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La motivación y la conciencia cultural en la enseñanza del inglés a adultos: la era del Swing.

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**UNIVERSIDAD  
DE LA RIOJA**

# TRABAJO FIN DE MÁSTER

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Motivation and Cultural Awareness in Adult  
English Teaching: The Swing Era

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Curso 2017/2018

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# **MOTIVATION AND CULTURAL AWARENESS IN ADULT ENGLISH**

## **TEACHING: THE SWING ERA**

### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this teaching innovation project is to develop a teaching lesson plan addressed to advanced students belonging to the Official School of Languages. There are two main goals in this project: enhancing students' motivation towards their learning and increasing their cultural awareness related to the English-speaking countries, specifically their cultural knowledge about the Swing Era occurring at the beginning of the twentieth century in the United States.

In order to reach these goals, some theoretical considerations regarding motivation, cultural awareness and the effects of age in Second Language Learning will be outlined, together with some teaching strategies to enhance the learners' cultural awareness by dealing with art manifestations such as music, literature or film.

Once the main theoretical aspects have been sketched, an innovation project consisting of five sessions of two hours each will be developed in a way that all the considered concepts regarding motivation, cultural awareness and adult learning have been accurately put into practice.

### **RESUMEN**

El propósito de este proyecto de innovación docente es diseñar un conjunto de sesiones didácticas dirigidas a estudiantes adultos de la Escuela Oficial de Idiomas pertenecientes al nivel avanzado. Los principales objetivos de este proyecto son incentivar la motivación de los alumnos hacia su aprendizaje e incrementar su conciencia cultural de los países de habla inglesa a través de contenidos relacionados con la era del Swing de principios del siglo XX en los Estados Unidos.

Para alcanzar estos objetivos, se realizarán primeramente una serie de consideraciones teóricas relativas a la motivación, el concepto de conciencia cultural, los efectos de la edad sobre el aprendizaje de lenguas o también varias estrategias didácticas para enseñar contenido cultural a través de manifestaciones artísticas como la música, la literatura o el filme.

Una vez concluidos estos puntos, se desarrollarán cinco sesiones de dos horas cada una en las cuales se pondrán en práctica los conceptos mencionados en el marco teórico para alcanzar los objetivos didácticos ya establecidos.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Motivation has always been considered as a key factor inside the field of Second Language Learning (from now onwards SLL). This discipline requires a feeling or an intention to accomplish specific goals that can lead the learners to achieve their linguistic goals. Therefore, motivation is an essential aspect to take into consideration when teaching a foreign language, especially when it comes to working with adult learners. Motivation is also part of what scholars have considered as the affective factors involved in the process of SLL, among which attitude and language anxiety can be found as well.

Adult learners work in a different way as younger learners do, and this occurs because their linguistic system has started working in a different way after going through the adolescence period. Hence, the age factor takes a big part inside the adult students' learning processes, requiring instructors to make use of different techniques to address this type of learners.

On the other hand, apart from the motivation factor, cultural awareness has also been considered as a key concept to work on when teaching a foreign language. It has been proved by most researchers that the concept of language cannot be separated from the concept of culture. Learning a language not only requires the ability to communicate with people from all around the world, but also the understanding of the culture this language is immersed in. This is why the importance of teaching culture in the SLL class will be theoretically justified and complemented by a series of instructional strategies teachers could use in order to make students become aware of the existence of more cultures apart from their own. Added to this, several points to take into consideration when dealing with the teaching of culture through different art manifestations will also be numbered.

Therefore, this project has been addressed to adult learners belonging to the Official School of Languages in order to utilize different teaching techniques to heighten their motivation towards the language and their learning process together with an increase of their cultural awareness. In order to do so, appealing, eye-catching materials related to the Swing Era and belonging to different art manifestations (music, literature, culture, dance, film...) will be

displayed in this innovative teaching proposal, which is intended to be of great interest to instructors dealing with this type of learners and suffering from motivational and cultural-awareness deprivation among their learners.



## **2. MOTIVATION IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING.**

### **2.1. The concept of motivation**

Over the last decades, motivation has been a field of great interest among scholars devoted to the field of SLL. Inspired by the well-known psychologists Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert's theoretical perspectives of motivation in a psychological framework, many have been the researchers who have grounded the concept of motivation into the field of language learning.

It is the case of one of the most renowned scholars on this field, Zoltan Dörnyei (1994), whose main purpose of study has been the fostering of "further understanding of L2 motivation from an educational perspective" (p.273) and who has dedicated great part of his studies to the exploring of relevant motivational components in the process of SLL. However, before delving into the concept of motivation in the scope of SLL, a reminding of the sense of motivation and its different types will be considered.

Most scholars agree with the idea that motivation is "generally understood to denote the strength of a person's desire to attain a goal" (Schmidt et Al. 2010). Moreover, it has been stated that motivation is a multi-dimensional concept that is dependent of four dynamic perceptual components: attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction and that it is a goal-oriented, continuous process of performing an action that causes behavior (Khuntia 2010; Oudeyer & Kaplan 2008). In a nutshell and paraphrasing these authors, motivation could be defined as a continuous, goal-oriented process that creates human behavior towards the desire to obtain a specific reward or psychological feeling of relief and satisfaction.

It goes without saying that as any field of study, the concept of motivation has been changing in the same way as different theoretical perspectives regarding human behavior have evolved. That is to say, that as Caciora (2008) states,

During the 1920s and 1930s, most behavioral psychologists were committed to a non-introspective study of human behavior that

concentrated mainly on what could be objectively observed (...) without the presumption of inner motives or innate mechanisms as determinants. (p.558)

Nevertheless, it was with the appearance of cognitivism and Chomsky's theories when the view of the learning process as a "rule-based system from which an infinite number of sentences can be created" regarded motivation from a cognitive perspective concerned with "why people decided to act in certain ways and what factors influenced the choices they made" (p.558).

Bearing these assumptions in mind, several scholars are in the thought that motivation towards learning can be defined by two main factors: learners' communicative needs and their social and educational attitudes. Therefore, scholars such as Gardner & Lambert (1972), Lightbrown and Spada (1993) or Wright (1987) agree with the existence of two main types of motivation: extrinsic or instrumental and intrinsic or integrative.

As for *extrinsic* motivation, it has been defined by a wide number of scholars as the type where the "reason for learning a language is to gain something outside the activity itself" (Caciora, 2008) such as passing an exam or getting qualifications. Dörnyei (1994) adds to this assumption that "extrinsically motivated behaviors are the ones that the individual performs to receive some extrinsic reward (...) or to avoid punishment".

Thus, the idea of extrinsic or instrumental motivation lies in the fact of learners' "propensity to take part in activities because of the reasons which do not link to the activity" (Vansteenkiste et. Al. 2006 cited in Mahadi & Jafari 2012: p.229). In short, instrumental motivation implies that learners learn in support of a "purpose or useful motive" (Gardner & Lambert: 1972).

On the other hand, in *intrinsic or integrative* motivation, the purpose of learning is "to enable one to communicate with the members of a specific language community" (Caciora, 2008: p.559). In Dörnyei's words (1994), "with intrinsically motivated behaviors the rewards are internal"; for example, students are motivated by the fact of getting joy from doing a particular activity or satisfying their own curiosity. Moreover, several scholars agree in the fact that intrinsic motivation is

Essential for the integration process through which elements of one's accessible internal awareness is assimilated or mixed with new knowledge. (Walker et. Al (2006) cited in Mahadi & Jafari 2012: p.233)

Notwithstanding, the type of motivation that will be of higher interest for this innovation project is intrinsic motivation, due to the fact that the project's main purpose will be getting adult students into the L2 learning process without being obsessed by getting good grades or reaching certain external goals, but getting positive feelings and attitudes through the use of motivating culture-related materials.

In addition, the concept of motivation has never been considered as a single-lined, straightforward field. As it is directly related to how humans create behavior, the task of defining it into a single path has been of great difficulty. Nevertheless, in Dörnyei's words (1998):

Researchers seem to agree that motivation is responsible for determining human behavior by energizing it and giving it direction" and "motivation theories (...) seek to explain no less than the fundamental question of how humans behave as they do. (p.117)

In short, what has been valued of great importance is the fact that motivation toward L2 learning is particularly complex in the sense that it is multi-dimensional and

It is not directly comparable to that of the mastery of any other subject matters in that knowing an L2 also involves the development of some sort of L2 identity and the incorporation of elements from the L2 culture. (p.119)

Due to time constraints, although it has been made clear that motivation is a complex and multi-theoretical field, it is not going to be further studied in the sense of different psychological and social perspectives. What is being intended in further sections is to explain the importance of motivation inside the second language classroom and its main traits in adult English learners.

## 2.2. Motivation as a key aspect for Second Language Learning

As stated in the previous section, motivation towards L2 has been defined as the extent to which humans work to learn a language because of their desire to do so and the satisfaction they experience in the process (Dörnyei 1998: p.122). Moreover, based on Gardner's social-psychological approach, motivation in L2 is considered to encompass three main components: motivational intensity, desire to learn a language and the act of learning a language (Gardner 1985: p. 20). The purpose of this section is to justify the importance of motivation inside SLL and analyzing the main affective factors involved in the students' learning process, as motivation has been considered to be one of them.

It was not until the 1990s that theories on motivation in L2 learning started to address a more educational approach and give more importance to motivation inside the L2 learning process. This has been named as the "educational shift" of the 1990s (Dörnyei, 1998). Then, a revival towards the interest in exploring the importance of motivation in L2 learning started to arouse.

In Dörnyei's words, the theoretical perspectives towards motivation in SLL in the nineties addressed three main underlying aspects: the willing to complement Gardner's approach with the fact that this social dimension might not be the most important one in some educational contexts, the need to conceptualize motivation in order to explain "specific language learning tasks and behaviors and not just broad, whole-community level social tendencies" (p.124); and finally the "call for a more pragmatic, education-centered approach to motivation research (...) more relevant for classroom application" (p.125).

According to the main contributions to the importance of motivation in specific educational contexts occurring in the nineties, several scholars agree in the fact that there is a wide variety of components that affect motivation in the learning context. This is the case of Dörnyei (1994), who based this contribution on Keller's motivational system "particularly comprehensive and relevant to classroom learning" (p.277) and distinguishes three basic components: *course-specific motivational components*, related to syllabus, materials, methodology and learning tasks; *teacher-specific motivational components*, "concerning the teachers' personality, teaching style, feedback and relationship with the

students” (p.277); and *group-specific motivational components*, which are related to the dynamism of the learning group.

However, as diving into the whole scope of the motivational components specific to learning situations would be too time-consuming, it has been considered of most relevance to this project the latter mentioned motivational components (group-specific), together with the affective factors involving individual students’ learning process that enhance their willing to acquire more linguistic knowledge.

Students often regard their learning as part of a whole social group or community with specific learning goals. Therefore, scholars such as Dörnyei (1994) consider four particularly relevant aspects for the group’s motivation: goal-orientedness, which is the “extent to which the group is attuned to pursuing its goal” (p.278), norm and reward system, which concerns “extrinsic motives that specify appropriate behaviors required for efficient learning”; group cohesion or “the relationship linking the members to one another and to the group itself” and classroom goal structures, which are considered to be of three types: competitive (students work against each other), cooperative (students work in small groups with a shared outcome) and individualistic (students work alone) (p.279). Furthermore, most scholars agree in the fact that the cooperative goal structure is the most powerful one to foster intrinsic motivation, whereas the rest of goal structures lie in the promotion of a more extrinsic perception (Dörnyei 1994, Dörnyei 1998).

### **2.3. Affective factors involved in Second Language Learning**

The process of learning a second language requires several aspects that need to be taken into account when doing some research on the matter. Motivation, attitude and language anxiety have been determined by most scholars to be the three main affective factors involved in SLL. As the aspect of motivation has already been in-depth examined in these terms, the concepts of attitude and language anxiety will be further developed in this section.

According to Robinson’s Transition Theory (2005), the process of learning a second language depends on different components: “cognitive abilities, learning

processes and mechanisms used to transfer knowledge from point A to point B” (cited in Henter 2013: p.373). Moreover, Robinson also states that inter-individual differences in language learning play an important role on this transition theory, which means that learners differ from each other in their own learning process.

Therefore, this transition theory grounds the matter of explaining the affective factors involved in the SLL process and states motivation, attitude and language anxiety as its main components.

According to *attitude*, it has been considered by most scholars as “one of the most powerful determinants of behavior” that students face when presented a new task and “causes a series of reactions charged with value, meaning and stimulus” which lead to positive or negative reactions. (Henter 2013: p.374). According to Oroujlou & Vahedi (2011),

Attitudes can be learned, hence taught; they are situational and hence can be generalized; they act in a certain frame of reference; if an event/object does not generate an attitude, the situation, the context will determine which will be the subject’s attitude. (p.996)

This means that there is a series of components inside attitude towards learning which leads to different types of reactions according to several factors such as the situation, the context or the individual itself. On this matter, Oroujlou & Vahedi emphasize the fact that it is relevant that learners possess a positive attitude in order to increase their efficiency in the foreign language classroom (p.997).

Moreover, attitude has also been depicted as “a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to the object, person, institution or event that is inaccessible to direct observation and must be inferred from measurable responses that must reflect positive or negative reflections” (Ajzen 2005: p.42). This means that attitude is a hypothetical construct that can be differently inferred from various determiners such as context, situation or personality.

As for *language anxiety*, it has been widely considered to have a “devastating effect on performance in oral communication” (Henter 2013: p.375). According to most psychologists, there are three main types of anxiety: anxiety as a trait, anxiety as a state and anxiety specific to a situation (Woodrow 2006, Horwitz 2001). English learning has been considered by most of these theorists as a

specific situation. Therefore, in Horwitz's words, language anxiety towards the learning can be considered as "distinct complex of proprioception, beliefs, feelings and behaviors that occur during learning in the classroom because of the uniqueness of learning a language" (p.114). Woodrow adds to this matter the fact that anxiety towards the language can have two dimensions: communication in the classroom and everyday communicative contexts. When learning a second language, students are faced with these two dimensions and the language anxiety can be manifest, according to Horwitz, in "the same clinical picture as any other type of anxiety: difficult concentration, sweating, palpitations, worry, fear and even horror of foreign language class" leading to an "avoidance behavior" (skipping class, etc.) (p.118)

However, several more scholars have been doing research on the psychological and personal components involved in SLL and have explored these affective factors differently. This is the case of Krashen's (1982) hypothesis on the affective filter, which explained the affective factors involved in Second Language Acquisition (from now onwards SLA) to be related to anxiety, motivation and self-confidence (cited in Olivares-Cuhat, 2010).

In short, what can be outlined in this section is that to understand the learners' difficulties towards learning a foreign language, the affective factors, in which motivation is involved, need to be taken into consideration by teachers so that they make a better understanding of their students' learning processes.





### **3. ADULT SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING: THE AGE FACTOR.**

Once the main components related to motivation and the attitudes of second language learners towards their learning process have been widely examined, the fact that adult learners differ from other types of learners in their learning process has been considered of great relevance. Adult learners also suffer from more learning difficulties and challenges related to the age factor. Therefore, this section will deal with adult SLL and the effects of age on it.

Nevertheless, before delving into this matter, it is essential to outline the main considerations that teachers might acknowledge when dealing with adult learners of English. Cunningham Florez & Burt (2001) have explored the main hints to consider before starting to work with adult learners. The first thing they give thought to is the existence of principles in common adult learning that apply to adult English language learners. They take Malcolm Knowles' (2001) principles of andragogy as the key traits in adult learning. These principles are as follow:

Adults are self-directed in their learning, they have reservoirs of experience that serve as resources as they learn, they are practical, problem-solved oriented learners, they want their learning to be immediately applicable to their lives and they want to know why something needs to be learned. (p.3)

Apart from these general features, Cunningham & Burt agree in the fact that English adult learners “need help with the language as they learn content” (p.3). They also claim that teachers need to consider that these main characteristics “are filtered through culture, language and experience”, so it may occur that teachers encounter learners who do not want to take part in their own learning and show themselves “resistant to a learner-centered classroom where they are expected to develop goals” (p.4).

Added to these facts, Cunningham & Burt establish some hints that instructors should consider in terms of the SLA process in general. They claim that SLA encompasses cognitive, affective and linguistic issues. Cognitive issues refer to “how the brain processes the language”, affective issues deal

with “how emotions factor into SL processing and learning” and linguistic issues are related to “how learners interact with and internalize language systems” (p.4).

Once the main theoretical considerations about addressing adult English learners have been explained, the main instructional approaches to support second language development in adults cited by Cunningham & Burt and inspired by Crandall & Preyton (1993) will be outlined. These are the top ten strategies that they consider instructors might bear in mind when working with adult learners:

- 1) Getting to know each student and his/her needs
- 2) Using visuals as instructional support
- 3) Modeling
- 4) Fostering safety in the learning environment
- 5) Watching the instructors’ own language and writing
- 6) Scaffolding
- 7) Using realia and authentic materials
- 8) Avoiding instructional overload
- 9) Balancing variety and routine
- 10) Celebrating success

Among all these tips, using visuals, authentic materials and balancing variety and routine have been considered as the most relevant for our project methodology. Our innovative design will foster the use of eye-catching, motivating materials that help increase adult learners’ interest in their own learning process and achievement of their goals.

Due to clarification constraints, it has been considered of great relevance a more detailed explanation of two teaching techniques above mentioned: ‘modeling’ and ‘scaffolding’. First of all, it should be considered that modeling is an example of scaffolding; that is to say, that scaffolding has been defined as “teacher talk that supports pupils in carrying out activities and helps them to solve problems” (Sánchez Reyes 2011: 35). Examples of this include simplifying tasks by breaking them into smaller steps, reminding students the goal of the task in order to keep them focused or; in the case of teaching

strategies, doing the task first so that the students could imitate the teacher (modeling).

Bernal Castañeda (2017) adds to the main hints to help teachers deal with adult learners that they should make use of teaching methodologies

Closely related to collaborate or peer-work (...) as well as the use of tasks or activities focused on real practice that could offer them experience for their future line of work. (p.141)

### **3.1. The effects of age in Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning.**

Supported by Lenneberg's Critical Period Hypothesis (1967), age has been considered as an individual difference that plays a key role in SLL. Younger learners have always been considered as being more successful in the learning process as they possess certain learning abilities that are lost once they reach a specific age. Lenneberg proved that humans' cognitive capacities to learn change once they are close to age 9-12, when the learning process changes from being acquired to being learned. This means that, in the case of adult learners, as they have passed through the critical period, an effort from their own must be done in terms of achieving learning success (cited in Nejandsari & Nasrollahzadeh 2011). Bernal Castañeda (2017) adds to this point that the optimum period falls from the first 9-10 years of life due to the brain's high plasticity. Therefore, it could be stated that this critical period "does not allow the complete mastery of a foreign language if L2 learning and first exposure begins after puberty" (p.137).

As Nejandsari and Nasrollahzadeh have pointed out, this theory has been also linked to "the period taken for lateralization of the language function to the left side of the brain to be completed", which means that the language functions are kept on the left side of the brain until humans reach the critical age, when researchers discuss it changes to the other side of the brain, justifying the learning effort that needs to be made by learners once this has occurred.

However, doubts have aroused about the existence of a neurological basis of the critical period hypothesis and controversy has led to questioning if

There are significant differences in SLL according to age, and also the theoretical explanations for those differences which researchers claim to have found. (p.19)

In Larsen-Freeman and Long's words, (1991), "the age issue is important for building theory in SLA research, for educational policy-making and for language pedagogy"(p.263). This statement supports the fact that if younger learners are proved to experience less learning difficulties than adult learners, teachers must elaborate pedagogical tools, methodologies and materials adapted to each type of learners' conditions.

According to some scholars like Cancino et al. (1978) adults go through the same linguistic acquisition stages as children, so "age, therefore, does not appear to affect the general developmental pattern". Some scholars have explored age in SLA around two specific aspects: grammar and pronunciation learning. In terms of grammar, one of the most well-known scholars in the matter, Harley (1986) studied the effects of age in young and old learners' acquisition of the French verb phrase, which showed that both groups made similar types of errors and the differences in acquiring them were minor (cited in Nejadansari & Nasrollahzadeh 2011). On the other hand, studies on the acquisition of pronunciation in adult and younger learners, this case in under and over twelve learners (studied by Riney 1990) showed that there were higher differences in the SL pronunciation learning in groups over 12 rather than under 12 years old. These scholars conclude that "it is obviously premature to conclude that age has no effect on the process of acquisition" (p.21).

In addition, other scholars like Goldenberg (2008), Hayes (2009) and Kurt (2015) have added to these facts that

The later learners start receiving input in L2, the harder it becomes for them to acquire an advanced or expert level, especially in the most 'fragile' aspects of foreign language such as morphology and morphosyntax or phonology and pronunciation. (cited in Bernal Castañeda 2017: p.139)

However, it has been pointed out by several scholars that, apart from biological/neurological constraints, the issues adult learners address when

facing SLL and SLA also have to do with the “old habit in outdated methodologies and ways of study” (Lee and VanPatten 2003: p.203). In the case of the Spanish educational context, scholars like Bernal Castañeda (2017) claim that

Lesson plans and curricula in schools (...) have usually relied more on grammar and memorizing lists of vocabulary and A-B translation, with no attention to the communicative approach or the L2 oral skills. (p.139)

Added to this, when mixed with younger learners, adults need a more repetitive and slower learning, which might turn into the youngsters’ demotivation towards their learning process. Their need for a slower pace, in Bernal Castañeda’s words, are due to the fact that adult learners “come from an obsolete and non-practical system” and they have been mixed in the language classroom with “a new generation of L2 younger students who have completed their studies in a more communicative way” (p.140). This means that adults’ way of regarding the learning process is completely different from the younger learners’. Bernal Castañeda adds to this that the use of new teaching and learning methodologies with adult learners keeps them “away from their ‘comfort zone’, which is grammar, vocabulary and the security of a textbook” (p.140), so diving into more technologically-centered methodologies too quickly may derive into adult learners’ frustration, demotivation and academic dropout.

Hence, taking all these assumptions into consideration and bearing in mind that working with adult learners of English makes a difference compared to working with younger ones, the following sections will deal with the second main theoretical path needed for this project: cultural awareness in SLL and the use of the Swing culture in the foreign language class in order to enhance adult learners’ motivation.



## **4. CULTURAL AWARENESS IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING**

### **4.1. Cultural awareness: An overview**

Cultural awareness is widely known as “the foundation of communication (...) involving the ability of standing back from ourselves and becoming aware of our cultural values, beliefs and perceptions” (Quappe & Cantatore 2005: 1). It is what becomes central when people from different countries have to interact with each other. Scholars like Gholson & Stumpf (2005) define culture as “the act of physical, spiritual, emotional, social or artistic living in a large or general community setting.” (p.78) Quappe & Cantatore add to this matter that being culturally aware refers to “step outside of our cultural boundaries in order to realize the impact that our culture has on our behavior” (p.2).

No language can be learned without its cultural background. Peterson & Coltrane (2003) claim that “students will master a language only when they learn both its linguistic and cultural norms”(p.1). When students learn a new language, they must bear in mind that acquiring all the linguistic and morphological content will not be enough if they want to entirely master the L2. Scholars like Brown (2007) describe the interrelatedness of language and culture arguing that “one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture (...) the acquisition of a second language (...) is also the acquisition of a second culture” (cited in Dema & Moeller 2012: p.76).

Therefore, several scholars agree that “linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language” (Krasner 1999 cited in Peterson & Coltrane 2003: 1). They also add to this idea that learners need to be aware of “the culturally appropriate ways to address people (...) know what behaviors are appropriate (...) and understand that (...) language use must be associated with other culturally appropriate behavior.” In addition, Valdes (1986) points out that

The knowledge of another language fosters greater awareness of cultural diversity among the peoples of the world because individuals

who have foreign language skills can appreciate more readily other people's values and ways of life. (p.4)

Hence, bearing all these considerations in mind, it is of no discussion that working on cultural awareness in the foreign language classroom is essential if instructors want to cover all the students' learning needs. Thus, what will be intended in the following lines is the justification of the importance of teaching culture in the L2 classroom and some considerations or techniques to teach it.

#### **4.2. The importance of teaching culture**

Over the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, culture had not been of great teaching relevance inside the L2 classroom and was not considered as an essential field for the L2 domain. Scholars like Valdes (1986) pointed out that "the culture presented in textbooks represents a value judgment made by the authors (...) that has led to many stereotypes of foreign peoples and cultures" (p.4).

Nevertheless, some considerations have been made along the years and many scholars have found out that teaching culture is essential in the foreign language classroom. Even Valdes considered that

It is important to teach culture to allow the students to understand the value system and the cultural traits of the speakers of the language and to foster a positive attitude toward these speakers of a language. (p.3, 4)

Valdes also made some generalities about the act of teaching culture, which dealt with the recommendation for teachers to "give priority to proficiency-oriented classroom instruction", due to the fact that "cultural understanding must be promoted in multiple ways." (p.3) His ideas inspired more scholars from the eighties such as Lafayette (1988), who established two main principles for teaching culture: the first one dealt with the fact that "cultural learning activities should be planned as carefully as language learning activities" and the second stated that "cultural components should be tested as rigorously as language components" (p.114).



Furthermore, it was in the nineties and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century when scholars started to take more account of the importance of teaching culture. Xiaoqing (1996) highlights the decisive role that teachers had in culture teaching. This role consisted on making teachers “ensure that students know the close relationship between language and culture” and also “overcome the barriers to culture perception such as ethnocentrism, prejudice and prejudgment” (p.8).

In the early 2000s, scholars such as Peterson & Coltrane (2003) considered that in the SL classroom, “culture is taught implicitly (...) in the linguistic forms that students are learning” (p.1). This means that teachers referred to cultural aspects in an implicit way through the linguistic components being part of the course syllabus. However, they considered that referring to cultural aspects was not enough to work on the learners’ cultural awareness, so they added to this that teachers “can make those cultural features an explicit topic of discussion in relation to the linguistic forms being studied” (p.1).

In 2005, Gholson & Stumpf considered that teaching culture “involves (...) knowledge and skills needed to survive in mainstream culture (...) and knowledge and skills needed to teach subcultures” (p.78). Therefore, their main highlight was the fact that culture is a multi-dimensional and complex matter which plays an essential role in language teaching and involves getting to understand complex cultural traits.

In the mid-first decade of the new Century, non-native English teachers acquired more relevance in their involvement in teaching culture. As they had their own cultural identity and it was different from the one they were teaching, some scholars started to consider ways of improving these teachers’ effectiveness toward the transfer of outer cultural traits to learners. Sowden (2007) considered that

To be effective, expatriate teachers must take account of all these cultures and how they influence the attitude and study styles of their students (...) They must work with the cultures that they encounter. (p.305)

### **4.3. Teaching techniques for an effective culture learning**

Once the importance of teaching culture inside the L2, together with getting L2 students aware of the cultural traits of the language have been justified, it is important to number several recommendations that scholars give to instructors when dealing with this matter.

Regarding the reviewed literature on the field, most scholars agree that one of the basic techniques to be used when teaching culture is the use of authentic materials (Peterson & Coltrane 2003, Valdes 1986, Xiaoqing 1996). All these authors are of the idea that using these materials “helps to engage students in authentic cultural experiences” and that “teachers can adapt their use of authentic materials to suit the age and language proficiency level of students” (Peterson & Coltrane 2003: p.4). In short, what they recommend is the use of film, news broadcasts, magazine articles or TV shows where the target culture is shown on its many ways. According to the use of films, Peterson & Coltrane add that using them “offer students an opportunity to witness behaviors that are not obvious in texts” and help to “encapsulate the look, feel and rhythm of a culture” so that it “connects students with language and cultural issues simultaneously” (p.11). This last assumption will be of great relevance when dealing with our innovation project, as the use of films will be part of the course syllabus.

Valdes (1986) adds to this use of authentic materials the recommendation for teachers to assign the view or reading of these materials for homework when students are available. In his view, students will be in touch with a more culturally-realistic scenario than with textbooks only (p.11).

However, the use of authentic materials is not the only teaching procedure teachers could take account of when teaching culture. Valdes (1986) recommends the use of cultural capsules, culture clusters, culture assimilators or simulations of cultural events as part of the main teaching techniques (p.3). As for his main recommendations, he highlights the fact that teachers should not make too many generalizations about the culture, but present evidence and let their students arrive at their own conclusions, together with the fostering of

positive attitudes that will lead students to “accept the differences between both cultures” (p.11).

In order to achieve the goal of enhancing the students’ cultural awareness and work with the L2 cultural features, some of these teaching techniques will be taken into account when designing our innovation project.

#### **4.4. Teaching English culture through the arts: music, literature, film...**

After delving into the concept of cultural awareness, the importance of teaching culture and the outline of some culture-teaching techniques, it has been considered of great relevance to state how the teaching of culture from different artistic manifestations such as music, literature or film can be regarded for an effective accomplishment of the project goals.

Regarding music, authors such as Weaver Failoni (1993) state that using music as a teaching tool can “reinforce the four communication skills within the target language” and “provide an interesting mirror of the history, literature and culture of a country” (p.97). In addition, the use of music as an instructional tool has been justified by Gardner’s (1993) theory of multiple intelligences, where musical intelligence is one of the types.

However, Weaver Failoni expresses her concern about the fact that “music as a systematic method to reinforce communication skills and demonstrate culture is a less explored aspect” and her review of the literature proves that over the last three decades, “music in the classroom has been relegated to a recreation and entertainment status” (p.98).

Even so, music can be used, according to Weaver Failoni, as a “mirror of culture” (p.99) in the sense that although it has been mostly used for communication skills practice, it is of great relevance to consider its use as a tool “to support other material such as *realia* for cultural units” or as “a basis for a culture course” (p.102). Moreover, Delière & Lafayette (1985) add to this point that song is considered to be the “ideal marriage between poetry and music”, so this statement justifies the power of music as a manifestation of both literary and musical identity (p.412).

As for the adaptation of culture-teaching through music to our innovation project, music will be regarded as one of the main sources of culture identity by which students will not only learn new concepts, but also regard songs as an expression of a time, culture and identity.

According to the teaching of culture through literature, little should be said about the fact that literature has always been considered as “the highest form of expression” and “the way by which students could appreciate the language” (Musaelian 2003: p.182). In terms of culture, Hismanoglu (2005) sums to this point that “literature adds a lot to the cultural grammar of the learners” (p.55).

Added to these points, the reasons why literature should be taught in the foreign language classroom as a cultural tool have been explored by scholars such as Hismanoglu, who numbers cultural enrichment as one of the main reasons for teaching literature. He justifies his point by stating that literature

Presents a full and colorful setting in which characters from many social (...) backgrounds can be described. This created world can quickly help the foreign learner to feel for the codes and preoccupations that shape a real society through visual literacy of semiotics. (p.54)

Apart from the cultural reasons for teaching culture, this author also points out the usefulness of teaching literature as valuable authentic material, language enrichment or personal involvement.

Nevertheless, the field of literature is too wide to be taught through all literary manifestations. That is why poetry has been chosen as the literary style to be used in order to teach culture in this innovation project. Some scholars are in agreement in the fact that using poetry in the foreign language classroom entails lots of cultural benefits. Hismanoglu gives special attention to the fact that poetry is one of the most powerful sources of culture knowledge in the sense that is “one of the most powerful transmitters of culture (...) with so many cultural elements- allusions, vocabulary, idioms, tone (...) not easy to translate into other languages” (p.61).

Musaelian (2003) relates poetry to the teaching of culture in the way that poetry can be appealing for learners and suitable for teaching as “the themes of poetry are common to all cultures” (p.182).

Bearing all these points in mind, the focus of attention will be on using the art manifestations of music, literature and specifically poetry in order to enhance

the targeted adult learners' cultural awareness and motivation in several ways that shall be further explained.



## **5. INNOVATION PROJECT: MOTIVATING ADULT STUDENTS AND INCREASING THEIR CULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH MUSIC AND POETRY: THE SWING ERA**

Once the theoretical basis needed for our project has been made and the main goals to achieve in the latter have also been numbered, the project itself will be developed.

As mentioned in previous sections, this project will consist of the design of five two-hour lasting lesson plans addressed to advanced adult students of the Official School of Languages. These lesson plans will contain culture-related materials and will be used in the teaching process with the purpose of increasing the learners' motivation towards their learning and enhancing their cultural awareness related to the English-speaking countries. Added to this, they will also be adapted to their age and level so that no special learning difficulties occur.

In order to do so, cultural content related to the Swing Era will be used to design different types of activities which will work on the main linguistic skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The project will be divided into several sections: target group, objectives, methodology, contents and activities. However, due to clarification reasons and before going through the above mentioned sections, it has been considered of great relevance the explanation of the historical context belonging to the Swing Era.

### **5.1. Contextualization**

The innovation project to be presented in this paper, working with adult learners' motivation and cultural awareness, will deal with the topic of the Swing culture. Before starting to develop this project, a contextualization of this historic age will be outlined. As the Swing culture is as much a historical period as an art movement, the sources taken for this section have not only been expert

scholars studying the period, but also artists and musicians that have their own views about what this age represented in all social spheres.

What has been baptized as the “Swing Era”, or the “Swing Culture” is the social, literary, musical and cultural movement occurring in the first half of the twentieth century in the United States. It was born in the Afro-American communities and spread like wildfire among all social and cultural classes around the country in a really short time and in all art manifestations: music, dance, literature, film...

The Swing Era is framed between the early 1930s and the 1960s. The 1930s was a time when “the Great Depression had befallen the nation (...), twenty-five percent of the workforce was jobless and up to sixty percent of African American men had no work” (Verity 2017: p.1). At this age, a musical style had been taking over from the early twentieth century and was spreading around the country from its birthplace, New Orleans: jazz music. As Gerarld Early (2017) points out, from about 1915 to 1955, “jazz was the dominant form of popular dance music in the United States”.

In spite of the fact that the 1930s was not a socially and economically boosting decade, jazz music and its culture were resilient. Verity states that “while businesses, including the record industry, were failing, dance halls were packed with people dancing the ‘jitterbug’ (what swing dancing had been named by jazz musicians who saw dancers bouncing to the rhythm)” (p.2).

Hence, swing was nothing but a fresher, newer interpretation of jazz music adapted to more danceable rhythms that musicians of all kinds started to feel caught by. Then, “thanks to musicians such as Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young and Ben Webster, swing music started to spread and the sound of saxophones started to be related to this new jazz” (p.2).

Consequently, this spreading of brand-new rhythms entailed the formation of big bands directed by popular band leaders like Benny Goodman, who from 1934 “provided the American Public with a real taste of black music” thanks to his radio music program (p.3) or by well-known male and female soloists such as Louis Armstrong, who was also a trumpeter, or the jazz myth Ella Fitzgerald.

By the end of the 1930s, Verity claims that

Swing had completely taken over (...) virtuosic musicians began to perform in smaller ensembles, using the rhythms of swing but



highlighting their improvisation (...) giving rise to the swing music that would later be called bebop. (p.3)

Nevertheless, by the early 1940s, the US was drawn into WWII after the attack to Pearl Harbor and the evolution of swing was also affected in a sense that, instead of disappearing, more and more dancehalls started to be crowded by people whose only intention was have fun and forget about misery and horror. Renowned dancers like Rick Archer (1998) recall the history of Swing in WWII stating that

When GIs, sailors and flyers enlisted to fight for our country, they were sent to major ports (...) These service men and women headed straight for the dance halls since dancing was by far the major form of recreation. (January 1998)

In addition, the swing era has not only manifested in music. In terms of dance, it can be stated that swing helped to create a social revolution. For instance, swing dancing, worldwide known as the Lindy Hop, “not only revolutionized dancing, it also figured in the nascent social reform that the 1930s (...) led to both the civil rights and the feminist movements.” (Stern 2016: p.3). Moreover, this author also states that the Lindy “presaged the touch-less sexuality of rock and roll dancing” as it is “one of the few styles that do not require contact between the two partners”. Added to this fact, Stern also states that the Lindy “played a role in integration”. The basic Lindy steps were invented by black people in Harlem, New York in “speakeasies” like the Savoy ball room. In places like this, both black and white dancers mixed together and inspired each other with their bouncing rhythms and spins.

Nevertheless, the Lindy scene could not entirely escape segregation. Even though “Early Lindy was primarily an African American dance, whites started visiting black entertainment venues” (p.4). Batiuchok (1988) claims that the Lindy Hop dancehalls were “black dances where white dancers were allowed to attend” (p.45). However, “African Americans were rarely allowed to dance at ‘white dances’ even when the bands were black.”

Later on, in the 1960s the Swing era was starting to be shadowed by the appearance of new music and dance styles such as Rock n’ Roll, Funky Chicken or the Pony (Stern, 2016), which have been seen by many music experts as a “mere reinterpretation of the already existing jazz rhythmic riffs”

(Early 2017: 4). Consequently, the African American, together with the white people started trying these new styles and left Lindy dancing behind for a while.

However, the Lindy came back to the scene in the 1980s, when old Harlem dancers such as Norma Miller or the Lindy Hop ambassador Frankie Manning came back to the dancing scene, “pressed” by the new-coming dancers who discovered this ancient style and felt absolutely amazed by its jives and fun. That was when, according to Stern, “Swing came back to having an active life across the country and gave birth to new devoted followers who channeled the 1930s and 1940s in dress and behavior” (p.5).

As any other cultural revolution in history, jazz or swing was more than just music and dance. Early (2017) considers that also “visual artists were inspired by jazz” as “its anti-bourgeois attitude embodied compelling aspects of modernism” (p.2). Apart from visual art, jazz was also present in film-making from the 1930s through the 1960s, when Early points out that “many filmmakers used jazz in either nightclub scenes as source music or as part of the musical score in animated features” (p.3).

The Swing era also brought literary manifestations. In the case of poetry, it was called the same name as the music: jazz. Jazz poetry has been defined as follows:

Poetry necessarily informed by jazz music—that is, poetry in which the poet responds to and writes about jazz. Jazz poetry, like the music itself, encompasses a variety of forms, rhythms, and sounds. Beginning with the birth of blues and jazz at the start of the twentieth century, jazz poetry is can be seen as a thread that runs through the Harlem Renaissance, the Beat movement, and the Black Arts Movement—and it is still vibrant today. From early blues to free jazz to experimental music, jazz poets use their appreciation for the music as poetic inspiration.  
(2004: May 17th)

Jazz spread in the time of the New Negro Renaissance period (1919-1939) when poets like Langston Hughes (1902-1967) or Frank Marshall Davis (1905-1987) started to move their audience (Early, 2017).

In short, what is intended to do in this innovation project is work with real materials related to the Swing culture and use them as an instruction tool to show adult students the multiple manifestations that this socially revolutionary

era brought to society and culture, together with helping them become more motivated towards the learning of the foreign language and its culture.

## **5.2. Target group**

The chosen target group for this project is the one belonging to the advanced level in the Official School of Languages of La Rioja, which according to the Boletín Oficial de La Rioja in the 22/2007 Decreto corresponds to a B2 level in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (BOR 2007: 6).

There are two main reasons to explain why this group has been chosen to work on motivation and cultural awareness inside the foreign language classroom:

Firstly, adult learners of this group have already reached a certain level of English. Therefore, they would feel comfortable if they were presented with authentic materials related to the topic of the swing culture.

Secondly, according to several scholars, and as it has been previously justified in the literature review when talking about the effects of age in learning a second language, adults normally tend to feel stuck, demotivated and frustrated when reaching a certain level. Moreover, they realize that making a greater effort is needed in order to reach an advanced level of English. Bearing this in mind, the instructional techniques will work on their motivation and cultural awareness.

## **5.3. Objectives**

The main objectives to be achieved in this project will be taken from the aforementioned document and adapted to our content materials. During this project, learners will reach both linguistic and non-linguistic goals.

### *Linguistic objectives*

They will be organized by the four main skills: oral comprehension, oral interaction, reading comprehension and written production. Moreover, students will also have to acquire new lexical and grammatical content that will be specified in the contents section.

#### Oral comprehension

Comprender el sentido general, la información esencial, los puntos principales y los detalles más relevantes en textos orales claramente estructurados y en lengua estándar, articulados a velocidad lenta o media y transmitidos de viva voz o por medios técnicos, siempre que las condiciones acústicas sean buenas y se pueda volver a escuchar lo dicho. (p.6)

#### Oral interaction

Producir textos orales bien organizados y adecuados al interlocutor y propósito comunicativo, y desenvolverse con una corrección, fluidez y espontaneidad que permitan mantener la interacción, aunque a veces resulten evidentes el acento extranjero, las pausas para planear el discurso o corregir errores y sea necesaria cierta cooperación por parte de los interlocutores.

#### Reading comprehension

Comprender el sentido general, la información esencial, los puntos principales y los detalles más relevantes en textos escritos claros y bien organizados, en lengua estándar y sobre temas generales, actuales o relacionados con la propia especialidad.

#### Written production and expression

Escribir textos sencillos y cohesionados, sobre temas cotidianos o en los que se tiene un interés personal, y en los que se pide o transmite información; se narran historias; se describen experiencias, acontecimientos, sean éstos reales o imaginados, sentimientos, reacciones, deseos y aspiraciones; se justifican brevemente opiniones y se explican planes.

### *Non-linguistic objectives*

These objectives have not been specified in the 22/2007 Decreto, as more attention has been focused on the non-linguistic contents rather than the objectives. Nevertheless, our targeted adult learners will have to reach specific non-linguistic objectives:

Firstly, students will increase their motivation by dealing with appealing task-based activities that will make them feel comfortable, attract their interest and catch their attention.

Secondly, students will increase their cultural awareness by acquiring new knowledge related to the swing culture. Specifically, they will be aware of multiculturalism in the English-speaking countries.

Thirdly, students will work on their strategic competence, which has been specified in the 22/2007 Decreto as follows:

En este nivel, el alumno debe activar las estrategias que más le ayudan de forma intencionada para lograr que la comunicación sea más fluida, arriesgarse a construir lenguaje con estrategias trabajadas, sortear las dificultades, utilizar sus recursos lingüísticos en nuevas situaciones y reconocer sus propios errores como parte importante del proceso de aprendizaje. (p.10)

#### **5.4. Methodology**

The methodology to be implemented in this course project will deal with three main aspects:

It must not be forgotten that the target group is made of adult learners, so the teaching tips stated in the adult SLL section will be taken into account, such as the use of visuals, *realia* or the balance between variety and routine. Apart from these tips, the instructional methodology for our project will also take into consideration the “six effective strategies for teaching adults” stated by Duverge (2016):

Strategy 1. Keep it relevant. The teacher will focus on the relevance of each task.

Strategy 2. Remember students' backgrounds

Strategy 3. Integrate emotion into lessons. The use of music and some poems will help to develop the target students' learning through emotion.

Strategy 4. Encourage exploration. Encouragement of students' broadening knowledge.

Strategy 5. Make assignments convenient

Strategy 6. Always offer feedback by means of using scaffolding techniques or by giving corrective feedback.

The first goal in our project will be working on motivation. In order to give specific instruction and work on motivational activities, Dörnyei's (1998: 25) ten commandments to motivate students will be used for this purpose. These are the following:

1. Present the tasks properly. Use eye-catching materials in order to call the students' attention.
2. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. The use of music will contribute to this specific aspect.
3. Develop a good relationship with the learners. Creating communication-centered activities will help to develop a good relationship between the students.
4. Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence. By presenting the students with simple tasks, the teacher will help to increase their self-confidence.
5. Set a personal example with your own behavior: Use of modeling.
6. Make the language classes interesting
7. Promote the learners' autonomy
8. Personalize the learning process
9. Increase the learners' goal-orientedness. The teacher will remind the students that they have a specific goal to achieve in each task.
10. Familiarize learners with the target language culture. Warm-up topic-introductory activities will be done at the beginning of each session.

Added to this, the fact that the project is addressed to a specific group of adult learners and not individual people should not be left behind. Therefore, Dörnyei's group-specific motivational components previously specified in the literature review will also be taken into consideration. That is to say, learners will have to deal with competitive, cooperative and individualistic tasks immersed in a goal-oriented instruction that will create a convenient learning atmosphere.

The second main goal of this project is working on the adult learners' cultural awareness. In order to do so, the teaching culture techniques previously explained in chapter 3 will be used for that purpose.

Additionally, all these instructional strategies will be immersed into the teaching communicative approach, known as Communicative Language Learning (CLT), whose main goal, according to Sánchez Reyes (2011) is “the use of contextualized real-life situations that necessitate communication”, due to the fact that the “students' motivation to learn comes from their desire to communicate in authentic ways about meaningful topics” (p.37).

Apart from these teaching methodologies, some activities will also make use of another specific teaching method, the Total Physical Response (TPR). Specifically, this approach will be used at the beginning of the third session and, as stated by Sánchez Reyes (2011), it will involve the following:

Students responding to commands given by the teacher by means of action, with the complexity of the commands growing over time as learners acquire more language. (p. 34)

In short, what is intended to do with the instructional techniques is the ease of the activities so that the goals stated for the project can be accurately achieved.

## **5.5. Contents**

This project will consist of five sessions of two hours each, according to the established timing for the advanced level in the Official School of Languages curriculum.

The sessions will deal with five different topics related to the swing era; developing one topic per session: music, dance, poetry and film. The structure to be followed in order to develop the sessions will be as follows:

1. Warm-up activity: The focused topic will be introduced by some question-answer activities.
2. Video watching: Students will be presented with a musical/ culture video containing the topics they are going to learn about.

3. Reading / Listening comprehension. Depending on the focused topic, students will either work on a text or on a listening comprehension task.

4. Written task. Students will have to develop their written skills by developing cards, letters, e-mails related to the topic.

5. Speaking practice. As stated in above sections, the tasks will be immersed into a communicative approach, so in each session students will have to interact, give their opinion and give ideas related to the topics.

At the end of these five sessions, students will achieve their goals and prove their acquired cultural knowledge by means of a Socratic contest<sup>1</sup>.

Together with these topic-specific contents and session structure, the activities will also be based on the specified contents in the 22/2007 Decreto, which deal with the following aspects:

#### Socio-cultural contents

El alumno deberá adquirir un conocimiento de la sociedad y la cultura de las comunidades en las que se habla el idioma objeto de estudio, ya que una falta de competencia en este sentido puede distorsionar la comunicación. Se tendrán en cuenta las áreas siguientes: Vida cotidiana (festividades, horarios, etc.), condiciones de vida (vivienda, trabajo, etc.), relaciones personales (estructura social y relaciones entre sus miembros), valores, creencias y actitudes (instituciones, arte, humor, etc.), lenguaje corporal (gestos, contacto visual, etc.), convenciones sociales (convenciones y tabúes relativos al comportamiento), comportamiento ritual (celebraciones, ceremonias, etc.). (p.7)

#### Lexical-semantic contents

Repertorios léxicos y utilización (producción y comprensión) adecuada de los mismos en los contextos a los que se refieren los objetivos especificados para el nivel. Estos repertorios se desarrollarán teniendo en cuenta las siguientes áreas: Identificación personal, actividades de la vida diaria, tiempo libre y ocio, viajes, relaciones humanas y sociales... (p. 8)

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<sup>1</sup> Socratic is an online application similar to Kahoot whose main purpose is the design of online content-related quizzes and space races. See <https://www.socratic.com/>



## 5.6. Activities / Sessions

The following section will encompass the design of the specific activities of this innovation teaching project that will deal with the increase in the learners' motivation towards the learning of the language. The activities will also help them become more aware of the existence of more than their own culture by acquiring more knowledge about a different age from a different culture: the Swing Era. Students will be in contact with authentic materials taken from different authors and art manifestations such as song lyrics, poems or films.

In short, what is intended to do with this lesson design is that students learn about the Swing Era as much as possible through extraordinarily motivating tasks that make them unconsciously aware of their learning process as well as multiculturalism.

Apart from containing materials related to the aforementioned authors and artists related to the Swing Era, these activities have been specifically designed to foster the three main goals of this project: motivate students, teach them culture and adapt the tasks to their age necessities. Therefore, different colors have been used to highlight these main goals, being motivation-enhancing tasks in pink, cultural tasks in blue and age-adapted tasks in green. There are also tasks which work on more than one goal, so the cells will appear colored in two alternating colors.

As showed in the charts, there are more motivation-oriented and cultural tasks than age-adapted ones. This has occurred because, even though the targeted students are adult learners and they may present some learning difficulties outlined in previous sections, they still belong to an advanced level, so they should not suffer from any linguistic challenge when presented with authentic, non-adapted materials.

### Session 1. Introducing the Swing culture

Goals:

Students are presented with the working topic, practice their oral skills, reading and listening comprehension.

Resources:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wE31EC3NoLs>

TASK TITLE	TIMING	TASK TYPE	GOAL	PROCEDURE
Warm- up: Question-Answer	10min	Speaking practice	Introducing the topic of Swing culture	T asks some questions to Ss: 'What do you know about jazz?' 'Have you ever heard about swing?' 'Do you know who these people are?' Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald? 'Do you know the Swing Kids film?'
Video watching: "An Intro to the Swing Era"	20min	Listening comprehension, writing	Ss get key words related to the swing era and learn new concepts	Ss watch the video twice: the first time at normal speed and the second slow-paced. T makes Ss note down key words they hear and prepare some questions.
"Between the Wars: Tap your Knowledge about the Swing Era"  <i>Annex I</i>	30min	Reading comprehension, writing	Ss understand a text's main ideas and learn new lexical content.  Ss learn about twentieth century history.	Ss read the text all together aloud and then answer to the comprehension questions in groups / pairs.
"Having a spoken break. Swing culture talk"	10min	Speaking practice	Ss practice giving their opinions and impressions about the given topic.	Questions given by T: "What are your impressions about the swing culture?" "What has been the most surprising or curious fact for you?" "Do you like the swing culture? Why/why not?"
"Swing culture in a nutshell"	30min	Writing practice	Ss use their own words to summarize what they heard in the video and read in the text about swing culture in 80-100 words.	Teacher reminds the Ss some techniques to use their own words when summarizing a topic and gives them some hints or tips.
"Swing charades game. Get the Swing together"  <i>Annex II</i>	20min	Speaking	Ss gather the basic info learned from the video and the text together in some flashcards	T divides the class in two teams. The first team gathering the flashcards together is the winner.

### Session 2. Swing Music

Goal: The goal of this session is to work on a collaborative project on different swing musicians and prepare an oral presentation for the last 25

minutes of the session. Students will create a wallpaper / infographic by using the application Infogram and present it to the class.

Resources:

Louis Armstrong's video link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIILBeUrYLk>

Ella Fitzgerald's video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8C67gnApLs>

Frank Sinatra's video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lm8rZdr7wf8>

Nina Simone's video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moOQXZxriK>

TASK NAME	TIMING	TASK TYPE	GOAL	PROCEDURE
Warm-up: Catch-up activity	5-10min	Speaking	Ss interview each other about swing	In pairs, Ss ask each other these questions: 'What is your favorite music style?' 'What jazz/swing musicians do you know?' 'What comes to your mind if you think of swing?'
Swing music project I.  Video watching in teams	25min	Listening and writing	Ss will learn about some musicians' lives and practice their oral skills by listening to key words from a video.	There are four teams. Each team will watch a video about a swing musician and gather info about it. T1: Louis Armstrong T2: Ella Fitzgerald T3: Frank Sinatra T4: Nina Simone
Swing Music Project II.  Dive into swing musicians through the net.	25min	Research task	Ss will practice their reading skills by searching the net for further information about their musician.	In teams, Ss will complete the info from the video with additional data collected from the net. They will have to include a famous song by this artist in their project.
Swing Music Project III. Creating the Infographic wallpaper	30min	Writing practice	Ss will learn information about musicians and practice their summarizing	After the T explains how to use Infogram to the class, each group works on their musician and creates the

Swing Music Project Presentation.	30min	Speaking practice in oral presentation	skills. Ss will practice their oral skills.	infographic. Ss will talk about their musician and play a song.
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### Session 3. Dance the Lindy Hop

Goals:

-Students will learn about the Lindy Hop as a dance style and learn specific vocabulary related to dance movements and dance steps.

-Students will take part in a live Lindy Hop workshop given by a British Lindy teacher, Kate Hughes, from Bristol.

Resources:

Lindy Hop basic footwork: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjAoG3fgjkc>

TASK TITLE	TIMING	TASK TYPE	GOAL	PROCEDURE
Warm-up: "Stretching for the Lindy!"	15min	Total physical response	Ss activate their brains by listening to some music and stretching instructions by the teacher. Ss learn vocabulary related to body parts and movements.	T's instructions: 1.Play the song "In the Mood" (Benny Goodman) 2.Model stretching movements and give Ss the instructions to follow.
"The Whitey's Lindy Hoppers" Text  <i>Annex III</i>	25min	Reading comprehension and speaking discussion	Ss learn about the Whitey's Lindy hop group and new specific vocabulary related to the Lindy hop.	Firstly, Ss read the text in pairs and answer the comprehension questions on their own. Secondly, they discuss the statements in pairs.
Video watching: "Lindy Hop Basic Footwork"	30min	Listening comprehension and speaking	Ss learn topic-specific vocabulary and practice their oral skills.	Ss note down the main footsteps in the lindy hop and then guess their meaning. In pairs, they put these steps into practice: Student 1 is the leader and student 2 the follower.
"The Lindy's Basics Memo" Flashcards game  <i>Annex IV</i>	25min	Speaking	Ss collect flashcard pairs related to basic footsteps and pictures with movements.	Divide the class in two teams. The team collecting more flashcard pairs is the winner.
"Get the jitterbug move" Lindy Hop beginners workshop in English	25min	Listening comprehension and dancing	Ss follow the instructor's movements and learn the basic moves of the Lindy Hop.	The teacher explains the meanings of the basic moves before starting the workshop and then they all dance.

## Session 4. The Jazz Poets

### Goals:

-Students practice their oral skills by discussing and giving their opinion about a topic.

-Students will learn to pick the main ideas of a topic and portray them in an Infographic.

-Students will also practice their digital competence by using the Infogram<sup>2</sup> app.

-Students will put into practice their reading skills by adding intonation and rhythm to their speech.

### Resources:

Langston Hughes's video link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ir0URpI9nKQ>

Jayne Cortez's video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xhU2RV>

TASK TITLE	TIMING	TASK TYPE	GOAL	PROCEDURE
Warm-up: "Talking about poetry"	10min	Speaking practice	Students practice their oral skills and learn ways of giving their opinion and ideas.	Teacher's questions to work in pairs: "Do you like poetry? Why/why not?" "Do you know anything about the jazz poets?" Then, the teacher talks about the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement.
"The Jazz Poets Project Part I"	30min	Project outline. Brainstorming.	In two groups, Ss do some research about the jazz poets and learn about two literary movements from the 20 <sup>th</sup> century.	G1: Works with Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance. G2: Works with Jayne Cortez and the Black Arts Movement.
"The Jazz Poets Project Part II"	30min	Video watching. Listening task	Each group will deal with an explanatory video about their author and they will have to gather the main ideas.	G1: Watches a lesson about Langston Hughes and notes down main ideas. G2: Watches Jayne Cortez's video and gathers main ideas.
"The Jazz Poets Project Part III"	30min	Writing in Infogram	Ss learn to gather basic information in an Infographic and learn about poetry.	G1: Adds the gathered info to the Infographic and chooses a poem to add. G2: Same task as G1.

<sup>2</sup> Infogram is an online chart, report and interactive map maker that can be shared in the net and be printed as wallpapers. See <https://infogram.com/>

Poetry reading	20min	Reading	Ss practice their reading skills and learn about rhythm and intonation.	Each group chooses a spokesperson to read the poem aloud to the class.
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### Session 5. Swing Cinema

Goals:

-Students will watch a nineties' film, *Swing Kids*, and learn about the swing dance during WWII in Germany.

-Students will practice their listening skills by watching the film in OV with English subtitles.

-Students will practice their spoken skills by making a discussion after watching the film and sharing their ideas.

Resources:

-*Swing Kids* film link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ig\\_hza\\_vxFA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ig_hza_vxFA)

TASK NAME	TIMING	TASK TYPE	GOAL	PROCEDURE
Movie watching: <i>Swing Kids</i> (1993)	1h50min	Listening task	Ss will learn about swing dancers in Germany during WWII and practice their listening skills.	Playing the movie with English subtitles.
Movie discussion	10min	Speaking	Ss will practice giving their opinion and impressions about the movie.	Teacher's questions: "What do you think about the film? Did you like it? Why/why not?" "What are your impressions about deprivation of freedom during WWII?"

In a nutshell, what could be concluded for this project development is that the tasks have been specifically designed and adapted for the targeted group and intended to accomplish its three main aforementioned goals.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The analysis given in this innovation project paper leads to the following conclusions:

First of all, motivation is a theoretical concept that has been grounded throughout decades of research, having been studied from more educational perspectives since the 90s. This educational shift leads to the point that motivation is a key aspect to be taken into consideration in SLL, as it belongs to one of the affective factors involved in the students' willingness to learn, together with attitudes and language anxiety.

Moreover, it has also been stated in this paper that there exist two main types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic, having considered the latter as the most relevant for our project because of its more personal-related achievements. Therefore, in order to understand the students' learning difficulties toward SLL, instructors should work on motivation in order to improve students' learning performance.

Secondly, this project has been addressed to adult learners. It has been shown that adults learn in a different way than younger students because of several reasons, among which age has been found. Age has been proved to act as a learning barrier that should be tackled in a different way than when instructors work with younger learners. This means that adult learners should be addressed in a way that instructional input has been accurately adapted to their needs and their way of processing information. Several instructional strategies have been proposed such as scaffolding, modeling or using visual materials, among others.

Thirdly, another conclusion that has been drawn from this research is the fact that cultural awareness is another key aspect that should be targeted during the teaching process because language cannot exist without its culture. Therefore, cultural content and materials related to the Swing Era have been chosen in order to foster the students' cultural knowledge of the L2. To reach these goals, several teaching techniques have been outlined, together with some

instructional materials that have been used to design our innovation teaching project such as song lyrics, poems or films.

However, as this is an innovative project and no specific work on the use of the Swing Era to address motivation and cultural awareness in adult SLL has been found, little has been proved about any result that this project could produce in adult English students' learning process. Therefore, future research should consider the potential effects of using cultural contents belonging to a specific historical era in different art manifestations such as music, literature or films inside an instructional project designed to foster motivation and cultural awareness in adult English learning.



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## 7. ANNEXES

### *Annex I. Between the Wars: Tap your Knowledge about the Swing Era*

Taken from <http://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/hist409/swing.html>

The music Americans call jazz has many origins and many forms. Music historians have a difficult time fixing the origins of musical styles with any precision. Many American musicians, no matter what their backgrounds, have had "big ears"--they have tended to listen to many forms of music and adapted them freely. One form of American music, emerging in the years just before World War One, became known as "dixieland." Associated primarily with New Orleans, and the many towns along the Mississippi river as far North as Iowa, this music derived from ragtime and marching bands. Typically, it involved group improvisation and a loose, freewheeling, "swinging" style. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band, an all-white group, gave the music its name in the popular markets. But music historians have long known that the ODJB borrowed heavily from African American musical forms. Louis

Armstrong and Bix Biederbecke became most famous playing in this mode of dixieland jazz.

By the late twenties, musicians had begun modifying the forms of "jazz." In the 1930s a new form of jazz had emerged, called "swing." Swing music was characterized by very large bands, fixed, usually written arrangements, and solos by individual musicians in turn instead of group improvisation. Swing bands typically used an upright or double bass instead of the tuba which had often characterized dixieland, and played repeated "riffs" to give the music its propulsive rhythmic force. Swing appears to have emerged from an adaptation of the commercially successful but bland, neo-jazz played by show and dance orchestras like Paul Whiteman's. In the hands of brilliant arrangers like Fletcher Henderson, however, swing combined harmonic sophistication with danceable rhythms and compelling individual improvisations.

Swing bands ranged from "Kansas City" style groups like Count Basie's, which emphasized a very bluesy, intensely riff oriented style, to New York based bands like Duke Ellington's or Glenn Miller's which experimented with a more orchestral range of colors. For many students of American music, "big band" swing represents a pinnacle of American musical form, combining harmonic sophistication, improvisational brilliance, and danceable accessibility. Others have criticized swing as overly commercial, regimented, and mechanical.

Whatever its aesthetic merits, swing music characterized the popular culture of the 1930s. The music played constantly on records and on radio, and reached virtually every city in America through

swing bands' incessant touring. Historians have seen in "the swing era" not just music but culture, a distinctive, generational culture of swing jazz with its own dances, clothing styles, and most notably, slang. By the 1940s there were several "dictionaries of jive" available to explain the special language of swing. Much of this slang grew from drug subculture; much of it seems to have had little to do with musicians, who often disliked it. But it made its way across the nation. In the 1930s Lavada Durst, one of the first African American disk jockeys in Texas, called himself "Dr. Hepcat." Here, in an interview conducted by The Discovery Channel in 1995, he recreates the patter that made him locally famous.

Equally distinctive, jitterbug dancing characterized swing culture. Jitterbugging apparently originated in Harlem as a variation on the "lindy hop." It placed a high emphasis on physicality and improvisation, and like swing itself it put set moves and repeated gestures in tension with moments of spectacular individual improvisation. Jitterbuggers, with their "breakouts" and "aerial moves" became as much a part of the show as the bands themselves. As rock and roll did in the fifties, swing culture seemed to offer a youthful alternative to the stultifying conventions and restrictions of middle class life. By the eve of World War Two, swing culture had culminated as well in the "zoot suit," an exaggerated, parodic form of dress favored by Mexican and African American youth.

Like much of American popular culture, swing crossed



ethnic and racial lines freely. White, black and Latin musicians borrowed from each other constantly. But what did this sort of interchange mean? Benny Goodman, for example, a child of Jewish immigrants, became known as "the King of Swing." The title had more to do with his commercial success--and perhaps the fact that he was white--than his musical productions. But Goodman earned the respect of white and black musicians alike when he integrated his band in 1936. Though this seems unexceptional today, in the 1930s it was not only innovative but politically explosive. To make his 1944 film *Jammin the Blues*, the photographer Gjon Mili had to get special permission from the studio to include white guitarist Barney Kessel in his band. The studio first attempted to stain Kessel's arms, hands, and face with "berry juice," so he would look darker, then finally relented after Mili agreed to film Kessel only in shadows. In the final film, Kessel looked much darker than the African American Lester Young. The singer Billy Holliday was once forced to darken her face with greasepaint by a white club owner who feared she looked "too white" to be on the stage with black men. Despite such idiocies, swing music brought both white and black audiences and musicians together in new ways.

But swing's capacity to unite hardly overcame entrenched racism. A selection from *Downbeat*, the leading magazine of jazz in the 1930s, demonstrates clearly how powerful racial divisions were even among the music's fans. In this piece the magazine's editors attempt to stay neutral as they ask various bandleaders what they think about integrated bands. Their answers were far more "mixed" than their bands.

Others saw swing, and jazz, as the key to building a better America. John Hammond dominated the jazz community as a critic and promoter in the 1930s and 40s. As a producer for Columbia Records, he "discovered" such artists as Bill Broonzy, Sidney Bechet, Albert Ammons, Count Basie, Billy Holliday, and Woody Guthrie. Late in his career, he helped Bob Dylan and rock singer Bruce Springsteen get their start. He worked against racial prejudice consistently, though he subscribed to a troubling form of racism himself, insisting that African American musicians were always better and more "authentic".

Hammond's leftist politics made him suspect to the FBI, while his inherited wealth, Ivy League accent and autocratic ways led some musicians to describe him as "the big bringdown." He exerted a near dictatorial control over recording for a time, and his career shows how even the best intentioned cultural brokers can become enmeshed in the contradictions of American racial politics. It also raises the question of how American popular culture, its music, its slang, its fashions and interracial borrowings, changes American politics.

By the mid forties swing had begun to decline in popularity. Younger musicians like Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, chafing against its more restrictive commercial aspects, began making a more harmonically challenging music that the press dubbed "bebop." Bebop, or "bop" severed jazz from its connections to dance and cast it further into the realm of "art music." The big bands' economics made them hard to sustain, and increasingly the popular dance market was captured by "jump" or "rhythm and blues" acts like Louis Jordan, Joe Turner, saxophonist King Porter, or vocal teams like the Ravens.

These acts themselves led directly to rock and roll in the decades that followed.

Historian David Stowe, in his book *Swing Changes*, argues for swing as an important cultural force, an instrument of social change. Imperfect, hedged in by systematic inequalities, swing music and culture nevertheless built bridges between black, white and Hispanic listeners. American popular culture, famously, is far more pluralistic, more diverse, more tolerant and more dynamic than American legal or political culture. Our politics has failed to live up to our taste in top-forty music. In the 1950s and sixties, African Americans were able to overturn legal segregation and the denial of voting rights. Most of this change can be linked to formal political campaigns against segregation and the formation of grassroots organizations. How much can be laid at the feet of the swing bands?

*Annex II. Flashcards game. "Get the Swing together"*

<b>SWING BEGINNINGS</b>	Early 1930s
<b>FRANKIE MANNING</b>	Lindy Hop Ambassador
<b>DIXIELAND</b>	New Orleans' first Jazz music
<b>DUKE ELLINGTON, GLENN MILLER &amp; COUNT BASIE</b>	Big band leaders
<b>NORMA MILLER</b>	Lindy hop champion in the Savoy ballroom
<b>'JITTERBUG'</b>	Swing bouncing movement (Slang)
<b>BENNY GOODMAN</b>	"The King of Swing"
<b>FIRST SWING DECLINE</b>	Mid 1940s
<b>'DISAPPEARANCE' OF THE SWING</b>	1955-1960

Annex III. The Whitey's Lindy Hoppers

Taken and adapted from  
[http://www.savoystyle.com/whiteys\\_lindy\\_hoppers.html](http://www.savoystyle.com/whiteys_lindy_hoppers.html)

**Whitey's Lindy Hoppers**

**The undisputed all-time champions of Lindy Hop, the original Swing Dance**

Whitey's group was formed from the *creme de la creme* of the Savoy; they were the top dancers in the top ballroom of the Swing Era. With Whitey's entrepreneurial skills, these Harlem youngsters were catapulted into world recognition thru both live performance and film. Their swing dance innovations had permanent impact on the social dance styles of the United States, Europe, Australia, and even Latin America and parts of Africa.

From its beginnings, Whitey's Lindy Hoppers was much more than a dance troupe. It was a training ground which prepared the most talented social dancers of the Savoy Ballroom for professional gigs. It was also a social club which kept the young people out of trouble by allowing them unlimited access to the Ballroom-- by day to practise; by night to dance to the best swing bands in the world.

Whitey's Lindy Hoppers was the brainchild of Herbert "Whitey" White. An African-American man known as "Whitey" because of the streak of white in his hair, he was a former boxer who became a bouncer at the Savoy Ballroom. At one time, more than 70 swing dancers were employed by Whitey. He had a good eye for talent and, like a good coach, he knew how to nurture it. He gave many future entertainers their start in show business.

By late 1936, Whitey's dancers had officially made the big time. His top dancers worked a 6-month gig at the the famous Cotton Club under the name "Whitey's Hopping Maniacs" Meantime, Whitey pulled together a second group of top dancers to perform for the first time under the name "Whitey's Lindy Hoppers" in their first major Hollywood film, the Marx Brother's zany *A Day at the Races*.

Other films followed, as well as gigs at top venues in the U.S.A., Europe and Australia. Whitey did quite a juggling act; his dancers might be simultaneously performing at the Moulin Rouge in Paris, Radio City Music Hall in New York, a Broadway show and an upcoming Hollywood film.

**Reading comprehension questions:**

1. Who was the Whitey's Lindy Hoppers pioneer?
2. Where did they start to perform?
3. What was this group's main repercussion on the media?

**Discussion. In pairs, discuss about the following statements:**

1. In your own view, which are the main reasons why a black-formed group might be called as "whiteys"? What is the main reason?
2. If you were in the thirties, would you like to take part in this elite lindy hop group? Why? Why not?

Annex IV. Memo game. The Lindy's Basic Footsteps

**LEADER'S ROCK STEP**



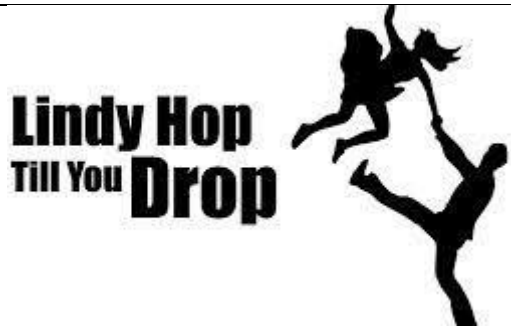
**FOLLOWER'S ROCK STEP**



FRONT STEP



AERIAL



SWING OUT



**BIG KICK**

