions, but also contributing to the solution through the approach, diffusion, and awareness of those issues. During the focus group, when asked to make proposals –from their role as students- for mitigating situations of inequality that still persist and affect women farmers in their community, students proposed (a) making conferences at school related to those issues in order to make people aware of those situations, (b) addressing the topic at home and discussing it with relatives, and (c) drawing attention to the situation by making posters to spread the word on the issues affecting women farmers. To illustrate, some of students' ideas expressed in the focus group were:

Penélope: En el mismo colegio, dar charlas, concientizar a las personas desde el colegio puede tener gran influencia, aunque al principio va a ser difícil por la mente cerrada que pueden tener algunas personas.
Alicia: Hablarlo en las casas, porque desde ahí es de donde empieza todo. Porque un niño actúa de acuerdo a lo que ve y afortunadamente los papás ya han cambiado

mucho ese punto de vista, entonces ya le empiezan a comunicar mejor las cosas en estas generaciones y pueda que eso disminuya muchísimo.
Leo: Yo lo que haría es poner carteles como diciéndole a la comunidad lo que estamos hablando, lo del machismo y todo eso.
Lucas: Hablarlo con algún conocido que uno tenga para uno tratar de cambiar ese pensamiento. (Focus group, March 28th, 2023).[7]

By proposing these possible solutions, we can evidence that students were willing to have an active position towards the situation, which connects with Freire's (1970) pedagogy that promotes social transformation. It means, students as active participants in their learning process, students as investigators and transformative agents of their reality. Something that Moon (2004) also supports, as reflection can lead to outcomes such as actions, critical review, solving problems, empowerment, and emancipation. In that way, the students' ideas about making people aware, dialogue with relatives, making the situation visible through posters are actions that show that they were not limiting themselves to proposing, but to go further and act. Figure 3 illustrates the students' progress in the ability for proposing solutions.

Figure 3

Results of the Rubric Assessing Progress on Students' Ability to Propose Solutions

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[7] Penélope: In the same school, giving talks, raising awareness among the people from the school can have a great influence. Although at first it will be difficult due to the closed-minded some people may have.
Alicia: Talk about it at home because that's where everything starts. Because a child acts according to what he/she sees, and fortunately the parents have already changed that point of view a lot, so they begin to communicate things better in these generations and that can decrease a lot.
Leo: I would put up posters telling the community what we're talking about, chauvinism and all that.
Lucas: Talk about it with someone you know to try to change that thought. (My own translation)

Ability to Propose Solutions
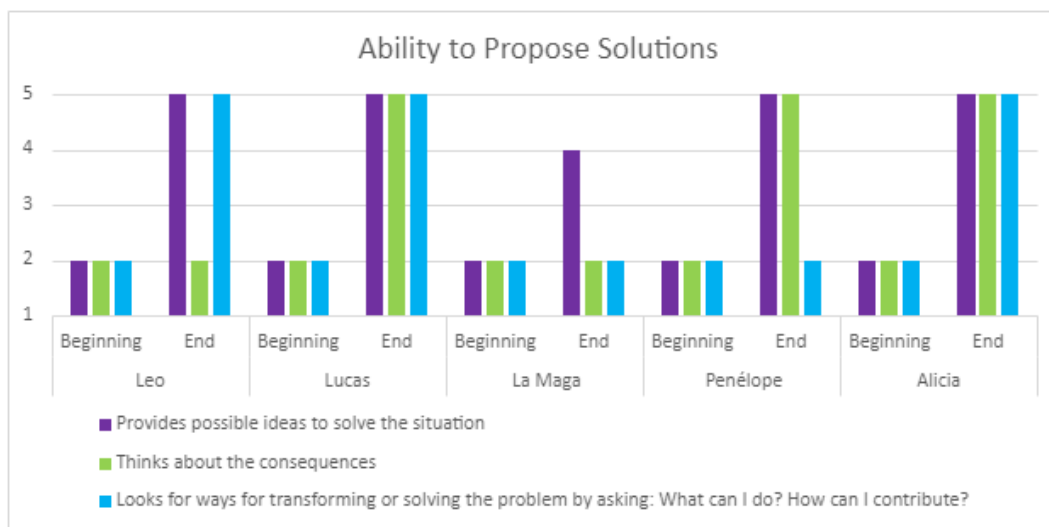
Note: Five cases progress from beginning to end of step 5 when having the opportunity to propose solutions to issues affecting women farmers in their community.

Data demonstrated that at the beginning of the process most of the participants did not propose solutions to issues at hand, but at the end of step 5, at least some of the students could develop one feature of this ability. In the case of the feature 'Looks for ways for transforming the problem by asking. What can I do? How can I contribute? We can see that Leo, Lucas y Alicia improved remarkably, since they passed from not proposing solutions, to consider themselves as contributors to the solution, they became active agents.

Becoming active agents also implies the students' engagement with the development of the Community Based Project, that engagement is demonstrated when students were aware and involved in all the 5 steps of the cycle by performing each of the tasks set for each step. For instance, during the step of preparing students for gathering information, the students had the following discussion:

Alicia: ¿Qué información se necesita para el proyecto?
La Maga: Sobre las women farmers.
Alicia: ¿Pero qué información se necesita?
La Maga: Como ¿Cuáles son las situaciones en que trabajan?
Alicia: Los beneficios y las consecuencias, unas síntesis y unas conclusiones.

> La Maga: Y buena información, por ejemplo, en un campo o en una región ¿Desde qué edad empiezan a trabajar?
> Alicia: Tener pruebas ¿Por qué violan sus derechos
> Leo: ¿Por qué tienen más beneficios los hombres que las mujeres? Nos interesa saber de las women farmers, nos interesa saber por qué hay tanta desigualdad.
> La Maga: Search on books, search on internet, y aquí ponemos el topic. (Journal entry 5, March 28th)[8]

According to Stoller (2005) the implementation of projects promotes students actively engaging in the steps of the project, as well as it increases motivation, autonomy, and a more positive attitude towards the class. Data demonstrated students' level of engagement in the project, through the questions proposed, they wanted to expand the information and corroborate things about the discussions they had in previous classes. In that way, their purpose was to contrast their experience in the domain, their opinions, and impressions of the topic with the information collected from the interview, they wanted to provide evidence and recognized multiple perspectives.

As explained earlier, even though the students could only get to finish 5 steps of the cycle, with their development, they had the opportunity to reflect and, in turn, understand how to work with projects. For that reason, the combination of Project-Based Learning and Community-Based pedagogy gave the students the structure and the content, the former provided the framework or the path to carry out the project –the how- and the latter, provided the issues or the topics –the what-. That combination contributed to students'

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[8] Alicia: What information is needed for the project?
La Maga: About the women farmers.
Alicia: But what information is needed?
La Maga: Like, what are the situations in which they work?
Alicia: The benefits and consequences, some synthesis and some conclusions.
La Maga: And a lot of information, for example, in a field or region. From what age do they start working?
Alicia: And have evidence. Why do they violate their rights?
Leo: Why do men have more benefits than women? We are interested in knowing about women farmers, we are interested in knowing why there is so much inequality.
La Maga: Search on books, search on internet, and here we put the topic. (My own translation)

engagement by guiding them during the process and addressing issues related to students'

environments. To demonstrate, in the focus group, students were asked: Do you think it is

important to talk about women farmers in the English class? Why? Data evidenced that

they recognized the importance of the inclusion of local knowledge in the content of the

lessons and the use of English as a means (English beyond the linguistic aspect):

> Alicia: Yo creería que sí. Pues y no solo en el inglés, sino en todas las materias.
> La Maga: Porque digamos nosotros estamos como en un ambiente agrícola,
> entonces nosotros tenemos que expandir nuestro conocimiento sobre el tema y más
> que eso es lo que a nosotros nos rodea.
> Leo: Y puede que a nosotros nos toque trabajar en eso.
> Alicia: Y siempre es así, o sea, siempre se escoge como otros temas para el inglés
> es como la música, el deporte y ya.
> Penélope: Y es muy chévere, pues por lo que usted decía que el inglés se puede
>
> aprender de muchas maneras, no simplemente con la gramática. Entonces, ese día
>
> yo lo vi complicado porque bueno vamos a hacer un proyecto de algo que me rodea
>
> en inglés, un idioma que no es tan fácil de hablar. Pero, poco a poco uno ve que es
>
> un reto y chévere poder lograrlo. (Focus group, March 28th, 2023).[9]

Enhancement of Students Spoken Production Thanks to Codeswitching and

Sentence Starters

Data showed that critical reflections about women farmers allowed the students to

improve their oral communicative skills by using codeswitching and sentence starter as

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[9] Alice: I would think so. Well, and not only in English, but in all subjects.
La Maga: Because let's say we are in an agricultural environment, so we have to expand our knowledge on the subject and more than that is what surrounds us.
Leo: And maybe we have to work on that.
Alicia: And it's always like that, that is, it's always chosen like other topics for the English class, like music, sports and that's it.
Penélope: And it is awesome, because of what you said, that English can be learned in many ways, not simply with grammar. So, that day I saw it as a complicated thing because, well, we are going to do a project of something that surrounds me in English, a language that is not so easy to speak. But, little by little, one sees that it is a challenge, and it is cool to be able to achieve it. (My own translation)

linguistic resources that supported their oral production. For example, in the step of

structuring the project, the students had to present the roles of each student, they did it by

combining English and Spanish. Moreover, data showed that when students switched to

English, they mostly expressed the keywords of the project –nouns and verbs- and common

sentences they were already used in class, such as *–The name of the group is... My role is-*

> La Maga: Nosotros escogimos estas imágenes de acuerdo al project women
> farmers
> Penélope: The name of the group is the JIM and the project is women farmers. The
> roles of the students are…
> Leo: Search on the books
> Lucas: My role is search in internet
> Alicia: My role is taking the photos.
> La Maga: My role is organize [*sic*] the material.
> Penélope: My role is doing the interview. (Journal entry, April 14th, 2023)[10]

That excerpt demonstrated that students were using the keywords of the project as

something familiar, meaning students understanding the use of the word in the context, and

it is not difficult for them to use them. In that way, their discourse aims to produce and not

to reproduce in a mechanical manner, because the words are not isolated but immersed in

an inner context where students were aware of what they wanted to express. As Brown

(2015) asserted, focusing on message-oriented oral production implies paying attention to

'the natural flow of the language' rather than on 'linguistic aspects', putting emphasis on

ideas students want to transmit and the different linguistic resources they take advantage of.

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[10] La Maga: We chose these images according to the project women farmers
Penélope: The name of the group is the JIM and the project is women farmers. The roles of the students are…
Leo: Search on the books
Lucas: My role is search in internet
Alicia: My role is taking the photos.
La Maga: My role is organizing the material.
Penélope: My role is doing the interview

In addition, in step 5, Students gathering information, they chose the interview as their instrument to collect the information from their context and when they reported the information gathered, they used guidelines or sentences starters as support to introduce the report and kept an order while presenting by using transitional sentences as follows:

> La Maga: The name of the group is the JIM.
> Penélope: Bueno, question number 1: What types of activities do rural women carry out in their territory? She told us that, bueno en floristerías, maquillando la flor, encapuchando y en las hortensias, crops, harvest, entre otros. [*sic*]
> Alicia: Question number two: What types of crops do farmers women grow? Las principales actividades son la floricultura y la siembra de hortalizas [...] (Journal entry, May 8ᵗʰ, 2023)[11]

The presentation evidenced that students were making an effort for transmitting the message using the linguistic resources as an attempt to enhance their oral communication in English. In that way, students were aware that their mother tongue was a support and not a limit to learning a foreign language. Therefore, allowing the students to use those linguistic resources alienates them from the reproduction of information because they are not memorizing, but using the guidelines as strategies to transmit their ideas with their own words. On the other hand, it is important to clarify, that on some occasions students recurred to the translation and the memorization to attempt to transmit the idea, which is also part of their learning process, and we need to address those aspects and guide students for using those tools, not for reproducing information, but as a supporting tool when attempting to express ideas in English.

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[11] La Maga: The name of the group is the JIM.
Penélope: Well, question number 1: What types of activities do rural women carry out in their territory? She told us that, in floriculture crops by cleaning up and hooding the flower, and by pruning and cutting the hydrangeas at harvest time, among others.
Alicia: Question number two: What types of crops do farmers women grow? The main activities are floriculture and planting vegetables. (My own translation)

Conclusions and Implications

The purpose of this action research was determining to what extent Community-Based Project provided opportunities to students to critically reflect on issues affecting women farmers in their community using spoken language. Therefore, I can conclude that Community-Based Project allows students to critically reflect on issues affecting women farmers when they problematized those issues by identifying and questioning women farmers' stereotypes, students became active agents by proposing solutions and turning into agents of change to those solutions and students enhanced their oral production by using codeswitching and sentence starter as linguistic resources to support their discourse. Thus, the reflections students did about women farmers were the content that encouraged them to express their ideas orally.

This action research encompasses a major implication on the use of Community-Based Project as one of the paths to implementing critical pedagogy in the class. This is a process that requires time and knowledge of the context, hence the inclusion of issues affecting the community and the critical reflection towards those issues becoming the essence that turned the project into a critical one. However, including the community implies that students get immersed in their context and become researchers, which takes a lot of time for the students to understand the way research should be carried out and at the same time the analysis and reporting of the information in a critical manner.

A suggestion for teachers that wish to implement Community-Based Pedagogy is to consider the path to be followed to give structure to the research. The case of the Project-Based Learning was useful since it gave the framework that allowed students not only to

have clear guidance, but also to get familiar with the research process which permitted them to become active agents. Therefore, future actions can also take advantage of that agency by going beyond on different issues and carrying out actions; actions that allow the students to be active in the transformation of their context. Designing material and proposing topics for the curriculum are ways in which students can be included and can have an active role in their learning process.

Another implication is the time that requires carrying out a Community-Based Project. As previously mentioned, I could not conduct the ten-steps cycle due to external factors and inclusion of grammatical topics proposed by the syllabus of the institution, which also reduced the time to implement the activities of the project. Nevertheless, despite those inconveniences, I would like to emphasize that each step of the cycle demands time because it is a process where the teacher should sample each step for students to understand the process of doing research. And at the same time, it is the process where students get immersed in their communities with the purpose of identifying, analyzing, and reflecting on different issues.

Reflection

Reflection is also part of the teachers' role. Therefore, the purpose of this writing reflects on my process in terms of my research and teaching process, my academic experience, and my role as student at the university.

I would like to start the following reflection by citing an author that supported my research and that for me implies the path in the promotion of a critical pedagogy. He claimed "Não há saber mais ou saber menos, há saberes diferentes" (Paulo Freire).

Therefore, that idea enclosed what I wanted to achieve with the research process by including the local knowledge of the community as a manner to connect students with the context. In addition, research is the process in which you allow yourself to dream, to idealize, to place yourself as an active agent that might change things in a complex educational system. And I am still thinking that it is possible to contribute, at least, in a minimum part, if we have the conviction.

Regarding the teaching process, it was really enriching because teaching implies a combination of praxis and theory, which means that they complement each other and cannot be taken as isolated domains. That is why, when the research was applied in a real context, you realize that some things were not as expected, that there are theories that do not apply for that specific context, also you tend to idealize avoiding some issues you did not considered. However, at the same time, you see some advances and you build community with students. Thus, teaching allowed me to put my feet on the ground in the classroom reality. Call me idealistic, but I want to become a teacher, continue doing research and put my effort always at the service of the students.

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