

## CHAPTER 3

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# READING THE COMMUNITY CRITICALLY IN THE DIGITAL AGE: A *Multiliteracies Approach*

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The learning process is a process of self-mastery, self-consciousness and thus-liberation. (Gramsci, 1916/1935, p. 54)

Why read the community critically in the digital age? Why use a multiliteracies approach? Since literacy is used as a tool in society to make sense of the world (Freire & Macedo, 1987), in this chapter we share the experience of using three frameworks: critical literacy, community based pedagogies and multiliteracies to engage online English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in multimodal literacy practices, with the aim of increasing their awareness and leading to the transformation of themselves and their community.

Why read the *community*? From an asset-based perspective, communities offer resources for language learning and literacy (Sharkey & Clavijo, 2012). Why read the community *critically*? Drawing on Butler (2002) we understand critique as the virtue of “a critical interrogation of the present and ourselves” (p. 50). Reading the community critically means questioning reality, raising awareness, transforming self and rewriting the world. It entails drafting an understanding of the power relations that subjugate our students and communities, and using language and literacy tools to initiate very specific transformations in the intricate fabric of power (Foucault, 1984).

Why use a *multiliteracies* approach in the digital age? Multiliteracies pedagogy offers a conceptual platform that fits the needs of students in digital times: combined modes and genres and a critical framing (New London Group, 1997). We consider that multiliteracies and digital tools are suitable for drawing or at least drafting the first letter of a re-writing of the world starting by transforming ourselves and by micro-transforming our communities.

This chapter reveals the findings of a qualitative research study conducted in an online EFL course at a public university in Bogota, Colombia. The main idea underlying the research study is that situating English language learning in community exploration offers possibilities for learners to develop critical literacy practices, raise awareness and propose transformations of their communities. The foundations of the study are critical approaches to literacy, community-based literacies and pedagogies, and multiliteracies.

### **Community and Critical Literacy**

This study focuses on using the community as a resource to promote critical literacy with EFL students. Their immediate learning community serves as a place to learn, raise awareness and propose changes by studying social and cultural issues critically. Inspired by Freire and Macedo's (1987) pedagogy, EFL learners and teacher explored the community and shared stories, descriptions and images in the online classroom, then they reflected upon what they observed and designed multimodal texts to report their critical insights.

Freire and Macedo's (1987) contributions to critical literacy suggest that "there is not any use of language that is not related to reality" (p. 53). Furthermore, critical literacy is about "[how to] write and re-write reality, transforming reality through a conscious work" (p. 56). Thus, we understand critical literacy as a pre-requisite for social transformation. It embeds situated learning and interaction among individuals, words and contexts and a variety of specific literacies and skills to live in community. Furthermore, it leads to becoming aware of reality and playing an active role to bring about change.

Community literacies and pedagogies serve as a framework to enact critical literacy and language learning in the study. Though the basics of this pedagogical approach relate to Freire and Macedo (1987), Moll (1994) or

Toohey and Day (1999), this study is influenced by Sharkey (2002), Marshall and Toohey (2010) and Sharkey and Clavijo (2012) and their visions of community teaching and community-based pedagogies. Sharkey (2012) defines community-based pedagogies as:

Curriculum and practices that reflect knowledge and appreciation of the communities in which schools are located and students and their families inhabit. It is an asset-based approach that does not ignore the realities of curriculum standards that teachers must address, but emphasizes local knowledge and resources as starting points for teaching and learning. (p. 11)

The definition above highlights the connection between contextualized knowledge of community and curricular practices for critical literacy. Nevertheless, the meaning of community is not explicitly given. Indeed, Smyth and Toohey (2009) acknowledge the complexity of community in relation to place by affirming that: “the concept of ‘community’ is complex and fluid” (p. 271). In the context of the study, we understand community beyond a geographical concept; it encompasses a social network formed by people who share interests and needs and who establish connections through the exchange of benefits (e.g., skills, services, and knowledge, among others) in a physical or digital space. The notion of community entails a dynamic process of identity construction and strengthening of social capital.

### **Multiliteracies Approach in the Digital Age**

As the context of the study was an online EFL course, the critical reading of the community implied using multimodal literacies and digital literacy. The relation between technology and foreign language literacy has been evolving in the last decades. As a response to the proliferation of new multimodal texts in and out of cyberspaces, the concept of multiliteracies emerged to explain the changing rules of reading and writing according to the new type of texts that include other kinds of media such as image, voice and movement (Gee, 2009; Kress, 2003).

Due to the digital nature of the setting, an EFL online-based course, multimodal literacy practices occurred as mediated by digital literacies. With regard to the close relation between multimodal and digital literacy in the L2, Lotherington and Jenson (2011) assert that “multimodality does not necessarily utilize digital technologies, but it is clear that digital technologies

intensify multimodal possibilities” (p. 227). Postings, videos, slideshows, Glogsters (i.e., digital posters) and voiced video comments were some of the multimodal and literacy practices students developed while working on the community projects. Figure 3.1 is a screenshot of a voiced thread used to make comments about a landmark in the community, a digital multimodal literacy tool that combines voice, video and text to share comments on a common image.



*Figure 3.1.* Voicethread about the community

Drawing on the aforementioned definitions, we take implore Medina’s (2013) elaboration of critical literacy as “a tool to interpret and re-create the social context through different modes such as languages, images, sounds or any other semiotic codes, and to raise awareness of power relations for individuals to become agents of change” (p. 12).

## Methodological Framework

### Context and Participants

The context of the study was an online-based EFL course in a public university that offers 90 undergraduate programs in different academic fields. The university has been recognized for its scientific and academic contributions

to the country. The campus hosts 38,000 students from different ethnic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and it is located in the heart of the capital city. The university offers variety of academic, architectural, natural and cultural resources for students as well as for community members. The university has been the starting point for social movements within the city and the country.

The participants were students who enrolled in English level 3 in the virtual modality during the second semester of 2012 and the first semester of 2013. They were 10 male and 14 female junior and senior students in the undergraduate programs of Engineering, Medicine, Human Sciences, Agronomy, Sciences and Economics. Most of them came from a working class background and enrolled in the online EFL course due to time incompatibilities with their coursework, internships or full- time jobs.

The teacher was an alumna of the same university that served as the research site, where she had been teaching for seven years at the time of data collection. She was in the position of teacher-researcher that enabled her to have an active membership, as she was responsible for the design of the online activities for the course. The study followed a participant observational approach as presented by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000). This approach allowed the main researcher to “develop a more intimate an informal relationship with those who are being observed and provide a superior grade of naturalness to the data gathering” (p. 188).

### **Research Design**

Addressing community issues with EFL students in online contexts in order to research critical literacies from a qualitative perspective moved us to search for a research methodology that could capture the specific characteristics or behaviors from users within cultures and communities that students inhabit online. Online ethnography is one such methodology that offers research techniques to study the behaviors that online communities display. Thus, students’ discussions online were recorded and analyzed in the light of Kozinets’ (2010) research design, who wrote that “Online communities form or manifest cultures, the learned beliefs, values and customs that serve to order, guide and direct the behavior of a particular society or group” (p. 12). Netnography as a research approach is closer to traditional ethnographic standards of participant observation, prolonged engagement,

and deep immersion. In many of its renderings, netnography maintains the values of traditional ethnography through providing a Geertzian sense of “thick description” through the “immersion” of the researcher in the life of the online culture or community. Netnography is defined as “a qualitative research methodology that adapts ethnographic research techniques to study cultures and communities that are emerging through computer-mediated communications” (Kozinets, 2002, p. 62).

The computer-mediated communications used in this study helped us gain insights on the culture of the online community composed of the students of the virtual EFL course. We used the netnographic procedures of Kozinets (2002) to explore the following research question: How do students read the community critically in an online-based EFL course? These procedures consisted of: (1) making cultural entrée, (2) gathering and analyzing data, (3) ensuring trustworthy interpretation, (4) conducting ethical research and (5) providing opportunities for culture member feedback (p. 65).

We selected the data collection instruments responding to the netnographic research typology to evidence the literacy practices in which students engaged when sharing their critical insights in the EFL online course. The data set included transcripts of students’ online interactions, visual and audiovisual online artifacts and a semi-structured questionnaire. Langer and Beckman (2005) assert that the best instruments to collect data for netnography are transcripts, which in this context are commonly defined as “a direct copy from the computer-mediated communications of online community members and observations of the community and its members, interactions and meanings” (p. 200). Postings were saved on the online platform as they are automatically archived and therefore easily accessible. Transcripts of the online discussions were stored in word processing and image file formats for content analysis.

Kozinets (2010) suggests collecting visual and audiovisual online artifacts for capturing online data. Non-textual, visual data were collected as “visual data often conveys information and emotional content and even audiovisual formats” (p. 35). As students produced visual displays, videos and audio artifact data were accessed mostly from the Internet using the university’s on-line learning management system (i.e., Blackboard) or accessing other websites, such as Youtube or Voicethread. Photos and videos produced by students when sharing their insights of the community were analyzed

in terms of content. Surveys are a common descriptive method in social sciences and specifically in the broader field of education. The questionnaire for this study included both open- and close-ended items. The goal of the open-ended items was to elicit information about students' perceptions and commentaries on the procedure and activities completed while addressing community issues in the EFL online course (See Appendix 3.1).

The data analysis followed grounded theory methods for qualitative data analysis as described by Corbin and Strauss (2014). The process of data analysis consisted of three phases: open coding, identification of patterns, and axial/theoretical coding. These techniques are used to construct theory inductively from the specific instances or fieldworks as proposed by this framework for analysis.

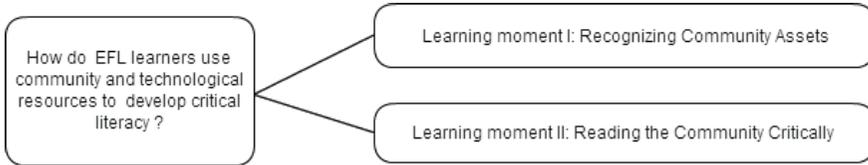
At the first stage, we read through the collected data and located frequent topics and themes. After reading the data several times, we identified codes and labeled the matching instances and statements using color coding. This helped us to shape the categories that directly addressed our research concern. The next step was making connections among the preliminary categories.. The initial codes were grouped in bigger themes and these were organized into bigger sets and smaller categories. In this phase, we considered the relationship between the preliminary categories that clustered together and the governing structure that included them. The third stage consisted of making connections with theory that reshaped the initial categories.

The section below presents and discusses the findings and shows graphic representations of the relations among categories and their thick descriptions based on data and theory.

### **Findings**

We identified two key moments identified in the data analysis process. The first was the students' recognition of community assets as a way to become users of such resources (human, cultural, ecological, historical and linguistic) to learn. The second was their critical reading of the community to experience the university campus from a problem-solving perspective to seek solutions to problematic situations that affected them, including actions to improve their community. The university community appeared as a multimodal book that encouraged students to undergo quests, and it provided valuable critical literacy sources in the online course. The graph below displays the two main

learning moments we identified: Recognizing the community assets and reading the community critically. The learning moments are displayed in Figure 3.2.



*Figure 3.2.* Learning Moments

### **First Learning Moment: Recognizing Community Assets**

Recognizing community assets is the first learning moment towards critically reading the community. This was an eye-opening experience for many students who acknowledged valuable traditions, places, and people while developing their projects. This experience mirrors what Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) call community asset mapping, which is a process of documenting the tangible and intangible resources of a community by viewing the community as a place with strengths or assets that need to be preserved and enhanced, not deficits to be remedied. Recognizing valuable community sources helps learners to acquire the knowledge embedded in social, cultural and material contexts (Gee, 2000). In this particular case, community asset mapping allowed students to grasp several types of knowledge: linguistic, historical and disciplinary. Data from the students' postings and videos provided seven types of assets to the university community: human, cultural, historical, ideological, ecological, communitarian and linguistic. Below we provide examples of the most relevant assets for the development of a critical reading of the community.

**Human assets.** The first assets students recognized when working on the community projects had to do with the community inhabitants. Students' postings to the forum, videos and other online artifacts suggest the paramount importance of acknowledging people as valuable learning sources. The way and reasons why learners portrayed certain community inhabitants suggests issues of subjectivity, as well as social and academic capital. These issues are

documented in the following excerpts from the online data and the students' survey.

Learners interviewed other community members. Many students interviewed university professors they admired while others selected university workers or classmates. The main features that prevailed in these characters were academic qualities and personal values. The following excerpts exemplify these characteristics. Some people were selected for their personal qualities, as shown in Figure 3.3, in which the students made a video on the life of a university employee who works for the animal medicine school.



*Figure 3.3.* Human Assets

The surveys also confirmed how students recognized human assets in the community as valuable. For example, Maira noted,

This project allowed us to find out about the life-story that forms part of the university. We found out about the teachers that give us their best to improve the university, as well as the administrative staff whose smiles make us feel at home in the same way as the smiles of our fellow students.

The examples show that recognizing the community's human assets provided appreciation of the community's inhabitants, or what Kretzman

and McKnight (1993) refer to as “building trust and “social capital” through connections and linkages” (p. 7).

**Cultural assets.** Cultural assets were the second resource students identified when working on their community projects. Bourdieu (1986) asserts that cultural capital exists in material and non-material states. Students’ online artifacts about cultural places and traditions in the community portray the cultural assets of the university community.

Another example (see Figure 3.4) is offered in Clara and Rafa’s clip in which they portray a cultural tradition in the community, the university carnival. In their video, they tell their classmates about the history, organization and main components of this tradition (video available at: <http://goo.gl/swKBes>).

The university carnival is an event that is performed every year for the purpose of promoting an atmosphere of warmth and joy between different people within the university community. It is the right space to foster a spirit of integration for the benefit of community members. In the carnival, it is possible to see art exhibitions that describe the various cultures living in the university, where one can “learn more about these cultures and their customs through the representation of their dances, their songs, their stories and of their colorful parades” (Clara and Rafa).



*Figure 3.4.* Cultural Assets: The University Carnival

In the screen-shots, some images of the carnival performances are shown. In the excerpt, the students mention the community values that this event promotes every year such as integration, joy and multiculturalism, the last of which is of paramount importance in the university environment, since students come from diverse cultural backgrounds including African-Colombian, indigenous and rural communities. Music, arts, storytelling, traditional dances and parades represent all the regions of the country present in the university community.

**Historical-ideological assets.** Students not only researched information about human or cultural assets in the community, but they chose landmarks significant for their historical and ideological meaning. Historical and ideological assets are relevant in this community, since the university has been a breeding ground for social movements and historic figures that have influenced Colombia's national history. Take for example Alejandro's posting about a significant picture from the community.

This image shows the faculty of law and political science this is the building where I study. By this faculty have studied great personalities of the country and countless people who are known for their fierce struggle against inequality in this country; so much history in these buildings make you think about you in the society.

In this posting, Alejandro pays close attention to the historical figures who studied there. For example, he mentions the case of political leaders who initiated social and historical movements in the country. The university community has both influenced and been influenced by the historical, political and ideological phenomena of the larger Colombian context.

With regard to the community's historical connotations, Lefebvre (1976) asserts, "Space has been shaped and molded from historical and natural elements, but this has been a political process. Space is political and ideological: "it is a product literally filled with ideologies" (as cited by Grunewald, 2003a, p. 31). In the space of the community, history, politics and ideologies have left indelible impressions on the minds of the community's inhabitants. These impressions are represented by quotations and art on the walls, as well as in landmarks and place names. Thus, the relation between communities and history, politics and ideologies constitutes a valuable resource for learners.

**Linguistic assets.** With graffiti, posters, cartoons, bulletin boards, flyers and notices, there is plenty to read in the university community. This set of linguistic tokens found on the community walls is defined by Shohamy as ‘linguistic landscape’; the “linguistic objects that mark the public space” (as cited by Gorter, 2006, p. 14). In this way, some students were thrilled to develop their video projects based on this subject. The following students’ artifacts (Figure 3.5) illustrate the community’s linguistic landscape as seen by them.

In the storyboard, Rebel shows the university community’s linguistic landscape. Although the community offers other types of linguistic objects, she focused on graffiti, which Shohamy and Gorter (2009) describe as a bottom-up (unofficial) form of expression, as opposed to top-down (official) alternatives. The university community as described by Rebel is a place where these two positions are in conflict. On the one hand, some authorities want the university to keep its walls blank. On the other hand, students like Rebel consider graffiti as a way to express discomfort, communicate messages and share their art. On this subject, Rebel prepared her final video project in which she showed some graffiti samples and interviewed four students to know their viewpoint regarding ‘Blank walls, blank minds’ (the clip is available at <http://goo.gl/igJ6Sn>). She asked the following questions: What is your opinion about the problems at the university and their connection to graffiti? What’s your opinion about the graffiti you see?

As noted in the example above, linguistic landscape is a resource for critical literacy. In fact, similar projects using linguistic community landscape have been successful for literacy development. Sayer (2010) reports on a pedagogical intervention in which he and his students examined the linguistic landscape in Oaxaca, Mexico and identified the main uses of English in the community landscape. Another example is shown by Jiménez, Smith and Teague (2009), where the linguistic landscape samples from Mexican and Texan towns are the main resources for migrant students to develop community and transnational literacies.

The complex richness of the community is a valuable resource for critical literacy development. An asset-based approach is useful to take advantage of the embodied and non-material cultural, linguistic and social capital that students can earn if they open their eyes to the multimodal book of the community.



Figure 3.5. Rebel's Video Project Storyboard

**Second Learning Moment: Reading the Community Critically**

The second learning moment students went through when working on the online-based course was through a critical reading of their community. After

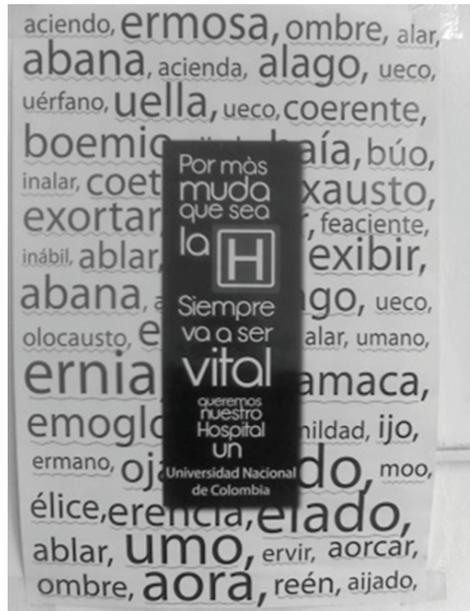
analyzing the community assets, students sought solutions to the problematic situations that affected them and proposed everyday actions to improve their community. The term critical in reading the community correlates to the component of critical framing proposed by the New London Group (1997) in the manifesto of the multiliteracies pedagogy. It involves students standing back from what they are studying and viewing it critically in relation to its context. Critical literacy emerged gradually after analyzing the community. Fairclough (1992) elaborates the concept of *critical* “as the ability to critique a system and its relations to other systems on the basis of the workings of power, politics, ideology, and values. In this sense, people become aware of, and are able to articulate, the cultural locatedness of practices” (as cited in New London Group, 1997, p. 84).

The critical reading of the community entailed two steps: looking into problematic issues and proposing simple everyday actions to transform their community. When working on their final projects, students went beyond the observation of community resources. Power issues, social struggles and budget problems affected the university community, and some students developed video projects to critique the struggles they face every day. On her final project, Gaby illustrated inequality struggles by historically relegated groups. Her video shows some graffiti associated with the indigenous and Afro-Colombian struggle for rights. The text reads “The unity that works is the one that joins us to the struggle.” Gaby asks another student about this graffiti and the debate between people who prefer white walls to the ones who support it. At the end, she expresses her opinion; she agrees with graffiti but she rejects offensive messages. In this short part of the video, the student is concerned with issues of inequality; by selecting the graffiti associated with racial groups, she engages in a critical dialogue with another student and finally, she supports her viewpoint.

Another problem frequently mentioned on the discussion boards and video projects was the need for a university hospital for medical students to practice. Figure 3.6 shows evidence of critical reading of the linguistic landscape that revolves around this topic. Sonia commented that, “It makes me feel proud to belong to the medical school, no matter have not yet university hospital, yet we are still struggling. What do you think about this poster?”

In this posting, Sonia critically reads a poster that uses language in a creative way. Spanish words in the poster have omitted the letter H. The lack

of this letter strikes the reader as the words appear incomplete and difficult to read. The message in the middle black chart reads “Even though H is mute, H is always going to be vital. We want our Hospital.” Sonia’s concise posting contains three main ideas: the pride of being a medical student at the university, the problems caused by the lack of a university hospital, and the struggle that “we” (i.e., the community) are faced with to resolve this issue.



*Figure 3.6.* Reading the Community Critically

As seen in the examples above, reading the community critically requires, as a first step, acknowledging issues of power and inequality. As Pennycook (1999) asserts, “nothing will change unless people know things need to (‘if it ain’t broken, don’t fix it’)” (p. 336). The students recognized inequalities and identified problems that affect the community. In the next step, students moved from recognizing problematic situations to proposing solutions to them.

Another meaning for critical, according to Giroux (1987), is transforming reality. Pennycook (1999) claims that: “critical approaches to TESOL have

to do with a political understanding of the location of pedagogy and the development of a way of teaching aimed at transformation” (p. 338). Students were not only able to identify power relations and issues that affect the community negatively, but they questioned themselves on ways they can transform their reality. Take, for example, Francisco’s posting:



*Figure 3.7. A Picture of the Community: Caution, Reality Across*

Francisco noted the following about this image:

This image represents more than a door, an entry or an exit. I chose this place because is a division of the world, so it is known as “Caution, reality across” from inside of the campus. The reason is that the University is a space of criticism of the reality, the political power, government and capital and also for the construction of a new society. The most important is that after you study here your life, your feelings and you thoughts change. And only if you can understand happened, you can transform the reality. What do you think about the phrase Caution, reality across”?

In this posting, Francisco criticizes the separation between the educational system and society. Grunewald (2003b) citing Brand and Clinton (2002)

mentions that schooling often distracts our attention from, and distorts our response to, the actual contexts of our own lives. They assert that people's everyday intimate experiences of literacy are in conversation with remote forces at play in the larger sociocultural context (p. 347). The student finishes his comment by recognizing that one must understand reality to begin changing feelings, thoughts and the larger context.

Another example of raising awareness to transform reality is given by Caro. On her final video project, she talks about contamination problems and she proposes solutions to them. She prepared a video show called *Green News*, in which she identified some environmental problems in the community. She raised awareness about water and electricity waste and she talked about the bad placement of garbage. After talking about these problems, the student proposed strategies to save energy and water and to deal with refuse. In the last half of the video, Caro gives simple recommendations to help solve environmental problems (the clip is available at <http://goo.gl/LggIdd>.) At the end of clip, she shows the recycling process; additionally, she explains how students can classify waste to facilitate the process.

The aforementioned examples show that after acknowledging the community assets, students moved to reading the community in a critical way. They were able to identify inequality and power relations issues to work towards a transformation, contamination problems in the city, the separation between the public educational system and the society. Once they had read the community as a book, students started re-writing their reality through the online discussions they held around the issues above mentioned.

### **Coda: Online Translanguaging**

The multimodal literacy practices students developed when working on a critical reading of the community had some particular features with regards to L2 and L1 use due to the online nature of the course. Reading in Spanish and composing in English was a common literacy practice in the postings. To gather information about a community asset a student would read an online article in Spanish and then write a summary in English. In the postings below, a student centered her attention on the meaning and used untraditional punctuation and spelling while other students used electronic translation tools. Another feature of the postings was translanguaging (the juxtaposition of L1 and L2 to convey meaning). Flores and Garcia (2013)

assert that “translanguaging as a pedagogy offers much promise to enable cultural constructions and transcend the nation state relationships of power” (p. 256). In spite of the mixture of L1 and L2 structures and nonnormative spelling, the message is intelligible, as Lina has shown below:

#### Carnival University

nacional history goes back to the year 1921, when you create the federation of students of the City, responding to similar latina university’s trajectories, also founded traditions such as the anthem and the flag of the student, the national government supports this initiative decreeing the STUDENT’S DAY and carried out events by all the city with participation of the national army, senate, others schools and many people more from this date starts the carnival university to be staying until 1934 and he reappears in various moments in the history of the soul máter bibliography (Official website of the University in Spanish).

In terms of textual genres, students composed descriptions, narratives, comments, dialogues, even argumentative texts. On this subject and translanguaging, Cope and Kalantzis (2000) assert that “when learners juxtapose different languages, discourses, styles and approaches, they gain substantively metacognitive and metalinguistic abilities in their ability to reflect critically in complex systems and their interactions” (p. 8). Learning how to deal with different languages, modes, genres, sources and electronic tools constitutes an essential skill for additional language learners in digitally mediated environments.

### **Conclusions and Pedagogical Invitations**

This study showed that critical literacy can be fostered through multiliteracies, digital literacies and community based pedagogies. We have further found that community-based pedagogies and multiliteracies are a suitable pedagogical approach for critical literacy development in digital environments. As Warschauer and Ware (2008) claim:

Only a transformative pedagogical approach can unleash the potential of technology for literacy development—both for traditional and new literacies. Through such a transformative or critical approach, students make use of technology to analyze their own lives and social problems, develop and publish material that addresses social issues or positively promotes their identities, and collaborate with distant partners to [make] further exploration of social or identity issues. (p. 229)

Findings on how community based pedagogy and multimodalities shaped critical literacy practices involved two learning moments: recognizing the material and non-material assets of the community and critically reading the community. Aside from language learning, the students earned cultural, academic and social capital by experiencing the community and using its resources to learn. Furthermore, students became aware of situations and issues present in the university campus and were able to propose strategies to transform their shared reality. The findings point out the need to become aware of the social, situated, multimodal and transformative nature of literacy. The results also suggest that education in the digital age needs to be nurtured from local resources community.

We invite language teachers and learners to critique and break dichotomies such as school/community, teachers and students/community inhabitants, monolingual/multilingual texts, textual/multimodal practices, traditional/digital educational environments, and so forth. These and other dichotomies can be transgressed by juxtaposing multiple modes, genres and languages. Further work is needed to break dichotomies in terms of modality and culture as well as transmodaling, transculturing and transliterating.

A final invitation is to open our minds to the use multiple languages and modes in non-linear ways in order to question reality and power relations, become aware and commit to self-transformation. Only then we will be able to initiate micro-transformations in the intricate fabric of power using literacy, community resources, multimodality and technology as tools.

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### Appendix 3.1

#### Semi- Structured Online Survey

Apreciados estudiantes, a continuación encontrarán unas preguntas sencillas para que reflexionen acerca la utilidad del proyecto que se realizó sobre la comunidad. También pueden agregar sus comentarios para mejorarlo. *(Dear students, you will find below a set of simple questions to reflect upon the usefulness of the project about the community. You can also add your comments to improve it).*

1. ¿Para qué sirvió la realización del proyecto sobre la Comunidad de la Universidad? \*Escribe tanto como puedas relatando tus percepciones sobre los foros, los scripts y la realización del video. *(What was the usefulness of the Project about the University community?\** Write as much as you can telling your perceptions of the discussion boards, script writing and video recording)
2. ¿Cuáles actividades contribuyeron más al aprendizaje de la lengua? *(Which activities were the most helpful to the learn English?)*
3. ¿Qué aprendiste durante la realización del proyecto acerca de la comunidad? \* *(What did you learn while working on the project about the community?)*
4. Otros comentarios y recomendaciones \* *(Do you have other comments or recommendations?)*Bottom of Form