

**Intercultural Communication and Critical Pedagogy:
Deconstructing Stereotypes for the Development of
Critical Cultural Awareness in Language Education**

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ABSTRACT

This study researches the problem of gender stereotypes that Spanish language undergraduates uphold against Hispanics and develops critical pedagogical approaches through the reading of a literary text for the deconstruction of such stereotypes so that students can think and act in less biased and prejudiced ways. This thesis develops the argument that stereotyping is a form of oppression, and through empirical research in three case studies, this research demonstrates that stereotypical oppression can be addressed by Critical Pedagogy for the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’. This thesis provides answers to three operational sub-questions addressed in each of the three case studies, which contribute to answering the main overarching question in this study of how can Critical Pedagogy help in the deconstruction of stereotypes for the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’.

This study found that a literary text can bring stereotypical thinking out to the fore for analysis and reflection, and that a reader-response approach to literature can trigger past experiences that reveal essentialising discourses of *otherness*. The research reviews the effectiveness of the use of an ‘identity-focused’ critical pedagogical intervention for the development of a ‘self-regulation strategy’ as a mental reasoning exercise to control bias and stereotyping. The results indicate that students tend to transpose stereotypical binaries and create new ones, whilst developing further views of cultural realities as being fluid, dynamic and contradictory, constantly being reconstructed and renegotiated. However, the findings indicate that a ‘self-regulation strategy’ may be insufficient to appreciate the oppressive nature of stereotyping. Therefore, a Critical ‘Pedagogy-of-the-Oppressed’ intervention is implemented, whereby students describe and ‘name’ their own experiences of suffering stereotyping during their year-abroad experiences with narratives of stigmatisation, discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation. A tentative pedagogical model, a teaching tool and a ‘grammar of interculture’ emerge from this study for the deconstruction of stereotypes in the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’ for practical teaching practice and classroom use.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CP	Critical Pedagogy
CS	Case Study
ELT	English Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
GT	Grounded Theory
ICC	Intercultural Communicative Competence
ILT	Intercultural Language Teaching
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
FL	Foreign Language

... no pedagogy is neutral,
no learning process is value-free,
no curriculum avoids ideology and power relations.

To teach is to encourage human beings to develop in one direction or another.

In fostering development, every teacher chooses some subject matters,
some ways of knowing, some ways of speaking and relating, instead of others.

These choices orient the students to map the world and their relation to it.

(Shor 2009: 300)

1.1 The Genesis of the Study

Shor's quote encapsulates my journey as an educator in order to 'educate' students to think, speak and act in a less stereotypically biased way. Before I started my PhD, I had become aware that my students tended to stereotype Hispanics. Being Argentinian myself, at times I felt annoyed by their rigid worldviews, and frustrated by my inability to challenge those stereotypes in a convincing and efficient manner. In 2005, I was presented with an anthology of short stories by Argentine writer Carlos Gamerro, who later delivered a lecture about his literary work at my university. At the end of his talk, I was confronted once again by the students' stereotypes embedded in their questions to the author about one of his short stories entitled 'Norma y Ester'. It was then that I decided to use this literary text to investigate what those stereotypical beliefs were. As the students read the short story, they spoke of their own personal experiences of encountering Hispanics that shared some of the traits of the fictional characters in the literary text.

In my teaching I have tried to raise students' awareness that stereotyping can be a form of oppression. I define 'oppression' as any form of social injustice, whereby people are inhibited to exercise their capacities and to express their needs, thoughts and feelings; with

marginalisation, powerlessness, discrimination and *othering* being perhaps some of the most dangerous facets of oppression (for a discussion on oppression, see Young 2000). I could have given them my view on this; I could have given them definitions of what ‘stereotyping’ and ‘oppression’ mean, and we could have co-constructed knowledge about what stereotyping involves and how oppression feels. But I would not have been following the principles of Critical Pedagogy. I wanted my students to live Critical Pedagogy, as I have been living it myself with my own experiences as an educator. Critical Pedagogy is not only about the process, but it is also about living it.

Phipps and Guilherme (2004: 1) define Critical Pedagogy as a pedagogy that addresses ‘the abuses of power in intercultural contexts’; it means ‘examining and challenging common sense assumptions, hegemonic structures and any uncritical belief in the status quo’. For Phipps and Guilherme, Critical Pedagogy:

refuses to place faith in the status quo of relations forged only in the dominant interests of global capitalism, of white hegemonic power, of world English as a supreme or first language, of a so called ‘first world’, of patriarchal power and of heterosexuality. (Phipps and Guilherme 2004: 2)

Wink’s (2011:6) definition is in agreement with Phipps and Guilherme’s, and she adds that Critical Pedagogy ‘gives voice to the voiceless, gives power to the powerless’. Therefore, I believed that for my students to ‘live’ and ‘experience’ Critical Pedagogy, I needed to create a social and intellectual space in the classroom for them to talk about their own intercultural experiences of conflict based on stereotyping, so that these personal experiences could emerge as parallel texts during the reading of Gamero’s ‘Norma y Ester’. In applying the rationale for Critical Pedagogy, students were thus encouraged to critically evaluate and reflect upon these personal experiences and to analyse their own discourses of *otherness*. Critical Pedagogy calls upon us to reflect critically on our own experiences so that we can act in new ways. As a novice critical pedagogue, I did not want to participate in perpetuating social myths or maintaining stereotypical beliefs, for in so doing I felt I would have been legitimising processes of oppression and this form of knowledge. These stereotypes certainly felt oppressive to me as an Argentinian, as a Latin American and as a Hispanic woman.

As a language teacher, I have undergone several stages of growth and development. My training as an English language teacher dates back to the late 1980s and early 1990s in Argentina, a time when we were not encouraged to be critical thinkers, but to regurgitate

what we read and what we were told. In those days I was young and inexperienced and was led to accept unquestionably the English Language Teaching (ELT) discourses of the so-called 'Centre' by both my Argentinian teacher trainers and British and American specialists. Now, as I look back, I see myself as having been 'hegemonised', a term I shall discuss in detail in Chapter 8. Despite (or because of) this, the expertise I gained during that time gave me access to an improved financial position and professional status in Argentina. For fifteen years, I ran my own English language school, where I 'hegemonised' others with similar ideologies to those that I had learnt, as I transmitted my knowledge to hundreds of students in my Argentinian hometown.

In 2004, I entered the world of teaching the Spanish language, my mother tongue, in the British university system, where students are expected to become 'critical beings' (Barnett 1997; Johnston *et al* 2011) and to develop their intercultural communicative competence in today's globalised world. It was then that I started to seriously question my own pedagogy. I thought I knew everything I needed to know about foreign language teaching, but the more I taught Spanish language undergraduates, the less sure I was. I gradually came to believe that language teaching was not just about phonemes or parts of speech but was also about power. I became aware that having learnt the English language myself this had empowered me to 'hold the key' to new ways of thinking, speaking and behaving, or in other words, to be more of an intercultural thinker and speaker. It was then that I wondered whether my students were also aware of the power of learning Spanish as a foreign language.

My teaching began to make more sense to me as I entered the world of Critical Pedagogy. The more I read about Critical Pedagogy, the more I questioned my long-held assumptions about my own teaching. As I walked the 'critical pedagogy path' to improve my lessons, I became aware that I was using it myself as a learner. Critical Pedagogy is about transformation. It is about learning, unlearning and relearning; with unlearning being perhaps the most challenging. How could I possibly unlearn all those long-held beliefs about teaching a foreign language that I had so conscientiously learnt for twenty years? Unlearning involves a shift in philosophy, beliefs and assumptions, and in this process I have moved from behaviourism to social constructivism and from social constructivism to critical pedagogy. It has not been easy and, at times, it has been painful; but I know that unlearning is central to Critical Pedagogy. Critical Pedagogy is about using knowledge for self and social transformation. It is about acting in the real world. Critical Pedagogy asks us to 'name', to 'reflect critically' and to 'act' (Wink 2011: 45). As I have been writing my PhD thesis I have

been ‘naming’ and ‘reflecting critically’, and in my lessons I have been ‘acting’ in the real world. In my teaching, my students have been encouraged to ‘name’ and to ‘reflect critically’, in the hope that they will ‘act’ in the real world. Critical Pedagogy is also a pedagogy of hope.

1.2 The Argument of the Thesis

In this thesis I develop the argument that stereotyping is a form of oppression, and that the deconstruction of stereotyping is one of the ways in which ‘critical cultural awareness’ can be developed. ‘Critical cultural awareness’ has been described by Byram (1997: 53) as ‘the ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries’. Byram (2009: 324) defines “explicit criteria” as ‘the intercultural speaker has a “rational and explicit standpoint” from which to evaluate’, i.e. the intercultural speaker has an ‘ideology’ – a term I shall discuss in greater detail in Chapter 8 - which one uses in their critical cultural evaluations. As stated by Byram, there is a need for pedagogical practices to raise learners’ awareness to make these criteria explicit so that students may understand where they are positioned, and from what standpoints they are making their evaluations.

In this thesis I argue and demonstrate in empirical research that Critical Pedagogy can raise students’ ‘critical cultural awareness’ for the development of intercultural competence. I demonstrate that the classroom can be a potential site of liberation, whereby issues of stereotypical oppression can be addressed through critical pedagogical approaches. Importantly, in this thesis I outline the pedagogical approaches I implemented to deconstruct stereotypes as the students started walking the path of unlearning long-held stereotypes. Further, I argue that, to a certain extent, students can develop ‘critical cultural awareness’ through the critical pedagogical interventions implemented.

1.3 Overview of the Study

This PhD thesis aims to describe the gender stereotypes that the participants in this study hold against Hispanics, and those stereotypes that they perceive Hispanics have of them. Additionally, it describes and evaluates the critical pedagogical interventions implemented in

this study for the deconstruction of such stereotypes. The objectives of these pedagogical interventions include the unmasking of the ideologies embedded in students' stereotyping of Hispanics and the development of 'critical cultural awareness' (Byram 1997, 2008); a concept that this PhD study refines. Argentine literature, as a cultural artefact, written in *rioplatense* Spanish, i.e. the Spanish language spoken around the Río de la Plata basin between Argentina and Uruguay, was the teaching resource used to develop intercultural tasks for raising awareness of stereotypical thinking. The research site for this study was a seminar entitled *Interculturality*, which I ran as part of two modules called *World Spanishes* and *Advanced Hispanic Studies* for British, Erasmus and International language learners in a British university. The study explored links between the reading of literature and the students' personal lives, with particular reference to their intercultural encounters with *otherness*.

It examined students' responses to a literary text, and sought to identify, describe and explain evidence of intercultural learning in their reactions and contributions through the pedagogies implemented. This thesis provides empirical evidence of the stereotypes that students have about Hispanics, and the stereotypes that students perceive Hispanics have of them. In addition, this research study seeks to inform teaching practice by exploring the potential of critical pedagogical tools for the deconstruction of such stereotypes. In this thesis, I also describe my own attempts as a teacher to incorporate students' identities and subjectivities into a critical pedagogical curriculum by translating theoretical principles into classroom practicalities.

To this end, I started this PhD thesis with a few initial questions, such as 'How do Western, relatively affluent, predominantly white undergraduates respond to the low-class Argentine *Other*?' or 'How are the normalising practices that the dominant Eurocentric student population endorses challenged?'. These questions, amongst others, guided my thinking process in the early stages of this study. As a language teacher, venturing into the field of intercultural education for the first time, I have been challenged by culturally sensitive and pragmatically face-threatening topics, such as those concerned with cultural stereotypes and prejudice, poverty, inequality, sexism, marginalisation and discrimination. I, together with my students, have often found myself engaging in constant (re)negotiation of gendered and ethnicised subject positions and identities, (re)organising a sense of who we are, whilst understanding our multiple relationships with the world through the use of Spanish as an L1 and L2 language.

1.3.1 Aim of the Study

The aim of the pedagogical interventions this study describes was for students to raise their awareness of the oppressive nature of stereotyping; of the harmful impact stereotyping can have on individuals; and of the need to develop strategies to help reduce bias and prejudice. In order to achieve this aim, the guiding principles underlying the teaching practice were geared towards the deconstruction of stereotypes, which are later reflected upon and analysed for their effectiveness in raising awareness of stereotypical thinking for the reduction of bias and prejudice. The findings of this study inform and are informed by the pedagogical decisions I have made to improve teaching practice for the development of intercultural competence through literature in L2, and the focus lies on the development of critical pedagogical approaches for the deconstruction of stereotypes.

To this end, a literary text from Argentina was the teaching resource utilised so as to improve my understanding of:

- how critical pedagogy can be applied for the deconstruction of stereotypes
- how students understand their relationship with Hispanics
- how students (re)define a sense of who they are and how they relate to their social world
- how students create subject positions and identities for themselves in relation to Hispanics
- how students' identities impact on language pedagogy for intercultural development

With these outcomes, I am hoping to contribute to the broader understanding of the discourses of UK-based students and in this process, enhance our insights into how they shape the selves. It is hoped that the findings of this study can be transferrable to and translated into similar situations where educators follow a syllabus either in L1, L2 or FL which involves *othering* others, so that more informed choices can be made to develop critical pedagogical practices for the deconstruction of stereotypes.

1.3.2 Research Questions

At the outset of the research, I aimed to evaluate the potential of literary texts for raising awareness of stereotypical thinking. I also wanted to explore the possibility of integrating fiction to go beyond a fragmented view of culture with the aim of enabling learners to think interculturally. The questions followed related, though different paths, which had emerged from my own assumptions as a teacher. As my thinking evolved, I formulated a general research question, with three operational research questions. To this end, I conducted three case studies in order to answer each of the operational questions empirically with a view to contributing to answering the more significant general question in this study. These questions read as follows:

General Research Question

How can Critical Pedagogy help students deconstruct stereotypes in their development of ‘critical cultural awareness’?

Operational Questions

- (1) How do students view the remote, and not so remote, Hispanic other?
- (2) When taught with an ‘identity-focused’ Critical Pedagogical approach, how do students deconstruct stereotypes?
- (3) When taught with a Critical ‘Pedagogy-of-the-Oppressed’ approach, how do students describe and ‘name’ their experiences of being stereotyped?

In this study, I use the term ‘Hispanic’ in its broadest sense to include Spain and Spanish-speaking Latin America. The ‘remote’ Hispanic *other* is the Latin American, and the ‘not so remote’ is the Spaniard. The imagined graphic conceptualisations of the ‘remote’ and ‘not-so-remote’ Hispanic *other* are represented in this drawing:

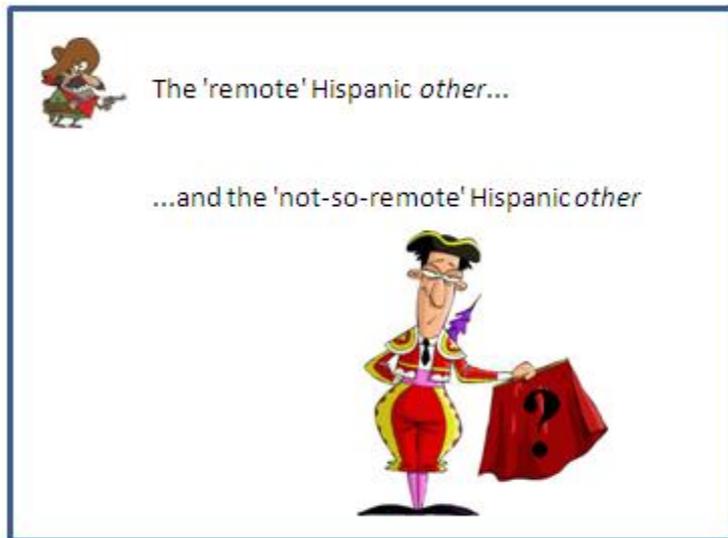


Figure 1. The Hispanic *Other*

Metaphorically speaking, what is represented in this drawing is the perception of those geographically more distant from us as demonised, exotic *others*, often viewed as inferior, dangerous or intellectually and socially less developed; whilst those who are geographically less remote are perceived as more like 'us', but still different. Hence, the stereotypical figure of the Spaniard with his red cape remains the enigmatic, mysterious alien, yet a more familiar *other*.

1.3.3 The Researcher's Assumptions

The rationale for the study was to gain a more in-depth understanding of the stereotypical beliefs that Spanish language undergraduates have about the Hispanic *other*, and how they are stereotypically perceived by others. I assumed that students had such beliefs based on my past observations as the teacher of this class. Investigating students' preconceived ideas of *otherness* during the reading process is of paramount importance, for it provides the teacher with an enabling fertile environment to develop intercultural competence through the reading of literature. Therefore, the present study aims to give voice to the students, and thereby identifying their preconceived beliefs about the Hispanic *other*, the ways they imagine their communities, and to what extent these influence their behaviours. I started my PhD study with three assumptions:

Assumption 1

Students stereotype Hispanics.

This assumption led to the first research question of ‘*how do students view the remote, and not so remote, Hispanic other?*’, which explores what those stereotypes are.

Assumption 2

Students can deconstruct stereotypes through L2 literature with the help of Critical Pedagogy.

This assumption led to the second research question of ‘*When taught with an ‘identity-focused’ Critical Pedagogical approach, how do students deconstruct stereotypes?*’

Assumption 3

Students are stereotyped by Hispanics during their year-abroad placement and Critical Pedagogy can help students describe and ‘name’ their experiences of stereotypical ‘oppression’.

This assumption led to the third research question of ‘*When taught with a Critical ‘Pedagogy-of-the-Oppressed’ approach, how do students describe and ‘name’ their experiences of being stereotyped?*’

These assumptions led to the investigation of stereotypical beliefs that might have an impact on the ways students communicate interculturally with Hispanics. Importantly and crucially, the three research questions that emerge from my assumptions operationalise the more general question in this study of *how can Critical Pedagogy help students deconstruct stereotypes in their development of ‘critical cultural awareness?’*, which is the most significant contribution of this PhD research to the field of intercultural education in language teaching.

1.3.4 The Gap in Knowledge

As stated earlier, the research focuses on identifying critical pedagogical practices for the deconstruction of stereotypes for the more general aim of developing students' 'critical cultural awareness': the main issue which this study investigates. Stereotypical student beliefs are examined as the class reads a literary text. A popular myth is that literature fosters intercultural learning, but this myth needs to be proven with empirical data, and this research study seeks to understand in what ways stereotypes can be deconstructed through L2 literature for the development of 'critical cultural awareness'. This is the gap in knowledge that this PhD thesis seeks to address. Pedagogies for intercultural exploration through literature in L2 / FL educational contexts are now being reconceptualised by language educators, and this study has the capability to contribute to this growing body of research. The research intends to capitalise on the language classroom as a potential privileged site for intercultural learning, and as an empowering space for exploring the inner self through meeting *otherness* with the opportunity to develop worldviews less biased by stereotypes.

1.3.5 The Need for the Study

My research is positioned among the work of several scholars who have studied the use of literature in second/foreign language contexts to explore and analyse intercultural learning. However, as already stated, none of these studies addresses the issue of stereotyping, which is the gap in knowledge that this research seeks to address. Secondly, there is no study of literature from the Hispanic world in the British Higher Education context that has explored its potential for the development of 'critical cultural awareness' through the deconstruction of stereotypes. Recently, there has been an emphasis on the investigation of the potential of literature for intercultural learning in the foreign language classroom and the pedagogical implications on teaching practice. I will now move on to providing an outline of some of the research in the field of intercultural and literature education that has influenced my thinking in one way or another as I conceptualised my PhD study.

1.4 The Development of the Research

1.4.1 Telling Moments

This PhD research project has its origins in two critical incidents from my experiences of teaching Spanish as a foreign language to undergraduates. The genesis of my PhD study can be traced back to, firstly, my realisation of students' stereotyping of Hispanics; and secondly, during class time as these stereotypes were being uncovered for analysis. I examined the first critical incident at the start of this chapter, where I expressed my frustration and annoyance by my inability to deal with stereotypes effectively in my teaching after Gamarro's lecture. The latter critical incident refers to feelings of discomfort, and probably embarrassment, I perceived students experienced in our discussions of negative stereotyping and prejudice against Hispanics (for further detail see Chapter 6). Kramsch (2003a) would describe these two incidents as *telling moments* in my teaching, i.e. unsettling realisations that produce discomfort. Initially, my frustration about the difficulties I encountered in dealing effectively with stereotyping in my teaching, and later on, during the implementation of a task to unmask stereotypical thinking, raised my awareness of the fact that the mere presence of a teacher who comes from a Hispanic culture could have led to feelings of embarrassment. Kramsch, who is probably the most influential scholar on literature and culture in foreign language teaching of our times, refers to *cultural faultlines* or *ruptures* (Kramsch 2000a) as opportunities to explore cultural difference in the classroom. She places cultural *brokenness* right in the centre of teaching and acknowledges *conflict* as an issue that should be addressed, rather than avoided. Burwitz-Melzer (2001) agrees with Kramsch on this point, and highlights the importance of students identifying, naming and explaining conflict as a pedagogical strategy to initiate intercultural dialogue.

Kramsch's work has been inspirational in the conceptualisation of this PhD research, particularly a study she conducted with her own German language students. In her chapter entitled 'From Theory to Practice and Back Again' in the book *Context and Culture in Language Teaching and Learning* edited by Byram and Grundy in 2003, she unfolds the journey she took from a *telling moment* in her German class with undergraduates in the States, to a research project and back to the classroom where the data were collected. This *telling moment* that Kramsch experienced was triggered during a class discussion about brainstorming associations with the word *Ausländer* [foreigner in German] based on the short

story *Deutsche Kastanien* by Yüksel Pazarkaya. Despite being a lively and talkative class, Kramersch's warm-up brainstorming task revealed that students were reluctant to speak and one of her students asked 'Are there any *Ausländer* [foreigner] here in America?' After this *telling moment*, Kramersch resolved to investigate the reasons for the students' silence and the students' belief about the States not having foreigners. She found that involving students in critically inquiry about their own texts can enhance their analytical skills by focusing on their authorial voice and enabling them to justify and interpret what they have written – even if they were not aware of those intentions at the time of writing.

1.4.2 Autobiographies

As I conceptualised a critical pedagogical model (see Chapter 3) for the deconstruction of stereotypes through the short story 'Norma y Ester' in this study, I was greatly influenced by empirical studies conducted by Zubair (2006) and Fäcke (2003). Zubair's study involved young Pakistani women on an MA in English Studies as they read English literature to explore their identities and aspirations; whilst Fäcke analysed two students' mental processes and autobiographies during discussions of a story entitled *No Pasó Nada* (1980) by Antonio Skármeta. The research participants in Fäcke's study were two learners of the Spanish language – one mono-cultural (Thomas, 18) and the other bi-cultural (Isabel, 20).

The findings of their studies reveal the importance of students' autobiographies in the way they relate to the literary text, although an aspect that Zubair studied and Fäcke did not, was the extent to which literature can impact upon students' lives. Zubair found that the students' exposure to Western culture opens up new 'windows' to the world, which challenges the dominant ideologies of traditional gender roles in her perceived patriarchal Pakistani society, where women's primary role is to become a housewife and a mother. The reading of English literary texts creates a space in the language classroom for these women to take on new subjectivities and positionalities, which reveal their hybrid dichotomous and conflictual identities, and expose the tension in their lives: *duty to their parents and family, and the desire to find out who they really are.*

Similar results were found by Fäcke in that students foreground autobiographical contexts in the way they relate and respond to fiction. Each student selectively focused on parts of the text which seemed to have some personal relevance to their life stories, and their

interpretations were largely determined by different contexts. Fäcke's research findings resonate with mine (as will become apparent later in this thesis) since the participants in my PhD study often referred to their own life experiences and personal trajectories as we discussed the literary text. Initially, these 'autobiographical' stories were incidental in my teaching, later they became part of the pedagogical model (see Chapter 3) that I developed for this study. This model consists of critical pedagogical interventions which trigger autobiographical memories using a reader-responses approach to literature. By foregrounding these experiences, pedagogies could be aimed at exploring the students' 'texts' in order to unmask ideologies and uncover stereotypes. The following section explores the concept of 'students' texts' in greater detail.

1.4.3 Students' 'Texts'

Kramersch (2000) postulates that literary texts are *pretexts* to analyse the students own 'texts' (i.e. their own responses to the literary text) as a pedagogical strategy for intercultural learning. Chapter 2 reviews the concept of the students' 'texts' in the discussions of reader-response theory; whilst Chapter 5 provides empirical evidence of exploration of students' 'texts' in order to unmask ideologies. In another empirical study, Kramersch finds no evidence of intercultural learning when the ideologies of the students' utterances are not explored. For Kramersch, the students' 'texts' need to be discussed and analysed, in addition to the literary text. Gonçalves Matos (2012) agrees with Kramersch on this point, and in her pedagogical model (see section 'Gonçalves Matos' Model' in Chapter 3) she builds in an element of revision of students' initial interpretations of literary texts with the aim of becoming critically aware of their images of others and those that others have of them. This view is supported by Burwitz-Melzer (2001), whose pedagogical model promotes reflection upon students' reactions and responses to the fictional world and the comparison of students' 'texts' for discussion of multiplicity of answers.

From her empirical studies, Kramersch (2000a) concludes that *conflict – faultlines, rupture points* or *telling moments*, as she calls them – is the catalyst for intercultural dialogue and reflection. The students' ideological standpoints embedded in their responses to the literary text and the ideologies of the text itself provide the pedagogical basis for intercultural exploration. For intercultural learning to happen, Kramersch argues, the teacher should create a teaching space to unmask these ideologies (in the students' responses and the text itself) and

explore the students' 'texts' in the classroom. These findings have been influential in the conceptualisation of this research and the development of critical pedagogical strategies, which I indicate in Chapter 6 in the specification of Intercultural Task One. For that activity, students' personal experiences (or students' 'texts', as Kramersch would label them) were transformed into pedagogical tasks and utilised as educational tools for the identification of stereotypical attitudes, taken-for-granted assumptions and implicit condemnation of others. The aim of this task was to use these personal experiences to raise awareness of prejudiced and ethnocentric attitudes from a position of distance.

Adopting a position of distance from one's own 'texts', of being an outsider as if examining somebody else's text for analysis and reflection, has been influential in the development of pedagogical approaches to challenge stereotyping. In this regard, the work of the German scholar Bredella (1996) has particularly shaped my thinking. He stresses the importance of being involved (i.e. being a participant) and detached (i.e. being an onlooker) in the reading process, a concept I return to in Chapter 3 on discussing the aesthetic experience of reading. Kramersch supports Bredella's postulation of students become critically aware of their assumptions and beliefs in a process of detachment and distance as they analyse their own texts. This exercise positions learners as 'onlookers' of their own 'texts' and engages them in a process of detachment, whilst being 'participants' at the same time (see also sections 'Pedagogical Model' in Chapter 3 and 'Critical Pedagogical Strategies' in Chapter 8).

In this process of decentering and seeing the world from new perspectives, students can become aware of their own preconceptions and presuppositions in relation to others. This process of 'detachment' and 'involvement' and of moving back and forth between the literary text and their own 'texts' can provide for opportunities to examine their own stereotypes and the impact they have upon others for their deconstruction. To this end, one of the intercultural tasks used for CS2 (see section 'Intercultural Task Two' in Chapter 6) was to encourage students to reread the literary text through the lens of identity construction and to search for instances in which the fictional characters take new positionings and exercise their agency. Another task developed with this aim in mind was to encourage students to discuss their own experiences of being stereotyped in order to provide them with an opportunity to voice the oppressive nature of prejudice and bias. This pedagogical strategy partially echoes Burwitz-Melzer's (2001) postulation of using literary texts to identify and name national stereotypes, prejudices and overgeneralisations in the literary text, although in her model there is no mention as to identifying stereotypes in the students' 'texts'. This PhD study seeks to

empirically answer the question of how the aforementioned critical pedagogical interventions can help students deconstruct their stereotypes for the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’.

1.5 Conclusions

The purpose of this introduction was to provide an overview of my PhD research and studies that have investigated the use of literature in L2 for intercultural exploration. A central question in the teaching methodology I develop is how undergraduates relate the reading of a literary text to their own world and experiences outside the classroom. The emphasis of the teaching lies in the readers themselves bringing their own knowledge, lived experiences, expertise and cultural backgrounds to the classroom. In this PhD study, I seek to investigate the relationship between students’ experiences and the literary text, their interpretations of the fictional characters in the stories and of their own experiences, and the intersection of their personal histories and trajectories with their viewpoints. I also take the responsibility to investigate as a researcher how effective the critical pedagogical approaches I used as a teacher have been to improve students’ ‘critical cultural awareness’ by the specific process of teaching students to deconstruct stereotypes.

This chapter has provided an overview of the study, its aim, research questions and argument of the thesis, in addition to a description of the genesis of the study. It has also outlined the contributions that empirical studies on the use of literary texts for intercultural learning have made to this PhD study; these have been categorised under three sub-headings (i) telling moments; (ii) autobiographies; and (iii) students’ ‘texts’. Furthermore, this introductory chapter has identified the gap in knowledge and how this study seeks to address it. It has also explained that the main aim of the study was to analyse how the use of Critical Pedagogy can be used to raise awareness of the oppressive nature of stereotyping for the harmful impact it can have on individuals with a view to creating a need in learners to develop strategies for the reduction of prejudice and bias. Chapter 2 reviews the theoretical framework that initially inspired my teaching and this research study; whilst Chapter 3 attempts to explain the concept of deconstruction of stereotypes. Chapter 4 gives a detailed explanation of the research methodology employed in this study, and Chapters 5, 6 and 7 describe the three case studies carried out for this PhD thesis. Finally, Chapter 8 provides a cross-case study analysis with

the aim of refining Byram's concept of 'critical cultural awareness' in answer to the general question in this study, and Chapter 9 outlines the conclusions of this research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this study aims to describe students' stereotypes about Hispanics, and also those stereotypes students perceive Hispanics have of them by using a literary text as a catalyst for bringing stereotypical thinking out to the fore. Furthermore, it aims to develop a theoretically-founded pedagogical model based on Critical Pedagogy for the deconstruction of stereotypes in order to test this empirically in this PhD study. Chapter 2 explores and defines key constructs used in this thesis, like 'schemata', 'stereotyping', 'essentialism', 'prejudice', 'marginalisation', 'discrimination' and '*othering*' and gives an overview of the major principles underlying Critical Pedagogy and the reasons why I have adopted this pedagogical standpoint for the deconstruction of stereotypes. It outlines different takes on the 'critical' and describes current trends in Intercultural Education, defines key terms used throughout this thesis, like 'intercultural competence' and 'critical cultural awareness'. The theoretical discussions reviewed in this chapter serve as the basis for the critical pedagogical approaches implemented for the deconstruction of stereotypes in intercultural education, and are later used to theorise the data in the three classroom-based case studies (Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

2.2 The 'Stereotypical'

This PhD study uses an Argentine literary text as the pedagogical catalyst for bringing Hispanic gender stereotypical beliefs out to the fore. Therefore, this first section of Chapter 2 reviews key concepts relating to stereotypes, like beliefs, schemata, stereotyping, *othering*, essentialism and prejudice. These are terms which are used throughout the thesis; as such they are defined and explained in this section.

2.2.1 Schemata

The use of literary texts in L2 educational settings opens windows to different foreign cultural realities, and this entrance into other ways of thinking and behaviours might challenge the learners' schemata. Schemata, drawn from the field of cognitive psychology, may be described as those structures we have in our head which have been formed through

our experiences, knowledge of the world, education, process of socialisation, reading, and so on. In other words, schemata can be defined as the learners' 'theory of the world in the head' (Smith 1975), which plays a key role in interpreting real-life experiences as well as in making sense of texts. As a result of this, students are likely to perceive the same text differently depending on their schemata. This notion resembles that of Rosenblatt (1978), who argues that readers bring to the text their own values and knowledge.

Schemata are not universal, but culturally shaped. Depending on their cultural realities, learners approach texts with their own assumptions and knowledge of the world. Therefore, they can easily misinterpret foreign cultural arenas. As outsiders, the foreign language reader is confronted with a number of challenges and difficulties to comprehend not only the words on the page, but also the meanings involving different schemata. Schemata can be revealed through stories. In this research, the stories are of two types: *fictional* (the Argentinian short story) and *real-life* (the stories narrated by the students themselves). The literary text that the language learners in this study read has implicit schemata and interpreting those schemata provides an insightful look into other cultural arenas and realities. Through the real-life stories that the students retell, learners introduce their own implicit schemata and thereby refer to the world as they see it and as they would expect others to see it. By comparing these stories in class, language learners compare and contrast schemata and enter into a dialogic discussion of intercultural exploration.

2.2.2 Othering

In this study, *othering* is the term used to explain when we imagine someone as:

alien and different to 'us' in such a way that 'they' are excluded from 'our' 'normal', 'superior' and 'civilized' group. Indeed, it is by imagining a foreign Other in this way that 'our' group can become more confident and exclusive. (Holliday, Hyde & Kullman 2010: 2)

Othering leads to stereotyping, essentialising and prejudice. Stereotypical thinking is the ‘default way of thinking about how we are different from each other’ (Holliday 2011: 4), which leads to ‘chauvinistic’, ‘moral’ judgements like “Spaniards are racist”, “Hispanic men are sexist”, “Latin American women lack confidence”, or “British students are lazy”. These statements are by their nature *othering* ‘in the sense that they are lumped together as though all the same under a grossly simplistic, exaggerated and homogeneous, imagined, single culture’ (Holliday, 2011: 5). I shall develop the concept of ‘stereotyping’ in more detail the next section.

Holliday (2011: 5) observes that the ‘discourse of Othering is so powerful that anyone who does not fit the essentialist definition is thought to be not a ‘real’ Chinese, Arab, Muslim or whatever’. Furthermore, Holliday (2011: 69-70) contends that ‘Othering is also essentialist in that the demonized image is applied to all members of the group or society which is being ‘Othered’ and that by constructing demonised images of others, like ‘they the weak’, ‘they the impure’ or ‘they the deficient’, we construct an idealised image of the self. Holliday argues that stereotyping leads to prejudices, which prevents us from understanding and communicating interculturally with others, by objectifying and packaging people in a process of ‘commodification’:

Commodification is a natural step in the politics of an idealized Self constructing a demonized Other, where an imagined, simplified, reduced Other is so packaged that it becomes an object which *can* be collected, bought and sold.’ (Holliday 2011: 84)

Othering can take many forms, from direct and overt hatred to more subtle indirect ways, which can be hard to identify, notice or be aware of. Fiske & Russell (2010: 117) note that the ‘face’ of bias and prejudice has ‘changed, adopting subtle manifestations’ and that research needs to use ‘more sophisticated methods to investigate hidden biases’. Their assertion resonates with van Dijk’s observation of contemporary forms of racism disguised behind a mask of democratic and respectable practices:

Especially because of their often **subtle** and symbolic nature, **many forms of the new racism are discursive: they are expressed, enacted and confirmed by text and talk**, such as everyday conversations, board meetings, job interviews, policies, laws, parliamentary debates, political propaganda,

textbooks, scholarly articles, movies, TV programmes and news reports in the press, among hundreds of other genres. They appear mere talk, and **far removed from the open violence and forceful segregation of the old racism**. Yet, they may be **just as effective to marginalize and exclude minorities**. They may **hurt** even more, especially when they seem to be so **normal**, so **natural** and so **commonsensical** to those who engage in such discourse and interaction. They are a form of ethnic **hegemony**, premised on seemingly legitimate ideologies and attitudes, and often tacitly accepted by most members of the dominant majority group. (van Dijk 2000: 34) [emphasis added]

van Dijk's point here is that contemporary forms of racism are 'subtle' enacted in the ways we speak about others using what we regard as 'normal', 'natural' and 'commonsensical' assumptions, which exclude and marginalise others in a hegemonic process. Given that these forms of 'racism' are 'subtle', an important aim of intercultural education should be to unmask these 'natural' and 'commonsensical' ideologies with a view to learning to control our biases. I shall return to the notions of 'hegemony' and 'ideology' as used in Critical Pedagogy in Chapter 8 in my discussions of 'critical cultural awareness'.

2.2.3 Stereotyping

Stereotyping is one way of *othering*. The term 'stereotype' was introduced by Lippmann (1922) to refer to the pictures we have in our heads about particular social groups, and early research on stereotyping focused on the inflexible mental representations that individuals have of others. More recent research however stresses the dynamic aspects of stereotyping as a way of (over)generalising and simplifying complex social environments. Correll *et al* (2010: 46) define stereotypes as:

category-based generalizations that link category members to typical attributes. For example, one might consider the stereotype that physicists are intelligent but socially awkward or that accountants are organized but boring.

Each stereotype connects typical members of a social category with distinctive traits.

Stereotypes are cognitive schemata, i.e. beliefs about groups, simplifications of a complex environment, which create expectations about behaviours. The fact that individuals can anticipate behaviours and prepare for them can be seen as positive and enriching, but stereotypes can limit and constrain since individuals can develop the ability to perceive only behaviours and characteristics that are consistent with the stereotype. Taylor (in press) observes that stereotypes are formed because the world is too complex and too big and individuals have a psychological need to categorise; it is the way 'our brains cope with the confusing nature of the world'. Stereotypes may come from a variety of sources, like personal contacts (family, friends), the mass media, personal experience, and he argues that the main problem with stereotyping in the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is that many people wrongly believe that there is a 'grain of truth' in them.

During the 1970s and early 1980s Henri Tajfel and John Turner developed the basic conceptual components of Social Identity Theory, their greatest contribution to the field of social psychology. The theory explains stereotypical behaviour and relations between groups and distinguishes between 'social identity' and 'personal identity'. Social identity is the knowledge individuals have which comes from belonging to a certain group, and which gives them a sense of who they are, based on their group membership(s), whereas 'personal identity' refers to the ways individuals define themselves in terms of personal attributes. In other words, 'social identity' refers to categorisations in terms of similarities with members of certain groups as opposed to other groups, whilst 'personal identity' refers to categorisations that define the individual as unique in terms of their individual differences from other members of the social groups they belong to. Self-categorisation leads to self-stereotyping – or auto-stereotyping as opposed to hetero-stereotyping – and depersonalises members of social groups:

Because category members are viewed as sharing the same social identity and associated group prototypical attributes, they are perpetually *depersonalized*. Perceptual depersonalization of outgroup members is usually termed stereotyping. (Abrams & Hogg 2010: 182)

Social identity and self-categorisation theories emphasise that when:

personal identity (the self perceived as an individual) is salient, a person's individual needs, standards, beliefs, and motives primarily determine behaviour. In contrast, when social identity (the self perceived as a member of a group) is salient, 'people come to perceive themselves as more interchangeable exemplars of a social category than as unique personalities defined by their individual differences from others' (Dovidio *et al* 2010: 15)

Tajfel argued that group membership is emotionally charged, and that the social groups people belong to are viewed positively leading to ethnocentrism, i.e. the belief of superiority of one's ethnic group:

Tajfel's early findings in this area led him to first define social identity and explain how a social-identity related motive to make one's ingroup distinct in evaluatively positive ways from relevant outgroups underpinned ethnocentric perception, behavioural ingroup favouritism, and the existence of status hierarchies in society. (Abrams & Hogg 2010: 180)

In order to improve our self-image we enhance the status of the group to which we belong and are prejudiced against others. For groups to achieve positive social identity, we compare our group with others, view it as superior and discriminate against other social groups. According to Self-Categorisation theory (Turner 1984, 1985; Turner *et al* 1987; Oakes, Haslam & Turner 1994), people are identified in relation to their social category (e.g. 'us' British, 'them' Hispanics) as a way to understand the complexities of the social environment. This process of self-categorisation divides the world into binaries - "us" (the in-group) and "them" (the out-group). Binaries are two ideas, opposite in meaning and mutually exclusive, being paired up and polarised. These binary oppositions tend to be ideological and ethnocentric and do not allow for variables; therefore deconstructing binaries should occupy a central role in intercultural education. One of the ways to move beyond the binaries is by engaging learners to discuss events or incidents in which a binary opposition is challenged and to provide thick descriptions of those moments.

2.2.4 Essentialism

Essentialism is probably one of the most negative characteristics of stereotyping, i.e. the mental representations and categorisations that we have of others are essentialist by nature. As stated before, the world is too big and complex and so there is a natural tendency for individuals to categorise and ‘pigeon-hole’ others based on essentialist criteria. Essentialism refers to our tendency to act as if there was an inherent essence, a fixed biology or an underlying homogeneous structure to make groups of people the way they are. Holliday (2011: 4) explains that:

Essentialism presents people’s individual behaviour as entirely defined and constrained by the cultures in which they live so that the stereotype becomes the essence of who they are. The most common aspects of essentialism (...) are to do with separate cultures as physical territories.

Recent research demonstrates that people believe that there are inherent innate essences to social groups (Demoulin, Leyens & Yzerbyt, 2006; Denson, Lickel, Curtis, Stenstrom & Ames, 2006; Estrada, Yzerbyt & Seron, 2004; Prentice & Miller, 2006), and this is reflected in a variety of popular expressions (such as "lo llevan en la sangre" [it is carried in the blood]) and deeply-held social racist beliefs. Holliday argues that essentialism gives ‘easy’ answers for culture, and has become the underlying principle that guides management and foreign language study, where intercultural communication is reduced to simple formulae and easy recipes. Constructions are never neutral, but ideological, and this type of essentialism is what Holliday terms ‘culturism’, which he equates to the same essentialism that drives sexism and racism, and defines in the following way:

From essentialism there is just a small step to *culturism* (...) This is similarly constructed as racism or sexism in that the imagined characteristics of the ‘culture’ (or ‘women’ or ‘Asians’) are used to define the person. (Holliday 2010: 27)

According to Holliday (2011: 4), essentialism occurs when one believes that behaviour is ‘defined and constrained’ by culture, especially when separate cultures are viewed as physical territories. Holliday asserts that essentialism is closely linked to a ‘default way of thinking’, such as the thought processes of the type ‘Hispanic men are *machos* who treat women as sex objects’. Comments like this, Holliday contends, carry with it a ‘moralistic judgement’, which implies by default that ‘British men are sensitive who treat women as individuals’. For Holliday, it is easy to construct chauvinistic theories, and Leyens & Demoulin (2010: 200) add that:

It is well-known that people who are convinced of the reality of a given idea unconsciously behave in a biased way. Because people treat assumptions as facts, they display biased behaviours that transform the idea into reality [...] Even when they have almost no experience with exemplars of specific outgroups, people readily attribute outgroup members the stereotypes shared by their ingroup.

Therefore, pedagogies for the reduction of stereotypes need to investigate the assumptions learners have, unmask dominant discourses and raise awareness of ‘culturist’ language in order to become more interculturally competent. Holliday warns against the normalisation and naturalisation of ‘culturist’ dominant discourses hidden in language for the destructive potential these ideologies carry. The effect that they may have on others when we speak or think about them can be negative; therefore there is a need to uncover these ideologies in everyday talk.

2.2.5 Prejudice

Stereotyping leads to prejudice, which is another form of *othering*. Prejudice carries a positive or negative feeling or attitude towards members of a social group. This emotional component may include feelings of admiration, like, anger, fear, disgust, discomfort and even hatred and cause people to behave in certain ways towards members of social groups.

Although most researchers define prejudice as a negative attitude, it should be noted that in some cases prejudice can take the form of pride and admiration.

Prejudice is the negative prejudgement of individuals and groups on the basis of unrecognized, unsound, and inadequate evidence. Because these negative attitudes occur so frequently, they take on a commonsense or ideological character that is often used to justify acts of discrimination. (McLaren 2009: 72)

If applied to a certain races, it is called *racism*, if prejudice is based on gender it is *sexism* and if it is based on culture, it is called *culturism*. From stereotypes and prejudice, it is a small step to discrimination, marginalisation and exclusion. Discrimination refers to unfair unequal treatment or negative biased behaviour towards individuals due to group membership, whilst marginalisation is generally understood as the exclusion from meaningful participation in society (Young 2000). Further to the effects that prejudiced behaviour can have on others, stereotyped groups are more at risk of poor performance if placed in uncomfortable situations of being negatively stereotyped by others. This take on stereotyping has been developed by the theory of stereotype threat, initially defined by Steele and Aronson (1995). This negative bias is the result of cognitive processes (e.g. categorisation), socialisation processes, personality and the values that individuals uphold. Despite commonplace discourses of equality and justice and the fact that people regard prejudice as unjust, offensive and abominable, it still remains deeply rooted in the psyche of those who condemn discriminatory practices based on negative biases (Monteith &McQueary 2010: 494).

2.3 The ‘Critical’

2.3.1 Takes on the ‘Critical’

A myriad of theoretical constructs have saturated the academic field with the word *critical*. In this thesis in addition to critical thinking and critical reflection, concepts such as ‘critical cultural awareness’ (Byram 1997; Guilherme 2002), ‘critical cosmopolitanism’ (Holliday 2010; 2011), and ‘critical pedagogy’ (Giroux 1992, 2009; Freire 1985, 2005, 2009, 2010;

McLaren 2009; Phipps & Guilherme, 2004) are used. ‘Critical Pedagogy’, Byram and Guilherme’s notions of ‘critical cultural awareness’ and ‘critical cosmopolitanism’ are reviewed later in this chapter. In this section I outline other conceptualisations of criticality for their relevance in this study in the development of the pedagogical approaches. Barnett (1997) develops his concept of criticality as an attempt to bridge the gap between higher education and society and unpicks the notion of what he terms a ‘critical being’ and the concept of being ‘critical’. According to Barnett, criticality involves three main domains - developing knowledge (*critical reason*), the self (*critical self-reflection*) and the acting in the world (*critical action*). Houghton and Yamada (2012: 12) observe that:

Barnett states that the purpose of higher education, although it is not exclusive to higher education, is to develop the *critical being*, which distinguishes his ideas from those that have shaped the fields of critical pedagogy and critical thinking. **Critical pedagogy promotes a specific direction for criticality and the action that follows from it, whereas the *critical being* does not in itself pre-suppose the direction of change that critical reflection and challenge might take.** Work on critical thinking, on the other hand focuses on skills-development and does not have the interconnectedness of Barnett’s vision [...] He also highlights the importance of clarifying the *purpose* of criticality, rather than just seeking to define it (Barnett 1997: 65) [...] **Barnett is arguing for the development of an *integrated form of criticality* that leads to social action in the world**, and the development of the individual towards this end should be the mission of higher education. [italics in original; emphasis added]

Barnett can thus be considered to be more of a critical pedagogue for his focus on ‘action in the world’; as Yamada (2010: 156) points out, the ultimate goal of critical pedagogy is ‘action in the world’, and education is seen as a way of fostering critical citizens who can actively engage in transformative action in democratic societies. Therefore, critical pedagogy has an ‘explicitly political mission’ for ‘self and social transformation’, a concept I shall develop later in this chapter in my discussions of critical pedagogy. Based on Barnett’s model, the University of Southampton conducted the Criticality Project to explore

empirically Barnett's concept of criticality to bridge the gap between theory and practice in two disciplines: Modern Languages and Social Work. The findings of this study show that intermediate and advanced levels of language study and content-based courses can develop criticality in various ways. It was also found that Barnett's domains and levels in the development of criticality are not as clear-cut as he presents them; and that some aspects of criticality in his model did not emerge in their data (Brumfit *et al* 2005; Johnston 2011). In another empirical study, Yamada (2012) also tested Barnett's model with beginner level Japanese language courses in the British university context and found that criticality can be enhanced through targeted instruction, although it can also develop on its own even at beginner levels of language study. Her results confirm those of the Criticality Project, with core concepts of criticality found in both studies. These are 'scepticism', 'inquiry', 'suspension of judgement', 'comparison and contrast', 'reflection' and 'the cultural dimension':

Scepticism involves stopping to question what is being presented [...] scepticism towards commonly accepted truisms is what critical pedagogy and critical thinking have in common (Houghton and Yamada 2012: 57)

Criticality also involves 'suspended judgement', which involves delaying or stopping judgement from 'happening for a while, or until a decision is made about it' (Houghton and Yamada 2012: 57). It involves 'comparison and contrast', which Houghton and Yamada explain as the process through which individuals 'learn about themselves better as they look into a mirror, metaphorically speaking, and see themselves and their own culture reflected in its image as they explore cultural difference' (Houghton and Yamada 2012: 59). Following this metaphor, in this PhD study students look at themselves in a mirror where they see the ways in which they are perceived by others (see Case Study 3, Chapter 7), and in this process they speak about their experiences of being stereotyped and *othered*.

In this respect, Luke (2004: 26-27) develops two takes on the 'critical' based on the tenets of Critical Pedagogy as he discusses issues relating to being *othered*. One 'as an intellectual, deconstructive, textual, and cognitive analytic task' and the other one 'as a form of embodied

political anger, alienation, and alterity’, noting that for the ‘critical to happen’, there must be some ‘discomfort’, a feeling which can perhaps only be experienced when one has been *othered*. Following this, Luke argues for a ‘very different sense of the critical’, which involves the ‘bodily experience of oppression, of alterity’, of having been the object of ‘symbolic and physical violence’ and of having had the ‘biographical experience of having been the object of power and violence’. Further, Luke contends that a ‘bodily experience’ remains just that until it is reflected upon, and speaks of an ‘out-of-body experience’, whereby individuals step outside of themselves to watch themselves being *othered* in order to critically analyse those experiences and name them as such. I shall develop Luke’s notions of the ‘critical’ in greater detail in Chapters 7 and 8.

Criticality also involves ‘reflection’, i.e. the ability to question what is presented, particularly reflection upon the experience. This is congruent with what critical pedagogy postulates in terms of reflecting on action and ‘from reflection upon action to a new action’ (Freire 1985: 50). Further, Houghton and Yamada (2012: 55) explain that the areas of critical pedagogy and critical thinking have grown and developed separately and have different goals. Whilst the goal of critical pedagogy is ‘action in the world’, the goal of critical thinking is to develop skills of persuasion, justification of one’s claims, etc without any connection beyond the educational context. Moreover, critical pedagogy promotes citizenship skills for transformative action in the world, whilst critical thinking fosters the development of criticality in teaching and learning. To conclude, this PhD thesis positions itself in the field of Critical Pedagogy, and as such the next section explains the reasons why this pedagogical approach has been adopted in the teaching and research of this study.

2.3.2 Why Critical Pedagogy?

Critical Pedagogy is the over-arching framework of this study as it has provided me with the tools to sensitise students to the oppressive nature of stereotyping and to foster ‘critical cultural awareness’. Critical Pedagogy has helped the students and I name the *-isms*. In class we talked about instances of racism, culturism, sexism and essentialism. We also spoke about marginalisation, discrimination and patriarchy. The students talked about their experiences of being the dominant and the non-dominant group, of stereotyping and of being stereotyped as

suggested by Luke before. Critical Pedagogy can be used to help students to deconstruct stereotypes and knowledge that only benefits dominant groups. In order to challenge these beliefs, students needed to consciously acknowledge the existence of such beliefs. Through problem posing, as a novice critical pedagogue, I attempted to raise students' awareness that stereotypes are culturally mediated, socially and ideologically constructed. Critical Pedagogy helped the students and me interrogate the relationship between power and knowledge, and posing the questions above was a fundamental exercise to unmask unjust power relations in an unequal world. As a critical pedagogue, I attempted to find answers to crucial questions that relate to the 'who', 'whose', 'what', 'why', and 'how'. Critical Pedagogy gave voice to those students who suffered from discrimination, marginalisation and stereotyping, with counterhegemonic discourses. These discourses revealed diverse personal narratives and lived experiences related to stereotypical oppression with regard to gender, sexuality and cultural difference. Critical Pedagogy provided us with the tools to deconstruct taken-for-granted assumptions that view Anglocentric ideologies as dominant, by foregrounding the exclusion and marginalisation of British Erasmus students. Importantly, Critical Pedagogy provided me with the foundation to initiate my journey onto the critical road, with some interesting results, but also with some unresolved issues.

Critical Pedagogy has also changed my perspective on my role as an intercultural educator. I have shifted my position of being an '(inter)cultural ambassador', holder of cultural knowledge, to that of a 'cultural worker' and 'transformative intellectual', in dialogue with the students. The teacher as an '(inter)cultural ambassador' risks transmitting a static, fragmented, and incomplete picture of culture, taught as if it was something 'out there' to be learnt as a set of facts in parrot-like manner. This type of teaching would only provide learners with a decontextualised, stereotyped and misleading picture of the culture under study (Crozet & Liddicoat 2000). By contrast, the 'cultural workers' and 'transformative intellectuals' that Critical Pedagogy advocates develop Houghton's (2010) addition to Byram's model of *savoir se transformer: knowing how to become*, for they deal with a more fluid concept of culture allowing students to learn to develop themselves by exploring and interrogating their own values, beliefs and attitudes. This is the reason why I feel I have performed participant observation in this study, although strictly speaking, for participant observation I should have been another student myself. My role as another 'learner' in the classroom, or 'teacher-student' in Freirean terms, has positioned me in a place away from the

act of deposit-making, in dialogue with the students, the ‘student-teachers’, constantly learning. The following section attempts to define Critical Pedagogy and reviews major concepts underpinning its philosophy.

2.3.3 Critical Pedagogy

Critical Pedagogy is theoretically and ideologically founded in the Eurocentric philosophical and educational schools of thought of Critical Theory and Postmodernism, influenced by French Poststructuralism. However, Critical Pedagogy owes much of its thinking to the Brazilian Paulo Freire, whose work in a Latin American context, gives a non-Eurocentric stance to the pedagogy (Guilherme 2002). Critical Pedagogy is difficult to define, for its flexibility and eclecticism and multiple applications in diverse social and historical contexts. However, there are major principles underpinning its philosophy in its search for empowering culturally marginalised and economically disenfranchised individuals. In this PhD study, I position myself as the ‘cultural other’ - I am a UK resident teacher, an immigrant from the South American world, who has at times felt stigmatised, *othered* and marginalised. I feel I am speaking from the margins. My teaching has become the site where I strive to ‘educate’ others about the harmful effects of stereotyping. I am acting in the real world on what I have learnt. In my endeavours, I attempt to raise my students’ critical consciousness of the oppressive nature of stereotyping. Therefore, I situate myself in a space, which is sometimes on the border between being an insider and an outsider; some other times I feel an insider, whilst at others I feel an outsider. On occasions, this border feels like a boundary, or a dividing line, polarising *them* (my students) and *me* (their teacher); on other occasions the border is not even perceived. I dwell in this space, which has become more and more comfortable as time goes by, as I understand it better.

Early critical pedagogy was greatly influenced and shaped by the Frankfurt School and owes much of its current thinking to the works of Henry Giroux, Professor of Education at Pennsylvania State University, and to Paulo Freire. Critical Pedagogy is a pedagogy of ‘reflection, dissent, difference, dialogue, empowerment, action and hope’ (Guilherme 2002: 17). It means addressing questions of power, social injustice and inequality associated with class, race and gender. It also means interrogating taken-for-granted assumptions and

hegemonic discourses. Critical Pedagogy is concerned with democratic education and social and individual improvement (Giroux, 1992), social solidarity and public responsibility. It is a dialectical and dialogical pedagogy of reproduction and production of knowledge. Critical Pedagogy is an established field, whereas Intercultural Education in foreign language teaching is a developing field. The key figures in the application of a critical pedagogical model to the field of intercultural education are Manuela Guilherme and Alison Phipps. Both scholars centre their discussions on citizenship through critical pedagogical approaches.

2.3.4 Paulo Freire

Freire, recognised as the founder of current conceptualisations of Critical Pedagogy, draws his thinking from Dewey's educational theory. However, Critical Pedagogy does not end with Freire, although his influence as a Brazilian working in a Latin American context, as opposed to Western European, cannot be denied. Freire himself started his educational work as a young man in both rural and urban poor areas following his Christian convictions. His internationally acclaimed book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, provides a solid foundation for the development of Critical Pedagogy. Radical critical pedagogues stress the importance of historical consciousness and advocate knowledge that informs the oppressed about their own situation of subordination, and knowledge of ways to develop a discourse to free themselves from being historically dominated (or oppressed). Freire developed a pedagogy that allows those traditionally silenced to examine the role that society has played in the formation of their own ideologies. It also gives them the tools to conform or resist them in their own personal trajectories. In this way, individuals can start the struggle to lead a self-managed existence (Giroux 2009: 47).

2.3.5 Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Freire passionately criticises education as an act of depositing content, whereby the teacher is the depositor and students memorise information mechanically; thus becoming the depositories. Freire encapsulates this 'ideology of oppression' in binary terms, with teachers and students in direct opposition. The teacher is knowledgeable and the students are ignorant. Therefore, the students need to be taught, talked to and indoctrinated:

The teacher talks about **reality** as if it were **motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable**. Or else he expounds on a **topic** completely **alien to the existential experience of the students**. His task is to “fill” the students with the contents of his narration – contents which 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, alienated, and **alienating verbosity**. (Freire 2009: 53)
[emphasis added]

Freire’s point here is that the students are seen as passive recipients of a fragmented ‘motionless’, ‘static’, ‘compartmentalized’ and ‘predictable’ view of reality, who accept the curricular choices imposed onto them by the teacher. These curricular choices are for Freire topics far removed from the students’ experiences; thus ‘alien’ to them. Students’ creativity is annulled and criticality suppressed in the best interests of the oppressors. Freire refers to this oppression as *the banking approach*, whereby students are domesticated and overwhelmingly controlled by the power of the teacher. Banking education, as an exercise of domination, is sometimes not perceived by teachers themselves, who are unwittingly unaware of the need to abandon such practices. The critical pedagogue regards students as critical intellectuals in dialogue with the teacher in a process whereby the ‘teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers his earlier considerations as the students express their own’ (Freire 2009: 57).

Pavlenko (2005: 55) advocates Freire’s pedagogy of organising instruction around students’ ‘daily experiences’ rather than around a ‘fully predetermined curriculum’, i.e. a pedagogy that focuses on ‘generative themes based on student life, not on didactic lectures based on teacherly discourse’ (Shor 2009: 298). Freire saw ‘generative themes’ taken from students’ immediate experiences and everyday life as the starting points for problem-posing, and as central resources for critical learning in the curriculum. Freire’s critical pedagogical approach involves teaching learners how to read the world, and employs students’ language and experiences as the basis of instruction:

Themes may come from **an incident in a particular student's life, a problem in the community, or an idea that a student latched into from the media, the news, or a classroom activity**. Writing, reading, talking, acting, and reflecting are the key ways through which generative themes develop. (Peterson 2009: 307)[emphasis added]

A 'generative theme' approach is organic in its development, and as Peterson states, it could be an 'incident', a 'problem' or an 'idea' that emerges from what the students bring to the classroom. This concept is further developed in Chapters 3, 5 and 7 in my discussions of the critical pedagogical interventions used in this study, whereby students delved deeper into their year-abroad experiences. The 'generative theme' teaching approach stimulated students to narrate their experiences of intercultural conflict with Hispanics and their stories of oppression through stereotyping. In this process, students became *subjects*, rather than *objects*, of the world. Critical Pedagogy places students as *subjects*, right in the centre of the curriculum.

Freire (1985, 2005, 2009, 2010) proposes a process of 'humanization', whereby individuals attempt to be more human by using their knowledge for self and social transformation through the elimination of 'pain, oppression, and inequality' (McLaren 2009: 74). In McLaren's terms, this is 'praxis'; i.e. an action phase that involves individuals using their learning to promote 'justice and freedom'. For McLaren, critical pedagogy should empower learners to develop the 'kind of courage needed to change the social order where necessary'. Wink (2011: 144) defines 'praxis' as the 'union of our theory and practice'; whereas McLaren (2009) defines it as 'informed actions', i.e. actions based on our learning. Praxis means using our theory or new knowledge for self and social transformation in order to improve one's own lives and those of others. According to Shor (2009: 293), personal experience gives relevance and significance to theory; 'theory' alone is just empty words. It necessitates reflection on experience and action, or in Freirean terms, "praxis". Theory without experience is 'words without the world' and abstract discourse. Praxis means rejecting the banking approach to embrace liberation. It means replacing the practice of deposit-making with problem-posing education. Problem-posing education is a humanist liberating praxis that overcomes the dichotomy teacher-student through dialogue, whereby in

Freirean terms ‘the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers’ (Freire 2009: 56).

For Freire, education is a political process that serves the interests of particular groups (Allman 2009: 421). Freire believes that dehumanization is widespread. The vast majority of people, regardless of their government, are alienated from critical thinking and decision-making. The goal of Critical Pedagogy is to humanize; therefore his distinction between “being in the world” and “being with the world”:

According to Freire animals are “**beings in the world**”; they must **respond and adapt to given conditions**. People, too, can be “beings in the world” either when they lack a scientific understanding of the natural world or the necessary “scientific” (dialectal) understanding of their social formation. To be thoroughly, humanly “**with the world**” means that people would have developed a **critical perception** and **collectively would have taken their environmental, social, political and economic destiny into their own hands**. But even to begin that struggle is to become “beings with the world”. (Allman 2009: 422) [emphasis added]

Freire’s point here lies in individuals becoming more human by developing as critical intellectuals and by taking the responsibility for transformation in their society. This is only possible through a process of *conscientização*. *Conscientização* is often equated to ‘consciousness raising’ and refers to the process whereby students raise awareness of the social realities that shape their lives, and make sense of their own experiences as a response to a dialogic ‘problem-posing’ method of education. In ‘problem-posing’ education, teachers and students figure out the world dialogically. From a Freirean perspective, it is only after a process of awareness-raising that certain elements, which had always existed, start to be perceived, reflected and acted upon. The notion of *conscientização* will be revisited in Chapter 8 in my discussions of students becoming aware of their ethnocentric prejudiced talk and of their negative images of *otherness*.

2.3.6 Identity-Focused Critical Pedagogy

The second operational research question in this PhD study reads *when taught with an 'identity-focused' critical pedagogical approach, how do students deconstruct stereotypes?*; therefore this section reviews an identity-focused approach to critical pedagogy, whose theoretical basis lies in the postulations made by Bracher (2006) and Brenner (2010). Bracher proposes a critical pedagogical approach centred on issues of identity to achieve social change and solve problems like prejudice, racism and sexism, and advocates the use of fiction for the study of identities. He argues that students who understand the dynamics of identity will become more sensitive to questions of social justice:

His aim is to (re)integrate the study of literary and other texts not only into the fabric of the curriculum but also into students' subjective experiences of encountering the Other through language/culture study. (Brenner 2010: 131)

Brenner (2010: 131) proposes a model of Critical Pedagogy that focuses on identity à la Bracher, which he refers to as a 'pedagogy of identity or identities' and advocates a teaching strategy in which students are encouraged to keep a record of their metacognitive processes by 'keeping a journal, for instance, of their thoughts, emotions, and action orientations when encountering real and fictionalized others'. This strategy aims to help learners to 'intervene in the formation of their own identities' (Brenner 2010: 133). One of the teaching techniques that Brenner (2010: 135-136) proposes in his critical pedagogical model is to encourage language learners to carefully record their responses to reading for later analysis, discussion and reflection:

This means that rather than having students offer an interpretation or judgement articulating what they think the *author* (or text or character or teacher) means, we redirect their attention back to **their own responses, thereby assisting them to become more aware of their own identity contents and sociopsychological issues**. This is not an anything-goes pedagogy where the teacher abdicates all responsibility for learning or

conveying his or her expertise, nor is it purely self-referential; rather, it is multiply intertextual, including **the students' own "texts" (i.e., his or her own personal stories)** as a foot in the door to connecting with texts as personal windows. These are windows on new cultures and new language, to be sure, but also **windows on the student's own self**. Through such strategies, students can begin to recognize and **take responsibility for their own development as individuals and members of collectives**. (Brenner 2010: 136; italics in original) [emphasis added]

Brenner's point here is that theories of identity may assist learners in the process of analysing their own texts; i.e. their own responses to fiction; thus opening 'windows on the student's own self' with a view to becoming responsible for their 'own development as individuals and members of collectives'.

The notion of 'identity' has been much theorised, problematised and contested in recent years. Block (2010: 2-3) notes that 'before the 1990s there was little or no work examining how language learners position themselves and are positioned by others depending on where they are, who they are with and what they are doing', but since then scholars have 'put the self at the centre of research, as something worthy of empirical study' by looking at their 'pasts, presents and futures; their trials and tribulations and their aspirations; and in short, who they are'. Applied linguists have adopted a poststructuralist approach to the concept of identity and share some common ideas. They hold the position that identity is (re)constructed and (re)negotiated every time we speak, act and think. Whilst stereotyping freeze-frames our thinking and fossilises representation (Pickering 2001), identity is now conceptualised as fluid, hybrid, complex and multi-faceted, in a permanent state of flux, constantly shifting and changing. Others refer to it as a site of struggle over power. Norton (2000: 5) understands identity as the way 'a person understands his or her relationship with the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future'; whilst Holliday (2010: 21) contends that:

A good interpersonal communicator [...] needs to be aware of issues surrounding the concept of identity. Before we can communicate with people who are different to ourselves, we need to understand something about how they present themselves as being or belonging to certain groups [...] one should respect what people say about themselves and see this as an artefact of who they are without over-generalising.

Whilst some researchers use ‘identity’ and ‘subjectivity’ interchangeably; others, such as Kramersch, suggest that they should be kept separate as they come from different theoretical discourses. For Kramersch (2009), identity collocates with social capital, investment, agency, participation as, for example, a woman, a mother, an immigrant etc. ‘Subjectivity’, on the other hand, collocates with memory, imagination and emotion, and has to do with the ways individuals interpret past events and the ways their futures are imagined.

Stereotyping reinforces ‘powerful social myths’ (Pickering 2001: 48) and denies change, whereas identity cannot be understood without the power to exercise our ‘agency’ to enact change. Agency is generally understood as the capacity to make choices and act in the world. Ros i Solé (2007: 205) defines L2 learners as ‘dynamic agents’ who ‘take the initiative’ and exercise control over their own actions through language:

This agency, however, is not unidirectional but co-constructed, both by the sociocultural environment and by those around the L2 user. Learners exercise their agency by making identity choices and by positioning themselves in relation to their context and the other discourse participants [...] learners achieve L2 subjectivities by exercising agency [...] They take positions of power and exercise their agency in the relations established in the second language. (Ros i Solé 2007: 205)

Phipps & Gonzalez (2004: 73) point out that learners accumulate ‘powers and understandings’ that enable them to ‘become actively critical social beings’, whilst for

Kramersch (2003b), 'the self only exists in the boundaries between the self and the other, in relation to them and the points of view that they have taken' (quoted in: Ros i Solé 2007: 213).

As stated before, applied linguists in language learning have adopted the construct of identity from a poststructuralist standpoint in the field of social sciences. Weedon (1997), a key theorist in poststructuralist discussions of identity, prefers to use the term 'subjectivities'. For her, subjectivities are precarious, contradictory and in a state of flux, constantly being (re)constructed in discourse every time we think or speak. By contrast, stereotypes obscure the complex subjectivities in individuals and are ideologically constructed; whilst identity is discursively constructed. These discourses refer both to linguistic and non-linguistic dimensions. Gee (1996) and Blommaert (2005) assert that any semiotic behaviour can express the individual's subjectivity, for example bodily movement, clothes, gestures, values, ideologies, attitudes, beliefs, ways of thinking, of speaking, of viewing the world, of acting, of behaving. Discourses are thus resources of identity construction.

Individuals locate and are located by others through interaction across time and space. The past, present and future are key in subject positioning, in addition to spatial imagination, which plays a crucial role in the construction of identities. Much the same can happen with the way others are 'constructed' and 'situated', for these 'imagined' subject positions may affect how we relate interculturally with others. Block (2010: 27) states that:

Identities are about negotiating new subject positions at the crossroads of the past, present and future. Individuals are shaped by their sociohistories, but they also shape their sociohistories as life goes on.

Indeed, subject positions are adopted on a moment-to-moment and day-to-day basis through social interaction, and can be either self-generated or imposed by others. As a result of this, identities can be produced by others, and are in a permanent process of reconstruction and negotiation. An identity-focused critical pedagogical approach, based on the theoretical

notions discussed in this section, is revisited in Chapter 3 in the sub-heading entitled ‘Deconstructing Stereotypes’ of the Pedagogical Approach and in Chapter 6 in the analysis of CS2 data. In this case study, students responded to a teaching strategy in which they were required to analyse the short story ‘Norma y Ester’ through the theoretical lens of identity construction.

2.3.7 The Transformative Intellectual

The ‘transformative intellectual’ is someone who transcends time and space in their own personal experiences and engages in a process of reflection that looks at ‘past experiences’ and relates them to ‘future action’ (Díaz-Greenberg & Nevin 2004: 51). In critical pedagogical terms, ‘transformative intellectuals’ are considered to be, and who consider themselves to be, ‘historical’, i.e. they understand that a situation is a ‘historical reality susceptible of transformation’ (Freire 2009: 59). Thus, the ‘transformative intellectual’ starts with the ‘here and now’, i.e. with present situations and circumstances in order to move on into the future. The future is therefore hopeful and prophetic, and can only lead to ‘humanization’. ‘Transformation’ is a key concept in critical pedagogy, which in Wink’s words means:

Freire and Marx provide deep roots for critical pedagogy that are reflected in **learners turning their beliefs into behaviours for self- and social transformation**. The ideas we grapple with are not just for the safe confines of the four walls of the classroom. The whole idea is **to improve the quality of life for ourselves and for others in our community**. (Wink 2011: 114)
[emphasis added]

In critical pedagogical terms, students and teachers are ‘transformative intellectuals’, a view that I have developed in this PhD research through the implementation of critical pedagogy. Based on the understanding that the ‘future is something we build in the present’ (Wink 2011: 111), students in this study were encouraged to raise their awareness of the oppressive nature of stereotyping *in the hope of* future collective struggle and transformation for a more

egalitarian society. This is the view of ‘transformative intellectual’ that I take in this study; i.e. an individual who transcends time and space, moves forward and looks ahead, but also looks at the past in order to understand who and what they are, so that they can build their future more wisely. In this study, the ‘transformative intellectual’ is someone who transcends time and space ‘to “imaginary worlds” of other languages where gender and sexuality may be constructed and performed differently than in their own culture’ (Pavlenko 2005: 55). Pavlenko argues that ‘transformation’ takes place in classroom discussions as students explore ‘oppression through dominant discourses of gender’ and produce ‘discourses (and, thus, subjectivities) of resistance’ through ‘storytelling’ and ‘autobiography’.

Freire views teachers as ‘transformative intellectuals’ too – or ‘cultural workers’ – who either domesticate or liberate students. Teachers can either ‘domesticate students into believing the dominant view’ (Wink 2011: 69) or liberate them through praxis with the potential of transformation. Teachers can either perpetuate the asymmetrical relations of power or lead to liberation and emancipation providing opportunities for transformation. Shor (2009: 291) asserts that:

By inviting students to develop critical thought and action on various subject matters, the teacher herself develops as a **critical-democratic educator** who **becomes more informed of the needs, conditions, speech habits, and perceptions of the students, from which knowledge she designs activities and into which she integrates her special expertise.** Besides learning in-process how to design a course *for* the students, the critical teacher also learns how to design the course *with* the students (co-governance). A **mutual learning process** develops the **teacher’s democratic competence in negotiating the curriculum and in sharing power.** [emphasis added]

Shor’s point here is that in the critical pedagogical classroom students bring the knowledge, the content and the themes, from which teachers design tasks and activities; thus teachers develop their democratic competence. ‘Transformative intellectuals’ utilise the newly gained knowledge to become critical intellectuals, responsible for ‘self and social transformation’ to

eliminate ‘pain’ and ‘oppression’ and to promote ‘equality’ (McLaren 2009). This is, in Freire terms, the ultimate goal of critical pedagogy – ‘humanisation’, i.e. ‘transformative intellectuals’ try to become more ‘human’ by developing their knowledge, by understanding their personal experiences better and by giving personal relevance and significance to theory (Shor 2009) in order to prepare themselves to act in the future for a more egalitarian and democratic world. However, the critical pedagogy teacher must be aware that they can only ‘create agendas of possibility in their classrooms’ for not every student will want to engage and take part as ‘critical pedagogy does not guarantee that resistance will not take place’ (McLaren 2009: 80).

2.3.8 Critiques of Critical Pedagogy

The Critical Pedagogy Reader (Darder *et al.*, 2009) provides an overview of some of the fundamental critiques to Critical Pedagogy which I outline in this section. Feminist scholars criticised the fact that the leading critical pedagogy thinkers have all been men, who have been accused of ‘challenging the structures and practices of patriarchy in society, solely from a myopic and superficial lens’ (Darder *et al.* 2009: 14). Feminists have advocated the use of personal biography and narratives to question patriarchy and gender equality, and have criticised theoretical academic language for creating a form of oppression and exclusion for its inaccessibility; thus fostering social and intellectual inequalities. In this regard, Guilherme (2002: 59) notes that the ‘obscure’, ‘overabstracted’ and at times ‘impenetrable’ language of Critical Pedagogy can make it inaccessible to teachers (Apple 1996; Ellsworth 1989). Indeed, my initial experiences of Critical Pedagogy were frustrating for two major reasons – its overly theoretical discourse and my lack of familiarity with the concepts underlying its philosophy. There was practically nothing that I had learnt before as a language teacher that I could relate to Critical Pedagogy. As Guilherme (2002: 59) observes:

[a]ccording to its critics, neither the rhetoric of CP nor its message provide clear guidance to teachers’ practice, instead it remains too much at the theoretical level. Teachers are, therefore, left with the difficult task of designing practices to match the theory.

In order to address this issue, I searched for journal articles and book chapters that dealt with the translation of theory into practice, even if the topics had little or no connection with my study. Therefore, the challenge for me was to resolve the permanent struggle of linking the theory with my teaching practicalities. I needed Critical Pedagogy to ‘speak’ to me as a teacher first and foremost, so that I could further develop teaching strategies that would be both persuasive and convincing. This proved to be a process that was gradual, slow and challenging; although fascinating once achieved.

Critical feminist educators advocate a pedagogy which gives voice to those who suffer from gender inequalities and heterosexual domination; with counter-hegemonic discourses that reveal diverse personal narratives and lived experiences related to gender, sexuality and women’s patriarchal oppression. Through critical dialogue, these scholars aim to deconstruct mainstream ideologies that exclude and marginalise different ways of thinking, feeling and being with a view to foregrounding the contradictions, ambiguities and uncertainties of gendered identities. A variety of new strands have been created along with the emergence of new scholars from diverse backgrounds challenging ideologies whilst reinforcing Freire’s premise that ‘critical pedagogical principles exist and remain open to reinvention’ (Darder *et al.* 2009: 16). In the name of social justice and human rights, ‘queer’ pedagogy has called for an interrogation of personal beliefs and values in relation to sex stereotyping in their battle against homophobia. In the work of these scholars, the categories of race and class are added to that of gender, which reveal the diversity and complexity of lived experiences. Feminist scholars of colour have also been influential in advancing the field of critical pedagogy to include gender, race and sexuality. The most significant criticism from these scholars has been that most leading critical pedagogy thinkers are ‘white’, and have failed to raise questions of race, culture or indigeneity.

An important aspect that this PhD study contributes to the growing body of intercultural education from a Critical Pedagogical perspective is the issue of gender stereotyping, with diverse narratives and experiences that deconstruct mainstream ideology of Western, predominantly white, affluent students being the dominant group; the so-called ‘oppressors’ as opposed to ‘oppressed’. Indeed, I have found that Critical Pedagogy can be rather binaric at its core, with its limited distinctions between the ‘oppressed’ and the ‘oppressors’; the ‘teacher-student’ and the ‘student-teacher’; the ‘dominant’ group and the ‘subordinate’ group; as if these were homogeneous groups. For example, Critical Pedagogy has been criticised for

treating ‘the oppressed as an indivisible mass with uniform needs and wishes [...] overlooking difference in the name of a common plight’ (Guilherme 2002: 58). However, as I shall discuss in Chapter 7, the co-existence of multiple positionings between these polar opposites can take place, although these can be brought to the fore through critical pedagogical approaches, an interesting contradiction I have found in Critical Pedagogy. A further contradiction that I have found in Critical Pedagogy is that on the one hand, scholars advocate the development of democratic competences in teachers by negotiating the curriculum with the students and sharing power with them through a ‘generative theme approach,’ whilst on the other, Critical Pedagogy can be ‘too teacher-centred’ and can give ‘teachers too much authority’ with regards to teaching practice (Guilherme 2002; Ellsworth 1989). Indeed, throughout this research study I was wary of how much I was ‘leading’ the students’ thinking and discourses, an issue which still remains unresolved right at the core of my teaching. This limitation will be addressed and discussed in more detail in the section entitled ‘Bias and Subjectivity’ in Chapter 4.

2.4 The ‘Intercultural’

2.4.1 Intercultural Education in Language Pedagogy

An intercultural approach to language teaching is the forward-looking paradigm of the twenty-first century in L2 / FL pedagogy. Both researchers and teachers are venturing into new territories to explore the relationship between language and culture to make visible the similarities and differences between members of diverse communities in our ever-increasing multicultural and multilingual globalised world. Intercultural learning has long been neglected in second/foreign language education, and in different parts of the world, the field is studied from the perspective of different disciplines. This redefinition of language education in terms of fostering intercultural communicative competence has led language educators to reassess the role of foreign language teaching to integrate the development of intercultural competence in more explicit ways. New learning goals and pedagogical approaches are now being conceptualised and framed for the integrated teaching and learning of ‘(inter)cultural content and exploration’ in the target language from the initial stages of language study. Accordingly, language teachers are now compelled to revise their pedagogies

for the development of interculturality and as Byram (2009: 331) puts it, ‘teachers of language need to become teachers of language and culture.’

2.4.2 Culture

Foreign language educators are believed to be ideally placed to promote intercultural learning; although as a goal in language teaching it is not a short term achievable outcome. As a language teacher venturing into the field of intercultural education, there was a crucial issue that I needed to consider. What was the concept of ‘culture’ underpinning my teaching practice? For this research study I opted for a fluid and complex concept of culture, with blurred boundaries and diversity as the norm (Holliday 2010: 54); sometimes referred to as ‘cultural realities’ as defined by Holliday (2011: 55):

Cultural realities can form around and be carried with individuals as they move from one cultural arena to another. Being part of one cultural reality does not close off membership and indeed ownership of another. Individuals can have the capacity to feel a belonging to several cultural realities simultaneously.

In other words, I have taken the view of culture as a ‘verb’ (Street 1993), i.e. enacted every time we speak or write, in interaction between people who are separated culturally, historically, geographically and socially. In this study, I also draw my understanding of culture from linguistic anthropology which views culture as a process or a conversation transmitted or mediated by language. My attempts to translate this meaning of ‘culture’ into classroom practicalities in my teaching practice for the development of intercultural competence has been an educational challenge throughout the entire PhD research project.

2.4.3 Intercultural Competence

The term ‘intercultural competence’ is difficult to define as there has been ‘a lack of consensus about the precise meaning of the term’ (Guo 2010: 23). Byram & Guilherme

(2010: 5) discuss the tensions and dichotomies in research and teaching as to what is meant by ‘intercultural competence’:

Coined relatively recently, *intercultural competence* has been the object of various attempts at theorisation, from different disciplines or research fields, from different regions of the world and nations, from different professional or organizational contexts. The expression *intercultural competence* seems to entail quite paradoxical meanings within it. The concept of competence is often used to seize the dynamics of something **fluid** and **unpredictable** implied by an intercultural *relation* and *communication* with notions of **skills, abilities and capacities**, and then to describe and evaluate them. On the other hand, the word *intercultural* expresses the impact of **the unexpected, the surprising, the potential** rather than the pre-structured, the foreseen or the expectable. [italics in original; emphasis added]

The term ‘competence’ itself has been a contested concept and Fleming (2006b: 6) has examined the arguments for and against the ‘competence’ debate, noting that the use of competence statements are ‘attractive because they appear to offer structure, order, stability and transparency’. However, Fleming warns that ‘there is limit to the degree of structure, order, stability and transparency that can be expected’ since ‘objectivity, clarity and transparency is an elusive goal’. Even more so as we attempt to define ‘intercultural competence’, a concept that, in Byram and Guilherme’s terms, needs to encapsulate something ‘fluid’ and ‘unpredictable’ and to capture ‘the unexpected, the surprising, the potential’. I agree with Fleming’s argument in that competence statements ought to be ‘seen more as a starting point rather than the end of a process’ for they are ‘often thought to be a final and definitive way of capturing achievement in a particular domain (and sometimes criticised for that very reason) instead of being seen as a focus for the evolution of shared understanding’.

The definition put forward by the Council of Europe in 2005, which views competence as ‘a combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviours’ (Byram & Guilherme,

2010: 5) is a useful one as it highlights the processes involved in managing intercultural interactions. However, it ought to be stressed that competence statements can be, to use Fleming's terms, 'narrow, reductive and functionalist'. Fleming contends that 'competence statements' can become 'behaviourist' and not allow for 'creative or unexpected outcomes', particularly in concepts like 'intercultural competence' where 'the unexpected, the surprising, the potential' are aspects to be considered. In sum, the term itself is an elusive one, with little agreement across disciplines. The field of intercultural education is relatively young and there are yet no definite answers with regard to its teaching and assessment.

2.4.4 Critical Cultural Awareness

In Chapter 1, I explained that in this thesis I develop the argument that stereotyping is a form of oppression, and that the deconstruction of stereotyping is one of the ways in which 'critical cultural awareness' can be developed. In that chapter, I also stated the general research question in this study, which reads *how can Critical Pedagogy help students deconstruct stereotypes in their development of 'critical cultural awareness'?*. Therefore, I hereby outline the learning objectives I set in my lesson plans for the development of 'critical cultural awareness' on the topic of stereotyping:

By the end of this series of lessons, students will be able to:

- appreciate the oppressive nature of stereotyping
- articulate their own ideologies manifested in their own experiences
- narrate their experiences of being stereotyped
- unmask stereotypes embedded in their own discourses and those of others
- deconstruct stereotypes
- examine asymmetrical power relations
- express conformance or resistance to the hegemonic discourses of Hispanic dominant groups

- express conformance or resistance to subject positions assigned to them by Hispanics
- articulate their own experiences of marginalisation and discrimination
- narrate experiences that perpetuate asymmetrical power relations with Hispanics

(Scheme of Work/Lesson Plan/2009)

In order to understand these learning objectives, it becomes necessary to introduce Byram and Guilherme's notions of critical cultural awareness as these provided me with the theoretical framework for their conceptualisation. Byram introduced a key dimension in the development of intercultural communicative competence – *critical cultural awareness / political education (savoir s'engager)*. He defines 'critical cultural awareness' as 'the ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries' (Byram 1997: 53). This notion is of particular relevance to this PhD research, given the nature of the pedagogical tasks designed for the development of intercultural competence with Spanish language undergraduates. In this study, the teaching focuses on the exploration of beliefs, values, perspectives, attitudes, practices, behaviours, events and language used in the literary text and the related personal experiences triggered during the reading process.

As explained in Chapter 1, Byram (2009: 324) defines "explicit criteria" as that 'the intercultural speaker has a "rational and explicit standpoint" from which to evaluate', i.e. the intercultural speaker has an ideology which he uses in his critical cultural evaluations. As stated by Byram (1997: 54), the classroom can be the site where these criteria can be made explicit:

Teachers are familiar with learners of all ages who condemn some particular custom in another country as 'barbaric'. They have no rationale other than that of the original meaning of 'barbaric', i.e. that it is different and from beyond the limits of our 'civilised' society. Although the teacher may not wish to interfere in the views of the learners, for ethical reasons, they can encourage them to make the basis for their judgements explicit, and expect them to be consistent in their judgements of their own society as well as others.

I agree with the argument that there is a need for pedagogical practices to raise learners' awareness to make these criteria explicit so that students understand where they are positioned, and from what standpoint they are making their evaluations. This is an essential element to be integrated within a critical pedagogical framework. Learning opportunities should be created for students to identify 'their own criteria' (or ideologies) in their critical evaluations, and also those of others, including the fictional characters in the literary text. This exercise can provide an enabling environment for the discussion, comparison and contrast of multiple perspectives and standpoints.

Literary texts have a variety of potential meanings for individuals to uncover based on their explicit criteria. Byram's concept of the use of 'explicit criteria' in critical cultural evaluations has important commonalities with Bourdieu's (1990b; 1991b; 1994) notion of *habitus*. *Habitus* is defined as the values, beliefs, attitudes, knowledges and dispositions that are unconsciously inscribed on us and which depend on our cultural trajectory and history. In other words, *habitus* is the way we see the world and the specific ways in which we act, the meanings that we construct are largely relative to where we belong culturally, and what lies outside of our habitus is hard to comprehend and normally interpreted as horrific, barbaric, absurd and comic. The significance of 'explicit criteria' is to make students conscious of their habitus.

Guilherme (2002: 121-124) also developed her own notion of critical cultural awareness, which I hereby outline for the purposes of theorising the development of critical cultural awareness in this PhD research thesis. Of particular importance in this study is her notion of the classroom as a site where common-sense and taken-for-granted assumptions are interrogated, challenged and critically reflected upon. Guilherme's (2002) theory of critical cultural awareness comprises of five dimensions: (1) Interaction between the Self and Other; (2) Cultural; (3) Educational; (4) Political and (5) Ethical. Within this framework, there is a recognition that identities are multilayered and transitory and that power relations influence subjectivities and relationships between the self and *other*. Culture is viewed as complex and as an ever-changing web of contradictions, constantly being produced and reproduced. For Guilherme, teachers and students are 'cultural workers' and 'transformative intellectuals'. Guilherme contends that the students' macro and micro-level contexts and subjectivities

ought to be taken into consideration. In her view, students' cultural realities and relations of power in particular contexts ought to be critically analysed, with a view to transformation. Finally, teachers and students have the moral and ethical obligation to examine relations of power between members of diverse backgrounds in order to avoid discrimination, racism, sexism and xenophobia.

2.5 Conclusions

This chapter has considered some theoretical frameworks, constructs and issues relating to *Stereotyping*, *Critical Pedagogy* and *Intercultural Education*, whereby this research is positioned. The starting point of this study presupposes the acceptance that culture can be accessed through a literary text - and that in every reading, the reader's schemata act as a filter through which situations, contexts, values, behaviours and notions are understood and interpreted. In other words, the reader's ideologies, personal trajectories and beliefs about the cultural *other* act as the 'glasses', whereby learners construct new multifaceted meanings resulting from the negotiation of different perspectives. Constructs pertaining the notion of stereotyping were defined and theorised, and the notions of 'intercultural competence' and 'transformative intellectual' were reviewed and discussed.

In my endeavours to explore the potential of literature for the deconstruction of stereotypes in my teaching, a rethinking of the methods and approaches to the use of the literary text entitled "Norma y Ester" was called for. Accordingly, I developed my own 'theories of practice' (Van Lier 1996) along with teaching materials and theoretical frameworks within which I have situated my teaching. The following chapter develops the concept of 'deconstructing stereotypes' within the frameworks of reader-response theory and current developments in research on combating stereotypes from the field of social psychology. Based on these theoretical discussions, I outline a pedagogical approach for the implementation of Gamero's short story with Spanish Honours Language undergraduates in their final year of language study for the deconstruction of stereotypes for the more general purpose of developing 'critical cultural awareness'.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to develop a theoretically founded pedagogical strategy for the deconstruction of stereotypes through Gamarro's short story "Norma y Ester". In very general terms, by 'deconstruction' I mean breaking stereotypes apart for analysis and reflection, with a view to paving the way to reduce them, so that we behave in ways less biased by them for 'self and social transformation'. This concept is developed in greater detail throughout this chapter. To this end I review reader-response theory from the field of literature and outline research on combating stereotypes in social psychology. An aesthetic reader-response approach is outlined as the guiding principle underlying the teaching practice for the deconstruction of stereotypes. Students' responses emerge from the interaction that they establish with the text itself, with other members of the class and with themselves. As the learners embark on a journey to a foreign place in the reading process, they explore and reflect upon the images of *otherness*, thus enhancing their self-understanding and raising their awareness of their stereotypical beliefs. This chapter also describes the literary text that was used in this PhD study as a teaching resource to bring stereotypical thinking to the fore for analysis and reflection and outlines a pedagogical model that emerges from the theoretical frameworks reviewed so far for the use of Gamarro's short story 'Norma y Ester'. What follows is an overview of the teaching resource and the syllabus of the seminars where this research was carried out.

3.2 The Teaching Resource**3.2.1 The Syllabus**

The whole of the PhD study was carried out in the fourth and final year of language study of a BA degree programme in a British university, where I lecture in Spanish. The seminar I led was an oral class called 'Interculturality', which I gave three times, where literary texts, among other types of texts, were used with the aim of improving language skills and developing intercultural competence. The classes comprised of students at different levels of language proficiency ranging from three to nine years of language study, including native

speakers of Spanish. These final year Spanish Honours Language classes are nearly always of a mixed-ability multilevel nature, with students completing degrees from diverse disciplines, the common and unifying element being the learning of the Spanish language. The class is normally composed of undergraduates of different nationalities; with students of diverse needs, interests and expectations. One of the major challenges that this class presents is the selection of suitable intellectually and linguistically challenging topics that could cater for the diversity of needs and interests. The tasks as the basis for language and intercultural learning have been a major challenge as they need to cater for students completing different degrees ranging from translation and interpreting to international development studies. Furthermore, the language required needs to be at the right level of difficulty for students learning Spanish not only as a second or foreign language, but also as their first language as is the case with native and near-native speakers

The syllabus for the ‘Interculturality’ seminar has been organic in its development and responsive to the needs of different cohorts and student feedback. Particular content, as the backbone of the syllabus, was integrated with language teaching aims and skills development, using media, including literary texts, as the primary source for language teaching purposes. Some other media used were newspaper articles, advertisements, films, documentaries and photographs, among others. These materials have been adapted for language analysis and skills work with related graded tasks designed by myself to cater for this type of class. Sequencing the syllabus in terms of grammar points proved to be ineffective with final year honour students, as participants have different expectations and needs of what should be taught in terms of grammar at this level of language study. Instead, the organising principle of the course has been the subject matter as the point of departure, from which language items are identified and introduced for analysis (Coyle 2000, 2002; Brinton *et al*, 2003). In these seminars, I detach myself from the instrumentalist view of language learning with its functional, technical and communicative approach, and embrace concepts of power, inequality, social justice, marked differences and divisions between rich and poor, male and female, self and *other* in order to develop an attitude in learners of questioning facts. The integration of a literary text into my teaching context aimed at providing learners with the opportunity to voice their worldviews and interrogate their beliefs and values. The next section explains the choice of Gamero’s short story “Norma y Ester”, summarises the plot and outlines the main themes of this text.

3.2.2 The Choice of Text

A short story entitled ‘Norma y Ester’ by Argentine writer Carlos Gamerro was the literary text chosen for this study. The main aim of this text was to bring stereotypical views of gender to the fore for reflection and analysis, as a consciousness-raising pedagogical strategy in the context of engaging with another literary tradition and country. Delanoy (2005) and Bredella (2000) advocate plurality in text choice to include minorities, even if these are not portrayed positively. Gonçalves Matos (2012: 119-120) notes that:

According to Bredella, even literary texts that criticize the dominant culture itself are valuable as they offer an insight into the values of the foreign culture also from a critical standpoint. But the encounter with otherness should not be merely concerned with ethnicity but extended so as to take into account *cultural* in terms of other categories, such as gender, or social groups, for example. (italics in original)

The literary text selected for this study serves the purpose of foregrounding negative images that the students may have constructed of the Hispanic *other*, in particular, of gendered identities. The pedagogies place these images at the very centre to raise awareness of stereotypical beliefs with a view to problematising cultural gendered identity. In the seminars I taught, it was generally agreed that the media, such as films, TV programmes, newspapers, magazines and literature, were key in constructing these images of Hispanic men and women. In the words of one of the students:

texts such as the story ‘Norma y Ester’ tend to reinforce preconceived notions that we have due to the way the characters are portrayed, which reinforce our images. (LD3/CS1/Rebecca)

Gonçalves de Veloso e Matos (2007: 142) asserts that:

It is precisely the cultural imbalance displayed in a literary text that may foster reflection on that difference ... this cultural asymmetry present in any text (...) parallels the inevitable cultural asymmetry in an intercultural event.

Indeed, Gamerro’s text provokes intensely strong reactions for its negative depiction of the characters and the situations they are involved in, which encourage learners to voice their

opinions. In this regard, “Norma y Ester” fits the pedagogical purpose of peeling back the layers of stereotypical thinking for the development of intercultural competence.

3.2.3 The short story ‘Norma y Ester’

The literary text used was a short story entitled ‘Norma y Ester’. There is no English translation of this text, and the original copy in Spanish can be found in AppendixG of this PhD thesis. A translation done for this thesis of the first page of Gamarro’s ‘Norma y Ester’ follows:

Norma, it’s a waste a time, Víctor isn’t gonna turn up today either, Ester thought in the back room as she hopped about trying to pull off her jeans over her feet and struggled to pull the neck of the T-shirt off over her head without throttling herself. That would be funny, she thought. She stretched her arms behind her to undo her bra and before she took it off she rubbed at the uncomfortable marks that it had made. She had taken it easy walking so as not to exhaust herself, but with these hot days she was moist with sweat as soon as the morning started. It’s not that it gets hotter, it doesn’t get cooler, said her mum fanning herself with a fly-swat, I didn’t get any shut-eye all night, and Ester thought to herself: I didn’t either, mum, if only it was just ‘cause of the heat. She carefully folded all her street clothes, the bra inside the T-shirt and the T-shirt on top of the jeans, put them all in her shoulder bag and the shoulder bag underneath the divan, today you’re worse than ever, she said to herself irritably taking everything out again until she found right at the very bottom her lace work bra. She stretched it this way and that to tease out the creases, just as her mum had taught her when she started to blossom, if you knew, mummy dearest, all that you taught me what’s that worth now, she sneered while her fingers buttoned her outfit from top to bottom. *[translated from Spanish by Leticia Yulita]*

3.2.4 The Plot

Gamero's 'Norma y Ester' concerns the relationships and experiences of two women from the impoverished suburbs of Buenos Aires, who wash men's hair in the back room of a salon. The text is set in a patriarchal social structure in the early 1990s, where Norma and Ester are taken advantage of by the customers at the hairdresser's, and shows how from a subordinate position they fight to gain more space and recognition in a male-dominated context. The reader first encounters Ester wearing revealing clothes and discovers that she has been instructed by her boss to dress this provocatively to please the customers. Indeed, the reader discovers that Ester is expected to give sexual favours to these men. Ester's best friend, Norma, has been dismissed from the same job for no longer giving in to the sexual demands of Víctor, the most valued customer of the salon. In an attempt to avenge her friend's misfortune, Ester manages to get the same job and plots to take revenge by strangling Víctor as she washes his hair in the back room.

Víctor is depicted as an arrogant, powerful and sexist man who abuses women both verbally and sexually. Given the fact that these women come from a low socio-economic background, the reader is led to believe that Norma and Ester accept these working conditions for financial reasons. The main male character of the story, Víctor, corresponds to the male prototype of the late 80s and early 90s in lower middle social classes. Víctor is portrayed as a chauvinist, who believes that the best way to seduce a woman is to undervalue and belittle her in a rather aggressive manner. In the first half of the story, Víctor pretends to be a successful wealthy man, a façade which in reality hides the fact that his business is failing and on the verge of bankruptcy. Víctor owns a factory that produces cheap women's wear, and usually has his hair cut in a hair salon in Munro, where he boasts about his latest advertising campaigns and the successes of his business. Munro is a neighbourhood in the north of Greater Buenos Aires, known for its jeans and clothes shops. In the hair salon, he is regarded as the most prestigious customer due to his presumed social position and financial wealth, which gives him the authority and power to manipulate the owner of the hair salon, Don Sebastián.

In reality, Víctor effectively runs the hair salon, and is allowed to make decisions like employing impoverished pretty young girls to wash men's hair in a tiny room at the back of the hairdresser's. In the late 80's and early 90's, women of low social class found it hard to get good jobs due to the poor economic situation in Argentina, and were more vulnerable to sexual harassment and abuse by their male bosses. Norma and Ester, employed to wash

men's hair by Don Sebastián, actually view Víctor as their boss. The readers discover that Norma, married to a useless unemployed drunkard with two young children, endured Víctor's sexual abuse in an attempt to keep her job, but when she decides to resist his sexual demands, she is dismissed. Without Norma knowing, Ester, manages to get the same job to avenge her best friend's misfortune, and plots to strangle Víctor while she washes his hair.

3.2.5 Patriarchal Ideology

The patriarchal ideology of the short story is seen in the depiction of women suffering unfortunate situations of male domination, where they are expected to adopt a submissive role, develop strategies to overcome their weak position. In 'Norma y Ester', the supposedly submissive women, Norma and Ester, choose to fight the patriarchal system. In their struggle, both women react in very different ways. Ester fights the system from without, by not conforming to her role and attempting murder, whilst Norma fights it from within, by becoming Víctor's lover. Ester chooses to enact revenge by strangling Víctor, whereas Norma chooses to become his lover for the financial benefits she gains from his help in supporting her family.

The paths that each of the women take in resisting male dominance cause the break-up of their close friendship. After the violent scene in which Ester nearly kills Víctor by strangulation in the back room of the salon, Víctor appears to become infatuated by Ester's dominance, strength and power, encouraging him to want more of her on a more personal level by the end of the story. Norma, on the other hand, manages to dominate Víctor sexually by pleasuring his masochist desires, for the text hints that in bed the gender roles are reversed - Víctor enjoys playing a submissive role and Norma a dominant one.

The last scene of the story sees Ester returning home, where her mother is waiting for her with dinner ready. Ester looks drained, is wearing blood-stained clothes, and is shocked by Norma's confession of her love affair with Víctor. Unable to make up a suitable story to explain the situation to her mother, Ester unwillingly blurts out a few comments, and with the few elements that her mother has, she constructs a story of what could have happened to her daughter that perfectly fits her mentality. This is the story that she finally tells her husband, Ester's father, and involves Ester having been in a car accident with a new boyfriend, a wealthy man who has given Ester money to help her parents financially and will support

them in the future. The economic factor is present throughout the whole story, and readers gain insights into the motivations and actions of the characters to secure a better and more secure financial position.

3.2.6 The Rhythm of ‘Cumbia’

The story is written to the rhythm of *cumbia*, a popular Argentinian musical style that arose in the shantytowns around Buenos Aires, and then shifted towards the middle classes, as new bands attempted to attract wider audiences in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Carlos Gamerro introduces excerpts of the original lyrics of *cumbia* songs in the story; an example of how high culture (literature) incorporates the popular culture of the masses. The language used in the story skilfully represents the colloquial speech of Argentine lower middle and low social classes, and ‘a musical texture’ is perceived in the language through the integration of *cumbia* lyrics. Following personal communication with the writer, I was made aware of the fact that Carlos Gamerro actually used recordings of real people interacting so as to be as faithful as possible in his representation of the speech of the lower classes in Argentine society. In addition, as he wrote the short story, he played *cumbia* music in the background in the hope that the texture of the music would be translated to and felt by the readers.

This effect is successfully achieved with Argentine native speakers, but the Spanish language native students from cultures other than Argentinian did not perceive the musical texture in the text. In the main setting of the story itself, the hairdresser’s, a radio is permanently playing *cumbia* music, whose lyrics inspire the characters to act or help them express their deepest feelings. One of the teaching strategies implemented during the reading of ‘Norma y Ester’ was for students to listen to and watch video clips of a selection of *cumbia* songs in order to provide some assistance with getting into the mood of short story.

3.3 The Teaching Approach

3.3.1 Reader-Response Theory

Traditionally, the ‘cultured’ reader (a literary critic) was believed to have the knowledge necessary to decipher the meanings underlying literary texts for the ‘common’ reader. Therefore, the emphasis in literature education was teacher and text-centred as the teacher

interpreted the text for (and with) the learners. In the evolution of literary criticism, there has been a move in the twentieth century towards empowering the common reader to interpret texts through reader-response pedagogies in classroom settings. Reader-response theorists (e.g. Wolfgang Iser, Stanley Fish, and Louise Rosenblatt), and in particular, Rosenblatt's theory of *aesthetic* response have problematised the ownership of reading and explored the relationship between 'common' readers and texts. In this study, the 'common' readers are Spanish language students, and the text is an Argentine short story, written in the students' foreign language. Reader-response theory is reviewed here as a theoretical framework for the deconstruction of stereotypes in the students' aesthetic responses to the literary text.

Although not regarded as such during her time, Louise Rosenblatt can be considered to be, in contemporary terms, a critical pedagogue (Wink 2011: 135). Rosenblatt (1981) has been one of the most influential writers on literary education with her distinction between *effere*nt reading as opposed to *aesthetic* reading. *Effere*nt reading refers to traditional reading comprehension tasks where learners are required to skim or scan the text to find factual answers. *Aesthetic* reading is related to what the text evokes – memories, past experiences and situations, present needs and worries – and is concerned with the way the text is 'experienced' by the learner. Bakhtin can also be regarded as a critical pedagogue in current thinking. From a Bakhtinian perspective, reading *aesthetically* means entering 'as a creator into what is seen, heard, or pronounced' (Bakhtin 1990: 305), or to use Bredella's (1996: 3) words, reading *aesthetically* means making it 'part of ourselves'.

In Bakhtinian terms, *aesthetic* reading requires 'involvement' and 'participation', whilst at the same time it fosters 'reflection' and 'detachment'. For Bakhtin, it is in the dialogue between the reader and the text that the learner's values, attitudes and beliefs are challenged. The dialectic between becoming involved in the dialogical articulation of feelings – *involvement* - and the distancing from them – *detachment* – encourages learners to develop new viewpoints and interpretations. Gonçaves Matos (2012: 49) relates this distinction made by Bakhtin to the experience of language learners reading a literary text for intercultural learning:

The process of participation counters its pair: *detachment*. The detachment of the reader of fiction allows for the ability to be critical of the orientation offered by the text. This may not be an easy task, since the implication is that he/she may have to read against his/her own schemata; however it constitutes

a major function in terms of being intercultural. The reader will therefore find him/herself involved in actively participating in the text but, in a subsequent moment, his/her detachment will allow for explanation.

For Rosenblatt, there is a reflective element in the aesthetic experience of reading that engages readers in a process of ‘involvement’ and ‘detachment’ (or a certain distance to this involvement). Bringing our past experiences into the aesthetic reading of a text *involves* us through reflection, whilst at the same time *detaches* us from them. It is in this dialectic dialogue that our past experiences are revisited and reflected upon developing new viewpoints and interpretations. For Bredella (1996: 3) ‘in order to read aesthetically the reader has to bring his or her experiences to the text’, to what Bakhtin (1990) adds that reading a text aesthetically requires readers to become *involved* and *detached* at the same time, so that past personal experiences that the text evokes can be analysed from the vantage point of the present.

Reader-response theory, developed from Bakhtin’s theory, emphasises the emotional engagement and relationship between readers and texts and how readers construct different interpretations as they read, creating a sort of new ‘writing’ out of the ‘reading’. Iser (1987: 55) observes that:

the written utterance continually transcends the margins of the printed page, in order to bring the addressee into contact with nontextual realities.

In this research study, students create their own ‘texts’ out of this new ‘writing’, which provide an enriching learning opportunity for the analysis of stereotypes in their responses to Gamarro’s short story. When reader-response theory is used to explain reading in a foreign language, we see that reading foreign texts *aesthetically* confronts learners with fictional, real and imagined foreign *others*, and in the analysis of their own ‘texts’, they engage in a process of reflection. Byram and Fleming (1998: 7) define ‘reflection’ as the act of ‘decentring from one’s own taken-for-granted world’. As students read texts aesthetically, this kind of reflection can be triggered in the classroom. Students can become critically aware of their assumptions and beliefs as they ‘decentre’ from their own ‘taken-for-granted world’, or in other words, as they detach and distance themselves from their own discourses of *otherness*. This exercise positions learners as ‘onlookers’ of their own ‘texts’ and engages them in a process of detachment, whilst being ‘participants’ at the same time (Bredella 1996). In this

process of ‘decentering’ and seeing the world from new perspectives, students can become aware of their own preconceptions and presuppositions in relation to others. This process of ‘detachment’ and ‘involvement’ and of moving back and forth between the literary text and their own ‘texts’ can provide for opportunities to examine their own stereotypes and the impact they have upon others for their deconstruction (see section entitled Students’ ‘Texts’ in Chapter 1 for more detail and Chapter 6 for the application of this notions of ‘involvement’ and ‘detachment’ in the teaching methodology).

Literary texts approached from a reader-response perspective stress the transformative power that these have in the reading process (Gonçalves Matos, 2012). This concept is encapsulated in the notion of *transaction*, used by Dewey in 1949 and later borrowed by Rosenblatt (1978, 1986) to develop her ‘transactional theory’. Transactional theory suggests a mutually shaping exchange process between reader and text. A text is just ink on paper until the reader reads it; that is, it only accomplishes *textuality* through the reader’s voice (Gonçalves de Veloso e Matos, 2007: 46). Rosenblatt (1986: 123) describes the process of meaning construction as:

a complex, to-and-fro, self-correcting transaction between reader and verbal signs which continues until some final organization, more or less complete and coherent, is arrived at and thought of as corresponding to the text. The “meaning” – whether, e.g., poem, novel, play, scientific report, or legal brief – comes into being during the transaction.

The process of meaning-making evokes in the transaction, images, feelings and experiences in the reader’s mind. In the absence of the reader, the text is just print:

It has become a common assumption in current literary criticism that, in simple terms, literature is a dialogue between a text and a reader. Just as drama only accomplishes its purpose when performed in a theatre with an audience, so it is only through the reading process that a text realizes its potential effect (Gonçalves Matos 2012: 46)

The reader’s individuality, therefore, acquires new significance. Texts are to be seen in the light of the reader’s background, histories, experiences, concepts and emotions brought about by the text (see section entitled ‘Autobiographies’ in Chapter 1 for further detail). Transactional theory also invites the reader to reflect and analyse what the text evokes. Crucially though, students may read the same text at different times, and construct different

meanings as a result of their new circumstances and experiences. Readers have the capacity to focus selectively on aspects that are relevant to them at the moment of reading. This concept has significant pedagogical implications, as students will take new positionings and have different readings depending on their more recent intercultural experiences. A critical pedagogical approach can foreground these lived experiences to be reflected and acted upon.

Being a language educator myself, venturing into the territories of interculturality through the use of literary texts, I do not claim to be versed or knowledgeable in literary theories, for that is the realm of the literature teacher. The aim of the language teacher should not be to develop literary critics, but critical readers. As a language educator, I use literary texts as another pedagogical resource, in the same way as I use films, newspaper articles, comics, TV programmes and other popular and high cultural products. As such, this research study firmly positions itself in the interface between language pedagogy and intercultural education, and draws on Rosenblatt's work, for its application in the classroom and emotional engagement between readers and literary works. The following section considers the pedagogical implications of reader-response theory for intercultural learning.

3.3.2 Pedagogical Implications

Bredella (1996; 2000), Delanoy (1993; 1996), Kramsch (2000; 2003), Gonçalves Matos (2012) and Burwitz-Meltzer (2001) agree that literary texts can be used for intercultural learning as they encourage readers to view the world from different perspectives and to explore the deepest layers of the self. From a reader-response perspective, the pedagogical implication becomes one of designing tasks that would allow for this plurality of meanings to emerge, as long as those meanings can be adequately justified by the learners. The emphasis is not to what the *texts* mean, but what *we* mean by them. Bredella (1996, 2000) observes that a reader-response approach to literature for intercultural learning provides learners with an opportunity to explore their images of *others* and to reflect on their reactions to those images – a much needed process in the deconstruction of stereotypes and the development of intercultural competence.

In the context of foreign language education with multicultural groups, the interpretations of a given text are very likely to vary. Similarly, the viewpoints of foreign language learners are likely to differ from those of native speakers, but even among native speakers, there may also

be differences. For Rosenblatt, learners need to be encouraged to construct their own meanings until they become confident in discovering new meanings. Mistakes are seen as natural in the learning process. Dialogic interactions with others are viewed as necessary in the development and shaping of new meanings. In addition, personal experiences in response to the text are indispensable and associations are welcome. In practical pedagogical terms, this means that lived experiences of being subjected to stereotyping or memories of situations and events which reinforced or contradicted stereotypes can be triggered in the classroom for the creation of students' 'texts' as a tool for the deconstruction of stereotypes.

According to Rosenblatt, readers adopt a *stance* either consciously or unconsciously when they read; that is, they move back and forth from *efferent* to *aesthetic*. Sometimes they focus on comprehending the information in the text, while at others they focus on the associations, feelings and attitudes that the text triggers. Rosenblatt (1985) calls this the 'evocation', which she believes should be the main focus in the teaching and learning of literature. Rosenblatt (1985: 40) defines the notion of 'evocation as 'a process in which the reader selects out ideas, sensations, feelings, and images drawn from his past linguistic, literary, and life experience, and synthesizes them into a new experience'. Again, this notion is relevant to language and intercultural educators wishing to use literature, as the images, feelings, attitudes and experiences with the cultural *other* can be "evoked", and provide opportunities for deconstructing stereotypes in their intercultural explorations.

From a pedagogical point of view, Rosenblatt's theory in practical teaching terms involves encouraging students (and teachers) to give personal responses to the text as a first step, with subsequent critical reflection on their responses and awareness of how their responses are influenced by their own preconceptions. Although reader-response theory advocates free emotional responses to the text, it is insufficient to develop a sound approach to literature for it lacks critical reflection on one's own responses. It is only when students understand what exactly provokes such a reaction with a view to modifying, rejecting or accepting it that there is a conscious development of 'ethical attitudes' (Rosenblatt 1995: 16). This postulation is congruent with Fleming's (2006a: 142-143) concept of citizenship education as a valued intercultural competence for the use of literature in the classroom:

An intercultural conception of citizenship education engages people with real, moral issues and does not seek or assert easy solutions. It is likely to be more controversial and contested than simple notions of national or international

citizenship. However, there is a limit to what can be said about citizenship in general terms without attention to specific contexts.

Rosenblatt (1995:17) speaks of the teacher scrutinizing her own ‘ethical criteria’ used in her own responses to the text. This concept resonates with Byram’s postulation to make the ‘criteria’ used in our evaluations ‘explicit’ for the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’. This practice does not exclude the teacher, who should also be critically aware of her own viewpoints so as not to impose them on her students. This view is echoed by Kramersch (1993: 137) who states that in order to ‘teach literature as dialogue between a text and a reader, teachers must first get in touch with themselves as readers’. This does not mean that the teacher should be seen as an ‘*objective* person’ (Gonçalves Matos 2012: 52) with neutrality, but rather as someone who is aware of her ideologies and ‘when appropriate state them honestly’. This concept is crucial in the process of stereotype deconstruction, since the teacher also needs to become critically aware of her own essentialist views and discourses of *othering*.

3.3.3 Critiques of Reader-Response Theory

Gonçalves Matos (2012), Bredella (1996, 2000), Delanoy (2005) and Kern (2000) recognise the advantages and limitations of such a reader-response approach from an intercultural perspective in language learning. On the one hand, such an approach ‘has the potential to problematize relevant issues in our lives [...] helping prepare students to interact with otherness and thus contributing, for instance, to the area of citizenship education’ (Gonçalves Matos 2012: 105). On the other hand, Delanoy criticises an aesthetic approach to literature in intercultural education for it may promote a belief that the text is self-sufficient for intercultural exploration, which may lead to uncritical endorsement of cultural attitudes, beliefs and values. As already identified by Bredella, one of the main risks of using literary texts from an intercultural reader-response perspective is that L2 students may believe that the text provides information and a description about that culture and is thus representative of a whole nation. Hence, critical reading of texts and unmasking ideological standpoints become central in the discussion of literary texts so as to minimise this risk.

Kern (2000) addresses two limitations of reader-response theory when applied to second language contexts. The first is the assumption that readers of a given text are native speakers.

It should be remembered that foreign language students are not the intended readers of literary texts, so there is a need for more assistance to ensure they are understood. Gonçalves Matos (2012: 123) points out that:

From a reader-oriented aesthetically motivated perspective and in order to activate the students' affective and cognitive abilities, the teacher must not interfere (at least in the initial stage of text reception) in order not to limit the exploration of texts by readers. In other words, teacher intervention could inhibit or even block an aesthetic text-approach; but on the other hand, foreign language student-readers may need assistance.

This limitation to reader-response theory has also been addressed by Brumfit and Carter (2000a) who note that foreign language learners need to be provided with background cultural knowledge so that literary texts can be understood. However, as Gonçalves Matos (2012: 107) points out:

[...] what is the concept of *culture* that is at stake? The examples given by Brumfit and Carter (2000a, b) suggest that they implicitly mean products and behaviours, not necessarily intrinsic values and attitudes.

Whilst there is a clear need to provide L2 learners with more guidance so that literary texts can be understood and enjoyed, the concept of culture used in this research goes beyond providing information about cultural products and practices to include a critical analysis and reflection on beliefs, values, attitudes and worldviews of the fictional characters, as well as those of the readers themselves in their responses to the text.

The second limitation that Kern addresses relates to the fact that if readers are to make their own interpretations, then they would impose their own culture on the text, instead of being open to new cultural meanings that the text has to offer. To overcome this, the language teacher can draw students' attention to aspects of the target culture that might otherwise have been overlooked or ignored, so that students' interpretations can enrich, rather than obscure the cultural meanings of a given text. Furthermore, it is precisely the readers' cultural realities entering in dialogue with the text that can promote intercultural dialogue. A step towards this dialogue is made through the learners' becoming aware of how they perceive foreign *others* through an aesthetic response to texts in order to evaluate the ideological standpoints from where they make their judgements. The following section overviews Gonçalves Matos'

pedagogical model as it provides an illustrative example of how reader-response theory can be translated into classroom practicalities.

3.3.4 Gonalvez Matos' Model

In this section I summarise Gonalvez Matos' pedagogical model for the use of literature for intercultural exploration as an illustrative example of how reader-response theory can be applied in practical terms in the classroom. It also serves as a starting point in my own conceptualisations of the pedagogical model I propose for the deconstruction of stereotypes later in this chapter. Gonalvez Matos (2012) developed a model for intercultural reading in foreign language education as an idealised conception resulting from theory, rather than from practice. The model is not supposed to be a rigid step-by-step structure to the way literary texts should be approached from an intercultural perspective, 'but rather as a working hypothesis to be reconsidered in the light of new research data' (Gonalvez Matos 2012: 129). The model consists of two stages (1) the 'read' stage and (2) the 'reread' stage.

In the 'read' stage, students are encouraged to engage with the text by responding emotionally and by providing insights into their personal experience with the text. After this, the learners are guided to revise their initial interpretations in order to develop new perspectives. The main aim is to help students to become critically aware of their images of cultural others and to explore the ways they view others. This exercise implies a reflection on 'others' as well as on 'selves'; thus developing 'skills of interpreting and discovering' (Byram 1997: 61).

In the 'reread' stage, the teacher's interventions are crucial. Areas that may have remained unexplored in the first stage are highlighted and the students are encouraged to question initial responses and to compare them with their peers in order to gain further insights and develop new perspectives. The teacher may choose to provide learners with 'more structured information on intercultural communication' (Gonalvez Matos 2012: 134) to assist them in their interpretations by 'comparing, searching for further evidence, seeking patterns, challenging hypotheses and responding to challenges, learning and gaining knowledge on human relationships'. In this stage, students interrogate 'the relationship between their interpretation and the evidence in the (con)text and (re)consider other possibilities'. According to Gonalvez Matos, these operations contribute to the development of 'critical

cultural awareness' (for Byram's definition, see Chapter 2) and the next section examines the place where all these operations take place – the 'third space'.

3.3.5 The Third Space

The 'third space' is an in-between teaching space, where learners learn to question, challenge and problematise their own beliefs and ideologies, and where they are empowered to construct new meanings. It can be created in the classroom itself, a potential rich and fertile site for intercultural exploration. The notion of the 'third space', developed by Bhabha (1994) in postcolonial studies, was brought into the field of intercultural education by Kramersch. Kramersch (1998: 16) argued that this teaching space can be created during class discussions of literary texts as learners identify, articulate and reflect on cultural similarities and differences, a place where learners become aware of their 'ways of speaking, reading and writing, and the way one's own discourse is culturally marked as well'. It is also a space where students can be guided through an 'apprenticeship of difference' (Kramersch 1993: 235) with the aim of gradually discovering one's own and other people's values, knowledge and behaviours. Crozet and Liddicoat (2000: 1) eloquently stated that:

One of the key goals of ILT [intercultural language teaching] is to educate language learners to develop the ability to create multiple 'third places' as they learn to interact with 'otherness' ... This teaching culture-in-language does not aim to make language learners into parrots of the target culture/language. The 'third place' notion refers to a comfortable unbounded and dynamic space which intercultural communicators create as they interact with each other and in their attempt to bridge the gap between cultural differences.

The *in-betweenness* that the third space enables is a place where values and beliefs are questioned, binary opposites are challenged, and interpretations are critiqued. Feng (2009: 74) notes that:

Definitions of **theories of thirdness** differ from one theorist (or academic area) to another, but all these notions suggest in **metaphorical language** a conception that reflects new insights into each of these academic areas by **challenging binary opposites** such as the here and the there, self and other, the present and the past, the local and the global, and of course the traditional

view that sees ‘education’ and ‘training’, ‘deep learning’ and ‘surface learning’ as polarities [...] Theories of thirdness, in a practical sense, provide us with useful vocabulary to **critique binary conceptions of social phenomena and to analyse and problematise culture by turning all physical places, symbols, customs, ideas, etc. into lived zones of trans-cultures and trans-ideologies.** [emphasis added]

These ‘lived zones of trans-cultures and trans-ideologies’ can be created in the foreign language classroom – or ‘third space’ in Kramsch’s terms – when language learners encounter the foreign *other* in a L2 literary text. Pulverness (unpublished data and personal communication) describes this process as ‘virtual ethnography’, whereby learners engage in participant observation through textual fiction to meet *otherness*. However, the ‘analysis’, ‘problematization’ and ‘critique’ of ‘binary opposites’ does not only happen when we encounter fictional foreign others, but also through dialogue with other individuals in the class and through reflection on the self. For all this to happen, an enabling ‘third space’ should be created for bring underlying beliefs, values, ideologies and attitudes to the fore, that would otherwise remain unnoticed

3.3.6 Reducing Stereotypes

Most theoretical conceptualisations of prejudice and stereotype echo a sense of conflict between democratic values of equality and justice and the psychological processes that contribute towards having negative feelings for those who are perceived as different from us. However, Monteith & McQueary (2010: 494) assert that:

It is [...] possible that a person may choose to confront their biases and take steps to overcome prejudiced responding. This process involves the use of self-regulatory resources to alter one’s experienced or expressed biases.

The last two decades of social psychological research on stereotyping and prejudice have uncovered a variety of methods to control and self-regulate biases including intention, attention, conscious awareness, counter stereotypic training, thought suppression and reflection, amongst others. There is much evidence to suggest that once stereotypes are formed, they are difficult to unlearn, but it has been postulated that they can be altered

through different mental reasoning systems (Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2006; Rydell and McConnell 2006). Experimental research in which participants have been exposed to counter stereotypic exemplars of a social group or training have shown decreased bias. For example, experiments involving training in which participants were required to visualise a counter stereotypical woman with stereotypically male characteristics showed promising results (Kawakami, Dovidio and van Kamp 2005; Blair, Ma & Lenton 2001).

Empirical research studies have also provided evidence that motivation can play a key role in reducing stereotypes, such as receiving a reward, avoiding punishment or negative reactions from others, a desire to maintain a positive self-image or to act in accordance to personal standards of egalitarianism (Monteith & McQueary 2010: 495-496). In order to self-regulate prejudice, one of the strategies individuals employ is to suppress stereotypical thoughts in their minds by focusing on individuals rather than on the social groups they belong to. This is congruent with Holliday's (2010: 57) postulation of responding to people according to how we find them rather than according to our preconceived notions, whilst taking what people say as evidence of how they want to represent themselves rather than as information about where they come from. However, it has been found that when individuals suppress their thoughts it may have a rebound effect (for a review, see Monteith, Sherman & Devine 1998). Despite this, much stereotype suppression research has shown positive results, especially in people who have a strong desire to avoid stereotypical thinking, although there are doubts as to whether this method can change attitudes or reduce prejudice.

Another method with more promising results in terms of attitude change is the self-regulation strategy. Monteith and colleagues have found that awareness-raising of stereotypical thinking may lead to feelings of guilt, self-disappointment, discomfort and threat, especially in individuals with high personal standards of egalitarianism, and that engaging in processes of reflection can routinise less biased attitudes and generate less biased responses by default:

Theoretically, this process of self-regulation should, with practice, result in the deautomatization of prejudiced responses, and the consistent generation of less biased responses. (Monteith & McQueary 2010: 500)

Currently, little is known about the effects of self-regulation strategies, the impact that suppressing stereotypical thoughts may have on individuals or precisely what changes with counter-stereotypic imagery, and the study of stereotypes in the field of social psychology is

gradually moving towards an understanding that it is perhaps the use of a multiplicity of diverse strategies that may result in promoting less biased attitudes.

Another dimension of this work shows that there has been overwhelming evidence in support of Allport's (1954) 'contact hypothesis', whereby positive contact between members of diverse groups is believed to reduce prejudice and stereotyping. Allport developed his theory based on studies examining interracial contact and explained that:

Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between minority and majority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom or local atmosphere), and if it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups. (Allport 1954: 281)

Allport's 'contact hypothesis' theory for reducing prejudice is now well established through extensive empirical work that supports his ideas. Attitudes towards members of different social groups improve when individuals *work under equal status conditions, cooperate towards a common goal and when contact receives institutional support*. Research has shown that positive outcomes of this cooperation need to be clearly perceived and that individuals feel less threatened to lose their distinctiveness as a group if they work on different but equally valued tasks. By 'contact', researchers have extended their initial conception of 'face-to-face' contact to include the internet, mental imagery of contact experiences and vicarious contact experiences through the media or other ingroup members. Recent empirical work has found that the internet provides an optimal opportunity for contact (Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna 2006) due to the sense of anonymity that this medium of communication provides, as 'many of the cues that people use to infer status are not available' (Tausch & Hewstone 2010: 550). There is now a little research on virtual contact for reducing stereotyping in the field of social psychology and empirical work on mental imagery has shown improved attitudes when participants imagine talking to members of a different social group (Turner, Crisp & Lambert 2007).

In general, then, research on reducing stereotypes has proved that approaches that de-emphasise social categories and emphasise personalisation of contact produce less bias.

Person-oriented models that focus on cooperative contact and the disclosure of intimate information have the potential of fostering friendships, which leads individuals to develop more heterogeneous and less stereotypical perceptions of the social groups their friends belong to (for experimental studies see Bettencourt, Brewer, Croak et al 1992; Turner, Hewstone & Voci 2007; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Levin, van Laar & Sidanius 2003). However, Miller (2002) and Brown & Hewstone (2005) have argued that social and personal identities can co-exist and therefore personalised interpersonal contact should not be seen in opposition to social intergroup contact, but that these two dimensions need to operate simultaneously to be effective. These scholars thus advocate an integrative model for Allport's contact theory by incorporating both the 'social' and 'personal' identities.

In addition, researchers have become increasingly aware of other variables and factors, such as individual differences like people's initial levels of prejudice or social group status (e.g. dominant majority as opposed to non-dominant minority group). Nonetheless, there is some evidence to suggest that these types of contact can be effective even for prejudiced participants (see Maoz 2003; Pettigrew & Tropp 2006). Research on stereotyping has also found that the use of multiple identities can reduce prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination. It has been proposed that by changing the binary opposition 'us' and 'them' (e.g. 'English' / 'Spanish') to a more inclusive 'we' (e.g. 'European') can blur the boundaries between members of diverse social groups. However, empirical evidence has proved that individuals who are recategorised as a 'we' group may feel that their social identity is threatened for losing their distinctiveness as members of a particular social group:

Recategorization, as specified by the common ingroup identity model, involves shifting from a less inclusive to a more inclusive identity [...] this shift in self-definition may not improve intergroup relations, and when identification with the original subgroups is high, may even make things worse. (Crisp 2010: 511)

Indeed, empirical studies have demonstrated that bias increases, especially in individuals with a high sense of social identity, whilst bias may decrease in those individuals whose identification with their social group is lower (for a review see Crisp 2006). Additionally, studies have tested the hypothesis of whether prejudice can be reduced if individuals have multiple categorisations (e.g. 'English' and 'European') and the findings have been positive. Research has also shown that people simultaneously define themselves in terms of more than

one identity; i.e. they can identify themselves as members of different social groups at the same time.

People can shift from one identity to another, either due to context and accessibility, or strategically to avoid being tarnished by a threat to one of their identities. (Crisp 2010: 521)

Empirical studies confirm that having multiple identities can reduce prejudice and stereotyping, but more research on multiple identities is needed to find out how prejudice and stereotyping can be reduced for a more democratic egalitarian world. The implicit assumption underlying the elimination of stereotypes and prejudice lies in reducing social injustice and developing democratic attitudes for social change. However,

reducing the negative thoughts (stereotypes), attitudes (prejudice), and actions (discrimination) of individuals represents only one potential route to increase social justice. (Wright 2010: 577)

Social psychology views *collective action* as an individual's intention to enact change for their group; i.e. when an individual engages in collective action, they are acting on behalf of the social group they belong to in order to improve the conditions of all its members. Thus, 'collective action can be engaged in by a single individual as long as the intent is to create change for the collective' (Wright 2010: 578). Wright points out a contradiction between the psychologies of prejudice reduction and collective action and notes that to date these two areas of research have developed quite separately. Wright (2010: 591-592) advocates research that unites these two strands in search of a more egalitarian society since often 'intergroup inequality goes unaddressed, even unnoticed', therefore for him 'this remains a critical area of study'. Having reviewed the literature pertaining reader-response theory and research on reducing prejudice and stereotyping, the following section outlines the pedagogical model that emerges from the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 for the use of Gamero's short story 'Norma y Ester' to deconstruct stereotypes for the development of 'critical cultural awareness'.

3.4 The Pedagogical Model

3.4.1 Materials Selection

Based on the theoretical frameworks reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3, I conceptualised a tentative pedagogical model for the use of literature to help students think, talk and behave in ways less biased by stereotypes. The proposed model further develops Gonçalves Matos' (2012) model for intercultural reading of literary texts in foreign language education and does not presuppose a rigid step-by-step progression, but instead suggests stages based on the theoretical principles reviewed. The model consists of six stages, which can be adapted, and serve as the basis for the design of pedagogical tasks:

1. Comprehending the text
2. Student Response
3. Recording the Response
4. Analysis of the Responses
5. Awareness-Raising
6. Deconstructing Stereotypes

On successful completion of these stages, I aimed for the students to be able to:

- appraise their emotional response to the literary text
- describe the ideologies embedded in their emotional response to the literary text
- demonstrate the development of their own worldviews
- explain how they relate their own personal experiences to the literary text
- describe the stereotypes they hold about Hispanics with regard to gender
- analyse and interpret their own texts and those of others
- evaluate commonsense assumptions in their own texts
- examine their own beliefs, behaviours, values and attitudes and those of others
- recognise particular instances where their stereotypes were challenged
- analyse their own texts and those of others using theories of 'identity'
- illustrate culturist language – as one facet of stereotyping – with examples taken from their own texts and those of others
- propose alternative viewpoints to those initially formulated
- identify and describe instances of having been stereotyped

These ‘intended learning outcomes’ included some general aims such as ‘appraising one’s own emotional response to the literary text’ and ‘demonstrating the development of one’s own worldviews’. Other aims referred more to the particular issue of stereotyping, like ‘identifying and describing instances of having been stereotyped’ and ‘recognising particular instances where stereotypes were challenged’. The next section provides a detailed description of each of the stages in this tentative pedagogical model outlining the teaching approaches to achieve the aforementioned learning outcomes.

3.4.2 Comprehending the text

Once I chose the short story ‘Norma y Ester’ to bring students’ stereotypical thinking to the fore, I facilitated the reading by designing comprehension tasks to help the class understand the literary text. One of the teaching techniques used was to provide students with a glossary of key terms, whilst comprehension tasks included dividing the text into manageable segments for students to work on. Students demonstrated comprehension through a variety of tasks, e.g. questions, summaries, use of graphic/visual organisers, mindmaps, key information about content, poster production, descriptions of characters, etc. As an example, building a mindmap of the main events of the story was used to check comprehension of the storyline, and served as a springboard for clarification, expansion and character portrayal. Another example of a comprehension task involved small groups choosing an episode in the story to create a new mindmap collaboratively, stating the cause and effect of an incident, the characters involved, and a timeline detailing the events leading up to the incident. Mindmaps were later displayed and shared with other members of the class, a task which provided students with a chance to focus on the story in greater detail.

As discussed previously, one of the limitations of a reader-response approach to literary texts in foreign language education is that language students are not the intended readers of the literary texts, and as such there is a need for more assistance to ensure that they are understood. Comprehending the text does not mean interpreting events. It means guiding the students in the *efferent* reading of the text (Rosenblatt 1981) through the creation of skimming and scanning tasks to help learners find factual information in the text. At this stage, students should not be encouraged to respond to the text emotionally or to analyse

events, situations or characters in the literary text, for this will trigger an *aesthetic* reading, a stage which should come after the students have comprehended the text (*effere*nt reading). In other words, teachers should ensure that they do not ‘interfere’, ‘inhibit’ or even ‘block’ (Gonçalves Matos 2012: 123) the later *aesthetic* reading of the text.

3.4.3 Student Response

After students comprehended the literary text, they responded to it emotionally and freely, whilst I posed questions (in Spanish) such as; “*What do these incidents / attitudes / events remind you of?*” “*How do you relate this incident / attitude / event to your experiences with (Hispanics)?*” “*Can you relate this to any of your personal experiences? Or to anything you’ve read or heard?*” “*If so, how?*” “*What makes you say so? Why do you say that? What exactly makes you think this way?*”. Students were encouraged to discuss lived, virtual or mediated experiences that they related to the themes, events and situations in the literary text and to explain and justify the links and connections they made. Students described these experiences triggered by the literary text, and justified and validated their answers. The questions posed aimed to encourage students to talk about their own experiences in relation to the literary text with a view to exploring the ‘texts’ within themselves. In this stage, I provided an enabling environment for an *aesthetic* reading, which aimed to explore the ways in which the text was experienced by the learners. As students related the reading of the literary text to their own lives, they created new ‘texts’; or in Iser’s (1987) words, the students created a new ‘writing’ out of the ‘reading’. These new ‘texts’ were the students’ past experiences, feelings and images, created as responses to the literary text. As stated in Chapter 1, Kramsch (2000) calls this new ‘writing’ the ‘students’ texts’, which provide a learning opportunity for the analysis of students’ ideologies in relation to foreign *others*.

In the ‘transaction’ (Rosenblatt 1978, 1986) established between the students and the literary text, students evoked feelings, images and experiences, which became the ‘texts’ used as teaching resources. This critical pedagogical intervention stimulated a ‘generative theme’ approach, whereby ‘themes based on student life’ (Shor 2009: 298) became the central teaching resources for problem-posing. Based on Freire’s premise that in order to ‘read the world’, the teacher must use students’ experiences and everyday life as the basis of

instruction, the pedagogies foregrounded the themes brought in by the students themselves, which were given as much importance as to the literary text; thus placing students as *subjects* right in the centre of the curriculum. This view is shared by Shor (2009: 291) who contends that by ‘negotiating the curriculum’ and ‘sharing power’ with the students, the teacher develops her ‘democratic competence’.

3.4.4 Recording the Response

Students recorded their responses in a format decided by myself (e.g. video/audio recording, portfolio, diary entry, recorded class discussion/role play, essay, etc). I designed tasks to ensure that the students’ responses were recorded for later analysis and reflection. This pedagogical decision was based on Brenner’s (2010: 136) idea of encouraging learners to record their own responses to fiction in order to raise awareness of their identities in their subsequent analysis. As previously discussed, Kramsch (2000) also advocates the exploration of ‘students’ texts’ to unmask ideologies for she found no evidence of intercultural learning in empirical research where the ‘students’ texts’ were not explored. In order for these texts to be discussed and reflected upon by the students, there is a need to record them in some format. In critical pedagogical terms, the act of recording students’ responses subverts power relations by positioning learners as active intellectuals rather than as domesticated students controlled by the curricular choices made by the teacher. Recording and using the ‘students’ texts’ as the basis of instruction is one of the ways in which a CP (Critical Pedagogy) teacher actively rejects the ‘banking approach’ to embrace a ‘problem-posing’ approach to education (for further detail, see ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ in Chapter 2).

3.4.5 Analysis of Responses

In this stage, I created two tasks. The first one was a group discussion analysing responses to the literary text made by a previous cohort of learners, followed by a reflective piece of writing in which students analysed their own responses. For the analysis of the responses to the literary text of a previous cohort of learners, I transformed their ‘texts’ into a pedagogical task. This being my first experience as a CP teacher, for ethical reasons, I chose not to use the students’ own texts for class discussions. Instead, I used fragments of the data from CS1 as a

pedagogical tool to be used with students in CS2, for I feared learners may have felt offended or accused of being prejudiced, racist, essentialist or biased by stereotypes in front of their peers in class. The aim of this task was to identify stereotypical attitudes embedded in these other students' responses to the same literary text previously used with another cohort of final-year undergraduates. To this end, in class we discussed the meaning of 'stereotyping' so that learners could find evidence of this type of thinking in the 'students' texts'; an exercise which they later repeated in their reflective piece of writing analysing their own 'texts'.

A key learning outcome of these tasks was for students to reflect upon the taken-for-granted assumptions, ethnocentric viewpoints, embedded stereotypes and implicit condemnation of *otherness* displayed in the responses. An element of reflection is an essential aspect of reader-response theory, and as noted before, 'reflection' has been defined by Byram and Fleming (1998: 7) as 'decentring from one's own taken-for-granted world'. The act of decentring that Byram and Fleming refer to, involves detaching and distancing ourselves from one's own discourses of *otherness* so as to analyse them as an object of study, an exercise which positions learners as 'onlookers' of their own texts with the aim of viewing the world from a different perspective.

It was at this stage, only after students had responded *aesthetically* to the literary text, that they were required to research the socio-cultural, historical and political context within which the literary text was set. This teaching technique aimed to help students contextualise the text and notice cultural aspects, which may assist them in the analysis of their own responses, situations and characters in the short story. As previously noted, one of the limitations that Kern (2000) addresses in relation to reader-response theory is the fact that if readers are to make their own interpretations, then they would impose their own culture on the text, instead of being open to new cultural meanings that the text has to offer. Indeed, as Kramsch (1998) noted too, there is a need to provide socio-cultural and historical contextual information of a literary text so as not to leave students in their native cultural mindsets failing to engage them in making sense of a reality other than their own.

Therefore, on the basis of this empirical research, I opted for the inclusion of a stage after the *aesthetic* response for students to gain knowledge that would assist them in the contextualisation of the literary text. The theoretical basis for this decision lies in Barnett's (1997) domains for the development of criticality (for further detail, see Barnett's take on the 'critical' in Chapter 2). For Barnett, a 'critical being' is someone who develops knowledge (*critical reason*); in this case the development of 'critical reason' can be fostered as the students gain knowledge of the socio-cultural, historical and political situation in which the literary text is set. Additionally, another of Barnett's domains is the development of the self (*critical self-reflection*), encouraged in this study by the evaluation of students' responses to the text.

3.4.6 Awareness-raising

Students identified the stereotypes and prejudices against Hispanics in the responses made by past students to the short story and wrote them on strips of paper, which I later blu-taked onto the board. Once all the strips of paper were displayed on the board, the students' awareness of stereotypical views developed as I posed questions such as *What makes these students see Hispanics in this way? Why are they perceived in this way? What do they do to be perceived in this way? How do you behave in similar circumstances? Can you give me any examples of language used in these responses that denote stereotypical thinking? What 'linguistic evidence' can you provide in support of your views?* Students were encouraged to provide evidence in their answers to justify their responses, and in the discussion phase, I asked the class whether they identified themselves with having any of these stereotypes about Hispanics at all. Students agreed that generally speaking, they shared most of the stereotypes as the previous cohort of learners.

As we shall see in Chapter 6, at this point some students exhibited feelings of discomfort during this phase of the teaching as they openly recognised sharing some of the stereotypes and prejudices. I previously noted that the field of social psychology found that becoming aware of one's own stereotypes may lead to feelings of guilt, self-disappointment, discomfort and threat (for further detail, see section 'Reducing Stereotypes' in this chapter). This happens especially in individuals with high personal standards of egalitarianism, and that

engaging in processes of reflection can routinise less biased attitudes and generate less biased responses by default as a ‘self-regulation strategy’ for attitude change. With this in mind, I actively set out to raise awareness of stereotypical thinking in the hope that ‘this process of self-regulation’ would, with practice, lead to the ‘deautomatization of prejudiced responses, and the consistent generation of less biased responses’ (Monteith & McQueary 2010: 500).

In this stage, students were also referred to their own responses to the literary text to evaluate whether they themselves had exhibited similar viewpoints in their own ‘texts’, although for ethical reasons, as explained before, I chose not to expose any learners by asking them to reveal their findings to the whole class. Instead, I used the task of analysing other students’ ‘texts’ as the basis for an ‘awareness-raising’ reflective piece of writing, in which students critically evaluated their own ‘texts’ within themselves through the analysis of their own images and discourses of *otherness*. This activity was similar to the work done in class with the responses to the short story from the previous cohort of undergraduates, although this time the students’ own responses were the focus of analysis. This consciousness-raising exercise aimed to identify values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that might otherwise have remained unnoticed by the students, and served as a springboard for reflection on their ideological standpoints. As part of this process of reflection, students were also guided to become critical of the language they used in relation to Hispanics by examining the linguistic choices made and searching for evidence of essentialist discourses. In this regard, Holliday (2007) advocates a ‘methodology of prevention’ to avoid essentialised, simplistic assertions related to foreign *others*. Therefore, I introduced the notion of the use of more tentative, cautious language and asked students to rephrase some of the comments in the personal experiences so that they sounded less essentialist and categorical, hence less *othering* (see ‘Language of Interculture’ in Chapter 8 for further details and examples).

The underlying guiding principle of this stage in the model has its foundations in Freire’s (2009: 57; italics in original) notion of an ‘*emergence of consciousness*’ for later ‘*critical intervention in reality*’. In attempting to raise students’ awareness of essentialised notions of Hispanic masculinity and femininity and of dominant discourses that reduce others to prescribed stereotypes, the task aimed to help students become ‘conscious beings’ ‘*with the world*’ (Freire 2009: 54; italics in original). In Freire’s terms, the task aimed to provide

enabling opportunities for ‘bits of the world’ based on their personal experiences to ‘enter’ into their ‘consciousness’, so that they can be ‘inside’ of them. This process of ‘*emergence of consciousness*’ is often referred to in critical pedagogy as ‘*conscientização*’ achieved through a ‘problem-posing’ approach to education. For Freire, the knowledge gained through ‘*conscientização*’ leads to ‘*critical intervention in reality*’, a view supported by McLaren (2009: 80) who states that:

(k)nowledge is relevant only when it begins with the experiences students bring with them from the surrounding culture; it is **critical only when these experiences are shown to sometimes be problematic (i.e., racist, sexist)**; and it is transformative only when students begin to use the knowledge to help empower others, including individuals in the surrounding community. Knowledge then becomes linked to social reform. **An understanding of the language of the self can help us better negotiate with the world. It can also help us begin to forge the basis of *social transformation*: the building of a better world, the altering of the very ground upon which we live and work.** [italics in original; emphasis added]

McLaren’s point here is that being ‘critical’ involves a deep awareness of how worldviews, based on prejudice, racism and other social problems, can be ‘problematic’. One of the ways in which McLaren’s sense of the ‘critical’ can be developed is by uncovering culturist language (Holliday 2010), which the students might be unaware of using, appropriating and perpetuating. Therefore, consciousness-raising tasks that encourage students to identify embedded ethnocentrism and stereotyping is one way of developing the ‘critical’ in McLaren’s sense of the word, which is also one way of developing ‘critical cultural awareness’ as conceptualised by Byram (1997). For McLaren, this type of criticality leads to ‘social transformation’ in order to build ‘a better world’ or as Freire would say, to ‘*critical intervention in reality*’.

3.4.7 Deconstructing Stereotypes

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, by ‘deconstruction’ I mean breaking stereotypes apart for analysis and reflection, with a view to paving the way to reduce them, so that we behave in ways less biased by stereotyping for ‘self and social transformation’. With this aim in mind, I developed a pedagogical intervention that aimed to equip students with a ‘self-regulation’ strategy to move away from ‘freeze-framing’ and ‘fossilising’ Hispanic cultures through stereotypes (Pickering 2001) to develop the ability to enter and explore *thirdness* (Feng 2009). I speculated that this strategy would enable learners to ‘critique’ and ‘problematise’ binary opposites. The strategy involved learning theoretical notions relating to identity, so that students could appreciate Hispanic identities as fluid, complex and multi-faceted, in a permanent state of flux, historically situated and socially constructed, rather than predetermined by biology (McLaren and Giroux 1997) or geographical location. I also speculated that students would use these theoretical notions as tools for stereotype deconstruction. Some of the ‘analytic metalanguage’ that Luke (2005: 26-27) recommends for analysis was also taught so that texts could be critically analysed ‘as an intellectual, deconstructive, textual, and cognitive analytic task’ (Luke 2004: 26). Since research in social psychology indicates that an understanding of multiple identities can reduce prejudice (Crisp 2010), I was led to explore a ‘pedagogy of identities’ (Brenner 2010: 131) as a possible strategy for the deconstruction of stereotypes.

The aim of this ‘identity-focused’ pedagogical strategy was to equip students with the tools to look at their ‘pasts, presents and futures’ (Block 2010: 2-3) with a view to becoming ‘transformative intellectuals’. In Chapter 2, I explained that the ‘future is something we build in the present’ (Wink 2011: 111), and that a ‘transformative intellectual’ is someone who transcends time and space by looking at their past to understand their present better so that they can build their own future more wisely. As noted in Chapter 2, for Norton (2000) and Kramsch (2009), identity has to do with the ways individuals interpret past events, the ways they construct their relationship with the world and the ways their futures are imagined. Therefore, these tools aimed to develop students’ ability to critically evaluate their own experiences (*past*) with a view to changing attitudes and behaviours (*present*) for ‘self and social transformation’ (*future*); thus becoming ‘transformative intellectuals’. In critical pedagogical terms, this is ‘praxis’; i.e. the use of theory to reflect on personal experiences

with a view to ‘self and social transformation’, or in other words, to improving our own lives and those of others. This is what McLaren terms ‘informed actions’, which is the ability to use our learning to act in the world, for as Shor (2009: 293) notes, theory without experience is abstract discourse, or ‘words without the world’.

Therefore, understanding the ‘dynamics of identity’ became central in my critical pedagogical framework so that students would learn to ‘behave less harmfully and more justly’ towards others (Bracher 2006: 466), and in ways less biased by stereotypes in order to ‘improve the quality of life’ for themselves and for others (Wink 2011: 114). This type of teaching, according to Freire, can only lead to humanisation as students develop knowledge for ‘self and social transformation’, a view shared by Bracher (2006: 101) who describes critical pedagogy as ‘resistance pedagogy’ for it:

aims at liberation from the oppressive forces and structures that constitute racism, classism, colonialism, sexism, and heterosexism. But in addition to liberating students (and others), it also aims to **help students develop their full potentials, to become empowered**. A careful reading of critical pedagogical theory reveals that a central motivation animating this pedagogy is **the teachers’ desire for a strong identity for their students** [emphasis added]

Bracher’s point here lies in the development of a ‘strong identity’ for students, which he views as the main goal of critical pedagogy in order to liberate them from the oppression of racism, classism, colonialism, sexism and heterosexism. Bracher sees ‘underdeveloped’, ‘insecure’ and ‘vulnerable’ identities as the root of many social problems and advocates a full understanding of identity to reduce behaviours that lead to prejudice, racism and hatred, among other social problems, for social harmony and justice. What Bracher is referring to here is the process of students developing into ‘transformative intellectuals’, the process by which they become more ‘human’ by assuming the responsibility of ‘self and social transformation’ in order to eliminate ‘pain’ and ‘oppression’ and to promote ‘equality’

(McLaren 2009) for a more egalitarian and democratic future. Humanisation is, in Freire's terms, the ultimate goal of critical pedagogy.

The theoretical basis for this pedagogical intervention lies in Bracher's (2006) postulations of an 'identity-focused' critical pedagogical approach to literature education in order to reduce prejudice, racism, sexism and other social problems. In attempting to define 'pedagogy', Anglas Grande (2009: 186) also foregrounds 'identity' as one of the core pillars of critical pedagogy:

[...] the "pedagogical" refers to the production of identity or the way one learns to see oneself in relation to the world. Identity is thus situated as one of the core struggle concepts of critical pedagogy, where the formation of self serves as the basis for analyses of race, class, gender and sexuality and their relationship to the questions of democracy, justice and community.

This view is also supported by Brenner (2010: 131), who argues that through the understanding of the 'dynamics of identity', students can analyse their own 'subjective experiences of encountering the Other', raising in this way their sensitivity to social injustice and inequalities. Furthermore, Bracher (2006: 466) argues that through an 'identity-focused' critical pedagogy, students develop not only as individuals, but also as members of a society for collective action. He posits that the real goal of education lies in changing students' attitudes and transforming their behaviours for positive social change so that they 'behave in ways that reduce suffering and injustice'. Fleming (2006a: 134-135) develops this argument further by postulating that 'fiction is a valuable resource for teaching citizenship' as so many plays, novels and films 'provide a general insight into the development of moral virtue'. For Fleming (2006a: 140), fiction has the capacity to engage us emotionally and 'confronts life in all its moral complexity', which can therefore facilitate 'personal growth' (Bracher 2006: xii-xiii) for the development of 'strong' and 'resilient' student identities and reduction of antisocial or prejudiced behaviours. Both scholars, Fleming and Bracher, view literature education as the means to teach for social justice through the reduction of prejudice against others, although Bracher recognises that there is little evidence to date of the effectiveness of

pedagogical interventions or theoretical frameworks to support an ‘identity-focused’ type of teaching.

Therefore, based on a critical ‘pedagogy of identities’, I created two tasks. The first one involved students re-reading the short story ‘Norma y Ester’ through the lens of identity in the hope that they would appreciate ‘diversity as the norm’, in Holliday’s (2010: 54) words. The main aim of this task was for students to learn about the ‘dynamics of identity’ using the literary text as the focus of analysis, with a view to repeating the same exercise at a later stage using the students’ personal experiences for textual analysis. To this end, students searched for instances in the literary text in which the fictional characters challenged their stereotypes about Hispanics or took new subject positions that contradicted their initial viewpoints. The class engaged in discussion, analysing and theorising the newly found evidence using notions related to ‘identity construction’ and explained the circumstances in which the characters were ‘dynamic agents’ (Ros i Solé 2007: 205) of change.

The second task involved students describing their own experiences of being *othered*, with a subsequent critical analysis using the notion of ‘identity’ as the theoretical framework. Students described critical incidents based on their personal experiences of being stereotyped during their year-abroad placement, drawing on their own ‘bodily experiences’ of being *othered*, marginalised and discriminated against (Luke 2005: 26). As reviewed in Chapter 2, Luke’s ‘sense of the critical’ involves the ‘bodily experience of oppression, of alterity’ and speaks of an ‘out-of-body experience’; i.e. an experience of being an ‘onlooker’ of our own ‘bodily experiences’ of being *othered* in order to critically analyse them. A pedagogy based on ‘identity’ was implemented in the ‘out-of-body’ phase, during which students critically analysed their year-abroad experiences of alterity for the purpose of ‘naming’ the oppressive nature of stereotyping.

What follows is a table summarising each stage in the pedagogical model with the aims, learning outcomes, teaching approaches and the tasks developed for this study. The table also shows the tasks that were tested empirically in each of the case studies in this PhD study. It should be noted that further research would be necessary to test the whole model focusing on all of the outcomes:

Table 1 Pedagogical Model

	AIMS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	TEACHING APPROACHES	TASKS
Comprehending the Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehending the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To comprehend the main events of the literary text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skimming • Scanning • Creating mindmaps • Summarising • Drawing timelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students built a mindmap of the main events of the story • Students created graphic and visual organisers to represent main events
Student Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating students' 'texts' out of the reading • Developing a 'generative theme approach' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explain how one's own personal experiences are related to the literary text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding emotionally and freely to the text • Linking the text to personal experiences • Justifying one's own answers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students discussed lived, virtual or mediated experiences they related to the text guided by my questions in class <p style="text-align: right;">CS1</p>
Recording the Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recording students' 'texts' • Rejecting the 'banking approach' to embrace 'problem-posing' education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To appraise the emotional response to the literary text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video/audio recording • Building portfolios • Keeping diaries • Recording class discussion/ role play • Writing essays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students wrote diary entries to record their responses to the text <p style="text-align: right;">CS1</p>

	AIMS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	TEACHING APPROACHES	TASKS
Analysis of Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying stereotypical and prejudiced attitudes in students' 'texts' Reflecting on taken-for-granted assumptions and ethnocentric viewpoints Contextualising the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To describe the ideologies embedded in one's own emotional response to the literary text To describe the stereotypes held against Hispanics To analyse and interpret other students' 'texts' To examine beliefs, behaviours, values and attitudes towards others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysing students' 'texts' Researching socio-cultural, historical and political context of the literary text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students analysed responses to the text from a previous cohort of learners Students wrote a reflective piece analysing their own 'texts' within themselves <p style="text-align: right;">CS2</p>
Awareness Raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting a 'self-regulation strategy' through an appeal to emotions for attitude change Uncovering ideologies Developing the ability to be 'onlookers' of one's own texts Identifying and modifying essentialist and culturist language in students' 'texts' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To demonstrate the development of one's own worldviews To critically evaluate and analyse one's own 'texts' To illustrate chauvinistic culturist language with examples To evaluate commonsense assumptions in one's own texts To examine one's own beliefs, behaviours, values and attitudes towards others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussing stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies Answering questions based on the students' 'texts' Analysing one's own images and discourses of <i>otherness</i> in closed pairs Improving the reflective essay based on class discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students noted the stereotypical prejudices and linguistic choices that denoted essentialist and chauvinistic attitudes on strips of paper as they analysed other students' 'texts' Students critically evaluated their own reflective essay and further analysed their own images and discourses of <i>otherness</i> with a view to improving their reflective piece of writing <p style="text-align: right;">CS2</p>

	AIMS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	TEACHING APPROACHES	TASKS
Deconstructing Stereotypes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying a ‘Pedagogy of Identity’ to the literary text and the students’ ‘texts’ • Changing attitudes and behaviours for self and social transformation • Becoming more human by learning to reduce prejudice and bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recognise instances where one’s own stereotypes are challenged • To analyse one’s own ‘texts’ and those of others using theoretical notions of ‘identity’ • To propose alternative viewpoints to those initially formulated • To evaluate commonsense assumptions in one’s own texts • To identify and describe instances of having been stereotyped 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning the ‘dynamics of identity’ as <i>tools</i> for textual analysis and stereotype deconstruction • Reading the literary and students’ ‘texts’ through the lens of identity • Describing personal experiences of being <i>othered</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students reread the literary text through the lens of ‘identity’, engaged in class discussions, delivered oral presentations and wrote an essay <p style="text-align: right;">CS2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students described their own experiences of being <i>othered</i> during their year-abroad placements through class discussions, oral presentations and essays <p style="text-align: right;">CS3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students analysed their own experiences of alterity through the lens of identity

3.5 Conclusions

This chapter has provided an overview of the theoretical frameworks employed to develop a pedagogical model for the deconstruction of stereotypes through Gamero’s short story ‘Norma y Ester’, along with a summary of the plot and the pedagogical ideology underpinning the teaching practice. Reader-response theory and its pedagogical implications were reviewed, in addition to outlining current research on combating stereotypes from the field of social psychology. Additionally, stages for a pedagogical model were developed as the basis for the design of intercultural tasks, a few of which are tested empirically in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. In these chapters, each of the three case studies are described, whereby I evaluate the students’ reactions to my pedagogical interventions in order to answer the research questions in this study. The next chapter deals with a discussion of the research methodology employed pertaining the case studies before showing the analysis of the data.

4.1 Introduction

At the outset of this research, I aimed to evaluate the potential of literary texts for intercultural exploration and to investigate what, beyond the text, could be learnt in the widest educational sense. In the initial stages of the research the focus was wide and open and focused on the potential of literature for the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). As the analysis of the data progressed, the focus shifted to uncovering gender stereotyping of the Hispanic *other*, and progressive narrow focusing enabled me to explore critical pedagogical approaches to deconstruct stereotypes with the aim of developing ‘critical cultural awareness’. During the data collection and analysis stage of Case Study 1 (CS1), I was not certain which direction I was headed with the research. As a result, I let the research guide me, constantly framing and reframing different research questions all throughout the process. It was not until half way through CS1 that the research question could be phrased with more confidence for the conceptualisation of Case Study 2 (CS2) and Case Study 3 (CS3). As Holliday (2007: 29) states:

the rigour of qualitative research is in managing what has the potential to be a very messy subjectivity; and central to this managing at the outset is the formulation of research questions – *even if they are likely to change*. [italics in original]

CS1 was exploratory in nature, and as the research evolved, so the questions followed related, though different, paths. The research questions gradually emerged as I listened to the digital recordings of the interviews, oral presentations and class discussions, whilst reading the transcripts, in addition to reading the students’ personal diaries and reflecting on my teaching practice. Holliday (2007: 32) explains that:

research questions can also change as the research moves on from the initial concept. Initial questions lead the researcher to investigate in a certain

direction; but within this process there will be unforeseen discoveries which raise further or different questions. In some cases the whole focus of the research may change.

The following diagram illustrates the evolutionary process in the conceptualisation of the research focus and questions in this study:

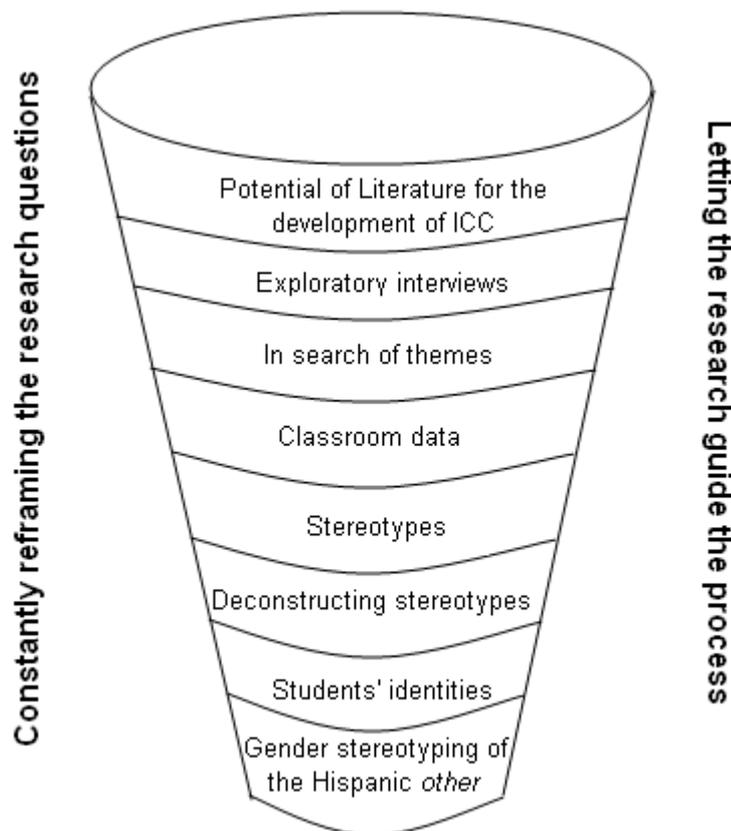


Figure 2. Evolution of Research Questions

This chapter outlines the methodological choices and challenges related to the investigation of the complex phenomenon of the deconstruction of stereotyping and the development of 'critical cultural awareness' through critical pedagogy, ethical concerns and translation issues. It also explains the rationale for case study research in this study, and describes the research design and participants, convenience sampling and data gathering methods (interviews, observation and documentary data). Furthermore, it reviews the triangulation protocols undertaken in this study and provides an overview of Grounded Theory as the analytic tool and style employed for the content analysis of the data. Additionally, it describes my journey as a researcher in the framing of the research questions, contending and wrestling

with data analysis as Hispanic gender stereotypical beliefs were brought to the fore in the Spanish language classroom with undergraduates. Furthermore, it reviews the limitations of the study by considering the issues of bias and subjectivity, research context, power relations, identity and the challenges posed by the translation of the data.

4.2 Methodological Choices

4.2.1 The Rationale for Case Study Research

This PhD study employs case study as its research methodology for a number of reasons, which I outline in this section. The complexity of the phenomenon that this study sought to understand required a methodology that investigates its characteristics and dynamics in depth. Uncovering students' stereotypical beliefs in the context of their prior intercultural experiences during the reading of a literary text necessitated the employment of an appropriate methodology that focuses on the natural context – in this research, the classroom – and is flexible enough in terms of bringing together a wide range of views and opinions through qualitative and interpretative inquiry. Cohen *et al.* (2007: 257-258) observe that:

Case studies, in not having to seek frequencies of occurrences, can replace quantity with quality and intensity, separating the *significant few* from the *insignificant many* instances of behaviour. **Significance rather than frequency** is a hallmark of case studies, offering the researcher an insight into the real dynamics of situations and people. [italics in original; emphasis added]

Yin (2003: 2) characterises case study as a research tool that ‘arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena’; i.e. it seeks to understand the meanings behind the actions and knowledge of the participants. Stake (1995: xi) defines case studies as ‘the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case’ and argues that ‘we are interested in them for both their uniqueness and commonality’. Therefore, case study research enabled me to portray the richness and complexity of the cases with descriptions, narratives and analytical accounts, striving to describe the uniqueness and dynamic complex nature of the case study. I, as a teacher and researcher, was integrally involved in each of the case studies, and the participant nature of my dual role allowed me to focus on the research participants, their experiences, thoughts and feelings. Watts (2007: 211) likens case study research with

literature. Case study is ‘concerned with illustrations rather than definite answers: but whereas literature may be concerned with the ideal, such research is concerned with the real and the particular’. Further, Watts recognises that in case study research ‘there are answers in the plural’, much the same as what happens when fiction is read in that individuals seek to draw their own conclusions and do not want to be given definite answers.

Furthermore, the boundaries of the case study were the seminars I taught, which I ran for fourth and final year undergraduates in a British university. Stake (1995) refers to case study as *a bounded system*, drawing attention to it as an object, rather than a process. I strove to collect the data within the boundaries of the case study - the classroom - where ideas germinated and viewpoints were developed in response to the literary text we read and the tasks students completed. The three case studies undertaken chronologically traced the evolution of my own thinking in terms of the pedagogical decisions I made as I gathered and analysed the data. Case study research enabled me to explore the complexity and multiplicity of views to be represented in each case study; with the use of down-to-earth and ‘strong in reality’ data. Cohen *et. al.*(2007: 258) observe that:

the case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community. The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalizations about the wider population to which that unit belongs.

Furthermore, case study research allowed me to view situations through the eyes of the participants and catch unique features. These unique features can admit other possible reinterpretations, and be applied to similar cases by other researchers, thus making the case studies in this thesis more generalisable. As the phenomenon researched in this PhD thesis was multifaceted, it required a methodology that brought in multiple perspectives and viewpoints, and which explored diverse dimensions and privileged the individual voice. Case study fitted this purpose. The postmodernist view argues that the world is complex and socially constructed, so infinitely rich and diverse that it cannot be objectively studied. Postmodernism concerns itself with the construction of the social world through the development of a multiplicity of perspectives, interpretations and voices, suggesting that there are a number of answers, conclusions and opinions about a single issue, all of which are

valid. Figure 3 graphically represents the multiplicity of perspectives that I as a researcher received from my students (S), which I, in turn, re-interpreted. Other researchers (R) will then formulate their own interpretations of the data I collected from the students:

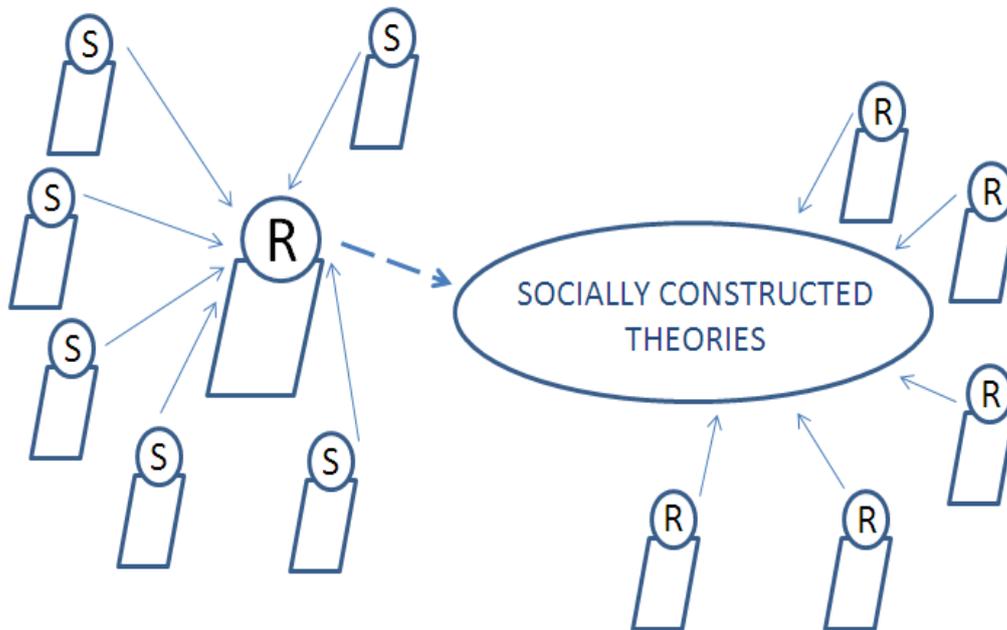


Figure 3 The Social Construction of Theories

For the postmodernist, there is no social world ‘out there’ to be discovered, since social worlds are constructed. The researcher’s task lies then, in putting forward an interpretation to be triangulated with other voices, since validity increases if the same point is targeted from many different angles.

Case study methodology allowed me to empirically test a teaching approach to the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’ through the deconstruction of stereotypes for language students in a British university. To this end, this methodology allowed me to design three case studies to explore issues in depth, evaluating the evolution of critical pedagogical approaches from different angles and with diverse voices. Although Yin (2003:10) contends that one of the major challenges of case studies is that ‘they provide little basis for scientific generalisation’, the case studies in this thesis can be very valuable in making ‘naturalistic generalisations’ (Stake 1995). According to Gerring (2004: 342), case study is ‘an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units’. Gerring encapsulates the main features of case study in that they are unique, but common;

complex with multiple interpretations, and the close examination and study of one case helps to understand other similar cases. According to Gerring, the ‘intensive study’ of a case enables researchers to ‘generalise across a larger set of units’.

4.2.2 The Action Research Element

For CS1, I chose to examine the stereotypical beliefs about Hispanics through the reading of Gamero’s short story. The analysis of CS1 data influenced my pedagogical decisions for CS2; and the analysis of CS2 data informed my teaching for CS3. Therefore, it could be argued that this research study shares some elements of Action Research, since the findings informed and were informed by classroom practice and ongoing data analysis. However, this PhD study goes only part way to becoming a truly action research project, since the scope of the study does not include identifying criteria to judge if situations have improved, or evaluating actions taken against criteria in each of the stages. This research though, utilises an important element of action research, which is that of planning the next stage and the next pedagogical strategies in the light of findings. However, as stated before, not all the elements of Action Research methodology were utilised. Consequently, the methodology employed was case study, with a general research question that reads *how can Critical Pedagogy help students deconstruct stereotypes in their development of ‘critical cultural awareness’?* and three operational research questions that helped answer the main general question and shaped the presentation of the rest of the thesis as follows:

Table 2 Assumptions and Research Questions

Chapter Title	Assumption	Research Question
<u>Chapter 5</u> The Imagined Hispanic Other (CS1)	Students stereotype Hispanics.	How do students view the remote, and not so remote, Hispanic <i>other</i> ?
<u>Chapter 6</u> Windows on the Hispanic <i>other</i> (CS2)	Students can deconstruct stereotypes through an ‘identity-focused’ critical pedagogical approach.	When taught with an ‘identity-focused’ critical pedagogical approach, how do students deconstruct stereotypes?

Chapter Title	Assumption	Research Question
Chapter 7 Mirrors of the Self (CS3)	Students are stereotyped by Hispanics during their period of residence abroad.	When taught with a Critical ‘Pedagogy-of-the-Oppressed’ approach, how do students describe and ‘name’ their experiences of being subjected to stereotyping?

As can be surmised from the table above, this PhD thesis gradually focused on investigating students’ deconstruction of Hispanic stereotyping through the critical pedagogical interventions I implemented in the classroom, and as my thinking evolved, I framed more specific research questions for each of the three case studies.

4.2.3 Research Design

As previously stated, the research consisted of three case studies with different groups of learners - Case Study 1 (CS1) during the 2008 Spring Semester, Case Study 2 (CS2) during the 2009 Spring Semester and Case Study 3 (CS3) during the 2009 Autumn Semester. Each case study is different, nested one upon the other, and there is an organic progression as this PhD study went from a potentially action research project to a case study research (Fig 4)

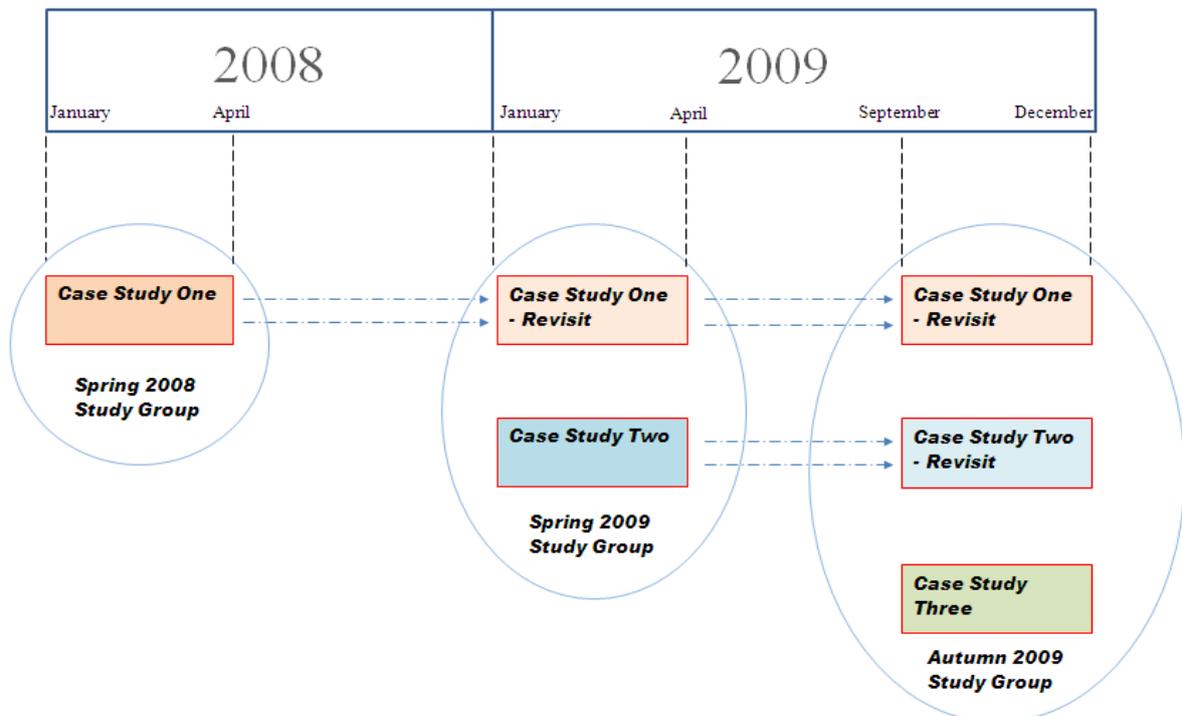


Figure 4 Research Design

The number of participants in this study totalled 68 (14 male and 54 female), the vast majority in their twenties, with a few mature students. Each cohort consisted of international groups of fourth and final year of undergraduates undertaking a BA in Spanish. The participants were mostly British, but there were also Spanish, French, German-Turkish, Finnish, Indian, Polish, Italian, Belgian, Luxembourger, Swedish, Malaysian and Swiss students. The table below details the number and gender of the students who participated in each phase of the case study project:

Table 3 Research Participants

Case studies	Number of students	Gender
Spring 2008 (Week 5)	17	4 male 13 female
Spring 2009 (Weeks 8 & 9)	20	3 male 17 female
Autumn 2009 (Weeks 3, 4 & 5)	31	7 male 24 female

The data were systematically collected using digital recording devices to tape class discussions, oral presentations and interviews, as well as through the collection of students' essays and learners' diaries in an attempt to bring a multiplicity of perspectives to the understanding of the study. Most of the data were transcribed, and only the portions of Spanish-language data included in this thesis were translated into English. Data analysis followed each semester, where pedagogical strategies were planned and revised in the light of the findings. The data were initially gathered in the Spring Semester of 2008, themes emerging from the data were identified, and new data were collected exploring those themes in more depth and from different angles in the Spring and Autumn Semesters 2009 with a two-fold purpose: to validate findings and to gain new insights into the issue under study. Accordingly, the results of the present research have something to offer in terms of addressing time triangulation as well as in acknowledging the effects of social change, bearing in mind that the study focused on snapshots of student beliefs in each of the classes and perceptions over three phases of data collection.

4.3 Limitations of the Study

4.3.1 Convenience Sampling

The selection of research participants for this study was based on convenience sampling, whereby students were selected at my convenience, an aspect of this research which can be taken as a limitation of this study. There was no attempt to ensure that the sample was an accurate representation of final year Spanish honours undergraduates, and all of the students who participated in this study were groups with whom I was already developing my theories of practice for the development of critical pedagogical strategies for the deconstruction of stereotypes. They were classes of language specialists in their final year honours Spanish language programme easily accessible to me and available at the time. Cohen *et al.* (2007: 114) state that convenience sampling ‘does not seek to generalize about the wider population’ and ‘may be the sampling strategy selected for a case study or a series of case studies’.

Flyvbjerg (2006) asserts that the most important criterion for selecting a good case is the one ‘richest in information’, the case that provides ‘a unique wealth of information’. The representative case might not be the best one, whereas the most atypical, extreme or critical case may be more appropriate, as the generalisation would be ‘if it is valid for this case, it is valid for all (or many) cases’, or ‘if it is not valid for this case, then it is not valid for any (or only few) cases’. The choice of the right case is not an easy task, and there does not appear to be a set of predetermined criteria or standards; more a case of selection through experience. However, the advice that Flyvbjerg (2006: 231) provides is to look for either the ‘most likely’ or ‘least likely’ cases, i.e, cases that would either ‘clearly confirm or irrefutably falsify propositions and hypotheses’. Ultimately, he claims, it is the researcher’s intuition that plays a crucial role in case selection. However, he warns that a researcher applying for funding can hardly justify an application based on pure intuition and will need to be accountable for it, ‘even though intuition may be the real, or most important, reason why the researcher wants to execute the project’ (p. 233).

Whether a typical or an unusual case, Stake (1995: 4) notes that ‘the first criterion should be to maximise what we can learn’, and suggests that more often than not, researchers pick a case because it is ‘easy to get to’, ‘hospitable’ or actors and informants willing to contribute have been identified. Indeed, the justification for my choice of class was simply because I had recently designed a new seminar called *Interculturality* for final year honours

undergraduates, and my School appeared keen to integrate aspects of intercultural communication into the existing language seminars. Hence, this PhD research provided me with an opportunity to explore to develop critical pedagogical approaches for the deconstruction of stereotypes for the general purpose of ‘critical cultural awareness’. Holliday (2007: 22-23) asserts that *opportunism* in qualitative research is ‘to be considered neither second best nor deceitful, but central to the way in which research can address reality’ and observes that ‘in many cases daily work and research can merge’ and become ‘the same thing’.

4.3.2 Ethical issues

It could be argued that a further limitation of this study is the context of the research. Throughout the research, I was faced with the ethical issue of using the seminars I taught as a research site. I was aware of the possible tensions that might have been created by the fact that I was conducting the study at the university where the students were completing their degree, and in the classroom which we all shared. Accordingly, I familiarised myself with the School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Committee guidelines for students undertaking a piece of research involving human participants, and sought ethical review and approval by the Research Ethics Committee. At the time, I discussed the research with my supervisor, submitted the PhD research proposal together with the application for ethical approval. A few weeks later, I gained ethical approval for the study and was advised to provide students with at least a week to consider whether they wished to participate in the research. Once I obtained official permission to undertake the research, I contacted the Head of Spanish in my School and gained verbal approval to collect the data in the seminars I was conducting for final year Spanish language undergraduates.

Informed consent was obtained from all the participants involved in this study as well as sufficient information describing the goals and procedures and the method employed to ensure confidentiality and anonymity were provided. Additionally, I ensured that the participants had the right to withdraw from the research at any time, as stated in the written consent form (Appendix B). All social actors in the research were informed that although quotes from the data collected would be used for analysis, in an attempt to reduce the possibility of being recognisable to other researchers or readers, pseudonyms were created.

Careful consideration was given not to reveal identifying information in order to protect the learners' anonymity. With reference to the latter, I was aware of the risk of creating an ethical conflict in terms of non-traceability, anonymity and non-identifiability (Cohen *et al*, 2007); accordingly student names were invented, and the nationality of the individuals were not used so as not to identify respondents and in an attempt to partially redress the balance, although I was always aware that their nationalities would be revealed in the data. Despite this, the problem of students in class recognising each other is a limitation that I recognise in this study.

4.3.3 Bias and Subjectivity

Some researchers may argue that another limitation of this study lies in the fact that qualitative methods render themselves to bias and subjectivity and that it is a human tendency to confirm one's views, notions and beliefs. Case study has been denigrated as lacking in rigour, claiming that subjective bias is one of its most significant deficiencies. In order to address this widely held assumption, the three case studies in this thesis have used multiple sources of evidence and portions of the data have been triangulated with students and validated in subsequent case studies. Triangulation can be time-consuming and uses up resources, so Stake (1995: 112) advises that 'only the important data and claims will be deliberately triangulated'. The application of this concept to my research involved the use of the same literary text with three different cohorts of undergraduates in different academic semesters to see if the same type of data was generated, from which similar conclusions could be drawn.

As previously stated, it could be argued that a limitation of this study is the potential of bias and subjectivity in managing qualitative data. To address this issue, as the research progressed, I became more focused and purposeful, and targeted the data collection and analysis towards stereotypical images of *otherness* and their deconstruction for the development of 'critical cultural awareness'. These issues became central in my study over the data gathering stages, and provided me with new dimensions and interesting insights into the ways students relate with Hispanics. Importantly, in addressing the issue of bias and subjectivity, this study employed various methods of data collection, which allowed me to triangulate the data. Holliday (2007: 8) observes that:

Qualitative research invites the unexpected. Decisions about research instruments are made in gradual response to the nature of the social setting being investigated as its nature is revealed [...] Whereas rigour in quantitative research is in the disciplined application of prescribed rules for instrument design, the rigour in qualitative research is in the principled development of strategy to suit the scenario being studied.

Another strategy employed to address the issue of bias and subjectivity was the use of ‘critical friends’ as a triangulation protocol. During the course of data transcription and analysis, Griselda Beacon, who has been my best friend for 27 years, visited me in the UK. Griselda is a Lecturer in Literature in Argentina, and I had the opportunity to discuss some of the data and findings with her. I greatly benefited from her insightful comments as she read the initial draft of my first chapters. As we listened to the recordings of class discussions whilst reading the transcripts, she raised my awareness of my ideological standpoints based on my personal life and how these influenced the students’ contributions:

You’re leading them on using your personal standpoints and agenda! I think that you’re aware of what you’re saying, but I’m not sure whether you are aware of where your viewpoints come from. I believe they come from your life experiences in Argentina, from having been raised in a very male-dominated family context, where your father and brothers were rather chauvinistic, and you always sort of rebelled against that oppression. I think that being aware of your history, and to acknowledge this, can help you modify your position in the classroom. Next time you talk to your students about clothes, for example, try not to establish links between the topics and specific meanings, that come from your experiences of a patriarchal family with a father who never let you wear a bikini! What you should do is let your students come up with their own meanings instead!

This awareness-raising conversation led me to take conscious decisions in the classroom to prevent my personal perspective from influencing students, who otherwise might have been guided to contribute with specific comments to agree with me. Therefore, it is possible that at times student data may have been influenced by what I said, or by what they believed I

wanted them to say. The role of teachers interacting interculturally with their students is an area which necessitates further analysis and exploration. On the one hand, it can be argued that teachers have an equal right to participate in the intercultural conversations established in the classroom, but on the other hand, teachers' authoritative power and halo effect cannot be ignored, which could feasibly prevent students from expressing their own views for fear of disagreeing with the teacher. A teacher's self-reflexivity and an awareness of her own personal trajectory and cultural reality can result in pedagogical changes.

Further, my partner John, who has read and re-read my PhD chapters over and over again and has patiently listened to me think aloud on so many occasions, has been of enormous help and immense support throughout my studies. His questioning attitude as an intelligent common reader has illuminated my writing and guided me in the process of clarifying, editing and improving this thesis. The conversations we held provided me with an opportunity to take a reflexive stance with invaluable insights and different perspectives, all of which enlightened the analytical process and greatly helped me to see my own ideologies.

4.3.4 Power Relations

A further limitation of this study is the fact that the research informants were my own students. It could be argued that they may have felt coerced to participate for fear of offending me or of being viewed negatively by me. It could also be hypothesised that the students may have felt that the lack of participation in my research may have an impact on their marks and assessment. With this in mind, I sought ways to ensure that volunteers freely made an informed choice of whether to participate or not. I gave as much information about the aims and procedures of the study, and made myself available for students for a fortnight so that they could come and ask me questions about the nature of the research. I never lost sight of the fact that students were helping me by participating, and I showed appreciation for their time, particularly during the interviewing process. In addition, since I was using small digital recorders to audio-tape class discussions, I was aware of the fact that students might have felt inhibited from speaking. However, most of them reported that, although recording devices caused initial anxiety, after a little while they became unaware of their presence. In the case of oral presentations, digital recording devices were used anyway as part of the School policy for assessment purposes.

4.3.5 The Issue of Identity

A related limitation of this study that I recognise, is my identity as an Argentine national and the identities of the students. The fact that this research explored stereotypical images of Hispanics in a classroom setting where the teacher/researcher comes from the Hispanic world is an issue that cannot be overlooked. Being an Argentinian teacher/researcher myself, teaching and researching the students in my seminars, could have potentially influenced their contributions and I was often confronted with the ethical issues of students expressing prejudiced views about Hispanics, and me as a Hispanic helping them analyse their stereotypical discourses in relation to people like me. Another important limitation lies in the fact that interviewing students from diverse nationalities, my accounts of their interpretations, observations and comments necessitated the undergoing of cultural validation involving member checks and triangulation protocols. Therefore, participants were asked to review the transcriptions of their own interviews and oral work, in addition to portions of transcribed and/or translated data in order to check for accuracy and to gain a more insightful look into the meanings, notions and beliefs for possible additional comments or observations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Cohen *et al*, 2007; Stake, 1995).

4.3.6 Data Translation

The translation of the data could be viewed as a limitation of this study. All of the data collected during participant observation and in essays and learning diaries were in Spanish, most of the students' foreign language. For the translated portions of the data included in this thesis, I opted for a 'sense-for-sense', rather than a 'word-for-word', translation approach. Munday (2008: 26) defines 'word-for-word' (or 'metaphrase') translation as a word by word and line by line translation, which corresponds to literal translation; whereas a 'sense-for-sense' translation (or 'paraphrase') is:

where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense; this involves changing whole phrases and more or less corresponds to faithful or sense-for-sense translation.

The main reason for this was that a 'word-for-word' (or literal) translation would have resulted in absurd nonsensical texts, whereas a freer 'sense-to-sense' translation allowed me to paraphrase the content, whilst trying to stay as closely as possible to the original. In

addition, since the Spanish used was at times deficient, I often had to interpret the meaning of concepts and ideas expressed. Being an experienced language teacher myself, I have developed the skill to understand, interpret and 'read' beyond language deficiencies. Sometimes, language limitations prevented students from fully and accurately develop their ideas, an issue that often necessitated respondent validation and data triangulation. Despite these difficulties, I never lost sight of the students' authorial voices, and ensured that my interpretations were as accurate as possible.

One of the earliest strategies I employed was to use some of the data to develop pedagogical tasks; thus providing learners with opportunities to correct possible misunderstandings, and to expand on the ideas in greater length and depth. Another strategy I employed was the use of some of the data as a language exercise, whereby tasks were designed to enable learners to convey their ideas more accurately and to improve the language. A third strategy used involved writing a fuller and improved version of portions of the data myself, and asking the authors to corroborate my understandings and edit accordingly. All of this work was conducted in Spanish and had a dual-focus purpose. On the one hand, I used some of the data for teaching purposes, and on the other hand I treated it as research data. I was very selective in the choice of portions of data I submitted to respondent validation and data triangulation, which included mostly the data I was interested in for this study. Once I ensured that I had understood the messages conveyed by the students, particularly those with more language limitations, I translated portions of the data into English for inclusion in the thesis. An important aspect of the translation process of the data is the fact that, despite attempts to validate and triangulate responses, translated texts always communicate interpretations. Venuti (2004: 482) states that:

Translation never communicates in an untroubled fashion because the translator negotiates the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text by reducing them and supplying another set of differences, basically domestic, drawn from the receiving language and culture to enable the foreign to be there.

According to Venuti, original messages are always interpreted, reinvented and reconstructed, particularly in cultural forms open to interpretation, such as research data. Figure 5

graphically represents the struggle I experienced to remain faithful to the original in the translation process:

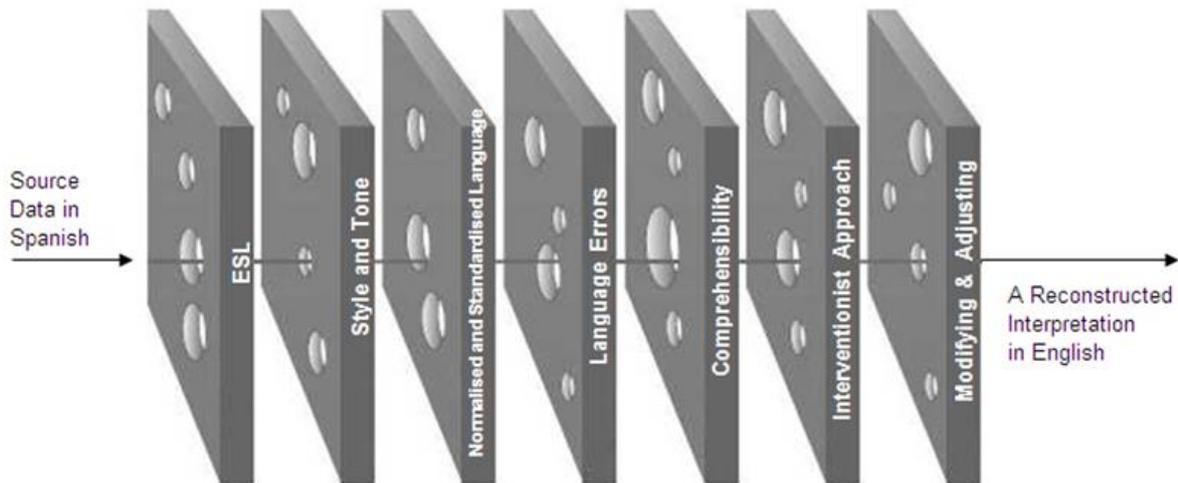


Figure 5 The Struggle to Remain Faithful to the Original

The translations were carried out from my mother tongue (Spanish) into my second language (ESL – English as a Second Language). As a result of this, although I ensured that my translations were as accurate as possible in terms of meaning, I often found it hard to keep the style and tone of some of the original texts. I encountered this problem in translating texts mainly produced by either Spanish native speakers, bilingual students or highly proficient learners. However, most of the undergraduates in this study were foreign language learners at intermediate, upper intermediate and advanced levels of language proficiency; they used relatively ‘normalised’ and ‘standardised’ language. This aspect, in some ways, made the translation process easier for me to remain faithful to as closely as possible to the original, particularly in cases where the texture of the English language was perceived in the Spanish versions. I found that when students were obviously thinking in English whilst speaking in Spanish, translating the data from Spanish into English was less problematic. However, for the sake of comprehensibility, I often adopted an interventionist approach by ignoring grammatical and language errors in Spanish, which I chose not carry into the English version. This resulted in me modifying and adjusting original texts, without losing sight of the accuracy of the meaning in order to avoid misrepresentation.

An AHRC-funded Network Project entitled “Researching Multilingually” was set up in November 2011 with the aim of investigating and clarifying ‘epistemological and methodological processes of researching in more than one language - whether dialogic,

observational, textual, or mediated - and their implications for research design, instruments, data collection and generation, translation and interpretation, and reporting' (Holmes 2012). Scholars involved in multilingual research gathered in Durham (March 2012), Bristol (April 2012) and Manchester (May 2012) to share views and address the gap in understanding the challenges raised by researching in multilingual and multicultural contexts. Previous explorations of the topic had taken place in an exploratory seminar at Durham University in July 2010 and in a colloquium at BAAL Annual Meeting in September 2011.

4.4 Data Gathering Methods

4.4.1 Sources of Evidence

In this research project, I corroborated the related issues through the use of multiple sources of evidence, as this diagram shows:

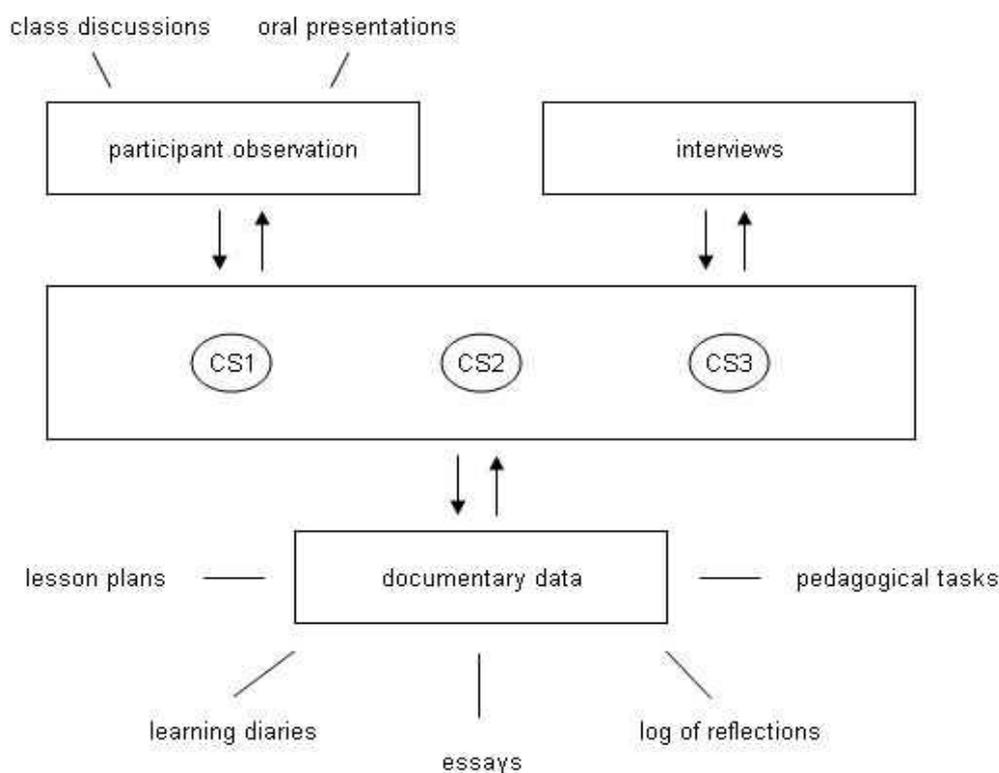


Figure 6 Sources of Evidence

The table below shows the research instruments used for each case study and the number of interviews, classroom documentary data and personal log of reflections:

Table 4 Research Instruments

Research Instrument	CS1	CS2	CS3	Total
Interviews	9	0	0	9
Class discussions	2	3	6	11
Oral Presentations	0	6	8	14
Learning Diaries	17	0	0	17
Essays	0	20	31	51
Log of reflections	1	1	1	3
Lesson Plans & Tasks	2	2	2	6

4.4.2 Interviews

For the interviewing process, non-random convenience sampling was used for the sake of practicality, as suggested by Cohen *et al* (2007: 114) ‘A convenience sample may be the sampling strategy selected for a case study or a series of case studies’. It is important to note that this research project is effectively wholly qualitative in nature, thus I was not concerned with the more positivist issues of representativeness or generalisation. Hence, consideration was given to providing ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz, 1973) of the emic multiple perspectives, realities and interpretations offered by the research participants and myself. All of the interviews were transcribed verbatim in full.

Stereotypical beliefs were inferred by students’ statements, perceptions, actions and experiences (Barcelos, 2003) in the content of these interviews. These were grouped in themes. The location for each of the interviews was a classroom at the university, a familiar place for all participants. The question of whether their voices were ‘authentic’ or not is a limitation that I recognise, as the mere presence of the teacher-researcher in the room might have altered the behaviours and words of the participants.

Initially, semi-structured interviews of an exploratory nature with students were conducted. The choice of this type of interview was based on the premise that I was seeking to develop themes to pursue further, whilst focusing on the development of intercultural competence through the reading of literary texts. I experienced a sense of ambiguity and uncertainty in each interview I conducted, and was not yet assured about whether I was gathering the right

type of data that would provide me with insights into the students' intercultural learning. Early on in the interviewing process, I noted in my log of reflections:

I am interviewing A, B, C D and E this week. I need to prepare better for interviews with each participant. It seems to me that the general questions I have for the students might work to a point. I am curious to find if I can get richer and more insightful data if I capitalise on the ideas they developed in class as their response to texts. I want them to expand on those ideas, to clarify them, explain them, develop more insights. In this way, hopefully, I will find what intercultural learning there has been through reading the texts. (LoR/24 February 2008)

Throughout the whole interviewing stage, I lacked a definite sense of direction, and felt somewhat disappointed by the type of data I was gathering, which I felt was not directly addressing the main issue under study. Once the data collection stage with the first cohort of students ended, I discovered that the more insightful and richer data lay in their personal diaries and class discussions, and became hopeful that I could capture the development of intercultural competence more accurately by recording their oral presentations, class discussions and analysing their essays prepared in response to the Argentinian literary text in the future two case studies. As a result, for the subsequent phases of data collection, I chose to focus more on observation, and decided that the best way to do so was to centre on class discussions, oral presentations and written work produced by the students, where viewpoints and perceptions were expressed.

4.4.3 Observation

For this research, I engaged in observation by digitally recording students' class discussions and oral presentations. I involved myself in situations where learners were discussing issues and themes as part of my own lesson planning. However, I allowed for some degree of flexibility with regard to student choice for oral presentations. All throughout the process, as I participated in class discussions and in the preparatory stages of students' oral presentations, I tried to make sense of the development of ICC and found myself adapting my teaching strategies to suit new situations in an evolving and exploratory journey of self-discovery as a language/intercultural teacher. The nature of observation in this research, with me as an

active player in the scene, allowed me to develop a better understanding of the situation as an insider. However, one of the disadvantages of me using this method was the potential for greater biases. As a result of this, the PhD project utilises other data gathering tools to offset any possible inaccuracies in the observations or conclusions drawn from this type of data.

In class discussions, participants were encouraged to engage in conversations (Dufva, 2003; Roebuck, 2000) in pairs, small groups and as an open forum, and the analysis of the findings was data-oriented. When the students worked in pairs or small groups, between three and four digital recorders were used to ensure that all discussions were recorded appropriately. The rationale behind this approach was to allow for the possibility of at least partially capturing a socially-embedded stereotypical ‘belief’ about the Hispanic *other*, whilst ensuring the voice of the students became more prominent than mine. The main criterion for recording class discussions was the multi-vocality of beliefs, experiences and perceptions, whilst at the same time it was hoped that by creating a ‘space and place’ where students could interact with peers might facilitate the social co-construction of beliefs. In many aspects, class discussions resembled focus group interviews, for they offered possibilities for the plurality of voices and social interactions to emerge. It needs to be recognised that in this research, the power relation was likely to be perceived more strongly, as I was their teacher assessing their coursework and marking their exams in their final year, when the marks have heavy weighting. Wilson (1997: 217) observes that:

the social situation of the research interview imposes certain constraints on the nature of data collected and demonstrates the disparity in the power relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewer usually has the unilateral right to ask questions, although the interviewee may seek clarification of particular points (...) Compared with individual interviews, focus groups help to break down this power relationship between researcher and respondent. By reconceptualising the focus group interview as a discussion amongst respondents, the researcher goes some way towards ‘democratising’ the process and it is likely that more naturally occurring language will result in what still remains a socially contrived situation. But this conclusion is tentative.

In addition, although I had a list of questions and topics for class discussion, I allowed a certain amount of flexibility in terms of emerging related issues to be explored, provided these remained within the focus of the lesson. Accordingly, my role in class discussions was

more of a facilitator and moderator, allowing for emic issues to emerge from a multiplicity of voices. Finally, a summary that accurately portrayed the general views of the group was created along with any significant differences after class discussions.

For oral presentations, students were referred to gender stereotypes of Hispanics that were brought to the fore during the reading of Gamero's story. At the micro-level, these stereotypes had been identified and discussed in class. In order to understand the micro-level analysis of these stereotypes, oral presentations attempted to bring to the surface the macro-level contexts in which these stereotypes may have been constructed, reinforced or experienced. With this in mind, students were required to analytically explore their views with regard to Hispanic gender identities using their intercultural experiences with Spaniards and Latin Americans.

Learners provided critical analytical accounts of these experiences using constructs such as stereotyping, identity and subject positions. Most of them referred to their year-abroad placement and reflected upon the observations that shaped their Hispanic gender stereotypes. Oral presentations provided students with some degree of flexibility in terms of aspects and issues related to gender they wished to focus on in the light of their intercultural experiences and encounters with Hispanics.

Digitally recording class discussions and oral presentations offered a number of opportunities for me to explore new paths. Often new avenues of thought were opened, contradictions were brought to the fore and additional insights were provided. All of these were of great interest to me as a teacher and researcher since they allowed me to explore diverse answers to the research questions. The main focus of recording class discussions was to provide me with the possibility to reflect on myself as a teacher and on my students' response to my teaching, in addition to analysing their viewpoints. Given the fact that I was teaching the class during data collection, I was unable to carry out real-time observation, although initially I tried to take down notes in class. However, I soon found this task too arduous, which led me to using digital recording devices despite their intrusive nature, a drawback that needs to be considered in the employment of this research method. For CS1, all class discussions were transcribed verbatim, a much time-consuming task. As a result of this, for CS2 and CS3, selective transcriptions of issues that became of particular relevance to this research were

carried out. Only the portions of data included in this thesis have been translated into English, if needed.

4.4.4 Documentary Data

Documentary data was used to supplement other sources of evidence, to guide the research and eventually to formulate the research questions. The sources of documentary evidence I used were students' learning diaries and essays, lesson plans, pedagogical tasks and a personal log of reflections. These data were at times used to triangulate information gathered from interviews and observation, and at other times to gain further insights into the answers to the research questions, and for clarification or expansion purposes. For CS1, learning diaries were implemented, whereby learners reflected upon the issues discussed in class; whilst for CS2 and CS3 students were asked to write essays. In the case of the learning diaries and essays, it could be argued that the evidence was biased owing to the pre-writing tasks and class discussions prior to the writing stage. Similarly, the fact that the documents were not intended as research data, but that they were pieces of written work to be marked for assessment purposes, can be taken as a limitation of this research instrument. Despite this, these data are not considered to be less valuable, but as constructions of the individuals or whole class as a group, and reliable expressions of the authors' views at the time.

It should be noted that there was an on-going reiterative process of (re)interpretation of the documentary data, which could also be regarded as a bias and somewhat reduced reliability in this research. Initially, the students interpreted the world during class discussions and oral presentations, following which they wrote their learning diaries and essays. Also, the act of writing implied another stage of translation and interpretation of the world. At a later stage, I, in my dual role of their teacher and researcher, read their written work and interpreted their worldviews further. As a result of this, I regarded these documents as situated in time and place, with many layers of interpretations, mediated by several filters and channels. In addition, the students wrote their learning diaries and essays in Spanish, their second or foreign language. This meant that at times, particularly in the cases of learners with a lower level of language proficiency, some of the ideas were incorrectly expressed, or there were inconsistencies and gaps, which posed a few difficulties in comprehension. The following diagram illustrates these unavoidable human filters:

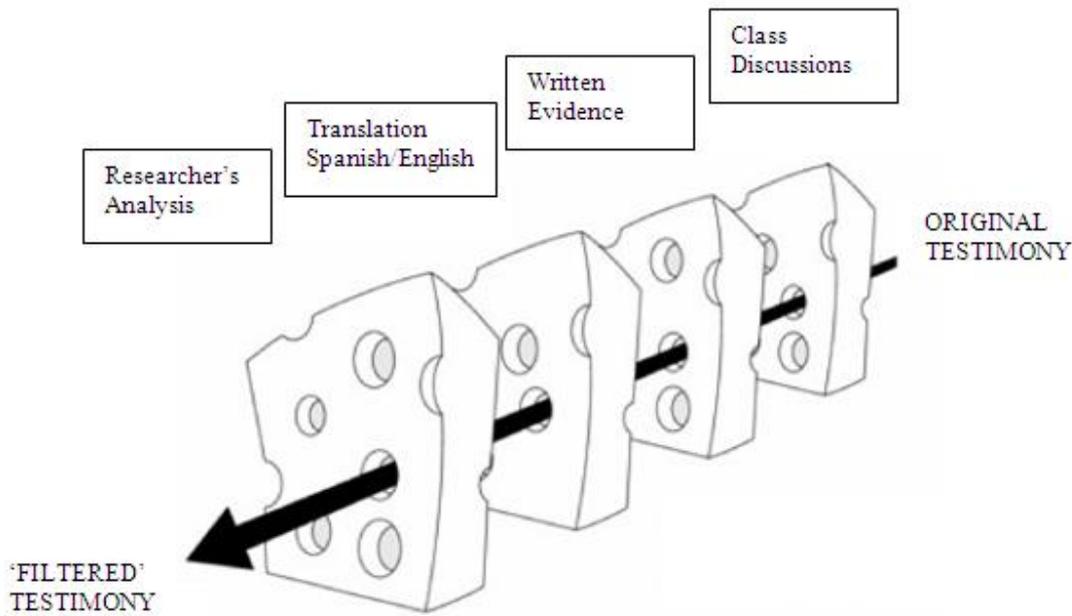


Figure 7 Human Filters

Whenever I was confronted with these issues, data from other sources, mainly from class discussions and oral presentations, were used to bridge those gaps or to make sense of the concepts expressed by the students in their written work. Respondent validation and data triangulation strategies were also implemented prior to the translation of the portions of data included in the thesis. However, where there was a significant lack of data to corroborate the findings or expand on their views and accounts, I chose not to use those pieces of data.

Lesson plans, pedagogical tasks and a personal log of reflections were also utilised in this research as documentary data. New intercultural tasks were designed and incorporated in the lesson planning all throughout the three case studies. However, with regard to the personal log of reflections, I started enthusiastically in CS1, but for CS2 and CS3, I made far less notes. Ideally, I may have maintained a more thorough record of personal reflections to assist me in subsequent data analysis, but this has only become apparent now with the benefit of hindsight. These notes were mostly used to gain insights into my reflections and thoughts at the time, which have helped me analyse the data at a later stage. Rather than descriptive notes, these were more reflective in nature. The lesson plans and tasks I developed underwent an iterative process of revision and modification in the light of classroom experiences. As I piloted the newly designed teaching materials, aims and objectives became clearer to me as a

teacher, which led me to improve the rubrics and descriptions of pedagogical tasks in greater detail.

4.5 Data Analysis

4.5.1 Content Analysis

This study used content analysis to analyse the data through some of the methods of Grounded Theory (GT) as an analytic tool. Content analysis has been defined as ‘the process of summarizing and reporting written data – the main contents of data and their messages’ (Cohen *et al.* 2007: 475), and since ground theory style analysis was used, this section provides a brief review of what grounded theory is. Grounded theory is an inductive method, developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, from the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF), which develops theory that is grounded in the data. Rather than forcing data to fit into a predetermined theory, GT allows researchers to start with the data, analyse it and generate the theory. Grounded theory arose out of positivist quantitative methods, in trying to apply some of its techniques to qualitative inquiry; however, over the years it has evolved, changed and been shaped by researchers every time it has been used since it was first developed by Glaser and Strauss. Morse *et al.* (2009: 14) note that:

The method cannot be used in a “cookbook” or formulaic way. Every application, every time grounded theory is used, it requires adaptation in particular ways as demanded by the research question, situation, and participants for whom the research is being conducted.

Since the original publication of Glaser & Strauss’ *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* in 1967, other grounded theorists have emerged, who have interpreted, applied and modified the two distinctive Glaserian and Straussian versions of grounded theory. For my PhD research, I was greatly inspired by postmodernist and constructivist paradigms to grounded theory techniques, like those developed by Clarke (2005), Charmaz (2006) and Corbin (2008), who view theories being socially constructed by researchers from what they are told by participants, rather than emerging from the data. Figure 8 shows the ideological factors that the raw data undergoes in the analysis:

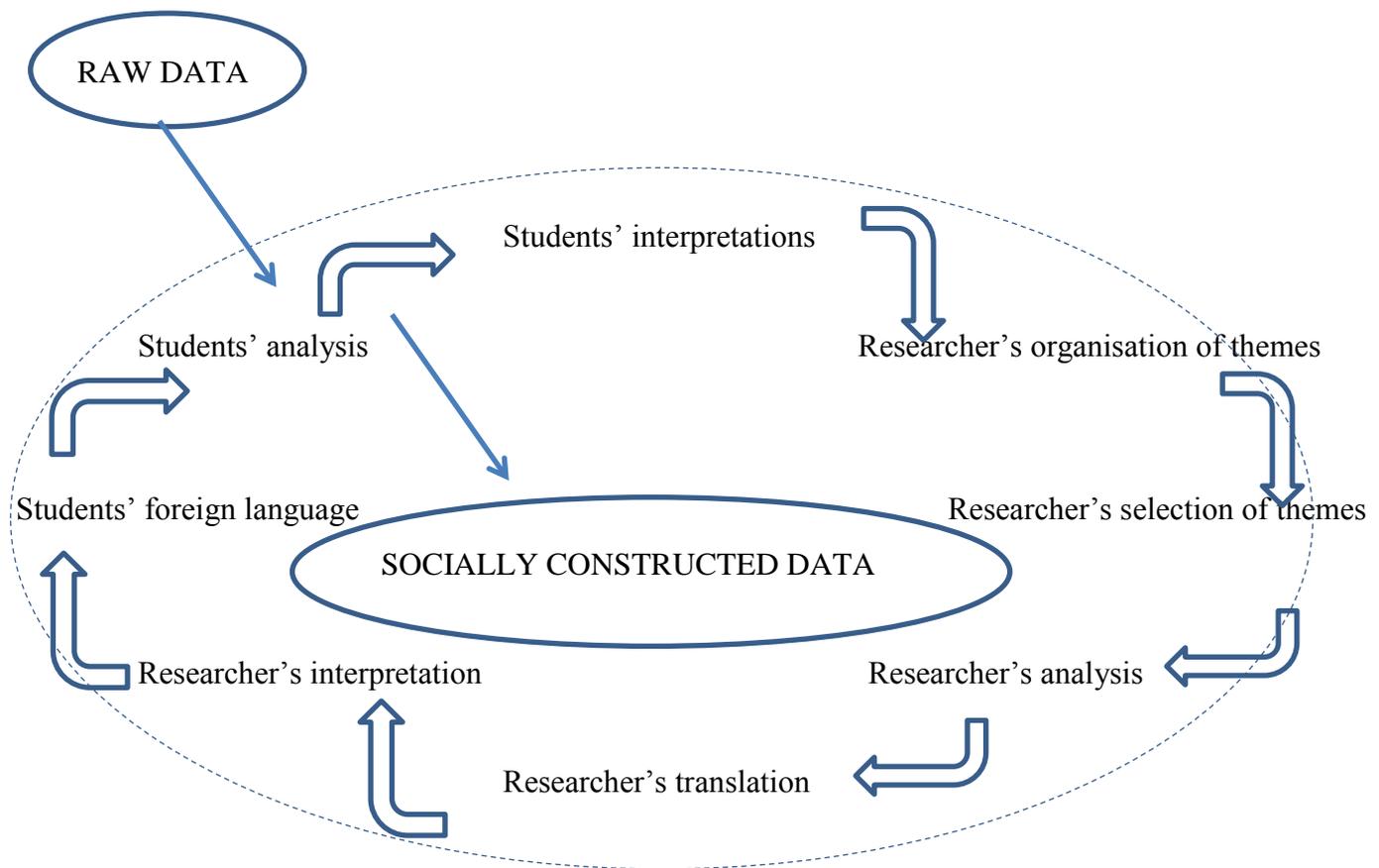


Figure 8 Socially Constructed Data

A major tenet of this postmodernist constructionist paradigm is that there are multiple realities or constructions, which are analysed and interpreted by GT researchers who ‘build something that they call knowledge’ (Corbin 2009: 39). Constructivist grounded theorists construct and reflect on knowledge that has been socially produced, and strive to understand and interpret both their own - and the research participants’ ideologies, i.e. their beliefs and reasons for their perspectives and actions. They ‘view data as constructed rather than discovered (...) not as objective reports or the only viewpoint on the topic’ (Charmaz 2009: 131).

GT theorists have developed many different approaches to data analysis, and used a variety of techniques and procedures which, Corbin (2009: 40) cautions they should be:

used by the researcher as he or she sees fit to solve methodological problems.
They are not a set of directives to be rigidly adhered to. No researcher should

become so obsessed with following a set of coding procedures that the fluid and dynamic nature of qualitative analysis is lost. The analytic process is first and foremost a thinking process. It requires stepping into the shoes of the other and trying to see the world from their perspective. Analysis should be relaxed, flexible, and driven by insight gained through interaction with data rather than being structured and based on procedures.

During the analysis of the data, I went through an iterative process of reading the transcripts while listening to the digital recordings and reading the students' written productions. Throughout the whole process, I adopted a fluid approach, in which I separated the data apart into pieces corresponding to natural breaks, and attempted to code and categorise them whilst writing my own interpretations. I also kept reformulating my research questions, in response to the data I was analysing. In an attempt to unpack the main purpose of any research, Cohen *et al.* (2007: 82) propose a *process of operationalization* by means of which the research moves from 'an expression of interest (or a general aim) into a series of issues that lend themselves to being investigated in concrete terms'. Accordingly, I deconstructed a key term in my research - intercultural communicative competence - into several components in an attempt to translate the general, abstract research aim into specific questions. As the conceptualisation of the research progressed, these more concrete issues became clear paths in the study, until the research questions gradually emerged as I analysed the data. Holliday (2007: 32) explains that:

research questions can also change as the research moves on from the initial concept. Initial questions lead the researcher to investigate in a certain direction; but within this process there will be unforeseen discoveries which raise further or different questions. In some cases the whole focus of the research may change.

In the early stages of the study I became aware that the most salient category corresponded to students' stories of intercultural encounters with *otherness*, which I coded as 'personal experiences'. With great interest, I read how the students' related the literary texts we were reading, with their year abroad experiences and other intercultural encounters with the Hispanic *other*. Initially, I focused exclusively on the Argentinian *other*, but further data analysis raised my awareness of the fact that students were actually interconnecting their

views with the whole of the Latin American world, in addition to Spain. That was when I decided to use the term ‘the Hispanic *other*’ to encapsulate this notion.

4.5.2 Dimensional Analysis

Inspired by Dimensional Analysis, a grounded theory approach developed by Schatzman (1991) and Caron & Bowers (2000), I developed a bank of dimensions from the core categories. Bowers & Schatzman (2009: 101) explain that dimensional analysis deals with the complexities of social phenomena, as it ‘dimensionalizes experience and constructs or defines situations dimensionally’, and state that:

Dimensional analysis shares with grounded theory a commitment to generating theory directly from data. It recognizes and integrates the perspectives of the researcher as well as those of the informants or subjects of research. (p. 103)

Stern (2009: 59) warns researchers that they should ‘avoid imposing pre-existing frameworks on the data’; whilst Bowers & Schatzman (2009) argue that the themes that emerge from the data depend on the perspectives of participants as much as those of the researcher’s. Indeed, the selection and organisation of the themes in this study were subjective and constructed by all involved parties in the research process. For example, one of the main themes that emerged and was constructed from the data I analysed initially, was that of ‘gender stereotyping’; hence, I followed that core category, rather than a research question. Bowers (2009) suggests that early on in their study, researchers should distance themselves from their own experiences and disciplines, and focus on generating the dimensions that are brought in by the participants. This means listening ‘carefully to the dimensions that are called out by the informants’ (Bowers 2009: 126) and use those identified by them as the bank of dimensions to work with for analysis. In other words, Bowers advocates being less directive early in the research, moving towards more directive data collection and analysis in the latter stages.

As previously noted, I did not use GT as the methodology for data analysis in this study, but I used GT analytic techniques, methods, tools and approaches to undertake content analysis. For example, there was no intention to generate theory in this study; therefore theoretical

sampling was not employed. Theoretical sampling has been described by Cohen *et al.* (2007: 492-494) as when:

data are collected on an ongoing, iterative basis, and the researcher keeps on adding to the sample until there is enough data to describe what is going on in the context or situation under study and until ‘theoretical saturation’ is reached [...] In theoretical sampling, data collection continues until sufficient data have been gathered to create a theoretical explanation of what is happening and what constitutes its key features [...] Saturation is reached when no new insights, codes or categories are produced even when new data are added, and when all of the data are accounted for in the core strategies and subcategories [...] The partner of saturation is theoretical completeness, when the theory is able to explain the data fully and satisfactorily.

Given that theoretical sampling to achieve saturation to generate theory was not used, the methodology employed for data analysis was not GT. However, GT tools, approaches and style of analysing data were employed. In this study, I always regarded students’ stories as versions of themselves, and not as ‘truths’, but as ‘constructions of truths’. In other words, I recognised them as the ways that students chose to represent their subjectivities at that point in time. I became particularly interested in how they made sense of what had happened and their own interpretations and meanings that they made of the events narrated, rather than in what might have actually happened. Having gathered a number of personal experiences, I analysed them for key elements, and I was able to code and categorise the data. For the qualitative content analysis of the personal experiences, I colour-coded emerging descriptions and themes from the essays that students wrote and the transcripts of the class discussions and oral presentations, which I later used to reconstitute the stories. These reconstituted stories were subsequently used as pedagogical tasks with the same research participants to ensure validity and to ascertain whether my reconstituted stories resonated with their experiences. I digitally audio recorded these lessons, and used the students’ comments in the validation process as data to contribute to the final restored experiences.

What at the outset were large blocks of text coded as ‘personal experiences’, on closer inspection they provided me with insights into the students’ worldviews and the embedded beliefs they had about the Hispanic *other*. My analysis then focused on their personal stories,

and as I was coding them, I derived many concepts which later guided me through the next steps of the research and led me to formulate the operational research questions in order to answer the main research question in this study. This long continuous process, which I am now summarising in one paragraph, caused much deliberation. Many times I felt I was being guided on pure instinct, and felt that the research was taking me to new directions I had not envisaged before. I felt I was not fully in control of the research. I went through a phase in which I looked intensely within the literature for rigorous guidelines that would help me put some order to the somewhat chaotic data I had collected. However, instead of finding a neat solution to my predicament with rigid protocols to follow, I derived great comfort in discovering that qualitative research involved exactly what I was experiencing - uncertainty, a lack of clear sense of direction and a certain amount of chaos. I went back to the data with renewed interest, and what I perceived as significant in the personal experiences became the focus of the study and started to look specifically for data that would bring out concepts that would answer the research questions.

4.6 Conclusions

The whole of this PhD study was carried out in the fourth and final year of language study in a British university, where I lectured in Spanish, after the learners had experienced a year abroad in a Spanish-speaking country, predominantly Spain, Mexico, Bolivia or Peru. Case study research, with three case studies, was the methodology employed in this PhD research project. The emphasis was on the use of ethnographic methods to allow for emic issues to reveal themselves and evolve in their natural setting and to bring together multiple views, perspectives and opinions through qualitative and interpretative inquiry. The research sought to capture the fluid nature of the development of 'critical cultural awareness' through systematic data collection from students' essays, learning diaries, oral presentations, interviews, personal logs of reflections, participatory observation and digital audio recordings of class discussions. It should be noted that the undergraduates that participated in this study were language learners, not specialists in literature. Similarly, the teacher was a language educator, not an expert in literature. Thus, the approach developed with the literary text involved intercultural theories, and not literary theories. In addition, as the study was with my own students; the power relationship was likely to be perceived more strongly. Another aspect in this project was the translation of students' data, which was mostly in Spanish,

except for the interviews. Most of these were carried out in English, however, there were a few occasions in which non-British students preferred to use Spanish.

The objective of the research methodology used in this PhD was to gain an in-depth understanding of the stereotypical beliefs about Hispanic gendered identities with a view to developing critical pedagogies for the deconstruction of stereotypes. It also facilitated a focus on the students' preconceived ideas of *otherness* and the ways that a literary text, such as Gamero's 'Norma y Ester', can be used as a catalyst to bring stereotypical beliefs to the surface. The study sought to examine how the macro-level – intercultural experiences – impacted upon the micro-level – the individual in the classroom – and analysed the students' worldviews through the lens of their beliefs. Throughout the study, I endeavoured to develop sensitivity through the employment of a number of strategies. I sought clarification and expansion from my research participants, trying to see the world through their eyes, discussed portions of the data and thoughts aloud with my partner John and my best friend Griselda, and generated provisional categories. From the interviews, themes emerged and categories were developed, from which I selected a few to pursue that interested me the most. This task allowed me to ask more precise questions of the data, and led me to read relevant literature related to the themes and categories. The subsequent phases of data gathering and data analysis focused on further questions, generating new categories and subcategories.

A lack of guidance and published material as to how intercultural communicative competence can best be researched has been a major hindrance to me as a novice researcher. I have had to make methodological decisions by emulating, as best I could, practices from other studies researching complex social phenomena. During further questioning and whilst pursuing new avenues of thought, I became more focused in the data collection stages, and more sensitive to 'hearing' the answers. At different moments of data analysis, I found that my interpretations could be biased and coloured by the literature I was reading at the time and it was hard to distance myself and look at the data for what is was. In the initial stages of my research apprenticeship, I found data analysis arduous and complex - a skill that I believe necessitates more experience and practice.

CHAPTER 5

THE IMAGINED HISPANIC 'OTHER'

It's 1989.

A 14-year-old Latina goes to the movies with her three homegirls.

The movie is a blockbuster. They know from the commercials that it's got people who look like them in it. Who sound like them. They can't wait to see it.

They see it. They walk home. In silence. They sit on the stoop. And speak.

"Man, they can't even tell a Puerto Rican from a Mexican."

"Yeah, them accents was real fake."

"They think we's all Puerto Rican and Mexican."

"Why the Spanish girl gotta be a ho, man? I ain't a ho."

Then they fall silent again.

5.1 Introduction

The relevance of the above quote from Sanabria, R. I. (2003) "Las aeious" will become apparent to the reader as the first operational research question in this study is answered in this Chapter. The PhD research provided me with an opportunity to explore different paths in the field of intercultural education, to reflect upon my own teaching practice and to gain insights into the students' perceptions of Hispanic cultural identities. To this end, I carried out Case Study 1 (CS1) with a group of final year Spanish Honours language undergraduates in the 2008 Spring semester. This case study was my starting point in developing a teaching approach to the deconstruction of stereotypes. CS1 sought to find answers to my first research question based on my initial assumption that students tend to stereotype Hispanics:

How do students view the remote, and not so remote, Hispanic other?

Chapter 5 presents the findings of this case study and attempts to answer the above research question by presenting and analysing the students' responses to the literary text 'Norma y Ester'. Rather than forcing data to fit into a predetermined theory, I started with the data, deriving the categories from the areas I was interested in, in an attempt to answer the research question (for further detail about data analysis in this study, see Content Analysis in Chapter 4). As I reflected on the students' comments and observations, I interpreted them in the light of the theoretical frameworks reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. Data for Case Study 1 (CS1) was gathered through interviews (INT), class discussions (CD), learning diaries (LD) and a log of reflections (LoR). All of the students' names in this study are pseudonyms.

The chapter starts with an overview of the students' reactions to the reader-response pedagogical interventions to the reading of 'Norma y Ester' and analyses the students' 'texts' that arise out of the reading. It searches for evidence of stereotypical views of the 'remote' and 'not-so-remote' Hispanic *other* in order to answer the research question of this case study. The students were completing Stage 2 of the Pedagogical Model outlined in Chapter 3, whereby they were responding emotionally and freely to the literary text and discussing their lived, virtual and mediated experiences of *otherness* guided by my questioning, as shown in this table 5:

Table 5 Case Study 1 Pedagogical Model

	AIMS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	TEACHING APPROACHES	TASKS
Student Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating students' 'texts' out of the reading • Developing a 'generative theme approach' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explain how one's own personal experiences are related to the literary text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding emotionally and freely to the text • Linking the text to personal experiences • Justifying one's own answers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students discussed lived, virtual or mediated experiences they related to the text guided by my questions in class <p style="text-align: right;">CS1</p>

	AIMS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	TEACHING APPROACHES	TASKS
Recording the Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recording students' 'texts' • Rejecting the 'banking approach' to embrace 'problem-posing' education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To appraise the emotional response to the literary text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video/audio recording • Building portfolios • Keeping diaries • Recording class discussion/ role play • Writing essays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students wrote diary entries to record their responses to the text <p style="text-align: right;">CS1</p>

In this *aesthetic* reading of the short story 'Norma y Ester', students related the fictional world with their past experiences. Therefore, this chapter starts with two sections entitled 'Personal Experiences' and 'Fictional and Real Worlds' analysing the data in which the students explicitly linked the themes of the literary text with their own lives. The chapter then follows by exploring six dominant discourses grounded in the data as the students were creating their own 'texts' out of the reading (1) Gender Inequality; (2) Clothing; (3) Verbal Attention; (4) The Female Body; (5) Male Chauvinism, and (6) Submissive Women.

5.2 Personal Experiences

As mentioned previously, I gathered a number of personal experiences that emerged from the reading of the literary text entitled 'Norma y Ester' written by the Argentine writer Carlos Gamerro. These experiences were narrated by the students during class discussions, in their learning diaries and in their interviews. As I progressed with the research, I became particularly curious about these personal stories triggered during the reading process, which reflected the perceptions that the learners had of Hispanics, in particular their gendered identities. The analysis of these life experiences raised my awareness of students' fixing and essentialising the Hispanic *Other*, mainly the Spanish and the Mexican, and in particular, the remote Argentinian *Other* as will be demonstrated empirically in the next section.

There is sufficient evidence in the data collected for CS1 to suggest that the themes that the literary text uncovers, act as a springboard for narrating related past experiences abroad. Reader-response theory (reviewed in Chapter 3) postulates that students respond to texts according to their life experiences, and that they can read the same text differently depending on their contextual circumstances by selectively focusing on aspects that are relevant to them at the moment of reading. In other words, from a reader-response perspective, the students' individuality acquires new significance, for texts are to be seen in the light of their background, histories, experiences, concepts and emotions brought about by the reading.

This is congruent with Zubair (2006) and Fäcke's (2003) findings (for further detail, see section entitled 'Autobiographies' in Chapter 1) in their empirical studies of the use of literature for intercultural dialogue. Fäcke stresses the relevance of students' autobiographies and notes that students' responses and observations are largely determined by their life stories. Triggering these autobiographical memories using a reader-response approach to literature can provide an enabling environment to discuss lived, virtual or mediated experiences of intercultural encounters for analysis and reflection. By foregrounding these experiences, pedagogies can be developed to raise awareness of any stereotypical thinking, discourses of supremacy or instances of *othering* embedded in them. As also discussed in Chapter 1, Kramsch's empirical research demonstrates that for intercultural learning to happen, the teacher should capitalise on the students' responses to the literature, and explore the students' 'texts' in order to unmask ideologies and analyse the links that are made between the literary text and the students' 'texts'.

Nearly all of the participants in this research study had spent an obligatory 'year abroad' either in Spain or in a Latin American country, most commonly Mexico. Undergraduates completing a degree course in Spanish Honours Language normally spend their third year abroad as Erasmus students. Most of the students made reference to their Erasmus year abroad experiences, whilst some referred to their previous experiences of living abroad, as these data demonstrate:

During my year abroad in Spain, I lived with a Mexican guy, a very *machista* man, a mummy's boy.

(CD2/CS1)

During my stay in Mexico, I sometimes felt like that too. In the first week, as I was walking to the university with my friend Nina, we noticed that men in their cars were taking photos of us with their mobile phones.

(CD1/CS1)

Similar comments were made by a number of students who referred to their life experiences in Peru, India, the Arab Emirates and Bolivia. Most data collected demonstrate that their stereotypical views of the Hispanic *other* had not been modified, and at times, had been reinforced, during their year-abroad experience. Many students claim that their experiences abroad reinforced the stereotypes that they had of the Hispanic *other*. This is in agreement with other empirical studies conducted by Cormeraie (1995) and Coleman (1996), who found that a large number of students during their period of residence abroad tend to reinforce national stereotypes leading to a less sympathetic view of the people in the host country. Additionally, this finding provides further evidence in support of Allport's (1954) 'contact hypothesis', since the four conditions that Allport argues for the reduction of prejudice are not present in the students' year-abroad placements. These four conditions are cooperative relations between the groups; equal status relations between the groups; common goals; and support from authorities, laws or customs (Pettigrew & Tropp 2006; also see section entitled 'Reducing Stereotypes' in Chapter 3 for further detail). This finding could possibly indicate that students may not have had the type of 'positive' contact with Hispanics during their year abroad that would promote less biased attitudes.

Importantly, it appears that a few students believe that generalised views of *otherness* cannot be avoided, and that there must be some 'embedded truth underlying stereotypes', as can be gleaned from these students' observations:

I believe that there's some embedded truth in them [stereotypes]; otherwise they wouldn't exist. (CD3/CS3)

It is impossible not to generalise when you meet someone very different from another culture. Every time I met a Spanish guy, the stereotype of Hispanics being possessive and jealous who wanted to control women was always present. (CD2/CS2)

Indeed, as stated previously in Chapters 2 & 3, the main problem with stereotyping in the development of intercultural competence is that many people wrongly believe that there is a 'grain of truth' in them. The comment made by Rebecca encapsulates the views of the majority of the students. She explicitly observes that her year-abroad experiences confirmed to a certain degree the preconceptions that she had before her Erasmus placement:

My year abroad did not change the stereotypes I had before. In love relationships, I still believe there is inequality between Latin American men and women. In Salamanca [Spain], I talked to my Brazilian boyfriend and his friends from several South American countries about love and relationships. I was disgusted to find out that at the beginning of a relationship, men impose their 'rules'. For example, they can dictate to their girlfriend who they can go out with, who they can talk to and what clothes to wear. I found this very antiquated because in my own culture [British] a man cannot dictate what a woman can do.

(LD3/CS1/Rebecca)

This student, as many others, claims to have experienced situations whilst abroad that reinforce her stereotypes. It appears that the students' personal experiences abroad during their Erasmus placements did not change their perceptions as will become apparent as the discussion of the data follows. Next section provides an overview of the ways students relate the fictional world in the literary text to their own real world of lived experiences.

5.3 Fictional and Real Worlds

Learners weave their own experiences between their understandings of the attitudes of Víctor (the most privileged customer), and Norma and Ester, the two female characters in the short story. These personal experiences fill the silences - or indeterminacy gaps (Iser, 1978) - that the text leaves and emerge as parallel stories, which are experienced anew from the vantage point of the present. These historical memories intersect with the interactions they establish with the fictional characters in the literary texts. Reflections on those experiences are triggered, as similar and dissimilar cultural practices and views are identified and juxtaposed. Figure 9 graphically represents the intersections that students make with their personal experiences using the themes in the literary text as a springboard:

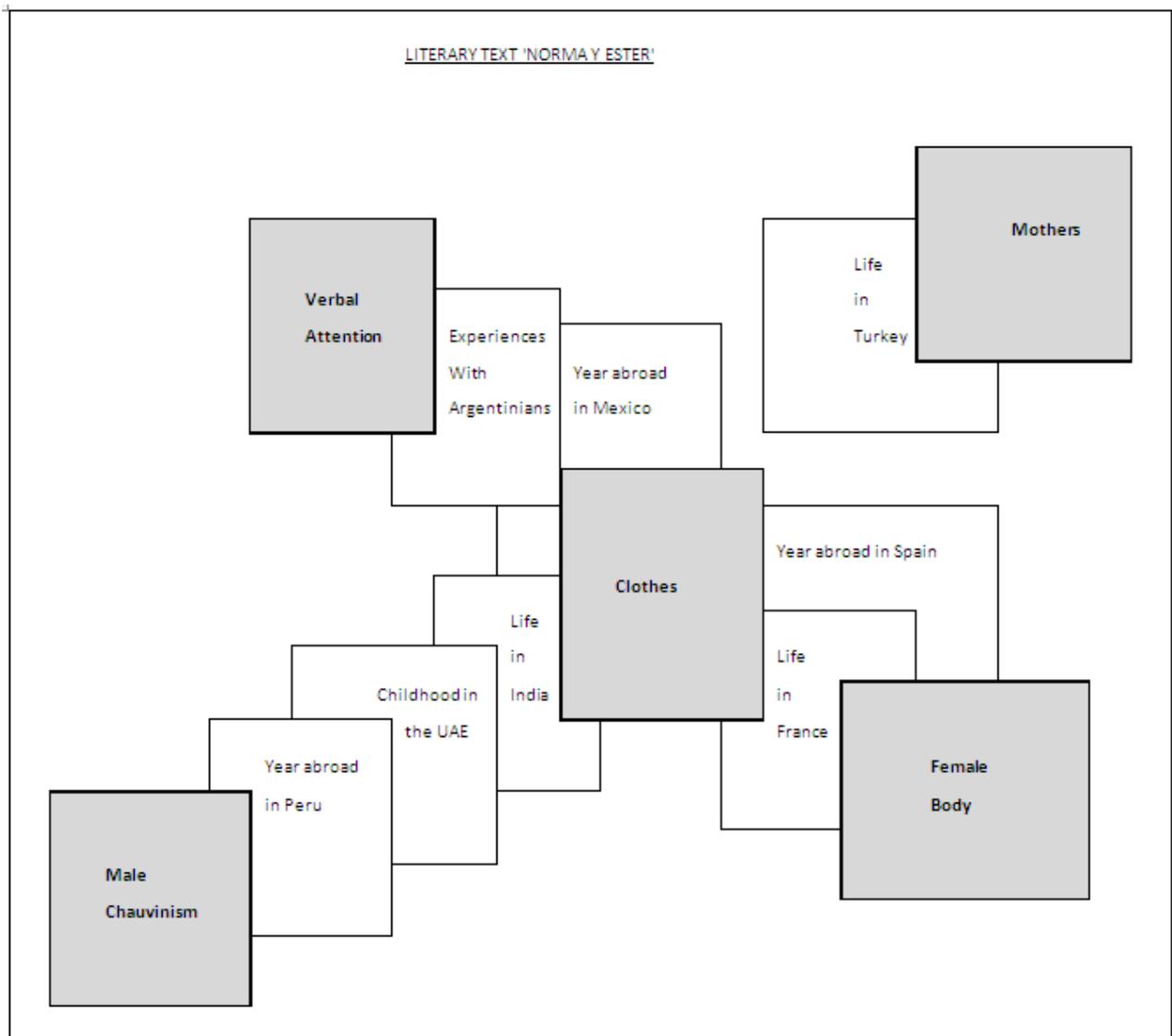


Figure 9 Fictional and Real Worlds

Some students find similarities between their experiences in the countries that they had lived for long periods of time and Hispanic cultures as portrayed in the literary text. Mike, for example, finds similarities with regard to gender relations between the Arab World and Argentina. Growing up in Dubai, he has come to appreciate that it is a male dominated society which he ascribes to the influence of Islam. Pickering (2001) shows the importance of history in the creation of ‘social myths’, and it is interesting to see how Mike weaves his life experiences with the histories of the places he has lived in to construct his own stereotypes. Of a Spanish mother, Mike has also been in a position to experience the Spanish culture from a young age. He observes that Catholicism has left its mark on Spanish society, where there is less equality of gender than in other European countries. Of particular interest to me as an Argentine, I was curious to explore how Mike imagined Argentina as he read the literary text:

Reading ‘Norma y Ester’ reminded me of my life in the United Arab Emirates, where I grew up. During my ten years there, I saw several places like the hair salon in ‘Norma y Ester’, where Philippine immigrant young women worked in poor conditions under the orders of **chauvinist bosses** who mistreated them. I find many similarities between this aspect of Argentine culture that the short story brings out, and the culture I experienced myself as a young boy. Perhaps the only difference lies in the fact that in the United Arab Emirates, it was foreign women who got the ill-treatment, whereas in ‘Norma y Ester’, it is the local women who suffer. This is the only difference I find (...) in the Emirates, the target of **this type of male behaviour** is immigrant women, never local women. I wonder which case is worse? To mistreat women of your same country or to be hypocritical and protect your own women, but mistreat the needy immigrants? It is clear to me that Gámerro hates this aspect of Argentine culture, and that is why he makes Ester strangle Víctor, **the embodiment of machismo [male chauvinism]** (LD8/CS1/Mike) [emphasis added]

Through the use of a feminist discourse highlighted in bold above, it can be inferred that Mike adopts a feminist attitude. He empathises with the predicament that both local and foreign women endure in diverse cultural contexts, and condemns men’s exploitation and

abuse of economically deprived women. In an attempt to strengthen his position as a male feminist, he invokes the support of the writer of 'Norma y Ester', another man who Mike seems to regard as a feminist too when he states *it is clear to me that Gamarro hates this aspect of Argentine culture, and that is why he makes Ester strangle Víctor*. Mike incorporates a voice of authority to his feminist discourse, a renowned Argentine writer, who he believes uses Ester in his fiction to voice, in Mike's own words, his 'fury and rage for filthy *machismo*' and wishes there were more women like Ester in the world to fight for gender equality.

In a similar vein, Fiona, another student who had spent her year abroad in Mexico, further explained that:

The fact that most of these men [Mexican men] love Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe [Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Patroness of the Americas] shows the double standards of **male chauvinism in Mexico. Certain men like women who dress and act like prostitutes, but they feel completely different in respect of their mothers and sisters, who are expected to be pure and virginal** (LD4/CS1/Fiona) [emphasis added]

Fiona and Mike's experiences present similar issues of how in their opinion, chauvinistic men view women in dichotomic terms. According to these students, for the Arabs and the Mexicans the women close to them, i.e. those who live locally and those who belong to their family, are the women to be valued and looked after. According to Self-Categorisation theory (Turner 1984, 1985; Turner *et al* 1987; Oakes, Haslam & Turner 1994), people are identified in relation to their social category (e.g. 'local women' vs. 'foreign women') as a way to understand the complexities of the social environment, thus dividing the world into binaries that do not allow for variables (for further detail about Self-Categorisation Theory, see section entitled 'Stereotyping' in Chapter 2). In this piece of data, foreign women appear to be viewed as the outsiders to be sexually objectified and abused, clearly establishing a binary opposition of *women to use* and *women to protect*; creating in this way a marked division between 'high status' and 'low status', although all 'inferior' women in the eyes of men.

From either perspective, women are placed as powerless beings belonging to men, to be protected or objectified, being in both cases subjected to male domination and control, a practice students strongly condemn.

Another student called Murat reflects upon the similarities between Turkish mothers and the ways he imagines Argentine (*m*)others with respect to male chauvinism:

Another similarity between **Argentine culture**, as represented in ‘Norma y Ester’ and **Turkish culture** is **male chauvinism**. Men believe that they are better than women (...) In my opinion, the main cause of this way of thinking lies in the **relationships that a mother establishes with her son**. It seems to me that **Argentinian mothers look after their sons too much and let them do whatever they want, but they do not behave in the same way with their daughters. This happens in Turkey too. This is the main reason why there are so very many machos like Víctor in Argentina and Turkey**. In my analysis of Turkish and German mothers, I have noticed that **a German mother treats both her sons and daughters equally**. However, my mother, who is Turkish, lets me do absolutely everything, like going out until 6 in the morning, but she does not let my sister do the same. My friend, who is German, also has a sister, and they are both treated in the same way by their mother. **What I am arguing here is that mother-sons relationships could explain why there are so very fewer machos in Germany than in Argentina or Turkey** (LD13/CS1/Murat) [emphasis added]

It is highly likely that Murat generalises about Argentine mothers from the few insights that he gains into the relationship between Ester and her mother in the reading of the literary text. From this, he assumes that Argentine mothers are more flexible and permissive with their sons than with their daughters, although there is absolutely no evidence of this in the literary text. Ester’s parents do not have a son, and the story does not present any mother-son relationships, which could indicate that Murat is using his own life experiences to fill the gaps that the text leaves as he interacts with the short story and uses Turkish and German

cultural frameworks to explain and describe gendered identity. There is no evidence to indicate that the belief about male chauvinism, stemming from the way mothers treat their sons, is constructed by the reading. However, the data suggest that Murat uses his prior knowledge of German and Turkish cultures to understand and imagine the Argentinian *(m)other*.

This piece of data indicates that Murat applies his own cultural schemata, set of values and beliefs to understand a different culture. Schemata are our own theories of the world in our heads and are revealed through stories, anecdotes and narratives. From a reader-response perspective, he fills the gaps in the text with his autobiographical experiences and makes judgements about mother-son relationships based on his own views of the world. This raises my awareness of the fact that engaging in processes of defamiliarisation, reflective practices and distancing from one's own worldviews necessitate guidance. An analysis of the language used by Murat also reflects an embedded belief in essentialism and in societies being objects that can be described with cultural behaviour to be predicted, leading to the creation of national stereotypes.

Furthermore, the ways Murat imagines Argentine *(m)others* resemble roles in Turkey where there is a generalised parental concern and participation in the choice of a husband for their daughters. Murat chooses to focus on one comment that Ester's mother makes in relation to her hopes for her daughter to find a kind, caring and wealthy man, and fills the silences that the text leaves with beliefs and notions normally associated with Turkish culture. With reference to the relationship between Ester and her mother, Murat observes that:

Ester's mother worries, and wants her daughter to marry a good man, but a man who is also wealthy so that he can look after her daughter. This phenomenon is also present in Turkey, where mothers are forever asking their daughters if they have found a rich man to marry. [In Turkey] it's not only the mother who is normally involved in the daughter's private affairs, but the whole of the family. To give an example, my mother is very concerned about my cousin who is 28 and does not have a boyfriend (LD13/CS1/Murat)

Murat draws on this cultural schema - what is familiar to him - and applies it to a different cultural context. With little information that the literary text provides about Ester and her mother, he constructs an image of the Argentine (*m*)*other* very similar to the Turkish, in that there is a generalised family concern about daughters' choice of a husband.

It is interesting to note that Murat describes mother-daughter relationships in Germany 'cold', because mothers are not concerned with who their daughters marry, whereas, according to Murat, Argentine and Turkish cultures are more 'emotional'. It is tempting to suggest that Murat regards family involvement in the choice of a man for marriage as an affectionate demonstration of love and care, but fails to recognise the fact that Ester in the story shows deep annoyance by her mother's questioning about the new man that Ester had supposedly met. I take this piece of data as evidence of ethnocentrism (Tajfel 1981, 1986; Abrams & Hogg 2010), i.e. the social group Murat belongs to is viewed in positive terms, and there is implicit condemnation of the German social group in his observation.

Students provide interesting insights into the ways they perceive *otherness* using their life experiences in other countries as their frames of reference or schemata. Their social contexts and life trajectories provide the backdrop of their personal experiences, which I have categorised into six sub-headings:

1. Gender Inequality
2. Clothing
3. Verbal Attention
4. The Female Body
5. Male Chauvinism
6. Submissive Women

These categories are analysed in the section that follows for they provide insights into the stereotypes students hold against Hispanics in relation to these issues.

5.3.1 Gender Inequality

All of the students agreed that in their opinion gender inequality is perceived more strongly in the Hispanic world, whilst a few students connect the literary text with their experiences of having suffered gender inequality themselves either in their home country or in their year-abroad placements. Again from a reader-response lens, these experiences fill the gaps in the short story and emerge as parallel texts. One of the students, Hasina explains that there had been very few women in India who had fought the patriarchal system for gender equality, and therefore little had been achieved. In her personal diary, she expresses her frustration of having had to endure a whole lifetime of male abuse and objectification of women:

Throughout my whole life in India I have seen men like Víctor, who treat women as sex objects. These men are dirty, ill-educated and believe that they have the right to behave the way they want to. For many years, I thought that there was no solution to this problem, and whether women are Argentinian or Indian, they are at the end of the day, all destined to feel inferior to men. However, Gárrero showed me a woman like Ester, who fought for her rights. **As I was reading the scene in which she strangles Víctor, I felt a strange feeling of happiness and inner relief. I felt this way because Ester had found a solution to injustice, even if her way was not the most appropriate one.** However, sometimes by giving men the same medicine, women can find the way to sort them out (LD2/CS1/Hasina) [emphasis added]

It is interesting to note how the literary text acts as catharsis and relieves frustrations in a non-destructive way. Hasina finds relief and happiness in Ester's actions, and manages to merge fiction and reality in an in-between, 'third' space where she metaphorically enacts revenge on abusive men through a fictional character, who have the courage and the confidence to take justice into her own hands. I take this piece of data as evidence of Hasina's exercising agency (Ros i Solé 2007; Holliday 2010, 2011; Phipps & Gonzalez 2004; Kramsch 2009) through fiction to enact change (for further detail see Chapter 2). It is tempting to suggest that Hasina is presented with a counter stereotypic exemplar in Ester (Kawakami, Dovidio and van Kamp 2005; Blair, Ma & Lenton 2001) as the fictional character subverts

gender roles in the strangulation scene. Ester's actions contradict Hasina's previous assertion that 'all (women) are destined to feel inferior to men', as she exercises her agency to change her circumstances and adopts a superior position. Therefore, Hasina reads the text against her own stereotypical lens, which views women as subservient and submissive to men's power.

Hasina's language denotes feelings of relief and empathy towards Ester in the story. She uses expressions such as 'reading the story was like a way of getting it off my chest', 'of feeling free and relieved' and of experiencing a 'strange feeling of satisfaction'. In addition, in her appreciations of Indian women, Hasina states that they 'have never had the confidence of being a person'. She admits to having gained her own confidence in a gradual slow process of juxtaposing and reflecting on both the European and Indian worldviews as she grew older; thus developing a mind of her own:

I have seen both sides, I think I had the selection and I have been able to choose what I want ... I am very proud to be who I am today. I don't feel I should hide any part of me. (INT4/CS1/Hasina)

Kramersch (1993: 234) would call Hasina a 'displaced' person, i.e. someone who has lived in more than one country, and who experiences a permanent feeling of being 'betwixt and between'. This feeling of being on the boundary does not mean that for Hasina there is a dividing line between two different cultures, that is, the culture of their past and the culture of their present. It means entering a 'third culture' with a myriad of potentially new meanings.

In her attempts to seek an end to gender injustice, Hasina makes reference to the iconic Indian symbol of peace, Mahatma Gandhi, whose exceptional ideology of non-violent resistance to tyranny during the years of securing Indian independence from the British Empire, inspired movements for human rights, justice and equality globally:

[Gandhi] succeeded in securing independence for India, but what woman has gained respect from men and achieved freedom from male chauvinism on the basis of being patient? None. Until now, women keep on fighting for better treatment, and even if it is politically incorrect, we need to show men our power and strength (LD2/CS1/Hasina)

Hasina feels deeply frustrated to discover that in Gamarro's story, Ester ends up all on her own, without the support of her best friend, Norma, or an understanding mother, which leads her to conclude that masculine power lies in money, which is a key factor in the (re)configuration of gender relations:

When women act, the issue tends to become more complicated, and there doesn't seem to be a way out for women. I'm not in a position to judge whether Ester did the right or the wrong thing, but it does give me a strange feeling of satisfaction to see that certain Argentinian women have the courage to fight against this serious social problem. (LD2/CS1/Hasina)

There is also some indication in the data that she views Argentinian women as similar to Indian women, in that she voices the belief that Argentinian and Indian women were all destined to suffer from gender inequality. In most of Hasina's observations, her comments indicate that her image of Argentinian women bears great resemblance with Indian women. However, Hasina enjoyed reading 'Norma y Ester' because there was some victory for women, even if partial and temporary, which gives her a great sense of satisfaction. For Hasina, Ester engages in *collective action* (Wright 2010) to enact change for her group to improve the conditions of all its members (see section entitled 'Reducing Stereotypes' in Chapter 3 for details about *collective action*). It could then be argued that the stereotype that Hasina has of Argentine women not fighting for gender equality is contradicted by Ester's individual actions to create change for the collective, which also includes Hasina as a woman.

Further, the fact that Hasina focuses on Ester as a person in the literary text probably emphasises personalisation and de-emphasises the social category Ester belongs to, a strategy which research on stereotyping has found can reduce stereotypical thinking and prejudice. The ‘virtual’ contact that Hasina establishes with Ester develops feelings of empathy and solidarity, which can lead to develop more heterogeneous and less stereotypical perceptions of social groups (Bettencourt, Brewer, Croak et al 1992; Turner, Hewstone & Voci 2007; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Levin, van Laar & Sidanius 2003). In the bridge that Hasina builds between Argentina and India, she finds a great deal of common ground, and experiences pleasure that a woman, embodied in Ester’s character, strikes back by trying to kill Víctor. This is evidence of what research on stereotyping has found, in that ‘personal’ and ‘social’ identities can coexist (see section entitled ‘Reducing Stereotypes’ in Chapter 3 for details), and that personalised interpersonal contact should not be seen in opposition to social intergroup contact, but that these two dimensions can operate simultaneously.

Additionally, a student named Sandra makes reference to a personal incident she had recently experienced, which reflects her views of gender inequality in the Hispanic world:

Last summer I had the chance to work in Mexico, and I couldn’t believe the number of men who tried to seduce me. One of them told me that if I accepted to go out for a drink with him, he would get me more work for the following months. Of course, I didn’t accept this, but now I can better understand the difficulties that a woman might experience in her workplace ... **I do not understand women who use their bodies to get a promotion**, for example, **but in the context of the short story**, I can see that in **certain** cases it **could appear** as the only solution. (LD15/CS1/Sandra) [emphasis added]

When Sandra says, *I do not understand women who use their bodies to get a promotion*, she makes a categorical absolutist assertion that appears to be applicable to every woman across the globe. In this way, she excludes and *others* these women from her social group. In this respect, Holliday (2007: 175) refers to Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis to explain that:

racism, sexism or, indeed, culturism can become naturalized in our everyday language to such an extent that we become ‘standardly unaware’ of their ideological impact [...] What is needed is a self-disciplining methodology of prevention.

However, with her use of ‘but’ after this rigid worldview, Sandra introduces some element of doubt to her own belief, as suggested by the adjective ‘certain’ and the modal verb ‘could’ in ‘in *certain* cases it *could* appear’ and admits that *in the context of* the short story, her own belief may not be applicable. The use of tentative language and the reduction of definite statements show suspension of judgement and disbelief about other cultures (see Byram’s model, Chapter 2), and avoid essentialised simplistic assertions, which merely promote the *othering* of those who are different from us. Sandra was subjected to a relatively similar situation, and whilst she felt in a position to reject the indecent proposition, and openly condemned the use of a woman’s physical attributes to advance in working environments, she was able to withhold judgement.

5.3.2 Clothing

The clothes that the female characters in the short story ‘Norma y Ester’ wear provide a forum for the discussion of clothing as a semiotic text, and serves as a springboard for comparing and contrasting dress sense displayed by women of Hispanic and European cultures. Some students were of the idea that Hispanic women tend to wear revealing clothes to please men and to get male attention. Fiona, for instance, notices that:

in Mexico and Cuba, women wear revealing clothes with tight jeans and blouses that show too much flesh. Cuban girls wear minute lycra skirts and tops, suitable for beach wear, in the streets. **This is not down to the hot weather** – since in the Sahara Desert women do not dress like this – **they have other motives for dressing this way ...** (CD1/CS1) [emphasis added]

Although Fiona does not state the exact reasons why she perceives these women wear this type of clothes, she discards the fact that it is due to the hot weather. There could be many interpretations as to why Fiona suggests that these women have ‘other’ motives to dress like this. One of them could be that according to Fiona, these women enjoy being sexually objectified by men; hence they actively strive to get male attention through the use of a semiotic resource, like clothing. Another interpretation could be that these women dress provocatively to please men showing in this way their subjugation to them. The clothes that Mexican and Cuban women wear are described as ‘tight’, ‘minute’ and ‘tiny’, adjectives that emphasise these women’s attempts to show the shape of their bodies as much as they can to attract male looks.

Whatever the interpretation is, it is evident that there is an implicit condemnation of the social practice of this type of clothing for the motives Fiona believes these women have. I take this piece of data as evidence of Fiona’s *othering* Mexican and Cuban women (see section entitled ‘*Othering*’ in Chapter 2). As Holliday (2010) puts it, these women are excluded from Fiona’s ‘normal’, ‘superior’ and ‘civilized’ group, and in Pickering’s (2001) terms, Fiona’s stereotypical *othering* is a form of social exorcism, placing the other in the periphery as if they had some sort of deficiency in behaving in such a way. It is interesting to note that this student looks at the other culture without looking at her own. The comparative element is absent; hence there is a lack of reflection upon women’s dress code in her own culture, and therefore a lack of critical cultural awareness (Byram 1997).

Hasina believes that Argentinian gender roles resemble those in India, as she notes here:

the difference between Indian and Argentinian women is that Argentinian women deserve the ill-treatment they receive from men due to the way they dress. (LD2/CS1/Hasina)

Hasina finds that the male mentality and women’s lack of confidence, submissive and obedient nature are surprisingly similar in both countries, despite the geographical distance.

This piece of data can be explained using self-categorisation theory (Turner 1984, 1985; Turner *et al* 1987; Oakes, Haslam & Turner 1994). Hasina depersonalises members of social groups (including hers), through a process of self-stereotyping hers and stereotyping the other. However, she enhances the status of her group (Indian women) and shows prejudice against the Argentine social group. Although she shows empathy for the female characters in the short story, she clearly makes an evaluative positive comment about her social group by saying that *Argentinian women deserve the ill-treatment they receive from men due to the way they dress*. As stated in Chapter 2, group memberships are emotionally charged, and observations like Hasina's are indicators of ethnocentric attitudes.

The story 'Norma y Ester' opens a window for Hasina to make some virtual observations of some of the clothes certain low social class Argentine women wore in the late 80s/early 90s, which provide opportunities for comparisons with women in less privileged Indian villages. In class, Hasina spoke of clothing as a sign and code, the messages those signs communicated, the readings and interpretations made by men and the empowering and disempowering effects of clothes in both cultures. Hasina observes that the women in Gamarro's story are made to wear tops with low necklines, revealing their bosoms and cleavage, and tiny skirts, which they use to their advantage as an empowering tool in gender relations. In her comparisons between Argentine and Indian cultures, she believes that whilst Argentine women deserve to be subjected to sexual abuse to a certain extent due to the way they dress, Indian women do not and are innocent victims of this type of harassment.

Another student named Kat draws a comparison between the way Ester dresses in the story and the clothes she imagines Latin American women wear:

Ester always wears provocative clothes to get men's attention [...] Latin American women feel some pressure to conform to the stereotypical view of the perfect woman [...] but certain women use their physical aspect as a tactic to achieve something. (LD6/CS1/Kat)

Women appear to be seen as victims and conformists to the image of what it means to be ‘a perfect woman’. According to Kat, Latin American women’s agency is achieved only through their bodies; their source of power lies in the way they use their bodies, and in this way they can achieve what they want. In the same vein, Martine feels that the female characters in the story reveal too much of their bodies in an attempt to look sexy:

I was greatly surprised by the way the female protagonists Norma and Ester dress in the story. Ester is made to wear sexy revealing clothes for her job, but Norma does not need to, since she no longer works in the salon. Despite this, she still chooses to dress in that way (LD11/CS1/Martine)

Martine explains that French women have a different concept of femininity and sexiness and makes a distinction between, what she calls, the French ‘subjective culture’ and the Latin American ‘body culture’:

For French women, dressing sexily means using the right make-up and jewellery and the details in the hairstyle. It is all about elegance, what I would call **the French ‘subjective culture’**, whereas **for Latin American women, dressing sexily means showing their bodies by wearing a miniskirt or a low-cut top. It is more of a ‘body culture’ that French women would regard as vulgar.** (LD11/CS1/Martine) [emphasis added]

Martine equates ‘vulgarity’ with Latin American dress sense, and ‘elegance’ with French dress sense. According to Martine, the French concept of sexiness involves dressing elegantly, not necessarily with a short skirt or a revealing V-neck top, but with the added details of the make-up, hairstyle and jewellery. It is possible that this student uses the literary text to form a generalised image of Latin American women’s dress sense and the ways they show their femininity and sensuality. According to Martine, Argentinian women wear revealing clothes, whereas French women wear unrevealing ones; thus placing the women in each cultural group at the two extremes of the continuum and in direct opposition. The

descriptive labels she uses place these women in binary oppositions. Whilst the French ‘subjective culture’ suggests depth, substance and other positive dimensions that go beyond a woman’s looks, the Argentine ‘body culture’ sparks negative images of superficiality, vulgarity and banality.

Martine believes that this aspect of what she perceives as ‘vulgarity’ is the major difference between both cultures and that the women’s dress code in the story is indicative of their vulgarity and of a hunger for sex. This is another piece of data that illustrates social identity and self-categorisation theories and the perceived supremacy of one’s social group leading to ethnocentric attitudes. It is quite evident in Martine’s comments that she applies her own cultural schemata to understand the semiotics of clothing, and in her observations there is a clear indication of how she places too high a value on her social group by viewing it in positive terms, whilst the cultures of the *other* are seen negatively. Anna, for example, juxtaposes Argentine and European views of a miniskirt:

(...) an important aspect that distinguishes my European culture from Argentinian culture, is the presence of *machismo* in Argentine society. In fact, this is a very important and relevant factor in the ways a miniskirt is viewed, since it can be interpreted in different ways according to one’s position with regard to women. What I mean is that, for me, if a woman wears a miniskirt, it is simply because she likes it, or because it is hot, but I would not read too many connotations in it. However, it seems to me that if a *machista* man sees a woman wearing a miniskirt, from his point of view it would mean that the woman is easy and would read it as a way of provoking him sexually. (LD1/CS1/Anna) [emphasis added]

Anna presents the Argentine and European worldviews as a dichotomy – a miniskirt as a semiotic text can be read as either *sexual provocation* or as *a matter of personal choice*. Anna regards herself as European, and appears to be aware of the different readings a sign can have, although it is interesting to note that she compares a whole continent with a country. This is a recurrent dimension in the data, that is, the fact that students regard cultures as being

territorially bound and geographically limited, and tend to compartmentalise cultural notions and practices into neat boxes for analysis and comparison. In Anna's case, she presents her voice as representative of the European viewpoint, which she describes in positive terms; thus positioning the Western perspective as superior to the Argentinian, which is described negatively.

5.3.3 Verbal Attention

The general consensus is that the Hispanic male *other* tends to look at women openly and lustfully. Based on their Erasmus experiences, a few students comment that whilst British men might look at women too, they are never as deliberately overt as the Spanish or Mexicans, for example. Students voice their opinion that, generally speaking, Latin American and Spanish men are more 'hot blooded' than the English or German, and that Hispanic men feel they have 'the right' to invade women's private personal space. For example, female students found it offensive that men wolf-whistled at them in Mexico, and note that English women do not appreciate wolf-whistling or verbal flirting and attention as much as Hispanics appear to do, as Nancy comments:

during my year abroad in Spain, one day my friend and I were sitting in a bar when we met two Argentinian guys. They walked past our table and sat with us, but we hadn't met before! They got chatting with us. Then my friend and I went nightclubbing and they came with us, and danced with us without our permission. Argentinian men are very open and try to get sex whenever they can. (CD2/CS1)

Another student, Vicky spent her year abroad in Mexico and was shocked to hear that one day, her Mexican teacher felt unattractive because no man had wolf-whistled at her that morning on her way to university:

I couldn't believe it ... **how low her self-esteem must have been to rely on that sort of ... kind of comment from a man** ... this woman was obviously intelligent, had a really good job, you know, but still was upset if she didn't get shouted at in the street on a daily basis, which **I always found amazing ... just the difference** ... because for us, when we were over there, we were just like 'Please, shut up, just stop it! Please! God!' (INT3/CS1/Vicky) [emphasis added]

Vicky seemed quick to judge and to apply her own set of values and beliefs to a different cultural practice. She had developed a sense of what was right and what was wrong, which she applied to the Mexican culture unproblematically, and equated a lack of self-esteem to the fact that this female teacher needed men to wolf-whistle at her or compliment her on her looks to feel attractive. Her belief that a woman does not need a man's approval to feel attractive is clearly perceived when she said 'which I always found amazing ... just the difference', since the implication appears to be that English women found men's catcalling unwelcoming and annoying, whereas the Mexican teacher needed it to raise her self-esteem and feel good about herself. Then Vicky adds:

the teacher, yeah ... but also managed to sort of head her own way and get her own job, stuff like that ... but I couldn't believe it ... I just couldn't believe it when that came out of her mouth! (INT3/CS1/Vicky)

This piece of data could indicate that Vicky struggles to decentre, i.e. to step away from her point of view and to recognise that there could be another worldview which can be as valid as hers. She finds it hard to suspend belief about her own cultural practices, and exhibits disbelief about others. In an unquestionably and uncritical way, she shows her ideological standpoint often associated with Centre/West cultures that women do not appreciate catcalling or wolf-whistling, which she uses as the template to judge behaviours and attitudes in gender relations different from her own.

Another student called Fiona fills the silences that the literary text leaves with her own experiences abroad as a university student in Mexico, and draws comparisons between Argentine and Mexican gender identities. In her diary entry, Fiona explores the images, emotions and ideas that the short story 'Norma y Ester' triggers, and asserts that Mexico is a very *machista* country, where men blew kisses to her in the air, took pictures of her on their mobiles, wolf-whistled and shouted at her in the street:

The story is about the way men treat women. **Víctor treats women as objects. During my stay in Mexico, I sometimes felt like that too.** In the first week, as I was walking to the university with my friend Nina, **we noticed that men in their cars were taking photos of us with their mobile phones.** This came as a great surprise to us, because men in England never do this. From that day on, **Nina and I always heard men's shouts and *piropos* [catcalling], for example, *güerita* and *mamacita*. They didn't treat us as a person, but as an object.** In England, I don't feel like an object. I do not feel this oppression in my country. (LD4/CS1/Fiona) [emphasis added]

The word *güerita* is used to express admiration and sexual desire for a woman who is not dark-skinned, especially one with a white complexion and blonde hair that looks like a tourist, while *mamacita* means a sexually attractive woman. These words are frequently used by certain Mexican men to show their sexual attraction to such women. Fiona noticed that these men had a particular obsession with foreign women, rather than with the local women, possibly due to their vulnerability as visitors and their distinctive looks, which she believed were perceived as different from the Mexicans. She relates the treatment that Víctor enacts on Norma and Ester to the way she felt treated by men in Mexico, and perceives that women's situation in Mexico, with unwanted compliments and photographs taken by men, is oppressive. Fiona admitted not liking the attention from men as it made her feel objectified and intimidated; therefore stereotyped as a sexual object based on her gender.

5.3.4 The Female Body

Many of the female students add a further dimension to their understanding of sexually objectified Hispanic women. They believe that these women have the agency to use sexual objectification to their own advantage through their bodies to achieve their aims. As explained earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 3, stereotyping denies change and agency, and the fact that students consider that the women in the story have the power to exercise their agency to enact change can be seen as evidence of reducing stereotyping. Instead of viewing Hispanic women as powerless victims of a patriarchal system, there appears to be a recognition that both women in the text use their bodies as a powerful tool:

women use their body and femininity to seduce, gain power and exercise their control over men in certain situations. (LD11/CS1/Martine)

Perhaps the student who shows a more reflexive attitude in her analysis is Katarzena, for her ability to withhold judgement despite the ‘shock’ she experienced by reading the story:

When I read the story ‘Norma y Ester’, **I was greatly shocked by the behaviours of the young women, Víctor and the people who appeared to accept the norms and orders that the female employees followed without questioning at the hairdresser’s. My shock was very similar to any other type of shock I experience when there is something I do not understand, or do not know, or something that has nothing to do with me, or that it seems I would not find in my own culture, or in my own environment.** Any of this can provoke an intense reaction. **But how wrong I can be!** (LD16/CS1/Katarzena) [emphasis added]

Like many other students, Katarzena describes the shock she experiences by reading a story, which seems to be so distant from anything she is familiar with. However, she concludes that she was wrong in her appreciations of *otherness*, and engages in a process of reflection by

‘decentring’ from her own ‘taken-for-granted world’ (Byram and Fleming 1998: 7). Katarzena takes a critical stance about gender relations in her workplace (a café in the UK), where the women who serve the coffee, like herself, use their sensuality and sexuality to receive privileges and advantages from their male managers:

Like in the story ‘Norma y Ester’, we do the same in the café. The difference between the café and the hairdresser’s is that we do not recognise and admit to the fact that we also use our bodies – our secret weapon – to achieve our aims. At the end of the day, the Argentinian, Polish, English worlds do not look so dissimilar. (LD16/CS1/Katarzena) [emphasis added]

Arguably, this student’s attempts to familiarise herself with what she perceives as being so different through an exercise of defamiliarisation of her participation in her workplace prove beneficial. Katarzena’s efforts are targeted to her need to understand values, attitudes and behaviours, which she initially finds so shocking. Therefore, she detaches herself from what is ‘familiar’ (the café) to look at a workplace, which she finds ‘strange’ (the hairdresser’s) to analyse gender relations critically, and much to her surprise, she finds common ground in an in-between space, where these new meanings emerge. This process of ‘involvement’ and ‘detachment’ (Bakhtin 1990; Rosenblatt 1978, 1986, 1995; Iser 1987) is explored in detail in the section entitled ‘Reader-Response Theory’ in Chapter 3.

5.3.5 Male Chauvinism

Some of the personal experiences illustrate the viewpoint that Hispanic men are disrespectful and inconsiderate to women, The reading of the story ‘Norma y Ester’ brings back memories of trips to, and encounters with Latin Americans, and it is feasible to suggest that, in general, students confirmed the stereotype they already had before they read the literary text, as this piece of data from Lizzie indicates:

Latin American men have little respect for women. They think that women should be submissive and obedient. In my culture, if a man is **disrespectful** to a woman, there would be serious consequences for the man, because we have managed to get the law on our side (...) When I read this story, it made me think of my trip to South America because there I met such **arrogant** men that matched the image of **male chauvinism**. (LD9/CS1/Lizzie) [emphasis added]

Lizzie claims to have met the most sexist and arrogant men during her travels in South America, and feels that she was too naïve at the time, and it is only now, through the reading of the story, that she is more able to understand many of the situations she experienced abroad. Lizzie calls South American men ‘disrespectful’, ‘arrogant’ and ‘chauvinistic’, three adjectives that highlight the negative image she has of the Latin American male *other*. Lizzie essentialises these men by suggesting that there is an inherent essence in them; thus she homogenises South American men by explaining their behaviour as if determined and constrained by the physical territory they live in (see section entitled *essentialism* in Chapter 2 for further detail). Another student who views Latin American men in a negative light is Emma:

During my year abroad in Spain, I lived with a **Mexican guy**. I noticed how much he disliked being contradicted by a woman. Every time his mother came from Mexico, she would cook for him, make his bed, put his rubbish in the bin ... she would do everything for him. So we had lots of arguments. *We were so different*. He showed his lack of respect for me one day when he put some of his hair on my toothbrush. **That’s why I say that Latin American men have no respect for women**. (CD2/CS1) [emphasis added]

It is interesting to note how Emma makes a generalised statement about the whole of the Latin American male population presumably based on her experiences with one Mexican. The emphasis on the ‘difference’ that Emma highlights seems to lie in the fact that a woman – the Mexican mother – performed the household chores unproblematically and unquestionably for her son, the implied suggestion being that an English woman would

possibly not allow this to happen. In the process of *othering* Latin American men, the implicit message is that Emma excludes them from her ‘normal’, ‘superior’ and ‘civilized’ group (Holliday *et al.* 2010: 2; for further detail, see section entitled *othering* in Chapter 2).

The belief that male chauvinism is widespread in Latin America is expressed by many of the students, for example Kat wrote in one of her learning diaries:

Gender inequality exists across the globe, but **male chauvinism** is a different matter. This cultural element **can be considered to belong to Latin America**. In my opinion, in England there is not much evidence of sexism being part of the culture, and I believe that chauvinism either constitutes or does not constitute part of a culture, for example, **the Italians and the Spaniards are well known for being the opposite to the English**. (LD6/CS1/Kat) [emphasis added]

The student positions Latin Americans, Italians and Spaniards as ‘them’, and the English as ‘us’ in direct opposition with respect to chauvinism. Kat refers to the taken-for-granted assumption that these cultural groups are well known for their reputation as chauvinists, and adopts this belief unquestionably as part of her discourse for an academic learning diary. However, Martine has an opposing view:

Male chauvinism is not something typical of Latin America, it also exists in Europe. Much to my annoyance, I have to admit that in every country I have lived in (Spain, France, England) I have seen signs of *machismo*. (LD11/CS1/Martine) [emphasis added]

Although Martine does not develop this idea further in her learning diary, I felt her observation had an important pedagogical implication in that the different meanings of

machismo could have been explored in class, rather than assuming we all had the same idea of what it meant. Another student, Claudine, shares a similar view:

Male chauvinism may have disappeared in most developed countries, but in France, Spain and England, incidents of *machismo* can be found. It is true that women are no longer treated as objects in these countries, but they are still being considered inferior to men in many cases. This can be seen in differences in salaries, for example. (LD5/CS1/Claudine) [emphasis added]

Furthermore, other stories reveal idealization of one's own cultural values, whilst demonizing others. Holliday (2011) observes that by constructing demonized images of others, we support an idealized image of 'us'. As can be gleaned from the data, there is a tendency for students to gather evidence that would support their views that Hispanic women are inferior to men and submissive to their authority. Nadia spent her year abroad in Guadalajara, Mexico, where she struggled to distinguish the difference between the concepts of being a 'gentleman' and a 'chauvinist'. She believed that Mexican men used the meanings commonly associated with being a 'gentleman' as a shield to mask 'male chauvinism' and to position women as 'inferior and subordinate'.

To illustrate this point, Nadia explains that every time she was riding her bicycle, men would wolf whistle her or shout comments to her, like "uy, ¡qué bonita!" [*wow! how beautiful!*], "¡qué guapa!" [*how hot!*] "¿estás buscando novio?" [*are you looking for a boyfriend?*] as if she was a sex object. She found these attitudes offensive and degrading to her as a young woman on the grounds that in Britain women have achieved a higher level of gender equality and independence, and would therefore not accept this treatment from men. It was not until an English friend advised her 'to enjoy the catcalling because once back in Britain that would stop altogether' that Nadia realised that English women would struggle to accept such compliments for fear of being seen as weak or dominated by men. This feeling was reinforced by some advice given to her by Mexican men. Once she was warned against swimming in the rough areas of the sea because it could be dangerous for a woman:

All this greatly frustrated me, because they wouldn't give the same advice to a man, would they? Because I was a woman, men instantly assumed that I would be physically unable to perform these activities. (CD1/CS1)

It is tempting to suggest that Nadia perceived these warnings as patronising because their assumption was that she belonged to the “weaker sex”. She appears to be gathering yet more evidence to support her views that Mexican men regard women as inferior, for the warning to be careful of the strong currents in the sea could just be a polite warning. However, she receives it as a patronising message, which reinforces her worldview that Mexican gender roles are primitive when compared to those in Britain, and that ‘their’ cultural values are *wrong*, and ‘hers’ are *right*.

5.3.6 Submissive Women

Most of the students agreed that in the Hispanic world there is an expectation that women should be submissive and obedient. A student named Sandra, who travelled to Peru for her year abroad experience, feels that Peruvian women are submissive, obedient and traditional. Since she was conducting a research project to submit in the UK, she had the opportunity to interview several women who revealed to her that their husbands expected them to have the house clean, cook, raise the children and look sexy for them. The ethnographic nature of her research allowed her to identify that this type of behaviour is more prevalent amongst the lower classes. Based on her own experiences in Peru, Sandra reinforces the stereotypes she had of Latin American male chauvinism on a daily basis:

When I went to Peru last year, I realised that certain groups in the population viewed women as a sex object, much the same as what happens in the story ‘Norma y Ester’ (...) In general, this behaviour was most prevalent in the lowest social class. Several women told me that their husbands had certain expectations, that is, to keep the house clean, to have the food ready on the table, to raise the children, and above all, to be sexy for them. Every day I had to catch a bus to go to a health centre in a poor

neighbourhood in Lima. Every time I waited for the bus, men made comments about my physical appearance. It didn't bother me that much, but it gives us an idea of women's situation in that society (LD15/CS1/Sandra) [emphasis added]

The belief that Latin American women are considered sex objects and should be submissive and subservient to their husbands appears to have been strengthened by her daily participation in socio-economically deprived neighbourhoods in Peru. This piece of data is evidence that there was a preconception before the reading of the short story 'Norma y Ester', and that it was not the literary text that constructed the stereotype. If anything, the text was yet another source to reinforce it.

There is a generalised view in the data gathered that Hispanic women tend to conform to the traditional roles of weak, obedient housewives submissive to men's authority and power. This worldview fails to consider the diversity of women's roles and the complexities of gendered identity in Hispanic societies. Often, some of the students fall into new binaries, like Kim who moves from one extreme of the spectrum to the other. In her personal diary entry, she wonders whether women use strategies to endure men's vulgarity, which oscillate between being 'completely subservient' to being 'totally manipulative'. In a similar vein, Fiona reflects upon her year abroad experiences in Mexico and writes in her learning diary that:

despite male chauvinism and women's objectification in Mexico, it would be a mistake to think that **Mexican women** are submissive and weak. I thought they were **very strong and worked as hard as men. Perhaps, these women find that they have to be this way to survive *machismo* and to endure men's selfish behaviour.** (LD4/CS1/Fiona) [emphasis added]

It is interesting to note that Fiona ascribes Mexican women's strength and power to a reaction against the patriarchal system in that society, as if it were a conscious decision on the part of these women to use these characteristics as weapons in their battle for gender inequality and

for survival in such a society. The underlying message in Fiona's observation is that these Mexican women feel the need to stand up for themselves against men. This is suggested by her use of language in 'they have to be this way', which may indicate that these women would not be as strong as they are, were the men not chauvinistic and selfish. The implication is that positive attributes, such as 'strength', 'power' and 'hard work', when assigned to Mexican women, seem to be regarded as developed strategies to fight men, whereas for English women, Fiona believes, it is 'their choice how they want to be'. The fact that there is an 'option' element places English women as independent free women able to choose the kind of lives they wish to lead, irrespective of what men believe or want, as opposed to their Mexican counterparts.

Interestingly, some of the students believe that powerful women like Ester are quite unique in Argentine culture, as Sally expresses in her learning diary:

The short story made me think that young women in Argentine culture are more submissive than the English, since it seems to me that **Ester is quite unique**. In England, we do not have such a male chauvinist culture, so it is much more likely that English women would not tolerate sexist behaviour.
(LD12/CS1/Sally) [emphasis added]

Sally contradicts herself by suggesting that the literary text shows her that Argentine women are submissive, although the protagonist in the story is not. This contradiction could mean that her reading of the story is filtered by her own schemata about Argentine women being more submissive than the English; therefore she chooses to focus on that aspect of the story in her learning diary. However, what does not conform to her set of beliefs - in this case a strong Argentine woman who stands up for herself - is considered to be 'quite unique'; therefore it is only worth mentioning it as a passing comment in the conclusion of her learning diary. As explained in Chapter 2, if people are convinced of the reality of a given idea, they unconsciously dismiss what does not fit into their schemata. As a result of this, they behave in a biased way through their stereotypical lens. According to Sally, even if the story presents a woman who fights for gender equality, she is considered to be 'quite unique'

in Argentine society. By contrast, the majority of English women would not tolerate such a male chauvinistic attitude, the implication being that most English women would fight for gender equality. Sally appears to have constructed notions of women's empowerment in both countries, which she presents as binaries, which by implication suggests that *the majority of English women would fight against male domination* as opposed to *the minority of Argentine women would fight against male domination*.

5.4 Conclusions

We now return to the research question in this case study of *how do students view the remote, and not so remote, Hispanic other?* The brief answer to this question is *the students view Hispanics in stereotypical terms*. In this section, I outline what is meant by 'in stereotypical terms' and summarise the main findings of this first case study. Firstly, the data provide evidence of students viewing Hispanics, mainly the Spanish and the Mexican, and in particular, the Argentinian 'in stereotypical terms' by fixing and essentialising them. As can be gleaned from their personal experiences, students voice their understandings of the countries they experienced and expose the stereotypes embedded in their perceptions. Further, despite the my initial assumption that the students would make a distinction between the 'remote' (the Latin American) and the 'not-so-remote' (the Spaniard) Hispanic *other*, this is a distinction that the students do not explicitly make in the data gathered.

Undergraduates voice their essentialist beliefs about Hispanic cultural identities and expose the rigid worldviews embedded in their perceptions of the Hispanic cultures, at times displaying strong negative attitudes against alterity. This 'Hispanic *other*' is in the eyes of some of the students deficient, primitive and inferior. By constructing a demonized image, Hispanics are excluded from their 'normal', 'superior' and civilized' group; thus making their group more 'confident' and 'exclusive'. These simplified generalisations appear to arise from their limited intercultural encounters, which do not seem to see beyond the dualist thought and binary construction of the Hispanic peoples. A popular myth lies in the belief that experience abroad naturally leads to intercultural competence. However, in the same way as it 'is perfectly possible to act as an intercultural being without going abroad' (Phipps and Gonzalez 2004: 115), it cannot be assumed that after a period of immersion in a foreign

culture, language learners automatically become intercultural speakers and mediators as Allport's hypothesis would also argue, which supports the pedagogical decision of creating a space in the classroom where stereotypical notions can be discussed and reflected upon and of developing contact experiences during year-abroad placements more informed on research.

As the students read the short story using a reader-response approach, their personal experiences interconnect with the literary text in a network of links not only from within, but also outside and beyond it, and create a hypertextual mosaic of other (imagined and real) texts in the reading process. These texts (referred to as 'student texts' in this study) display essentialising notions of the subaltern Hispanic *other*, that dichotomise 'us' and 'them' in a process of *othering*. At times, students display disbelief about other cultures and tend to apply their own set of values to different cultural practices and worldviews. The data indicate that learners are often judgemental, struggle to decentre and to view other cultures from different perspectives other than their own, whilst constructing stereotypical representations of the Hispanic *other*, thereby reinforcing 'social myths'. In metaphorical language, students' personal experiences hereby presented act as a 'window' on how language learners' historical memories intersect with the interactions with the literary text and the characters of the story. Students draw parallels between their own experiences abroad and the literary text. In so doing, they voice their stereotypical beliefs about Hispanic gendered identity and do not seem to see beyond the dualistic thought and binary gender construction of Hispanic cultures.

Furthermore, data analysis exposes the fact that students seldom examine their own culture, and when they do, they tend to do so uncritically. They tend to look at the *other* more than the self, and sometimes the comparative element is absent, unless it is to highlight supremacy or an idealised image of their own social group. There is also a general tendency to construct positive identities for themselves and an implicit assumption that their dominant ideologies are widely accepted and self-evident. Some of the data demonstrate that students tend to enhance the status of their social group; whilst showing prejudice against others leading to ethnocentric views. This is congruent with Self-Categorisation Theory (Turner 1984, 1985; Turner *et al* 1987; Oakes, Haslam & Turner 1994), which postulates that the social groups people belong to are viewed positively and that individuals tend to divide the world into binaries – 'us' and 'them' – increasing the self-image of their in-group ('us') and developing

ethnocentric and prejudiced attitudes towards those belonging to the out-group ('them'). As the students dichotomise cultures, for example 'Argentinian culture' or 'European culture', the tendency is for students to see cultures as territorially bound and geographically limited.

From the results of CS1, it becomes apparent that pedagogies necessitate the implementation of a strategy that would allow learners to examine cultures through a different lens. The challenge for the educator is to develop a pedagogical approach that removes the stereotypical lens (even if temporarily) and replaces it by another one that helps students view cultural realities as fluid, contradictory and ever-changing, as opposed to rigid, fixed and frozen. The implications for practice of CS1 lie in the development of a pedagogical tool that would allow students to recognise different subject positions, that would help them move away from binaries and from viewing cultures as territorially and geographically bounded entities in order to develop further perspectives. The next chapter will address these pedagogical challenges by empirically testing a tool to deconstruct stereotypes.

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts

William Shakespeare - All the world's a stage (*from As You Like It*)

6.1 Introduction

Butler's (1999, 2004) postmodernist concept of gender 'performativity' has much in common with Jaques's words in Shakespeare's *As you like it* (1600). The notion of 'performativity' is a dramaturgical metaphor, to refer to gender as fluid and variable, as opposed to fixed and homogeneous. Butler sees gender identities and subject positions as performances, i.e. 'acting' masculine or feminine. Gendered identity is seen as a theatrical space, a socially constructed 'stage', where men and women 'have their exits and their entrances' enacting different roles in an unconscious and repetitive way, and where every 'actor' shows their uniqueness in the many parts they play. In this theatrical space, the notions of gender and cultural identities can be deconstructed, and men and women on this stage are not perceived as having fixed masculine/feminine gender binaries, or frozen Latin American/European cultural binaries, but as groups with diverse differences that prevent us from defining them as homogeneous.

These concepts relating to cultural and gendered identities became the basis of the pedagogies implemented in Case Study 2 (CS2) as an attempt to deconstruct stereotypes and problematise gender roles in the Hispanic world. In Chapter 5 I demonstrated empirically that students stereotyped Hispanics with respect to gender, and for this chapter I developed a tool focusing on 'identity' to deconstruct stereotypes as the students read Gamero's 'Norma y Ester'. The purpose for the creation of this tool was to develop a 'self-regulation strategy' in students for them to learn to control prejudice and stereotyping in the real world as a 'mental

reasoning system’ (Monteith *et al.* 1998; Gawronski & Bodenhausen 2006; Rydell & McConnell 2006; Monteith & McQueary 2010; further details on ‘self-regulation strategies’ in Chapter 3). I tested this tool empirically in CS2, and this chapter attempts to answer the second operational research question in this study:

When taught with an ‘identity-focused’ Critical Pedagogical approach,
how do students deconstruct stereotypes?

CS2 involved a new cohort of fourth and final year Spanish language undergraduates, as shown in the table below:

Table 6 Case Study 2 Research Participants

Case study 2	Number of students	Gender
Spring 2009 (Weeks 8 & 9)	20	3 male 17 female

I sought to answer the research question by collecting data as students completed intercultural tasks aimed at deconstructing stereotypes. The same approach employed in CS1 for data analysis was used for CS2; i.e. rather than forcing data to fit into a predetermined theory, I started with the data, deriving the categories from the areas I was interested in, in an attempt to answer the research question (for further detail about data analysis in this study, see Content Analysis in Chapter 4). As I reflected on the students’ comments and observations, I interpreted them in the light of the theoretical literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 6 starts with a description of the two intercultural tasks used in this case study, and then analyses the main findings of the research to answer the second operational research question.

6.1.1 Intercultural Task One

This task was used in Stages 4 (Analysis of Responses) and Stage 5 (Awareness-Raising) of the Pedagogical Model outlined in Chapter 3 to raise awareness of stereotypical beliefs. The relevant sections of the model tested empirically in this case study are outlined in the following table:

Table 7 Case Study 2 Pedagogical Model (a)

	AIMS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	TEACHING APPROACHES	TASKS
Analysis of Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying stereotypical and prejudiced attitudes in students' 'texts' • Reflecting on taken-for-granted assumptions and ethnocentric viewpoints • Contextualising the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To describe the ideologies embedded in one's own emotional response to the literary text • To describe the stereotypes held against Hispanics • To analyse and interpret other students' 'texts' • To examine beliefs, behaviours, values and attitudes towards others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysing students' 'texts' • Researching socio-cultural, historical and political context of the literary text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students analysed responses to the text from a previous cohort of learners <p style="text-align: right;">CS2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students wrote a reflective piece analysing their own 'texts' within themselves
Awareness Raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting a 'self-regulation strategy' through an appeal to emotions for attitude change • Uncovering ideologies • Developing the ability to be 'onlookers' of one's own texts • Identifying and modifying essentialist and culturist language in students' 'texts' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To demonstrate the development of one's own worldviews • To critically evaluate and analyse one's own 'texts' • To illustrate chauvinistic culturist language with examples • To evaluate commonsense assumptions in one's own texts • To examine one's own beliefs, behaviours, values and attitudes towards others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies • Answering questions based on the students' 'texts' • Analysing one's own images and discourses of <i>otherness</i> in closed pairs • Improving the reflective essay based on class discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students noted the stereotypes, prejudices and linguistic choices that denoted essentialist and chauvinistic attitudes as they analysed other students' texts' <p style="text-align: right;">CS2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students critically evaluated their own reflective essay and further analysed their own images and discourses of <i>otherness</i> with a view to improving their reflective piece of writing

Selections of the data gathered for CS1 (see Chapter 5) were transformed into pedagogical tasks and utilised as educational tools for CS2 with a different cohort of learners. I selected fragments of CS1 data with embedded stereotyping, prejudice and ethnocentric bias and designed a hand-out with these excerpts (Appendix F). Later, I asked students to read the fragments and identify stereotypical attitudes, taken-for-granted assumptions and implicit condemnation of *otherness*, with particular reference to gendered identity in the Hispanic world. The aim of this task was to use these personal experiences as a mirror for learners to see the self through the eyes of the *other* with a view to raising awareness of generalised, stereotypical, prejudiced and ethnocentric attitudes and reflect upon them.

The underlying guiding principle of this task has its foundations in Freire's (2009: 57; italics in original) notion of an '*emergence of consciousness*' for later '*critical intervention in reality*'. In attempting to raise students' awareness of essentialised notions of Hispanic masculinity and femininity and of dominant discourses that reduce others to prescribed stereotypes, the task aimed to help students become 'conscious beings' '*with the world*' (Freire 2009: 54; italics in original). In practical terms, this meant helping students not only become aware of their own preconceived notions of *otherness*, but also help them make these stereotypes and prejudices be 'inside' of their consciousness. In Freire's terms, the task aimed to provide enabling opportunities for 'bits of the world' based on their personal experiences to 'enter' into their 'consciousness', so that they can be 'inside' of them. This process of '*emergence of consciousness*' is often referred to in critical pedagogy as '*conscientização*' achieved through a 'problem-posing' approach to education. For Freire, the knowledge gained through '*conscientização*' leads to '*critical intervention in reality*', a view supported by McLaren (2009: 80) who states that:

(k)nowledge is relevant only when it begins with the experiences students bring with them from the surrounding culture; it is **critical only when these experiences are shown to sometimes be problematic (i.e., racist, sexist)**; and it is transformative only when students begin to use the knowledge to help empower others, including individuals in the surrounding community. Knowledge then becomes linked to social reform. **An understanding of the language of the self can help us better negotiate with the world. It can also**

help us begin to forge the basis of *social transformation*: the building of a better world, the altering of the very ground upon which we live and work. [italics in original; emphasis added]

McLaren's point here is that being 'critical' involves a deep awareness of how worldviews, based on prejudice, racism and other social problems, can be 'problematic'. In McLaren's sense of the 'critical', being 'critical' also involves uncovering chauvinistic culturist language (Holliday 2010), which the students might be unaware of using, appropriating and perpetuating. Therefore, a consciousness-raising task that encourages students to identify embedded ethnocentrism and stereotyping is one way of developing the 'critical' in McLaren's sense of the word, which is also one way of developing 'critical cultural awareness' as conceptualised by Byram (1997). For McLaren, this type of criticality leads to 'social transformation' in order to build 'a better world' or as Freire would say, to '*critical intervention* in reality'.

6.1.2 Intercultural Task Two

This task was used in Stage 6 (Deconstructing Stereotypes) of the Pedagogical Model outlined in Chapter 3. The relevant section of the model tested empirically in this case study is outlined in the following table:

Table 8 Case Study 2 Pedagogical Model (b)

	AIMS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	TEACHING APPROACHES	TASKS
Deconstructing Stereotypes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying a ‘Pedagogy of Identity’ to the literary text and the students’ ‘texts’ • Changing attitudes and behaviours for self and social transformation • Becoming more human by learning to reduce prejudice and bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recognise instances where one’s own stereotypes are challenged • To analyse one’s own ‘texts’ and those of others using theoretical notions of ‘identity’ • To propose alternative viewpoints to those initially formulated • To evaluate commonsense assumptions in one’s own texts • To identify and describe instances of having been stereotyped 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning the ‘dynamics of identity’ as <i>tools</i> for textual analysis and stereotype deconstruction • Reading the literary and students’ ‘texts’ through the lens of identity • Describing personal experiences of being <i>othered</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students reread the literary text through the lens of ‘identity’, engaged in class discussions, prepared oral presentations and wrote an essay <p style="text-align: right; color: red;">CS2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students described their own experiences of being <i>othered</i> during their year-abroad placements • Students analysed their own experiences of alterity through the lens of identity

An ‘identity-focused’ critical pedagogical approach to the reading of the short story ‘Norma y Ester’ was implemented, whereby students were introduced to basic theoretical concepts relating to ‘identity’. The intercultural task involved students moving back and forth from the short story to the students’ personal experiences (or students’ ‘texts’) with the aim of identifying instances in the literary text that challenged the stereotypes displayed in the personal experiences. Students were also required to support their answers with evidence from the short story and to develop their viewpoints in the light of this newly found evidence. This activity involved students reading the literary text against their schemata, and as previously discussed in Chapter 3, the field of social psychology has found that stereotypes can be altered through different mental reasoning systems (Gawronski & Bodenhausen 2006; Rydell & McConnell 2006), such as being exposed to counter stereotypic training or

developing a ‘self-regulation strategy’ that would allow learners to critically evaluate intercultural experiences in the real world (Kawakami, Dovidio & van Kamp 2005; Blair & Lenton 2001). With this in mind, the task involved learners searching for counter stereotypic instances in the literary text with a view to demonstrating that cultural identities are fluid, contradictory and in a permanent state of flux, and that ‘freeze-framing’ and ‘fossilising’ cultures through stereotyping should not be the way to read and interpret them.

The underlying principle of the task lay in the idea that gendered identity is a ‘performative act’ (Butler 1990), i.e. a theatrical space where a multiplicity of identities can be freely adopted in different contexts and at different times. Butler (1990, 1993) and Weedon (1997) view gender as not being predetermined, but constructed interactively. Butler’s concept of ‘performativity’ proved useful to conceptualise this intercultural task, which aimed to analyse the fluidity of gender identities; thus deconstructing essentialised views. An important concept about gender, which I have appropriated to develop this intercultural task, is that gender is about doing and acting, and not about having or being (Butler 1990). Gender identities emerge from and in activity and interaction, and are communicated not just through language, but through other semiotic systems, such as hairstyle, clothing, facial expressions, and so on. These concepts were crucial in the design of this intercultural task, which involved reading the literary text from a different angle with the aim of challenging students’ initial viewpoints imbued with stereotypical thinking.

Furthermore, these concepts were of special relevance in this study, since CS1 showed that students viewed Hispanic femininities and masculinities as having clear boundaries and being socially determined and stable. This finding led me to conclude that there was a need for me to develop a pedagogical intervention which would help learners avoid over-generalisations beyond the confines of the literary text. In class we spoke of what stereotyping means, and how identities are constructed. We also discussed Butler’s concept of ‘performativity’ and the dynamics of identity. In the light of these theoretical conceptions of the social construction of gendered identity, students were encouraged to deconstruct their own gender stereotyping of Hispanic cultures in order to gain new insights into the roles performed by men and women in the literary text. Based on this class work, students were required to write an essay discussing and critiquing the dynamic nature of gendered identity in the short story ‘Norma y

Ester'. As previously noted in Chapter 3, research on reducing stereotypes and prejudice has demonstrated that person-oriented approaches, where social categories are de-emphasised and personal identities are emphasised, can produce less bias. Therefore, through an identity-informed approach to critical pedagogy, it was hoped that students would distance themselves from their initial viewpoints to enable them to develop further perspectives less imbued with stereotypical thinking. It was also hoped that encouraging students to read the text from a different angle would open (in metaphorical language) new *windows* on the fluid nature of gendered identities.

What follows is an account of the main findings in CS2 in response to the critical pedagogical interventions outlined this far, presented under four dominant discourses (1) awareness-raising; (2) reinforced stereotypes; (3) challenging stereotypes; and (4) transposed binaries.

Data for Case Study 2 (CS2) was gathered through class discussions (CD), oral presentations (OP), essays (E) and a log of reflections (LoR) and all of the students' names in this study are pseudonyms.

6.2 Awareness-Raising

In seeking to answer the second operational question in this research of *when taught with an 'identity-focused' critical pedagogical approach, how do students deconstruct stereotypes?*, I thought it necessary to develop a consciousness-raising task involving the conscientization of stereotypical thinking. To this end, I created 'Intercultural Task 1', which involved the reading and identification of prejudiced and biased attitudes in other students' personal experiences in the hope that they may resonate with theirs. It is interesting to note that initially some students struggled to identify the stereotypical beliefs displayed in these personal experiences, but once discovered and after a period of uncomfortable silence, most of them admitted sharing the same beliefs as the authors. Some students in this case study observed that there is a need to reflect on prejudices and negative reactions for an improved mutual understanding of difference:

The problem with stereotypes is that they ill predispose you and don't help you to understand people from different cultures. It is wrong to generalise, because stereotyping generates negative attitudes and don't help intercultural communication. (CD2/CS2)

Some other students expressed feelings of embarrassment and discomfort during the consciousness-raising task of uncovering stereotypical thinking:

These students are full of prejudices! I feel embarrassed by their comments!
(CD1/ CS2) [*This comment was made in class by a student after reading excerpts of students' testimonies embedded with stereotypes and prejudices against Hispanics*]

This finding is supported by research in stereotyping, which has identified a conflict between democratic and citizenship values (e.g. equality, social justice, respect) and the psychological processes of categorising complex social phenomena that leads to stereotyping and being prejudiced against those who are culturally different. The pedagogical intervention appears to have brought this conflict out to the fore; i.e. the conflict between being prejudiced on the one hand, and having high personal standards of egalitarianism on the other (Monteith & McQueary 2010). The fact that this student feels embarrassed by the prejudiced comments made by other students is evidence of this conflict, and as Monteith and colleagues have found, becoming aware of bias and prejudice may lead to feelings of embarrassment and discomfort.

Teaching for democratic citizenship may involve a 'pedagogy of discomfort' (Boler & Zembylas 2003; Zembylas & McGlynn 2010; Santoro & Major 2012), whereby students are 'challenged to move beyond their comfort zone into new and unfamiliar territory, and into states of dissonance and discomfort' (Santoro & Major 2012: 309), particularly in cases where the purpose of the teaching is 'to unsettle taken-for-granted views and emotions', then 'some discomfort is not only unavoidable but may also be necessary (Zembylas & McGlynn

2010: 3). Fleming (2006a: 131) notes that ‘controversial issues’ in intercultural citizenship education are ‘unavoidable’ when trying to resolve ‘tensions and ambiguities between competing concepts’, a view shared by Guilherme (2002; 2007), Byram (1989a; 2008) and Holliday (2010; 2011) who regard citizenship education as preparing learners to live together in an increasingly diverse world.

For these scholars, teaching should deal with issues like stereotyping, discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation for a more democratic engagement in a globalised world. ‘Questions of value’ (Fleming 2006a) and attitudes like equality and social justice based on personal experiences should be the focus, even if this means teaching through ‘conflict’ or through ‘cultural faultlines’ and ‘ruptures’ (Kramersch 2000a). I experienced this discomfort, together with my students, as we were describing stereotypes and prejudices held against Hispanics. On that day, I noted in my personal log of reflections:

The class was lively, the students were working on the hand-out with the personal narratives. They had strips of paper where they had been asked to write down the stereotypes embedded in them. These were later Blu-Tacked onto the board. I then asked them whether they shared those beliefs themselves. **There appeared to be an unusual silence after I asked them this question. This silence must mean something.** Perhaps the students felt uneasy because they had retold similar experiences themselves last week. All of a sudden, Yvette was very critical; she said the authors of the personal experiences were being too harsh, too inflexible, she said that it felt almost embarrassing that people could be speaking like that. A few nodded in agreement. (LoR/5 March 2009) [emphasis added]

As the teacher and researcher of this class, I took this *silence* as a critical one. There seemed to be some awareness, even acknowledgement, of sharing similar beliefs; and there was evidence of some rejection of, what could be regarded as, the socially unacceptable. Kramersch (2003) would describe this instance as a ‘telling moment’ in the classroom, an unsettling realisation that produces discomfort, and in this case, the mere presence of a

teacher that comes from a Hispanic culture could have feasibly led to feelings of embarrassment. As I explained in Chapter 1, Kramersch used a ‘telling moment’ in her German class to investigate the reasons for the students’ silence when discussing foreigners, and one of her students’ beliefs about the States not having foreigners. The genesis of Kramersch’s research study was inspirational in mine as I also used a ‘telling moment’ in my Spanish language seminar as a possible revelation of these undergraduates’ sudden awareness of holding similar stereotypes.

As students were completing task 1, they developed increased awareness of some of the stereotypes about Hispanics, and added new perspectives, which did not necessarily eliminate their initial viewpoints, but merely problematised their worldview. Many of the testimonies revolved around the students being confronted with their own stereotypes and prejudices, in addition to overcoming difference during their year abroad in Spain or Latin America. Most participants in this study claimed not to have been aware of their own generalised views of the Hispanic *other* until after their year abroad experiences and after the pedagogies implemented in class in the reading of ‘Norma y Ester’. In this respect, Meghan observes that:

I recognise I was not totally aware of my own stereotypes (...) Gamarro’s story and my own experiences raised my awareness of those stereotypes I have ingrained in my head. These ideas have been exposed and brought out into the open, which has in turn made me look at my own culture. Obviously it is easier to analyse the *other*, and more difficult to look at one’s own culture (...) I have become more aware of issues related to my own culture, and also how others view us. (OP3/CS2/Meghan) [emphasis added]

After the class identified the stereotypes, prejudices and linguistic choices that denoted essentialist and chauvinistic attitudes during their analysis of other students’ ‘texts’, Meghan engaged in a self-awareness exercise of reflection on *otherness* and difference to unmask stereotypes embedded in her own discourses and those of others. Additionally, in response to

task 1, Sarah admitted that she discovered the way she viewed the Hispanic *other* and her own self:

The story ‘Norma y Ester’ does not help me to overcome the stereotypes I have with regard to Latin American men and women, but it has helped me to consider the generalisations that I make of the Hispanic *other* ... **now that I am aware of my stereotypes, I will try to reduce them.** (CD1/CS2)
[emphasis added]

As can be gleaned from the data, student responses to task 1 provide an example of Freire’s notion of *conscientização*, for certain elements that had always existed started to be perceived and reflected upon, with a view to be acted upon. This is evidenced in this student’s comment *now that I am aware of my stereotypes, I will try to reduce them.* Guilherme (2012: 362) observes that *conscientização* is ‘more than critical awareness’ for it ‘includes the purpose of informed and committed agency towards social justice’, as this student demonstrates her intention to enact her agency based on the knowledge she has gained in the process of awareness-raising. In critical pedagogical terms, her ‘informed actions’ (McLaren 2009) can only lead to humanization. As I listened to the recordings of the class discussions while the class was completing task 1, I came across a female student whispering in English to her group classmates the following comment:

this is all bombarding our essay [inaudible] yes, because you can’t generalize anything about women in Latin America. (CD2/CS2)

There appeared to be a sudden realisation that the intercultural task was raising her awareness of taken-for-granted assumptions with regard to Hispanic identities, which ‘bombarded her essay’, and possibly, other students’ essays. It is feasible to suggest that the task may have been challenging the views that she had already developed for her essay. Critical Pedagogy raised this student’s awareness of the need to rethink the essay question more critically by foregrounding different aspects and issues.

Other students observed that beliefs about Hispanic gender imbalance can be ‘offensive’ to and ‘discriminatory’ against the whole of the Hispanic male and female populations (CD1/CS2). This is congruent with findings in social psychology on the reduction of stereotyping and prejudice in that there is often a sense of conflict between egalitarian values and the psychological processes of stereotyping, such as those of idealising the self and demonising the *other* (Monteith & McQueary 2010). The same result was found in CS1 (see Chapter 5); some students exhibited a sense of conflict between citizenship values (inclusion, respect, tolerance) and the psychological process of stereotyping and prejudice. As it was also found in CS1, a few students believed that there is a ‘grain of truth’ in their stereotypes (Taylor in press; also see section on *stereotyping* in Chapter 2) as this piece of data shows:

Sometimes stereotypes end up being true. Such is the case when we read a story like ‘Norma y Ester’. For me a typical Latin American woman is powerless, controlled by men, normally housewives, with no independence or opportunities outside her family or home. The only way these women can have access to the labour market is when they dress provocatively and show their bodies. This stereotype is confirmed by the story. (CD1/CS2)

Students noted that texts such as ‘Norma y Ester’ tend to reinforce preconceived notions of *otherness* due to the portrayal of characters that perpetuate stereotypes:

the text presents a common stereotype, for example, that of Hispanic women being submissive, dominated by men, who agree to dress provocatively to please the male customers in the hair salon. **The problem is that after reading the story, you end up assuming that all Latin American women are subordinate to men, and that Ester’s attempt to murder Víctor represents women’s empowerment and rebellion against gender injustice and imbalance.** (OP2/CS2/Monique) [emphasis added]

As Monique pointed out, the *problem* of reading literary texts like ‘Norma y Ester’ is that *you end up assuming that all Latin Americans* are like the characters in the story, a view shared by others in the class. This demonstrates one of the limitations of a reader-response approach to literature for intercultural learning (Gonçalves Matos 2012; Bredella 1996, 2000; Delanoy 2005) for some students believed that the text was self-sufficient and representative of a whole nation, which often led to uncritical endorsement of cultural attitudes, beliefs and values and a ‘fossilisation’ of stereotypical views. However, an ‘identity focused’ critical pedagogical approach can be used to address this limitation of reader-response theory by challenging and questioning one’s own responses to the literary text, as I shall demonstrate in the next two sections.

6.3 Challenging Stereotypes

This section shows how theoretical notions of identity can assist learners in the process of stereotype deconstruction. So far the data have demonstrated that students view gender in binary oppositions, with dichotomised identities, revealing two opposing aspects. For example, students’ discourses reveal their belief that Hispanic men are powerful, whilst Hispanic women are powerless; or that Hispanic men are chauvinistic and disrespectful, whilst Hispanic women are obedient and submissive. Therefore, I created ‘Intercultural Task 2’ which involved reading the short story through the lens of theoretical notions of identity in an attempt to challenge and deconstruct stereotypes. As we shall see in this section, student response to this task revealed a greater in-depth analysis of the multifaceted nature of identity by moving beyond these stereotypical binaries. As the students engaged in the exercise of finding evidence in the literary text that contradicted the stereotypes embedded in the students’ texts, they developed further perspectives in the process of validating, supporting and justifying their answers, as we shall see later in this section.

As previously noted, by ‘deconstruction’ I mean breaking stereotypes apart for analysis and reflection with a view to reducing bias, and with this aim in mind, students learnt theoretical concepts relating to ‘identity’ as a tool for textual analysis in the process of stereotype deconstruction. The purpose for learning to use such a tool was to develop a ‘self-regulation strategy’ (Monteith *et al.* 1998; Gawronski & Bodenhausen 2006; Rydell & McConnell 2006; Monteith & McQueary 2010) to control prejudice based on stereotyping when confronted with situations in the real world (for further detail see section ‘Reducing Stereotypes’ in

Chapter 3). To this end, students engaged in class discussions, prepared oral presentations and wrote an essay exploring the dynamic nature of gendered identity in the short story 'Norma y Ester' by reading the text against their schemata. The intention was for students to engage in an 'intellectual, deconstructive, textual, and cognitive analytic task' (Luke 2004: 26) so as to learn about the dynamics of identity with a view to applying the same tool to critically analyse their own 'texts' at a later stage. As students engaged in task 2, there appeared to be a gradual understanding that cultural and gender identities are in a permanent state of flux, and that a literary text should not yield to over-generalisations, as these data demonstrate:

it can't be assumed that the characters in the story represent all Hispanics ... We have to open up our minds to new possibilities because **we can't generalise by just looking at one specific case.** Gamarro's story made me aware of the stereotypes I have and **helped me look beyond superficial understandings to explore more complex issues.** (OP3/CS2/Meghan)
[emphasis added]

Víctor is a dirty old man. He's vulgar, chauvinistic and rude. **It would be very simplistic to conclude that all Latin American men are as chauvinistic as he is.** [...] **It would be wrong to conclude after reading 'Norma y Ester' that all men in Latin America behave like Víctor, as individual circumstances and personal situations vary from man to man.** (OP4/CS2/James) [emphasis added]

It is **impossible** to say whether men or women are more powerful in this story. It is **very complex**, as **none of the characters behave in fixed ways throughout the story.** Behaviours and attitudes change all the time, and power shifts constantly depending on the situation. (E19/CS2/Lindsey)
[emphasis added]

Comments such as *we can't generalise by just looking at one specific case or it would be very simplistic / wrong to conclude that after reading 'Norma y Ester' all Latin American men behave like Víctor* indicate some degree of awareness of over-generalisations. Additionally, other observations like *Gamerro's story helped me look beyond superficial understandings to explore more complex issues; individual circumstances and personal situations vary from man to man; and none of the characters behave in fixed ways throughout the story* imply the students' beliefs about their perceived 'simplistic' and 'superficial' understandings and 'wrong' interpretations of the literary text. I take these data as the students suggesting that they need to learn the tools to examine the complexities of identities or a 'self-regulation strategy' to help them move away from stereotypical thinking and reduce prejudice (for further detail on 'self-regulation strategies' see Chapter 3). These tools were theoretical concepts of 'identity', so that students could learn to appreciate the multidimensional fluid nature of identity, and the impact of 'human agency' and 'social action' to enact change *in the hope* that these tools might become part of a 'self-regulation strategy' when acting in the real world for 'self and social transformation'. The next section explores the students' responses to the pedagogical intervention of using an identity approach to the reading of the short story 'Norma y Ester'.

6.3.1 Transposed Binaries

In the process of deconstructing stereotypes, students transposed their stereotypical binaries and constructed new binaries. The empirical data demonstrate that students tended to move from one end of the spectrum to the other, and created new binaries. As the students completed task 2, the pedagogies focused on developing student understanding of the complex phenomenon of gender identities to allow them to move beyond the construction of new binaries. The gradual transformation of the learners' views of power relations became noticeable as they progressed with the task and developed new insights, which they had not been able to do initially. In proving that their stereotypes may be flawed, the students became aware of their fixing of gender roles, whilst fixing them again with new transposed binaries. However, they added new dimensions to their understandings of the gender roles of the fictional characters, as I demonstrate with empirical data in the following sub-sections.

At the outset, the initial consensus was that generally speaking, Hispanic women were submissive, subservient, obedient, fragile and lacking in confidence, as were the two fictional female characters Norma and Ester. In response to task 2, the class concluded that Norma and Ester were far from the powerless females they were initially believed to be, and that their strength lay in their resourcefulness to achieve their objectives. The intellectual effort students made to activate more finely tuned discovery skills in order to analyse the multidimensional nature of gendered identity in the literary text should not be underestimated as I noted in my log of reflections:

It appears that some students struggled to develop further viewpoints and ended transposing the binaries and stayed there without much else to say. However, it was interesting to see how after transposing the binaries, they came up with so much as they applied theoretical notions of 'identity'.
(LoR/12 March 2009)

Even if sometimes students fell into another binary by looking at the other side of the coin - for example, women are powerful and men are powerless – I took this exercise as a step forward in their intercultural learning journey. In this regard, Gonçalves de Veloso e Matos (2007: 155) explains that:

this third space does not dismiss the original binary relationship but presents an opportunity to recombine them starting from the two opposing categories to open new alternatives. Thus, the presence of an Other [...] is a necessary element to trigger cultural dialogue, to help translate knowledge and experience into conscious reflection that ultimately may bring about change.

As stated in Chapter 2, binary oppositions tend to be ideological and ethnocentric and one of the ways to move beyond the binaries is by engaging learners to discuss events or incidents in which a binary opposition is challenged and to provide reflections on and analyses of those moments. In Task 2, during the comparative analysis of the life stories and the literary text, students gained further insights and developed new perspectives which gradually saw beyond

and ignored their stereotypical lens. Students witnessed the contradictory nature of identity as a site of struggle in the evolution of the fictional characters and appeared to open new windows into the story. There now follows an outline of the new transposed binaries and an examination of the new avenues of thought and paths in the students' analysis in response to my critical pedagogical interventions for stereotype deconstruction.

6.3.2 From a 'predatory wolf' to a 'lap dog'

Students witnessed Víctor's transition from a 'predatory wolf' [un lobo feroz] to a 'lap dog' [un perro faldero], in the process of becoming an emotional wreck towards the end of the story. They also observed that Víctor cries like a child, falls at Ester's feet and offers her all of his financial possessions as an attempt to beg for forgiveness. One of the student's contributions illustrates the views of the class:

As I focused on the instances in the characters' behaviours which would contradict my stereotypes, **I gradually noticed a change in the roles that the men and women play in this story.** For example, when Ester enacts revenge and strangles Víctor, she says to him "la pagarás con creces, te vas a arrepentir" (Gamerro 2005: 172). [You'll pay dearly, you'll regret it]. Ester wants, and in fact tries, to kill Víctor. Her words and actions show that Ester gains control and makes her voice heard. **Her behaviour in this instance contradicts my stereotype that Hispanic women accept men's control passively and that Hispanic men are powerful and strong ...** Víctor ends up a weak man ... without his money, he's a nobody ... when Ester appears not to be giving in to his sexual demands, he says "Let's see if you understand it. Everything here is mine, you know ... You even owe me the job, you see, if it wasn't because of me you wouldn't be here. I raise a finger and you go back to the street." (Gamerro 2005: 168). Although before they never spoke about money or power, Víctor introduces it into the conversation because he's fully aware that **his power lies in his money, without it, he's a weak man ...** towards the end of the story, Víctor is under Ester's control and offers her

money because he doesn't know any other way to defend himself. (CD3/CS2)
[emphasis added]

Students witnessed Víctor's fluid and dynamic identity as he adopts a subordinate and vulnerable position half way through the story. The class concluded that the fact that Víctor falls at Ester's feet, cries and begs for forgiveness indicates that the power balance shifts towards Ester, who now gains control and dominates all of the situations until the end of the story. In other words, students gradually came to the understanding that the fictional men and women's identities in the story are permanently being constructed in their interactions. Another student, Gemma, made reference to, what was for her, evidence of Víctor's contradictory identity, the most significant event in the story:

... the act of crying represents a loss of masculinity ... he [Víctor] offers Ester all of his money, his credit and debit cards, that is, the principal source of his power. Accordingly, **Víctor's identity changes radically** as he loses his identity as a sexist rich man who takes advantage of women's vulnerability. This is for me an example of how **Víctor negotiates his identity depending on who he's with. The contradictory nature of his identity came as a shock to me.** (E1/CS2/Laura) [emphasis added]

Additionally, this event in the story was taken by most students as evidence of the stereotype of masculinity in Latin America being challenged and contradicted and of Víctor's identities being formed in response to who they were with, as these data demonstrate:

Here, on page 163 [in 'Norma y Ester'], Víctor says [to Ester] "What do you want? I'll give you what you want" I think this means that he's lost everything, he's lost control ... but I believe **he behaves this way because he's alone with Ester, he's not with his mates.** When he's with his mates, he's totally different. He's sexist, strong and when he talks, he comes over as an evil man, but in this scene, he is all on his own with Ester, and he's

desperate because he doesn't want to die and says things like 'I'll give you what you want' and cries. **He's a totally different man.** Notice what the text says 'crying, reaching out his hands to her like a baby asking for a cuddle' ... He's pathetic! **He's only a macho man when he's with other men!** Ha, ha, ha! (CD3/CS2) [emphasis added]

Víctor becomes an impotent and vulnerable man. He is no longer superior to women. Ester controls him to the point of him crying on the floor, offering Ester all he has in his pockets – money, credit cards, debit cards. (E8/CS2/Debbie) [emphasis added]

These data provide evidence of students' noticing the contradictory and fluid identities of the characters in the story, in a permanent state of flux constantly shifting and changing. Other comments reveal new dimensions of the characters' identities and provide evidence of students' awareness of how the characters bring change and transformation in gender roles; thus moving away from fixed stereotypical notions of gender identity:

In this scene, Víctor loses his masculinity. He cries, begs for forgiveness and kisses Ester's feet. **Ester clearly demonstrates that she is not at all intimidated by Víctor's power.** (OP6/CS2/Kevin) [emphasis added]

Ester calls the back room where she washes men's hair 'piecita' [literal translation 'little room']. 'Piecita' is a positive term of endearment, which denotes the relationship that she has established with that room. It is her space. It is a space where she feels safe. She feels she 'owns' the place. **This is where she exercises her control over men.** The language she uses is indicative of this. There are two phrases she uses to describe men when they enter her 'piecita'. **She says 'sometimes they get shy' and 'if you're quiet, it is worse. Sometimes I do it on purpose'.** These phrases lead us to believe

that she knows how to manage situations in that space. They clearly indicate that she is full of confidence and power. **This is the place where men turn into ‘lap dogs’.** (E17/CS2/Flora) [emphasis added]

Students gained an insight into gender identity negotiation through social interaction and participation. Different aspects that affect Víctor’s vulnerability and sense of security were discussed, whilst behavioural changes and the ways Víctor relates to others under diverse circumstances were analysed. Importantly, in response to task 2, students appreciated both Ester and Victor’s identities being formed in response to who they are with and the context they are in and that they are permanently being reconstructed in their interactions.

6.3.3 From ‘evil’ to ‘loving’

Students pointed out that Norma sees the ‘real’ Víctor – a loving and sweet man who puts on a powerful and *macho* façade at the salon. A student named Fredrik provided further evidence from the literary text by quoting Norma’s words to Ester on page 186:

[quote from ‘Norma y Ester’] You know, Ester, **he [Víctor] was not at all the way I told you.** Deep down inside he is tender, you know, he takes me to the best places, he always asks after my children, sometimes he brings them a present. He has a daughter from his marriage. He promised me that one of these days when he has her, he’ll bring her over so that I can meet her. **Sometimes one misjudges people, not because of what other people say, but because we look at the surface and don’t go deep.** (CD3/CS2) [emphasis added]

In this part of the story, students gained an insight into the human dimension of Víctor - a considerate, affectionate, emotional man who has developed feelings for a woman. They discovered that he is respectful towards Norma, he takes her to the best restaurants in Buenos Aires and treats her like a lady. Víctor is also a father who shows consideration for Norma’s

children. In response to task 2, students provided examples of identities not being unique, lacking inherent characteristics, but fragmented, with many facets and a site of struggle.

Students noted that Víctor's male supremacy is all a vocal façade, which can be gleaned from the linguistic choices he makes when he addresses Ester or talks about his sexual adventures in front of other men. The data illustrate students' views that Víctor undervalues women and boasts loudly about his sexual adventures when he is surrounded by other men. Learners made reference to the social construction of masculinity, and concluded that Víctor's behaviour is due to social pressure to fit into a *macho* role; whilst at other times, it appears to show a 'decent' man, enacting in this way the performative role of gendered identity. This can also be taken as evidence of this character's identity being reconstructed in response to who he is with, and to the context he is in.

The data also indicate that students gained further insights into the multiple dimensions of a male character, whom they had initially defined only as an extremely inconsiderate *machista* (chauvinist). In his essay, a student used the concept of the 'mask' to explain identity negotiation, and explained that 'we wear different masks depending on who we are with'. This undergraduate appropriated the concept of the 'mask' developed by Nobel Prize Italian writer Pirandello of the late 19th century and beginning of 20th, and applied it as a template to understand cultural identities. The idea of wearing a theatrical mask dates back to classical Greek and Roman theatre, where actors wore masks to impersonate characters, and represented the voice or character that the writer created in the literary text.

For this undergraduate, there is no one person underneath the mask, but a fluid mass in a permanent state of change, shaped by a multitude of socio-cultural contexts. Thus, Víctor, initially described as a powerful, disgusting, sexist beast in the main salon with the other male customers, adopts new positionings in the tiny room at the back of the salon, when he is with Ester on his own, or when he dates Norma away from the gaze of other men; thus adopting multifaceted contradictory identities. He explained that:

This new expression of his personality reveals a completely different image of the Víctor we had initially constructed. This new image, **in total opposition** to the initial one, comes in a completely unexpected way and greatly surprises me. **The new information that we gain about his personality does not eliminate our initial viewpoints, but it helps us to reformulate and develop new layers to our understanding of his identity.**
(CD3/CS2) [emphasis added]

The concept of the ‘mask’ proved to be useful for this learner to explain that Víctor wears different masks depending on the socio-cultural context he finds himself in, and who he interacts with. These conditions influence his behaviour and attitudes. Similarly, another final year student, Rebecca revealed her gradual realisation of the transformation that Víctor undergoes from an ‘invincible, degrading man’ to someone who ‘loses all dignity and masculinity enacted by throwing himself onto the floor and begging for Ester’s forgiveness while kissing her feet’. Rebecca pointed out that he ‘physically positions himself in an inferior space and shows how weak and vulnerable he can be’(CD3/CS2). These data are evidence of students’ noticing and explaining that identities are not unique, but fragmented and that they lack inherent characteristics or a coherent core. In other words, identities are a site of struggle.

6.3.4 From ‘powerless’ to ‘powerful’

There is enough evidence to suggest that students deconstructed their stereotypes by developing further viewpoints on the men and women in the story as a result of transposing the binaries. For example, on a first reading, most of the students admitted viewing the women in the story as completely powerless. It was only through the intercultural tasks that encouraged self-questioning that a new dimension to the reading was added, as these data demonstrate:

“Wait a minute” I thought. What is the function of women in this story? and I realised that everything revolves around the women in this story ... when I

read it for the first time it seemed to me that the women were just instruments, but then I realised that they were in fact puppeteers, pulling the strings. On a first reading, without going deep into it, without thinking, it seemed that the women only did what the men wanted. (OP4/CS2/James)

A few students observed that without the women, ‘the hair salon would be a failure, for it is the woman, in this case, Ester, the one who attracts the customers’ (E20/CS2/Jack). It appears that students viewed Ester as the central figure, which everyone else orbited around. Jack added, ‘she possesses what men want. As such, she plays a key role in the hair salon. Therefore, she is powerful’. One student defined the term ‘power’ in relation to the short story:

Power can be defined in many ways. If the definition of ‘power’ is ‘the ability to influence others’, then the power in Gamero’s story lies in the hands of women. (E2/CS2/Johnny)

In the light of this definition, other students provided examples to illustrate the ways women influence men’s behaviours in the story. Some students mentioned that it is obvious throughout the story that women have sexual power over men as can be seen when Ignacio (one of the customers at the hair salon) pretends to faint when he meets Ester for the first time. He openly shows physical attraction for her and appears to be ‘needy’. Other students discovered that sometimes the power also lies in the hands of the women in the story, who use their sexuality through the way they dress to achieve their aims; whilst some of them observed that women exercise their power in the story by choosing what to do with their own lives. To illustrate this point, a student observed that ‘Norma chooses to take Víctor as her lover for financial security; whilst Ester chooses to violently fight the system by attempting murder’ (E17/CS2/Flora). Often the data indicate that the students fell into the other extreme of the spectrum, where female gendered identity undergoes a ‘double fixing’ construction from ‘powerless’ to ‘powerful’.

According to the data, the class were of the opinion that Norma and Ester adapt and manipulate man-made rules and the patriarchal system to their advantage as an instrument to exploit and control men. Thus, they develop strategies to dominate and to survive in such a society - Ester manages to strangle Víctor and enact revenge on the unfair treatment her best friend received, whilst Norma finds financial security by having Víctor as her lover. Given the fact that students were equipped with theoretical notions of identity construction, students were able to theorise the fluid nature of gendered identity in the story, as this student illustrates with his observation that:

the story can be described as **a power struggle** between men and women [...] **power has got a lot to do with identity. It cannot be physically owned, but is constantly negotiated.** We see this in the story and in the change of identities that the characters undergo [...] as the story unfolds we see how the power balance gravitates towards Ester [...] in my opinion, Ester's behaviour produces a change in Víctor's identity because she makes a conscious decision to take power and stop being a victim. (E2/CS2/Johnny) [emphasis added]

Johnny used theoretical understandings pertaining 'power' and 'identity negotiation' and provided an example to illustrate these notions. In relation to 'power', one of the students noted that subordination is not limited to male supremacy, but is also evident in Ester's relationship with her best friend, Norma, who is portrayed in the story as being more successful in life:

This story should not be read as a story that confirms our stereotypes. It should be read as a story about human relations, identity negotiation and power struggle. For example, Norma is married with two children, and has Víctor as her lover. The fact that Norma managed to have Víctor as her lover positions her as superior to Ester. She *does* know how to control men and readers are led to believe that 'invincible Víctor' would never date a girl like Ester. These aspects demonstrate that Norma is viewed as superior to Ester. Ester appears to accept this superiority, shows admiration for Norma and

imitates her decisions, like leaving high school earlier than she should. Norma even refers to herself as Ester's 'mamita' (ironic for 'mother') who sorts Ester's life out [...] **All of these examples demonstrate how individuals build relationships based on power and take different identities based on power.** (E15/CS2/Steffi) [emphasis added]

Steffi probably suggested that reading the short story from a stereotypical lens would probably obscure the complexity of human relations, and provided several examples to illustrate her point of *individuals building relations based on power and taking different identities based on power*. She engaged in an exercise of interpreting characters and their relationships, looking at power and examining how power affects the ways they relate to each other. Therefore, it can be argued that, pedagogically speaking, Steffi was developing a 'self-regulation strategy' to reduce stereotyping and bias. This strategy involved Steffi learning to focus on individuals, rather than on the social groups they belong to, to develop the ability to critically analyse the elements presented to her, rather than use her preconceived notions to come to a superficial understanding of the story. It can therefore be concluded that such a strategy can be developed by reading a literary text to be later applied in real life situations in order to self-regulate prejudice and stereotypical thinking.

6.3.5 From 'passive' to 'active'

Students argued that Ester is positioned as inferior on many levels, passively accepts men's decisions and is labelled as the 'useless and deficient *other*'. She is told by men what clothes and what colour make-up to wear, appears to lack strength of character and self-confidence even to ask when she should expect to receive her monthly pay. In addition, there seems to be no apparent desire to fight for her rights, to be respected and valued as a human being. Therefore, Ester projects an image of a submissive passive woman:

Ester appears to be a dominated woman. Through the use of vulgar and obscene language, men belittle and underestimate her. It seems that the only

reason she is valued for is her body. This is degrading. The fact that she is only allowed to wash men's hair, but not to cut it also shows how little regard the men in the story have of her. Ester is only allowed to leave her little back room where she washes men's hair to go to the main salon to sweep the floor. She is underestimated in the sense that it appears that it is not worth training her to become a haircutter as she is believed not to be capable to learn the job. (E3/CS2/Sophie) [emphasis added]

By contrast, some students observe Ester's transformation from a passive into an active agent of change. Steffi, for example, writes in her essay:

Readers witness Ester's reconstruction of her identity. She rejects the man-created world [...] and chooses to violently oppose the system by strangling Víctor [...] the new Ester is much more self-confident, takes the initiative and subverts gender stereotypes by not submitting to male domination. The scene in which she is washing Víctor's hair from a standing position, whilst Víctor is sitting and calling her 'dumb, slow and without a future' is evidence of the process of her identity reconstruction. As Víctor instructs her to sit on his lap to touch her up, Ester turns him down and chooses not to give in to his sexual desires by sinking his head in the basin full of soapy water. This torture scene in which Ester uses a piece of wire to tie his head to the sink around his neck shows that Ester does not feel in the least intimidated by Víctor and what he represents. Through her actions, she expresses for the first time in the story her rights as a woman, enacting in this way female emancipation. At this moment, **Víctor loses his masculinity** – he starts crying, begs for forgiveness and even kisses her feet [...] Ester does not succumb to male domination and leaves the room victorious after having won a battle against a man, who she has managed to belittle completely [...] **Ester's change illustrates how individuals can adopt different positions and, through them, negotiate diverse identities in a dynamic process.** (E15/CS2/Steffi) [emphasis added]

This piece of data can be interpreted on two levels. Firstly, despite the fact that Ester is viewed as a woman who subverts gender roles in the strangulation scene, it is interesting to note the absence of data relating to her violent response to male domination. No-one discussed Ester's character as a potential murderer; although one student in class openly condemned the practice of attempting to kill someone as a way to improve social conditions and gender inequality. This appeared to be agreed by other students in a class discussion as a socially unacceptable practice. In CS1 (Chapter 5) the short story 'Norma y Ester' acts as catharsis and relieves frustrations in a non-destructive way for a student named Hasina, who finds relief and happiness in Ester's actions, and manages to merge fiction and reality in an in-between space where she metaphorically enacts revenge on abusive men through a fictional character. However, Hasina never mentions the violent means Ester uses to enact social change and justice.

Secondly, this piece of data can be taken as an example of how theories of identity construction can assist learners in their process of deconstructing stereotypes. Concepts, such as the coexistence of a multiplicity of identities within cultural realities and individuals, can provide opportunities for problematising worldviews and reducing over-generalisations. Steffi described the scene in symbolic terms, with power relations being metaphorically represented by body posture and positioning. Whilst Ester is washing Víctor's hair, his eyes are shut. This instance was taken by a few students as a sign of confidence and authority. 'He can relax and trust that things will be done his way' (OP4/CS2/James), certain student commented. Another student observed that:

The power balance shifts towards women in the tiny room at the back.

Ester's standing position washing Víctor's hair places her as superior. Ester appears to be physically dominating Víctor. While Víctor's head tilts back into the basin to have his hair washed, his neck is exposed, placing him in a weak and vulnerable position. His eyes are closed and the crowd of other men supporting him are somewhere else. **These factors contribute to place him in an even more powerless position.** When Víctor tries to pull her down to a more vulnerable and subordinate position by sitting her on his lap, **Ester**

resists and acts violently. Ester's reaction takes Víctor by surprise and he completely loses control of the situation. (E2/CS2/Johnny) [emphasis added]

Here Johnny explained an instance in which Ester was capable of becoming an agent of social change through her actions. Other students also commented on Ester's capability of bringing about change and transformation in gender roles, thus moving away from fixed stereotypical notions of gender identity. For example, they observed the symbolic power conferred to Ester in her standing position, which empowers her to resist Víctor's attempt to bring her down to his level by sitting her on his lap. As can be gleaned from the data, students experienced undergoing a process of deconstruction of gendered identities as they opened windows to new viewpoints through the lens of identity construction. This exercise can be taken as an important step towards crossing borders away from stereotyping, essentialising and *othering* towards understanding complex phenomena.

6.4 Conclusions

The operational research question that CS2 sought to answer was *when taught with an 'identity-focused' critical pedagogical approach, how do students deconstruct stereotypes?*. With this question in mind, I created two intercultural tasks; the first task aimed to raise awareness of stereotypical thinking and bias, and the second one used an identity approach to critical pedagogy. As previously noted, it was necessary to create task 1 so that students became aware of the stereotypes that needed to be deconstructed through a process of *conscientização*. The data gathered as students completed these tasks indicated evidence of awareness-raising and reinforcement of stereotypes in response to task 1, and transposition of stereotypical binaries and development of further viewpoints through the lens of 'identity' in response to task 2. As can be gleaned from the data, in the deconstruction process, students tended to transpose the stereotypical binaries and create new ones, as hereby juxtaposed and summarised in the tables below:

Table 9 Transposed Binaries

Víctor

On the first reading	After the intercultural tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong and powerful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • weak and powerless
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • domineering chauvinist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the women turn the tables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unapologetic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • begs for forgiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inconsiderate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considerate & generous
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sees women as sex objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emotional & affectionate with women

Ester

On the first reading	After the intercultural tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • weak and powerless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong and powerful
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dresses provocatively to please men 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • powerful through her sexuality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • powerless in society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agent of social change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • submissive & obedient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploitative & manipulative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • passive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • active

In the process of deconstructing their stereotypes, students came to a gradual understanding of identities being permanently constructed in interaction. For example, students witnessed the contradictory and fluid identities of the characters in the story, negotiated in relation to other identities and constantly changing. In addition, some students found evidence in the text of instances in which identities are produced, challenged and resisted. They argued, with supporting evidence from the short story, that identities are not unique, but fragmented, lack inherent characteristics or a coherent core, and are a site for struggle. Students adopted more

of a critical attitude by posing compelling questions such as *'how come Ester is produced as submissive and subservient?'* and *'what are the conditions that allow a young woman to be in the position of a powerless, obedient and weak individual within the context of her work?'*. In attempting to find the answers, students built a picture of how Ester's 'cultural reality' is being formed in response to the company she finds herself in (Holliday 2011). Students witnessed how Ester is capable of becoming an agent of social change through her radical - and as agreed in class, socially unacceptable - actions, which destabilise the power balance and brings about a transformation in the gender roles played in the story.

Further, as students deconstructed their stereotypes using theoretical concepts of 'identity', they became aware of the influence of *self-other* relations. Learners witnessed how the selves are viewed by *others* in the process of identity formation as embedded in social relations, and examined the social representations of gender positions within the context of the salon. Students observed that the men in the story 'situate themselves' as stronger than women, which lead Norma and Ester to 'act through' these dynamic social representations. This situation shapes the interactions between the characters in the story and students witnessed how Ester's identity is produced by the men in the story; how she gradually challenges and resists this positioning, and eventually engages in a process of (re)negotiation and (re)construction of her own self.

The empirical data also indicate that students developed further viewpoints as they themselves positioned outside their centre to enter a different, and at times uncomfortable, space. In other words, they engaged in a process of reflection, 'decentring' from their own 'taken-for-granted world' (Byram and Fleming 1998: 7) by moving out of their 'normal' and 'familiar' thought processes - 'mental structure' or 'schemata' - to read the story from another angle. This exercise, necessary for intercultural understanding, was vital in the process of opening new *windows* on further perspectives on the roles played by the men and women in the story. As learners 'decentred' and read the story from a different angle, they moved away from the dichotomous practice of *othering* towards a more complex multi-dimensional understanding that encompasses shades of grey. In this way, students learned an important lesson in intercultural education – that these selves are real at this point of time for the men and women in the story, and that as intercultural mediators (Byram 2008), sliding out

of monolithic, rigid, frozen and essentialising views of cultural identity is a desirable learning goal.

As it has been demonstrated in this chapter, theoretical understandings of the dynamics of identity helped students to develop tools and the metalanguage for analysis as an ‘intellectual, deconstructive, textual, and cognitive analytic task, to use Luke’s terms. Experimental social psychology has found that stereotypes can be altered through different mental reasoning systems (Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2006; Rydell and McConnell 2006); therefore I speculated that the newly acquired tools would act as a ‘self-regulation strategy’ to critically evaluate intercultural experiences in the real world. Or as previously noted, and to use McLaren’s words, it was hoped that ‘an understanding of the language of the self’ would help students ‘better negotiate with the world’. It was hoped that by developing a ‘self-regulation strategy’, students would change their attitudes and reduce stereotypes so that they could ‘begin to forge the basis of *social transformation*: the building of a better world’ (McLaren 2009: 80). However, what students had not yet fully appreciated through the pedagogies implemented in this study thus far, is the oppressive nature of stereotyping and the damaging effect it can have on individuals. To this end, the pedagogical model outlined in Chapter 3 included a description of students’ own experiences of being *othered* during their year-abroad placements, with a subsequent analysis of these experiences through the lens of identity. This aspect will be addressed in the following chapter.

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5, I demonstrated empirically (CS1) that through a reader-response approach to the short story ‘Norma y Ester’, students related the themes of the literary text to their own personal experiences abroad. An analysis of these life stories (referred to as the students’ ‘texts’) revealed that students viewed Hispanics in stereotypical terms by fixing and essentialising them and did not seem to see beyond their dualist thought and binary construction of the Hispanic peoples. Furthermore, the data indicated that learners dichotomised national cultures as ‘us’ and ‘them’ in a process of *othering*. From the results of CS1 it became apparent that the pedagogies necessitated the implementation of a strategy to deconstruct stereotypes. Chapter 6 empirically tested (CS2) such a pedagogical tool for the development of a ‘self-regulation strategy’ to control bias and stereotyping, and searched for evidence of students’ moving away from binaries and from the rigid, static, frozen conception of territorially bound cultures. To this end, students were encouraged to analyse the ‘cultural realities’ of the fictional characters through the lens of identity with a view to developing a ‘self-regulation strategy’ that would act as a ‘mental reasoning system’ (Gawronski and Bodenhausen 2006; Rydell and McConnell 2006) to control bias and stereotypical thinking when acting in the real world .

In the development of this strategy, the data demonstrated evidence of awareness-raising of stereotypical thinking, and reinforcement of stereotypical binaries whilst creating new ones by transposing them. In the process of transposing the binaries, students witnessed the contradictory and fluid identities of the characters in the story, found evidence in the text of instances in which identities are produced, challenged and resisted and developed further perspectives that went beyond the conception of cultures being geographically bound. As stated in Chapter 6, the purpose for the development of a ‘self-regulation strategy’ based on identity was to help students reduce stereotyping and control bias, as a way of developing criticality on an ‘intellectual’ level, as Luke (2005) would argue, so that they can ‘begin to forge the basis of *social transformation*’ (McLaren 2009: 80). However, understanding the dynamics of identity was insufficient to help students fully understand and feel the oppressive

nature of stereotyping, the harmful and damaging effects it can have on individuals, or in McLaren’s words, how ‘problematic’ this type of knowledge can be. Therefore, this aspect is addressed in Chapter 7.

In this chapter, I present the findings of Case Study 3 (CS3) as the students looked at their own experiences of being stereotyped during their year-abroad placements in order to answer the third operational research question in this PhD study:

When taught with a Critical ‘Pedagogy-of-the-Oppressed’ approach, how do students describe and ‘name’ their experiences of being stereotyped?

CS3 involved a different group of undergraduates to both CS1 and CS2 who, in the 2009 Autumn Semester, attended two of the seminars I led at the time, entitled ‘Interculturality’ and ‘Academic Writing’. The same students attended both seminars. The table below provides some information about the class composition:

Table 10 Case Study 3 Research Participants

Case study 3	Number of students	Gender
Autumn2009 (Weeks 3, 4 & 5)	31	7 male 24 female

Data for Case Study 3 (CS3) was gathered through class discussions (CD), oral presentations (OP) and essays (E). All of the students’ names in this study are pseudonyms.

The genesis of this PhD study (see Chapter 1) encapsulates the ideological standpoint of the teaching throughout this research, for there I express my frustration at some of the prejudices held by students about Hispanics and my difficulties in dealing with the deconstruction of stereotypes effectively in my teaching. During CS1 and CS2, students equally showed their annoyance about men (like Víctor) stereotyping women as inferior; and by condemning the practice of objectifying women as the sexualised *other*, they were able to see the workings of stereotyping and prejudice and their impact upon others. In this process, they empathised

with the female characters in the literary text in their frustrations to escape the oppressive nature of stereotyping and prejudice. The pedagogies implemented in CS3 aimed to further raise awareness of the oppressive nature of stereotyping and appreciate the impact that this type of oppression can have as students found themselves the subjects being prejudiced against. The guiding principle underlying the teaching was to show how the question of stereotyping (being the perpetrator and being the object of them) is one way of developing ‘critical cultural awareness’ in language students in (British) universities, an issue I shall discuss in greater detail in the next chapter.

As I stated in Chapter 1, ‘oppression’ refers to any form of social injustice, whereby people are inhibited to exercise their capacities and to express their needs, thoughts and feelings, with marginalisation, powerlessness, discrimination and *othering* being perhaps some of the most dangerous facets of oppression (for a discussion on oppression, see Young 2000). Chapter 7 provides an outline of an intercultural task implemented in CS3 to raise awareness of the oppressive nature of stereotyping. The teaching described in Chapter 7 took place within an oral seminar on ‘Interculturality’ and a seminar on ‘Academic Writing’, and given my desire to deal with stereotypes and develop critical thinking and the fact that the same students attended both courses, I took the opportunity to develop my teaching inspired by my Critical Pedagogy approach in both seminars.

The ideology underlying the pedagogies developed for CS3 lies in the creation of a space for students to voice their own annoyance at being stereotyped by others. Metaphorically speaking, the teaching provides students with a ‘mirror’ to see themselves through the eyes of Hispanics, and in this process, articulate the oppression suffered by being biased against. As the students narrated their stories of being subjected to stereotypical thinking in Spain and Mexico, they spoke of their stories of resistance to stereotypical oppression, of discrimination, marginalisation and isolation as they critically reflected on their experiences of being positioned as the ‘foreign’ *other* by Hispanics. Chapter 7 categorises these stories under four dominant discourses relating to the criteria the students perceived they were being discriminated against by Hispanics, as follows (1) nationality; (2) clothing and physical appearance; (3) gender; and (4) foreign language. These students’ discourses are analysed and theorised using frameworks developed in Chapter 2 and 3. However, rather than forcing

data to fit into a predetermined theory, I started with the data, deriving the categories from the areas I was interested in, in an attempt to answer the research question (for further detail about data analysis in this study, see Content Analysis in Chapter 4).

As previously mentioned, this chapter relates personal experiences of being *othered* so that they can act as *mirrors* on the students' complex and contradictory identities in their new positioning as the 'oppressed'. They also reveal students' struggle to integrate into new societies through the use of Spanish as a mediating tool. I sought to answer the research question by collecting data as students completed an intercultural task aimed at describing experiences of being stereotyped by Hispanics. Since the task focused on the Year Abroad, it was important to locate this part of the thesis within that phenomenon and to review existing research and literature on year-abroad experiences for language learners in British universities with specific reference to stereotyping.

7.2 Residence Abroad

Residence abroad involves spending part of a student's degree at a foreign university with the aim of improving language competence as well as academic, personal, intercultural and employability skills:

The term 'Residence Abroad' reflects the British practice of including within a Modern Languages or other degree an extended period of residence in a country whose language one wishes to learn. The phrase 'Study Abroad', widely used in the research literature, reflects North American practice, whereby students go abroad in groups, often accompanied by home-institution Faculty (staff), and follow formal study - including language study - in the target language (TL) country. Other labels (*séjour à l'étranger*, *Auslandsaufenthalt*) suggest a short and provisional immersion, whereas UK students typically have to deal with living for an extended period in circumstances akin to those of local native speakers [...] Thanks to the EU's successive Joint Study Programme (1976), ERASMUS (1987) and SOCRATES (1995, renewed 2000-2006), over a million European students

have now spent part of their degree in one of over 30 participating countries
(Coleman, J., LLAS paper)

Coleman's (1997) research on residence abroad indicates that the main gains lie in improving language proficiency, although there is considerable individual variation. Other, more recent work (Coleman & Parker 2001; Roberts, Byram & Barro *et al.* 2001; Coleman 2009) on the intercultural dimension of the language curriculum has stressed the importance of preparing undergraduates for the experience of studying and living abroad. More recently still, employability skills have been found to be of great value through residence abroad (Coleman, in preparation). A number of projects investigating the benefits of the year abroad experience have been undertaken, like the Learning and Residence Abroad (LARA), the Residence Abroad Project (RAPPORT) and the Lancaster's Interculture Project (ICP). Two of these websites (LARA and ICP) are still available today.

The Learning and Residence Abroad Project (LARA) (1997 – 2001) was funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to carry out a programme of developmental work designed to encourage the spread of best practice across the HE sector in residence abroad for modern language degree students. LARA identified key issues relating to residence abroad, which became sub-groups, one of them being 'intercultural learning'. Within this sub-group, LARA's work developed an ethnography programme based on the idea that students will benefit more from their experience abroad if they undertake an ethnographic project using anthropological research methods. The aim underpinning this practice was to understand cultural practices of others by participating in a group's way of life and develop language learners as ethnographers.

RAPPORT developed the following intercultural learning objectives (Coleman & Parker 2001: 137-141) for the year-abroad experience to underpin year-abroad preparation, curriculum development, academic work while abroad, assessment and staff development:

- amalgam of knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, skills, behaviours
- awareness of relativity of cultures - including one's own
- recognition that culture is a social construct
- cognitive *and* affective learning

- ethnographic skills allowing observation without misunderstanding, objectivity free of ethnocentrism
- inter-personal skills allowing adaptation to multiple cultural milieux, respecting local values without abandoning one's own
- work-related: ability to function in new linguistic/cultural environment

One of the ways it has been suggested assessment can be carried out is through a learning contract with personal objectives set out before departure and monitored regularly, and assessed through a report or oral debriefing upon return.

The ICP (1997-2000) examined the obstacles which hinder students' intercultural competence during their year-abroad experiences with a view to developing teaching materials to prepare students for the intercultural experience of residence in a foreign country. One of these obstacles was found to be stereotyping. Hall & Toll's (1999: 9) report on 'Raising Intercultural Awareness in preparation for periods of residence abroad' outline the aims and objectives of such preparation, where they highlight the importance of the ability to 'recognise and understand the implications of stereotyping and the nature of counterproductive stereotypes'. As Hall (1997) observes, there is a general belief that language students just pick up intercultural skills during their year-abroad experiences. However, Cormeraie (1995) and Coleman (1996; 1997; 1998) found that a large number of students during their period of residence abroad tend to reinforce national stereotypes leading to a less sympathetic view of the people in the host country. Further, Cormeraie (1998) asserts that there is a dangerous tendency in modern language teaching to present cultures in ways that develop ethnocentric attitudes and reinforce stereotypes and polarities. In the sub-project report for the ICP, Toll (2000: 3) notes that:

Whilst many institutions run preparation courses ranging greatly in duration and intensity, it is clear that many HE language teachers fail to make the distinction between learning about another culture and acquiring intercultural competence. Cormeraie (1998) underlines a dangerous tendency in modern language teaching to view "Culture 2" from an ethnocentric perspective and states categorically : "Teaching **about** other cultures as a strategy for reducing prejudice does not work. Nor does it address the issue of cultural bias which can be detected in those selected aspects of the other culture that teachers

ethnocentrically choose to indict or advocate in their course reinforcing in so doing stereotypes and polarities”.

The ICP developed pedagogical tasks based on language students’ experiences during and after residence abroad. As an example, Jo’s experience in France is transcribed below as an illustration of a critical event used for the development of tasks. Jo was a female research participant in the ICP, and her experience echoes the type of data I have gathered for this PhD research:

"If you are female, you have to be really careful what you wear. If you come from Britain, you are used to being able to wear short skirts and vest tops without being hassled. There's no way you can wear things like that here if you don't want blokes approaching you every 100 metres down the street. I know a couple of people who have been grabbed in the street by strange blokes who have run off. French blokes won't hesitate in asking you out for a coffee after having said "hello" to you in the street, and when they realise you are foreign they are even worse. I never really realised how much I would miss British lads! French women don't really realise or understand - they only wear tops up to their necks and long skirts or trousers. According to them, if you wear a low-cut top, you are encouraging men, and the only reason you might wear a low-cut top is that you want men to ogle you."

The ICP presents students’ experiences such as Jo’s as teaching resources for analysis of stereotypical thinking embedded in the discourse, for example Jo’s categorical use of ‘they’ to refer to French men and women collectively or Jo’s assumption that all French women are of the same opinion. Furthermore, Jo’s prejudice against French women by blaming them for not seeing things her way and her strong sense of nationalism in her longing for ‘British lads’ were viewed as teaching resources for reflection on ethnocentric worldviews. The ICP saw these experiences as having the potential for the development of good intercultural tasks, with the aim of exploring the discourse of stereotype and nationalism, recognise behaviour that

may affect integration, and consider clothing as a semiotic resource that conforms to social and cultural values.

Examples of activities designed based on this vignette included reading Jo's extract, considering Jo's feelings, and what she should have done to avoid feeling this way, in addition to analysing her discourse like the use of pronouns 'you', 'I', 'them' and 'they'. Tasks also involved asking students to rate, on a ten point scale from 'false' to 'absolutely true', the validity of the comments Jo makes about 'French blokes', 'British lads' and 'French women', discussing why and asking students if they have any anecdotal evidence which might disprove Jo; and finally asking students to 'tidy up' Jo's extract to make it into a *valid* piece of advice for students going abroad. To do this, students need to engage in an exercise in which they reflect on their own discourses and commonsense assumptions and rephrase language to reflect tolerance and a desire to understand the difference in dress code; properly contextualise incidents and remove counterproductive, invalid stereotyping. This process of reconstructing each sentence according to these criteria aims to raise awareness of judgemental elements in one's own discourse. Pedagogical tasks to prepare students for their year abroad experience include searching on the ICP databases for evidence of attitudes and incidents of stereotyping, looking at the self by unpacking taken-for-granted assumptions, ethnocentric attitudes and prejudiced behaviour and interacting with other foreigners to find out whether they have stereotypes about the British.

In the context of increasing internationalisation and globalisation, since 1998 Coleman has stressed the importance of employability skills for language students as a valued intercultural competence within the context of residence abroad. For Coleman (1998) the 'ability to operate professionally in a foreign context' should be one of the key aims and objectives of the year-abroad experience. It has been noted that published manuals and handbooks to prepare individuals for the business world in work contexts abroad tend to reinforce stereotypes. Advice such as 'Germans are punctual' and 'the French like formality' have the potential to freeze-frame stereotypes, perpetuate social myths and increase prejudice rather than develop 'critical cultural awareness' (Byram 1997; Guilherme 2002) or sensitivity to diversity in multilingual and multicultural work contexts. With Coleman's aim of developing employability skills in mind, I created a pedagogical task based on students' year-abroad placements to address this objective. One of the ways in which Coleman's postulation of

developing the ‘ability to operate professionally in a foreign context’ can be achieved is through reflection on students’ experiences abroad. Therefore, the teaching outlined in this chapter aims to describe and ‘name’ students’ own experiences of being the objects of prejudice. Stereotypical thinking and biased attitudes prevent a democratic engagement in today’s globalised world; therefore, developing the ability to recognise, describe and ‘name’ discriminatory ideologies and practices can be taken as a valued employability competence for a future less unequal multicultural workplace. The following section describes this task.

7.3 Intercultural Task

The task involved students describing their own experiences of being *othered*, by retelling critical incidents based on their personal experiences of being stereotyped during their year-abroad placement. In the ‘Academic Writing’ seminar, students were required to write a reflective essay critically exploring an intercultural aspect of their residence abroad, such as the examination of a critical incident in which they were subjected to stereotyping by Hispanics. The oral presentations and class discussions were based on the same topic and took place in the ‘Interculturality’ seminar. All of the oral presentations were video-recorded, whilst the class discussions were audio-recorded. Transcriptions of these data took the form of summaries, verbatim transcripts or students’ scripts of their presentations. I also held a few private tutorials with students in my office, which were digitally audio-recorded, with relevant portions transcribed verbatim. Through these data gathering methods, I collected students’ personal experiences of being the objects and victims of stereotypical thinking and prejudiced attitudes. The seminars revolved around the development of viewpoints and arguments for their essays, and notions such as ‘stereotyping’, ‘essentialism’, ‘*othering*’, ‘discrimination’, ‘exclusion’ and ‘marginalisation’ were discussed in class with a view to being used as metalanguage to ‘name’ their own experiences (for a discussion of these concepts, see Chapter 2). The following table summarises the portion of the pedagogical model outlined in Chapter 3 that was empirically tested in this case study:

Table 11 Case Study 3 Pedagogical Model

	AIMS	LEARNING OUTCOMES	TEACHING APPROACHES	TASKS
Deconstructing Stereotypes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying a ‘Pedagogy of Identity’ to the literary text and the students’ ‘texts’ • Changing attitudes and behaviours for self and social transformation • Becoming more human by learning to reduce prejudice and bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recognise instances where one’s own stereotypes are challenged • To analyse one’s own ‘texts’ and those of others using theoretical notions of ‘identity’ • To propose alternative viewpoints to those initially formulated • To evaluate commonsense assumptions in one’s own texts • To identify and describe instances of having been stereotyped 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning the ‘dynamics of identity’ as tools for textual analysis and stereotype deconstruction • Reading the literary and students’ ‘texts’ through the lens of identity • Describing personal experiences of being <i>othered</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students reread the literary text through the lens of ‘identity’, engaged in class discussions, delivered oral presentations and wrote an essay • Students described their own experiences of being <i>othered</i> during their year-abroad placements through class discussions, oral presentations and essays • Students analysed their own experiences of alterity through the lens of identity <p style="text-align: right;">CS3</p>

To complete this task, students drew on their own ‘bodily experiences’ of being *othered*. As reviewed in Chapter 2, Luke’s (2005: 26-27) ‘sense of the critical’ involves the ‘bodily experience of oppression, of alterity’:

for the critical to happen, there must be some actual dissociation from one’s available explanatory texts and discourses – a denaturalization and discomfort and “making the familiar strange” [...] Perhaps, as Freire would argue, this is easier for those who have been **the objects of symbolic and physical violence**, for those who have been **materially Othered**, for those for whom

the normalized pedagogical site for the construction of the habitus feels unnatural [...] In order to analytically and discursively construct Otherness, difference and alternative pathways, strategies and schemata, **must one have been Othered?** Does having **the bodily experience of oppression, of alterity**, enable a ticket to ride to the analytically, deconstructively critical? [...] Freire's point was that the experience of oppression could only be translated into action through a process of externalization and analysis that began with **naming** and reading the world, including the sources and practices of one's own oppression [...] So the bodily experience of having been the object of power remains just that until it is rendered coherent through **naming**, through **problematicization**, and, indeed, through **textual analysis** and the use of **analytic metalanguage** [...] we can and should ask how and whether it is possible to teach the critical to those who have not had the experience of being Othered? Indeed, to what extent does the critical, without the **biographical experience of having been the object of power and violence**, become a pro forma or indeed formal analysis and renaming of the world, a parsing of design, or mastery of text deconstruction and reconstruction? To what extent does ideology critique stay, indeed, just that – an **intellectual exercise** lacking a translation into embodied action that might disrupt, interrupt, or transform the fields in question? [emphasis added]

For Luke, having had the 'bodily experience of oppression', of 'alterity', of being 'materially *othered*', enables individuals to be *critical*. He contends that 'the biographical experience of having been the object of power and violence' is a pre-requisite for transforming an abstract, theoretical and analytical conception – what Luke terms an 'intellectual exercise' - into a real *lived* experience. Furthermore, Luke asserts that 'the bodily experience of having been the object of power remains just that' until it is named, problematised and critically reflected upon through 'textual analysis and the use of analytic metalanguage'. Luke (2005: 26-28) advocates the 'use of analytic metalanguage' as a pre-requisite to become 'critical' in 'textual analysis' and speaks of a 'doubling' experience, or an 'out-of-body experience'; i.e. an experience of being an 'onlooker' of our own 'bodily experiences' of being *othered* for the purpose of 'naming' the oppressive nature of stereotyping:

a sense of **being beside oneself or outside of oneself** in another epistemological, discourse, and political space than one typically would inhabit. This is a kind of **distantiation** that entails the capacity **to watch oneself watching without slipping into the infinite regress of ontologically ungrounded perception** [...] So the bodily experience of having been the object of power remains just that until it is rendered coherent through **naming**, through **problematicization**, and, indeed through **textual analysis** and **the use of metalanguage – the “doubling” discourses that name and rename experience and the social and physical world**: indeed, that **name** and **rename** knowledge and social relations themselves [...] This remains the basis for a very different sense of the critical: not one of abstraction, of distance, of doubling in a logico-analytic, scientific-expository sense, or of stepping back via complex linguistic metalanguage, but **the out-of-body experience of watching oneself watch oneself as an object of power and naming myself as such**. Everyone who has been a relatively hapless object of racialized, colored and classed, and gendered and sexualized power knows this. [emphasis added]

The ‘doubling’ experience that Luke refers to, involves ghosting or shadowing ourselves, as if there were two of us out of phase, almost occupying the same space – one is the red-blooded, hot-headed emotive human, and the other one is the intellectual, who rises above and becomes detached from their base instincts. In this ‘doubling of the world’, in addition to having the ‘bodily experience’ of being *othered*, Luke contends that we need to have the ‘out-of-body experience’ of alterity. This is what he means by ‘being beside oneself or outside of oneself’ and ‘watching oneself watch oneself’. In a sense, we become bifocal, i.e. intellectuals who can ‘name’ and ‘rename’ the world without letting our emotions dictate our thinking. For Luke, as we distance ourselves from the ‘bodily experience’ of being *othered*, we can then think in a coherent manner without our judgement being clouded by our emotions. As we ‘double’ the world, we keep the animal within ourselves caged and have the ‘out-of-body experience’ that he talks about. It is at this point that we can then allow the metalanguage to come to the fore to be expressed, to rename ‘experience’, ‘knowledge’ and

‘social relations’. This is, in essence, what Luke means by a ‘very different sense of the critical’.

Therefore, Luke’s take on the ‘critical’ involves not only the ‘bodily experience’ of alterity, but also the ‘out-of-body experience’ of critical analysis through the ‘use of metalanguage’. This ‘out-of-body experience’ involves the ‘oppressed’ experiencing the condition of ‘double consciousness’ (Fanon 1952, 1967; DuBois 1965, 1990), by stepping outside and standing outside of themselves in situations in which they are being *othered*. It means ‘watching oneself’ while it is happening and being able to ‘name’ the experience. Luke (personal communication, 9 August 2012) notes that the ability to step outside of oneself to ‘watch oneself’ is a kind of ‘psychological defence, but also a realisation of alterity in a dominant society’. In practical terms, for Luke this is something that can occur ‘in moments of invisibility, harassment, physical and verbal abuse, discrimination, i.e. ‘bodily experiences’ that are quite distinctive and different from privileged classes reading and acquiring critique’ engaging in ‘an intellectual, deconstructive, textual, and cognitive analytic task’.

Luke’s statement thus, becomes the theoretical justification for the development of this intercultural task in CS3 and for the third operational research question in this PhD thesis. The supposed ‘Centre’ (UK-based, mostly British students) is now positioned – only if temporarily – in the Periphery (residence abroad) and speaks from the margins as students describe their experiences of being the objects of prejudice and bias. The ‘Centre’ can now have the ‘bodily experience’ of alterity and can ‘feel’ the workings of stereotyping. The significance of Luke’s statement is that a Pedagogy of the Oppressed can speak to both, the ‘oppressed’ and the ‘oppressors’, although it may be hard to imagine the students who participated in this study as being the ‘oppressed’, given the fact that most of them came from wealthy, affluent backgrounds and were Europe/West/Centre-based; therefore supposedly belonging to the dominant group. I wondered whether it was possible for these students not to ever have been ‘oppressed’ – or *othered* . I speculated that their experience during their year abroad, when they would be in a more ‘strange’ situation than at any previous time, might have given them the ‘bodily experience of oppression, of alterity’ Luke considers a crucial condition for being ‘critical’.

Although these students may be typically thought of as the ‘oppressors’, this case study provides evidence of the tensions, contradictions and struggles of their identities as they relate to situations during their year abroad placements as being the ‘oppressed’. Luke’s theory when applied to year abroad experiences makes evident an aspect of residence abroad in the UK which has not been adequately researched or theorised before. Therefore, an improved understanding of this aspect of the residence abroad experience is another contribution that this thesis makes to knowledge. The next sections provide a detailed analysis of the data in response to the intercultural task of describing and ‘naming’ students’ ‘bodily experiences of oppression, of alterity’ during their periods of residence abroad in a Spanish-speaking country. The students’ experiences are categorised under four dominant discourses relating to the criteria the students perceived they were being discriminated against by Hispanics, as follows (1) nationality; (2) clothing and physical appearance; (3) gender; and (4) foreign language.

7.4 Nationality

Many students narrated their stories of being stereotyped because of their nationality during their experiences abroad. Some of them felt discriminated against by their lecturers and fellow students at the universities they were studying; others suffered bullying from their flat/housemates and classmates; whilst a few felt stereotyped by the locals.

7.4.1 Fellow Students

Like many others, Sarah’s personal experience was based upon being subjected to stereotyping due to her nationality. She had just returned from her Erasmus year abroad in Zaragoza, where she felt victimised, labelled as ‘the *other*’ and subjected to prejudice for just being *English* by Spanish university students:

The Spanish students humiliated the English (including me) and ignored other foreigners, like the French. I never understood this, because we were not different or ill-mannered. We were simply English, and that difference was enough for the Spaniards to discriminate against us ... In some cases, I felt

a victim of generalisations, just for being English, which made it **extremely hard** for me to integrate into Spanish society, or even to inhabit the so-called ‘third space’. Although I spoke Spanish, that was not enough for me to become part of that society or to do anything to improve the situation ... I did want to build bridges with the Spanish students, and to learn about their culture, but their lack of interest to make friends with me made it practically **impossible**. (E7/CS3/Sarah) [emphasis added]

Sarah’s Spanish language competence was insufficient to facilitate integration into Spanish society or for her to feel a ‘legitimate speaker’ (Bourdieu 1977) with the right to speak or be heard in order to exercise her agency to change circumstances in situations of intercultural conflict. Sarah felt humiliated, ignored, discriminated against, stereotyped, and powerless to develop any meaningful intercultural communication with Spanish students. The language used, such as *extremely hard* or *practically impossible* expresses impotence to build bridges with Spanish students. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that Sarah’s accommodation was in a school, which she shared with fifty other people, twelve of those foreigners. Right from the outset of her stay, she perceived that Spanish students disliked foreigners, especially the English, evidenced by the fact that Spaniards would steal the food, drinks and saucepans that belonged to English students from the kitchen they all shared. This process of *othering* can, as Pickering (2001) notes, take the form of hostility, a view which is supported by Sarah in her essay in her statement of feeling ‘victimised’ and ‘bullied’ by these attitudes, for she perceived that Spanish students were constantly picking on English students’ belongings only.

In many of the personal experiences collected, there is a strong sense of idealisation of the Self and demonization of the *Other*. Holliday (2011: 69) asserts that in the process of *othering*, individuals construct or imagine a demonized image of ‘them’ which supports an idealized image of ‘us’. An instance of this is when British and Spanish institutions’ relationships with the Erasmus student community are compared, as Krista explains:

In Zaragoza, there was a party for Erasmus students every Thursday, and many other activities for us, but we didn't mix with all the students on these occasions. In England, we have 'societies' with a wide choice of interesting entertainment opportunities. In my University, we have the ESN (Erasmus Student Network), where everyone is invited to join in, not just Erasmus or language students. It is for *everyone*. **In Zaragoza, people enjoyed isolating Erasmus students, and made sure that British people wouldn't mix with other students, especially the Spanish. They wanted us to be isolated from the rest**, in a different group. When you compare this with what happens here **in England**, you realise that the English don't treat foreigners this brutally, and that **foreigners integrate into the system like any other normal student**. Despite the fact that Spaniards were polite and fun, and organised several parties and other activities to welcome us, they always treated us as different. **We were different because we came from another country**, and this impeded the integration into the society. **In England, we don't regard Erasmus students as a different species, but as normal people**. Thanks to this, they easily integrate into our culture and feel like authentic students. (OP6/CS3/Krista) [emphasis added]

There is no doubt that this student felt isolated in Zaragoza, and blamed the Spaniards for marginalising her. The comparison reveals her dichotomised essentialist views of British and Spanish institutions in their treatment of Erasmus students. She constructed rigid 'us' and 'them' binaries, which favoured the 'local' over the 'foreign'. From her perspective, the Spaniards were cruel, heartless people who derived pleasure from isolating her; therefore they were to blame for her inability to integrate into the student community. According to Holliday (2011), these constructions are not neutral, but ideological. Images of the self are created as, in this case, 'we the efficient' and 'we the normal', as opposed to the *other* as 'they the deficient' and 'they the abnormal'. British and Spanish institutions are presented in binary oppositions - 'inclusion' vs. 'exclusion', 'equality' vs. 'inequality', 'supportive' vs. 'unsupportive'. Krista struggled to move beyond these binaries. Whilst she perceived that in the UK there are support systems that assist in the integration of the Erasmus student population, and foreigners are treated equally as 'normal' people, the Spaniards are portrayed as unwelcoming to foreign students. As Krista spoke of her experiences of being *othered*, she

was unaware of the fact that she was equally *othering* Spaniards, perpetuating in this way inequalities and asymmetrical power relations. In this respect, Pickering (2001: 73) notes that:

In considering the concept of the Other, it is important to remember that those who are ‘othered’ are unequally positioned in relation to those who do the ‘othering’. The latter occupy a privileged space in which they can define themselves in contrast to the Others who are so designated as different, with this designation reinforcing and prolonging the inequalities involved by seeming to confirm and prove them.

Most of the students in this study recognised that the template that Spaniards used to ‘measure’ them were stereotypes that had been constructed with previous groups of Erasmus students. They felt that they had been already fixed before arriving in the country. In their view, Spaniards struggled to modify preconceived notions; despite this, there are narratives in which students used their agency to enact change, which will be presented later in this chapter. Georgina observed that:

At times Spaniards commented that other Erasmus English students kept themselves to themselves and didn’t want to integrate, which led to **the stereotype that English students don’t like to mix with others**. Because of this, they believed that we were like this too, so **they didn’t really treat us as individuals**. (E11/CS3/Georgina) [emphasis added]

It was clear in the narratives that there was a division between Spanish and foreign students, as Emma explained ‘they hardly said hello to us and those who spoke English were afraid of talking to us’. Holliday (2010) would call this a case of ‘culturism’, i.e. individuals being *othered* based on their culture and being conditioned by essentialist dominant discourses.

7.4.2 Locals

Other students voiced similar experiences of being stereotyped on the basis of their nationality. Lisa, for example, became aware of the stereotypical views that the locals had of the British soon after arriving in Ciudad Real, Spain. She found out that the British are regarded the same as the Americans, the reason being that they are believed to be non-Europeans – as the British currency is not the Euro – and are perceived to have strong connections with the United States:

I believe stereotypes exist due to ignorance or lack of information about a particular nation. I do hope the Spaniards realise that we are not like the Americans, that we are a different nation with a different identity and that we are part of the European Union. (E10/CS3/Lisa)

From the start, many students felt labelled for being English. The English have a reputation for ‘living in the Erasmus bubble, unwilling to insert themselves into Spanish culture’, Georgina commented and ‘would rather have fun and get drunk’ without the need of socialising with the locals. With the aim of contradicting this preconceived notion, Georgina deliberately set out to challenge the stereotype through the development of her communicative agency:

I **stopped fearing** talking to native speakers, and I **resisted the temptation** of falling into the ‘Erasmus bubble’. I **was determined** to improve my Spanish and learn more about Hispanic cultures. I **made a conscious effort to change my fate**, and decided to act linguistically powerful and interculturally aware. One day, I **decided to have a voice in all this** (...) I finally joined a class, and became a Spanish language student. I also made a few friends with the Spaniards. Above all, I became a Spanish language speaker after a few months. (E11/CS3/Georgina) [emphasis added]

Georgina's sense of agency is clearly conveyed by the linguistic choices she makes, which was not only enacted when she interacted with the locals, but also with others within the 'Erasmus bubble', where she met a group of Brazilians with whom she chose to represent herself as the 'interculturally competent' English student. Her determination to challenge stereotypical thinking was clearly perceived when she explained that 'not only did I want to show my worth to Spanish natives, but also to Portuguese speakers'. This identity shift from a position of powerlessness caused by the oppressive force of stereotyping was due in part to the influence of social and institutional factors (for a discussion on identity, see Chapter 3). Georgina perceived that the university and the teachers had positioned her in a place she did not want to be, and had denied access to where she wanted to be – in a Spanish classroom at the university and in a Spanish social group. Georgina succeeded in crossing the borders of difference to gain acceptance in social and educational circles by adopting new subject positions as she exercised her agency.

Another student called Emma explained that she suffered '*la ignorancia de los españoles*' [the ignorance of the Spaniards] during her stay in Ciudad Real. Before her Erasmus placement, she had assumed that Spanish people were friendly and welcoming, but she experienced a totally different reality once there:

Ciudad Real is a remote, provincial, quite isolating town in Spain, where people are not used to foreigners. **I thought I would be treated in the same way as we [the English] treat foreigners, but I was wrong.** Most people there didn't speak English, which in a way was good because I had a chance to practise my Spanish, but every time I was talking to an English friend in the street, **the locals would look at us as if we came from another planet. This made me feel very uncomfortable.** I was not expecting this reaction. (CD5/CS3) [emphasis added]

There is a clear indication of Emma's idealisation of the self when she says *I thought I would be treated in the same way as we [the English] treat foreigners, but I was wrong* as there is also evidence of her feelings of discomfort caused by the way the locals looked at her. Emma

claimed that due to ‘the nature of the Spaniards’, she spent most of her time with other Erasmus students, and that she learnt a valuable lesson whilst abroad ‘*No hagas a los demás lo que no quieres que te hagan a ti*’ [don’t do to others what you don’t want others to do to you]. Emma referred to her year abroad placement as an experience ‘*que te destroza los nervios*’ [that destroys your nerves] and called the locals in Ciudad Real ‘ignorant’ due to their limited experiences with foreigners.

Another student named Antonio felt stereotyped by the locals based on his nationality. Antonio’s is a story of human agency, whereby he attempted to be released from the ‘cage’ he felt trapped in using a metaphor of ‘masks’ used by actors in plays. He draws a parallel between his intercultural encounters during his year abroad placement in Spain and a theatrical play, where actors have assigned roles and perform within those roles:

After a short while, I noticed that often Spaniards were wrong in the ways they understood the part I was performing in the play, and I frequently found myself placed in a role in-between their expectations and my self-representation. What they expected from me was based upon the ideological and stereotypical views of Italians. **The mistake they were making concerned the singularity of my uniqueness.** (E5/CS3/Antonio) [emphasis added]

Antonio claimed that the transcultural nature of his identity never ceased to be an element of surprise, and sometimes confusion, for Spanish people:

Very often Spaniards were perplexed when they found out about my personal life. I never understood why. Now, on reflection, I think that getting to know me better caused a crisis of expectations, forcing them to reformulate the blurred image they had of me (...) **I often felt like an open box to intercultural communication, and it was precisely this dialogue that**

helped them to adjust the views they had of me to approximate the ways I wanted to represent myself. (E5/CS3/Antonio) [emphasis added]

Antonio's point here is that he used 'dialogue' to exercise his agency and caused a change of perception from Spaniards who had a stereotypical image of him for being Italian. Furthermore, Antonio used the concept of a mask to explain how through interaction, he gradually changed the mask that the Spaniards placed on his face for another one that represented him better. Antonio concluded that his year abroad experiences were a theatrical space, where individuals wore the masks that others chose for them. In this negotiation, multifaceted identities were produced interactively, pushing individuals to take new positionings. Antonio was able to explain identity negotiation using metaphorical language as a result of having learnt about Butler's (1999, 2004) notion of gendered identity as a performative act (for further detail, see the introduction to Chapter 6), i.e. a theatrical space where a multiplicity of identities can be freely adopted in different contexts and at different times. Antonio argued that in his case, his experiences increased his sensitivity to the ways Spanish young people perceived him and developed him as a more able intercultural mediator. Through negotiation, Antonio was able to choose the masks he wanted to wear; thereby enacting his agency in the deconstruction of how others viewed him.

An undergraduate named Pierre narrated his experience in Madrid, where he shared a flat with a Spanish young man:

Before I went to Madrid last year I didn't have any prejudices, I knew nothing about them and didn't know if they had any prejudices. **I rented a flat with a Spanish student who called me *Napoleon* and laughed every time he called me by this name. I found this weird** and I never knew whether he was joking or being serious. (OP5/CS3/Pierre) [emphasis added]

Pierre seemed to be confused about being called *Napoleon* and felt being ridiculed for no apparent reason. Much to his surprise, Pierre's university lecturers advised the French

students to stay indoors the nights of 2nd and 3rd May as they could become victims of francophobia. They were explained that people in Madrid commemorate the uprising of 2nd May 1808, when they rebelled against the occupation of the city by French troops and the brutal repression by Napoleon, which led to the outbreak of the Peninsula War. Pierre became increasingly concerned about this type of stereotyping and discrimination, which caused feelings of isolation and discomfort. One day, he decided to ask a Spanish friend about his opinion of Napoleon:

What do you think of Napoleon? I asked him, and he replied, ‘Pierre, Napoleon did very good things, but also horrible things. For example, our *Código Civil* [civil law] is based on Napoleon’s ideas, and he encouraged trade for Spain, which is good, *but* he triggered a war in Spain, and that’s why we don’t like Napoleon, **he is an ambiguous person.** (OP5/CS3/Pierre)
[emphasis added]

Pierre was rather put-out by this reply, and voiced his concerns about being judged by the ‘ambiguity of a historical figure’ in the history of his country. In frustration, Pierre exclaimed ‘I have nothing to do with Napoleon, and I don’t go about calling Spaniards *Franco!*’. The stereotype that Pierre was subjected to, can be explained by the concept of nationalism, i.e. our sense of belonging to a nation. Pickering (2001: 84) observes that nationalism deeply affects how we regard and understand other people in the world, which produces and perpetuates stereotypical forms of characterising ‘us’ and ‘them’. For Pickering, national identity constructs negative stereotypes of difference that mark ‘us’ off against ‘them’ through a process of excluding foreign *others* from belonging to ‘our’ own nation. This is evidenced in Pierre’s confrontation of this national stereotype and his powerlessness to act against the oppression that forces him to stay indoors due to a historical event in the nineteenth century that has shaped attitudes towards the French in current times.

7.4.3 Lecturers

A few students spoke of their experiences of being stereotyped by their university lecturers. These undergraduates narrated stories of marginalisation, of inhabiting the margins due to cultural difference and a lack of familiarity with their new environment. Nicole, for instance,

exposed feelings of vulnerability in her attempts to adjust to the new society, and her inner difficulties in trying to understand the social constructions and cultural meanings of certain concepts. Nicole spent her year abroad in Guadalajara, Mexico, a place she perceived, where there were strong beliefs in traditional values and religion. Nicole was extremely interested in learning the history of Catholicism in Mexico at the University in Guadalajara, so she joined a seminar on religious education hoping that the lecturer would cover aspects related to the influence that the Catholic church had in shaping Mexican culture. However, in her first seminar she struggled to overcome feelings of confusion. Her lecturer gave out a hand-out with the names of Catholic saints and asked the class to name those that were of their birthplace or parish, assuming that everyone was a Catholic. Given the fact that Nicole was not Catholic, and came from an English multicultural city, where many religions co-exist, she felt unable to complete the task, and commented that:

The lecturer couldn't believe that I was not a Catholic or that I didn't have an answer to his question, and **he ridiculed me in front of everyone** by saying "mira a nuestros hermanos del otro lado del mundo que ni saben de dónde vienen" [*look at our brothers from the other side of the world who don't even know where they come from*] and **everyone in the class laughed. He ridiculed me for being different, so I never came back to that class again.** (CD6/CS3) [emphasis added]

Nicole felt 'ridiculed' and 'laughed at' by the teacher and the whole class. The oppression of their prejudiced attitudes led her to drop out of the class and pushed her to the margins. Nicole was labelled as *different* based on her religion. She felt under the spotlight, in the periphery with a sense of not belonging in a 'country with beliefs and ideas in total opposition to those found in Britain', as described in her own terms. This incident may be evidence of sense of humour being a source of intercultural conflict, since from the perspective of the teacher and the home students the comment may have been a funny joke (albeit prejudiced), which was lost to Nicole.

Other undergraduates voiced their experiences of being stereotyped, discriminated against and marginalised for just being *English* Erasmus students by some of the university lecturers in Spain. Emma explains that:

Most of classes I attended had Spanish students and few foreigners. I chose a grammar class. My first seminars were tough so I spoke to the teacher, and she said ‘you should be able to understand, but Erasmus students shouldn’t be in this class’. I thought she was very rude and unfriendly. No-one had told me that we couldn’t join that class. (CD6/CS3)

Another student, called Melissa wrote in her essay that:

Some of the teachers did not want any Erasmus students in their classes, in particular they didn’t want *English* students, and a few of them actually didn’t allow any English students in their classes. It turned out to be really difficult to find a welcoming class in Zaragoza, which contributed to my **feelings of marginalisation and discrimination against us** [...] although I wanted to join a class, I couldn’t because **I suddenly became a victim of the generalisation that ‘all Erasmus students are lazy and ill-mannered’.** (E20/CS3/Melissa) [emphasis added]

From Melissa’s perspective, the Spanish teachers had formed a stereotype, probably based on previous experiences with Erasmus students or co-constructed with colleagues in the staffroom, which led to prejudices against English students to the point of turning them down in their own classes. In this respect, Holliday *et al.* (2010: 25) contend that:

Many argue that it is natural to form stereotypes, and that they indeed help us to understand ‘foreign cultures’ – that they act as a template, or as an ideal type, against which we can measure the unknown. We disagree with this view.

One reason for this is that we do not behave sufficiently rationally in intercultural dealings to be able to work with such templates objectively. A major reason for this is that stereotypes are often infected by *prejudice*, which in turn leads to *Othering* [...] Reduction [...] is where the different facets, the variety of possible characteristics and the full complexity of a group of people are ignored in favour of a preferred definition. In our view, [...] stereotyping, prejudice and Othering interact with each other; but it is the negative impact of the latter which makes the other two undesirable.

Following this line of argument, the teachers' *othering* of Melissa reduced her to a student who was lazy and ill-mannered; therefore not welcome in their classes. The 'negative impact' Holliday refers to, can be easily perceived in Melissa's frustration about her inability to integrate into university Spanish student and teacher communities. The Spanish students and teachers were perceived by Melissa as people with fixed preconceptions, unable to communicate interculturally with her, incapable of appreciating the complexities of the Erasmus English student population and were quick to label her negatively. In Holliday's terms, Melissa was being subjected to *culturism*, i.e. the essentialising of the foreign *other* based on her culture which leads to reducing and judging people from other parts of the world to simplistic, generalised cultural prescriptions. These negative stereotypes appeared to be embedded in everyday practices, and conditioned the behaviours, attitudes and (hidden) discourses of the university Spanish community, in this way reducing Melissa to somebody she may not be, solely based upon the country she came from.

The data demonstrate that Erasmus English students were being stigmatised by some of their lecturers during their time of residence abroad and struggled to cope with bias. The word 'stigma' is of Greek origin and is used to describe a mark or scar left typically when branding animals. It refers to the act of branding or marking someone out as different based on individual characteristics, beliefs or behaviours regarded as being against the social norms. As can be gleaned from the data, some of the students were being labelled and pigeon-holed into 'lazy', 'linguistically deficient' or 'non-Catholics' and became the targets of stigma-related discrimination and prejudice, which limited access to classes and reduced their self-esteem. There is overwhelming empirical evidence of the devastating effects of

stigmatisation in the field of social psychology. Stigmatised individuals as a target of negative stereotypes, are often treated unfairly, discriminated and prejudiced against, with access to services and goods being denied to them. Major & Townsend (2010: 412) state that:

Stigma exposes individuals to being ignored, excluded, patronized, and ridiculed as well as targeted by physical violence.

However, rather than viewing stigmatised people as helpless victims of negative stereotyping, new perspectives in social psychology have shifted to an understanding of these people being active agents in negotiating social interactions in order to maintain their self-esteem and achieve specific goals (Major & O'Brien 2005; Steele, Spencer & Aronson 2002). Furthermore, it has been found that stigmatised individuals respond to stressful events in a variety of ways due to their low social status, poor access to services and unfair treatment, and that most of them are aware of the dominant cultural stereotypes and related stigma, which leads to stress and anxiety. The stigmatised cultural representations that Erasmus British students perceived their lecturers had of them, can potentially impact negatively on their year-abroad experiences.

7.5 Clothing and Physical Appearance

Female learners experienced preconceived beliefs that Spaniards had of English young women based upon their appearance, in particular the clothes they wore. Clothing became a semiotic text to be read, interpreted, analysed and reflected upon, and students gained insights into some of the stereotypes that the Spanish had of the ways English young women dress. An undergraduate called Natasha described her struggle to deconstruct stereotypes, as this observation demonstrates:

We are viewed as easy girls who wear revealing clothes, making us popular and readily accessible to Spanish guys, who often shouted “¡Qué frío!” [*How cold!*] at us whenever we went out at night. In England, no one

would give us a second look. It was really hot in Spain, so it was only natural to wear light clothes. However, **I tended to dress in a more reserved way during my stay there so as to comply with the dress code, but probably more to contradict the stereotypes that the Spaniards had of ‘us’.** (OP4/CS3/Natasha) [emphasis added]

As can be gleaned from this piece of data, Natasha exercised her agentive power to change the ways she was perceived by the locals and dressed *in a more reserved way to contradict* stereotypical thinking. Several other views were expressed juxtaposing young women’s dress codes in the UK with those in Spain. Sally, for instance, drew conclusions as to the images that clothes project. Whilst in Alcalá de Henares in Spain during her year abroad placement, she noted that Spanish young women tended to wear ‘conservative’ clothes, whereas the English wore more ‘liberal’ ones. To illustrate this point, Sally provided an example:

In the summer months, Spanish girls would wear jeans and even cardigans, whilst English girls would wear short skirts and strap suntops or vests or camisole tops as soon as the sun came out (...) **this happened more in Alcalá de Henares, for it was a more traditional town, whereas in Madrid, fashion tended to be different as it is a more cosmopolitan city (...)** Every time my friends and I [all English] went out, **we used to get plenty of unwanted attention from men in the streets.** They’d shout to us “¿No tenéis frío, chicas?” [*aren’t you cold, girls?*]. I’d never heard such comments from strangers. In England, I’d hear such a thing from my parents, who would suggest that I take my coat on a cold day. (CD5/CS3) [emphasis added]

The reactions that the same clothes provoked in the different settings encouraged Sally to reflect upon the messages and images that her clothing communicated to others. She provided a number of interpretations as to the messages she may have probably been conveying with her clothes. One of them could be the fact that perhaps Spanish people from Alcalá de Henares were not used to British fashion as it was *a more traditional town*; or perhaps the

clothes she wore conveyed the message that she just wanted to reveal her bodies to attract male attention given the fact that she got *plenty of unwanted attention from men in the streets*.

Sally also toyed with the idea that Spanish people *were more traditional in their views*; or they were simply more prone to *expressing their views openly and did not fear offending others*. Whatever the interpretation, from Sally's viewpoint, the main reason why she wore lighter clothes was *because it was hot in Spain*:

We [the English] are not used to the heat, so when we are in a hot country, we wear light clothes. Also, the fact that the sun hardly ever comes out in England makes us want to get brown quickly when we are in a sunny country.
(CD5/CS3)

Some of the British female undergraduates felt stigmatised and subjected to common beliefs in relation to their physical appearance during their year abroad placement in Spain, which they had to battle with. Danielle states that:

Among Erasmus students, English girls have **the reputation of being 'easy'**. Unfortunately, many of them conform to this stereotype in an attempt to have fun and to be unconventional. Many a time **I felt marginalised because of my appearance. Spaniards could immediately tell that I was English because of the colour of my eyes and hair**. (E8/CS3/Danielle) [emphasis added]

Danielle was prejudiced against and marginalised because of the stigma related to the physical appearance of a perceived typical English woman - white, with blue eyes and blonde hair -, attributes associated with cheap women of loose morals of British origin. Danielle was so intent on challenging this generalised view that she took conscious measures to project a positive image of herself in the Erasmus student community, as she rejected the idea of being classed as the typical English girl who gets drunk and can be easily chatted up to have sex with. Finally, together with other research participants in this study, Sally expressed feeling

under the spotlight in Spain, not only due to the clothes she wore, but also because of her appearance, which immediately identified her as a foreigner. Those who were blonde and had blue eyes shared the opinion that they had not been aware of their racial features until their year abroad, and since most of the local girls were darker-skinned with brown eyes, their physical appearance marked them as *different*. One student commented that once she was walking along the streets of Alicante and a man approached her and asked to touch her blonde hair. She had never felt more ‘foreign’ than then.

As can be gleaned from these data, the students struggled with the ways others saw them, and although they themselves did not use the term *othering*, they referred to a series of issues which can be classed as processes of *othering* (Holliday 2011: 70). For example, Spaniards identified English female students in binary oppositions - ‘us’ and ‘them’ -, explicitly condemned their dress codes and stigmatised them based on their physical appearance. The ideology underlying these attitudes lies in the belief that English young women, with blonde hair and blue eyes, who wear revealing clothes, are ‘easy’, ‘binge drinkers’ and have ‘loose morals’. The *other* (in this case the female students) either worked with or resisted these imposed definitions by complying with the dress code in Spain, thus wearing less revealing clothes; or by altering their behaviour so as not to be pigeon-holed as ‘easy girls’. This finding is congruent with new perspectives in social psychology which view stigmatised people as being active agents in negotiating social interactions in order to maintain their self-esteem and achieve specific goals (Major & O’Brien 2005; Steele, Spencer & Aronson 2002).

7.6 Gender

Many female undergraduates felt stereotyped based on their gender. Their awareness of being distinctively young women created feelings of discrimination, even when walking down the streets in Spain or Mexico. Jo talked of her experiences in Zaragoza:

In my country, I am hardly ever aware of my gender identity, except when there are discussions of equality, but I never really think too much about this. However, in Spain, nearly every day, as I was doing something as simple as

walking down the streets, my friends and I received so much sexual attention from men ... it was incredible! They would wolf-whistle, shout and look at us with come-to-bed eyes. **I suddenly became very much aware of my identity as a woman, which led me to develop a feminist outlook on life, something I'd never identified myself with before.** (CD5/CS3) [emphasis added]

Something similar happened to Rachel with her identity as a British national, as she claimed never to have felt 'more English' than when she was in Spain. After some time she started noticing the ways Spanish people looked at her just for being blonde, and it was through the eyes of the Spaniards that she was made to feel *English* and *female*, two identity constructs she had never paused to think about before.

Another student, Linda, perceived the presence of male chauvinism strongly in Mexico. Often Linda felt marginalised for lacking the local knowledge, for looking and thinking differently, and for being a woman. She experienced feelings of vulnerability, fear, isolation and marginalisation, particularly after an incident when she was camping with a friend on an island in the south of Mexico. There she frequented a restaurant, owned by a middle-aged man, who often invited them for beers and introduced them to male friends. The men made sexual advances towards Linda and her friend. Linda felt dominated by fear and vulnerability, totally at the mercy of these men who greatly intimidated her. Reading the story 'Norma y Ester' brought all these feelings out to the fore, as the experiences of the two female characters in the text reminded her of that horrible incident on the island in Mexico. Linda's observations of women's positioning on that island greatly compared to the ways Norma and Ester are portrayed in the literary text – subservient, submissive and obedient to men:

Those men [on the island] did not care about their wives being there at all. They would make sexual advances towards us in front of them. They had no respect for them. Their wives were there to serve them, and **I found myself adopting a submissive position to men during my short stay on the island so as to survive there. I was totally scared. I was terrified!** Since I come from a society in which women are not dominated by men, I found it really

hard to process male domination. I could not understand why men would treat women in such degrading ways. (E10/CS3/Linda) [emphasis added]

Linda identified unwanted sexual male attention as prejudiced, discriminatory and *othering* for being just a woman. This biased attitude based on her gender led her to feel *scared* and *terrified*. Additionally, in her attempts to understand the social constructs of being a ‘gentleman’ and a ‘male chauvinist’ in Mexico, Linda positioned herself in the periphery looking at Mexican gender identities through a magnifying glass and making judgements of what she saw and experienced. That marginal place became for Linda a space to reconstruct new meanings, to reinvent herself and to look at her own cultural reality with renewed eyes. In this journey, she noticed a lack of gentlemanlike attention on the part of British men, who rarely flattered women by complimenting them. Linda also spoke of a personal transformation, which would never have happened had she not experienced other cultural realities. Once back in the UK, Linda reflected upon the lack of attention she got from men, which she attributed to the fact that from a feminist perspective, women’s fight for equality and independence have emasculated men and masculinised women in an on-going battle for gender dominance.

Rebecca, an undergraduate who spent her year abroad with her boyfriend in Mexico, also felt stereotyped based on her gender:

I lived in Mexico with my boyfriend for 9 months, and we bought a car which broke down several times. Once we were in the south of the country, one of the least developed areas in Mexico, when our car broke down and we went to see a mechanic. My boyfriend did not speak any Spanish, so I spoke to the mechanic. He was a 60 year-old man **who didn’t even greet me, let alone speak to me**. I told him what went wrong with the car, he obviously understood as he immediately checked the engine. **At no stage did the mechanic keep eye contact with me**, he constantly looked at my boyfriend as I was explaining what was wrong with the car, but he kept looking at my boyfriend as if I was not there. As far as he was concerned, **he was not having**

a conversation with me about the car, but with my boyfriend through my voice. (OP7/CS3/Rebecca) [emphasis added]

Car mechanics have been historically associated with men in Mexico, as in many other parts of the world, and it was obvious for Rebecca that the old man struggled to accept a woman talking about a car engine. ‘I was totally invisible!’ Rebecca exclaimed, which made her very aware of her gender and prejudiced against based on the fact that she was a woman.

7.7 Foreign Language

Other students talked about Spanish, their foreign language, being a reason to be stereotyped as being ‘shy’, ‘reserved’, ‘introverted’, and at times ‘inferior’ due to language deficiencies. Lauren’s experiences in Spain raised her awareness of the symbolic power of language in relation to the construction of her identity. She makes reference to the power that native speakers of the Spanish language had over her, as a non-native speaker. During her first months in Spain, she lived with three nice and friendly Spanish female students, who were genuinely interested in her life and keen to help her adapt to the new environment:

They were lovely. They let me speak, they never interrupted me or corrected me, and never ever laughed at my accent. They really looked after me, introduced me to all their friends and took me to their parties.
(E17/CS3/Lauren)

However, Lauren always felt the ‘foreign’ *other*, the one who needed to be explained the meanings of words, the one who needed advice every time she left the house, the one who needed protection. ‘My Spanish housemates had a paternalistic attitude towards me’, Lauren explains, ‘they assigned me a certain identity and I conformed to that image’. Whilst she participated in conversations, Lauren always let them initiate them due to her language deficiencies, and felt that she was not a legitimised speaker (Bourdieu 1977) with sufficient authority to broach a topic for discussion herself. Lauren was therefore perceived as a shy and

reserved young lady in her group, an identity which she disliked. This situation changed when Lauren's Spanish roommates moved out of the house and three foreign students came to live with her:

My new housemates positioned me differently. For them, I was not only the one who had lived in the house before and knew how everything worked, but I was also the one who could give them advice about places of interest. **Importantly, I was the one with the highest level of Spanish, the language in which we communicated.** I noticed how they respected my language competence, which in turn influenced my identity for I became the group leader. **It was me the one who took the initiative now.** (E17/CS3/Lauren)
[emphasis added]

As she became aware of her agency, Lauren challenged the situations she had been in with her Spanish housemates and reframed her relationship with them by adopting a more powerful authoritative identity:

I became more talkative with them [the Spanish roommates], felt able to express my points of view and strong enough to develop and defend my arguments. They started to look at me differently, to ask for my opinion and advice, and it was then that we developed a more intimate close friendship, and talked about deeper stuff. (E17/CS3/Lauren)

It is interesting to note that Lauren reflected upon the ways in which she may have positioned her foreign housemates. Her higher language competence may have affected the power relations within the group. Lauren revealed that she may have underestimated them in a similar way as she herself had been perceived as inferior before.

Importantly, identity was both produced and constructed through Lauren's foreign language, Spanish (Block 2010; Norton 2000; Gee 1996; Blommaert 2005). As she engaged in intercultural interactions with others in different contexts, diverse sides of her identity - shy and reserved, interactive and challenging – coexisted within herself. Lauren linked these experiences with those lived by Ester, the female character in the literary text. By analysing the identities that the fictional character constructed, Lauren contended that the conditions in which Ester interacts are influenced by power relations, and through her agency, Ester is able to resist identities and claim for recognition through reframing relationships with others. Therefore, Ester manages to represent herself as an assertive, powerful young woman rather than the subservient obedient one that the readers may see in a first reading of the story.

Another experience of being stereotyped based on the assumption of poor Spanish language skills was that of Anna's, as she was labelled as a tourist and mistaken by a North American in Mexico. Anna narrated her experiences of shopping in market places in Mexico, where stall owners would presume that she was a North American tourist willing to pay high prices for their goods:

I went up to a stall in a marketplace in Cancún and the stall holder asked me in English '*how are you?*' and I replied in Spanish '*muy bien, gracias. Y Ud?*' [*very well, thank you. And you?*], and he replied in English '*Very well, I am about to get your money*'. I felt deeply offended by his remark and left that market place straightaway. I believe he had assumed that I was an American tourist because I am white, and **I suddenly became a victim of the stereotypes that the Mexicans have of American tourists. The fact that he kept speaking to me in English suggests that he assumed that I did not speak Spanish well**, or at least as well as he could speak English [...] and I have seen it with my own eyes that **most Americans that visit Mexico can't speak Spanish**, but since I'd already spent six months in the country I felt deeply offended that he had assumed that I could not speak his language. (CD6/CS3) [emphasis added]

The fact that the stall holder mocked about money shocked Anna, who felt insulted by the fact that he assumed that she was an American tourist with money to burn at his stall. Anna had noticed that Mexicans and Americans talked openly about money, especially about generous tips, but she claimed that she came from a ‘culture where we do not talk openly about money and tips. I can understand where this stereotype comes from, but I was waiting for my student loan and didn’t have spare money to buy ear rings for 20 dollars’. Anna often felt uncomfortable only in touristic places in Mexico as she perceived that there was a clear dividing line between ‘them’ – the locals – and ‘us’ – the tourists, and noted that language was a distinctive sign which marked this division.

Experiences such as Lauren’s and Anna’s, uncover difficulties in terms of breaking barriers to communicate interculturally with others. They also show how undergraduates transcend the dictates of their immediate environment, empower themselves to shape their circumstances and alter the course of events through human agency. Furthermore, these experiences demonstrate the different subject positions students take in response to the circumstances and interactions at the time, negotiated in Spanish, their L2 language.

7.8 Conclusions

As can be gleaned from the personal experiences reported in this chapter, there are no clear-cut distinctions between the categories, and a number of overlapping themes run through the sections. However, for organisational purposes and for the sake of clarity, the categories are grouped under dominant discourses based on the most salient theme in each of the experiences. The participants in this study made a number of observations and overgeneralisations that described and explained difference between members of diverse countries, as if cultural behaviour, attitudes and values had physical boundaries. For example, they spoke of Spaniards hating foreigners, Spanish teachers disliking Erasmus English students, and Mexicans being sleazy. Holliday (2011: 20) prefers to think of these differences:

not so much as the result of harsh national differences but rather as variations on what might be considered ‘normal’ within a particular person’s experience.

In attempting to answer the third operational research question in this study of *when taught with a Critical 'Pedagogy-of-the-Oppressed' approach, how do students describe and 'name' their experiences of being stereotyped subjected to stereotyping?*, this chapter provides empirical evidence of students describing their experiences in which they were the objects of prejudiced attitudes and behaviours based on stereotyping. Importantly, as can be gleaned from the data, the pedagogical approach implemented helped students 'name' those experiences by using terms such as 'discrimination', 'marginalisation', 'victimisation' and 'bullying'. Narratives of students being stigmatised, humiliated, ignored and discriminated against during their year-abroad placements are testament of this. Furthermore, as can be seen in the data, many students felt victimised, isolated and marginalised; whilst others were made to feel unwelcome, uncomfortable and disliked.

As students 'named' their experiences, they described situations in which they were victimised for being just English, with narratives that revealed their vulnerability and inferiority for being 'foreign', 'women' or 'non-native speakers'. Other students voiced their concern for their safety and state of confusion and fear; whilst others expressed their frustration by their invisibility. There is also a clear sense in some of these stories of students being laughed at, offended, ridiculed and intimidated based on prejudice and stereotypical thinking. In 'naming' their experiences, students became aware of the oppressive nature of stereotyping, of the harmful and damaging effect it can have on others, and of how 'problematic' this type of knowledge can be. To sum up, students' experiences of being stereotyped described the oppressive conditions of being essentialised and *othered* and their struggle to overcome this oppression. The following chapter will review the three case studies in this PhD research and provide a cross-case study analysis in order to answer the main general question in this PhD study of *how can Critical Pedagogy help students deconstruct stereotypes in their development of 'critical cultural awareness'?*

*Turn him to any cause of policy,
The Gordian Knot of it he will unloose,
Familiar as his garter*

Shakespeare, Henry V Act 1 Scene 1. 45–47

8.1 Introduction

During the early stages of my data collection, I recalled the Greek mythological legend of the ‘Gordian Knot’, often used as a metaphor for an intractable problem that can only be ‘unloosed’ by a bold stroke. As I received the initial strands of data from my students during CS1, I struggled to unravel the messages that they were conveying. At the time, trying to steer a path towards a coherent all-encompassing argument (i.e. delivering the ‘bold stroke’) appeared very difficult. Only as I moved through the later case studies did I become more confident with what the data were telling me, how the studies could usefully be ‘directed’ to elicit more useful information from the participants and where the concept of ‘critical cultural awareness’ could be examined, analysed and developed.

In an attempt to ‘deliver the bold stroke’, this chapter provides a cross-case study analysis for the more general purpose of refining Byram’s notion of ‘critical cultural awareness’ using the concepts of ‘ideology’ and ‘hegemony’ from Critical Pedagogy, and ‘essentialism’, ‘Centre’ and ‘Periphery’ from the field of Intercultural Communication. It also describes a ‘Grammar of Interculture’ that could be usefully implemented in foreign language study to discuss attitudes, values and beliefs. I am greatly indebted to Prof Byram for the phrase ‘Grammar of Interculture’ who, in personal communication (December 2011), suggested that in the same way as language teachers spend time teaching metalanguage to talk about language (e.g. words and phrases such as ‘gerund’, ‘noun’, ‘adverb’, ‘present perfect’, ‘passive voice, etc), teachers should also spend time teaching the metalanguage to talk about issues related to

intercultural communication and conflict. In addition, this chapter introduces a teaching tool for the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’ for classroom use in language education and provides an illustrative example of the type of tentative, cautious language students can use in their analytic discussions to reduce culturist language.

Chapter 8 is divided into two main sections entitled (1) *Critical Cultural Awareness*; and (2) *Critical Pedagogical Strategies*, firstly exploring *what* ‘critical cultural awareness’ means in this PhD study, and then unravelling *how* it can be developed in language education. Therefore, section one aims to answer the questions of what is ‘critical cultural awareness’? and what does it mean in this study?; whilst section two seeks to find an answer to the questions of how can it be developed in the language classroom? and what pedagogical strategies can be used to develop ‘critical cultural awareness’?. The first section thus attempts to refine the notion of ‘critical cultural awareness’ empirically under four sub-headings, as follows (1) (Neo) Essentialist Ideologies; (2) Ideologies of Supremacy; (3) Centre/Periphery Ideologies and (4) (Counter) Hegemonic Ideologies. The second section answers the main research question in this PhD study of how can Critical Pedagogy help students deconstruct stereotypes for the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’ under four sub-headings (1) Conscientization; (2) Naming the World; (3) Grammar of Interculture; and (4) The Language of Interculture. The following section revisits Byram’s concept of ‘critical cultural awareness’ and introduces the notion of ‘ideology’ as used in Critical Pedagogy.

8.2 Critical Cultural Awareness

This section revisits Byram’s notion of ‘*critical cultural awareness*’ / political education (*savoir s’engager*) with a view to refining it using the concepts of ‘ideology’ and ‘hegemony’ from Critical Pedagogy and ‘Essentialism’, ‘Centre’ and ‘Periphery’ from the field of Intercultural Communication Studies for the purpose of the analysis of stereotypes. ‘Critical cultural awareness’ (introduced in Chapter 2) is defined as ‘the ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries’ (Byram 1997: 53). As already stated, for Byram (2009: 324) “explicit criteria” means that ‘the intercultural speaker has a “rational and explicit standpoint” from which to evaluate’, which, in McLaren’s terms means, the intercultural speaker has an

ideology which he projects onto others in a hegemonic process in his critical cultural evaluations. McLaren (2009: 69) defines ideology as:

the production and representation of ideas, values, and beliefs and the manner in which they are expressed and lived out by both individuals 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.* [italics in original text]

McLaren (2009) identifies a positive and a negative function of ideology. The *positive function* of ideology is to supply concepts, meanings, representations, categories, images, ideas that help us make sense of the world; the *negative function* is that it is ‘exclusive’, because it appears to be ‘natural’ and therefore unchangeable and ‘selective’, because the ideologies of some groups are dominant, thus privileging certain groups over others. The negative function of ideology is that it systematically perpetuates asymmetrical power relations through the inculcation of certain values, beliefs and behaviours:

The most difficult task in analyzing these negative functions of ideology is to unmask those ideological properties which insinuate themselves within reality as their fundamental components. Ideological functions which barricade themselves within the realm of commonsense often manage to disguise the grounds of their operations (...) If we all can agree that as individuals, we inherit a pre-existing sign community, and acknowledge that all ideas, values, and meanings have social roots and perform social functions, then **understanding ideology becomes a matter of investigating which concepts, values, and meanings obscure our understanding of the social world and our place within the networks of power/knowledge relations, and which concepts, values, and meanings clarify such an understanding.** In other words, why do certain ideological formations cause us to misrecognize our complicity in establishing or maintaining asymmetrical

relations of power and privilege within the sociocultural order? (McLaren 2009: 70-71) [*italics in original; emphasis added*]

Ideologies exist ‘at the deep, embedded psychological structures of the personality’ and manifest themselves ‘in the inner histories and experiences’ (Darder *et al*, 2009: 11). Ideologies are not just ideas, but ways of relating and behaving with others (Allman 2009: 420). McLaren’s point is that the ‘natural’ and ‘commonsense’ character of ideologies need to be investigated, in particular to make evident what ideologies do to us, i.e. how they influence the ‘ways we relate and behave with others’, to use Allman’s terms.

As a CP teacher, I took the responsibility of ‘investigation’ as part of my pedagogical process to make these ideologies evident - or ‘these criteria explicit’, in Byram’s terms – in my teaching. Holliday (2010: 261) too defines ideology ‘as a system of ideas which drives behavioural choices’ and refers to these ideas or commonsense assumptions as the ‘default ways of thinking’, particular frameworks which individuals use to make sense of the world. What is interesting here is that he uses this theory to analyse intercultural relations between people from different countries, whereas McLaren and others in the field of Critical Pedagogy have usually focused on relationships of groups within a society or country. As stated before, as a CP teacher I sought to develop pedagogical practices to raise learners’ awareness to ‘make these criteria explicit’ so that students understand where they are positioned, and from what standpoints they are making their evaluations and Holliday’s focus on people of different countries was a useful additional perspective. In other words, this research aimed to develop teaching strategies for the uncovering of ideologies and hegemony, and to this end I re-analysed the data with a view to unmasking the ideologies students used in their critical cultural evaluations.

In my endeavours to develop students’ ‘critical cultural awareness’, I seek to identify what ‘default ways of thinking’, ‘default beliefs’ and ‘default prejudices’ against Hispanics students may have, and what ‘default ways of thinking’, ‘default beliefs’ and ‘default prejudices’ students perceive Hispanics may have against them. In short, what are the ideologies embedded in their experiences which make statements like “Spaniards are racist”,

“Hispanic men are chauvinistic”, “Mexican women are inferior to men”, or “British students are lazy” acceptable? Or to use McLaren’s terms, what ‘values, beliefs and behaviours’ are being ‘inculcated’ that ‘maintain asymmetrical relations of power and privilege’ between Hispanics and the students? These statements were taken as the starting point to explore ‘natural’ ideological standpoints and ‘commonsense’ assumptions and the following section revisits the data in the three case studies in order to identify the students’ ideological standpoints (Byram’s ‘explicit criteria’) so as to provide empirical evidence of students’ development of ‘critical cultural awareness’.

8.2.1 (Neo) Essentialist Ideologies

In the cross-case study analysis in search of the ideologies that ‘obscure’ - to use McLaren’s term - students’ understanding of the complexities of Hispanic societies, I found that their ideologies were mainly essentialist. The findings indicate that students imagine Hispanic *others* as homogeneous, fixed and static, as this piece of data illustrates:

I **imagine** Latin American **men as very chauvinistic**, with no consideration for women’s feelings. I **imagine** them only interested in women’s bodies and wanting to be with many women as if it was a contest. (E11/CS2/Sarah)

This is what is expected of women in the story – to look sexy and please men sexually. **This is what happens in any patriarchal society, like the one in Latin America.** (E6/CS2/Suzanne)

The data indicate how students *imagine* Hispanics and ‘all’ men as very chauvinistic - the ‘all’ remains implicit but is important. In their imagination, the *other* is constructed (or imagined) through the stereotype of male chauvinism in the Hispanic world, a concept which is reinforced by the literary text. For some of the students, the short story represents Latin American patriarchal society, where men treat women as if they only existed to satisfy their sexual needs and use vulgar and obscene language to belittle and underestimate them.

Suzanne expresses it well when she comments *this is what happens in any patriarchal society, like the one in Latin America*. In this categorical assertion, she is making an essentialist observation territorially and geographically bound to the Latin American world.

At this point I find it pertinent to return to McLaren's notion of ideology, which he defines as the 'production and representation of ideas, values, and beliefs and *the manner in which they are expressed and lived out by both individuals and groups*'. The 'manner' in which the students' ideologies are 'expressed' in this study is primarily essentialist. The 'natural' and 'commonsense' assumption is that Hispanics' behaviours, values and attitudes are 'entirely defined and constrained by the cultures in which they live' (Holliday 2011: 4). Further, data analysis in the three case studies also reveals that the students believe that cultures are territorially and geographically bound, thus supporting Holliday's theory that the most common aspect of essentialism has to do with 'separate cultures as physical territories'. As the students engaged in the 'virtual ethnographic observations' (Pulverness, interview data) of the situations in the hair salon during the reading process the students' perceptions reveal that, in the eyes of most undergraduates, male chauvinism is prevalent in the Hispanic world. The story reminds students of trips to and experiences of gender inequality in Hispanic countries, where they claim to have met sexist men, like Víctor, and subservient women, such as Norma and Ester.

Undergraduates express the opinion that Hispanic men believe they can 'control', 'dominate' and 'own' women, even to the point of choosing the clothes they should wear. They also describe Hispanic women as being submissive, subservient and obedient to men. The data demonstrate rigid essentialist views which describe human behaviour as if this was predetermined and confined by territories. Examples include 'Latin American men have little respect for women'; 'The Italians and the Spaniards are well known to be the opposite of the English' or 'In England we don't have such a male chauvinistic culture. English women would not tolerate sexist behaviour'. A cross-case study analysis reveals the commonly held belief that behaviours can be geographically prescribed, determined and expected. What is important in this essentialist discourse is that the judgements made – that 'our women are protected by the system' or that 'women can choose who they want to be and how they want

to live' for example – are considered as 'natural' and 'common sense' without challenge, i.e. they are unquestioned ideological judgements.

Furthermore, a cross-case study analysis reveals that when Latin American women are assigned positive attributes, like 'strength' and 'power', these are normally viewed only as reactions to patriarchy, for example, women are strong and powerful in order to fight against male chauvinism and to survive in a male dominated society in an ever-lasting battle against gender inequality. Many students see this type of women as 'quite unique' in Latin America. Holliday labels this type of ideology as 'neo-essentialist', which he defines as:

The dominant approach within the sub-discipline of intercultural communication studies which follows the essentialist and highly influential work of theorists such as Hofstede while claiming a more liberal, non-essentialist vision. (Holliday 2011: 198)

The neo-essentialist ideologies found in this PhD study relate to 'unexpected', 'unusual' behaviour found in an individual as not being, in this case, really Hispanic, but rather 'unique' (Holliday 2010: 266). Holliday argues that much of the current intercultural communication studies and training recognises the problems associated with essentialism, but follow a neo-essentialist model because:

basic cultural models implicit in the work of theorists like Hofstede are often implicitly maintained so that diversity continues to be the exception to the essentialist rule rather than being recognised as the norm. This results in a dominant paradigm, which remains neo-essentialist. (Holliday 2010: 261)

This neo-essentialist view can be perceived in some of the data in this study in comments such as 'Ester is quite unique'. For the students, whereas Ester is unique and exceptional, in 'our' society 'our women stand up for themselves' without exception; there are no challenges

to the generalisation. Another example of a neo-essentialist view comes from Lindsey's experiences whilst in Salamanca during her year abroad placement:

I'd always believed that, in general, Hispanic men were chauvinistic, sexist and sexually perverse, like the male characters in "Norma y Ester". My first impressions for quite a while after I arrived in Spain were that **this generalisation was correct**. Every evening that I went clubbing, it was always the Hispanics who came up to me and asked me "¿guapa, quieres bailar? [*babe, wanna dance?*]", while the rest of the nationalities, for example, **the British would sit in a corner chatting away in a low voice**. These Hispanics seemed to be full of self-confidence, and at times, I even thought that they were really trying to conform to the stereotype! ... however, I later realised that **not all men were like this. In Salamanca, I met shy and honest men, respectful of women.** (OP5/CS2/Lindsey)

It is interesting to note that Lindsey equates men asking her for a dance with chauvinism and perversion, whilst shy men, who mind their own business, are regarded as honest and respectful of women. There is clearly a strong sense of idealisation of men from her country, whilst demonizing Hispanic men. Lindsey's starting point is essentialist as indicated in her linguistic choices *in general, Hispanic men, the British* and *this generalisation was correct*, and her neo-essentialist view is expressed when she says *not all men were like this* as if 'diversity' was 'the exception to the essentialist rule rather than being recognised as the norm', to use Holliday's terms. Lindsey's assertion that she later realised that not all men were like this when she says *in Salamanca, I met shy and honest men, respectful of women* implies by default that this student regards men in Salamanca as dishonest and disrespectful of women, except for the few that she met who were not, whereas British men are honest and respectful of women. Ideologically this is then explained as a 'natural' or commonsense' element of the underlying essentialism.

8.2.2 Ideologies of Supremacy

The critical pedagogical interventions in this study aimed at raising awareness of the ideologies ('explicit criteria' or 'default ways of thinking') underlying UK-based students'

views of Hispanics, and to this end, one of the teaching approaches employed was to use fragments of the data from CS1. These were transformed into pedagogical tasks (Task sheet Appendix F) for other students to identify the ideas, values and beliefs underpinning personal experiences. The theoretical justification for using personal experiences for textual analysis lies in Darder *et al.* (2009: 11), who postulate that ideologies manifest themselves ‘in the inner histories and experiences’. In the classroom, I drew a table on the board with two columns that read ‘Hispanic men’ and ‘Hispanic women’. The class was instructed to read the personal experiences (fragments of CS1 data) and to identify the ‘commonsense’ and ‘natural’ ideas, values and beliefs embedded in the past students’ ‘histories and experiences’ in respect to each of the categories. Students were provided with strips of paper to write their ideas on, which were later blu-taked onto the board in the corresponding columns. After completing this task, the columns on the board read as follows:

Table 12Hispanic Gender Stereotyping

Hispanic men	Hispanic women
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need to spread their seed, are hot-blooded and have many women • cannot control their actions or emotions due to this internal urge • engage in the cultural practice of catcalling and wolf-whistling • sexually objectify women • do not take women’s emotions into account • are chauvinistic • are controlling • are lecherous • are disrespectful • are arrogant • are inconsiderate • are sleazy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wear revealing clothes to please men and to get their attention because they want sex • are submissive, obedient, subservient and fragile • are used to being sexually harassed • are not respected or listened to • lack self-confidence and so do not fight for their rights • are treated as sex objects • conform to the traditional role of a woman • serve their husbands • are more accepting of their husband’s authority • let men exercise control over them

This table demonstrates the underlying ideologies in the students' stereotypes about gender identity in the Hispanic world. Men perceive themselves as 'superior' and 'more powerful', whilst women are classed as 'different' and 'inferior' from them. All of the attributes are negative. Hispanic men are perceived as womanisers, chauvinistic, disrespectful, inconsiderate, arrogant, lecherous and sleazy; whereas women are viewed as vulgar, needy, subservient, traditional and fragile. From the students' interpretations of the main characters in the story, there is a tendency to construct them as dichotomous binary opposites as an attempt to organise thought and shape meaning. Initially, Víctor is viewed as a strong powerful chauvinist, and women as weak powerless objects. These perceptions are later reversed and new binaries are constructed – Víctor becomes generous, emotional and affectionate, whilst Norma and Ester turn into manipulative agents of social change.

These binary oppositions reveal a hierarchal structure that privileges ideologies of supremacy, with positives and negatives. Thus, male attributes related to affection, emotion, consideration, kindness and generosity; and female attributes of power, control, strength and dominance are valued. These ideological standpoints, associated with Centre-European cultures by the students, permeate their discourses, and become the unquestioned norms to be adhered to. Pedagogies which encourage students to recognise the existence of these dichotomous binaries and the embedded hierarchal structures in their discourses, can open up a space for exploring how they are projecting their ideology onto others in a process of hegemony – which we shall analyse in more detail later in this chapter. The same exercise was later done with a table with two columns labelled as 'us' (the students) and 'them' (the Hispanics), which after the activity read as follows:

Table 13 Idealised Self / Demonised Other

<i>Us</i>	<i>Them</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • our women stand up for themselves • our women are protected by the system • what our women wear is a sign of elegance and femininity • our women can choose who they want to be and how they want to live 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their worldview is antiquated • their men are disrespectful and inconsiderate to women • their women are submissive and obedient • their men are arrogant, sexist and chauvinist • their women are unprotected by the system • their men are protected by the system • their men offend women in the streets and invade their private space • their women lack self-esteem and self-confidence • their women are sexually objectified • their women's agency is exercised through their bodies only • their women are victims of the patriarchal system • their women wear revealing clothes to attract male attention • their women are vulgar • their women are either 'completely subservient' or 'totally manipulative'

As it can be gleaned from this table, there is more detail in looking at the culture of the *other*, but there is little reflection upon their own cultures, and in particular, their own personal discourses when referring to *otherness*. This table contains more information in the 'them' column than in the 'us' column. Furthermore, the table reveals that students view 'them' as inferior and less civilised by associating them with negative attributes ('antiquated',

‘disrespectful’, ‘inconsiderate’, ‘arrogant’, ‘sexist’, ‘invasive’, ‘offensive’, ‘vulgar’, ‘manipulative’); whereas the column representing ‘us’ (the students themselves) represent only three aspects – ‘independence’, ‘equality’ and ‘elegance’ – all of which are positive. These discourses are essentialist and project an ‘idealised Self’, which is imagined always to be modern and successfully independent, and a ‘demonized Other’ (Holliday 2011: 3). Students’ ideologies become apparent as they speak from a position of power and privilege and of inhabiting and living in the so-called Centre. In their construction of an idealised image of the Self, they believe that they are modern, independent, civilised, elegant and advanced, which is the underlying ideology in the observations they make. These beliefs become their ‘commonsense’ and ‘natural’ assumptions and opposing gender attributes are judged as inferior and less civilised.

As previously stated, students often dichotomise ‘us’ and ‘them’; hence polarising Hispanic and European women. Most of the evidence indicates that Hispanic women are perceived to be passive, traditional, vulgar and victims of a patriarchal system; whereas European femininity is viewed in positive terms relating to elegance, freedom and self-confidence, with individuals protected by a system that guarantees gender equality. For example, a mini-skirt as semiotic text can be read as either *sexual provocation* - students’ ideology of Hispanic cultures - or as *a matter of personal choice* – their unquestioning ideological view of European cultures. These unequal binary opposites are evidenced in the language they use. Let us consider students’ comments such as *the majority of English women* as opposed to *the minority of Argentine women would fight against male domination* or *Ester is quite unique in Latin American society*. These observations demonstrate that students struggle to go beyond the binaries and their discourses of supremacy in the initial stages of analysis. What is important here is that students reveal their ideological standpoints in terms of binary oppositions, and display their discourses of supremacy by placing ‘us’ as superior and more civilised, and ‘them’ as inferior and less civilised. These representations reveal their ‘natural’ and ‘commonsense’ ideologies, which ‘perpetuate asymmetrical power relations’.

Other examples that illustrate the rigid binary constructions that favour the “local” over the “foreign” include the observations made about attitudes towards Erasmus student communities. British and Spanish institutions are also presented in binary oppositions,

labelling British organisations as “inclusive” and “supportive” and Spanish ones as “exclusive” and “unsupportive”. Other discourses of supremacy are revealed through class contributions such as *Hispanic men are disrespectful* and *European men take women’s emotions into account*. Students explicitly condemn cultural practices, such as catcalling and wolf-whistling, and their observations display negative feelings to incidents, such as men dancing without women’s prior consent, or issuing danger warnings against strong sea currents to women. Other students are disgusted by their perception that Hispanic men can dictate to their girlfriends what friends they can have or what clothes they can wear. These situations are perceived as sexist and patronising messages to women, reinforcing images of Hispanic gender identities being primitive and inferior to those at home, for regarding women as the weaker sex.

Consciousness-raising – or ‘clarifying’ to use McLaren’s term – through the use of critical analytic tasks along with reflective practices that reveal learners’ ideological standpoints to them and subvert hierarchical binary opposites can prove beneficial to develop ‘critical cultural awareness’. The concept of ‘ideology’ serves as a useful starting point in critical pedagogy to recognise and critically evaluate commonsense assumptions embedded in the discourses of Eurocentric dominant groups in relation to the Hispanic *other*. However, it is also important to understand the notion of hegemony for it can be used to examine the asymmetrical power relations and privileged positions that sustain the interests of the dominant groups. In the next section, I explore the concepts of ‘Centre’ and ‘Periphery’ as used in Intercultural Communication Studies as useful constructs to develop the notion of ‘critical cultural awareness’.

8.2.3 Centre-Periphery Ideologies

A cross-case study analysis reveals awareness of ideologies of supremacy in terms of binary opposites dichotomising the ‘Centre’ and the ‘Periphery’. Holliday (2011: 197; 199) defines the ‘Centre’ as a ‘location or state of economic and political power which defines and imposes meaning on the rest of the world’ and ‘Periphery’ as a ‘location or state which lacks economic and political power in such a way that it is defined and given meaning by the Centre’. Although Holliday uses the notions of ‘Centre’ and ‘Periphery’ to refer to

intercultural relations between the West and the non-West, his theory is also applicable to dominant and subordinate or marginal groups within a society, where the same principles apply, as will be seen later in this section. As students discussed the short story, they made observations of ideologies of supremacy that position men as superior to women in patriarchal societies, and although they did not use Holliday's terminology of 'Centre' and 'Periphery', the data indicate that the students were fully aware of a dominant group (the men in the centre) and a subordinate group (the women in the periphery) in the hair salon of Buenos Aires. The following pieces of data indicate students' understanding of social inequalities through the existence of a 'Centre' and a 'Periphery':

"Wait a minute" I thought. What is the function of women in this story? and I realised that **everything revolves around the women in this story** ... when I read it for the first time it seemed to me that **the women were just instruments**, but then I realised that they were in fact the **puppeteers, pulling the strings**. On a first reading, without going deep into it, without thinking, it seemed that **the women only did what the men wanted**. (OP4/CS2/James)

During my ten years there [the Arab Emirates], I saw several places like the hair salon in 'Norma y Ester', where Philippine immigrant young women worked in poor conditions **under the orders of** chauvinist bosses who mistreated them. (LD8/CS1/Mike)

Another similarity between Argentine culture, as represented in 'Norma y Ester', and Turkish culture is male chauvinism. **Men believe that they are better than women**. (LD13/CS1/Murat)

These students use language that denotes their awareness of the existence of a 'Centre' or a 'dominant group' imposing their own definitions, in Holliday's terms, on a 'Periphery', 'marginal group' or 'subordinate group'. The specific terminology of 'Centre/Periphery' had not been taught to these students, nor theoretical understandings related to

‘dominant/subordinate groups’. As a result of this, students used alternative language to express such concepts, like *everything revolves around the women; men believe that they are better than women; women did what the men wanted and were under the orders of men*. Furthermore, the women in the short story are referred to by James as being *instruments* and *puppeteers* at the same time, deconstructing in this way the hierarchal structure of men and women seen in binary oppositions of one gender group being superior to the other.

By placing the binaries within the women themselves, it could be argued that James appreciates the fluidity of identities as he moves away from the dichotomous practice of assigning fixed roles to gender. Another possible interpretation is that this student understands identity as a site of struggle, contradictory and multifaceted, with the co-existence of a multiplicity of subject positions. What is important here is that the examination of these dichotomous binaries - and the hierarchal ideologies embedded in them - can open up a space for questioning fixed notions of Centre/Periphery with a view to understanding that these can be subverted. This examination can also serve as the springboard for raising awareness of how students project their ideology onto others in a process of hegemony, a concept that will be explored in greater detail later in this chapter.

In some other data, students become aware of the invisibility of subordinate groups and the need to ‘work hard’ for these groups to ‘claim the world’. ‘Claiming’ the world is for Holliday (2011: 97) having the ‘ownership’ and the ‘capacity to expand culturally into different domains’. Holliday observes that some people in periphery situations, used to being defined by others, resist these definitions and struggle to make themselves visible and to be recognised by others, but points out that:

ideology is everywhere [...] both the Centre-West and the Periphery must own up to their fair share of ideology and of imagining the Other. Indeed, the claim that only the Centre-West is chauvinistic can easily be accused of being essentialist. (Holliday 2011: 187).

The following piece of data from Hasina illustrates these concepts. Hasina feels deeply frustrated to discover that in Gámerro's story, Ester ends up all on her own, without the support of her best friend, Norma, or an understanding mother, which leads her to conclude that:

Masculine power lies in money. For many years, I thought that there was no solution to this problem, and whether **women** are Argentinian or Indian, they are at the end of the day, **all destined to feel inferior to men.** However, Gámerro showed me a woman like Ester, who **fought** for her rights. As I was reading the scene in which she **strangles** Víctor, I felt a strange feeling of happiness and inner relief. I felt this way because Ester had found **a solution to injustice**, even if her way was not the most appropriate one [...] [Gandhi] succeeded in securing independence for India, but **what woman has gained respect from men and achieved freedom from male chauvinism on the basis of being patient? None.** Until now, women keep on **fighting for better treatment**, and even if it is politically incorrect, **we need to show men our power and strength** (LD2/CS1/Hasina)

The language used by Hasina suggests the recognition of a 'Centre' represented by men and a 'Periphery', represented by women in countries like Argentina and India. For example, Hasina makes reference to *masculine power* lying in *money*. Whereas Holliday defines the 'Centre' as a 'location' or 'state' of 'economic and political power', Hasina unknowingly transfers the same concept to gender. She views women as *being destined to feel inferior to men*, and observes that they 'struggle to make themselves visible' and 'need to work hard' – in Holliday's terms – in order to 'claim' some space and be recognised as equals. In her experience, Hasina has found no examples of women being treated as equals *on the basis of being patient*, but she finds evidence in the literary text of one woman (Ester) who resorts to strangulation so as to find *a solution to injustice*.

It is also interesting to note that Hasina views the strangulation scene as a 'collective action' (Wright 2010: 578) as Ester's intention to enact change for *all* women (see social psychology

research on ‘collective action’ in the section entitled ‘Reducing Stereotypes in Chapter 3). Although Holliday uses the notions of ‘Centre’ and ‘Periphery’ to refer to intercultural relations between the West and the non-West, I have appropriated this theoretical model to illustrate dominant and subordinate or marginal groups within a society, where the same principles also apply. This piece of data is therefore supporting Holliday’s theory of ‘Centre’ and ‘Periphery’ in intercultural relations between different locations and states, with a specific application to gender relations in the literary text and in societies like those in Argentina and India. In the next section, I explore the notions of ‘hegemony’ and ‘counter-hegemony’ as used in Critical Pedagogy as useful constructs to develop the notion of ‘critical cultural awareness’.

8.2.4 (Counter) Hegemonic Ideologies

Hegemony is a social process whereby a dominant socio-cultural class has control over a subordinate group. Critical Pedagogy is engaged in a constant battle against hegemony. McLaren (2009: 67) contends that:

The dominant culture is able to exercise domination over subordinate classes or groups through a process known as *hegemony*. 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*. By *social practices*, I refer to what people say and do. [italics in original]

McLaren (2009) describes hegemony as a prison-house of meanings, language and ideas that enters ‘freely’ into the dominators and dominated. The hegemonic sense of the world becomes popular commonsense assumptions. Hegemony refers to the imposition of the ideologies of dominant groups on subordinate groups, and it is achieved by winning the unconscious consent of the oppressed, who unknowingly participate in their own oppression by actively subscribing to many of the values of the oppressors. The dominant class supplies

“terms of reference” (i.e. images, stories, ideals), symbols, signs, representations, meanings, and tries to “fix” them as if they were commonsense worldviews, masking relations of power and privilege through the media, educational settings, government institutions, churches, family socialization, etc. Specific subject positions are assigned to individuals who are expected to react in prescribed ways to ideas and opinions, which are viewed as natural, commonsensical and inviolable. Resistance, struggle and confrontation emerge in terrains of transactions and exchange and oppositional (or counter-hegemonic) ideologies do exist, and are sometimes tolerated by dominant ideologies, and given some symbolic space for limited periods of time.

In the cross-case study analysis, I found that students empathise with Ester’s predicament and take her side in her counter-hegemonic resistance against men. As Ester thinks, speaks and fights from the margins in the short story, students observe that the ideologies underlying their perceived Hispanic gender identities are ‘antiquated’ and not accepted in the Centre-West, as they are regarded as being traits belonging to ‘more primitive’ and ‘inferior’ cultures, like those, in their opinion in the Hispanic world. Therefore, students develop an empathic attitude towards Ester, whose counter-hegemonic discourses challenge the chauvinistic ideologies imposed by the men in the hair salon. This empathic attitude towards Ester in her counter-hegemonic struggle reveals the students’ ideological standpoint that women should be strong and independent individuals, who should not tolerate men’s oppression and should fight for her rights and gender inequality. This ideology of strong, independent women fighting for gender inequality, commonly associated with Centre-West cultures, thus becomes the accepted ‘commonsense’ and ‘natural’ assumption for the students to use in their judgements of the events in the short story

Students appreciate the workings of hegemony and asymmetrical power relations in the literary text as they describe the men in the story as sexist and chauvinistic, with social and financial power to define relationships. These men objectify, exploit and abuse economically deprived women. This male-domination is enforced in a variety of ways, including sexual harassment, discrediting women’s intelligence, and job instability and security. What is important here is that although the specific terminology is not used, students make references to the men in the hair salon imposing their own ‘terms of reference’, in McLaren’s words, on

the women in a hegemonic process, whereby man-made meanings and representations are being 'fixed' as if they were 'commonsense worldviews'. These hegemonic representations maintain relationships of power and privilege in a 'man's world', where women are disrespected and subservient to men's wishes and desires.

In response to the CP task in which students were required to find evidence in the literary text which contradicted their stereotypes, students display an understanding of Ester's counter-hegemonic agency and praxis, as she subverts apparent rigid gender roles when she rebels against the patriarchal system and tries to kill Víctor, whilst her best friend Norma embodies counter-hegemonic resistance from within by taking him as her lover. Students become aware that counter-hegemonic resistance can take many forms and describe the counter-hegemonic actions embodied in the characters of Norma and Ester, who resist the positionings assigned to them by men in different ways. For example, some students view 'objectification' as a source of power for these women and the use of their bodies and sexuality as weapons to keep their jobs or to obtain certain privileges in their private lives.

Others voice the opinion that their initial perception of Norma and Ester as passive and accepting of a 'man-made' world completely changes in the second reading as they discover their counter-hegemonic resistance and praxis. In this reading of the story, the fictional women are viewed as manipulative agents, who use their intelligence to adapt man-made rules as an instrument to exploit and control men. As part of their counter-hegemonic processes, many students observe Norma and Ester's transitions from passive into active agents of social change as acts of resistance to the prevailing patriarchal system in the hair salon. Both women 'act' to change the status quo. They fight gender inequality and social injustice in different ways. Norma takes Víctor as her lover in what appears to be a strategy to obtain financial assistance for herself and her two young children; whilst Ester violently opposes the system by attempting to murder Víctor.

Gamerro's short story provides opportunities to gain insights into the existence of 'oppressors', embodied in hegemonic masculine discourses being projected onto the women

(the ‘oppressed’) who, in McLaren’s terms, ‘unknowingly participate in their own oppression’ by their ‘unconscious consent’. The following data illustrate this process:

The fact that **Ester is only allowed to** wash men’s hair, but not to cut it also shows how little regard the men in the story have of her. **Ester is only allowed to** leave her little room at the back where she washes men’s hair to go to the main salon to sweep the floor. She is underestimated in the sense that it appears that it is not worth training her to become a haircutter as **she is believed not to be capable to learn the job.** (E15/CS2/Steffi)

Men in the story have all of the money, and women have to satisfy their sexual needs to earn it. For example, Víctor owns a factory and Don Sebastián owns a hair salon, whilst the women are exploited in the tiny room at the back. All that **Ester is allowed to** do is the low jobs, like serving the coffee, cleaning the hair salon and washing men’s hair. The men speak to her disrespectfully, for example, Don Sebastián shouts an order to Ester in front of everyone in the hair salon “Two coffees! And wash that hair quick, there are two more customers waiting!” **I find this most unfair.** (E9/CS2/Stella)

Students observe that the men in the story have *all of the money*, which gives them the power and the privilege to be the ‘oppressors’, who dictate Ester what she is and what she is not *allowed to do* in a hegemonic process. Students observe that work opportunities are limited for Norma and Ester based on their gender and empathise with their predicaments. Both are given menial tasks to perform, such as washing men’s hair, and are expected to satisfy the customers’ sexual desires as an added value service to the business. For fear of losing their jobs, the women succumb to the pressures to prevent exclusion from the labour market, thus consenting to the oppressors’ hegemonic ideologies and perpetuating asymmetrical power relations.

What is important to note here is that, when describing the counter-hegemonic actions of the female characters of the stories, the students' ideologies are revealed in their observations. They often make reference to Centre-West attributes associated with European women (confident, independent, strong to fight for social justice) to describe the types of counter-hegemonic resistance women should engage in for gender equality. In analysing the ways women in the story resist patriarchal hegemony, students use their own hegemonic discourses and evaluate what is right and what is wrong for them. For example, some students condemn Norma's decision to take Víctor as her lover since this act does not conform to the students' schemata of how a strong, independent woman should behave. Critical Pedagogies can help to raise awareness of students' own hegemonic ideologies, which are unconsciously perpetuated and used in their judgements.

This same ideology is also revealed in the analysis of the strangulation scene in the short story, as students witness how Ester enacts her counter-hegemonic agency from a standing position as she washes Víctor's hair in the basin. As Víctor calls her 'dumb, slow and without a future' and attempts to touch her indecently, Ester and Víctor break all the stereotypes that students have about Hispanic women and men when Ester attempts to murder Víctor. In that scene, Ester enacts nearly all of the attributes that students often associate with European women. She's full of confidence and exercises her freedom to act in the name of justice. Ester's strength and power quickly subvert gender and power relations. Importantly, Víctor is positioned as a useless man totally dominated by a woman. The open-ended nature of the story leaves students with the feeling that after the torture scene, Víctor enjoys Ester's new agency and power and falls for her, contrary to the stereotypical view that Hispanic men enjoy exercising their power over women.

Similarly, when during their year abroad, students themselves are positioned as the marginal *others* in their experiences of being stereotyped, they voice their counter-hegemonic resistance to the ideas, meanings and values imposed on them by their 'dominators' and 'oppressors' (the Hispanics). In response to the CP task that required learners to narrate their own experiences of being stereotyped, students become aware of their own counter-hegemonic struggle to be recognised and represented. There is hegemonic intention in the stereotyping they suffered, i.e. an expectation by the Hispanics that the students will willingly and unconsciously accept the characterisations and stereotypes assigned to them and the

power relations involved. However, as the data demonstrate, some students resist these characterisations with counter-hegemonic discourses and behaviours, whilst others consent to them; therefore participating in the perpetuation of the oppression exercised by Hispanics on them. The short story acts as a catalyst for students to narrate their own ‘bodily experiences’ of *othering* and to become aware of hegemonic stereotypical discourses in the Hispanic world; thus feeling the oppressive nature of stereotyping.

Some of these experiences refer to academic inequalities due to perceived unfair treatment and negative behaviour from some university lecturers in Spain and Mexico. It appears that some students were subjected to stereotyping of poor academic performance relating to British students, which led to prejudices and exclusion from lectures and seminars. Another student reported on her experiences of being singled out as ‘different’ in classes in Mexico for not sharing Catholic religious beliefs. Other students made reference to the stereotypical ideologies of Hispanics in respect of English students, and identify Hispanics as their ‘oppressors’ by accusing them of injustice and inequalities. For example, many of the research participants spoke of being *othered* and marginalised based on ethnic discrimination. They talked about their experiences of being excluded from mixing with local students, of being robbed of their belongings just because they were British and of being looked at as if they came ‘from another planet’. The inequalities that these personal histories reveal are triggered by the short story, which brings out ‘the biographical experience of having been the object of power’ (Luke 2005: 27) to the fore for analysis and reflection.

A cross-case study analysis reveals that students engaged in counter-hegemonic struggle by resisting the subject positions imposed on them by Hispanics. As students reflected upon the fictional character’s agentive power, they narrated the ways in which they themselves assumed their agentive and active roles. Many undergraduates were labelled as ‘lazy and ill-mannered’ by the Spanish lecturers; therefore not accepted in their lectures and seminars. Others were accused of ‘living in the Erasmus bubble’ not wanting to integrate into Spanish culture or to socialise with the locals; whilst a number of female undergraduates were stereotyped as ‘easy’ and ‘binge drinkers’. Danielle for example, enacted her agency to deconstruct the generalised views that blonde English girls with blue eyes have loose morals and do binge drinking. She resisted the dominant discourse through social action, and

rejected the idea of being categorised within the constraints of a stereotype. Another student called Lauren resisted the dynamics of power relations with her Spanish housemates, and used language as a mechanism of power to modify her social positioning. She disliked being seen as a shy reserved lady. Therefore, through the use of agency, she reframed her relationship with her Spanish housemates in such a way that she then felt she had the 'right' to initiate discussions, give advice and develop arguments. Other students also described the actions taken to remove their linguistic barriers to achieve higher standards of Spanish in order to be able to integrate into the Spanish educational system.

Students resisted identities imposed on them by Hispanics in a hegemonic process, as much as Ester resisted her identity as a powerless sex object. As a result of this, a few students used their agency to contradict the local preconceived beliefs and to empower themselves to change circumstances in their counter-hegemonic struggle. A few other undergraduates reported feeling disempowered due to the Spanish language limitations, with repercussions on gaining access to seminars and sharing lessons with native speakers. Importantly, in the students' analysis of the counter-hegemonic strategies employed by the female characters in the short story and those employed by the students themselves, they display their own hegemonic ideologies of supremacy. For the students, the counter-hegemonic weapons employed by Norma and Ester are their 'female body', 'sensuality', 'sexuality', 'violence' and 'manipulation' (i.e. negative attributes). However, the counter-hegemonic weapons students claimed to use were 'strong determination' to change circumstances, and 'dialogue' with the locals to change the 'masks' that had been placed upon them for 'masks' that would represent them better (i.e. positive attributes). These personal experiences reveal the strategies students developed to feel empowered in their powerlessness, and to turn their stories of inability into stories of ability.

In sum, the major aim of this PhD thesis has been the investigation of the concepts, values, and meanings embedded in the students' stereotypes that can potentially perpetuate asymmetrical power relations. The analysis of stereotyping and being stereotyped is the focus for the more general purpose of developing 'critical cultural awareness'. 'Critical cultural awareness' can be understood as a matter of becoming aware of and unmasking or 'clarifying' one's own ideologies. The deconstruction of stereotypes and awareness of

commonsense assumptions are of paramount importance in intercultural education since stereotypical thinking benefits dominant groups through the hegemonic projection of certain ideologies. With the aim of ‘clarifying’ or uncovering these ideologies, I developed intercultural tasks and collected data of students’ responses to my pedagogical interventions in each case study. So far, in this chapter, I have revisited the data with the aim of ‘clarifying’ the ideological concepts that could possibly ‘perpetuate asymmetrical power relations’ between students and Hispanics, and the next section explores critical pedagogical strategies for the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’ so that these ideologies can be brought out to the fore for analysis by the students themselves.

8.3 Critical Pedagogical Strategies

This section attempts to answer the main research question in this PhD research of how can Critical Pedagogy help students deconstruct stereotypes for the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’ and, to this end, it describes the critical pedagogical strategies and interventions employed in this study and those that emerge from this study. It has been suggested by Guilherme (2012: 360) that Critical Pedagogy can be effectively used for the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’ through the critical analysis of ‘experiences of cultural difference’. She postulates that Critical Pedagogy:

unsettles **deep-rooted** values and principles, **unquestioned** concepts and **automated** routines, all of which lead to unconscious criteria and uncontested judgements [...] It is always a challenge to attempt to deconstruct and uncover ideas, feelings and behaviours that are generally **taken for granted** or are often hidden from view and to invite students to address and explore them. (Guilherme 2012: 368) [emphasis added]

Critical Pedagogy, engaged as it is, in a ‘battle against hegemony’ that seeks to free students from, in McLaren’s terms, the ‘prison-house of meanings, language and ideas that enters ‘freely’ into the dominators and dominated’ has much to offer to those who suffer from oppression. Or to use Guilherme’s terms, Critical Pedagogy ‘unsettles’ the ‘deep rooted’, ‘unquestioned’ and ‘taken for granted’ ideologies that are projected onto others in a hegemonic process.

8.3.1 Conscientization

As a CP teacher, the pedagogies I developed sought to test Luke's theory of whether the 'bodily experience' of alterity can raise students' awareness of situations of 'oppression' experienced during their year abroad as a means to transform reality. As students were positioned in a place where they themselves thought, spoke and acted from the margins, they became aware of their own ideologies and (counter)-hegemonic processes. In this process, it can be argued that students were developing Freire's notion of *conscientização* through a dialogic 'problem-posing' method of education, which for Freire (2009: 57-59):

strives for **the emergence of consciousness** and **critical intervention in reality**. Students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, will feel increasingly challenged and **obliged to respond to that challenge** [...] In problem-posing education, men develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation [...] A deepened consciousness of their situation leads men to apprehend that situation as an historical reality susceptible of transformation. [italics in original; emphasis added]

Therefore, I developed a task, which brought to the fore, what Luke terms, the 'bodily experience' of those who 'have been the objects of symbolic and physical violence', of those who have felt oppressed by the imposition of hegemonic ideologies of dominant groups to stimulate the '*emergence of consciousness*' in the hope that students will feel 'obliged' to critically intervene in the future and transform reality (for further detail about Luke's theory see Chapter 7). From a Freiren perspective, the future is hopeful and prophetic, and can only lead to humanization. Gamero's short story thus served a dual function. It provided opportunities to gain insights into the students' stereotypical and essentialised notions of Hispanic identities and the associated prejudices against Hispanic peoples. It also acted as a springboard for students' narrating their own experiences of being subjected to stereotypical and essentialised thinking and to suffering prejudice. The social and gender inequalities

portrayed by a man and two women in a hair salon of a working class neighbourhood in Buenos Aires, acted as a catalyst to bring out ‘the biographical experience of having been the object of power and violence’ so that students’ preconceived ideas and past experiences could be brought to the fore for analysis and reflection.

To this end, I developed a task that encouraged students to narrate their experiences of being *othered* in their year abroad experiences. However, before this exercise, I engaged learners in an ‘intellectual, deconstructive, textual, and cognitive analytic task’ (Luke 2005: 26) by designing an activity that involved ‘an intellectual exercise’ in Luke’s sense of the phrase for the development of a ‘self-regulation strategy’ to control prejudice and stereotypical thinking. Therefore, I turned to the short story ‘Norma y Ester’ to encourage students to appreciate the workings of hegemony and counter-hegemony in a literary text, although I did not teach this specific ‘analytic metalanguage’ that Luke recommends for ‘textual analysis’, a pedagogical strategy which now, upon reflection and with the benefit of hindsight, I deem necessary. The issue of the use of ‘analytic metalanguage’ will be dealt with later in this chapter under the section of ‘Grammar of Interculture’.

Some students in CS3 discussed how being stimulated to critically evaluate their own experiences of marginalisation raised their awareness of them unknowingly participating in the oppression of others, as I noted in my log of reflections:

Pierre, Nicole and Lauren’s group discussion (part of their summative assessment) opened my eyes to something new. As they talked about their experiences of being stereotyped whilst abroad, they spoke about having developed a ‘**new conscience**’. They described this ‘new conscience’ as them having raised their awareness of the existence of dominant groups everywhere. They said that **in the same way as they felt victimised by Hispanics, they themselves may be unknowingly victimising others**. I don’t know if any other student has become aware of this or not, as I don’t have any other data in which students explicitly say this, but what I do know is that I (as a researcher) have now become aware of this, and I will speak to the teacher in myself of

the need to develop a teaching strategy to raise awareness of this aspect in future. (LoR/3 December 2009)

This piece of data demonstrates that the ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ speaks to both, the ‘oppressed’ and the ‘oppressors’, as both constructions can co-exist within ourselves. Given that most of the students who participated in this study were wealthy, from affluent backgrounds, middle class, Europe/Centre/West-based, the supposed ‘dominant’ group, it may be hard to imagine them as being the ‘oppressed’. It may be assumed that that these students may not have ever been ‘oppressed’ (or *othered*). However, although these students may be typically thought of as the ‘oppressors’, this study provides evidence of the tensions, contradictions and struggles of their identities as they relate to situations as being the ‘oppressors’ and the ‘oppressed’ at the same time. Pierre encapsulates this idea quite well when he links the class discussion with his own ‘bodily experience’ – to use Luke’s term – and begins to see the hegemonic projection of power through stereotyping:

In class we talked about our stereotypes of Hispanics, but we never spoke about how Hispanics might feel about them. We could have invited some Spaniards and Latin Americans to class for example to share our views of them with them and see what they think and how they feel. My suspicion is that they won’t be very happy with us if they hear that we think that they are sexist [...], disrespectful [...], arrogant [...] When in class I spoke about my own experiences of being labelled as ‘Napoleon’ and how that affected me, I wondered **who is stereotyping who? who is offending who? who is victimising who? who is labelling who?** And I realised that it all depends. **Sometimes I have the power, sometimes they have the power** [...] the ‘**new conscience**’ I have now is that **I am now aware of what an impact my thinking and my behaviours can have upon others.** (GD2/CS3/Pierre)

Arguably, when Pierre speaks of a *new conscience* and *sometimes I have the power, sometimes they have the power*, he could be said to be experiencing what Freire (2009: 57-59) terms ‘the emergence of *consciousness*’, whereby he becomes aware of asymmetrical relationships of power. As Pierre wonders *who* has the power, he also becomes aware of the fact that the world is not ‘a static reality’, but ‘a reality in process, in transformation’ and the impact that his own ideologies may have when projected onto others in a hegemonic process.

From a Freirean perspective, this ‘emergence of *consciousness*’ will challenge Pierre, who will feel ‘obliged to respond to that challenge’ for it is only after a process of a ‘deepened consciousness’ of one’s situation that certain elements, which had always existed, start to be perceived, reflected and acted upon for the emergence of ‘*critical intervention* in reality’.

Another student named Lauren, who held the group discussion with Pierre, spoke of the ideologies of supremacy upheld by her Spanish housemates due to the fact that they were native speakers of the language, and she was not. She discussed the impact that their attitudes had upon her. Lauren felt patronised, ‘treated like a child’ and ‘foreign’ during her stay with them, and was perceived as a ‘shy’ and ‘reserved’ young woman, an identity she resisted. This situation changed when Lauren’s Spanish roommates moved out of the house and three foreign students came to live with her:

My new housemates positioned me differently. For them, I was not only the one who had lived in the house before and knew how everything worked, but I was also the one who could give them advice about places of interest. Importantly, **I was the one with the highest level of Spanish**, the language in which we communicated. I noticed how **they respected my language competence**, which in turn influenced my identity for **I became the group leader. It was me the one who took the initiative now.** (E17/CS3/Lauren)

Lauren also reflects upon the ways in which she may have positioned her foreign housemates as her higher language competence may have affected the power relations within the group. Lauren reveals that she may have underestimated them in a similar way as she herself had been perceived as inferior before:

I didn’t feel myself when my Spanish housemates regarded me as inferior because I was not a native speaker of Spanish [...] I may have been as **patronising** as them in the way I related to my new foreign housemates, whose Spanish was not as good as mine [...] the ‘**new conscience**’ for me now is **my awareness of these power relations based on language, which will be**

present in my head when I am confronted with a similar situation.

(GD2/CS3/Lauren)

The group discussion encouraged Lauren to reflect upon this experience during her residence abroad in Spain, and led her to develop what she also labelled as *a new conscience*, where she became aware of asymmetrical power relations due to language, a competence she intends to carry with her and use next time she is confronted with a similar situation. This type of prejudice based on linguistic differences is often referred to as ‘linguicism’ (Phillipson 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas 1988: 13). As opposed to Pierre, Lauren explicitly makes reference to how her ‘emergence of *consciousness*’ will lead her to a ‘*critical intervention* in reality’ when she says *my awareness of these power relations based on language [...] will be present in my head when I am confronted with a similar situation*. As previously stated, from a Freirean perspective, the future is hopeful and prophetic, and can only lead to humanization.

Through Critical Pedagogy, these students (who belong to the societies commonly thought of as the ‘oppressors’) spoke of their experiences of being the ‘oppressed’, and the critical evaluation of these experiences provided them with an opportunity to recognise the influence and impact that their own hegemonic discourses may have upon others. These students recognise that they may be unknowingly perpetuating inequalities, oppression and injustice as the ‘dominators’ and ‘oppressors’ of others as they reflect upon their own experiences of having inhabited the Periphery, albeit temporarily. This piece of evidence shows that being in a privileged position does not mean never having had the experience of being ‘oppressed’. This exercise, crucial for the development of intercultural competence, is central for the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’ and gives some support to Luke’s argument that such insights can only come when people have had personal experience of being oppressed, in this case through stereotyping. There is thus an educational need to design pedagogical tasks which raise awareness of asymmetrical power relations between dominant and subordinate groups, taking care however, for ethical reasons, in a situation in which students may feel accused of being the ‘oppressors’ responsible of injustices and inequalities. The aim of the task, which must be tackled with caution in order to avoid extreme discomfort or embarrassment, is the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’, whereby students can be critically guided to self-discovery without the teacher pointing at them as the ‘oppressors’

8.3.2 Naming the World

A teaching tool emerges from the theory and practice in this study, graphically represented in following diagram, to help students ‘name the world’ as they deconstruct stereotypes in the analysis of their own texts and those of others in the development of their ‘critical cultural awareness’:

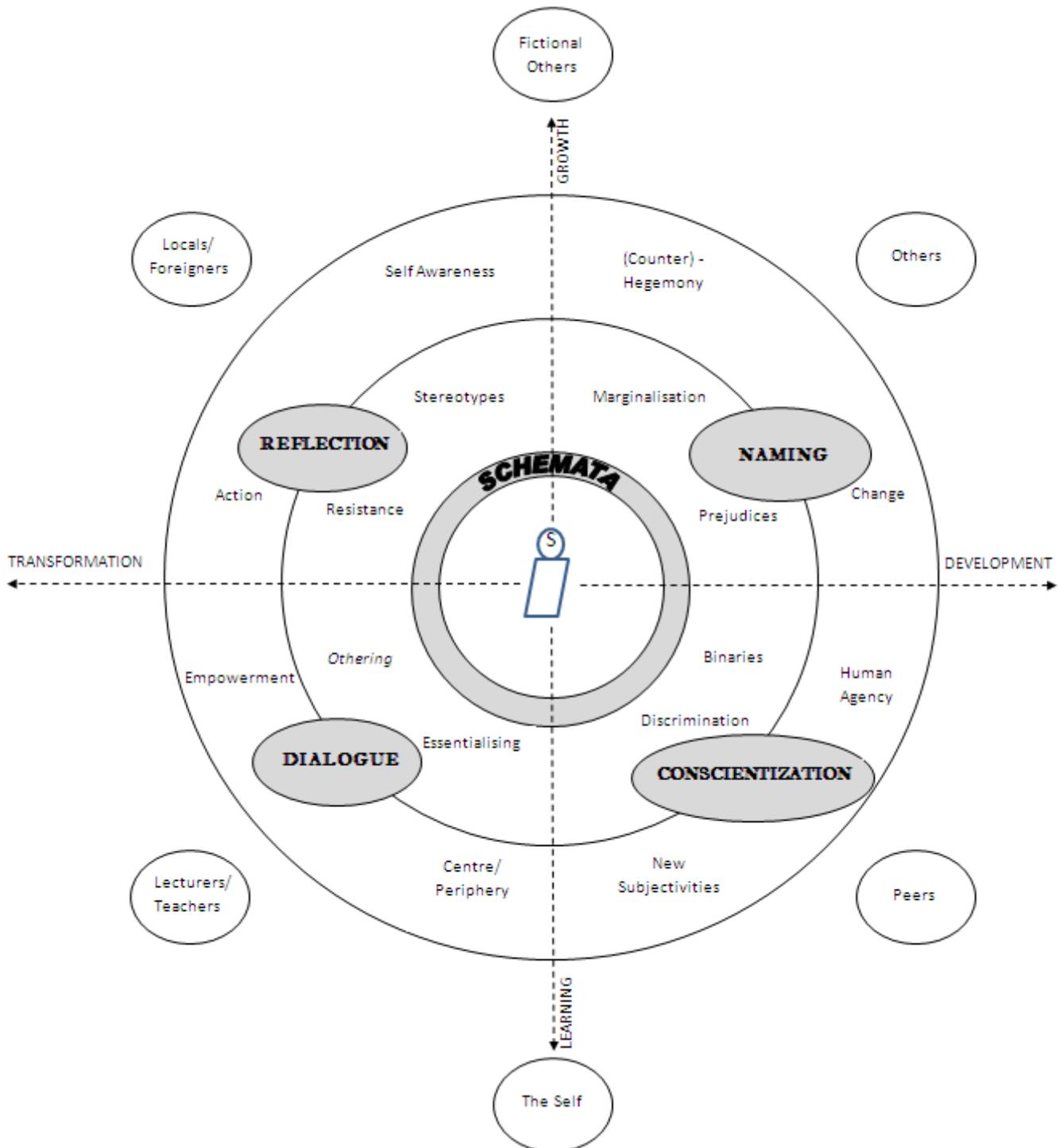


Figure 10 Teaching Tool

The diagram shows a representation of the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’ in the ‘thirdspace’ (see Chapter 3), which in this research study was the teaching space where students narrated their personal experiences and discussed the literary text ‘Norma y Ester’. It is in this ‘thirdspace’ that students can develop the ‘analytic metalanguage’ they need for their ‘textual analysis’ in the hope that it can be internalised and appropriated as part of their intercultural competence, an aspect which will be discussed in greater detail in the subsection entitled ‘Grammar of Interculture’. The use of ‘analytic metalanguage’ is intended for students to take for themselves, use and claim as their own. In other words, when students learn the terminology of a ‘Grammar of Interculture’ and learn to be more cautious in the language they use when talking about other people – avoiding stereotyping – then we hope this will lead to them being able to analyse their own ideologies and hegemonic relations with others in order to critique them and maybe change their own behaviour towards others.

In the absolute centre of the diagram sits the student, who looks out towards the cultural other through their own schemata, which are ideological. In the case studies conducted for this PhD research, the evidence demonstrated a tendency to stereotype, essentialise, marginalise and discriminate against those who are culturally different from us through a process of *othering* which has hegemonic purposes. It also indicated that students tended to think in terms of binaries, displaying prejudice against others and at times resistance to be defined by Hispanics and an intention not accept their definitions. As stated before, only when students have the opportunity of using the critical pedagogical interventionist approaches - ‘problem-posing’, ‘conscientization’, ‘dialogue’ and ‘reflection’ - do they learn, grow, develop and transform.

The dotted lines represent the evolutionary process at work, building upon their initial reactions before moving on to understanding cultures as multifaceted, dynamic and fluid processes. The labels in the outer circle represent a higher level of ‘critical cultural awareness’, where students display deeper self-awareness and understanding of the power of human agency to enact change, and a greater appreciation of the complexity of personal and cultural identities. When students reach this level, this can be taken as evidence of altered schemata. The external influences ‘sitting’ outside the diagram (i.e. lecturers/teachers, peers, locals/foreigners, others, perceptions of the self) affect the learners during the self-reflective process for the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’.

This teaching tool is a simplification of the complex social phenomena developed for didactic purposes. It represents a translation of theory into classroom practicalities, which can be used in a variety of ways. For example, students can be asked to keep a personal journal of reflections based on some class work for later self-analysis. One of the tasks that students can engage in is an examination of their own diary entries to find evidence of the labels in the diagram in order to uncover their own ideologies, values and attitudes. This exercise of analysing one's own discourses places students as outsiders – what Luke terms ‘out-of-body experience’, as we shall see in the next section - examining their ideologies from a position of distance. The teaching tool can also be used to plan lessons or to analyse other people’s discourses.

The development of ‘critical cultural awareness’ cannot be taken to be hierarchically ordered or neatly sequenced. The students’ personal ‘thirdspace’ is in a permanent state of reconstruction, growth is uneven and development is anything but linear or systematic. Importantly, students may develop their intercultural competences at different rates, exhibiting different levels of abilities to think, behave and act interculturally. These are not overnight processes, but through dialogue and reflection, and with help and guidance, students can gain new layers of understanding in the process of stereotype deconstruction and ‘critical cultural awareness’ development. The following section explores the rationale underpinning the development of a ‘Grammar of Interculture’ for the teaching of the ‘analytic metalanguage’ presented in the diagram above (Figure 10) for the more general purpose of developing ‘critical cultural awareness’.

8.3.3 A Grammar of Interculture

In his definition, Byram calls for ‘critical evaluations’ of products, practices and perspectives, which can be argued – and has been suggested by Byram as indicated above – necessitates the mastery of the terminology of a ‘Grammar of Interculture’, i.e words and phrases that make up the metalanguage of interculture. The field of intercultural education has not yet advanced far enough to produce a dictionary of key terms for language and intercultural studies; thus leaving educators in a position to develop their own dictionaries to fit their own

teaching contexts and realities. Some of the key theoretical terms suggested for the discussion of stereotypes are:

- Stereotyping
- Essentialism
- Prejudice
- *Othering*
- Discrimination
- Marginalisation
- Binaries
- Identities
- Subjectivities
- Agency
- Ideology
- Hegemony
- Counter-hegemony
- Neo-essentialism
- Centre
- Periphery
- Oppression

As can be gleaned from some of the data discussed in the previous section, given that students had not been taught the metalanguage of critical ‘textual analysis’ to analyse their own ‘bodily experiences of alterity’, they referred to some of these concepts using alternative language. For example, the group discussion that Pierre, Lauren and Nicole had prepared for their summative assessment provided them with the opportunity to reflect upon their own ideologies and those of others and to describe the workings of hegemony and counter-hegemony in explicit ways, although at no stage they used terms like ‘ideology’, ‘hegemony’ or ‘counter-hegemony’. The reflections that these students made in their group discussion were incidental, in the sense that there was no task specifying this outcome, although it is feasible to suggest that these observations were triggered by the critical pedagogical

approaches implemented in the seminar. The task the students were completing was a piece of summative assessment, and consisted of students preparing a 10-minute group discussion analysing critical incidents in which they had been victims of stereotyping during their year-abroad experiences. Despite the fact that students were not explicitly required to refer to aspects pertaining to hegemonic discourses, they theoretically framed their own experiences without using the specific terminology (or metalanguage).

This finding reveals that it may be useful for students to learn the metalanguage (or specific terminology) that would assist them in analysing and theorising their own experiences and those of others more accurately. Another piece of data that leads me to this conclusion is an analysis one of the students brought to class, which helped her understand some of her own views:

I was reading an article about culture and **I learnt a concept** which can be applied to this text. **It says that it is normal for people to think of other cultures as more primitive ... [we] tend to assume that other cultures are more primitive than ours ... I have done this myself ... in my culture [British], where women are very independent and share everything with men, we tend to believe that our culture and way of life is more advanced than others... lack of familiarity and lack of interaction with the Hispanic cultures have made me generalise, and as a result of this, the distance between the cultures has been intensified.** (CD5/CS3)

Upon reflection, this student comments that there is a tendency to believe that one's own culture, perceived as more advanced, is superior to others, viewed as more primitive, and that learning this new concept raised her awareness of her own ideologies of supremacy. This student could be said to be developing her 'critical cultural awareness' for she is explicitly voicing the criteria she uses to evaluate others. She also appreciates that a lack of familiarity and limited encounters with *otherness* widened the distance between her views and those of the Hispanics. Her own stereotypes 'blinded' her from appreciating the diversity of gender identities during her year abroad experiences. Indeed, research on stereotyping has found that

stereotypes create expectations about behaviours, which may limit what we perceive to fit into the pictures that we have of others (see section on *Stereotyping* in Chapter 2 for more detail).

Some of the ‘analytic metalanguage’ in relation to identity was taught to students in CS2 (see Chapter 6), which proved beneficial in their analysis of the short story “Norma y Ester”. However, students did not experience learning any other ‘analytic metalanguage’ to discuss their ‘bodily experiences of alterity’, and therefore resorted to alternative language. Through *conscientização*, students became critically aware of their own ideologies, dominant discourses and the workings of hegemony and counter-hegemony. However, it is now in the reflective process of me as a novice CP teacher and researcher, that I become aware of the need to teach learners the ‘analytic metalanguage’ so that it can be usefully employed in their ‘textual analysis’ for language and intercultural education. Therefore, a ‘Grammar of Interculture’ can be usefully implemented as a pedagogical tool for students to explain and illustrate the uses and applications of these key terms in their own texts and those of others, which will need to be empirically tested to prove its effectiveness in the critical evaluations of students’ own texts and those of others.

8.3.4 The Language of Interculture

A cross-case study analysis reveals that students use language which expresses fixed, rigid and essentialised notions of cultural and gender identities, a finding that has important pedagogical implications in language education. From this PhD study, it becomes apparent that there is a need to teach specific linguistic items – what could be termed as the ‘language of interculture’ – to be used when discussing issues related to stereotyping. An analysis of the language in the students’ testimonies reflects an embedded belief in a structural-functional model of culture, whereby society appears to be an object that can be described and cultural behaviour predicted. Despite this, there is sufficient evidence in the data that indicate some acknowledgement of human agency and social action as strategies to resist essentialism and stereotyping. Holliday (2007) advocates a ‘methodology of prevention’, whereby students are introduced to tentative, cautious language that avoids essentialised, simplistic assertions; developing thus their academic literacies.

Much can be done in the foreign language classroom to raise learners' awareness of their ethnocentric prejudiced talk, and their views as the norms into which *others* are expected to be assimilated. It is hoped that by exposing students to a repertoire of linguistic choices, these will be learnt, appropriated, internalised and recontextualised as a transferrable language skill and intercultural competence. What follows is a sample repertoire of more tentative, cautious and academic language items in Spanish, with their translations in English, for teacher and student use:

Table 14 Language of Interculture

Spanish	English
Es posible / probable / factible que ... Lo más probable es que ... La factibilidad / la posibilidad de + INF Puede ser que ...	It is possible / likely / probable / feasible that ...
sugerir / proponer / insinuar / indicar / parecer / llamar a la reflexión / la impresión que da es (que) .../ según parece ... / parecería que ... / al parecer / parece (ser) que ... / se desprende que ... / se tiene la impresión de que ... / aparentemente / en apariencia / tender a ... / tener tendencia o propensión (a) ... / soler / inclinarse a ... / parecer indicar que ... / tal como lo indica	suggest / imply / indicate / appear to / seem to / tend to / tend to suggest
a menudo / varios / unos cuantos / algunos / por lo general / / ciertos / algunos / a veces / otras veces mientras que .../ uno de los temas principales	often / many / some / generally / sometimes / other times / certain / while / a key theme
en contraste con / a diferencia de / en contraposición a / por contraste	in contrast to <i>or</i> with/ by contrast

Spanish	English
Podría decirse que esto refleja ... Podría argüirse / argumentarse que ... Posiblemente ...	This arguably reflects / Arguably
Según ... Conforme a ... De acuerdo con ... Tal como lo indica(n) ...	According to
se define como ... por ejemplo / tal(es) como	has been described as such as / for instance

My own teaching experiences of having introduced such language for students to paraphrase, rephrase and improve their essays and oral presentations show improved academic literacies. Language, as a tool, provides a way to express ideas and categorise thinking. Language also reveals our way of thinking and viewing the world and has the potential to change the way we think. However, questions that still remain unanswered and would need to be tested empirically are, *can this 'language of interculture' help learners think more interculturally? Can I, as their teacher, shape their thoughts by teaching them this new language? And importantly, can this language be used as a tool for students to transform themselves?* It is not within the scope of this research to answer any of these questions, and although the benefits in the development of academic writing skills have been noticeable, it still remains to be seen whether the students become more interculturally competent as a result of this exercise.

8.4 Conclusions

This chapter analysed the findings of the three case studies so as to provide empirical evidence of *what* 'critical cultural awareness' means in this study and *how* it can be developed through Critical Pedagogy. It further discussed the data in order to refine Byram's concept of 'critical cultural awareness' using the theoretical constructs of 'ideology' and

‘hegemony’ as used in Critical Pedagogy and ‘essentialism’ and ‘Centre/Periphery’ from the field of Intercultural Communication Studies. Further, it answered the main research question in this study of *how can Critical Pedagogy help students deconstruct stereotypes for the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’?* by examining the notions of ‘conscientization’ and ‘naming’ within the context of this study. A teaching tool for the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’ was developed, in addition to a ‘Grammar of Interculture’ for the use of ‘analytic metalanguage’ and a ‘Language of Interculture’ with illustrative examples for student use of tentative and cautious language to avoid stereotyping. In the cross-case study analysis, data which illustrate the ‘explicit criteria’ students used in their evaluations were presented to demonstrate the ideologies that students project onto others in a hegemonic process.

Having analysed each case study in order to address the three operational sub-questions, in this chapter I attempted to answer the overarching research question in this study as previously mentioned. In this cross-case study analysis, it was found that Critical Pedagogy can help students deconstruct stereotypes by raising their awareness of (neo)-essentialist discourses that prescribe behaviours as geographically determined and expected, by appreciating their own discourses of supremacy that privilege the ‘us’ as opposed to ‘them’, and by understanding that binary thinking can lead to ethnocentrism. Critical Pedagogy was also found to be particularly useful to raise awareness of commonsense assumptions and of the existence of a Centre (dominant group) and a Periphery (subordinate or marginal group) through the examination of asymmetrical power relations and privileged positions. Additionally, Critical Pedagogy helped students analyse the fluid, multifaceted, contradictory and complex nature of identity, ‘name’ the oppressive nature of stereotyping and describe (counter)-hegemonic processes. Students became particularly aware of the struggle for visibility of people in periphery situations, and developed some of the ‘analytic metalanguage’ of interculture to ‘name’ the world and to critique hegemonic relations with a view to changing behaviours towards others, in addition to developing cautious, tentative language to talk about foreign others. Furthermore, a tentative pedagogical model had emerged from theory (see Chapter 3) and was partially tested empirically in this study, although it should be noted that such pedagogical model was developed to be applied in the teaching context of this PhD study, with final year honours undergraduates with high levels of language competence and life and study experiences abroad. For it to be implemented by other teachers in other teaching contexts, it would require adaptation.

A cross-case study analysis revealed that the critical pedagogical approaches employed in this study, of engaging learners in an ‘intellectual’, ‘deconstructive’, ‘textual’, ‘cognitive’ exercise of analysing the short story contributes to the ‘textual analysis’ of the students’ ‘bodily experiences of oppression’, of ‘alterity’, of being ‘materially *othered*’ as Luke postulates. For example, students linked Ester’s identities, subject positions and agency as a member of a subordinate group with their own experiences of being ‘objects of power’ during their year abroad placements. In the same way as Ester resisted identities imposed on her and reframed relationships with others in an attempt to represent herself as a powerful confident woman, students resisted identities in the new environment they were immersed in. Importantly, in the students’ analysis of the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic processes in the short story, students revealed their own ideological standpoints which were unquestionably accepted as ‘commonsense’ and ‘natural’, or as ‘default beliefs’ in Holliday’s terms, and were used to make judgements of what is right and wrong, acceptable or unacceptable, appropriate or inappropriate. In this way, students became aware that they were unknowingly perpetuating asymmetrical relationships of power by imposing their own hegemonic ideologies on others; and it is at this point that Critical Pedagogy, particularly Freire’s concepts of ‘conscientização’ and ‘naming’, became a significant aspect of the pedagogical strategy. The following chapter will summarise the study and provide a synopsis of the main findings taking each research question in turn and will outline the contributions of this research project to the field.

9.1 Introduction

On a personal level, it has been liberating for me to develop ways to raise students' awareness of their stereotypical beliefs about Hispanics, and to actually 'hear' students verbalise and articulate the stereotypes that, as a Spanish language teacher, I had become aware of students holding. It has been liberating and empowering for me to find ways to unmask stereotypes, an area that I had previously been unable to deal with in my teaching due to a lack of theoretical foundation and knowledge on my part. This had been most frustrating for me as a teacher. However, the field of intercultural education and my PhD thesis have acted as catharsis in this process and have provided me with the tools to act upon the issue. Chapter 9 summarises the research study and provides brief answers to the research questions, outlines the contribution that this study has made to the field and concludes by reflecting upon the educational challenge of managing stereotypes for the development of 'critical cultural awareness'.

9.2 Summary of the Study

As previously stated, this PhD study set out to investigate the potential of Gamero's story 'Norma y Ester' for the purpose of bringing stereotypical thinking out to the fore for analysis and reflection. It aimed to explore the links students made between the literary text and their lived experiences in order to gain a better and a more in-depth understanding of undergraduates' stereotypes about Hispanics. Additionally, this research project empirically tested critical pedagogical approaches to the teaching of stereotype deconstruction and refined Byram's concept of 'critical cultural awareness' as the overarching aim of this study. Figure 11 graphically represents the main findings in this study, which are explained in greater detail in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 and summarised in the next section:

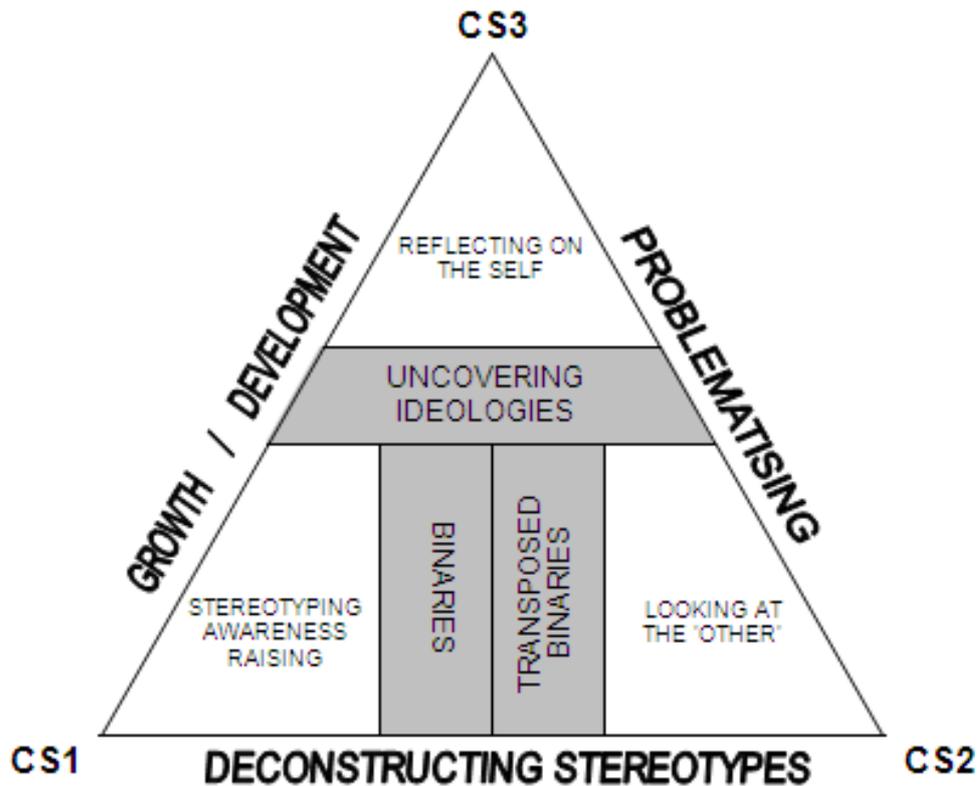


Figure 11 Study Main Findings

What follows is a brief summary answering the three operational research questions and the main overarching question in this study; thus providing a description of the above diagram:

Operational Research Question 1

How do students view the remote, and not so remote, Hispanic other?

In order to answer the first sub-question, Case Study 1 (CS1) was performed, the results of which indicated that students attributed negative values and essentialising identities and subject positions to Spaniards and Latin Americans, whilst they constructed favourable, privileged and positive identities and subject positions for themselves. This analysis led me towards a rethinking of my own pedagogical strategies and methodological decisions, with a view to developing teaching approaches for the deconstruction of stereotypes. I explored alternative ways of organising my teaching around engaging students in examining voices and experiences of intercultural encounters, the linguistic choices made, behaviours and attitudes displayed, developing in this process, ‘transformative intellectuals’ (for further detail see Chapter 2) and attempting to deconstruct ethnocentrism.

The findings of CS1 had significant pedagogical implications for me as an educator for they raised my awareness of the need to set learning objectives for a structured implementation of a reflective element that engages learners in taking a critical stance of their own worldviews and discourses so as to make their ideologies ‘explicit’ to them. They also raised my awareness of the need to develop pedagogical strategies to help students appreciate the complexities of cultural identities in order to move away from stereotypical thinking. This led me to CS2 and the second operational research question.

Operational Research Question 2

When taught with an ‘identity-focused’ Critical Pedagogical approach, how do students deconstruct stereotypes?

In order to answer the second sub-question, Case Study 2 (CS2) was performed where I implemented critical pedagogical interventions for students to become ‘conscious’ of their stereotypical images of *otherness*. This step was considered a necessary prerequisite to develop a ‘self-regulation strategy’ to control prejudice and stereotypical thinking (further details of ‘self-regulation strategies can be found in the section ‘Reducing Stereotypes’ in Chapter 3). Most students admitted having constructed preconceived notions of gender relations in the Hispanic world before their year abroad, which were later confirmed during their placement, whilst others narrated their experiences of feeling vulnerable for being treated as sex objects in countries like Mexico, Peru and Spain. The choice of a literary text dealing with one kind of stereotype i.e. gender stereotypes, was therefore in part determined by this experience. After this consciousness-raising task, students were provided with theoretical notions of ‘identity’ to analyse the complexities of gender relations in the literary text. The purpose of this exercise was to encourage students to develop a ‘mental reasoning’ tool that would act as a ‘self-regulation strategy’ (Monteith & McQueary 2010) to control prejudiced attitudes and behaviours in the real world.

The results of CS2 indicated that in the deconstruction process through the lens of identity, students transposed their stereotypical binaries and created new ones, whilst developing further viewpoints and perspectives. The pedagogical tasks that students responded to in this case study involved the analysis of personal experiences abroad and reading the literary text from a different perspective. In completing these tasks, students became critically aware of

their rigid worldviews and transformed their reading into a critique of gender and cultural identities through dialogue and reflection. Students learnt concepts relating to identity construction, which they applied as a template to read and analyse gender relations in the literary text in an attempt to deconstruct the stereotypes triggered by the short story. The pedagogies aimed to encourage learners to blur the boundaries between the binary opposites through deconstructive readings of texts in order to appreciate diversity and the dynamic, contradictory and fluid nature of cultural identity. However, understanding the complexities of cultural and gender identities was insufficient for students to appreciate the oppressive and damaging nature of stereotyping, which led me to the third sub-question in this study.

Operational Research Question 3

When taught with a Critical ‘Pedagogy-of-the-Oppressed’ approach, how do students describe and ‘name’ their experiences of being stereotyped?

In order to answer the third sub-question, Case Study 3 (CS3) was performed, where a critical pedagogical intervention of students describing and ‘naming’ their own experiences of suffering stereotyping was implemented. The results of CS3 indicated that students felt humiliated, ignored and discriminated against during their experiences abroad due to stereotyping. Many students felt stigmatised, victimised, isolated and marginalised; whilst others were made to feel unwelcome, uncomfortable and disliked. The oppressive nature of stereotyping was perceived and ‘named’ in many of the students’ intercultural experiences abroad, whereby students narrated their anecdotes of frustration, invisibility, vulnerability, confusion and fear. As stated in Chapter 7, students’ experiences of being stereotyped described the oppressive conditions of being essentialised and *othered* and their struggle to overcome this oppression.

Through critical pedagogical interventions, students were empowered to express their experiences of being stereotyped by Hispanics and the classroom became a site of liberation; an enabling intellectual and social space for the expression of personal anecdotes. Critical Pedagogy capitalises on students’ lived experiences, whereby students are encouraged to take a reflective stance on their own critical incidents to recognise asymmetrical relations of power and uncover their ideologies. The anecdotes in this case study highlighted the

intercultural conflicts students experienced with Hispanics. In this respect, Phipps & Guilherme (2004: 3) observe that:

intercultural communication has often erroneously established intercultural consensus and harmony as its only goal. Competencies for intercultural interaction entail the capacity to deal critically and successfully with dissent and even conflict through critical cultural awareness towards the Self and the Other and through honest and balanced negotiation.

As previously stated, a key aim in this PhD study has been the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’, whereby students were encouraged to look at the self and the *other* through voicing their stereotypes and expressing their experiences of being stereotyped. The processes to become more interculturally competent that the students underwent in this study are graphically represented in Figure 12:

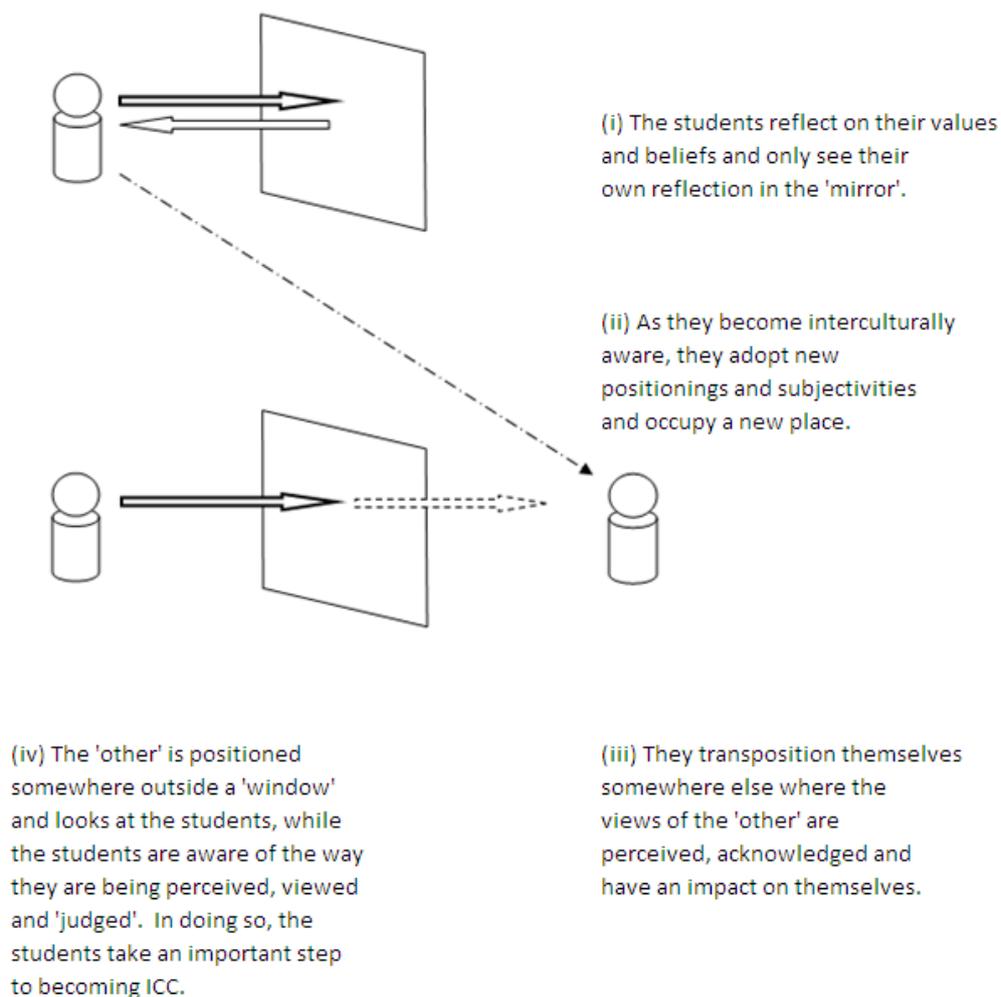


Figure 12 Positionings in the Development of ICC

I regard these processes as necessary steps towards developing ‘critical cultural awareness’ and the ‘capacity to deal critically and successfully with dissent and even conflict [...] through honest and balanced negotiation’. Awareness-raising tasks are a necessary stepping stone in these endeavours, and action and hope, as key elements for transformation in critical pedagogy, come after these initial steps. The answers to these three sub-questions in this research gave me a position from which to answer the main overarching research question in this PhD thesis, as follows in the next section.

Overarching Research Question

How can Critical Pedagogy help students deconstruct stereotypes in their development of ‘critical cultural awareness’?

Having analysed each case study in order to address the three operational sub-questions, I then went back to the theory and especially to the notion of ‘critical cultural awareness’. In Chapter 8 I reconsidered the data of the three case studies with a view of refining the notion of Byram’s ‘critical cultural awareness’ in the light of theory of ‘ideology’ and ‘hegemony’ from critical pedagogy, and ‘essentialism’ and ‘centre/periphery’ from the field of intercultural communication. Following this, Critical Pedagogy was found to have helped students deconstruct stereotypes in their development of ‘critical cultural awareness’ by:

- raising their awareness of (neo)-essentialist discourses that prescribe behaviours as geographically determined and expected
- appreciating their own discourses of supremacy
- understanding that binary thinking can lead to ethnocentrism
- becoming conscious of their commonsense assumptions and of the existence of a Centre (dominant group) and a Periphery (subordinate or marginal group)
- examining asymmetrical power relations and privileged positions
- analysing the fluid, multifaceted, contradictory and complex nature of identity
- ‘naming’ the oppressive nature of stereotyping
- appreciating the struggle for visibility of people in periphery situations
- describing (counter)-hegemonic processes

- raising awareness of how asymmetrical power relations may be unknowingly perpetuated
- developing ‘analytic metalanguage’ of intercultural to ‘name’ the world and to critique hegemonic relations with a view to changing behaviours towards others
- developing cautious, tentative language to talk about others

In addition, a tentative pedagogical model had emerged from theory (see Chapter 3) and was partially tested empirically in this study, although it should be noted that such pedagogical model was developed to be applied in the teaching context of this PhD study, with final year honours undergraduates with had high levels of language competence and life and study experiences abroad. For it to be implemented by other teachers in other teaching contexts, it would require adaptation.

9.3 The Approach to Literature

The pedagogical approach to literature developed in this thesis differs from conventional approaches in that the literary text is the teaching resource used to detect one's own stereotypes of those who belong to social groups different from ours through reader-response theory. In other words, this approach allows for the exploration and analysis of one's own stereotypical images of others, whilst reflecting upon reactions to those images. One of the critiques of reader-response theory in foreign language education lies in the fact that students may impose their own cultural definitions on the literary text. Therefore, this study sought to address this limitation of reader response theory by using critical pedagogy through consciousness-raising tasks that focused on the impact that one's own definitions may have on the reading process. The teaching aimed to make this impact explicit to the students through the analysis of their own responses to the literary text by demonstrating how personal worldviews and experiences may shape the understandings of a literary text, with a view to transferring this skill to real-life intercultural situations. Thus, in the process of aesthetic reading, students created their own 'texts' in the emotional engagement with the literary text. This 'new writing', that came out of the reading, became the educational source for the 'intellectual, deconstructive, textual, analytic, cognitive' critical analysis, that Luke refers to, necessary for the discovery of one's own discourses of *otherness*.

This teaching approach also differs from conventional approaches in that the reading of literature is used for the development of two self-regulation strategies for the reduction of stereotypes. The first self-regulation strategy involves the analysis of responses to literature to become critically conscious of one's own stereotypical images that may lead to oppression. As noted in Chapter 3, research in Social Psychology demonstrated that individuals often experience feelings of discomfort, guilt and embarrassment as they become aware of and reflect on their biases and prejudices, which can promote attitude change. The second self-regulation strategy consists of learning to read fictional and real-life situations through the lens of identity, rather than through the lens of stereotyping. This approach to literature involves appreciating the dynamics of identity in textual analysis with a view to altering and reducing stereotypical bias through a mental reasoning system. Empirical data in this study demonstrated that responses to literary texts can indeed be used for students to become conscious of their own taken-for-granted assumptions with the aim of developing self-regulation strategies to control bias and prejudice through stereotyping.

In summary, the pedagogical strategies to literature developed in this research study differ from conventional approaches in that reader response theory is used to raise awareness of stereotypes for later 'critical intervention in reality'. Further, literature is analysed through theories of identity with a view to learning a tool for textual analysis. This tool involves engaging learners in reading texts and situations from a different angle and against their schemata in order to help them control prejudice and stereotyping in real life situations. The purpose of this intellectual exercise lies in students moving away from 'freeze-framing' and fossilising cultures by learning that identities are fluid and constantly changing, rather than frozen and static. Finally, the pedagogies differ from conventional approaches in that by using student responses to literature as educational resources, critical pedagogical approaches can be applied to these 'texts' so that the oppressive nature of stereotyping can be appreciated by transforming abstract and theoretical textual analysis into 'bodily experiences' of social injustice.

9.4 Positionality

This section focuses and reflects upon my positionality as a researcher and the impact it may have had on the students who participated in this study during data collection and analysis. It considers the multiple I's (Peshkin 1988) in relation to this research study as (a) the 'woman-I'; (b) the 'academic-I'; (c) the 'South American-I'; and (d) the 'ideologically committed-I'. In my apprenticeship into research, an enhanced self-awareness of these multiple identities as expressions of my subjectivity can be articulated in more explicit ways now that I am at the end of my PhD thesis 'journey'. The role of reflexivity in positionality has been defined by Pillow (2003: 176-178) as a 'focus on how does who I am, and who I have been, who I think I am, and how I feel affect data collection and analysis'. Further Pillow (2003: 178) states that:

this focus requires the researcher to be critically conscious through personal accounting of how the researcher's self-location (across for example, gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality), position, and interests influence all stages of the research process.

In other words, reflexivity for Pillow is about raising awareness of one's own ideological biases as a researcher. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to reveal the different selves I developed and to unmask ideological standpoints I took in the completion of this PhD study in order to be 'critically conscious', in Pillow's own terms, of their influence on data collection and analysis.

The 'woman-I' reveals itself in the choice of the literary text 'Norma y Ester', for it reverberates with my personal life. The impact of my family situation, and in particular of my father's role in attempting to shape my thoughts, behaviour and future, cannot be underestimated. As I entered tertiary level teacher education, the chaotic family circumstances in which I completed my training years greatly disrupted my studies. My father struggled to reconcile his worldview of where a woman should be located in life with my ambitions as a teacher and as an academic. What was the point of me going to university when my place in society should be as wife and mother? I resisted this patriarchal definition

which prescribed that a woman who was an 'intellectual' was incapable of also fulfilling her role as a wife and a mother. These roles were, for me, never mutually exclusive. I also rebelled against male domination and power in my home environment and rejected imposed definitions of me being in a subordinate position in relation to my father and brothers. In later years, I resented my mother's acceptance and consent to male subjugation and oppression. I turned against patriarchal discourses in my domestic life by leaving Argentina in my late thirties, and became a South American immigrant in the UK. Despite this, I am 'still the young woman, rebelling against my father' through my writing, my intellect, my teaching and research (Manders 2012, personal communication). In my crusade against male oppression, I sought the complicity of my students to add more voices to my discourse in my personal battle against patriarchy; thus making it more powerful.

It is not my intention to turn this section into a confessional act; but it is nonetheless essential to acknowledge the impact of personal life trajectories in educational research processes. It is highly likely that my family history may have affected the choice of topic and data analysis in this research study as a way to deal with feelings and thoughts that have greatly disturbed me as a woman. It is also possible that as a self-defence mechanism I may have needed to intellectualise my life experiences, which could have feasibly led me to overanalyse data and meanings that helped me deal with the personal conflict of justifying my decision of shying away from my family against my parents' impositions. Arguably, the literary text may have allowed me to take a position of distance and detachment from my own personal circumstances through the discussion of the two female fictional characters. Literature may have feasibly acted as catharsis for me to rationalise my own personal struggle against patriarchy. Therefore, the 'woman-I' may have been using data analysis as therapeutic counselling, which could have led me to overlook data that did not fit into the realm of my personal experience. I may have unwittingly been more sympathetic with female students whose stories revealed patriarchal abuse against women. Had I been aware of this potential danger at the onset of this research, data analysis could have benefitted from the integration of this positionality into the research process.

Furthermore, the 'academic-I' in me was wary of the possibility of leading the students' thinking and discourses through my questioning and class activities. Early on, I became

aware of the need to develop 'ethical attitudes' (Rosenblatt 1995: 16) so as to 'make the criteria explicit', in Byram's terms, to myself and to the students. Recognising the central role that self-awareness of ideologies as a teacher occupies, is a necessary step to becoming honest about how these may influence aesthetic responses to the literary text and lesson planning and delivery. The same concept is applicable to research. Self-awareness of subjectivity could have led me to a more systematic identification of what I was avoiding and what I was foregrounding, what I was limiting and what I was broadening in data collection and analysis. In this respect, Peshkin (1988: 20-21) explains that:

By monitoring myself, I can create an illuminating, empowering personal statement that attunes me to where self and subject are intertwined. I do not thereby exorcise my subjectivity. **I do, rather, enable myself to manage it from being unwittingly burdensome** - as I progress through collecting, analysing, and writing up my data. [emphasis added]

As stated before, my early awareness that potentially, I could have influenced students' thinking and discourses and that I could have led them on, guarded me to prevent a potential limitation of the study to become a reality as much as I reasonably could. However, it now becomes apparent with the benefit of hindsight that, no matter how hard I tried to avoid bias, validate responses and be faithful to the data, I could not, as Peshkin says, 'exorcise my subjectivity'. Instead, I could have monitored it more closely and systematically, rather than intuitively. This would have allowed me to control my bias and make my subjectivity less heavy and loaded, for as Peshkin notes, the 'untamed subjectivity mutes the emic voice'. An important lesson learnt at the end of this PhD journey is that my personal log of reflections as a researcher, could have been more usefully utilised as a research instrument to monitor my positionality in a more formal way.

The 'academic-I' also reveals itself in my choice of critical pedagogy for the reading of 'Norma y Ester' in the development of teaching strategies for the deconstruction of stereotypes. The complex dynamics of my positionality as an 'academic-I' was intertwined with the 'ideologically committed-I' and the 'South American-I' as critical pedagogy became

more central in my teaching and research. The 'ideologically committed-I' came to the fore in my endeavours to raise awareness of student stereotyping of Hispanics that may lead to social oppression. However, in the process of applying critical pedagogical principles to myself as a teacher and researcher, I came to the realisation of the tensions between presenting the incohesiveness of research data in a neat and ordered fashion and the risk of essentialising and stereotyping the student population. Indeed, the need for categorising and classifying complex phenomena is in conflict with the argument that stereotyping and essentialising may lead to injustice and *othering*. Therefore, a conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that becoming critically conscious of this tension is a major step in developing the capacity to control bias and prejudice.

Further, critical pedagogy took me back to my EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher training years in Argentina and led me to conclude that I had been complicit in my own situation of a colonised mind in a world of Centre/West intellectual imperialism. The Centre/West told me what and how to teach in the non-Centre/non-West. Educational models and pedagogies from the northern hemisphere penetrated southern classrooms and minds in a hegemonic process, which I accepted, consented to and appropriated unquestionably. These discourses and practices became commonsensical, inviolable and natural in the EFL Argentinian community. Twenty years later, I became a South American immigrant in the UK and located myself in a position of distance and detachment from these hegemonic ideologies; thus decentring from my own taken-for-granted world (Byram & Fleming 1998). At the point of completing this thesis, the act of writing became cathartic in raising my awareness of my unconscious consent to intellectual imposition and domination. I had unwittingly been participating in my own hegemonisation. However, this PhD study goes only part way to becoming a counter-hegemonic tale of resistance, for it draws solely upon thinkers from the Centre/West, such as Kramsch, Byram, Holliday and McLaren, amongst others. It can also be argued that my mind is still being colonised by the Centre/West as I follow the academic conventions and research culture that a British university considers to be commonsensical, inviolable and natural in the completion of a PhD study. The 'ideologically committed-I' becomes visible again in my keenness to unlock myself from this intellectual imperialism by broadening the literature review in my post-doctoral research to include other voices, such as those who speak from the margins, in a process of intellectual decolonisation and internationalisation of research cultures.

The 'South American-I' positioned me in the periphery of the space where I conducted the three case studies in this research. It could be argued that this positionality allowed me to identify stereotypical comments about Hispanics more easily than if I had been in the Centre. The students who participated in this study were mostly from the Centre/West - the perceived 'dominators' - whilst I, from South America, had a more peripheral view of the world, allowing me to detect stereotypical, biased and prejudiced discourses (Manders 2012, personal communication). The 'South American-I' may have located me in a position of sensitivity and alertness to stereotypical comments; a vigilant state of attentiveness to perceive biased and prejudiced attitudes in relation to the students as a teacher and as a researcher. As the students in CS3 spoke of their frustrations at being prejudiced against during their year-abroad placement, their narratives acted as a mirror for me to see myself in similar situations and to recognise attitudes and discourses that I had experienced myself as an immigrant. Owing to this, my positionality as the 'ideologically committed-I' led me to have a political agenda at all stages of the research, as I had been the object of stereotypical prejudice, discrimination and marginalisation myself in my experiences as a South American academic.

Critical pedagogy provided me with a discourse to describe and 'name' my own experiences of oppression, which had enabled me to transform myself and to enact praxis so as to improve my own life and those of others. The political agenda of this research becomes more visible in my positionality as the 'ideologically committed-I' who needed to ensure catalytic validation (Kincheloe & McLaren 1994) for social transformation. Therefore, it could be argued that through my research, I may have wanted my students to undergo a similar experience to mine - that of self and social transformation by understanding the world in a different way and acting in less biased ways. It could also be argued that through my research I was engaging in collective action as an individual acting on behalf of all Hispanics in order to improve their condition and create change for the collective. The potential danger of this political agenda lies in that I may not have 'heard' counter-narratives of students not *othering* Hispanics or I may have unwittingly ignored resistance to my critical pedagogical interventions.

As can be gleaned from this account, the apparent separation of the multiple-I's became blurred as the 'South American-I' intermingled with the 'ideologically committed-I' and the 'academic-I' intertwined with the 'woman-I', as Figure 13 represents in the linked imagery of the four jigsaw pieces:

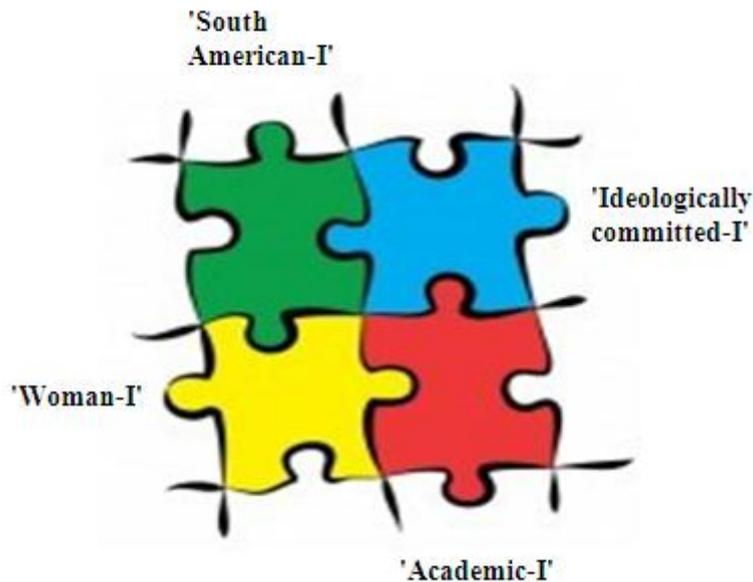


Figure 13 Positionalities as Researcher

The potential for conflict between these positionalities cannot be underestimated, such as the tensions between Centre and Periphery and other identity markers, for example of gender and nationality. I simultaneously positioned myself both in the Centre, in the ways I conducted this study in order to gain acceptance as an academic in the research community of the West; whilst at the same time in the Periphery in terms of belonging, as an ideologically committed South American woman. Ultimately, my main aim in this PhD study was to provide students with the tools to deconstruct their own stereotypes and to give them the opportunity to control their biases and prejudices against Hispanics for a more egalitarian world. Understanding the positionalities I adopted in relation to this PhD research study became a necessary step for me to be able to appreciate the complexities, fluidity and multifacetedness nature of my identity as a researcher, and to recognise the various layers of interpretation and construction that the data may have undergone. Importantly, as I considered my actions, I learned more about myself as a researcher, as a teacher and as an individual. Crucially, I learned about the importance of introspection during research processes and of critical consciousness of what

may not be heard, seen or reported and of the dangers of what may be privileged or overlooked. The following sections outline the main contributions of this study and identify possible areas that emerge from this project for future research.

9.5 Contributions to knowledge

One contribution to knowledge of this PhD research lies in the development of critical pedagogical approaches for the deconstruction of stereotypes by raising awareness of stereotypical thinking in students through a literary text. To this end, this study contributes to the field by developing a pedagogical model and a teaching tool for the deconstruction of stereotypes. Crucially, another contribution to the field is the reading of a literary text through theoretical frameworks of 'identity' in order to develop a 'self-regulation strategy' to control bias and stereotyping in the real world. From the point of view of the teaching of Spanish in British universities, this study contributes by providing a broader understanding of the discourses of UK-based Spanish language students with regard to Hispanic identities. These learners, who spent a year abroad in a country in the Hispanic world as part of their degree studies, spoke about the ways they perceived Hispanics and the ways they felt they were perceived by them; thus contributing to our understanding of Hispanics and UK-based language undergraduates relate to each other interculturally. The pedagogical implication of this contribution lies in the potential of using students' experiences as teaching resources for analysis and reflection.

Furthermore, this study contributes to refining Byram's notion of 'critical cultural awareness' using the notions of 'ideology' and 'hegemony' from critical pedagogy and '(neo)-essentialism' and 'centre/periphery' from the field of intercultural communication. This study also makes a contribution in relation to how 'critical cultural awareness' can be developed through managing stereotypes in language education. A further contribution to knowledge that this PhD study makes, is an aspect of the year-abroad experiences in British universities, which is students' suffering stereotyping and prejudice during their period of residence abroad. As stereotypical oppression was discussed, students spoke about their own experiences of being marginalised, excluded and discriminated against by Hispanics in their year-abroad placements. The students' beliefs and ideologies were brought to the fore in the views they expressed and in the experiences they narrated, providing them with an

opportunity to voice the oppressive nature of prejudice and bias that leads to intercultural conflict between them and Hispanics. One of the corollaries of the pedagogical aspect of the research lies in tailoring the year-abroad preparation stage to specific incidents of intercultural conflict as an awareness-raising exercise for analysis and reflection.

9.6 Further Research

In the context of language teaching, questions that arise from this research to be further pursued are (1) *what pedagogical strategies can be developed so that students can better deal with conflict based on stereotyping?*; (2) *how can the student experience of residence abroad improve?*; (3) *how can language learners be assisted to develop less stereotypically biased attitudes during their period of residence abroad?*; (4) *what teaching approaches can be most beneficial to prepare students better for this type of intercultural conflict?* Not only would answers to these questions prepare language learners to be more interculturally competent for their period of residence abroad, but in a widest educational sense, they would also be developing their employability skills through fostering citizenship competences. As such, students would be better prepared for the challenges of working in multilingual and multicultural environments in their future employment. Answers to questions such as these would equip undergraduates with values such as respect, equality, social justice and openness in order to prepare them to work in an increasingly diverse world. By looking at issues like stereotyping, discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation that prevent a more democratic engagement in today's globalised world, students can be 'educated' to be less biased by stereotypes in their future employment so that they are trained to respect and work together with individuals from diverse cultures as responsible citizens. This view of citizenship encourages learners to develop a more cosmopolitan mindset as a valued employability competence for a future less unequal multicultural workplace. These issues, arising from this PhD study, need to be researched so that more informed choices can be made in respect of curriculum design that incorporates learning objectives relating to residence abroad experiences and employability.

Finally, further questions that arise from this research lead to an investigation of the learning experience from the perspective of the students themselves, rather than from me as their

teacher and researcher of this project. Questions like (1) *what do the students say they have learnt from raising awareness of their own stereotypical thinking about Hispanics?*; (2) *what is the educational value of describing one's own experiences of being stereotyped from the perspective of the students? what, in their opinion, is being learnt from this exercise?*; (3) *what do the students believe they should be doing to think and act less biased by stereotypes?*; (4) *what do they think they should be doing to avoid intercultural conflict based on stereotyping?*; (5) *how have theoretical concepts relating to identity helped them think less biased by stereotypes?* Answers to these questions would provide insights into the students' perspectives about the learning experience of stereotype deconstruction and their perceptions of the critical pedagogical approaches implemented in the teaching. Areas of further research to be pursued comprise empirical work that investigates students' perspectives of the teaching and learning process. For example, an aspect that this study has not addressed empirically relates to the processes of involvement and detachment in the reflection stage as the students' analyse their own 'texts'. Although the teaching included this step, no data was gathered; this is an area that I would personally be interested to investigate in the future. Finally, further research is necessary to test the pedagogical model as a whole developed for this PhD study.

9.7 A Final Note

The development of intercultural communicative competence is an educational challenge, which can be complex to undertake. It involves dealing with attitudes, values, beliefs, perceptions – notions which can be unsettling for the language teacher for their vagueness and lack of clarity. It also means coping with issues, such as stereotyping and prejudice, which requires the creative translation of theoretical concepts into teaching practicalities. As has been demonstrated in this research study, the reading of Gamero's story 'Norma y Ester' can bring gender stereotyping – as one example of stereotyping – out into the open and provide opportunities for the development of 'critical cultural awareness'. The critical pedagogical interventions implemented aimed at creating opportunities for the modification of stereotypes and the strengthening of the ability to examine the complex and multifaceted nature of identity construction. Developing teaching approaches that encourage learners to interrogate their own assumptions provides them with the opportunity to remove their monocultural glasses and view the world through an intercultural lens. However, paving the way to stereotype deconstruction cannot be achieved overnight. It necessitates the use of theoretical

frameworks from related disciplines to assist L2 teachers and students to move beyond superficial understandings of issues such as *othering*, essentialism, hegemony, ideology, stereotyping and ethnocentrism and engage us all – learners and practitioners alike - in the development of ‘critical cultural awareness’.

As I noted at the beginning of Chapter 1, before I started my PhD, I had become aware that students tended to stereotype Hispanics. Being Argentinian myself, at times I felt annoyed by their rigid worldviews, and frustrated by my inability to challenge stereotypical thinking and prejudiced attitudes in a convincing and efficient manner. I experienced, as Luke would term, the ‘biographical experience’ of being the object of stereotyping and prejudice. However, this PhD research gave me the ‘doubling’ experience that Luke speaks about, of stepping outside of myself to be an onlooker of my own teaching. In this ‘doubling’ experience, I ghosted and shadowed myself in my dual role as a teacher and researcher. In other words, in addition to having had the ‘bodily experience’ of feeling annoyed and frustrated by my inability to deal effectively with students’ stereotyping of Hispanics in my teaching, I had the ‘out-of-body experience’ Luke contends we need to become critical. As I developed the ‘analytic metalanguage’ in the completion of this PhD thesis, I was able to ‘name’ my own experience and I was able to act in the real world – in the classroom, with my own students. I would like to end this PhD thesis with the same quote I started it, for it eloquently encapsulates the essence of the underlying philosophy of this pedagogical study in my journey as an educator and educational researcher:

[...] no pedagogy is neutral,
no learning process is value-free,
no curriculum avoids ideology and power relations.

To teach is to encourage human beings to develop in one direction or another.

In fostering development, every teacher chooses some subject matters,
some ways of knowing, some ways of speaking and relating, instead of others.

These choices orient the students to map the world and their relation to it.

(Shor 2009: 300)

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - SAMPLES OF CLASS DISCUSSION TRANSCRIPTS

The class discussions were audio-recorded and samples of the transcriptions are given below.

Code: CD1/ CS2

Context: A portion of the class in which the students are discussing the meaning of ‘stereotype’ as a lead-in activity for them to identify the stereotypes embedded in the comments made about Hispanics by students in CS1

Teacher ¿Qué han investigado para la clase de hoy? ¿Cómo podemos definir el concepto de “estereotipo”?

Student 1 Es una idea exagerada

Teacher ¿Quién quiere venir a la pizarra a escribir las ideas que presenta la clase?

Student 1 [writes on the board ‘una idea exagerada’]

Student 2 Es una exageración, una generalización, una idea anticuada

Student 1 [writes on the board ‘una exageración’, ‘una generalizacion’, ‘una idea anticuada’]

Teacher Podemos decir que es una idea anticuada como dice Sarah que se ha perpetuado a lo largo de los años. Y que no se sabe bien porqué pero sigue existiendo.

Student 2 Es por falta de educación

Student 3 Algunos grupos sociales por ejemplo, que tienen la perspectiva fija, la opinión fija dentro de su propio ambiente

Student 1 [writes on the board ‘una idea fija’]

Teacher Es un concepto interesante, es una idea fija con respecto a otros grupos sociales dentro de nuestro propio país, no necesariamente con respecto a personas que vienen de otros lugares del mundo. Muy bien, la palabra “fija” es una idea importante cuando hablamos de estereotipos, es una idea rígida. Es una idea podríamos decir excesivamente fija...no es flexible

Student 1 [writes on the board ‘una idea rígida’ ‘no flexible’]

Student 4 Los estereotipos son prejuicios

Teacher “prejuicio” significa *damage*, la palabra que estás buscando es “prejuicio”

Student 1 [writes on the board 'prejuicios']

Teacher Muy bien, entonces esta idea rígida o también podemos decir, es una idea absolutista que conduce a prejuicios como dice Rachel. ¿Sí? Son ideas generalizadas, o creencias, podemos utilizar la palabra creencias... absolutistas que no respetan las diferencias.

Student 1 [writes on the board 'una idea absolutista']

Teacher Jack nos dijo que es por falta de educación. ¿Podríamos decir también que es por falta de información? O ¿falta de conocimiento acerca del otro? No se lo conoce bien al otro. ¿Qué mas podemos decir? ¿Cómo podemos definir el concepto de estereotipo?

The class works in pairs to brainstorm ideas. The class continues.

Student 5 yo tengo la palabra simplificación ... es una idea simplificada que no respeta las diferencias.

Teacher ¡Que bien! Escríbala en la pizarra.

[Student 1 writes the word 'una idea simplificada' on the board]

Student 6 ¿Preconcepción?

Teacher Bien, bien, es una idea preconcebida

[Student 1 writes 'una idea preconcebida' on the board]

Podemos decir que a partir de estas ideas preconcebidas, se tiende a generalizar, a universalizar y a homogeneizar a los grupos sociales. Los estereotipos clasifican o categorizan a ciertos grupos. Los ponen en distintas clasificaciones. Se etiquetan a diferentes grupos sociales. Y como bien han dicho por aquí, estas ideas nos llevan a ser prejuiciosos y a adoptar ciertas actitudes. ¿Qué tipo de actitudes? ¿Qué tipo de actitudes promueve?

Students are given slips of paper to write words and phrases that describe the attitudes that stereotyping fosters. The class works in small groups completing this task and puts their slips of paper on the board, with the following words:

Rechazo

Burla

Hostilidad

Exclusión.

Discriminación.

Racismo.

Actitudes xenófobas.

Actitudes clasistas.

Sexismo.

Marginalización

Teacher Como han dicho, los estereotipos conducen a la marginalización...y también marcan una diferencia entre dos grupos culturales, que pueden ser dentro de un mismo país, o en diferentes países. Pueden ser dos grupos culturales como los ingleses y los españoles por ejemplo, o los adolescentes y los adultos. También podemos decir que los estereotipos son una valoración negativa, pero como Simon comentó la semana pasada, siempre hay una postura dominante y otra subordinada, en donde un grupo se posiciona como superior en relación a otro posicionado como inferior.

Hoy les he traído unos comentarios que he sacado de conversaciones que he tenido con otros estudiantes de la UEA. He seleccionado fragmentos de estas conversaciones y trozos de los ensayos o diarios personales que han escrito acerca de sus experiencias con hispanos durante el año en el extranjero. Las vamos a leer y a descubrir cuáles son los estereotipos que tienen estos estudiantes con respecto a los hispanos. ¿Qué estereotipostienenestosestudiantes?

The class reads the excerpts in silence. Then one student says:

Student 1 ¡Estos estudiantes están llenos de prejuicios! Me da vergüenza ajena leer algunos de estos comentarios.

Code: CD2/ CS2

Context: A portion of the class discussion where students are talking about the stereotypes that the short story “Norma y Ester” reinforces.

Student 1 A mí, una vez yo he pensado que el estereotipo de las mujeres no tienen estima para defenderse...

Teacher ¿No tienen qué?

Student 1 Estima

Teacher Autoestima

- Student 1 Autoestima para defenderse...y yo he pensado esto de las mujeres latinoamericanas
- Student 2 Primero que los hombres de Latinoamérica tienen poco respeto por las mujeres. Se puede ver en el cuento, porque el jefe no quiere que las chicas vistan bien, y que provoquen a los hombres y también porque Víctor abusa a las chicas, por lo general los hombres en el cuento se animan mucho cuando una chica tira algo al suelo y “pick it up”, y lo recoge y es provocante...
- Teacher ¿Qué es provocativo?
- Student 2 No provocativo, que provoca, anima a los hombres, se excitan. Hay una parte en el cuento cuando Norma tira algo al suelo y muestra poco respeto a las mujeres, no hay intelectualidad, no hay convergencia entre hombres y mujeres, como hacemos ahora que podemos charlar de los problemas del mundo...
- Student 3 Sí, pero yo sé que en Latinoamérica no puedes generalizar en todos los países porque son tan distintos. Porque yo he ido a Bolivia y en una zona muy quechua, y como las mujeres quechua, no puedes generalizar, no puedes hacer una comparación con las mujeres de México y con las diferentes clases sociales también y las diferentes ciudades también. Una vez pensé esto pero ahora es algo de una mujer y otra mujer. Puede ser que una mujer tiene autoestima y otra no.
- Student 4 Yo he pensado lo mismo, también en relación a que los hombres en Argentina no tienen en cuenta las emociones de las mujeres. Por lo que he visto en películas, ahora creo que sí hay hombres que son así, pero al mismo tiempo hay muchos hombres que no. Y es natural, un problema que he tenido con eso, por la mayoría sí creo que hay gente así, pero no se puede dar la misma clasificación a todos los hombres
- Teacher ¿Y a ti te parece que el cuento refuerza ese estereotipo? ¿Que en cierta manera tu idea preconcebida se refleja bien en este cuento?
- Student 4 Sí, en este cuento sí
- Student 5 También a mí me ha pasado en España, con un mexicano, podía ver que a él no le gustaba cuando una mujer dice algo en contra de él. Y cuando venía su madre de México, ella cocinaba todo para él, tiraba su basura, hacía su cama y todo...teníamos peleas.
- Teacher ¿Era tu novio?
- Student 5 No, no, no ... era mi compañero de piso, en España...cuando teníamos diferencias, a él no le gustaba cuando una chica decía algo, y él no tenía respeto y puso pelo en mi cepillo de dientes del baño...porque tenía problemas...(risas) Por eso yo digo que los latinoamericanos no tienen respeto por las mujeres.

- Teacher Por tu propia experiencia, a través de este muchacho latinoamericano. Una entrada... Claro...muy bien ... ¿Qué otro estereotipo confirma el cuento?
- Student 6 Que los argentinos son abiertos con respecto al sexo...dentro de este cuento es cierto porque Víctor intenta tener una relación con Ester...
- Student 4 Sí, con Norma....
- Student 6 Sí, y yo he tenido una experiencia....cuando yo estaba en España el año pasado nos encontramos con dos chicos argentinos, estábamos sentadas en un bar. Ellos nos pasaron y se sentaron y no nos conocíamos, y hablaban con nosotras y estaba bien y luego yo y mis amigas fuimos a una disco a bailar, y ellos vinieron con nosotras, y bailaron con nosotras sin permiso y yo he tenido una experiencia en eso, que son muy abiertos y que intentan donde puedan en busca de sexo. Pero sé que no todos son así, porque también he conocido a otros argentinos y hombres de Latinoamérica que no son así. Entonces, pero con respecto al cuento eso sí confirma el cuento.
- Student 5 Es imposible no generalizar cuando conoces a alguien de otra cultura muy diferente. Cada vez que conocía a un muchacho en España, se cumplía el estereotipo de que los hispanos son posesivos y celosos, y quieren controlar a las mujeres.
- Student 3 El problema con los estereotipos es que te predisponen mal y no ayudan a entenderte bien con gente de culturas diferentes. Esta mal generalizar, porque los estereotipos generan actitudes negativas y no ayudan a la comunicación intercultural.

Appendix B - CONSENT FORM

Consent to participate in research Consent Form

Research: *Pedagogies for Stereotype Deconstruction in Foreign Language Teaching*

Introduction

You are invited to consider participating in this research study. I am interested in the development of pedagogical approaches for the deconstruction of stereotypes in foreign language education. This form describes the purpose and nature of the study and your rights as a participant in it. The decision to participate or not is yours. If you decide to participate, please sign and date the last line of this form.

Method

I will be exploring responses to the oral and written assessment tasks set for your class this semester. A flip camera will be used to digitally record your oral work as it is policy at this University. I will also be audio-recording group and class discussions. I am seeking your consent to use these recordings and your written productions to investigate your responses to the pedagogical tasks used in our seminars. The research findings may also be used to create new teaching and/or training materials. I may also be inviting some students for interview if necessary.

Confidentiality

All of the information collected will be confidential and will only be used for research, training and/or teaching purposes. This means that your identity will be anonymous. Whenever data from this study are published, your name will not be used. In the case of recorded data, I may ask other people to transcribe them for me, but I will make sure that they do not know any of the research participants in this study.

Your participation

Participating in this study is strictly voluntary. If at any point you change your mind and no longer wish to participate, you can tell me. If you have any questions about the research, you can contact me by telephone 01603 591504, by e-mail l.yulita@uea.ac.uk or in person in my office ARTS 0.12

Researcher's statement

I have fully explained this study to the student. I have discussed the activities and have answered all of the questions that the student asked.

Student's consent

I have read the information provided in this Informed Consent form. All my questions were answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Your name _____

Your signature _____

Date: _____

Form adapted from Mackey, A. & Gass, S. (2005) *Second Language Research: methodology and design*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers, Fig. 2.1. pp.33.

AppendixC - ESSAY SAMPLE

Code: E17/CS2/Flora

Context: A portion of an essay in which a student uses theoretical concepts of identity construction to analyse Gamerro's story 'Norma y Ester.'

En este ensayo trataremos de analizar el concepto de identidad, determinada no solo por el modo en el que uno se ve a sí mismo sino también en relación a la percepción del Otro. El Otro es un concepto originado por varios filósofos y se refiere a lo distinto del sujeto, en nuestro caso, la otra persona. Observaremos como el Otro puede tener una gran influencia en el desarrollo de la identidad de un individuo. Según esta teoría, la identidad es la proyección hacia el sujeto, es decir que el Otro es responsable de la identidad que una persona adopta. En la primera parte del ensayo, comprobaremos esta hipótesis refiriéndonos al ejemplo de Ester en el cuento "Norma y Ester" por Gamerro (2005). Identificaremos cómo la imagen de Ester ha sido construida a través de la mirada del Otro y como poco a poco la chica va operando la reconstrucción de su identidad. Dedicaremos la segunda parte del ensayo a mi propia identidad y nos basaremos sobre mis vivencias durante mi estancia en el extranjero para destacar las transformaciones de identidad que ocurrieron durante ese tiempo.

En el cuento de Gamerro, Ester parece una mujer dominada. A través de un lenguaje vulgar y obsceno, el Otro, en este caso los hombres, la tratan de una manera menospreciativa –la única cosa por la que puede ser valorada es su cuerpo-, degradante –no piensan que sea capaz de cortar el pelo y solo la dejan lavarlos- y despectiva –no la dejan salir de la salita de atrás sino es para barrer el suelo. La subestiman pensando que no es capaz de aprender el oficio de peluquera y no invierten tiempo en su formación. No obstante, Ester hace todo lo que se le exige de ella y la rebelión no parece ser una opción. Ester está totalmente controlada por su jefe, quien decide por su vestimenta e incluso su maquillaje. Ester aguanta su posición de inferioridad ante una actitud machista y su falta de confianza, de fuerza y de carácter se traducen por el hecho de que no es capaz de oponerse o de preguntar cuándo y cuánto va a cobrar. No existe ningún deseo aparente para expresar sus pensamientos, reivindicar sus derechos y ser respetada y valorada. De esta manera, proyecta hacia el Otro la imagen de una mujer sumisa.

Asimismo, la subordinación de Ester no se limita al sexo masculino sino que ocurre también con su amiga Norma. La manera en la que Norma dirige la palabra a Ester –a veces sin mirarla, como en la última escena- da la impresión que Norma es la chica más atractiva de las dos y la chica que ha conseguido más en su vida. Norma tiene un marido, hijos y un amante. El hecho de que tenga un amante muestra la posición de superioridad de Norma en su matrimonio. Ella sí es capaz de controlar a los hombres. Esos aspectos subrayan que Norma se ve de manera superior a Ester, ya que a través de sus afirmaciones deja entender que el "invencible" (Gamerro 2005: 185) Víctor nunca saldría con una chica como Ester. Ester acepta esa superioridad y aun parece admirar a Norma, haciendo todo lo que ella hace, como el hecho de dejar el colegio. Ester no tiene autoridad para tomar sus propias decisiones y sigue los pasos de Norma, la "mamita" (Gamerro 2005: 184) que le arregla su vida.

Appendix E – INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Interviews were audio-recorded and samples of the transcriptions are given below.

Code: INT3 /CS1/Vicky

- Interviewer In your diary entries, you made comments about women in Mexico, and I was particularly struck by this comment ... when you said that...A teacher says if one day she doesn't get a "piropo"...
- Interviewee Oh yeah!...
- Interviewer ...it means that she is not pretty that day, or she's not wearing nice clothes...And this came over as a shock to you...
- Interviewee Yeah...I couldn't believe it because...how low her self-esteem must have been to rely on that sort of...kind of comment from a man...It's really sort of...This woman was obviously intelligent, had a really good job, you know, but still was upset if she didn't get shouted at in the street on a daily basis, which I always found amazing, just the difference...Because for us, when we were over there, we were just like "Please, shut up, just stop it! Please, God!" And because we were not used to it, but I suppose she because had it all of her life, I don't know...It must have affected her differently to how it affected us...
- Interviewer So how does the attitude of this Mexican woman compare to Norma and Ester?
- Interviewee The...My teacher? How does...?
- Interviewer Yeah...Do you find any [inaudible]
- Interviewee Oh gosh...Well again, it's a sort of different layer, isn't it?...Because she's kind of half and half, like she obviously has done really well for herself but still feels sort of...that she has to have...she has to play a certain role if you like...She has to play a woman sort of...
- Interviewer Who? This teacher?
- Interviewee The teacher yeah...But also manages to sort of head her own way and get her own job, stuff like that...But I couldn't believe it, I just

couldn't believe it when that came out of her mouth! Me and Nina were just [inaudible], oh my God!

[...]

Interviewer With respect to marginalisation and treatment of women [inaudible] But this bit about marginalisation, when you were the minority, when you say in your diary "although it was an international department at the university we were the minority"...When you say "we were the minority", what exactly do you mean?

Interviewee Extranjeros...Well actually yeah, extranjeritas, women from other countries who... who they could basically pick out and be...If I say you are white and blonde, they pick you out straight away so we were marginalised for I suppose the way we looked...Like it was so obvious that we were foreign...And it was [inaudible] was a small sort of place and although there was a big international department for the school, I can't remember the numbers now...the school is only 7000 so we were maybe 700 or something like that...But we still got picked out a lot for one being a woman, two being a white woman, three for being a white blonde woman, sort of ... yeah, we definitely got picked out quite easily... (she laughs)

Interviewer So your experiences in Mexico...How do they relate to the short story that we have read in class? In class you told us that the short story somehow resonates with your experiences abroad?

Interviewee Yeah ... well, yeah, it is basically the way women are seen, like...over there... I suppose like...It's hard to say...It's kind of like...you do get treated very differently...I got treated very differently in Mexico to how I get treated here as a woman, and that does come out in the short story ... like women are sort of ... [inaudible], whether you sort of want that to get to you or kind of pushes you to kind of rebel against it and be like: "Well no, I don't care if you say this and this and this to me, I'm still gonna do whatever I like and whatever I want and say what I like, so yeah..."

Code: INT4 /CS1/ Hasina

Interviewer How have you felt related to the short story that we have read in class? How do you compare your life with [inaudible]?

Interviewee 'Norma y Ester' ... when I first read it, firstly I didn't think about what was going on, because it was...Even though in India we have

very similar situations of women being treated as an object ... that's what the story reminded me of, when I read 'Norma y Ester', how ... even though it's like ... women are given a reason in 'Norma y Ester' to be treated like that, but then in India there's no reason because they are completely [inaudible] ... It's normal woman walking down the street, and she might be disrespected by a man in a motorbike coming and then just being very rude to her ... so like...I could understand it somehow because of the male mentality and I find in most...like development...like not developed countries I feel this problem always being a big issue... to... and I don't know why it's so similar, because it's completely different...Theoretically they are not nearby at all, but then you can see that these ideas are very similar in countries such as South America, India or...like not developed...yeah...less developed countries...which I find kind of funny how...it is still...I suppose it's the education and... And I think even...if women in Latin America also sexist in the way that...I can see like...old women especially...can be quite sexist with a woman...this sometimes happen in Latin America...but somehow and to some extent it gave me...it gave me that opinion in my mind that even woman with woman is quite sexist in a way...

Interviewer Sexist in the sense of machista or...?

Interviewee Yeah machista...in the way that man is always given the power, even by a woman ... Like she would say 'this woman is a prostitute'...even a woman would say it, so then, what do you expect the man to do? And I can see that even in 'Norma y Ester' when Norma isn't...she has to be treated so badly by Victor she ended up with him, and then she told Ester that it was her fault what she did...and it's just...you can see that...Ester giving the reason like...to the man to...to behave like that, it's not just the man that just decides to behave like that, I think it's also the woman who is making the man...so I thought that kind of issues is quite similar as well...

Interviewer So you can relate...

Interviewer Well, in India the woman I believe...she would never have the same rights as a man, she would never have the life of a man...A woman seems to be always...not now, not very in big countries because women work now and...and they have like a proper job, but I still believe there is a big part of India where woman is just meant to clean, look after their family, look after their husband, of how he... like cooking and cleaning the house and...and if she does something else, if she [inaudible] ... then the whole society, the woman also, see her as

an offence and they want to get her out of their neighbourhood if she did something wrong, if she went out with another man, or if she did...or if she was...if she was beaten up by a man, she ... if she did something, people would see it as wrong sometimes...

Code: INT7 /CS1/Mike

Interviewer How do those life experiences compare to the ways Gamarro portrays Hispanics in 'Norma y Ester'?

Interviewee Yeah, well I, from what I, from what I found, Argentina has, umm in the past has been a very, you know machista, a very [inaudible] and religion has always been a very strong part of the society, and of course, living, growing up in the Arab world, uh they're very, very similar, umm

Interviewer very similar ...

Interviewee Very similar, yeah, yeah, I mean uh, the Arab world is known for, uh it's uh, having uh, I can't think of the equivalent of *machista* in English

Interviewer Male dominated?

Interviewee Male dominated culture, I'm not saying it's bad, it's just, it's just the culture, it's the way it's developed, uh it is when you look at it, it is quite male dominated, you know men are allowed to have four wives, women can't have four husbands, uh just you know to put a basic ...

Interviewer Men are allowed to ... ?

Interviewee to have four wives

Interviewer Four wives

Interviewee Yeah in Muslim culture, yeah little things like that, and so all that is quite, you know I've grown up around society like that, and uh certainly above all in one in which, umm religion plays a very, very dominant role, uh I mean the Arab, uh Dubai is a slight exception it's, uh it's becoming very westernised now, and uh I think, it's becoming in some aspects slightly secular, but certainly religion has always, has still uh plays a strong role, so as I said as I, I've grown up in that sort of society, and so you know, it's quite interesting seeing it in

Argentina, and I mean in Spain as well, Spain is very strongly Catholic country, umm I think much, much more so than England is, and so again uh I can relate to that as well.

Interviewer Do you mean that Spain is also a male dominated society?

Interviewee Uh I think so, umm I, I mean recently I was speaking to a friend of mine who is an engineer, and she's uh, she says that, you know in her company, uh most better career opportunities go to the men, umm when they're asked to travel and go on, uh different projects, different countries, it's generally the men that go, umm

Interviewee She's from Spain?

Interviewee She's from Spain yeah, umm to put an example to uh, but I, I mean I think, you know, generally around Europe there's more umm, more of an equality of gender, but I think *machismo* certainly still exists in Spain, certainly.

Appendix F – TASK SHEET

Sample of a fragment of data from CS1 transformed into a pedagogical task for educational purposes.

Task Instructions

Read this comment made by Vicky, a student who went to Mexico during her year-abroad placement. In your groups, discuss Vicky's beliefs, behaviours and attitudes towards cultural practices in Mexico. Support your views with what Vicky says and implies in her observations.

Vicky, a university Spanish language student, spent her year abroad in Mexico and was shocked to hear that one day, her Mexican teacher felt unattractive because no man had wolfwhistled at her that morning on her way to university. One day she told us in class:

“During my year abroad stay in Mexico, I got on really well with my teacher, María. She always seemed very intelligent, had a really good job, friendly, generous etc. There was one thing though that really surprised me; every single day if she didn't get shouted out by the men in the streets she got upset! She was looking for it! When I was out with my English friends, we'd be saying stuff like “Please, shut up, just stop it! For God's sake, just stop it!” and we really didn't like the way we were being treated.

But María, somehow needed those comments. That's when I realised she must have had such low self-esteem; you her to need whistling and chat-up lines from men. She'd always struck me as someone who'd made their own way in life and got to where she was because of who she was, and nothing to do with what she looked like. So I couldn't believe it - such a difference from back in England.”

In class Vicky told us that during her stay in Mexico, she sometimes felt like a sex object. In her first week there, as she was walking to the university she noticed that men in their cars were taking photos of her with their mobile phones. This came as a great surprise to Vicky, because men in England never do this. In the streets, she often heard men's shouts and catcalling, for example, güerita and mamacita. Vicky didn't feel treated as a person, but as an object and said ‘In England, I don't feel like an object. I do not feel this oppression in my country’.

I

Norma, es en vano, hoy tampoco va a venir Víctor, pensó Ester en la pieza del fondo mientras trastabillaba tratando de sacar los pies de las perneras de su jean y estiraba el cuello de la remera para pasársela por la cabeza sin acogotarse. Eso sí que tendría su gracia, pensó. Estiró los brazos hacia atrás para desabrocharse el corpiño y antes de sacárselo masajeó detrás las marcas irritadas que le había dejado. Había caminado despacio para no agitarse, pero con el calor de estos días ya estaba mojada de transpiración apenas empezada la mañana. No es que suba, es que no baja, decía su mamá abanicándose con el matamoscas, no pegué un ojo en toda la noche, y Ester para sí: yo tampoco, mamá, ojalá fuera del calor solamente. Dobló con cuidado su ropa de calle, el corpiño dentro de la remera y la remera sobre el jean, todo en el bolso de mano y el bolso bajo el diván, hoy estás peor que nunca, se dijo mientras fastidiada sacaba todo de

nuevo hasta encontrar en el fondo el corpiño de encaje del trabajo. Lo estiró varias veces en distintas direcciones para desarrugarlo, como le había enseñado su mamá cuando empezó a desarrollarse, si supieras, mamita querida, para lo que me sirve ahora todo lo que me enseñaste, le dijo sonriéndose mientras los dedos abrochaban de arriba abajo los escasos botones de su delantal. Pero bien que hoy o mañana o algún día de éstos cuando mi jefe se decida a pagarme y me aparezca con la plata no vas a hacer preguntas, pensó mientras llegaban al final y controlaban que todo estuviera en su lugar.

El escote me deja ver la puntilla del corpiño, el delantal te lo adaptás a tu talle pero nada de alargarlo, eh, que no es cuestión de taparse de nadie acá, le había dicho el primer día su jefe, de espaldas a ella y con las manos atrás, mirando el espejo como si fuera una ventana, mascullando incómodo las palabras que no eran de él. Quiero que me los trates bien a los clientes, ¿eh, nena?, que para eso te pago. La que estaba antes no quiso entenderlo, gracias a eso te regaló el trabajo, a ver si vos lo cuidás más.

Los alcances y los límites de la consigna los terminó de entender Ester el día en que la invitó a salir mientras lo lavaba un gordito petisón al que le habían puesto —ya me imagino quién, el que más lo repetía— Astrakán por el casquito de rulos grasientos que llevaba pegadito a la cabeza. La orden era clara, le dijo que sí. Lo plantó. Cuando al día siguiente el gordito fue a protestarle a su jefe, Ester escuchó desde la pieza la contestación:

—Yo le ordeno que sea amable acá con los clientes. ¿Acá te dijo a algo que no? Bueno. Lo que hizo después es cosa suya, yo no voy a andar pagándole horas extras para que vos sacudas la pistolita gratis.

Escuchó las risotadas, imaginó que le pegaban con dos dedos en los pelos, escuchó: ¡Uy, Astrakán! ¡Te la dieron, Astrakán! y pensó: bien contestado. Aunque no podía dejar de preguntarse si a él, justamente a él, se hubiera atrevido a contestarle lo mismo.

Le había causado gracia el delantal, cuando se lo dio, aunque Norma le había contado. Era el mismo; al principio, hasta su olor tenía: un delantal de mucama de película, pero de película vieja, de las que veía su mamá en la tele, en blanco y negro, el delantal también, pero más sexy, demasiado, se me salen las tetas por arriba y las nalgas por abajo, Ester, y con los zapatos de taco aguja que me prestó Leonor es peor, parezco puta, las uñas largas de colorado como los labios, y los párpados azul turquesa para combinar con las paredes, y ese Víctor atrás a las carcajadas, bien, Gordo, dale que vas bien, las pestañas bien largas y bien negras no te olvidés, todas instrucciones de Víctor que el día que la tomó le repitió casi de memoria su jefe a Ester, sin imaginar que ella ya se las sabía casi casi mejor que él.

No, el gordo no es problema, le tiene pánico a la mujer, pelás una teta y saca la foto de los hijos, le contaba Norma, hasta podría ser un tipo decente si no fuera por el otro, no, el problema no es él, es esa bestia, esa basura, es esa víbora de Víctor, Ester. Por

lo menos vos ves gente todo el día, Norma, en cambio yo... ¿Gente? ¿A eso llamás gente? Tendrías que ver vos misma lo que son, tendrías que ponerte en mi lugar para ver, Ester.

Ester se sentó en el diván para ponerse los zapatos, y tentada se tiró. El plush le hizo cosquillas en los brazos y piernas, y enseguida empezó a darle calor. Uno de los tubos del techo parpadeaba, y se tapó la vista con la mano. Bostezó. Acolchadas por la puerta del cuarto le llegaban desde el salón las modulaciones del dial buscando música en la FM. La verdad es que no variaba mucho la selección, tirando a aburrida, como su jefe, hasta los tropicales resultaban tristes escuchados por él. De noche, a veces, cuando se quedaban los dos solos esperando el último cliente que nunca llegaba, Ester escuchaba desde su piecita algunas de esas músicas exóticas, de la tierra de él o de sus padres, y cuando ya estaba cambiada y entraba al salón lo encontraba con las manos atrás y mirando el espejo como si fuera una ventana. A veces para no interrumpirlo salía sin saludar y él ni se enteraba.

Una tarde, un sábado justamente, le encontró los casets Víctor. Uy, miren lo que tenía escondido el Turco, música turca tenía, música para el harén. Los otros vagos que se juntaban en la peluquería cuando estaba él empezaron a batir palmas con el que la ponga, que la ponga, y Ester impotente desde la pieza de atrás podía escucharlo tarareando una música turca inventada que no se parecía en nada a la de los

casets, seguramente meneándose como una odalisca y trepándose a los sillones, y la voz de su jefe apenas audible por favor, no, Víctor, si a nadie le gusta esa música, devolvémoslos, hasta que llegó el ruido de algo rompiéndose y un silencio pesado y después típico: Bueno, no era para ponerse así. Es tu culpa, Turco, si se cayó. Te lo pago. Tomá, no jodás más, ni que fuera de oro, che.

Y a pesar de todo su jefe Sebastián Djordjalián no sólo lo aguantaba: lo veneraba, era capaz de cualquier cosa por complacerlo. No es mal tipo, o sí, qué sé yo, es un hijo de puta. De tan cagón con esos amigos suyos termina siendo peor que ellos, por miedo a defraudarlos: tomando Gancia con soda en la cocina, la ventana abierta al aire de la noche, febrero pleno, los nenes dormidos, Eugenio desocupado esperando en el billar a que alguien convidara, Norma contaba y Ester escuchaba, como siempre. El ruido de la heladera arrancando, la casa de Norma. Yo también lo extraño. Pero falta poco, cualquier día de éstos, hasta hoy puede ser, hoy. Tarde o temprano va a tener que venir a lavarse. Y ahí va a pagar lo que te hizo, Normita.

Me rajó, Estercita. Me rajó el gordo hijo de puta. Después de todo lo que me aguanté. Si yo escuchaba clarito desde ese cuartucho donde me tenía, los comentarios de ese Víctor mientras le cortaba, a todos les contaba a gritos cómo me había manoseado, a todos que lo conocen a Eugenio cómo me había cogido en el divancito de atrás: ¡El dogor la tiene clara! ¡El

Turco pone carne de primera pa la clientela! ¡Coto, le vamos a decir, Coto! Qué más quería, cinco meses, qué más quería, en ese divancito, Ester, por qué me echó.

Ester se levantó del divancito de un salto, se marcó, tuvo que apoyarse en la pared y en la silla para mantener el equilibrio. Cuando se amodorraba le venían a la cabeza pensamientos como éstos, la seguían de los sueños que cortaba el despertador cuando sonaba, sueños con la cara de Norma mirándola con asco y su jefe descubriéndolo todo en el peor momento y el alambre que giraba y giraba sin ajustarse y Víctor que se reía a carcajadas y era el despertador.

Se asomó al pasillo, nadie a la vista, avanzó dos pasos hasta la entrada del salón. Tanta luz de golpe. En la avenida los dependientes empezaban a abrir los primeros negocios, sábado, ya había gente, saludos gritados de una vereda a otra, el ruido de las cortinas metálicas levantándose.

—¿Necesita algo, don Sebastián?

Medialunas.

Su jefe se sobresaltó y se dio vuelta desorbitado. Durante un segundo pareció no reconocerla, después balbuceó:

—No, nada, querida, nada. Volvé a tu trabajo.

Las medialunas. Decile.

Qué trabajo, a esta hora, más que esperar acá metida, sola. Se cepilló el pelo para atrás, tironeando sin piedad. ¿Me pagará hoy? Qué salto que pegó. Ya estamos a fin de mes, mi primer sueldo, no hay día que

mamá no me pregunte. ¿Habrá exagerado lo de las propinas Norma? Porque lo que es a mí...

Tenía la cara gorda, un granito rosado en el mentón, la frente aceitosa, se la lavó frotando fuerte con agua y jabón. Otra vez me estoy inflando como un globo, pensó; rogó que no me venga justo hoy. ¿Los habré metido en el bolso? Ayer, sí.

La televisión, nada hasta las diez.

Arriba de la puerta, sobre un soporte colgado de cadenas, el aparato la miraba muerto y mudo apoyado sobre el plush de leopardo con borlas bordó. Para que puedan ver mientras los lavás, le explicaba Norma, pero no parece seguro, tenés miedo de dar un portazo y que se te caiga en la cabeza. A Ester le había parecido raro. ¿Por qué el video en la piecita, y en el salón sólo una radio? A esta altura ya deberías saber, dijo Norma torciendo en una mueca la boca, todas esas vivezas vienen de Víctor. Y trae sus propias películas. ¿Sabés lo que es estar lavándole el pelo como si nada mientras en la pantalla a una sujetada entre dos le chorrea por la cara la leche de tres y el tipo te dice ¡Mirá eso! ¡Mirá!, como si fuera una jugada de fútbol entre tres a la vez? ¿Sabés?

—Sus peliculitas acá no. ¿Qué se cree que es esto, un transitorio?

—Dale, ésta solita. Así me divierto mientras me lavás.

—¿Le parece poco placer que lo lave Ester? Mirando video se lo va a perder.

No, así no, más cortante. Sino parecía darle pie. ¿Y si lo dejo mirar? Por ahí es mejor, lo agarro más

distraído. Ester acercó la nariz a la rendija de la puerta y husmeó el chiflete dos o tres veces. Como un perrito. Pensé que llegaban las medialunas, se explicó, y se contestó a sí misma, las ganas. Si tuviera una sola ventana, un ventilete, un tragaluz... Era como estar en el fondo del mar, pero con calor, apresada en una pecera, sin lugar para nadar, y en cualquier momento mete la pata el gato.

¿Norma no exagerará? No, si es una bestia, se ve, lo que le hizo.

Conmigo no se metió.

Será porque no le gusto. También, con las minas que pone en sus almanaques. Gentileza Casa Víctor, la mejor del Munro. Gran liquidación: a comprar que se acaba el Munro. Sus carteles eran los más cotorros de Mitre, tratando de tapar a todos los otros, sea dueño del Munro. Como sus chistes, cada vez que uno le salía bien lo contaba cinco veces y se reía todas. Y sus amigos con él.

Aguzó el oído. Por encima de los preguntale preguntale de Manolo Galván le llegaba un murmullo de conversación. No, no es. ¿Si hubiese sido? No estás preparada. Ni tijeras. Mamá, anoche: son mi herramienta de trabajo, hija. No puedo con un par solo. ¿Por qué no te compra unas tu jefe? Si tenés que aprender... No aprendo nada, lavo pelo, quiso gritarle, le gritó ma sí, tomá tus tijeras, cometelás. ¿Qué iba a explicarle? Lo peor era eso, no poder preverlo, tener que estar siempre lista, esperando una oportunidad

que podía ser única, y que si la dejaba pasar... Desde que se había decidido, casi un mes, diez horas por día, seis días por semana pensando ahora, va a ser ahora, ni un segundo podés bajar la guardia... Como para no estar como estaba, peleándose con su mamá todo el santo día, saltando con cada voz nueva en el salón, sabiendo que cualquier minuto...

Cualquier minuto, pero hoy no.

Cagona.

-Norma, esperame, tenés que entender...

-Vos, vos, Ester, mi mejor amiga. Vos.

Prefiero que entre Víctor, Víctor con un látigo en una mano y la verga parada en la otra, antes que Norma con los ojos llenos de dolor y acusándome. Me muero.

Un mes. Y su mamá, a cada rato: Hoy me encontré a Normita del coreano. Me preguntó por vos. ¿Nena, no tendrías que decirle? Así es peor. Si son tan amigas, tiene que entender.

-No jodás mamá. Y cerrá el pico. Ya le voy a decir cuando sea el momento.

Pero quién iba a pensar que ese Víctor iba a hacerse rogar tanto. Un mes. ¿Y si justo se le ocurrió dejarse el pelo largo? Tendría que haber conseguido un cable, más blando, porque el alambre era más difícil de ajustar. Claro que, una vez ajustado...

¿Quién?

-Entonces, el *Clarín* y cigarrillos le traigo. ¿Alcanza? ¿No me da de menos?

-Vaya tranquilo, y no se me pierda por el camino. Cuando me venga el primer cliente se lo dejo hojear.

Ah. Claro, es la hora. Las nueve. Nadie. Bueno, don Amílcar, pero no contaba: su jefe lo dejaba quedarse a cambio de algún mandado como éste, o las medias-lunas. Total, era muy educado y no molestaba. A él sí, en cambio, cuando caían Víctor y su barra:

-Entonces la turra le dice a don Amílcar: ¿Cómo que es muy temprano para la cama? Si yo tengo las diez y diez. Y don Amílcar le contesta: Eso será en tu reloj. El mío se quedó en las seis y media. ¡Ja! ¡Ja!

Pobre, se la seguían hasta la hora de cerrar, o hasta que se cansaba y buscaba a los otros jubilados en la plaza. Y papá en esa fábrica: Me parecen años las horas en ese galpón. Después se van todos y no tengo ni a quién servirle un cafecito. Por lo menos ahora es verano. Vigilancia, vigilancia de qué, si lo primero que hago cuando me quedo solo es sacarle las balas al revólver y guardarlas en un cajón, no se me vaya a escapar un tiro, me ponen ahí para que los chorros de lástima se vayan a afanar a otro lado.

Ester se sentó en la silla y apoyó la nuca en la muesca de la palangana. Cerró los ojos y bostezó. ¿Se darán cuenta de lo indefensos que se vuelven, tan confiados en nuestras manos, con los ojos cerrados y el cuello expuesto, entregado? Imaginate con la navaja. Yo ni loca. En el salón puro grito, pero en la pieza a veces les agarra la timidez, y si te quedás callada es peor, a veces se los hago a propósito, se ponen

re incómodos. Víctor no, claro. Víctor no cierra nunca los ojos y su boca siempre sabe lo que tiene que decir, nunca se equivoca. ¿Te das cuenta, Ester? Quería que se la chupara, esa verga sucia, llena de grasa, me lo decía tan tranquilo sin sacar la cabeza del agua, me empujaba la mía con la mano. Traté, Estercita, pero no pude, no soy tan fuerte como vos pensás, los dientes no se me despegaban. Si sabía que me iba a hacer echar, Ester, me lo decía tan tranquilo, qué se hace con un tipo así, Ester, no hay que matarlo, no hay que matarlo, y Ester no le contestaba, quería pensar pobre Norma, quién es esta mujer, Norma qué te pasó, pero lo único que le venía a la cabeza era Norma te echaron, tu puesto está libre, qué cambia, dejame salir de ese depósito, tenés razón, hay que, pero primero yo. Sólo esta vez. Primero yo.

—Yo no sé hacer las cosas, mamá. Norma sabe. Yo no. Yo soy como vos.

—La seguís demasiado, Ester. Cuando dejaste el colegio porque ella se fue. Pero ella se casaba. Y vos...

—¿Ves? Ni copiándola me sale. ¿Ves?

Nena, dos cafés. Y rápido el lavado, que hay dos esperando, escuchó Ester y ya estaba con los dos pocillos equilibrados de milagro y empujando con la cola la puerta vaivén. Don Amílcar. Renato. Mochuelo. El quinielero. El pintón, el futbolista, que igual le paró el carro la vez que le quiso meter mano debajo de la bombacha. Un chico joven, con cara de asustado. No, no está.

Sin darse vuelta, sin soltar un segundo la tijera y el peine que sin tocarse giraban con vértigo sobre la cabeza del futbolista, desde el espejo su jefe le gritó nena ahora el pibe, y el otro: Armenio se va al descenso, Turco, te lo digo yo que algo sé y si no me creés te juego el próximo corte, papá, y Renato al chico: nene, cuidate de la leona que se quedó con las ganas, con las ganas te vas a quedar vos, flan de verga, me mordés una teta y te quedás sin dientes.

En la tevé el grupo Papaya de cumbia colombiana ponía ritmo y color al mediodía del sábado y Ester le preguntó al chico si estaba muy caliente el agua, acomodándole con cuidado la nuca sobre la muesca.

—No. Así está bien.

—Sos tímido vos. Y lindo, pensó, desmadejando el largo pelo espeso con cariño en el agua tibia de la palangana. Le habló ella.

—Qué lástima. Con ese pelo tan lindo que tenés.

—Es por la colimba. No les voy a dar el gusto. Me lo hago yo.

Mientras se lo estiraba hacia atrás para escurrírselo volvió a calcular mentalmente la distancia del cuello arqueado a la columna de acero que sostenía la palangana. Le dio bronca, pero no podía evitarlo, se le había convertido en un reflejo, no te asustes que a vos no te voy a hacer nada, amor.

—¿Y, pibe? ¿Le viste la cara a Dios? ¿O otra cosa?, gritó el Renabo y los demás festejándole, menos don Amílcar y su jefe que sonrió para un lado y miró

para el otro. El chico se sentó a esperar en el otro sillón y lo giró hacia la calle, donde a medida que los negocios de ropa cerraban el cordón continuo de gente del mediodía había empezado a ralearse. Ma qué Florida, viejo, ma qué Santa Fe. Dame mi Mitre una mañana de sábado en la liquidación de verano y yo te regalo las grandes avenidas del mundo, pichón, ni en New York ves lo que acá, y el brazo vencedor de Víctor Balvecqui callando a gritos a su oponente inventado abarcaba la avenida de un borde a otro de lo visible, como si él mismo la volviera a crear con su gesto cada vez, el dueño del Munro, poco le faltaba, arreglado con la policía y la Municipalidad y algunos decían que más, ni un puestito de medias de toalla pisa mi Mitre sin mi permiso fanfarroneaba, qué puedo hacer contra un tipo con tanto poder, Norma, hasta que se le ocurrió su idea, colgarlo con su propia soga, ya va a saber lo que es meterse con una amiga de Ester.

—Querida, qué hacés ahí parada, show para los de afuera que no pagan, hacés, barreme un poco esta pelambre que parece una alfombra, querés.

Sí, claro, qué fácil, con la palita de mango corto que le eligió Víctor no te queda más que agacharte y si estás de espaldas te ven hasta la marca de la bombacha y si te ponés de frente las tetas se te salen por todos lados y el culo te lo ven igual por el espejo, Ester, tendría que barrer sentada en el suelo para zafar. Y en ese preciso instante entra de la calle ese Ignacio y hace como que se desmaya y que le den aire.

¿No sabés si viene Víctor hoy?, le preguntó su jefe mientras los demás lo abanicaban con el *Crónica* recién comprado. Sí, supongo, muchachos gracias, suspendan esa ambulancia, por ahí más tarde, ahora está todo el día con la cabeza metida en sus bombachas. Cuándo no, este Víctor, cuándo no, ensayó su jefe uno de sus previsible chistes que no hacían reír a nadie. En el cuarenta te cortaban con una máquina de esquilar ovejas y te hacían el cuerpo a tierra entre los cardos, le contaba don Amílcar al único que lo iba a escuchar, pobre chico le debía dar lo mismo viendo cómo caían al suelo los hermosos mechones que su jefe le tijereteaba sin piedad, y adentro de la pieza el brillo y el sabor del auténtico wawancó caribeño ritmaban con palmeras recortadas y un mar de celofán el rebuscar fastidiado de Ester en su bolso de playa. No me los puedo haber olvidado, no puede ser, con lo que sale el paquete de Siempre Libre, se arrodilló para revisar bajo el diván, a ver si están.

Así te quería agarrar, así, arremetió a través de la puerta Ignacio y le agarró las ancas por detrás, zarandeándolas, y Ester como pudo lo sentó en la silla, las manos quietas, apretando los dientes para no gritar. A mí me despreciás, como venga Víctor vas a ver, tuvo que subir el volumen de la tevé para taparle la voz, como me jodás más en vez de Víctor la ligás vos, el pelo era peor que lavar la fuente del pollo con agua fría. Ya está, vaya, téngase la toalla que se le va a caer.

Si parece a propósito, son como chicos, piensa Ester mientras corre atrás para recoger la toalla del suelo. ¡Pirincho! ¡Pirincho! Qué le hicistes, nena, le pusistes los pelos de punta, le pusistes, le gritaron los otros cuando lo vieron salir, e Ignacio excitado por la hinchada volvió a sacarse la toalla de la cabeza y le tiró un chicotazo a Ester, que tuvo que arquearse como una bailarina para esquivar. ¡Ooole!, gritaron los demás y el más exaltado, el Mochuelo, le sacó la toalla a Ignacio y saltándole de atrás se la ciñó al cuello, ahorcándolo jugando. ¡Calma, Nacho! ¡Calma!, dijo con su voz de miga en la garganta, y desde la calle una salva de bocinazos le abrió cancha a una más brava y viril que atravesó el vidrio como una baldosa arrojada: ¡Tigre! ¡Vos sí que sos un tigre, terror del sauna! ¡Con vos no hay toallita que valga!, bramó, y era la voz de Víctor.

Bajó con chomba violeta de su Renault Fuego rojo, estacionado frente al cartel de no estacionar, y en dos pasos sin medias de sus zapatos náuticos auténticos sus vaqueros Calvin Klein atravesaron el umbral y se clavaron en V invertida en el centro del salón.

Ester aprovechó para pegar el manotazo y apenas pasó a tiempo por la puerta vaivén. Apoyó las tijeras en los estantes bajo la pileta y luego manoteó sobre su cabeza y dejó sin sonido a la tevé. Cállense, qué dice, shh.

—Ma qué mejores bombachas del Munro, ese eslógan ya lo usé. Tanto que se estiró el elástico. Prestá atención: un aviso en Canal 2, el príncipe buscando

a su Cenicienta con un corpiño que sólo a ella la convierte en la Chica Víctor, ése para toda la provincia; y para el barrio dos carteles de tres por tres: desnudita, tapándose donde ya saben, mi línea de jeans y remeras a sus pies. Algo te estaba faltando. Nueva línea íntima: para estar más cerca de vos. Vestite toda de Víctor. Otro, más clásico, pa gente de más nivel. Mi cara en un cartel que tapa el cielo, mirada de general triunfante sobre la avenida: Veni, Vidi, Víctor.

La cuerda le duró casi dos horas.

Con cada vez menos clientes para lavar, más tiempo para pensar lo que le vas a hacer, lo que le vas a decir, va a ser hoy, Norma, no sé por qué pero estoy segura que va a ser hoy. Dos horas pegada a la puerta, escuchando cómo pasaban de gritos a risas, a discusiones sobre fútbol, sobre política, bromas, conversaciones desganadas, palabras sueltas, música en la radio. Cada vez menos, despidiéndose hasta el bar, hasta la cancha mañana, hasta que sólo quedaron tres voces, o dos.

—Desde hace un mes. Y todo por vos. Ni entraste a mirar. Nada, me decís.

Sin sonido, el televisor.

—Víctor.

—Qué.

—Contestame.

—Che, qué estás ahora, en esposa regluda, dejame en paz.

—Dale.

-No.

-Te la traje para vos. Especialmente, te la busqué.

-Te queda feo así.

-Es de mucha desprolijidad.

-Usted siga con su diario, don Amílcar, que siempre puede ser el último. Y vos cambiá la cara. Ma sí. ¿Querés que me corte? Me corto. ¿Querés que me lave? Me lavo.

¡Normal!

-Las putas ganas que tengo. Pero tampoco tengo ganas de ninguna otra cosa. ¿Estás contento? Andá, corré, decile a la putita ésa que se prepare. Que va a visitarla Víctor.

II

Norma no sabés, esperá que te cuente. Ay, Normita, tanto tiempo, qué ganas que tenía de verte. ¿Yó? ¿Cómo se te ocurre? ¿Justo yo? Si yo pensé que vos ibas a ser la enojada. Claro, otra pensaba mal enseguida, pero vos confiaste en mí, ¿no? ¿Pero quién te vino con el cuento? Ah, claro, no me extraña, pero pará que te cuento. Sí. No se puede creer, ¿no? Después de todo lo que te hizo. Lo vieras ahora. Con ojos de carnero degolláu, tratando de taparse la tonsura con el poco pelo que le dejó. ¿Eh? Así sería antes, después del método Ester quedó como un gatito. Y sí, al principio estaba furioso, pero cuando le expliqué todo entendió. En el fondo no era malo, sabés, sólo malcriado, demasiado

acostumbrado a que lo dejaran hacer lo que quería. Tiene que aprender a querer. No, dejame de joder, que se lo enseñe otra. Pero hoy recibió la primera lección: cómo tratar a una dama. En algún momento iba a encontrarse con la horma de su zapato. Así que sí, sí, lo prometió. En una de sus jeanerías, un puesto jerárquico. Ya no vas a tener que humillarte. Claro, tu puesto en la pelu no, me imaginé que no querías volver, total yo me las arreglo, los puse a todos en vereda ya. Sí, tan embobado mirándome las gambas que ni se avivó que había caído en mi red. ¿Qué fáciles de manejar que son, no? Entran como anillo al dedo. Pará, pará, para que me creas. Tomá. ¿Sorprendida? Adiviná. ¿Cómo de dónde? Es el anticipo de tu futuro sueldo. Para que veas que va en serio. No lo dejé ir hasta que me lo dio. Agarralo, Norma, es para vos y los tuyos... Che, no seas tonta, cómo vas a llorar, sonsita. Soy yo, Ester, tu amiga Ester. ¿Creíste que te iba a dejar sola, en un momento así? Con todo lo que te debo, Norma, todo lo que soy, hoy apenas empiezo a devolvértelo. Te espera el lunes, en su despacho, a primera hora, no vayas a llegar tarde, eh. Por favor no te rías cuando lo veas, seguro va a tener que usar peluca. Le va a calmar sus aires de donjuán. Fue por lana y salió trasquilado, como dicen. Ya te podés imaginar cómo entró, gallo llegando al gallinero, qué pasa mi bataraza, y después se sentó confiado, tan invencible Víctor, sonriéndome como si yo me fuera a pishar encima por la blancura de su dentadura, se

sentó en la silla sin sospechar nada y con los ojos cerrados apoyó la nuca en la muesca de la palangana.

III

—Dame la cotorrita, mi amor,

dame la cotorrita,

que yo no sé vivir si no tengo a mano mi cotorrita.

—¡Caliente! ¡Muy caliente! Te dije tibia, tarada.

No hay caso. Le di las mil indicaciones al imbécil de tu jefe pero este lugar sigue siendo un agujero de culo. Y vos venís a ser el producto, el resultado logrado, ¿no?

El dueño de la voz que interroga levanta apenas la nuca goteante del recipiente metálico donde la apoyaba (en una muesca dispuesta a tal efecto) y señala la habitación con cinco dedos unidos por las yemas.

La muchacha parada al costado del hombre sentado, que viste un uniforme de mucama afrancesada, mira la cabeza enjabonada que protesta enérgicamente bajo sus manos.

—¿Eh?

—Qué cuartetera me salió la nena,

qué cuartetera baila por demás,

qué cuartetera no la paro más.

—¿... te digo? Peor el remedio... ¿Qué quiere hacer tu jefe con la radio a todo lo que da? ¿Poner una bailanta acá en el local? Poco futuro para vos, querida. Encargada de los baños, y de favor.

La muchacha ubicada tras el hombre sentado entrama sus dedos en el cabello mojado, enjabonándolo.

—¿No te parece? ¿Eh?

La espalda de ella se tensa sin contestar.

—No te puedo ver ahí. No me gusta, dice él. Quiero que estés donde te pueda ver. Acá adelante.

—No puedo. No voy a llegar para lavar.

El hombre se da palmadas paternas en la falda.

—Desde acá sí.

—Escúcheme, señor Víctor. Yo quiero explicarle algo...

—Yo te voy a explicar algo —dice el hombre sin sacar la cabeza de la palangana donde su cabello flota como un aguaviva en el agua tibia—. A ver si lo entendés. Todo lo que hay acá es mío, sabés. La puerta y la tevé y el diván donde me la bajaba a la que voló sabés por qué, tus uñas y el color de la pared y el de tu boca y tu ropa, todo lo elegí yo excepto vos, se nota, el toque del Turco tenías que ser. Andate tranquilo, Víctor. Cuando vuelvas de tus vacaciones vas a tener un pimpollito esperándote. Te lo voy a elegir especialmente para vos. Hasta el puesto me debés, ves, si no fuera por mí no estarías aquí. Levanto un dedo y volvéis a la calle. —Lo baja y señala su falda—: ¡Acá! ¡Te sentás acá!

Erguida como un jockey sobre los estribos la muchacha obedece y se coloca sobre la falda del hombre con las piernas muy arqueadas y los brazos echados hacia adelante. Su cabalgadura primero la deja

hacer, y cuando la tiene a la distancia adecuada le mete el bigote en el escote, se ríe un rato de sus esfuerzos por evitarlo antes de tomarla por la cintura y sentársela abierta sobre las piernas para enseguida simular con ellas un trote saltarín, como suele hacerse con los niños cuando se les va a contar un cuento, lo que él seguidamente pasa a hacer.

—Hace poco compré la mayor fábrica de ropa interior femenina de Munro. ¿Sabés por qué? No, sos demasiado lela, te voy a tener que explicar. —El rostro invisible de él casi toca el de ella, que está vuelto hacia un lado mientras las manos intentan seguir lavando lo que los ojos evitan mirar—. Para ir por la calle con mi auto y saber que cada mina que miro lleva una bombacha Víctor calzada ahí, como un dedo mío metido en su raya —dice él y vuelve a levantar uno—. ¿Y vos?

Acordes exóticos del trópico invaden el recinto.

—Los cazadores malos,
le pusieron una bomba,

donde la mona jugaba,

—Vamos a comprobarlo. Vamos a ver si sos fiel a la casa o otra putita traidora más.

—Pero Chita se salvó,

pues Tazán así le gritaba:

La mano del hombre se mete jugando bajo la pollera de la muchacha y empieza a hurgar en ese lugar, mientras ella trata de enjuagarle la espuma del pelo con los ojos hundidos en el azul de las paredes.

—¡Cuidado! ¡Cuidado! ¡Cuidado con la bomba Chita!

El hombre extrae de abajo el dedo buceador y como un catador se lo lleva a la nariz.

—¡Puf, nena! ¿Qué tenés ahí adentro, el puerto de La Feliz? ¿Hace cuánto que no te lavás? —le dice, extendiendo el índice rígido hasta casi metérselo en el orificio derecho de la nariz—. Olé, mirá.

En lugar de obedecer la muchacha grita y hunde con las dos manos la cabeza del hombre en la palangana llena que se levanta como una catapulta volcándole encima el volumen completo de agua jabonosa. La joven salta hacia atrás y comienza a buscar desesperada en los estantes bajo la pileta mientras el hombre ruge restregándose los ojos con el dorso de las manos. Apenas puede abrirlos saltan rojos y furiosos para gritarle:

—Bailen bailen todos, bailen bailen todos,

Que el baile ha empe.

—Don Sebastián, me ha sacado esa música tan chévere.

—¿No escuchó, viejo sordo? —Alguien gritó.

—¡Imbécil, no podés tener más cuidado, imbécil! ¡Mirá lo que hiciste! —dice el hombre despegándose del torso la chomba violeta encastrada. La joven murmura algo que parece una disculpa, o quizá él la entiende como tal al ver la toalla blanca extendida en sus manos, y vuelve a la muesca la cabeza cerrando los ojos para dejarla hacer. Ella le cubre con la toalla cabeza y cuello y simula frotar con una mano mientras la otra pasa un aro de alambre a la vez sobre la

palangana y sobre la cabeza tapada y lo apoya delicadamente donde la toalla cubre la base del cuello. El hombre murmura algo incomprensible bajo la toalla mientras la muchacha introduce un palo corto y grueso en el extremo diametral opuesto del aro de alambre y con toda celeridad empieza a hacerlo girar en torniquete, cerrando el cerco al mismo tiempo sobre el cuello del hombre y la columna de acero.

—¿Y? ¿Qué esperarás para secarme, inservible de...?

—¿No fue Víctor ése?

El hombre se corre la toalla de la boca para gritarle y cuando está por sacársela del todo calla. Tiene que tirar muy fuerte para hacerlo porque el aro de acero la ha ajustado contra su cuello, y un segundo demasiado tarde sus manos se disparan tratando inútilmente de interponerse entre la piel tierna del cuello y aquel cerco acogotador. El alambre corta la piel del cuello en varios puntos y la sangre rojo fuego corre tiñendo la chomba violeta de morado. La boca se comba toda en O para aullar cuando detrás de la reja roja de sus dedos el hombre ve avanzar una enorme V de acero enfilada hacia su cara.

—Un ruido y te clavo los ojos al respaldo.

Los de la joven que sostiene la tijera en su mano derecha parpadean por el sudor negro y azul que los inunda. En el silencio que sobreviene sólo se oyen jadeos y el zumbido fluorescente del tubo dañado, una canilla que gotea y voces conversando en una habitación cercana.

—¿No le parece ir a ver? Digo por la chica —dice una vocecita. Exageradamente festiva, la otra:

—Ese Víctor, bien que la debe estar pasando. Y yo que creí que no le había gustado. ¿Se imagina si entramos y lo agarramos con las manos en la masa? Un caso este Víctor, eh. No deja títere con cabeza.

—¡Una bomba de tiempo!

¡Este sábado en Terremoto bailable!

¡Hechos, no palabras!

Vuelve a sonar la radio. El hombre ve su oportunidad en el suspiro de alivio de la muchacha, le tira una patada que la alcanza bajo la rodilla, y con una mano le manotea el pelo. La muchacha se tira hacia atrás, tratando de aflojar con las dos manos el tirón sobre el pelo que el hombre aferra ciegamente a pesar del mordisco del alambre que debe resultarle extremadamente doloroso. Tanteando su otra mano alcanza la cara y busca los ojos, con tan poca suerte que un dedo por error penetra en la boca abierta y los dientes de la muchacha se cierran sobre él. Aúlla el hombre y vuelve a aullar cuando cuatro uñas postizas se clavan sobre el dorso de su otra mano, que por acto reflejo suelta el pelo, y ya no encuentra qué más agarrar.

El hombre jadea como un perro atorado, tose como si tuviera algo atascado en la garganta. Sin palabras.

—Soltame, puta reventada. Soltame —dice casi llorando.

—La pagarás con creces, te vas a arrepentir,

y sufrirás dos veces,
por lo que yo sufrí.

El hombre trata de incorporarse y sus manos blancas como de mármol se crispan sobre los bordes de la silla por el esfuerzo del cuerpo para incorporarse y el alambre se dobla hasta casi fundirse con el acero en los ángulos rectos de la columna.

—Tú la pagarás, tú la pagarás,
porque mi desquite pronto llegará.

—Soltame. Soltame —insiste redundante.

Su nuca golpea la muesca con fuerza y vuelca la poca agua que quedaba.

—¿Qué querés? ¿Por qué me hacés esto? —le pregunta agotado al tubo del techo—. Yo no te hice nada. Unos chistes —dice el hombre, serio—. No te vas a enojar por unos chistes. —La voz se aferra a un tono más grave para no quebrarse del todo—. Soltame y hablamos. Soltame por favor. ¿Qué querés? Te doy lo que quieras.

—Quizás una explicación,
le dé una solución,
a nuestras vidas.

Con movimientos rígidos la muchacha da la vuelta a la silla para ver de cerca lo que las manos del hombre ofrecen suplicantes.

—Mirá, no tengo mucho acá. Pero te puedo firmar un pagaré, te puedo dar Bónex, Banelco y dólares también tengo, Argencard —dice desplegando ante los ojos fijos de ella una ristra de tarjetas como amuletos contra el maleficio. Va llenando los

bolsillos del delantal de la muchacha con bollos de billetes arrugados, soltándolos apenas entran para que no vaya a pensar mal. Ella maquinalmente los toma y se los mete en los bolsillos. El hombre gira la cabeza para mirarla, muy lentamente para no cortarse más, su nuez sube y baja como un animal en un saco, esforzándose por tragar, chocando cada vez contra el alambre y retrocediendo de dolor. La voz le sale mezclada con la saliva que no puede sorber.

—Gracias. Gracias, te lo agradezco tanto —dice lloroso, tendiéndole las manos como un bebé pidiendo upa—. Tuve un día difícil hoy, malos negocios, estafas. Me van a embargar. Todos piensan que me va muy bien, pero yo sé que no... —el hombre enmudece, embargado por la emoción. La muchacha como atrapada en su nicho recula hasta sentarse sobre la mesada, volcando sobre la pileta y el piso frascos de champú y crema y abrillantador. El hombre llora. La muchacha tiene que sentarse sobre el divancito de atrás para poder sostener el palo y meterlo en el alambre trenzado. La cabeza del hombre se mueve para todos lados como la de un pollo asomado fuera de la jaula, tratando de ver lo que hace. Quizás porque eso la enerva o porque el azul turquesa idéntico de las cuatro paredes le ha hecho perder el sentido de la orientación, lo cierto es que la muchacha comienza a hacer girar a toda velocidad el palo en la dirección equivocada y en lugar de aflojar el alambre

lo tensa. El cuerpo del hombre se arquea hacia el techo en un estertor prolongado y cuando baja la silla cae con él, dejándolo colgado del alambre.

—Con ese short cavado,
tú me estás matando,
qué cosa de locos,
mi... corazón se está parando.

La muchacha asombrada observa como hipnotizada al cuerpo corcoveante que se arquea hacia el techo en tres espasmos prolongados y luego cae y permanece inmóvil.

Al tercer intento la muchacha logra introducir el palo con las dos manos y vuelve a hacerlo girar, esta vez en la dirección acertada. La certeza de estar llegando demasiado tarde le da la destreza necesaria, y apenas el alambre afloja su tenaza el cuerpo del hombre se va deslizando y doblando sobre sí mismo en pliegues sucesivos. Sólo el lento goteo de la canilla mal cerrada marca con regularidad de reloj el silencio submarino que sobreviene.

—¿Qué callados que están ahora, no?

—Y... La calma después de la tormenta.

—¿No le habrá pasado algo a la niña, don Sebastián? ¿No habría que...?

—Mire, don Amílcar, le soy sincero. Víctor es un gran amigo y en esta casa todo es tan suyo como mío, la chica incluida. —Con una risa de complicidad masculina, orgullo, alivio—: Tanto tardaba en decidirse que empecé a pensar que no le gustaba.

Sentada sobre el plush del divancito la muchacha mira con expresión confundida el bulto caído al pie de la columna de acero.

—Yo me voy, don Sebastián. Se me hace que ahí adentro pasó algo raro.

Cuando te tenga entre mis brazos ya no te marcharás, resucita la radio a través de la puerta, hasta el amanecer haremos haremos el amor, atruena la música a través de la puerta. La muchacha no puede permanecer sentada, desesperada se incorpora y arremete a patadas contra el hombre, hunde repetidamente la punta del único zapato puesto en la masa amorfa que apenas acusa los golpes con breves sacudidas inanimadas. La muchacha muestra los dientes, se muerde las manos retorcidas, vuelve a patear sin calcular adónde van a parar los golpes.

—¡Vos la estabas buscando!

—¡Ahora la encontraste!

—¡La Ventana, tu programa de la tarde!

—¡Un mundo aparte!

Se alternan anunciando una voz de hombre y una voz de mujer.

La muchacha agarra al hombre de los pelos y lo arrastra por la habitación, la lengua morada que ahora combina con la chomba colgando fuera de la boca, trata de sentarlo contra la pared; superando su asco pega sus labios a los de él y empieza a inflarlo como un globo. Una serie de arcadas la acomete cuando interrumpe y sin contenerse vomita sobre el hombre

el contenido entero de lo que debe de haber sido un frugal almuerzo, en el preciso instante en que la boca de él se abría para aspirar. Al retroceder la muchacha golpea sin querer la cafetera prendida y vuelca la jarra llena sobre la cabeza del hombre que aúlla de dolor con los ojos cerrados.

Como un milagro de vida un par de pupilas sorprendidas aparecen en el barro informe y contemplan azorados el paisaje de las cuatro paredes y el televisor y el rostro de la muchacha que tambaleando se limpia la boca con el dorso de la mano. El hombre empieza a moverse; en cuatro patas avanza sobre la muchacha, cerrándole el camino de la puerta, obligándola a retroceder hasta la pared del fondo. Dos garras de hierro se cierran sobre sus tobillos, y como ha apretado con fuerza los ojos para no ver, la muchacha tarda en advertir que eso que reptaba allá abajo ha empezado a cubrirle de besos los pies.

—Perdón, sin tí mi vida no tiene sentido, gracias, por haberme alumbrado el camino.

Conmovido porque la música lo ayuda a expresar sus emociones más profundas, el hombre le limpia con la mano el peine manchado y levanta hacia la muchacha un rostro gris y viejo, un rostro obsecuente que se esfuerza por mantenerse sonriente con sólo la mitad de los dientes en la boca. Trata de incorporarse, retrocede temeroso de importunar, se atraganta de emoción procurando hablar. Intentando suplir las palabras sus manos se estiran hacia las de ella en un

ruego impulsivo, y aterrado por su propia temeridad a medio camino las retrae bruscamente para protegerlas del castigo. Con una expresión extraña en el rostro la muchacha acerca una mano a la cabeza hundida entre sus pies y acaricia una sola vez el pelo inmundo y pegoteado. El hombre solloza como un niño que nunca recibió cariño, y luego se incorpora. Sobre piernas temblorosas da dos pasos hacia la puerta de salida y el tercero lo mete en la palangana que flota vacía sobre un charco de agua jabonosa. La palangana vuela hacia atrás y golpea contra la pared y el hombre vuela hacia adelante y para detener su caída sus manos manotean el soporte orlado de borlas y lo arrancan de las cadenas de la pared. Catapultado, el aparato de té describe un doble salto mortal y con un estallido ensordecedor cae sobre las dos piernas del hombre, quebrándose y electrocutándolo. Los tubos del techo estallan al unísono y la habitación queda a oscuras, salvo por la lucecita roja que todavía brilla un segundo más en la cafetera sin jarra.

La puerta del cuarto se abre hacia adentro de un empujón, golpeando al hombre en la cabeza, y queda abierta al trabarse entre su brazo izquierdo y su cadera. Un gordo azorado aparece en el marco, la luz que llega desde la calle rodeándolo como un halo.

—¡Dios mío, Víctor, Dios mío, Víctor!

Se lanza sobre él y trata de levantar el rostro triturado que yace de nariz contra el piso. —Hablame, Víctor, hablame —le retuerce el cuello hacia el costado,

como a un pollo, para verle en la cara si continúa con vida-. Ayúdame, nena, ayúdame -dice y sin esperarla alza los restos de la tevé en brazos y la arroja hacia un costado. Intenta levantar al hombre caído, hablándole sin parar-: Víctor, no te me vayas, tú eres mi flor, niña bonita, ganaste mi amor, Víctor por favor, es mi culpa, vos me dijiste, aseguré mal el televisor, qué horror. No te preocupes, te conseguiré el mejor médico del Munro, nena, vos quedate con él, yo voy a telefonar, no voy a tardar.

Lo que queda del hombre caído no es suficiente para suplicarle aterrado que no lo deje solo con la muchacha. Parece sorprenderse cuando en lugar de rematarlo de una buena vez ella le habla con su voz cansada.

-Si salís de ésta espero que sepas mantener la boca cerrada, Víctor.

Sin volver a mirarlo empieza a buscar sus cosas a tientas por la habitación apenas iluminada por la luz de la calle que entra por la puerta que el cuerpo del hombre mantiene abierta. Un reloj despanzurrado entre los restos de la repisa, un bolsito bajo el diván, billetes de cien dólares, un alambre retorcido, un pedazo de palo de escoba, serruchado por un extremo, un zapato con el taco roto que yace en un charco de agua al lado de media dentadura postiza que se ríe como si lo fuera a morder. Entre los frascos abiertos y volcados de champú encuentra un espejito de mano, estrellado por un pisotón. De espaldas al hombre

inmóvil, sin fijarse si la mira o no, la muchacha se desnuda, moja el delantal en la pileta y se lo pasa por todo el cuerpo, insistiendo particularmente entre las piernas donde con dos dedos comprueba que la sangre ha comenzado a correr. Guarda el delantal abollado en el bolso y sin secarse se pone la bombacha usada y el corpiño de algodón blanco y el jean ajustado y la remera.

Encontrándola así al volver el hombre gordo piensa lo peor y se arroja sollozando sobre el cuerpo caído, que lo sorprende abriendo muy grandes los ojos y contemplando el mundo a su alrededor como si acabara de llegar a él. Abre la boca varias veces como para lanzar su primer vagido, pero en su lugar le sale un croar casi inaudible. El recién llegado asienta sus nalgas gordas sobre el piso y se aúpa al caído, meciéndolo con suavidad.

-No trates de hablar, Víctor, ya llega la ambulancia, esperá.

-Ella... la chica...

La muchacha se tensa como un gato a punto de saltar.

La radio no ha callado, debe de estar funcionando a pilas. El imbatible Riki Maravilla, tal como acaban de presentarlo por la emisora radial, les canta a los tres desde el salón:

-Yo me subí a un cocotero,
un coco quería bajar.

El hombre caído trata de articular, como si estuviera aprendiendo a hablar, ella... no tiene culpa de

nada, la culpa... ha sido mía, sabía que algún día, repite con los ojos clavados en los pies de la muchacha, serías tan sólo para... mía, la culpa...

—Cuando toqué algo peludo, lo comencé a tironear.

El gordo se arrepolla y vuelve a acomodarse al niño en la falda, lo mira solícitamente tratando de infundirle confianza, le limpia con su pañuelo las secreciones del rostro, niega con la cabeza indicándole que no debe volver a hablar.

—Lo peludo no era un coco, era una mona, señor.

Detrás de la música, muy lejano, llega hasta los oídos de ambos un ulular.

—Lo peludo no era un coco,

Hay un estrépito y la música se corta repentinamente, como si alguien hubiera volteado la radio de un manotazo al pasar. Se escucha el ruido de una puerta abriéndose sobre bisagras gimientes, y enseguida cerrándose con un tintineo de vidrio flojo en el marco. La sirena de la ambulancia se escucha ahora con mayor nitidez, y el rostro del hombre gordo sonríe sobre el de su amigo que ya más tranquilo se ha quedado dormido.

—Estamos salvados, Víctor. ¿Oís? Estamos salvados.

IV

Norma canturreaba un ritmo cuartetero frente al espejo del botiquín, meneando las nalgas desnudas

como un par de bongós, sacudiendo la cabeza hacia ambos lados, disfrutando con el chasquido del cabello mojado sobre la cara, tirándose luego hacia atrás y separando con los dedos los mechones con claritos para que se destacaran más. Demasiado calor para usar el secador, total para lo que me puede durar el peinado, una noche así, miró su reloj. ¡Las nueve ya! Mirá si llega y te agarra así, le dijo al espejo alzándose con ambas manos los pechos desnudos y brillantes para que pudieran reflejarse en él. Imitó la miradita ladeada y los mohines escénicos de Gladys la Bomba Tucumana, preguntando con su misma voz de mujer sabedora:

¿Dónde está ese lobo?

¿Dónde está ese lobo?

Besó la bombacha antes de ponérsela, enfundó con esfuerzo las caderas morenas en una minifalda de raso bordó, se subió a los verticales zapatos de cuerina blanca con moños de lamé plateado y todavía en tetas comenzó a pintarse.

Había logrado convertir sus labios en dos envolventes ondas de fucsia fluorescente, los párpados en relumbrantes semáforos verdes, probarse la vincha dorada para ver cómo le quedaba, ponerse el aro emplumado, empezaba a delinearse la ceja izquierda cuando sonó el timbre de calle. No puede ser, es tempranísimo. Qué hago.

Corrió al dormitorio y trató de ponerse el corpiño, se le escapó dos veces el broche y el timbre

volvió a sonar, más insistente, manoteó la toalla y tapándose se acercó a la puerta.

—¿Sí? ¿Quién?

—Norma. Norma, ábrime. Es Ester.

Norma abrió la puerta del todo. Parada bajo el foquito quemado del frente, con una pierna más baja que la otra por un zapato roto, el pelo sucio y pegoteado a la cabeza y mal teñido como siempre, la cara a medias lavada y a medio pintar; rascando su puerta con la misma expresión inconfundible de pedir limosna, la expresión de Ester. Norma la saludó sin apartarse para dejarla pasar, sin disimular la decepción.

—Hola, Ester.

—Norma. ¿No me dejás pasar?

—Caíste justo mal. Estaba por salir.

—Es un minuto, Norma. Por favor.

Norma se apartó y sin esperarla volvió directamente al baño, tirando la toalla en el camino. Ester entra y cierra.

—Disculpame si sigo. Cómo andás, Estercita, tanto tiempo —le dijo terminando con una ceja y empezando a copiarla del otro lado—. ¿Tu mamá y tu papá bien?

—Sí, bien —contesta Ester parada ante la puerta del baño—. Norma...

—Eugenio se fue con los chicos hoy, sabés, y aprovecho para salir. Vení, ayudame ya que estás ahí, abrochame el corpiño. ¿Viniste por algo o pasaste a saludar? Sabés que yo siempre te escucho, pero justo hoy...

Ester busca en el espejo la mirada de Norma, sin encontrarla. Le dice a sus espaldas:

—Te juro que es un minutito nomás, Norma. Pero te lo tengo que contar ahora, sabés, aunque sea rápido. Me pasó algo muy...

Norma giró la cabeza violentamente, el ojo con pestaña y el ojo sin clavándose en los asustados de Ester.

—Qué. Te echó el gordo. Y sí. Qué esperabas. Si yo duré cinco meses, ¿cuánto querías durar vos? Me hubieras preguntado antes y te lo advertía. Pero quisiste hacerte la viva, ¿no?

Cada frase golpeó el rostro de Ester como una bofetada, haciéndola retroceder hasta que queda fuera del baño. Norma volvió la vista al espejo y se puso la segunda pestaña con el pulso temblando de la rabia contenida.

—Y ahora que te echaron ya no tenés nada que perder y venís a ver si mamita te consuela, eh, a que te arregle la vida otra vez. Bueno, mamita tiene que salir y no puede atenderte ahora. Mamita tiene que arreglar su vida primero que nada.

Ester balbucea incrédula:

—¿Cómo...? ¿Cuándo te enteraste que yo trabajaba ahí? ¿Quién te dijo?

Norma calculó el efecto de su respuesta, paladeó los segundos de silencio con que la demoró, sonriendo para sus adentros dijo con el tono más casual que fue capaz de lograr:

—Víctor.

Miró de reojo por el espejo, y lo que vio pareció gustarle.

—¿Te sorprende?

—No entiendo —dice Ester sacudiendo apenas la cabeza—. ¿Qué Víctor?

—Víctor Balvecqui —dijo Norma volviéndose, pronunciando las ves fuerte como una maestra en el dictado, chiste que siempre las había hecho reír a las dos, hasta esta vez—. Víctor, el villano, el invencible, el que me hizo echar porque no se la chupaba y a los cinco días estaba acá pidiéndome de rodillas que me fuera de vacaciones con él, mandándome todos los días pinches con regalos, invitándolo a Eugenio al bar para mamarlo y sacarlo del medio, hasta que el pobre aprendió a ir solo a beber con el crédito de él para olvidarse de buscarme al volver. Víctor, Ester, el que me mantiene a mí y a esta casa, el varón más buscado del Munro, el ex lobo feroz, que ahora no le da la cara para confesarles a sus amigos que la mulatona del cuartucho del fondo le echó la sogá al cuello, para explicarles a los que lo creen el más macho del Munro cómo le gusta que en la cama se la den por el orto con un vibrador para morir de amor y placer. Boluda que fui, de no darme cuenta antes. ¿Te acordás de Víctor, ése que asustaba a la pobre Normita? El lobo se volvió perrito faldero.

Norma volvió a mirar a Ester y le dio un poco de pena lo que vio, e intentó moderar la facilidad de su triunfo, que poca gracia tenía, así.

—Sabés, Ester, no era para nada como yo te decía. En el fondo es cariñoso, sabés, me lleva a los mejores lugares, me pregunta siempre por los chicos, a veces les trae regalos. Él mismo tiene una hija de su matrimonio, me prometió que uno de los días que le toca me la va llevar a conocer. Cómo una a veces juzga mal, no, por lo que dice la gente, por quedarse en lo superficial y no ver más profundo, ¿no?

El silencio atormentado de Ester la inclinó a ser más compasiva aún.

—Lo digo por vos también, Ester. En un principio me dio mucha bronca, sabés, que me hicieras esa perrada, que te aprovecharas así de mi desgracia. Pero bueno... al fin te salió el tiro por la culata, pobre, te ligaste la parte de la esclava y yo... Siempre trataste de ser como yo, lo sé, aunque no tuvieras con qué. Bueno, no te guardo rencor, por mí quedátele todo lo que quieras al puestito, disfrutalo hasta que te mueras. Digo, si no te echaron.

—Creo que sí —dice casi inaudible Ester.

—¿No te digo? Te lo veía en la cara. Ay, chiquita mía, si te conoceré. Yo en cambio me quedo con mi Víctor, ¿sabés? —Norma observó si la labor de su rostro era perfecta y conforme se puso su blusa favorita, una hermosura fucsia de poplín con volados regalada por él, y se la empezó a abotonar—. Como te habrás dado cuenta me estoy preparando para él, para mi hombre. ¿Te acordás, las veces que te conté cómo iba a ser mi hombre? Sólo por rajarme de mis viejos

me pude colgar del cuello a alguien como Eugenio. Y no te creas que de Víctor sólo espero favores, sabés. Estos días, por ejemplo, lo preocupado, lo angustiado que está porque su negocio de ropa interior está por quebrar; hoy me llamó de lo más deprimido, y entonces yo me pongo especialmente hermosa como ahora para hacerlo olvidar sus penas. —Dio a su voz la insinuación más directa que pudo—. Ahora está por llegar. ¿Sabés, Ester?

Sin mirarla, Ester murmura:

—Puede tardar un poco.

Norma estiró la camisa metiéndosela adentro lo más que pudo, hasta que la tela formó una línea recta casi perfecta entre la punta de sus pechos y la cintura de la ajustada pollera. Se contempló al espejo con las manos sobre las caderas, echando el torso más hacia adelante aún. Forzó la indiferencia.

—¿Él te lo dijo?

Ester no le contesta.

Norma se colocó el aro símil cuero, el collar dorado con los apliques de strass, las diez pulseras en cada muñeca, antes de girar sobre la punta de sus tacos y enfrentarse a Ester.

—Mirá Estercita, bastante tolerante estoy siendo con todo esto. Pero vos no me provoqués. Hay una cosa que quiero que me digás claro, que me la contestes mirándome a los ojos, sin mentirme por una vez. ¿Es verdad lo que dice Víctor, que nunca te puso un dedo encima? ¿Eh? ¿Es verdad eso que dice, que al lado mío vos no sos ni la servilleta para limpiarse después de

comer? Vos sabés que a mí no me podés mentir, Ester, así que mirame de frente y contestame la verdad.

Ester la mira de frente. Empieza a hacer crujir los dientes sin poder controlarlos y antes de que Norma pudiera abrir la boca para repetir su pregunta la agarra de los pelos y la estrella de frente contra el espejo del botiquín.

Norma retrocedió dos pasos, horrorizada; miró a Ester, incrédula, después miró el espejo estrellado y el reflejo de su cara partida en cien pedazos en los vidrios del espejo, el trabajo de toda la tarde borrado en segundos por la sangre que manaba de la frente y la nariz. Incapaz de creer lo que sus ojos le mostraban, acercó los dedos temblorosos al espejo y los pasó por los bordes cortantes y los huecos de los pedazos caídos, como si fuera ése el lugar donde recomponer la imagen arruinada que le devolvía. Encontrándose en uno de los fragmentos con la mirada de Ester, se volvió lentamente y le preguntó:

—Pero... ¿Por qué? Ester...

La respuesta que Norma escuchó parecía provenir de una persona desconocida, de alguien que ella nunca había visto en su vida antes.

—Porque sos muy puta, Norma —dice Ester.

V

Doña Tita, la costurera, termina de lavar los platos de la cena una vez que su marido, mozo jubilado

y por necesidad sereno de los galpones de Textilanas S.A., ha partido hacia el trabajo. Parte de la mesa permanece servida para una persona, y doña Tita parece algo preocupada cuando mira el lugar vacío.

Se demora lo más que puede en su tarea, secando cada plato más allá de cualquier rastro de humedad antes de guardarlo en el armario bajo la pileta, frotando los cubiertos de aleación hasta que parecen de plata, chancletendo finalmente hasta la mesa y sentándose al lado del lugar vacío cuando no encuentra más excusas para seguir de pie. Lo que más extraña en ese momento es su viejo televisor en blanco y negro, que se les fue irremediablemente el día en que tras el último corte la compañía de electricidad devolvió la luz con excesiva convicción. Contempla al San Cayetano con su espiga en la pared, los veleros surcando el mar azul del almanaque de la peluquería con los dos primeros meses arrancados, la botella de vino y el sifón reforzado y el pan con la servilleta encima. Para ocupar su mente decide seguir un trabajo y colocándose una blusa en la falda empieza a deshilar un dobladillo con la punta de la tijera, meticulosamente, casi al tacto por la escasa luz y su miopía. Con tanto calor que hace teme en cualquier momento dejar con un dedo una mancha de sudor que la obligará a lavar la prenda entera. Además los mosquitos y las cotorritas entran como locos con la luz y hace un rato nomás una se le metió en la nariz, y la hizo estornudar.

Cuando vienen tanto es que va a llover, sabía por experiencia, y en ese galpón la humedad siempre afectaba la espalda de su marido. Lo que más le gustaría en la vida sería volver a tenerlo en la cama por las noches, porque no termina de acostumbrarse a dormir sola después de casi cuarenta años de compañía. Está a punto de encender la radio para saber la hora –más rápido marcar el 113 pero no vale la pena gastar una llamada– cuando suena el timbre de calle y doña Tita eleva los ojos al cielo y agradece con un movimiento de labios.

–Hija, qué tarde llegaste. Empezaba a preocuparme.

Ester entra en la salita de su casa, pasa a la cocina y apoya su bolsito sobre la mesa.

–Voy al baño, mamá.

Doña Tita enciende las hornallas y le calienta el puré y el churrasquito, hablándole a través de la puerta.

–¿Tuviste mucho trabajo hoy, hija?

–Sí, mamá –le llega tras el ruido de la descarga del inodoro.

Cuando sale doña Tita ya le tiene la comida servida y humeante en el plato.

–No tengo hambre, mamá.

Una sombra vuelve a instalarse sobre el rostro de doña Tita, que trata de disiparla disculpándose.

–El puré se me pegó un poco, pero el bife está bien. Un poco sequito, eso sí, pero es que pensé que ibas a llegar para cenar con papá.

-No tengo hambre, te dije.

-Tenés de postre queso y dulce.

-No... bueno, dame. Queso y dulce sí.

Algo aliviada retira el plato caliente y lo reemplaza por el de postre ya servido. Al acercarse sus ojos debilitados ven lo que de lejos no habían podido advertir.

-Nena, Ester..., estás golpeada, tenés moretones por todos lados, nena...

-Me caí en la calle. Casi me pisa un auto -dice Ester mecánicamente. Levanta con el tenedor un borde del dulce, lo separa del queso y lo vuelve a dejar caer-. Me voy a dormir, mamá.

-Con tu papá te hicimos la cama acá abajo, Ester. Con este calor no vas a poder dormir en el cuartito de la terraza, hija. ¿No me dejás ver lo que tenés? Podés estar más lastimada...

-Voy a dormir arriba. Para qué me hizo papá la piecita si voy a volver abajo cada dos por tres. No me habrás deshecho la cama.

-No, hija. Este...

-¿Qué? Dale, quiero irme.

-¿Le dijiste?

-Qué.

-A tu jefe.

Ester la mira extrañada.

-Qué le voy a decir.

-No, si... si te va a pagar. No quiero estarte encima con eso, pero sabés que...

-No voy a trabajar más ahí, mamá. Me echaron.

Doña Tita siente como si el corazón se le saltara un latido.

-Cómo hija. Si ya contamos con el sueldo de este mes. Si al corcano...

Ester abre su bolso y de un tirón saca el bollo mojado y pegajoso de su delantal de trabajo, sacudiéndolo para desplegarlo, sacudiéndolo cada vez con más fuerza hasta que los billetes empiezan a caer, abollados, doblados, apelmazados, sobre el mantel, las sillas, el suelo, la mesa servida. Cuando no cae ninguno más Ester mete las manos en los tres bolsillos, saca más billetes, dejándolos caer sobre los demás.

-Ester. Toda esa plata. ¿Qué es toda esa plata, Ester?

-Ya te dije, mamá. Me echaron. Esto es el sueldo y la indemnización. Quiero dormir, mamá. Quiero dormir hasta el mediodía. Voy a seguir durmiendo todo el día mañana, y pasado, y pasado, hasta que se termine la plata. Y recién después voy a buscar otro trabajo. Me voy a dormir, mamá.

Doña Tita escucha los pasos de su hija resonando sobre los peldaños metálicos de la escalera de caracol, y después empieza a recoger los billetes del suelo, las sillas, revisa el bolso y encuentra algunos más, los despliega y alisa y los separa en dos pilas, los dólares de un lado, los australes del otro. Tras contarlos, y agradecer con lágrimas en los ojos a San Cayetano, hace a un lado la blusa con su montoncito de hilvanes, enchufa la plancha y canturreando espera que adquiera la temperatura adecuada. Pone

el indicador en "seda", para no correr el riesgo de quemar el papel que se le antoja delicado. El teléfono suena en ese momento.

-Sí. No, la mamá. ¿Quién...? Ah, don Sebastián, mucho gusto, muchísimo gusto. Le habla la mamá de Ester. Sí. Pidió que no la despertara. Vino muy cansada, sabe, no se sentía... ¿Es algo...? A ver, espere que anoto. -Sin soltar el tubo se arrima hasta la máquina de coser y en el cajoncito rebusca hasta encontrar una tiza bien puntiaguda. Alisando un molde de papel madera con la mano libre se dispone a anotar-: A ver, dígame. Clínica Olivos, habitación 311, señor... ¿Balbequi con v o b? Ah, Valbequi. Sí. Mañana domingo todo el día. Cómo no. Seguramente. El gusto es mío, señor, muchísimas gracias, no, por favor, gracias.

Corta. Empieza a silbar un tango de sus tiempos de juventud mientras plancha los billetes, elevando cada tanto los ojos para agradecerle en silencio a San Cayetano. La ordenada pila de billetes calentitos y crujientes ya tiene la altura de una tostada cuando la acomete un súbito impulso de hablar con su marido. Tarda en atenderla, y al principio no la deja hablar.

-Bueno, no te preocupés, yo te espero a la mañana con unas cataplasmas. Escuchame, viejo, que te quiero contar algo. Escuchame un minuto. No sabés las novedades que tengo. No, de Ester. Escuchate ésta. La nena tiene novio. Sí, y parece que de plata. Hoy le dio para todas nuestras deudas. Creeme, creeme, lo tengo acá enfrente mío. No, ella me contó otra cosa,

pobre, es tan correcta. Y, como mil. ¡Un milagro, viejo! La única tristeza es que tuvieron un accidente. No, ella unos magullones nomás, pero él está en el hospital. Llamó el jefe de la nena, viste, el señor Sebastián. Muy atento. Se está ocupando de todo. Dice que el muchacho no para de pedir por ella. ¡Mil australes, viejo! Qué suerte viejo, no, a nuestra edad, quién lo iba a creer, tener para que nos cuide una hija como Ester.