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# Ideologies Revealed During the Construction of Meaning in an EFL Class

Ideologías reveladas durante la construcción de significado  
en una clase de inglés como lengua extranjera

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This article reports on an interpretive qualitative study conducted at a public university in Bogotá with 26 pre-service social studies teachers. It is focused on unveiling which ideologies are discovered when they construct the meaning of texts through text-based tasks in an English as a foreign language class. The data were collected by using class video recordings and students' artifacts. The data analysis procedure follows an inductive process based on grounded theory. Results indicated three subsidiary categories called Shattering the Establishment, Perspectives From a Counter-Hegemonic Position, and Resisting the Mainstream. Furthermore, there is the core category *Habitus*, which assembles those subsidiary categories in an internalized system of fixed dispositions.

*Key words:* Construction of meaning, grounded theory, *habitus*, ideology, text-based task.

Se reporta un estudio de tipo cualitativo interpretativo adelantado en una universidad pública de Bogotá con 26 docentes en formación, de una licenciatura en educación básica con énfasis en ciencias sociales. Este artículo se concentra en develar las ideologías mostradas por ellos en el proceso de construir el significado de los textos a través de tareas basadas en escritos durante las clases de inglés como lengua extranjera. La información se recolectó mediante las producciones de los estudiantes y la grabación de las sesiones de clase. Los datos fueron analizados inductivamente siguiendo la teoría fundamentada. Los resultados indican tres categorías subsidiarias: resquebrajando el establecimiento, perspectivas desde una posición contra-hegemónica y resistiendo la corriente dominante. *Habitus* es la categoría central que engloba los conceptos subsidiarios como resultado de un sistema internalizado de disposiciones fijas.

*Palabras clave:* construcción de significado, *habitus*, ideología, tareas basadas en textos, teoría fundamentada.

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## Introduction

This article informs a research study conducted with a group of pre-service social studies teachers about which ideologies are revealed while they are making meaning of English texts in an English as a foreign language (EFL) class.

The purpose of studying ideology addresses the need to understand the political and sociological framework from which pre-service social studies teachers build their meanings of texts. In other words, EFL teachers might reflect on how students perceive the meaning of texts powerfully permeated by the social and political structures in which students are immersed. In this sense, the following question guided this study: Which ideologies does a group of pre-service teachers reveal when constructing the meaning of texts?

The ideologies can emerge in an EFL setting where pre-service social studies teachers have an array of opportunities to contrast their representations about historical issues, to debate their ingrained values towards sensitive matters (abortion, egalitarian marriage, racism), to confront their beliefs about teachers' role in intercultural contexts, and/or to challenge their understandings—even feelings—in relation to contemporary concerns. In view of that, the researcher proposes a methodology that connects pre-service teachers' real needs with their personal and professional growth. It is possible to do so if they find texts that are appealing and relevant to their field and which engage them in a meaningful way. Accordingly, three theoretical perspectives of ideology will be addressed as well as a final reconstruction of this concept made by the researcher.

The paper begins with the theoretical framework, which is followed by the pedagogical and research designs. Next come the findings' section, the conclusions, and pedagogical implications.

## Theoretical Framework

### Ideology: A Platform of Ideas, Values, and Beliefs to Unveil

The term ideology has different historical meanings (Eagleton, 2007) that come out of a broad spectrum where the term ideology has been understood as a way to determine the thought patterns ingrained in a society as those meanings that come from a rather narrow society where ideas are established for the purpose of maintaining the ruling class.

Van Dijk (1998) ascertains that “ideologies are the *foundation* of the social beliefs shared by a social group” (p. 49). This socio-cognitive perspective of ideology establishes that ideologies are constructed in group members' minds. It also establishes that social beliefs organize, determine, and control the opinions of a group; these beliefs reflect what is considered as true or false, correct or incorrect, and good or bad in a society. Van Dijk ascertains that “beliefs may be constructed, stored, reactivated, organized in larger units, and such processes take place in the accomplishment of all cognitive tasks” (p. 21). Aspects of life such as worries, fantasies or fears may also be beliefs. This research study evokes in its data analysis this concept of beliefs given that pre-service social studies teachers are expressing their beliefs toward one topic or another in conjunction with EFL learning.

The second perspective of ideology presented in this study is based on Eagleton's theory (2007). He claims that ideology “is a matter of ‘discourse’ rather than of ‘language’” (p. 223). Ideology “represents the points where power impacts upon certain utterances and inscribes itself tacitly within them” (p. 223). The concept of ideology tries to unveil the struggle between an utterance and its concrete conditions in order to achieve goals. These conditions to

make accomplishments are considered as the struggle of power to maintain and reproduce social life. In this sense, Eagleton argues that “ideology is less a matter of the inherent linguistic properties of a pronouncement than a question of who is saying what to whom for what purposes” (p. 10). This approach of ideology determines that the relationships between subjects and social objectivity are complex and those relations are mediated by discourses.

Finally, the third perspective of ideology considered here is developed from McLaren (2003), who defines it as

*the production and representation of ideas, values, and beliefs and the manner in which they are expressed and lived out by both individual and groups. Simply put, ideology refers to the production of sense and meaning. It can be described as a way of viewing the world, a complex of ideas, various types of social practices, rituals, and representations that we tend to accept as natural and as common sense.* (p. 205)

Society is organized around different social practices and rituals that generate a feeling of belonging. People who share these feelings tend to accept social rules without restrictions. Consequently, “ideology is the result of the intersection of meaning and power in the social world” (McLaren, 2003, p. 205).

Considering previous definitions of ideology, I would like to propose my own. Ideology is the platform of ideas, values, and beliefs from which people build meaning of the world and the ways they employ to enact and live according to that platform. In other words, it is what makes meaning for people and how they act out based on their way of thinking. Certainly, ideology deals with the tension existing in power—to empower and disempower people and there are many different levels of each one of these conditions. That is to say, each group of people that shares or defends its particular ideas has a particular ideology.

## Construction of Meaning

According to Wells (1995), the construction of meaning can be described in three characteristics. The first is that “meanings are made, not found” (p. 237). This characteristic involves the interdependence between action and knowledge because meanings must be actively constructed from learners’ background. Moreover, meaning is constructed for the reason that it has a purpose and motivation which can be evaluated as valuable and valid according to learners’ purposes and needs.

The second characteristic mentioned by Wells (1995) is related to the impossibility of constructing the meaning detached from learners’ personal interests, cultural backgrounds, and/or levels of familiarity with the content of the discussed subject. Subsequently, the meanings are constructed socially and systematically.

The third characteristic of construction of meaning recognizes the transactional nature of learning and teaching. Wells (1995) has emphasized that “what we learn depends crucially on the company we keep, on what activities we engage in together, and on how we do and talk about these activities” (p. 238).

Learning cannot be analyzed apart from individual and social values that affect the construction of meaning. Wells (1995) has declared: “learning is as much a social as an individual endeavor and meanings that are constructed occur, not within, but between individuals” (p. 238). According to Wells’ perspective, learning and teaching are anchored to a social enterprise wherein the construction of meaning is shaped not only by individual characteristics but also by social factors that deal with an ideological platform towards values, beliefs, and ideas built within the communities.

After presenting the main constructs of the study, I will now describe my pedagogical and research design.

## Pedagogical Design

*"If learning is not meaningful to students,  
it is irrelevant what the teacher does."*

(Wink, 2005, p. 75)

The pedagogical design that I proposed and carried out was task-based learning (Ellis, 2006; Murphy, 2003; Willis, 1996; and Wink, 2005). This approach indicates the path along which the transformative pedagogy can cement and fill the gap between experience, theory, and practice.

Task-based learning delineates a powerful tool to carry out any teachers' goal from a communicative perspective. This starting point indicates that "the teacher is in a unique position to assess how far the contribution of learners to tasks . . . would help develop the potential in task-based learning" (Murphy, 2003, p. 359). In this train of thought, those EFL teachers who plan their teaching practices based on tasks will be able to enhance not only their pedagogical practices, but also their students' performances in terms of accuracy, fluency, and/or complexity.

Likewise, I implemented a specific vision of task: text-based tasks. Since this instructional design was planned to be carried out in the course called foreign language text comprehension, the selection of suitable texts from available resources and their grading were at the core of the course. According to Willis (1996), the word *text* can be seen from different perspectives, e.g., a continuous piece of spoken or written language. Thus, the texts included a wide variety of information (audio recordings, radio or TV broadcasts, visual resources and/or images). From now on, I will use the term *text* without distinction.

## Transformative Pedagogy: Upstream Against "Stupidification"

*"Teachers and students . . . need learning contexts that empower them as learners and as inquirers who actively search out new questions."*

(Short & Burke, 1989, pp. 205-206)

Transformative pedagogy unfolds to reveal the characteristics of pre-service teachers who have developed a high level of criticism that allows them to feel free to express their own way of thinking and construct their opinions and conclusions, but framed by the understanding of society. Transformative pedagogy is connected to the setting of pre-service social studies teachers because it reflects upon the real state of order from a critical perspective that provides a deep analysis into the fossilized positivism that over many years fostered an asocial analysis of things, facts, and ideas. Giroux (2003) argues how these ideas had "subordinated human consciousness and action to the imperatives of universal laws" (p. 28).

The nature of education started to develop a critical theory of social education through analysis of the culture, mass media, ideology, power, and authoritarianism as instruments of imperative rationality. In this sense, the nature and purposes of education are starting an upstream that unmasks current mainstream canons that search for a society in which justice succeeds despite the presence of real conditions of injustice. As a result of this counter-hegemonic education, the work of teachers cannot be limited to the "stupidification" (Macedo as cited in Bahruth & Steiner, 2000, p. 119) of education in which "students have learned to respond to the expectations of the teacher:

parroting, memorizing, and regurgitating from a series of facts and official bodies of knowledge promoted by the mainstream canon” (Bahruth & Steiner, 2000, p. 119). The teachers’ mission is the other way around, to wit: to empower their learners’ learning processes; thus, learners will be able to analyze the status quo of reality. Learners inquire about the world around them, but also they need to reflect upon themselves. With these purposes of education—among others—it is possible to build up the transformative pedagogy I have claimed.

A curriculum that is able to fulfill the requirements of transformative pedagogy is the transformative curriculum presented by Henderson and Hawthorne (1995), who proposed the 3S Scaffolding: “Transformative Subject Learning, Transformative Self Learning and Transformative Social Learning” (pp. 6-12). This model takes into account learners’ previous knowledge in order to enhance the learning of English via the contents. In other words, one must empower learners’ knowledge as a starting point to develop EFL learning. Moreover, Henderson and Hawthorne stress the necessity of putting into practice “*inquiry responsibility* rather than obedience to authority” (p. 10). Finally, transformative education strengthens the democratic, civility, and diversity issues for learners.

### Research Design

I define this research as an “interpretive qualitative study” (Merriam, 2002, p. 6) since it provides me with a framework to analyze and describe my particular context in detail. Merriam (2002) has argued that “the researcher is interested in understanding how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon, this meaning is mediated through the researcher as instrument, the strategy is inductive and the outcome is descriptive” (p. 6).

Consequently, this research explored the ideologies that emerged with the learning of EFL in the

scenario of the class relating my students’ concerns, as well as those associated with my own experiences as a teacher- researcher. According to this situation, Merriam (1988) has stated that “qualitative research is an effort to understand the situations in their uniqueness as part of their particular context and their interactions there” (p. 35).

### Context for the Research Study

The study took place at a public university in Bogotá, Colombia, specifically with pre-service social studies teachers enrolled in an undergraduate program called *Licenciatura en Educación* (Bachelor degree in Education). This undergraduate program establishes three levels of English as a foreign language, which are foreign language I, foreign language II, and finally, foreign language text comprehension.

### Participants

They consist of a group of 26 pre-service social studies teachers, eight females and eighteen males whose ages range from eighteen to thirty-four years old. Most of them are in seventh semester of their program in the course called foreign text comprehension. This course meets two sessions per week of 100 minutes each. It is a mandatory subject.

### Data Collection Procedures

Strauss and Corbin (1990) have defined grounded theory as a qualitative research method in which theory emerges from the data through the implementation of an inductive process rather than a deductive one. Accordingly, Freeman (1998) argued that “in a grounded analysis you are uncovering what may be in the data” (p. 103).

I selected two instruments for data collection: first, video recordings and second, students’ artifacts such as personal written exercises, oral discussions, written guides or video clips. These

instruments helped me to find out what ideologies pre-service social studies teachers reveal when they construct the meaning of a text.

## Findings

The data analysis process led me to identify one core category and three subsidiary categories that answer the research question: What ideologies does a group of pre-service teachers reveal when constructing the meaning of texts?

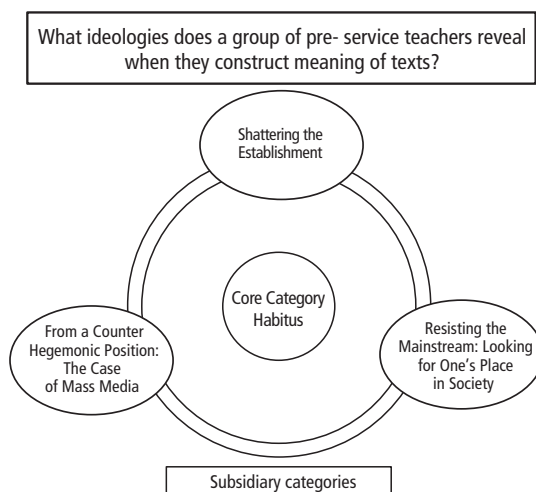
As stated by Strauss and Corbin (1990), a core category must be the sun positioned in an orderly systematic relationship to its planet. I called the core category that emerged from the analysis of the data *Habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977) and it will be explained in detail after the analysis of the three subsidiary categories. In Figure 1, I present the relation among subsidiary categories with the core category and then I argue each one of them separately.

### Shattering the Establishment

The establishment is a term coined by Henry Fairlie (1955), a British journalist, in the London magazine “The Spectator”. He asserted that:

By the “Establishment”, I do not only mean the centres of official power—though they are certainly part of it—but rather the whole

**Figure 1. Categories From the Data Analysis**



matrix of official and social relations within which power is exercised. The exercise of power in Britain (more specifically, in England) cannot be understood unless it is recognised that it is exercised socially. (n.p.)

Data analysis allowed me to discover the fact that pre-service social studies teachers analyzed and inquired into the issue of power throughout the tasks programmed in the intervention plan. According to McLaren (2003), “oppositional ideologies” are those which “attempt to challenge the dominant ideologies and shatter existing stereotypes” (p. 207). Consistent with this perspective, the participants were constantly showing their oppositional ideologies towards the existence of domination. For example, they were always questioning the capacity of some countries, considered as world powers, to interact with other countries in equal conditions. Participants identified as Andrekar and Cicas acknowledged the existence of the power issue among strong and weak countries and also the co-existence and tension among them. Each one of them exists thanks to the existence of the other. However, the relationship is asymmetrical because the strongest countries dominate the weakest.

I do not think that it is possible for a strong country to trade with a weaker one without controlling it because there is a power relation mediated by disadvantages that at the same time generates manipulation. Weaker countries depend on the requests of the strongest countries. As a consequence the trade exchange and business are unequal. (Tsk2, Andrekar, Shapex)<sup>1</sup>

I think that it is not possible because the fittest, the strongest [country] is [the one] who controls and dominates; the fittest is the one who survives. (Tsk2, Cicas, Shapex)

<sup>1</sup> Codes used: Tsk# = Number of the task, Shapex = Sharing personal experiences, Prtsk = Pre-task, VRT = Video recording transcription, L = Line(s) of the sample, Prosolvi = Problem-solving task, CreActPha = Creation action phase.



Oppositional ideologies, which shatter the establishment, were also identified through the data analysis when pre-service teachers attempted to unveil how people or groups of people, also identified as the establishment, influenced the behaviour, emotions, and reactions of others. This was the case of the participant Cicas, who commented on the drawing of “The Yellow Kid” (Outcault, 1896, see Appendix for details of this cartoon). He claimed:

I see a yellow kid who sells newspapers thanks to headlines. The Yellow Kid generates profits for the newspapers. Yellow Journalism manipulates the feelings of the people of the United States. (Tsk4, Cicas, Prtsk)

As the reader can perceive through this excerpt, Cicas unveiled his oppositional discourse because he revealed the use and impact of journalism on society. It was an explicit concern about power and how it worked through both official and social relations within society. In this case, yellow journalism influenced people’s behaviour since reporters “manipulate the feelings of the people of the United States.”

The subsidiary category, Shattering the Establishment, was also enlightened by reflections of pre-service teachers about the relationship between EFL and power. Participants pointed out the issue of power as being in a close relationship with EFL because this language is used as a tool with the capacity to influence two important spheres of people’s lives: politics and economics. The development of English language competencies is viewed as a given right or as a delegated authority with the capacity to transform learners’ thoughts.

I assume that [English] is vital in the workplace. Besides it is a tool to acquire new knowledge and to meet people. Likewise, I think that English language learning is a strategy not only for political domination but also economical. (Tsk1, Jccar, Shapex)

In addition, the relationship between EFL and power was well supported by a process of

homogenization. The English language was understood as a tool of domination that was used with the purpose of homogenizing a perception of the world that dismissed other voices to comprehend reality through other languages.

Finally, throughout the characterization of the subsidiary category, Shattering the Establishment, pre-service teachers reflected upon how uses of power masked strategies to be exerted. They pointed out that power was possible due to inherited social practices that maintain the ruling class as the paradigm to follow. McLaren (2003) has argued the following in this sense:

Hegemony refers to the maintenance of domination not by the sheer exercise of force *but primarily through consensual social practices, social forms, and social structures produced in specific sites such as the church, the state, the school, the mass media, the political system, and the family* (p. 202).

The participant Andrecar gave us a clear example of how the dominant culture gained the consent of those who are oppressed because it “is good for [the] strongest countries”. She used the concept of hegemony—argued by McLaren (2003)—as she declared, “[Strong countries] don’t use force to control the economies of the weaker countries”. As a result, the “strongest countries . . . avoid unions of workers or resistance in the intervention” (Tsk2, Shapex).

### Perspectives from a Counter-Hegemonic Position: The Case of Mass Media

This subsidiary category accounts for not only the perception of pre-service social studies teachers towards the power of communication, but also reflects on messages filtered to society by power or “the how” that is used for communication by a small group of people who owns the modes of communication. Data analysis sheds light on those two issues. Giroux (1988) claimed that “the devel-



opment of technology and science, constructed according to the laws of capitalist rationality, has ushered in a form of domination and control that appears to thwart rather than to extend the possibilities of human emancipation” (p. 74).

Print media have been involved in a fight to control information and the tools used to captivate readers day after day. Moreover, the issue of “truth” depends on who says what to whom with a clear intention to increase sales. In this sense participant Kevra wrote as follows:

I believe that cartoon shows the confrontation among newspapers in New York in order to capture readers’ attention. I think this cartoon says that the truth depends on who says it. According to this, the newspapers just think about selling the information. (Tsk4, Kevra, Prtsk)

Modern life is permeated by a big amount of advertising which creates needs and requirements in our daily lives. Advertising sells values, ways of being, and ways of acting more than selling a product itself. In this fashion, advertising influences the decisions of people who buy goods and services uncontrollably. In a socialization task where participants showed their perspective regarding the issue of consumerism, participant Mrom expressed the following:

First, I attempt to show through video how advertisement has manipulated us and how it is searching for, defining, and compelling our decisions directly or indirectly. Second, we wanted to show how advertisement uses many tools with the purpose of capturing our attention; for example, double meaning. A publicist is expecting for people to define their needs—most of the time unnecessary needs—in an unconscious way where the double sense influences the decisions to consume. (VRT3, L165-172, Mrom)<sup>2</sup>

Previous samples show how advertisements built their own reality, which articulates its own rules. Advertising is a communicative manifes-

tation integrated to the area of consumerism and social values transactions whereby the need to produce a consumerism ideology is vital for industry or, in Mrom’s words, “how advertisement has manipulated us.”

So far the analysis of participants’ voices has shown their ideas toward communication as an issue that has power. This power of communication imposes ideas, values, and beliefs on its receivers. Now, let us consider a participant’s perceptions around consequences of imposition in communication. The participant Disa perceived the power of communication as a matter of imposition that makes people feel miserable.

The means of communication and brands impose some consumption patterns that seem affordable to everybody. These consumption patterns depend, on the one hand, on the economical and social viability that people have, and, on the other hand, are based on people’s desires. When consumption patterns are compared with people’s reality, then they become frustrated people. (VRT2, L6-12, Disa)<sup>3</sup>

Participant Disa analyzed imposition in communication as a phenomenon that generates people’s tendency toward “becoming frustrated people.” If people cannot satisfy their needs created through the power of communication they feel frustrated. This level of dissatisfaction is not real because people actually supply basic needs but in conjunction with created “needs” spurred on by means of communication; they feel the need to buy more, to have more and to store more with the purpose of reaching a minimal level of satisfaction.

In accordance with the previous idea, I could analyze how participants perceived the psychic consequences of the power of communication in people’s behaviours. Participant Anvarg explained as follows:

<sup>2</sup> Originally in Spanish. Translated by the author.

<sup>3</sup> Originally in Spanish. Translated by the author.

The purpose of this video was not so much to show the amount of individual consumerism or mass consumerism, but to show the existing consequences at a personal and a psychological level. [To analyze] how some consumer habits become compulsive. That is the purpose of this video. (VRT4, L409-412, Anvarg)

The power of communication affects people's behaviour because it is such an amount of power that it turns people into compulsive consumers. For example, compulsive buyers, compulsive gamblers, compulsive overeaters, compulsive drinkers, sex addicts, drug addicts, those obsessed with aesthetics, television, and smoking. In turn, Cicas argued a current trend that he called "homo consumer" and explained this contemporary trend under the slogan: "consumption, therefore I am" (Tsk5.1, Shapex).

Pre-service social studies teachers analyzed how teenagers and other young people are lured into feeling the power of communication through messages that sell the ideal life at a global level where the internet is confused with inherent, where cell phones, video games, virtual communities, and the most known brand names are the gadgets and labels to involve them in a deceptive virtual world. Towards the issue of teenagers, participant Edwoso declared that teenagers do not live in a geographical space but in a globalized and interconnected world. Those global adolescents better absorb the media culture and become the most assiduous consumers. He concluded as follows:

During last decade, young people have been converted into the main target of marketing. Global teenagers are the big hope of the economic global system. Elissa Moses, vice-president of the first New York publicity agency Brain Waves, describes the apparition of the young demographic sector as "one of the biggest opportunities to do business of all times." (Tsk5.1, Edwoso, Shapex)

Participant Edwoso explained how teenagers are the target group of multinational corporations because they are the most malleable customers who

create fidelity with specific brand names. Despite geographical distances, cultural and economic differences, and even religious practices, the younger people all over the world live in a parallel universe. This parallel universe facilitates the exchange of same fashions, listening to the same music, sharing codes and preferences, and reflecting the same likes and even dislikes among youngsters despite the fact that they live on the opposite sides of the planet. Those "global teenagers" are reflecting similarities in tastes and pleasures sold by big brand makers from New York, Paris, Hong Kong, Sao Paulo, Cape Town, or Bogotá. Young people meet and fulfill their dreams at malls, "the bastion of consumerism," as was stated by participant Calix.

Once we have analyzed the first two subsidiary categories, we can follow up with the third one that reported what ideologies emerge in a group of pre-service social studies teachers as they construct the meaning of texts.

### Resisting the Mainstream: Looking for One's Place in Society

This subsidiary category explains what solutions, reflections, and actions participants proposed to resist and, as well, solve the problems detected throughout the two previous subsidiary categories which evidence forms of domination and control.

Giroux (1988) has established that teachers as transformative intellectuals require combining reflection and action with the intention to empower their students as critical subjects who are not only able to confront injustices but also able to seek a world without "oppression and exploitation" (p. xxxiv). In the following lines, I present how pre-service teachers proposed actions framed into the counter-hegemonic angles that allowed teachers to be critical subjects who combined reflection and action.

Pre-service students always wrote in the first person. The personal pronoun *I* is repeated

throughout their reflections. I interpreted their use of the first person *I* as the search for a place in the world that permitted them to understand it from a critical perspective and be conscious of it. Conscientization is a route that opened pre-service teachers' eyes regarding their inner feelings, assumptions, even biases. The characteristic of being conscious is linked to the capacity to question daily life. McLaren (2003) has contended that to pose questions is more difficult than to answer them. Problem posing is a matter of reflecting continuously about common sense, a matter of "to make the strange familiar and the familiar strange" (p. 189).

Pre-service social studies teachers gave evidence of "liberating memory" (Giroux, 1988, p. xxxiv) given that they recovered historical events that portrayed continuous struggles of social movements that demanded people's rights. Moreover, they were social movements that are not resigned to the oppressor determinism but generate resistance processes with the intention to overcome conditions of subjugation. Participants constructed reflections that supported how they tackle liberating memory from an unfamiliar concern.

We, as educators, have to rescue these ancestral values and apply them in the classroom. We have to show our students history from different points of view but creating in them a historical perspective that allows them to see that there is not a unique view of the world because other possibilities exist such as the view which includes ancestral culture. (Tsk6.1, Jomipar, Shapex)

So far we have analyzed the counter-hegemonic ideologies revealed by these transformative pre-service teachers. They criticized power per se, that is, those who use their power to manipulate the population because they realized the consequences of a homogenized public opinion. Moreover, social studies teachers proposed alternatives for struggling mainstream canons into the school setting. Now,

we will examine the ideas of pre-service teachers concerning oppression and exploitation generated by the "communication crisis" (Beaugrande, 1997, p. 59), in which common sense is not questioning the mainstream canon of "who is saying what to whom for what purposes" (Eagleton, 2007, p. 10).

Participants in the study assumed their role as transformative teachers who demanded that education confront the current level of advertisements which controls and manipulates people's decisions. Mrom used the expression "to awaken the conscious" as teachers, to wit:

As teachers, we need to awaken the conscious of educating children properly. Now, I remember the phrase that I had listened to many years ago: "Educate the child, so that you don't have to punish the adult." Nowadays, this is our role as teachers: to teach the facts of life. (VRT3, L188-191, Mrom)

To finish, pre-service social studies teachers, as transformative teachers, were subjects who sought a world without oppression and exploitation. They proposed the school setting as the context wherein they can resist mainstream canons. Pre-service social studies teachers identified themselves as part of the "upstream in the mainstream" (Bahruth & Steiner, 2000, p. 119).

Taking into account the previous two ideas that explain their concerns about consumerism and their proposals as teachers, I think it is time to unveil pre-service students' ideologies around the school and education.

In broad terms, pre-service teachers considered the school as a place of continuous struggle. They developed a critical theory of social education through analysis of the culture, ideology, and authoritarianism as instrumental rationality; in this sense, the nature and purposes of education were starting a new era of appreciation: the search for a society in which justice succeeded despite real conditions of injustice. Giga voices this as follows:

I believe we are in an epoch of barbarism in which, despite our being from the same ancestors, we attack each other mercilessly. As a Social Studies teacher, to face this reality is quite difficult because we educate meaningless values that are imposed; it is more sensible and coherent to teach values from below, from our ancestors, and toward the restoration of respect for the other and respect for the earth. Thus, we can raise awareness within our society which has its own culture and identity. As a consequence, we would not continue emulating European or North American cultures. (Tsk7, Giga, Shapex)

Giga asserted that the teacher's job is "difficult" and insists on the need to educate by including ancestral values. There was a clear sample as to how a teacher can fight the mainstream because the sample proposes "to raise awareness in our society." Moreover, Giga promoted analysis of "our culture, our identity" as a way to develop a critical stance in social studies teaching.

Teachers' work cannot be limited to the "stupidification" (Macedo as cited in Bahruth & Steiner, 2000, p. 119) of the education in which learners repeat just what their teachers have said previously. The teacher's mission is the other way around: to empower learners' learning processes so that they will be able to analyze the status quo of reality. Learners inquire into the world outside them, but they also need to reflect upon themselves. Wilpri's voice was warning us about this danger of considering the school and teachers to be in a messianic position.

I do not think that I can convert students into absolutely nothing. It is not in my power or obligation to decide if this is good or bad for my students. The only thing I can really do is to provide elements of analysis, and then each student can freely decide. (Tsk6.1, Wilpri, Shapex)

Transformative pre-service teachers became conscious of school possibilities and bestowed special relevance upon the construction of their students'

subjectivity. Wilpri highlighted the need as a teacher to "provide elements of analysis to his students and permit them to 'decide.'" This kind of pedagogy is contrary to the parrot model that prevails in schools and even in discussions about freedom whereby the teacher establishes the viewpoint.

Transformative pre-service teachers understood the school as a place in which students have to be challenged in terms of cognition and freedom, a place for choices and liberty. A school should be contextualized with the social necessity for teachers to be masters and researchers. Finally, concerning teachers who teach build up arguments, Jomipar advised us in this perspective:

As we can see, the job is not easy, but neither is it impossible. We do not want for our students to adopt a single position because that would be catastrophic and incoherent. My job is to challenge and generate in them a cognitive conflict which guarantees the construction of new cognitive structures from which they can learn their own reality. Finally, teachers must be researchers who encourage their students to live as critical, creative, and transformative subjects. (Tsk6.1, Jomipar, Shapex)

Transformative pre-service teachers as intellectuals insisted on a sort of school where social inequalities are discussed and also where personal aims are achieved throughout the curriculum (social studies, mathematics, science, arts, languages, etc.). Transformative teachers persevered to instill in their pupils a critical perspective about the current world including when those pupils found something to change, to do it.

Transformative teachers adhered to the principles of radical pedagogy that reflects on pedagogy as cultural politics where different kinds of subjectivities and types of knowledge are framed by a particular context which answers to specific interests. To understand transformative teachers' concepts that change their pedagogical practices to radical practices is required for study under an onto-

logical perspective. The transformative intellectual is committed to new concepts and methodologies. Teachers who are called transformative intellectuals require acknowledging errors in the past that caused pain and suffering with the intention of becoming conscious of the historical conditions in which events occur. As a result, liberating memory helps as a warning to comprehend that “people do not only suffer under the mechanism of domination; they also resist” (Giroux, 1988, p. xxxv).

The three subsidiary categories that attempt to reveal the pre-service teachers’ ideologies which emerge during the construction of text meaning are these: Shattering the Establishment, Perspectives from a Counter-Hegemonic Position: The Case of Mass Media, and Resisting the Mainstream: Looking for One’s Place in Society.

### Habitus: Core of Ideologies Revealed While Constructing Meaning

The core category that enlightens what ideologies were revealed when pre-service teachers construct meaning is Habitus, a concept developed by Bourdieu (1977) to explain the mechanisms that frame men and women every day.

Habitus, by which [Bourdieu] means the inculcation in men and women a set of durable dispositions which generate particular practices. It is because individuals in society act in accordance with such internalized systems . . . that we can explain how their actions can be objectively regulated and harmonized without being in any sense the result of conscious obedience to rules. (Eagleton, 2007, p. 156)

In this research study I found the core category Habitus throughout the instruments used to collect the data (students’ artifacts and class video recordings). At this point it is important to remember that students’ artifacts and class video recordings were the result of the instructional process whereby they

analyzed and discussed issues related to the field of social studies.

The habitus revealed by this group of students towards the application of Darwin’s theory on the expansion of the U.S. during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> is exemplified as follows:

People often interpret social and political theories according to their convenience because in the field of Social Studies theories are submitted for different interpretations; nothing is fully established in the field of Social Studies. In that sense, the theories are often misunderstood. For example, Bolívar’s ideas are not the same for President Uribe as they are for President Chávez. (Tsk2, Migonz, Prosolvi)

OK, this is the idea. We consider Darwin’s theory to be too broad. It permits a wide interpretation concerning whatever the perspective is and it is appropriate to cases at hand...whether conquest, power, or expansionism cases. The theory of natural selection is applicable to all of these. (VR1, L102-105, Yesgam)<sup>4</sup>

Habitus allowed them to categorize as adequate, worthy and right to make use of a theory. Right and wrong parameters in the use of theory were defined as how useful a theoretical framework is vis-a-vis personal needs. A previous excerpt claimed the use of theory with the purpose of legitimizing and protecting someone’s own arguments where personal interests are privileged. These students coincided on the “convenience” pattern in the adaption of knowledge. This sample argued in favor of accommodation of the theory to personal interests, taking into account personal conveniences and intentions.

Most students revealed their ingrained perceptions, or habitus, towards the role of the newspaper and its responsibility when publishing news. The following excerpts exemplify a generalized perception:

4 Originally in Spanish. Translated by the author.



The press has the responsibility of offering reliable and true information; it is an ethical duty. (Tsk3, Stvper, CreActPh)

In this sense, another student claimed the following:

I think that the press is a means of information. The reporter would be limited to informing the public and be responsible for interpretations of reality. The press is responsible for what happens after publishing news. (Tsk3, NatMon, CreActPh)

Both students' excerpts emphasized the role of newspapers in terms of duties, reliability, and truthfulness as a call for ethical practices. *Habitus* as the core category opened up possibilities for explaining how pre-service teachers could build a practical scheme of perception and appreciation that would permit them to classify as adequate or inadequate, worthy and unworthy, and evaluate parameters about right or wrong, as we have seen in previous samples.

The core category *Habitus* was built on these three subsidiary categories, which were *Shattering the Establishment*, *Perspectives from a Counter-hegemonic position: The Case of Mass Media*, and *Resisting the Mainstream: Looking for One's Place in Society*. Throughout the identification of those subsidiary categories the core category *Habitus* was present at all times.

Next, I focus on the conclusion and the pedagogical implications that I found after the analysis of the data.

## Conclusion

This research paper discussed the ideologies revealed by a group of pre-service teachers when they are engaged in social, political, and cultural issues through tasks based on texts. The first subsidiary category—*Shattering the Establishment*—provided facts regarding how pre-service social studies teachers constantly gave evidence of ideologies that inquired into power while simul-

taneously constructing the meaning of texts. The discussions posed by participants attempted to unveil the manipulation of power in favor of a few. As part of this questioning of the mainstream, participants reflected on the relationship between the English language and power that is used as a tool of domination and homogenization.

The second subsidiary category which tackled the ideologies revealed by this group of pre-service teachers is *From a Counter-Hegemonic Position: The Case of Mass Media*. In this subsidiary category, participants inquired as to who informs what, to whom, and with what purposes. As pre-service social studies teachers, they revealed ideologies that resisted any kind of manipulation exerted by means of communication and with special attention to Colombian networks. Texts proposed in the instructional design allowed participants to ask about the current model of global communication where advertising plays a crucial role. Participants were touchy about this subject matter and made public their warnings in regard to advertising due to the reality of the negative consequences of planetary overconsumption, nature, and humanity itself.

*Resisting the Mainstream: Looking for One's Place in Society*, is the third subsidiary category that emerged from the data in this group of 26 pre-service teachers. Giroux (1988) has called on current teachers to act as critical subjects able to propose alternatives to improve this chaotic world. Through this category, I could analyze the tireless search of this group of pre-service social studies teachers who observe in the school system one alternative of changing.

Participants were conscious of their role as agents of change, as future educators and also as citizens. Their search for a better society started with their conscientization towards the issues addressed. They perceived themselves as teachers that know. As Wink (2005) has asserted, they knew that they



knew. This consciousness empowered them as agents of change.

Pre-service students' role in society was confronting the status quo. They confronted how mass media manipulate information with the purpose of favoring a few and controlling the population. They perceived current communication trends as a trap that engaged current society and homogenized it. They tackled any kind of domination that exerts oppression over people. Their claims were made from ethical stances whereby their role as citizens was unquestioned and their efforts as teachers could not be postponed.

Pre-service social studies teachers reveal their ideologies based on their habitus from start to finish whereby the process of the construction of meaning of texts is concerned. In other words, pre-service teachers constructed the meaning of texts based on that internalized system of fixed and acquired dispositions and also on a range of personal possibilities within these dispositions that outlined schemes of perception, thought and action. Students' personal experiences were developed from the inculcation of social structures into their subjectivity. Thus, pre-service teachers integrated not only their previous knowledge, assumptions, and intertextuality, but also their ideologies that would emerge toward those lasting and transferable dispositions, better known as the core category habitus.

Finally, the role of pre-service social studies teachers in Colombian society can be understood as one of transformative teachers who, in education, have a cornerstone in the search for an egalitarian society. The role of the school is undeniable given that that institution is the place to fight for freedom, justice, and human and civil rights. As result of this research study, I, as teacher researcher, can say that from now on my pre-service social studies teachers should be called transformative pre-service social studies teachers.

## Pedagogical Implications

Tasks based on texts are an option to be implemented in those settings where EFL learning is characterized by rejection, boredom or lack of interest. To create a community of inquirers within the English language classroom would engage those learners who do not find in EFL learning a professional or a personal option. As a consequence, during the research experience English classes became the space where students could share reactions encouraged by readings. This experience provided the opportunity for classes to speak, reflect, and interact in the English language.

Taking into account students' needs, backgrounds, and interests encourages them to participate effectively in the classroom because it gives them a voice and an active role in their process of EFL learning. Participants in this study had the opportunity to interact with texts related to social, historical, and economic issues, which enabled them to contrast and enrich their own vision of the world through the knowledge of others' visions.

EFL teachers have the need to unveil their students' ideologies or assumptions as regards English and its learning; furthermore, teachers need to design tasks according to the characteristics of their learners.

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## Appendix: Students' Artifact Sample



UNIVERSIDAD DISTRITAL FRANCISCO JOSÉ DE CALDAS

Facultad de Ciencias y Educación

Licenciatura en Educación Básica con Énfasis en Ciencias Sociales

Comprensión de Textos Extranjeros

Néstor R. Fajardo M.

### Yellow Journalism: A Miracle

### Yellow Kid


*A.F.*

**PRE-TASK ACTIVITIES**

**Aim:**  
At the end of the topic students will be able to express orally the origins of Yellow Journalism.

**Intended outcome:**  
At the end of the lesson students will be able to describe the key information of a graphic text using journalist's questions. Moreover, the students will be able to compare and contrast headlines found in modern tabloid papers with stories published in *The World* and *Journal*.

1. Observe carefully the cartoon and figure out what is it about?



*decir, mirar*  
*-demonio de mi*  
*domante*  
*Yo he estado*  
*una semana*  
*vendiendo periódicos*  
*en New York*

*mirar mi*  
*espalda (mirar la*  
*parte)*

*this cartoon is about, I think:*

1. is a comic of the word.
2. is a rich kid.
3. He speaks about the newspaper.
4. He speaks about New York.
5. He is a caricature.
6. He is a dirty kid.
7. He is barefoot.
8. He is a bold kid.
9. He is happy.
10. He is from New York.

The Yellow Kid was created by Richard Felton Outcault. He made a cartoon in one week. He made a small eyes.

**Learning strategy:**  
*Forming concepts*

Use the context to help you understand new vocabulary.

*he's an asiatic kid*

Richard Felton Outcault. "Yellow Kid." Drawing, ca. 1896. NYPL, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, Print Collection