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Socialization of Knowing How to Feel through the Epew in Mapuche Culture: Guidelines for Early Childhood Education

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Abstract: Oral stories have historically been used by Indigenous peoples as an educational tool. In contexts of social diversity, where Indigenous peoples are a minority, these stories are excluded from formal education or used in ways in which their original meaning is lost. *Epews* are oral stories that form part of the family education of the Mapuche people. This article aims to reflect on the emotional socialization mechanisms in formal education (kindergarten and school) and also from the perspective of Mapuche family education, taking the *epew* as a basis for the learning process of knowing how to feel. The methodology corresponds to the Delphi method, in which 40 people participated (experts in methodology, literature, intercultural education, Mapuche academics, and Mapuche families). The results allow us to highlight the importance of the *epew* in the learning process of knowing how to feel in early childhood education. These results are organized into categories such as (a) the conceptualization of the *epew*; (b) reporting; (c) the *epew* and its function: Mapuche values and anti-values; (d) articulation with territory; and (e) early childhood education proposals. The results conclude that the implementation of the *epew* in the classroom, through the incorporation and visibility of socialization mechanisms, values, and rules of the display of emotions of the Mapuche people, constitutes a starting point for intercultural education in early childhood.

Keywords: reading; epew; early childhood education; stories; emotional ideal



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1. Culture and Mechanisms of Emotional Socialization

Emotional education is an ongoing process that integrates an ideal of knowing how to feel in particular social contexts [1]. In this emotional education, a child is given guidelines on what is desirable and appropriate [2], which constitute dynamic action scripts that initially operate in the behavioral planes to then be internalized as models of action that are capable of being organized in representational models [3].

These recursive processes of action–internalization and the representation of emotion are articulated in daily socialization activities and early childhood education, both in institutionalized education [4,5] (notably preschools) and in family education [6]. These spaces of formal and informal education transmit norms—explicitly or implicitly—that indicate emotional guidelines expressed in language about what is expected or desirable in a social context, which are then culturally reinforced [7]. This results in the construction of frames of reference that not only allow us to understand the world but also to conduct ourselves in it effectively or competently. From this perspective, we can understand emotions as social constructions on which we can reflect and build representations, thus organizing our daily work but also allowing us to reorganize our experiences. In this sense, our memory about emotional experiences is also mediated by cultural information [3].

We can then observe that, through these daily interactions, the social interactions of a culture mediate the emotions that are part of the expected emotional ideal [8,9]. These cultural emotional ideals are constructed through direct interactions with the family [10,11] and social actors, such as preschool educators [12] and teachers, who socialize emotion in their interactions with children [13,14].

The mechanisms used to socialize emotion are widely described [15] and present wide individual variability within each society [16]. The following elements, described in the Eisenberg, Cumberland, and Spinrad model [15], stand out in a heuristic model: (a) the emotional expressiveness of parents, (b) parents' reactions to children's emotions, and (c) the discussion of emotion by socializers. Each of these factors presents cultural variations. For example, the authors of [17] showed that North American mother-child conversations are characterized by an "explanation of emotion" style, while Chinese mother-child conversations are characterized by an "emotional criticism" style. In relation to parental reactions to children's emotions, according to Cheah and Sheperd [18], when faced with aggression in their children, Canadian Aboriginal mothers were less anxious about aggression in their children than mothers of European-Canadian origin. Cole, Tamang, and Shrestha [19] found differences between (a) Tamangy and (b) Brahman Indigenous Nepalese mothers, where the former were more likely to repress children's shame and anger whilst Brahman mothers responded to children with hugs or by reasoning with them.

The Eisenberg, Cumberland, and Spinrad model [15] is complemented by socialization mechanisms for the regulation of emotional expression. Cultures differ in their rules of emotional display [20], which are the rules that guide the appropriate expression of emotions by defining how, when, and to whom emotions are expressed. Similarly, cultures also differ in the preferences for certain types of emotions (e.g., [21–23]). As we noted, young children acquire these culture-specific emotional norms through the emotion socialization strategies of their parents [24], teachers [25,26], and educators [27], and even from the facial expressions of political leaders [28] or exposure to cultural artifacts, such as advertising messages [29].

These cultural artifacts [30] can reflect culturally acceptable emotional norms, and exposure to these emotional displays is a viable source for children to learn and value the ideal emotional states of a culture, as well as their rules of expression [4]. In other words, we educate children's emotions within the framework of the culture in which we develop. Stories, on the other hand, are a tool for emotional education [4,30], providing content through images, samples of different types of emotions, as well as different levels of intensity of expression. Examples of these are illustrated stories.

In Western and European education, literary devices have contributed enormously to the field of children's emotional education [31]. Stories are part of education and are used both at home and at school. They date back to the nineteenth century, where the work of the Brothers Grimm (1812–1815) stands out, with famous works such as "Hansel and Gretel", as does the work of Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875), through classics such as "The Little Mermaid", "The Ugly Duckling", and "The Emperor's New Clothes" [32]. Currently, the use of stories is recurrent for the teaching of emotions and values [33], as they allow for the development of emotional competencies that involve awareness, emotional regulation, and life skills [34].

These emotional regulation processes are associated with the psychological mechanisms involved in the construction of cultural identity. For example, when compared to members of collectivist cultures, members of individualist cultures are more attuned to internal states and value them more [35]. In this way, cultural behavioral practices tend to be more indicative of one's preference for using specific emotional regulation processes [32,36,37]. Similarly, emotional regulation processes are associated with acculturation processes and mental health [38]. Early childhood education plays a key role in the regulation of children's emotions and, in the same manner, in the construction of cultural identity.

The abovementioned Westernized education is part of the influence of globalization in early childhood education (ECE) and can be witnessed by the representation of global approaches in most of the ECE programs within the framework of a child-centered approach [39]. Regrettably, globalization in terms of ECE could deny or diminish the knowledge of those who belong to minorities, including their knowledge about how to feel accepted in their cultures [39,40].

In contexts of social and cultural diversity, the tools used to teach emotions and values are diverse. Among these tools are oral stories, developed by the wise men of the community, such as the case of the Nyoongar society in Australia [41] and the Tseltal society in Mexico [42]. This can also be seen in Mapuche society through the stories known as *epew* [43].

The *epew* are stories that narrate the relationship between animals and nature with human beings, to teach actions, values, and the development of emotions in accordance with expectations in Mapuche society [43]. They are used for didactic purposes, in teaching Mapudungun [44]. From the pragmatic principles of the production of an *epew* [45], as well as generic didactic strategies (in language acquisition), the *epew* “can be integrated into a learning unit or classroom projects so that students can undertake infinite activities such as dramatization, imitation of characters, drawings, clothing design, etc.” [46] (p. 79). However, they are also considered to be mechanisms for the education of knowing how to feel, which transcends moralization. They promote forms of knowing how to feel through particular strategies that are organized in the reading structure, its phases, its openings and closures, and with an essential pillar of dialog.

The cultural variations in the use of stories are quite clear [30,47]: families teach their own values and strategies for regulating emotion through different tools; however, the socialization processes of the emotional ideal can encounter a scenario where children from minority groups are exposed to ideals that do not necessarily coincide with those maintained in the vernacular knowledge of their families [48].

Thus, if the ideals of these families are unknown, children must move in a complex context in which knowing how to feel can also be exposed to monoculturality, the loss of cultural identity, or the development of double rationalities [49]; however, in the context of social and cultural diversity, it is fundamental that minority groups can also recognize emotional ideals and their underlying values in the elements that they are presented with in kindergarten, such as the *epew*, which passed from oral transmission to a storybook format in the Western tradition. The causes for this probably lie in the fact that, at first, Mapuche oral stories were translated into foreign languages and adapted to Western structures, moving from an oral tradition to the demands of Western writing [50].

To revert the above, it is important to avoid the Westernization of oral stories, because when they are rewritten ancestral aspects are adapted to Western patterns. Likewise, it is important to bring children’s literature closer to the Mapuche worldview, seeking coherence with issues raised in ancestral stories [51]. In this sense, it is essential to consider the *epew* as a metaphor impregnated in the word, ancestrally oral [52], and based on the transmission of Mapuche values. This facilitates the development of relevant and meaningful early childhood education.

Over the last decade, decisions have been made in an effort to focus on the well-being of children. Various educational policies, referring to the recognition of preschoolers as citizens, have resulted in an increase in coverage and an effort to improve educational spaces; however, there are still too many gaps in Chile between reality and promised improvements in intercultural education [53].

Training practices tend to become a biased vision of life in early childhood education centers. It is not that this educational level should be left out of the required reforms, but rather the idea is that the rights of children should be enforced through public policies that ensure equitable responses, well-being, and respect. An institution that provides preschool education from a civic perspective should be recognized for promoting experiences associated with social encounters and coexistence, but ones that naturally reach all spaces and do not just remain in certain closed spaces, exacerbating social injustice.

Hence, the importance of generating holistic spaces, which serve as mediators in the education of girls and boys, where they can develop skills in terms of learning to live with others, first in their relationship with their family and then progressively interacting with others in a positive interaction that promotes the development of their identity as part of a community that accepts them. In this scenario, they can progressively exercise their rights, sharing with an increasing number of people and developing relationships of affection and trust, reaffirming their identity and belonging to a world that recognizes and is enriched by their contributions.

In Chile, public policy on early childhood education in recent years has followed this approach. Through the updating of the Curricular Bases of Preschool Education (BCEP) in 2018, an intercultural approach was incorporated that promotes learning contextualized in the cultural contexts of children and their families [54]. This makes it possible to organize pedagogical work in preschools with flexible learning objectives along a cross-cutting agenda, such as individual training.

Likewise, among educational proposals programs have emerged within the framework of the National Board of Preschools (JUNJI) and Fundación Integra that have made it possible to implement intercultural proposals in the Mapuche context [55,56]. From the perspective of each context, educational teams integrate community knowledge and ways of knowing into these, such as knowing how to feel.

Currently, the national early childhood education curriculum integrates proposals that gather cultural knowledge as well as ways of knowing and integrates them into educational practice, responding to the cultural diversity present in the country.

Chile is a multicultural country according to the National Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (CASEN) [57]. The Indigenous population is 9.5% of the total, and the most representative group is the Mapuche peoples, making up 9.9% of the Indigenous population; however, recent research shows the predominance of Western knowledge in schools, which influences the loss of vernacular knowledge [58]. The same is happening in the family context, since families have had to adapt their educational actions to be considered “good parents” in the eyes of the state [59].

From this perspective, it is important to understand Mapuche family education and the principles of *kimeltuwün* educational action in order to articulate this knowledge in a relevant way with Western didactics, thus avoiding the folklorization of cultural practices. In the case of storytelling, didactics is implemented by an individual or formally established expectation from a Western perspective, which tends to exclude those ideals that underlie both the form of reading and its content, thus limiting the mechanisms of the socialization of emotions (and therefore of knowing how to feel emotionally) where the *epew* plays a key role [7].

Based on the above, the general objective of the article is to characterize the nature of the *epew* as an oral story that has transmitted information for the education of knowing how to feel in Mapuche families. The specific objectives are to identify and characterize its basic and distinctive elements in the search for a greater understanding of the *epew* for its incorporation into formal education (preschool and school) and family education in contexts of social and cultural diversity.

From this logic, the following research questions are posed: What are the nature and characteristics of the *epew* in the Mapuche tradition? Additionally, how does the narration of the *epew* contribute to educational practices concerning the mechanisms of emotional socialization and knowing how to feel in formal education?

2. Method

The method used was the Delphi method, which is classified as one of the general methods of foresight. It aims to approach a consensus among a group of experts based on the analysis of and reflection on a defined problem. For Marín-González et al. [60], this method is based on two principles: collective intelligence and anonymous participation. The first is operationalized from assumptions that experts raise and converge into a common

argument. Anonymity implies that ideas are considered without any knowledge of the identity of the person presenting them.

This method makes it possible to structure the information provided in groups or panels on the study object until a consensus is reached among the experts [61].

It is then an iterative process in which the experts issue their opinions on more than one occasion, with controlled feedback, processing the responses after each round of application where participants evaluate the results of the previous stage [62–64]. According to Skulmoski, Hartman, and Krahn [65], it is a flexible method that is well suited to when there is incomplete knowledge or when the goal is to improve the understanding of problems and propose solutions. The Delphi methodology used in this research was for the aggregation of ideas [66], considering our qualitative approach and the goal to generate or aggregate different ideas to a problem.

2.1. Participants (Selection of Experts)

For the selection of participants, the study identified experts in methodology, literature, intercultural education, and Mapuche scholars as well as families: 15 Mapuche scholars; 12 Mapuche families; 5 professionals with experience in the management of a national institution aimed at the care of children in early childhood education with extensive knowledge regarding childhood and interculturality, considering that they form part of the intercultural education team in this national institution; 2 experts on children's literature; 4 preschool educators; and 2 methodologists. A total of 40 people agreed to voluntarily participate in the study, who were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality in the handling of information.

2.2. Procedure

The Delphi procedure has phases that have been fairly well defined [67,68]. Having identified the problem, selected the panel participants, and guaranteed the anonymity of the participants, we initially proceeded to organize groups of experts for review. Four groups were organized around a consultation on the nature of the *epew* and the methodology of its implementation in preschools. This consultation was translated into specific open-ended questions about its nature, characteristics, and meaning in school. Each group had a coordinator who distributed and coordinated the provision and integration of information. At the end of this phase, the groups had been formed and we had open-ended questions that responded to the objectives and research questions.

The second phase involved iterative Delphi rounds and controlled feedback. In this phase, each person from each group was given their answers and an organizational proposal in a common document. In this phase, comments and suggestions were collected from each group. Once comments had been collected, a second document was presented, with controlled feedback, that integrated the positions of each group as well as the organizational suggestions. There were six Delphi rounds of controlled feedback that extended over almost six months.

During the third phase, consensus criteria were reached for an agreement on the structure of the proposal result and content by more of the 80% of the panel when no new information arose from the information analysis in Delphi rounds. This closure criterion was agreed upon in the initial phase and was maintained for the consensus of the process.

The process of Delphi rounds of controlled feedback made it possible to reach an agreement between judges on the results obtained, with the validity and reliability necessary to guarantee the solidity of the conclusions reached.

Data collection took place during 2021, through meetings held by the research team where the experts socialized their knowledge about the *epew* in Mapuche education.

2.3. Data Collection Instrument

Based on the objectives and research question, a series of questions were proposed and incorporated into an open-ended questionnaire. The original questions were adjusted in the first phase of the procedure to ensure their understanding by the expert panel.

The questions were as follows: What is an *epew*? What are its characteristics and functions? How are emotions and identity taught through the *epews*? How can the *epew* be incorporated into early childhood education?

2.4. Data Analysis

The original data collected from the second phase of questionnaires were analyzed using an emerging category analysis. The analysis procedure was developed following the coding paradigm. The following were carried out: (a) open coding, to identify emerging categories; (b) axial coding, to specify and relate defined categories; and (c) selective coding, choosing a central category to relate the other categories to it [69]. Each Delphi round of controlled feedback incorporated the results that were collected in those rounds, so that the experts on the panel could regularly position themselves on the progress of the results and incorporate their position on them.

3. Results

The results are presented in accordance with the study objective and are organized into the following categories: (a) the conceptualization of the *epew*; (b) reporting; (c) the *epew* and its function: Mapuche values and anti-values; (d) articulation with territory; and (e) early childhood education proposals. In an effort to connect the original responses with the results, for each category we have added a quote from a Mapuche wise man from the Delphi groups (G1–G4).

3.1. I.—Conceptualization of the *Epew*

“The epew is a story that is transmitted from generation to generation. According to elders, it is a way to regulate and learn from our relationship with nature, with animals, with trees, the wind and between people, to learn from respect.” (G.4)

In the implementation of the *epew*, in terms of education on knowing how to feel, the validation of other emotional socialization mechanisms emerges; in this case, mechanisms that are typical of Mapuche families as another cultural form. In this way, social representations must be made visible in terms of the emotional ideal, which exemplifies the expected aspects of Mapuche culture, and within other teaching strategies, which are also transmitted and addressed through the *epew*.

Based on this logic, the most recurrent social representations are the following: (a) consideration of subsistence: meeting the primordial need of ensuring existence and survival, generating the security of living and making it sustainable over time; (b) consideration of spirituality and *feyentun*: this refers to the fact that there are other dimensions and other beings on earth that cohabit and/or coexist permanently with people; therefore, in this relationship there must be respect and rules that regulate it from a spiritual dimension (linked to the *az mapu*); and (c) consideration of the sense of community: the *che* (person) is established as such by nourishing themselves and relating to others, to the family, to the elders, to the territory, and to the community. Therefore, the *che* (person) is a product of the collective that is above an individual being.

In the *epew*, emphasis is placed on the value of *yamuwiin* (respect) towards all things that exist, whether they are material or immaterial. *Yamuwiin* is one of the most important values of Mapuche culture, since the way of relating to others, to the world, and to nature is built on it. This value is represented in accordance with the age and life cycle of people, as described below:

1. Respect for young people, because they contribute to the community with their strength, vitality, and courage to give continuity to the cultural legacy, facing opposition and collective conflicts.
2. Respect for the elderly, because they contribute with their experience, their trajectory, and the *kimün* (knowledge) acquired throughout the course of their lives. This knowledge is a very valuable cultural asset to transmit and guides the new generations, as well as being complemented by the strength of the *weche keche*.
3. Respect for women and men, where the importance of “being a person” is highlighted rather than a gender distinction. This considers the principle of complementarity and duality, since the functions that both fulfill are equally important and contribute to community life.
4. Respect for the *pichikeche* (small people), because adults recognize the active participation of the *pichikeche* in daily work, cultural activities, and in all social spaces that involve community participation. From the moment they are born, children are considered active members of the community, participating and contributing in keeping with their possibilities and abilities.

“Everything in this life is based on and was learned from nature and needs to be respected, because they respect each other, live in harmony and need each other, so we must also respect each other from children to the elderly and also everything around us.” (G1)

The elements presented above show that a Mapuche person is built by valuing and respecting all beings with whom they interact and coexist. All of the elements and people that surround the *che* (the person) nourish or feed them to help them build themselves as a person in a symbiotic reciprocal relationship.

For an adequate understanding of the *epew* as a tool of early childhood education, it is important to highlight the vision of childhood from the Mapuche worldview. According to the Mapuche worldview, boys and girls are visualized as *pichikeche* who are in formation, i.e., they are considered to be a person who, based on their age, is able to reason and actively reflect on their behavior and the effects it has on others. The above refers to the growth and development of the *pichikeche*, where adults validate their abilities as they grow and progressively acquire autonomy. This formation process of the Mapuche being is built in interaction with the different members of the family and the community.

One of the important roles that Mapuche children have is to accompany adults, so that the *pichikeche* learn from the wisdom of many adults and, therefore, from their culture. Thus, the *pichikeche* provide assistance to many adults, helping them with what they need. The learning that they acquire is not only for their individual development, but it also helps to maintain balance with other people and other beings that exist in the territory from a community perspective. This community vision of education includes the participation of not only parents, siblings, uncles, grandfathers, and grandmothers, but also of other members of the community as active and responsible parties. This is the way of seeing and understanding the world of Mapuche logic, which considers that each person is part of the community and contributes to or affects the collective whole.

For a full understanding of the *epew*, some central aspects are defined below:

1. The *epew* corresponds to stories that are transmitted through the generations, incorporating different elements of nature. This tradition is typical of Mapuche society and is used for educational purposes with children in family and community contexts. The *epew* constitutes a cultural transmission mechanism with great symbolic value because it highlights specific teachings, emphasizing central points of the stories or events and channeling relevant reflections to those who listen (learners/new generations).
2. The narratives of Mapuche wise people claim that the *epew* is based on the observations and connections of the person (*che*) with nature and the different elements that compose it. From the Mapuche worldview, nature constitutes a learning space, which is why the natural environment provides opportunities to learn and teach social norms and values. The creation of an *epew* starts with the consideration that the

person (*che*), like other living beings, is governed by the rules established by nature. For example, the *che* cannot fly because nature did not give them wings like birds, hence narratives are told from the point of view of the narrator. Therefore, people carry out detailed observations of nature, where they interpret it and interpret themselves in it, attributing characteristics to other beings that are related to the events and experiences that hold importance in their lives. For example, from their knowledge and experience, people attribute cunningness and the skill to deceive others (“crook”) to the fox, as presented in some *epew*.

3. Indeed, the *epew* is born from observations, which constitute a form of learning and teaching that the Mapuche people have instrumentalized, and it is transmitted through the telling of stories, facts, and events where the protagonists are inhabitants of the territory who teach and transmit these natural norms to be learned by people. An example of this is the observation of the sound that nature gave to different natural phenomena, which helped to create Mapudungun (language of the earth).
4. The people in charge of telling the *epew* are the paternal and maternal grandparents (*laku* and *chezki*), transmitting this knowledge to their grandchildren, so that it is transmitted from generation to generation. Likewise, the *epew* can be transmitted by other adults to children as an educational tool in preparation for life from the experiences that nature has given to the oldest inhabitants of the territory.
5. *Epews* can vary in their content, depending on the territory where people live. For example, in the *Pehuenche* territory (mountain range) it is common to find stories that incorporate the *pehuén* (fruit of the araucaria) and animals that inhabit that sector, while in the *Lafquenche* territory (coast) the stories may include marine animals. The elements incorporated into the narratives can vary, depending on what is happening in people's lives. Sometimes these *epews* incorporate new characters and inhabitants that are observed in natural spaces (new phenomena or natural scenarios, new species of flora and fauna). Likewise, characters can also disappear, either due to natural conditions or the actions of humankind, since many animals have left the territories and decreased in population.

In present times new *epews* have emerged, which are based on the observation of new natural phenomena and the relationships of these with new facts, events, and experiences that occur in society, opening the possibility to address new needs, problems, or requirements that can be developed through this educational strategy.

3.2. II.—Story

“In the epew we learn how animals behave, and we learn from them. That is why you cannot act like the fox that always lies, we should not be like the fox and lie.” (G2)

The *epews* have been narrated across generations for the education of boys and girls. There are stories that teach their own values; they also promote the teaching of appropriate actions as well as those that are not approved in Mapuche society. Together, they constitute a basis for the teaching and regulation of emotions in childhood, since the actions of the characters invite children to learn and adjust their emotions to the context. Stories are created to didactically represent and address values and anti-values with the *pichikeche* or children, to generate a space for reflection on the events reported, and, through this, internalize the learning that emerges from the *epew* to guide their actions.

The *epews* do not have specific moments for their narration, since they arise as a means to address situations or events in the daily lives or actions of humans that must be analyzed and reflected on; however, according to cultural tradition, they are told at times when people are gathered at home, so it is more common for them to be told at sunset, after the family's tasks have been performed, or in winter, when more time is spent inside the house, and in ceremonies or special events, such as *we xipantu* (winter solstice in the southern hemisphere) and changes of cycles, among others.

“My grandfather would tell us an epew every time something strange happened during the day, so we could learn from what happened, or when we were all gathered at home, so we all learned.” (G3)

It can be told by two different people, who can contribute to the same *epew* with deeper descriptions based on their knowledge of nature. For the narratives, narrators can use images, objects, gestures, and interpretations that contribute to providing greater content and understanding. It is currently possible to find *epew* writings made using the writing tools provided by Western culture, which has contributed to the preservation of these stories over time, thus ensuring that the *epew* are not lost with the departure of the oldest people or the ancient *epewtufe*; however, this situation has distanced the *epew* from the ancestral Mapuche tradition, since they are currently used as didactic stories in the classroom.

3.3. III.—The Epew and Its Function: Mapuche Values and Anti-Values

“To be a che (person), you have to learn. You cannot learn everything immediately; you have to be correct (norche) like the ox, but also a good person (kumeche), like the heron and always help others, learn from the chickens who are strong even though they are small (newenche), and with time we can be wise like the condor (manke). Only then do we become people, Mapuche.” (G1)

Through the *epew*, the cultural knowledge and ways of knowing of the Mapuche people are socialized. Its characteristic and central importance, as a form of Mapuche teaching, is to favor the teaching–learning processes of values and anti-values in the formation of the *che* or person. This contributes to self-regulation and education on knowing how to feel in childhood.

From this perspective, the purpose of the *epew* is to contribute to the formation of the person, the formation of the *che*, responding to Mapuche ideals: (a) *norche*, which refers to the formation of an upright, honest person, who works for what is right for their people; (b) *kumeche*, which refers to a good person, who through their actions tries to find balance in their relationships with the different elements of the earth and the rules of coexistence; (c) *newenche*, which refers to a person with spiritual strength, who is nourished by the energy of all beings living in the Mapuche world; and (d) *kimche*, which refers to a person with wisdom and experience, who is willing to contribute and share their knowledge with those who require it.

These values and ideals promote respect for the rules of coexistence with the different beings and elements found in the Mapuche world. Likewise, these values are provided by the community and are acquired through real situations that arise in life.

In the same way that the *epews* address values, they also incorporate the teaching of anti-values, i.e., those that do not respond to the ideals of the education of a Mapuche person. Among these, we find the following: (a) *weluzuam*, which refers to a person who acts without reasoning; (b) *koilatufe*, which refers to a person who lies; and (c) *goimatufe*, which refers to a person who forgets things.

“The epew teaches us that we must not stray from the right path. We must not lie like the fox; that’s why they do not want the fox. You cannot be weluzuam; you have to think things through before doing them, because every bad thing we do will affect us.” (G2)

3.4. IV.—Articulation with Territory

“The epew arise from real things, from what we observe in our lof. They teach us about nature, like when the pilpilén warns us when the tide rises or falls, when the partridge with its song warns us that it is coming to visit, or when we want to sing as beautifully as the thrush.” (G3)

The *epew* is constituted as a strategy to transmit *kimün* (Mapuche knowledge) through stories and events that have occurred throughout the history of the Mapuche people. Its articulation with territory is generated from the interactions, observations, and daily

experiences that a person (*che*) has with their *lof* (territory) and the different beings that inhabit it. This is how the experience of life in the communities provides a source of inspiration for the *epew*.

From this perspective, the *epews* personify living beings, phenomena, and other elements of nature that coexist with people. The characteristics attributed to these beings will depend on the existing relationship with the community, which will result in possible variations among the *epews*. The following are noteworthy: (a) *gürrü* (fox): it is attributed the characteristics of a liar (*koyla*), since it is characterized by using various tricks to favor itself in different situations; (b) *manke* (condor): it is characterized as being calm (*ñochi*), for being a patient and calm bird; (c) *achawall* (hen): it is attributed strength (*nnewenche*), because it is one of the few birds that confronts predators to defend its young; (d) *mansun* (ox): it is attributed wisdom (*kimche*), because it is considered to be a very calm and reflective animal; (e) *wilki* (thrush): it is *tayülfe*, because of its song, and is also a very trusting bird; (f) *diuka* (*duca*): it is *liwentu ka tayülfe*, because it begins to sing before sunrise; (g) *rakin* (bandurria): it is considered to be friendly (*wenüy ka nutramtufe*) and good at talking, because its sound resembles two people conversing; (h) *fizüi*: it is *tayülfe*, because of its strident song when it flies; and (i) *trapial* (puma): it is considered to be a friend (*wenüy*), since it is very trusting of other animals and tries to help whenever it can.

3.5. V.—Proposal for Early Childhood Education

“The epews leave us a teaching, a piece of advice, but that advice should be for everyone who listens, not just for a single person, so we learned among us all because we all have knowledge. We not only learn from a tree, but also from the soil where it is found, from the animals that visit the tree, and from their neighbors’ trees that together help each other to live.” (G3)

There is currently a trend in preschools to have children’s literature for individual use, in which spaces to “promote reading” are enabled and each child interacts independently with the available literature; however, the books used in these reading spaces tend to address themes and cultural elements of Western culture, whose authors are mostly foreigners. This is why the elements and characters tend to be decontextualized from the territorial reality of the preschool children in these areas.

For an adequate implementation of the *epew* in early childhood education establishments, the suggestion is to narrate the *epew* in large-format texts that propitiate storytelling with a large group of children, respecting the logic of the community approach in Mapuche culture. This methodological proposal is presented in a general way, to work with a large group of *pichikeche* (small adults), respecting the tradition of the *epew* as a collective story, while contributing to the construction of *gülam* (advice) as a result of participatory reflection. Regarding the above, some specifications of the methodology are detailed below:

1. Giant *epew* for preschool education: The measurements of the closed book are 50 cm × 70 cm, and once opened the book measures 1 m × 70 cm. This unusual size for a book makes it possible to see the scenes on each page up to an approximate distance of two meters, thereby making it possible to be told to a large group of children.
2. Construction of characters that are relevant to the territory: Another particularity of this method is that the characters and elements used in the composition of the scenes are incorporated through photographs of the characters that were built with natural elements of each territory, based on the origin of the story. This makes it possible to generate significant learning, since the images are related to specific elements associated with the contexts where the *epews* were collected. This is because the natural elements that give life to the characters were selected on field trips with the *pichikeche* from intercultural preschools located in the towns where the story was born. The incorporation of these elements makes it easier for children to identify and recognize some characteristic elements of their territories, such as wool, wood, stones or types of crustaceans, algae, leaves, flowers, trees, etc. It also helps them to know their names in Mapudungun. This encourages toddlers to engage with greater

interest in the images, since they incorporate elements that belong to the spaces of everyday life.

3. **Emphasis on orality:** According to the knowledge of the *kimche* (Mapuche wise people) of different territories, the *epew* are stories that are transmitted from generation to generation, with an emphasis on orality, where traditionally the *chachay* (older person) told these around the *kutral* (fire) in the *ruka* (house). That is why, in the *epew* book adapted for use in preschool education, there is no text that explains what is happening in each scene, in an attempt to perpetuate the oral tradition of the Mapuche culture. However, for its use in *epewtufe* (storytelling), a sheet is located in a pocket of the book, which provides a general explanation of what happens in each scene, which must be internalized and learned before telling the story.
4. **Text of the *epew*:** The text of the *epew* for the narrators' use has a basic structure or story, but it is the duty of each *epewtufe* (storyteller) to give greater relevance to certain circumstances, episodes, or characters, adding other characters that contribute to developing the teachings that they want to transmit. It can also incorporate greater dangers or natural phenomena that must be understood or further examined, based on the children's interest or the territorial context where the story is being told. By not having writing, it helps the *epewtufe* to motivate the *pichikeche* to listen, prioritizing an attentive observation of the images, but the use of these will also depend on the motivation or objective that they hope to achieve with the *epew*.
5. **Windows with the characters:** At the end of each *epew*, there is a section that promotes and facilitates the provision of *gülam* (advice) in a didactic way. A series of windows were created to talk about this *gülam*, and behind each of these are the characters that appear in the *epew*. The objective of this structure is to generate a surprise effect to motivate dialogue with children. In this section, some questions, answers, or comments will be formulated regarding how the *pichikeche* interpreted what happened in the story. In other words, they are asked how the characters acted or behaved. How should the characters have acted? Why did this character behave this way or not? These questions are asked for reflection and the giving of advice, for better coexistence and good living with the different beings that inhabit this *Wall Mapu* (Mapuche territory). From this logic, the windows with the characters are used to achieve *rakizuam* (thought and reflection), allowing a co-construction with children from their previous experiences of the different possibilities of telling the *epew* and the interpretation of roles and each character's way of acting, which favor the formation of divergent and creative thinking.
6. **Age for the narration of *epew*:** In Mapuche culture the *epews* are presented as a methodology for learning, where orality and active listening are important. In children in early childhood education, it is estimated that participation from the middle levels will be more significant, since at this stage of development preschoolers have advanced in the use of language. Likewise, they have initial knowledge and experience of their natural and cultural contexts, which will allow them to understand the meanings of the story.

The methodological specifications presented constitute guidelines that may vary based on the territory and educational context. These can be adjusted based on the needs and interests of the preschool and even incorporate guests for implementation, such as family members and the local community; however, it is important that this practice does not stray from its oral tradition, to avoid being confused with other stories.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

Through this work, we are able to reflect on the emotional socialization mechanisms in formal education (preschool and school) and in Mapuche family education, using the *epew* as the basis for the education of knowing how to feel. This highlights the value of the *epew* as a strategy for transmitting *kimün* (Mapuche knowledge), which narrates stories and events that have occurred throughout the history of the Mapuche people [44]. This ancestral

practice would bring this knowledge to the classrooms of early childhood education, contributing to the learning process via emotional education through the teaching of values that guide the education of the person in the Mapuche context.

We argue that a pertinent implementation of the *epew* in the educational context must be territorialized, because, for the Mapuche peoples, knowledge is built according to territories, so the stories may vary based on geographical characteristics [46]. For this reason, the *epew* must contemplate life stories pertinent to the territory where the preschool is located. In addition to the above, we stress the importance of avoiding the Westernization of oral stories. In other words, the implementation of the *epew* must adhere to the oral tradition, based on the transmission of Mapuche values [44].

We maintain that, for the development of an emotional education based on the social and cultural contexts of children, it is essential that they know their own educational methods, as is the case with oral stories for the Mapuche people. This poses a great challenge, because these practices assume the commitment to integrate the *epew* in its most proper meanings, thereby avoiding the Westernization of ancestral practices [70].

For the incorporation of the *epew* in the classroom, the work of educational agents is key, placing emphasis on the knowledge about the nature of the *epew* to avoid decontextualized implementation [70]. In addition to the above, teamwork is important, assuming roles in the narratives, as is the integration of members of the family and social environment, since they are the ones who have the knowledge of the territory. This strategy would integrate *kimiin* (knowledge) into the classroom and strengthen intercultural educational competencies in early childhood education professionals [70,71].

In summary, through the incorporation of the *epew* in the classroom, we conclude that it would be possible to bring visibility to socialization mechanisms, values, and rules regarding the display of emotions in the Mapuche people. Likewise, we estimate that the use of *epew* constitutes a tool that contributes to the advancement of intercultural education in early childhood, since it will enable the presence of other forms of knowledge in the classroom, which not only represent the dominant culture but also incorporate the knowledge of others, which have long been invisible and ignored.

The following five guidelines will enable the implementation of the *epew* in educational contexts:

1. Build trust with families and key territorial agents (town elders), demonstrating respect, validation, and interest in the knowledge, stories, and values of their local culture;
2. Consult and inquire with the families and grandparents of the territories about the stories they were told when they were children, what they learned from those stories, at what times they were told them, who told them, and why they told them, to understand the forms, values, and mechanisms of cultural transmission held by families;
3. Engage with the *epewtufe* (narrators) that exist in the territory or grandparents of the preschoolers who are familiar with the story in order to increase knowledge about the *epew*;
4. Systematize the *epew*, recognizing the strengths behind the learning values of Mapuche culture in local families and incorporate these *epews* as didactic tools into daily preschool activities;
5. Undergo training in the use of Mapudungun (the Mapuche language) and the Mapuche worldview to tell the *epew* with greater knowledge.

In short, the use of *epew* in preschools will enable us to move towards an education that does not exclude the cultures of Indigenous peoples, but includes their voices, regardless of the differences. In addition, the diversity of perceptions of reality and ways of seeing the world offered by the *epew* in the classroom will make it possible to see difference as a value, as a source of enrichment and improvement of educational conceptions as well as practices. Through this recognition of Mapuche knowledge through the *epew*, self-esteem and cultural identity are strengthened, promoting the achievement of significant learning for children, because both the characters in the story and the phenomena it addresses are typical of situations of daily life and the regional territory where the children live.

This is the reason why it is important to implement this mechanism with cultural relevance. Despite efforts to develop intercultural education for early childhood, Mapuche teachings tend to become Westernized. In order to help children develop a positive perception of their culture and its educational knowledge, children's literature must be relevant, where the rewriting of Mapuche stories is performed through an author or informant who belongs to the culture. The revitalization of emotional socialization tools from Mapuche family education and their integration into early childhood education would provide opportunities to contrast globalizing education and examine global versus local hegemonies, departing from a view of history from a colonizing point of view on knowing how to feel. In this regard, early childhood education teachers must impart knowledge concerning how to feel, values, and language, with an emphasis on local culture [40], knowing the impact of this element on supporting children who are "culturally strong and resilient" [72] (p. 8).

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