EFL culture-based instruction: An observation of attitudes and dispositions in Colombian college students after being exposed to cultural contents.

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Trabajo de grado presentado como requisito parcial para obtener el titulo de Licenciado(a) en la Enseñanza de la Lengua Inglesa

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"Language has no independent existence: it exists only in the brains and mouths and ears and hands and eyes of its user."

Crystal, 1997

RESUMEN

Este proyecto se encuentra enfocado en el análisis del cambio en las actitudes y disposiciones de los estudiantes cuando enfrentan una clase de Ingles con un enfoque hacia un contenido cultural, ya sea del lenguaje materno o de otras culturas. Se analizo un grupo de 5 estudiantes de una Universidad en la ciudad de Pereira de un curso Básico de Ingles (A1) dictado en dicha Universidad, como parte de sus competencias en Ingles para cumplir con los requisitos de grado.

La recolección de datos se llevo a cabo elaborando un cuadro comparativo de entrevistas y observaciones. El análisis de estas fue basado en una comparación de datos que fueron triangulados y luego categorizados. Los resultados obtenidos nos muestran que los estudiantes se sienten un poco más interesados para aprender el idioma Ingles mediante un contenido cultural ya sea de la Cultura propia del lenguaje materno u otras culturas y por ende sus actitudes para el aprendizaje de este mejoran en su gran mayoría.

ABSTRACT

This project is focused on the analysis of change in the attitudes and dispositions of students when faced with a kind of English with a focus on cultural content, whether the native language or other cultures. Was analyzed a group of 5 students from a university in the city of Pereira in a Basic English course (A1) given in the university, as part of their competence in English to meet the degree requirements. Data collection was carried out to develop a comparative table of interviews and observations. The analysis of these was based on a comparison of data that were triangulated and then categorized. The results obtained show that students feel a bit more interested to learn English through either cultural content of the culture of the native language or other cultures and thus their attitudes to learning this mostly improved

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INTRODUCTION.

With the present research, we intend to implement a study that focus on the implementation of some lesson and those lessons will be content-based lessons in which the central focus is on cultural aspect from Students own culture and other cultures around the world and how these lessons may affect their dispositions and attitudes towards learning English.

It is widely known that culture is an important part of human's daily lives, but have you ever wonder which its role in language learning is? Culture should be included into teaching, but why is that anyone include it? Or why is it not important to be included into teaching? What we could say is that not all teachers are aware of the necessity of implementing culture in their lessons, but so far we have found that some teachers are aware of this need and implement cultural information in their classrooms, as well as these teachers dedicate time just to cultural instruction and the results in their students have been successful.

For the matter of this study we wanted to go and explore how culture affects language learning in a group of basic learners (A1), we wanted to explore why is cultural instruction useful in a language learning environment and how culture can be use in a classroom in order to change students perceptions of that certain language they are learning, in our case English.

All along the study you will find out that students interest in the language learning not only increase when they are exposed to cultural instruction from their first language but also from any cultural content what so ever.

This study attempts to elicit a definition of culture from a population of Colombian EFL college students, departing from a characterization of both their own culture and the North American (USA) culture. Through this characterization students will have the ability to identify similarities between the cultures and to contrast their own culture to the foreign culture. As a result of this process, students will gain not only the communicative aspects of the language but also they will gain cultural information and by doing so students will have not only a

syntactic knowledge of the language but also they will be aware of what is the whole language about.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

As human beings, we can witness the important role that culture plays in our daily lives based on the mere fact that our behaviors, perceptions and approaches to the world are mediated by culture. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) clearly stated it when they asserted that "the explicit and implicit patterns of behaviors, symbols and ideas that constitute distinctive achievements of human groups" (cited in Dias and Weed, 1995, p195) Although the awareness about the significance of learning a language as a whole is not very common (Fantini, 1997), by this we are talking about learning a language with all the elements immersed in it such as the cultural aspects. The relevance of culture in the learning/teaching process is something that we as stakeholders tend to forget, both learners and teachers due to the importance we usually give to learning of foreign languages focused mostly on the syntax of the words.

With this study we attempt to avoid the "fluent fools" that according to Bennet (1993) are people who have a huge communicative knowledge of a language, but at the time to face any cultural aspect of that language this person will not know how to react.

In order to complement what Bennet said, we can also call Fantini's (1997) assertion about the lack of interest in some teachers about the implementation of cultural information in the classrooms; they are maybe only focused in the development of communicative skills.

This study wonders if new and innovating settings, such as the culture-oriented curriculum can impact students' perspective towards the foreign language; settings where students are able to face cultural aspects corresponding either to their own context or to a foreign context, and in this way broadening their social

and cultural understanding of the language they are learning (Hamers & Blanc, 1995). What is a fact is that culture has to be integrated in the learning of foreign languages. Hinojosa (2000) asserts that "in foreign language learning, knowledge of linguistic structures alone is not enough; we also have to understand the way of life in a foreign culture and the individuals living in it" (p.112).

What is noticeable during the past few years and is mentioned and sampled by Onalan (2005, 217) is that different national and international associations are trying to use English in a social and cultural way to help students feel closer to the language and through this acquire the language in a better way. For instance, TESOL (1996) has integrated to its *K-12* standards the cultural information as a means of making the user of the language both linguistically and socially competent.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES.

Main questions

This study examines if there is any change in the attitudes and dispositions that participants manifest towards the foreign language after an attempt of a deeper cultural understanding.

Our study attempts to explore the following questions:

1. What is the definition students have about culture?
2. How is the students' definition of culture related to their perspective of the components they can recognize in their own culture?
3. How do the student's attitudes and motivations change after a culture-based instruction? Does this change have an impact on students' attitudes and dispositions towards the foreign language?
4. What is the students' perceptions about the implementation of cultural contents in the EFL classroom?

Objectives

General objective

- To identify how student's attitudes and dispositions of students change with cultural content

- To introduce cultural contents in the English lessons

Specific objectives

- To identify if students perceptions of the English language change, when the English instruction has cultural contents

- To identify how student's dispositions towards the language change, when the instruction has cultural contents

LITERATURE REVIEW.

We have searched through different theoretic constructs, and we have carefully decanted them keeping those that may shed some light on our study and support the concerns noted earlier.

Defining culture.

To task of defining culture is not an easy one, since this term can be approached from different perspectives based, ironically, in the departing culture. However, we decided to depart from a very concrete and general definition of culture. Diaz & Weed (1995) brought up Taylor's (1974) claim about culture when the author states that culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by humans as member of society" (p. 193).

Nonetheless, culture is a widely used term that has pertinence in different areas of the social life, as supported by Seely (1976) who argues that culture embraces all concepts of human life (cited in Hernandez & Samaca, 2006). As such, there are different possible definitions that might be accurate according to the context. A more specific definition was provided by students at the time our actual study was conducted. By doing so, we prevented ourselves from having a preconceived concept of culture, which may have unfolded in a bias perception of students' understanding of the term. Additionally, and based on the chore of theory of two of the most striking linguists who have approached the language and culture issue, Sapir (1962) and Whorf (1956), students perceive the world in terms of categories and distinctions found in their native language, which clearly establishes a relation between language and culture. In other words, speakers of different languages may encounter that their definition of culture differ in some categories, and what is labeled as a cultural element for one speaker might not be perceived with such label by the other. Within this framing, we could infer that for the sake of

this study it is worthy to let the participants themselves to build their own schema of culture.

Relationship between culture and language learning/teaching.

One might wonder about the role of cultural manifestations in the EFL classroom or even its possible integration to the curriculum of instruction, as well as the areas of learning that this integration may affect. Different researchers have stated the need to raise awareness in students about cultural aspects, and these studies have proved the benefits students witness themselves when they become culture observers. Then, when we come to put language and culture on the table we find a magnetic attraction between these two terms, because we may realize that "language and our thought-grooves are inextricably interrelated, are, in a sense, one and the same." (Sapir, 1921)

To communicate ideas individuals need more than words; they need to convey meaning. It is a fact that culture delimits the language. It is the culture the one that marks the boundaries of the language. Sapir (1962) and Whorf (1956) stated that what is found in a language may not be found in another language as a consequence of cultural differences. Then, individuals might face frustrating situations when they have not been exposed to the cultural manifestations that remain behind the language itself. This is named "Cultural Literacy". Cultural Literacy is the set of abilities that speakers of different languages gain after studying cultural aspects of a foreign language community which leads them to a deeper understanding of the different behaviors that cultures may embrace. Then, what is the connection between Cultural Literacy and ELT? Well Bada (2000, 101) presents an interesting connection between these two concepts, "the need for cultural literacy in ELT arises mainly from the fact that most language learners, not exposed to cultural elements of the society in question, seem to encounter significant hardship in communicating meaning to native speakers."

Besides the support that culture represents for understanding the language, there are "insignificant" events that can become highly frustrating and excluding for the user of a foreign language. This is the case of expressions, proverbs or jokes that carry a pragmatic load and that can be understood if the user has a cultural notion of what is being conveyed. Hernandez *et al* (2006) present the answer of one of the participants of their study, in which this situation is expressed: "culture becomes a way to learn the expressions that can't be translated and the different vocabulary which doesn't exist in the own culture" (p. 46). As a result, a student that has gone through a process of having better understanding of the foreign culture might feel more comfortable with the language and having a deeper pragmatic knowledge with the words he or she is using, what may turn out in a change of attitude and disposition towards the language; notwithstanding the higher confidence that the student may feel in the use of the language.

Furthermore, students themselves might be aware of the need they have of bringing culture to the classroom. This is the case in a study conducted by Hernandez and Samaca (2006) about students' interpretation of cultural aspects in foreign language learning, where students manifested that knowing the foreign culture is important to improve the acquisition of a foreign language.

Since Hernandez *et al* (2006)'s study showed that students are aware of the importance that culture plays in the understanding of the foreign language, we wonder about the attitudinal change that may occur towards the language in students that get to experience a deeper understanding of the foreign culture.. According to Lee, (2002) that step beyond would consist of taking advantage of the students' interest for the local culture in order to introduce the foreign culture along with the target language.

Therefore, we will analyze some implications for the learning and teaching processes that come along with the inclusion of cultural topics in the EFL classroom:

Motivational neediness in language learning.

It is a fact that there exists a necessity for the development of instruction that may impact students' attitudes and motivations. This is the case in Midraj's *(*2008) study that analyzed the impact of motivation in learners' attainment in the language. After reporting that those students with a higher motivation attained a better proficiency in the language, Midraj (2008) claims that a better understanding of students' motivational factors is the key for the "production of more successful ESL/EFL learners."(p. 49).

Considering Midraj's assert, it is our duty as foreign language facilitators to seek for those factors that may influence positively the motivational aspects in foreign language learning processes. Therefore, different scenarios are to be presented in the language classroom in order to explore the motivational traits of learners.

In the search for a more identifiable and interesting setting for students of foreign languages, Lee (2006) found that there is a correlation between the students´ level of interest in learning about cultural aspects and the awareness of their own culture. This bond between the students' consciousness about the aspects of the culture that surrounds them and their dispositions to learn more about cultural manifestations opens a possibility to study the students' reactions to lessons in which cultural information, either from their own country or a foreign one, is highly presented. In other words, if the students' awareness for their culture is raised as long as the cultural material from the foreign language community is presented, there will be room to establish contrasts between the cultures as well as thoughtful analyses about the values and backgrounds embraced by what is referred as culture; in this way fostering students' interest for the moment in which the class takes place. EFL instructors can not underestimate students' natural and consequential curiosity about foreign countries after having studied cultural contents, because as asserted by Kitao (2000) students' motivation might result fostered after experiencing this methodology. Bada and Genc (2005) quote Kitao

(2000) in terms of motivation: "...learners like culturally based activities such as singing, dancing, role playing, doing research on countries and peoples, etc." (p. 74)

Lastly, language instructors and learners may be subtlety aware of the fact that the textbooks are in some cases not very appealing, and this is not because the books do not present real or genuine situations, it is because the users of this material are not part of those "real situations." In contrast, Chastain (1971) asserts that learning about culture drives students to relate language and its components with real people and situations. In other words, the inclusion of culture in the language lesson may be considered as the building of meaningfulness as it claimed by Stainer (1971) in his asserts that understanding culture yields reasons for the students to approach the target language as well as rendering the study of L2 meaningful.

Advantages in cultural awareness.

When individuals are aware of their own culture, and at the same time are able to contrast it with a foreign one, these individuals are equipped with some extra strengths and advantages that other learners may not have. These students will probably be more respectful to their culture and value it as a whole.

Thus, Lee (2006) presents that those students who show to value and respect their own culture are commonly more committed and engaged with their learning process, and in accordance with the researcher if those students who were engaged through the cultural aspects of their context are presented with a new language along with cultural information about that foreign language, they will be more likely to be successful in school. In this sense, it could be said that if the instruction in the EFL classroom is imparted keeping a cultural thread that incorporates information about both their own culture and about the foreign

language culture students may raise their level of interest to learn the foreign language, as their dispositions and attitudes towards the language may change.

It is important to specify that a key element in the culture-based instruction is the opportunity for students to analyze both cultures and establish contrasts between them. Then, if the students' possible interest for their own culture is connected to an additional cultural content, i.e. the foreign language cultural information, students' interest will be present during the whole instruction.

Önalan (2005) brings up a relevant point in his study about the teachers' perceptions of culture in the ELT classroom when he states that the cultural information about American culture should not be imparted as a language rule. Instead, the cultural content should represent a source for increasing motivation and interest in the learners as it may contribute to the creation of an enriching English language environment productive for the teaching and learning processes.

Cultural stereotypization.

"In an age of post-modernism, in an age of tolerance towards different ideologies, religions, sub-cultures, we need to understand not only the other culture but also our own." (Bada & Genc, 2005)

Something that is very important is that students may have stereotypes generated by concepts imparted by their families or social context.

Moving towards another aspect that is frequently found in the EFL classroom, which is no other than the stereotypes that are present in the students' minds, and which are reflected in some cases in the fear of abandoning their own culture or "betraying" their social values and customs.

It has been found that within the appropriate conditions, students can learn that they are compounded by a set of elements that make them members of a society. Within this set of elements, the cultural and social identities can be found,

as it is expressed by Seelye (1976). In Seelye's words (as cited by Hernandez *et al*, 2006, p.40) "we may interpret that our social and cultural identities seem to be alike, but indeed they are not."

Therefore, students may be led to understand that their social identity, it is their definition of themselves in relation to the roles and the social groups in the society (Hamers & Blanc, 1995) does not have to be modified, if they determine so, by the broadening of their knowledge and understanding of a foreign culture and its language, which indeed can only be determined as "one becomes cognizant of the existence of other cultures in or outside one's own society" (Hamer & Blanc, 1995, p. 117)

Teaching implications.

So far, we have glanced the connection between culture and language learning. However, learning cannot exist without teaching and as a result we need to consider how inclusion of culture in the language curriculum may affect the teaching practice. In fact, McKey (2003) asserts that cultural contents influence the teaching practice in its linguistic and pedagogical aspects. In terms of the linguistic aspect, the cultural contents mark the semantic, pragmatic and discourse levels of the language. On the other hand, pedagogy also results shaped by the cultural implementation in terms of the material that will be used to guide the lessons.

Celebrations present an abundant source of cultural manifestations that teachers can exploit. Nonetheless, learners should not be exposed to unknown celebrations. The first cultural aspects that they should be exposed to are those relative or similar to the manifestations present in the learners' nearest context, by doing so learners will have some similar insights to contrast both cultures.

It is also advisable that the material should not create an unnatural setting for the students since it lacks of meaningfulness turning the process more difficult

and lowering students' interest (Midraj *et al.*, 2008). These materials may have a better contribution for the atmosphere in the EFL classroom if they target students' needs and interests (Midraj *et al.*, 2008).

In this point, we could say that students' own culture is a meaningful source that may serve as material to develop lessons that foster learners' interest as long as it impacts their attitudes.

As a result, an important aspect that should be taken into account for the development of instruction is the material to be used. This material should reflect the purpose of the lesson, and additionally it should engage the student's disposition and interest. Then, in order to accomplish its purpose, the material that is implemented during the EFL instruction should draw the students' integrative orientation towards the new elements, in this case cultural aspects that are introduced in the lesson (Midraj *et al.*, 2008). For our current concern, the integrative orientation is approached as the capacity of understanding and sharing the cultural aspects from a foreign culture, as well as the interest for adopting the foreign culture without dismissing the own culture (Gardner *et al.*, 2004). Then, if students are able to develop an integrative orientation through the instructional design, there is no reason to be apprehensive against a possible "loss" of the student's own culture.

On the other hand, most EFL teachers are aware of the importance of the integration of cultural information in their instruction. Nevertheless, teachers also consider that the inclusion of too much cultural information may turn the lesson boring, as it may affect learners' cultural orientation (Önalan, 2005). These fears manifested by teachers may present an explanation for the fact that they are conscious of the positive reactions that students have when instruction is based on cultural information, yet the instruction is still more devoted to aspects of EFL such as reading, vocabulary and grammar (Önalan, 2005).

Additionally, according to Alfaro (2008) teachers started to realize that culture is still a gap in the teaching/learning processes that should be filled up in

the EFL classroom, and as a result, cultural aspects of the language will help students to be successful on their language learning process. Besides this, Alfaro (2008) stated that teacher candidates thought that they had knowledge regarding cultural differences, but when they lived in the foreign country and got in touch with the real aspects of the culture, teachers actually changed their perceptions and believes they had about culture.

We can say that the integration of culture within the EFL classrooms is no longer an optional methodology. In fact, it is a necessity that is being claimed by students themselves. Furthermore, students' attitudes and dispositions to learn a foreign language may result productively touched if they are exposed to settings that offer them chances of reflection of the foreign culture.

METHODOLOGY.

Type of research.

According to the Qualitative research methods: a data collector's field guide, Module 1, this is a qualitative research study since it seeks to analyze EFL students' behaviors during lessons in which cultural aspects are imparted. Likewise, it is the purpose of this study to contrast individuals' preconceptions of some English speaking societies with their attitudes and dispositions to learn English.

Additionally, the qualitative paradigm helps better understanding any phenomenon about which little is yet known, as claimed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), which matches with our motivation to explore this teaching/learning methodology in Colombian soils. In addition to this, Mack, Woodsong, M. Macqueen, Guest, & Namey. (2005) inform us about other aspects that are included in the qualitative research for us to be taken into account. The first one will be when seeking answers for questions, whether the questions are opened or closed, qualitative research also allows us to collect evidence through field notes and observations. One of the most important aspects in this research is that qualitative research allows us to find things that were not part of the research study. This qualitative research allow us to be involved with the perceptions participants may have about cultural specific information which is very relevant to our study.

Context & participants.

In order to select the participants for our study, we conducted a probability sample, in which we selected 5 people at random to be observed and interviewed,

as it is mentioned by Dawson (2002) "in probability samples, all people within the researcher population have a specifiable change of being selected".

In our case we were interested in finding out how students' attitudes and dispositions changed by a cultural instruction in the classroom, so we chose a group of five individuals as a focal group to analyze insights and thoughts in front of a cultural instruction.

The context for our study was English as a foreign language classroom (elementary level) at a public university, that we called Risaralda Tech.   This university offers 16 English courses for students of different academic programs. Each course lasts a total of seven weeks. This course had a total of 26 students from which we selected 5 individuals as a focal group to collect the data for our study.

The courses that this university offers are frequently taken through the week in a 6-hour per week basis. For our study, we chose one of the groups in which instruction is imparted three days a week, two hours per session.

Instructional Design.

If we look for an appropriate definition of Instructional design, we can see that it means creating instruction. In order to comprehend and analyze human performance problems in specific areas, what causes them and how to address these problems in order to correct them.

We based our instruction on presenting cultural information, values and cultural aspects and practices, such as historical backgrounds remarkable for a society and common traditions that present cultural roots among the members of a community.

Some of the lessons covered during our study were based on USA cultural manifestations. We chose to use cultural aspects from this region due to both the

geographical proximity and the broader knowledge that participants may have about these country in contrast to the reservoir of information that is ordinarily known by our target population. We also used some cultural manifestations from other countries due to a discovery made during a pilot questionnaire; students were interested not only in North American culture, but also in other cultures.

Our instruction sought to elicit the participants' knowledge, opinions, and insights about the values and practices of the foreign language culture, as well as the knowledge, opinions, and insights about the values and practices of their own culture, as well as culture contents from countries with a language different to English. After the elicitation, we expected that participants had elements to contrast both cultures. As a result, our instructional design attempted to expose the participants to cultural information in order to observe if there is any change in their attitudes and dispositions. At the beginning of our instruction we took pictures and explicit observations of students' attitudes. By observing our students' we were able to gather information about their attitudes and dispositions.

For this section, we did not only worked with USA cultural information, but also with cultural information from Japan, Russia among others

Data collection methods.

Having considered the different methods available within the practice of the qualitative research, and once again targeting the purpose of our study, which is no other than analyzing the very subjective insights of EFL college students towards the culture that surrounds the language of study, i.e. English, we decided to implement two methods; each method applied to the participants in an individual basis, in a collective basis, and for some specific aspects to the whole group which played the role of context for the present study.

The methods that were used during the task of collecting data were: Observations and semi-structure interviews. As it follows, each method will be presented, justified and described as they were applied.

Observations.

Most of the times, under natural settings where daily activities are performed by human beings tend to lose consciousness of how their bodies are speaking their minds. Thoughts can be depicted by body postures, and sometimes people's eyes can even show how much anchored their souls are to their bodies. This very convenient loss of awareness about the connection of thoughts with one's body can represent such a wealth of data for an observer who is eager to piece together every sign emitted by the observed individual in order to build up a very close appreciation of what is going through the other person's mind.

As attitudes and dispositions are concerned in this study, observations represented a very important source of data in order to define the attitudinal trends within the classroom and in the participants during the presentation of lessons based in cultural contents.

On the one hand, interviews yielded some very precise data about learners' insights and analysis. However, our core intention was to contrast those appreciations and concepts that individuals manifested in the interviews about the US culture with their actual behaviors during the lessons that let them have critical positions for some cultural manifestations from the USA and Colombia. This has been perceived by some other researchers, as well. That is the case of Hoepfl (1997) who clearly claims the usefulness of observations in attitudinal studies:

"Observation can lead to deeper understandings than interviews alone, because it provides knowledge of the context in which events occur, and may enable the researcher to see things that participants themselves are not aware of, or that they are unwilling to discuss (Patton, 1990)."

Therefore, we decided to implement observations every time those individuals were given a culture-based lesson. We also observed a regular lesson based on the course book in order to have a reference point. These observations were documented using field notes taken by one of us. Each observation lasted two hours. Our observation sessions took place every week. As mentioned in the context section, the course lasts seven weeks. We devoted the first week of the course to the selection of the participants. Therefore, we accounted a total of six observations.

After having taken notes during the lesson, the observer expanded this notes with additional details she could remember from the session. Finally, we both met and read the field notes in order to find extra information. Expanding the field notes in this way facilitated a later in-depth analysis of the data collected through the observations.

Interviews.

In the particular case of our study, we used interviews as a primary resource of data collection. Additionally, to complement the information collected in these interviews we also used observations. For these interviews we conducted a series of three semi-structured interviews, which, in order to get as much information as possible from our participants were conducted in Spanish due to the participants` proficiency in the English language. For these semi-structures interviews we also used informal conversation, not only to gather specific answers from the participants, but also thoughts, perceptions, and insights; about what they thought of the American culture in contrast with Colombian culture.

Each interview was conducted in an specific time during the study, in order to gain information as we developed our instruction.

The first round of interviews was conducted at the beginning of the study to inquire the perceptions participants had about culture, as well as to analyze their attitudes towards the foreign culture. Furthermore, with this interview we intended to obtain participants' definitions about culture, their opinions about the elements that compound culture and salient characteristics of their own and the foreign language cultures. Besides, this first interview led participants to express their opinions and feelings towards their own culture and the foreign culture, the USA culture in this case.

The second interview was conducted in the middle of the course. This one helped us to contrast both participants' performance with the language and any possible change in their attitudes and dispositions.

A last interview took place at the end of the course. This final interview led us explore when the attempt of a cultural understanding through the cultural instruction had some sort of effect on the participants' attitudes and dispositions.

These interviews were applied to the same participants that were selected at the beginning of the study. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes. During the interviews both researchers were present. While one researcher was conducting the interview, the other one was taking notes about participants' answers. Interviews were also recorded.
After each interview, we met and share information about the interviews.

Questions implemented during the first round of interviews :

1. ¿Qué entiendes por el concepto de "cultura"? ¿para ti que es cultura?
2. En tu opinión, ¿qué elementos componen una cultura?

3. ¿Qué aspectos representativos puedes resaltar de tu propia cultura? ¿Qué aspectos representativos puedes resaltar de la cultura de los Estados Unidos?

4. ¿Cómo describirías a una persona que tú consideres representa la cultura colombiana?

5. ¿Te sientes orgulloso de tu cultura? Explica tu respuesta.

6. ¿Cómo describirías a una persona que tú consideres representa la cultura de los Estados Unidos?

Questions implemented during the second round of interviews:

1. ¿Cómo te sentiste el día que tuvimos la clase sobre el día de las madres?

2. ¿Te has llegado a sentir identificado con la lengua, o sea con el Ingles, en las clases que hemos estudiado la cultura? Por ejemplo, el día que hablamos sobre cultura y el día que comparamos aspectos de la cultura de los estados unidos y de Colombia.

3. ¿En este momento cual sería tu concepto sobre los americanos? Ha cambiado o sigue igual al que nos dijiste la primera vez?

4. ¿Te gustaría seguir conociendo sobre comportamientos de los estadounidenses? ¿Te gustaría aprender sobre ese vocabulario de la calle, o común que se utiliza?/

Some questions that were implemented after our instruction are:

1. ¿Te sientes identificado con la cultura de los Estados Unidos? ¿de qué manera?

2. ¿Te identificas con el idioma Ingles a través de su cultura? ¿en qué forma?

3. ¿Qué aspectos puedes destacar de la cultura Estadounidense?

Researcher's role.

This study was conducted by two pre-service teachers, who played different roles based on the instruments applied each time.

Based on Mertens' (1998) categorization of the researcher participation, and as by the moment of the impartation of the cultural contents, the researchers in the present study may under the following labels: Complete participation and passive participation. We can label the participation of one of the researchers in this study as *complete* based on the instruction role performed by him. This researcher was the subject facilitator. We can also label the other researcher as one with a *passive* participation since she was in charge of jotting down the field notes perceived during the observation sessions. However, the latter researcher had absolutely no participation during the lesson activities.

By the moment of the administration of the interviews, both researchers had an active participation. In some cases interviews were administered by both researchers, and some others by only one of us.

Analysis of field notes and interview transcriptions was carried out by both researchers.

In our study, we both had roles instructor and observer. Julieth was the observer and David the instructor. This choice was made due to David's current instructional role within the target population.
In Julieth's role as the observer, she had a moderate participation, which allowed her to take notes about participants' behavior, but at the same time she was able to have some closer contact with the participants.
On the other hand, David imparted the instruction based on our instructional design.

We decided to have this kind of participation seeking to provide participants with some confidence between participants and researchers.

According to our plan of work, the two of us will be present during the interviews. Therefore, if we have already built trust with the participants, they may feel more open to our inquiries.

Data analysis

The evidence yielded by the methods applied were analyzed using the flow model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994)

DATA COLLECTION

        DATA REDUCTION

                DATA DISPLAY

                        CONCLUSIONS

In this section we will have a glance on how each one of the methods were processed, coded and analyzed.

Interviews

Three rounds of interviews were administered in three key moments of the study. The first interview was applied before starting the impartation of the cultured-based lesson, the second in the middle of the process, and the third round after concluding the sessions of instruction

The first interviews had as a purpose to identify the participants' concepts of culture and the characteristics they find in their own culture and the foreign

language culture, which for the case was the USA culture. These rounds of interviews were coded as **I1** plus the participants' code that is the first two letters of their names.

In the second stage of the interviews we attempted to analyze the students' perceptions about the culture-based lessons after having experienced some sessions of instruction, as well as how comfortable they felt with the activities carried out during these sessions. This data was coded as **I2** plus the participants' code.

The third and last round of interviews was intended to explore a possible attempt of cultural identification in the participants. It also let us confirm some of the answers given by the participants in the second round of interviews. These interviews were coded as **I3** plus the participants' code.

All three rounds of interviews were carefully analyzed and transcribed, considering the coherence of the answers and the relevance with the focus of the study. After analyzing the interviews, the answers given by the individuals were assigned a category. The categories came up as result of the similarity of the answers and the commonalities in the focus of the latter.

Observations.

The three sessions of observations were aimed at capturing particular factors of in the population which may give us some idea on how the individuals were feeling in relation with the lesson and their motivation to learn the language.

A total of six observations took place along the data collections stage. The first observation recorded the general disposition of the group and the level of interaction the whole class had during a regular lesson, a lesson structured in a communicative approach. Therefore, this first observation was coded as **OWG** (Observation of the Whole Group).

The subsequent observations were also aimed at recording the level of disposition and motivation; although this time we were only concerned of the focal

group of five participants. These observations were coded as it follows: **O1, O2, O3, O4** and **O5** plus the participants code.

We proceeded to categorize the observations in the same way the interviews were processed. We found common and new categories among the observations.

Triangulation

We contrasted both methods pursuing the finding of relevant and common events which were aligned with our research questions. In order to triangulate the data we established certain criteria which may give some certainty of validity. The criteria we used in order to triangulate the data was the following

- Participants: We put together the participants whose answers had a similar focus, whose behaviors were similar during the observation or who had worked together during the instruction sessions.
- Methods: The previous criteria of grouping was supported by the contrast of both methods using common categories between them both.
- Categories: This was the most recurrent criteria, which consisted on contrasting groups of categories, and categories themselves.

Observations and opinions from the participants were put in parallel, which gave us the opportunity to measure the variations in the students' dispositions and attitudes in regular lessons, and lesson based on cultural instruction.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Students' definitions of culture, and relation of the definitions to the perceptions of their own culture.

One of the main purposes in our study is to provide relevant and reliable information valid for the Colombian context. Therefore, it was necessary to explore the ground and let the participants themselves to set the basis for the development and further results of this research.

The conceptual foundation when speaking about culture cannot be imposed by the curriculum designer, but instead it needs to be elicited from the very same population under instruction. This assertion was made by Hernandez & Samaca (2006) in their study about EFL students' interpretations cultural aspects in foreign language learning, where the researchers also decided to let participants build up their own definitions of culture. This comes to be absolutely important from the perspective of the course planner since the understanding of culture of the students will delimit the framework in which the instructor can move around. In other words, the instructor needs to take advantage of the students' own perceptions, and use this conceptual background as platform where to start the process from.

Participants' personal perceptions of culture

All along this study there has been a common concept working as a binder; that is the concept of *Culture*. People may consider that culture is such a plain and ordinary word that it does not really need of too much thinking in order to be described or defined. However, when one comes to the point of defining this "simple" word a whole brainstorm of ideas may unfold. Culture could be everything, and culture could be a single thing.

Human beings have the need to put life into schemes in order to give certain logic to the aspects that are above the bare eye perception (Bada & Genc, 2005, p 74). Consequently, as culture is part of those intangible building blocks that configure human life, there is the need to break down this term, as well, in smaller portions so to give it logic.

Having considered this actual trend of the human mind, this study can now have a clearer approach to Sapir (1962) and Whorf's (1956) statements about the human perception of the world, which very conveniently for our study, comes to be linked with language. The above mentioned researchers present the idea that "we perceive the world in terms of categories and distinctions found in our native language." (Bada & Genc, 2005, p74) As we can assume from here, culture needs to be perceived in terms of categories, as well. This assertion will be evidenced later on this section supported with some evidence.

The need to break down culture into categories comes to be relevant for our study when we attempt to analyze the mental schema in which participants develop their concepts of culture. By the exploration of these schemes of thought we could aim in a more accurate way to enter and make use of the Vygotskian zone of proximal development of the participants. Thus, we could guarantee hooking-up points to start the process.

As a result of the previous analysis, we opened a window to learn about those elements that compound our participants concept of culture. We will proceed now to present the elements that we found as salient and descriptive for the individuals in the present study.

We could evidence that 4 out of 5 participants agreed when defining the concept of culture and pointing it to some interchangeable terms such as traditions and customs. As it follows, we will analyze some excerpts of interviews corresponding to the answers of some of three of the participants to one of the questions in the first round of interviews:

"*-Que entiendes por cultura?-*

> **I1MA:** La cultura es un compendio de valores de costumbres, ideas, que rigen y que están en la sociedad, en una comunidad o en un grupo.

> **I1LE:** Yo creo que son las creencias de cada persona, que van desde nuestros antecedentes que nos han criado con cada cultura, por ejemplo religiones, las tradiciones y los valores"

Considering this sample of answers to the question intended to explore the participants' general idea of culture, we can perceive how these individuals unconsciously create categories following Sapir (1962) and Whorf's (1956) description of the human mind behavior.

Among the different categories in which individuals tried to define culture, we found that there are some more persisting associations. That is the case of the *social values*. Participants considered that the axiology in which the life of the members of a community unfolds has a lot to do with the daily construction of the culture. This conclusion becomes more evident in this particular answer given by another participant to the same question.

> **I1CH:** "[...] acerca de las formas.. que nos enseñan en la casa y pues la gente que nos rodea… Respetar <u>los parámetros de otro.. que no le falten a usted al respeto</u>. Pues básicamente eso. Pues la cultura es para mejorar la sociedades."

Likewise, the *traditions and customs* of the communities make part of the collective description of culture. One of the participants gave a very interesting description of culture which sort of standardizes the general description of culture.

I1CA: *"[...] la cultura es un conjunto de símbolos, signos y códigos que hemos creados nosotros los seres humanos para poder vivir en sociedad y de ella se rescatan mucho esas costumbres por las cuales nosotros decimos que pertenecemos a una cultura."*

The particular understanding of culture in the previous answer embraces the essence of culture that the other participants targeted. Then, we assumed that the general understanding of culture within the frame of the present study consists of constant manifestations present in a community in which the members are aware of the traditions, beliefs, actions and values, which are at the same time the factors that rebuild every day the same concept of culture. We could get this assumption when we realized that the answers from the participants had a recurrent use of the terms *customs, traditions and values*. The previous categories led us to portray a general understanding of culture, so to call it, among the population in our study.

As we came to the previous conclusion, we were able to set a scope in which our instructional design could be developed. Furthermore, we narrowed and explored in some more detail the perceptions of the Colombian culture held by the individuals. It will be analyzed in the following section.

Perceptions of the Colombian culture

In the process of analyzing the data, we found that some of our participants had several similarities within their own perceptions of the Colombian culture; here we present some of the similarities we found and how they are seen by us as researchers to fulfill the importance of our study; in this case it will be to determine the importance students give to their own culture and how much their attention will be drawn by some other cultures.

Another point of importance for our study is to confirm students' concepts about culture.

Descriptors of the Colombian culture

As it was mentioned above, we could find some similarities among the characterization that participants made of the Colombian culture during our first round of interviews. Exploring those elements that the individuals found salient within the Colombian culture helped us to confirm the categorization of culture that we presented in the previous finding. All of these aspects were important for our study, because they let us see the importance of having a definition or a description of what our participants thought their culture was about, and in this way we immediately found elements from the local culture which could be hooked up with the cultural elements of the target language, giving us a first chance to lead the participants into the *attempts of cultural identification* (this label will be explained in some section below)

We have selected some samples of the answers retrieved from the participants where we could clearly match the general understanding of cultures they had manifested and their characterization of their local culture.

"¿Qué aspectos representativos tú puedes resaltar de la cultura Colombiana?"

I1LE: "Las fiestas […] puede ser la semana santa […] porque cada persona con esa creencia forman la cultura y como las procesiones todo eso"

I1MA: "Los colombianos nos caracterizamos por ser muy espontáneos, tener tantas creencias; a veces algunas que parecen idiotas pero son nuestras, y eso es lo que nos hace tan diferentes, aunque la cultura Colombiana no es del todo buena; porque también hay costumbres que no son para nada adecuadas. Somos muy inteligentes pero a veces esa inteligencia como que no la utilizamos bien, es como la malicia, la malicia que llaman."

I1SA: "Fiestas, música de ciertos lugares, la comida de ciertos lugares"

As it can be witnessed, participants showed a clear tendency to relate the term culture with those social events such as national celebrations (fests). At this point we conclude and assure the elements that had to be aimed at in order to lead the individuals towards a stage of analysis and contrastation of their own culture and the foreign culture in which the target language was present. As it is stated by Bada & Genc (2005) in this new era of postmodernism we not only need to understand other cultures but also we need to understand our own, in order to become competent not only in a foreign language but also to be aware and be competent in our own first language. By being competent we do not only refer to the fact of the speakers of a language being able to use it with the grammatical structures corresponding to that specific language, but also to have a good sociolinguistic competence which is in charge of the cultural aspect in any language.

Participants' disagreement with aspects of their own culture

Human beings have the need of putting in categories the world that is before ourselves, and it was already exposed some sections above (Bada & Genc, 2005, p. 74). Within the process of labeling the world we usually use moral judgments to determine if something is "good", "neutral" or "bad" so we can define what give us some comfort or discomfort.

Cultural manifestations are part of those elements the human beings categorize based on moral judgments. In this way the Colombian culture embraces some elements that before the judgmental human sight represent inconformity.

We decided to include the inconformity we found in some of our participants as a means of assessing the extend of disagreement that they felt

towards their own culture, and by doing so analyzing in a later stage if this cultural disagreement could infer with the attempts of cultural identification.

Here we have an example from some of our participants referring to this specific topic.

"Te sientes orgulloso(a) de tu cultura?"

I1MA: "[…]la cultura Colombiana no es del todo buena; porque también hay costumbres que no son para nada adecuadas."

I1MA: "Si, particular y generalmente si. Aunque como te digo algunas cosas si le hacen dar a uno como pena ajena"

"**I1CA:** hay muchas falencias hoy dentro de nuestra cultura y que todavía no podemos llamarlo cultura precisamente por esas falencias que se vienen dando en cuanto a lo educativo, en cuanto a lo laboral, en cuanto a la salud, hay muchas falencias entonces no me sentiría orgullosa de que si que soy colombiana en cuanto a eso. Porque Colombia se caracteriza por lo general es por los malo ante los demás países"

With the previous excerpts we could witness that these participants acknowledged their negative judgments towards their own culture. In the last excerpt, the participant wants to make sure that we understand why she does not feel proud of the Colombian culture giving us reasons for what she believes. She also points out that in other countries people only see the negative aspects that happen in Colombia, but they do not highlight the good aspects of the country..

At a firsts glance one might not find a connection between the cultural discomfort and the difficulties in the learning process. However, Lee (2002) asserts that those students who feel pleased within their own culture can have positive

attitudes in their learning process. Our participant quoted above let us see this connection when, later in the same interview, she manifested her shortcomings when she had faced both cultures.

> **I1CA:** "[...] la verdad si me genera muchos problemas aprender algo que dentro de mi cultura nunca me había… desde pequeña porque yo creo que esas transformaciones y todos esos procesos de aprendizaje se deben dar es desde la niñez."

As a result, we can conclude that detecting the level of conformity that students have with their own culture comes to be a transcendental issue that teachers should consider before imparting the language contents.

Cultural Pride

For our study this is one of the most important parts, because from here on we try to establish a relationship between a foreign culture and the own culture of our participants and how these relations could lead them to be more aware or more interested to learn English, considering one more time Lee's (2002) claim about the bond between the image students have of their own culture and the impact over their learning process. Here we present some answers that participants gave in the interviews in order to complement this part of our study:

"Pero entonces te sientes orgullosa de lo que es tuyo, con lo que se te ha criado?"

"**I1CA**: Hasta cierto sentido si me siento orgullosa de haber nacido aca con esta gente como tan de campo, como que sabemos aprovechar muy bien los recursos

naturales. Entonces sí de eso me siento muy orgullosa. Pero de ahí para alla pues... no podría hablarlo porque aun hay muchos puntos que cuestionar dentro de nuestra cultura. Porque en muchas ocasiones se dice que es cultural y al ser algo cultural se podría estar hablando también de democracia y de igualdad. "

The participant here is letting us know that she feels proud of being a Colombian person even though according to her in Colombia there are a few falls in terms of Politics and Equality; apart from that she is still proud of being born in Colombia because it is a rich country which knows how to explote its natural resources and more.

Here we can evidence that the participant had an interest on her own culture which is a fruitful situation based on Lee's (2006) assertion on how to take advantage of the students' interest on their own culture

Participants' perceptions of the USA culture

In this present time with the globalization and all the information coming through the news and all the media we have today to be acquainted   with the current trends of the world, Colombians might have shaped a strong idea or perception of the USA culture.

Here we present some samples coming from our participants in which they express their perceptions about the USA culture.

Que aspectos crees tu que representan la cultura de los estados unidos?

"**I1CA:** Los aspectos que los representan dependen. En la medida en que ya no lo han hecho ver como un país ya desarrollado los aspectos que más los representan es los avances tecnológicos que se han dado"

"**I1CA:** Algo que lo representa también demasiado es el consumismo. El consumismo de alimentos, de electrodomésticos, contaminación visual, la cotaminación auditiva, todos tipo de contaminación."

"**I1CH:** Lo más representativo de los americanos es el consumismo… pues no se… que son muy organizados. La cultura de ellos es muy cronometrizada. Todo es: que a tal hora voy a comer, a tal hora voy a ir a trabajar. Todo lo organizan. La organización es muy importante para ellos. Entonces por eso es que ellos se nota como son ellos y como somos nosotros. Nosotros somos como más relajado"

I1MA:"si algo podemos ver en la cultura de los Estados Unidos es esa forma de consumir, el capitalismo más que todo"

Here the participants give us some contributions about what they think of the USA culture. They are trying to express that Americans have a desire to buy things, that Americans are more serious unlike us. We are not as concerned in respect of buying appliances.

According to what they say their perception of the USA culture is all about the consumerism and that their life style is in a rush in comparison to our lifestyle, which is more relaxed.

¿Como describirías a una persona que representa la cultura de los estados unidos?

"**I1CH:** Son muy frios sentimentalmente. Son…no se… en cualquier momento se lo toman es para analizar las cosas y no para disfrutar del momento; como nosotros."

"**I1MA: Me** parece algo superficial, es como el bienestar de cada uno, es pensar más en lo material, importan más las cosas que las personas**"**

In the previous comments, we can highlight that our participants agree on the overall stereotypization given to the American people about the way they perceive the world. As expressed by our participants, Americans' behaviors tend to be focused on the personal welfare, seeking the increment of their material wealth.

As we have seen so far, our participants had a clear opinion about the American culture. We could infer that this opinion is fed by the general social perception of the USA. The position of our participants came to be important for our study in order to determine in a further stage if these perceptions may alter their disposition to learn the language. Therefore, students' understanding of the foreign culture comes to be the first step in what Gardner et al. (2004) has labeled as integrative orientation, which was cornerstone theory for the development of our study

Shift in the students' attitudes and motivations after an exposure to cultural-based contents: impact on students' attitudes and motivation towards the foreign language.

After having a solid idea of the vision that individuals had about culture, as well as having identified the elements that were salient and remarkable in the participants' depiction of the Colombian and the USA culture, the study proceeded to the implementation phase. At this point, we had sufficient material to expose the students in different parallel scenarios in which manifestations of one or both cultures were the main focus of attention in the lessons; all this accompanied by the presentation of the linguistic components, i.e. the grammar, the pronunciation, and more importantly the pragmatics that could be imparted in convenience of the cultural topic.

Interestingly, we found that the students' motivation and attitudes during the culture-based lessons were impacted at different levels such as the participants intrinsic motivation, willingness to produce without elicitation, increement in the recurrence of the use of the foreign language. As a matter of fact, we found reactions which were out of our initial interest. All these items will be exposed later on. We considered as a reference point a lesson in which the contents were presented in a regular fashion, that is a lesson which was not based on cultural contents, but the approach suggested by the institution curriculum. This particular observation was labeled as OWG (Observation of the Whole Group) in order to have a parallel which helped us to establish certain comparison and thus assume and report findings. Next on, we will present each one of these appealing and somehow unexpected results, which we did not consider at the beginning of the study.

Cultural approach impact on participants' motivation/attitude

In the following section we will piece together the information gathered across the study in order to compare the students' motivation with and without being exposed to culture-based lessons. The levels of disposition will be evidenced after contrasting a regular lesson with one in which the main core is an analysis of diverse cultural manifestations.

It is important to clarify that the findings described here below are displaying two specific moments of our research: first, regular classes based on the syllabus suggested by the institution, which allowed us to determine the factors that motivate the students to take the foreign language classes, as well as their disposition towards this sort of courses; second, culture-structured lessons designed for our study where we carefully analyzed if there was any perceptible change in the students' attitudes and motivational factors.

Attempt for cultural identification:

In the following segment we will present one of the striking points in the present study; the attempt of a cultural identification in the participants, that is. Then, it is necessary to clarify the way we approach the concept of cultural identification. We did not attempt to drive the participants to an identification of the foreign culture as a whole. Instead, we exposed the participants to contexts of cultural parallels between the Colombian culture and some foreign ones, especially some cultural manifestations of the USA. By doing so, we sought to let participants establish conceptual comparisons among the different cultures brought up in the lessons, and through this to lead students to analyze the commonalities and discrepancies present in culture-based tasks.

Having clarified the idea of the attempt of cultural identification, it is important to point out that the purpose for this section is to analyze the possible motivational changes that appeared in the students after an eventual cultural identification.

As a result, this idea is supported by the data collected from some of our participants, namely observations and interviews of the individuals.

¿Te has sentido identificado con la cultura de los Estado Unidos en las ultimas clases?

I2MA:"Es que es difícil identificarme con la cultura. Yo creo que la cultura de los Estados Unidos abarca muchas cosas. Y lo que nosotros vemos es el idioma. En estas clases hemos visto…lo del clima…pero que me sienta identificado, no."

It is interesting to notice the ideas that are conveyed by the participant. In the previous excerpt it can be perceived how the student is fully aware about the

unlikeliness of pouring a whole culture into a classroom. It is beyond the instructional possibilities to aim at leading a whole classroom to feel identified with the entire load of habits and traditions of a community, particularly if the instruction happens in a context of foreign language.

Nevertheless, it is remarkable that the perception of the participants is different when the focus of the lesson is shifted to particular events of culture, i.e. particular cultural manifestations. Let's analyze the following answer referent to the celebration of Mother's day in Colombia and the USA.

I2MA: "[...] Pues la verdad si fue algo sorprendente. Porque yo crei que por allá era diferente, más diferente que aquí. Pero al ver la información que nos dieron, es muy similar. Lo que cambian son detalles. Entonces si cambie como en ese momento la idea que tenia de esa parte acerca de la cultura inglesa, o americana."

I2CA "En el día de las madres, porque es algo que se relaciona mas como con lo que hablamos normalmente y con celebraciones y pues que se relaciona con cosas como tan cotidianas y con las que nos relacionamos diariamente con otras personas que es la mamá o la familia o las celebraciones o ese tipo de cosas así entonces me gusto mas el día que hablamos sobre las madre"

As it can be evidenced in the previous answers, it could be said that the participants had a different perception of the celebration of Mother's day in the USA before the lesson. However, they were able to establish linking points between the local and the foreign culture, stating the similarities and differences in both cultural manifestations, which appealed their attention. In addition, we could remark that the second participant is clearly manifesting the level of meaningfulness that she could experience during the lesson. Then, we can clearly agree with Chastain (1971) and Stainer (1971) when they both asserted that the involvement of culture lead students to related the target language with real people, which for the concerns of the presents study is understood as the attempt of cultural identification. And we can come to this conclusion in a sort of natural fashion when we consider that students had no longer their attention on the form of the language, but on the events carried out by the natural speakers of the

language; in other words, they humanized the language, they could witness how some fellow humans live certain events of life in a common way to their own with just a different code.

Some additional behaviors that are remarkable came with the observation of some of the participants' attitudes during the lesson that was based on the Mother's day celebration. With this observation we could gather some information about the students' better apprehension of the USA culture.

O3CA"[...] el texto genera una discusión; uno de los temas que discutieron fue el por qué los norte americanos izan la bandera el día de las madres, También hacen un paralelo entre la familia y la comida que ellos hacen en ese día especial y la que tenemos nosotros en nuestro país"

O3CH:"Hace comentarios referentes a la historia y elabora paralelos en frente de la celebración de los estados unidos y la colombiana. toma de base la izada de la bandera y con su compañera **CA** se preguntan ¿por que lo hacen? ambos dicen "debe ser por que ellos son muy patriotas"

Altogether, we can now assume that the participants manifested an attempt of identification with particular celebrations common to both cultures. It is necessary to highlight that after having set the parallel, both individuals pointed out some positive values from the foreign culture such as the patriotism in the deed of the flag-raising.

In the following section we will analyze the repercussions in the participants' dispositions and attitudes after having experienced the different approaches to the concept of culture.

Increcement in intrinsic motivation due to a cultural approach.

For the matters of this section, we wanted to see if our participants' motivation towards learning the language had changed after the impartation of the cultural based lessons.

Based on our participants' information, we could witness the evolution of the motivation, moving from a more extrinsic motivation to one in which there were more intrinsic factors mediating the learning process. This is supported right below. Our focus will now move to the variations in their attitudes, their body language change, and more importantly, the change in the recurrence of the use of the foreign language, which is of major relevance for this study, and which we will now catalogue as indicators of increasing motivation.

As it was mentioned previously in this document, it would not have been possible to rank the trend in the students' disposition and attitude unless we had a point of reference. In order to set the reference point we will consider a general observation of the population, which did not have a cultural content.

Consequently, we will present a piece of data taken from the observation of the first stage of the study, in a regular lesson based on a communicative approach. Here we will analyze the general factors affecting the population and their attitudinal response to the lesson.

OWG: "El grupo en general es participativo, algunos de los estudiantes hacen diferentes preguntas al profesor dirigidas a los temas de la clase o a temas previamente vistos en la clase. se les ve interesados en la clase pues participan haciendo preguntas referentes al tema, algunas veces cuando son llamados a participar lo hacen de forma activa, discutiendo entre ellos el tema propuesto en clase. Sin embargo, otras veces participan no por iniciativa propia si no que el profesor les pide que lo hagan. algunos de los estudiantes tienen un nivel de ingles con el cual pueden expresarse usando muy poco el español; mientras que

otros necesitan usar más el español para hacerse entender. los estudiantes que tienen un nivel de ingles funcional para la comunicación usan el español como último recurso, usan palabras en ingles que ellos creen que se deben usar en ciertas situaciones y cuando son corregidos incorporan la nueva palabra en su léxico activo."

In spite of some external factors such as the time of the class, the acoustic conditions, and the natural fatigue due to the morning journey of the students, we could say that the students' participation during the class was high. We could also observe here that the students' focus of attention is on the language and the context corresponding to that language, or as it was expressed by Wilkins (1976, 10-11) the rules of communication and the rules of grammar, which is the natural aim in the communicative approach. We need to note as well that students made efforts to use the language. However, it is remarked that this position is taken by those students who have a level of proficiency in the language what makes them confident to use it in the class, having the L1 as a last resource to communicate. Important to note as well is the fact that those students with a lower level of proficiency were not as motivated to use the L2 as those mentioned before. Therefore, the recurrence of use of the L1 was highly present in these students.

Yet, this common trend in the students showed some changes in the focal group during the lessons focused on cultural manifestations. Proof of this will be given in the following chunks of data, where the indicators of increasing motivation will be clearly outlined: the first, an excerpt from the notes taken during a lesson focused on the Mother's day celebration; the second, a piece of the answer given to a question about the participant's opinion of the appealingness of the language in a culture-based lesson.

> **O3CH:** "[...] hace comentarios referentes a la historia y elabora paralelos frente de la celebración de los estados unidos y la colombiana. toma de base la izada de la abandera y con su

compañera CA se preguntan ¿por que lo hacen? ambos dicen "debe ser porque ellos son muy patriotas"

I2CA: "[...] y aparte de que es necesario pues me gustaría, se que también aprender otro idioma desarrolla otras partes del cerebro y entonces se va a desarrollar más mi capacidad cognitiva entonces metida por esos lados y además porque es rico saber cosas nuevas y saber expresar conformidades o inconformidades a través de diversas lenguas y formas de comunicación"

Although at first sight one may wonder about the connection between the two pieces of data above, one may also find interesting variations in the students' performance and insights when they are compared to the initial observation and the remarkable presence of extrinsic factors in the first round of interviews.

From the observation we can evidence that the motivating factors for the students to share opinions, and more interestingly, to take the initiative to express an opinion moved from an outer actor, e.g. the instructor, to their need of solving the questions that come up after analyzing the traditions of a foreign country. Here we cannot label this phenomenon with another name than a transition from an extrinsic motivation to an intrinsic one because the individual is not satisfying anymore an inquiry originated in an external entity, but a questioning originated in the individual itself, the individual is satisfying his own need. Therefore, the classroom is turning into a source of queries about the surrounding world. At this point we could agree with Midraj et al. (2008) when the researcher assures that the material chosen for the EFL lesson should not create unnatural settings since it could decrease the level of motivation. By bringing a celebration that is common for both cultures, students have the chance to establish their own comparisons due to the fact that they have personally lived the event thus having authentic points of reference.

Similar to the phenomenon just analyzed, we found in the response of our participant some key words that let us appreciate her realization of some specific needs, and the motivation to nurture those needs. Let's analyze her answer one more time:

> **I2CA: "[...]** y aparte de que es necesario pues me gustaría, se que también aprender otro idioma desarrolla otras partes del cerebro y entonces se va a desarrollar más mi capacidad cognitiva entonces metida por esos lados y además porque es rico saber cosas nuevas y saber expresar conformidades o inconformidades a través de diversas lenguas y formas de comunicación"

All along her answer about her opinion of the language during cultural topics, we can sense that her desires to be in the language classroom is not just to fulfill some administrative requirements, but instead, she is clearly presenting the personal benefits that the learning of a foreign language has for her. Notwithstanding that in the last part of the answer she is unconsciously presenting her yearning to develop pragmatic abilities in different languages or what is labeled by Gardner et al. (2004) as the integrative orientation, which is the interest for approaching a different culture with no fear of dismissing the own one. Once again, we could sum it up as transference of the source of the motivational factors; moving from the outside to the inside.

The idea of the importance in the intrinsic motivation results relevant to us in a very logical way. We can assume that if the individuals hold a high level of intrinsic motivation, they could define their presence within the classroom as a decision of self-improvement, which consequently will be reflected in their disposition to learn the language and the attitudes they will adopt during the impartation. Here we can hear one more time Kitao's (2000) voice when he claims

that the natural curiosity arose in students after studying the culture of different countries have a co lateral effect on the individual's' motivation. In fact, Kitao (2000) refers to the study of culturally based lessons in terms of appealingness since students like culturally based lessons. At this point we can say that Kitao's assertion agrees with our assumption when we can understand the increasement in the appealingness of the language for the students described above with the evident increasement of intrinsic motivation in our participants during the analysis of cultural events.

Recurrence of the use of the foreign language.

So far, this study has yielded satisfactory outcomes in terms of the evident need present in the teaching practice, the need to keep up students' motivation. One might also consider that the increment in the students' motivation will be logically reflected in the improvement of the students' performance with the language, which evidently needs of some support. Very conveniently, we found out a relevant aspect in our study which shows the impact that the change in the students motivation has in the use of the target language. The aspect that we found can be determined as an result of increasing motivation, as we will analyze in the following section. The factor we could notice is the variation in the recurrence that students have in the use of the foreign language. Here we will take a look at those variations and how they may affect the language performance in the students.

We have selected three excerpts from the field notes which let us perceive this phenomenon.

> **O3CA:** Participa activamente de la clase sin habérselo pedido, se ve un poco más interesada en el idioma debido a que antes hablaba mucho en español y en esta clase utilizo más a menudo el Ingles

O3MA: Mira a su cuaderno con sus piernas cruzadas, al mismo tiempo discute con su compañero el tema que se está tratando en la clase, realiza la lectura y da opiniones acerca de lo que se acabo de leer, le cuesta un poco expresarse pero se hace entender; necesita un poco de tiempo para producir pero eventualmente lo logra[…]

O3CH: […]se nota un poco interesado en el tema, puesto que sus comentarios están dirigidos a generar una discusión y para ello usa de formas repetitivas el Ingles. hace comentarios referentes a la historia y elabora paralelos frente a la celebración de los Estados Unidos y la Colombiana[…]

There is a common factor in all the above mentions, and that is the active participation noted in the individuals during this lesson. But there is something particular in the annotations, and that is the initiative to participate by each one of the individuals. If this is compared to the first observation, it can be evidenced that in the regular lesson students needed to be elicited in order to have some participation from them. Opposed to this, students are experiencing some willingness to express their opinions even if they have not been asked to do so.

Likewise, if it is put in comparison the students' performance during the initial observation and the culture-based lessons, the level of use of the foreign language deserves some consideration, as well. In addition to the initiative to express personal opinions, the individuals try to use English in a more frequent fashion than that one of the initial observation. Therefore, we could also assume that the culture-based lessons provide ideal contexts in which the individuals feel comfortable to express their ideas in the language of instruction; English in our case.

Let's analyze the following excerpt taken from the observation of a group activity based on the comparison of particular cultural manifestations in different countries:

O4MA: Lee la historia atentamente para él y para sus compañeros, luego de terminar la lectura cada uno da su opinión y se crea una pequeña discusión acerca del tema. **MA** saca a relucir un punto muy importante de las manifestaciones culturales en Colombia, muestra a sus compañeros cuales son los puntos más importantes de la historia, presta atención a los compañeros que le están explicando dentro del grupo, <u>se nota más participativo dando sus opiniones más repetidamente que en otro tipo de actividades</u> y al final de la clase el grupo como tal da opiniones generales acerca de lo que aprendieron en base a la historia y con la actividad planteada por el profesor

Here we can evidence how participants use the language to communicate the ideas they infer from the reading given by the teacher.

This is a clear evidence that supports the idea we have of how often participants use the language for their own purposes; this part is important for our study, because what we try to do is to find if there is a change in the frequency of the use of the language by the participants after the cultural based lessons.

It is also important to note how participants themselves related the use of cultural topics with their own motivation to use the language. In the following pieces of evidence we could perceive that individuals envisioned themselves using English in a logical or natural way at the moment of sharing conversations based on culture. These answers correspond to the last round of interviews:

Te gustaría compartir con estadounidense sobre tu cultura y la cultura de él utilizando el ingles como medio de comunicación

I3MA: "Sí, sería muy interesante. Sería <u>lo que aprendimos llevarlo a la práctica</u>. Yo creo que sería mucho más fácil aprender asi"

I3CA: "Pues de compartirla sí, claro porque si el americano se presta para hacerlo ahí podemos entre los dos payasear harto o se puede desarrollar una forma de aprender el lenguaje, <u>de yo entenderlo a él y el entenderme a mí</u>, entonces yo creo que ya no estaríamos ni en la cultura de él ni en la mía si no que estaríamos creando una nueva cultura entre él y yo; de cómo comunicarnos, como relacionarnos, <u>como tratarme de entender y yo entenderle a él</u>, entonces me parecería algo muy chistoso y seria hasta chévere"

I3SA: "Si […] Es una forma de intercambiar ideas, <u>de uno practicar</u>, de uno aprender más"

As we could perceive in the previous piece of data, our participants were trying to use the language as a way of communicating ideas, and we could see it was easy for them to express after they learn about culture in this particular class. McKey (2003) claimed the linguistic influence of culture in the teaching of foreign languages in the semantic, pragmatic and discourse levels of the language. Therefore, after analyzing these particular results we can evidence that our finding proves right with McKey's affirmation. Our participants showed improvement in the discourse level of the language during the exposure to culture-based activities.

Random cultural contents might foster students' motivation

Overall, the instructional design was focused on the study of some particular manifestations of the USA culture and the Colombian culture. However, we decided to try a lesson in which our central topic was neither the Colombian culture nor the USA one. We wanted to explore in some form a different context. Then, we designed a single lesson in which cultural manifestations from different countries were brought up for the students to establish parallels with the local culture. Unexpected for our study, we found positive behaviors in the students.

Here we have some pieces of observations taken during this particular session, as well as some answers given during the last round of interviews.

> **O3LE:** "durante la clase aparenta estar distraída, mira a diferentes lugares como el techo, la puerta, el suelo, otras veces mira su cuaderno pero sin escribir nada se ríe cuando lee algo en el. le muestra a su compañero lo que está escrito en el cuaderno y luego los dos empiezan a reírse de ello; luego su compañero hace un dibujo en su cuaderno y lo rotan con varios compañeros así todos lo ven y se ríen de lo que está en el"

> **O4LE:** "parece estar hablando del tema de la clase, le comenta a sus compañeros de grupo acerca de lo que leyó en la manifestación que le toco a su grupo. llama al profesor y le pregunta algo relativo a la manifestación cultural de su grupo. parece estar mas interesada en esta clase que en las anteriores puesto a que su posición corporal es mas abierta a recibir el tema de la clase, se presenta mas participativa, haciendo preguntas tanto a sus compañeros como a el profesor. al poner a uno de sus compañeros en otro grupo ella colabora desde su grupo ayudándole a contar la manifestación de su grupo, contándole a el otro equipo lo que aprendieron de esta manifestación cultural"

The above observations corresponds to the field notes taken to one of our participants who did not showed very much increment in her motivation nor a lot of confidence to speak and participate during the previous culture-oriented sessions. This can be observed in the first citation. However, we can perceive that her attitude changed during the lesson described in the second piece of field notes. We can somehow infer that the willingness to express her ideas increased in a substantial way, considering that the pieces of data have a chronological order; the second one happening subsequently after the session in the first notes.

When we started the analysis stage and the following of the participants' behaviors, we were surprised with this participant's change of attitude and disposition. What drew our attention the most was the fact that this session was not designed under the initial parameters of the study. Instead, the session in reference had as central topic cultural manifestation from different countries such as Japan and Russia. Despite the fact that the lesson was not aimed at studying the target language culture, it provoked positive reactions in the participants, who let us know their amazement about certain cultural behaviors in these countries, as well as their comparisons with the Colombian traditions. Here we have another observation from a different participant during the same lesson:

> **O4MA** : "MA saca a relucir un punto muy importante de las manifestaciones culturales en Colombia, muestra a sus compañeros cuales son los puntos mas importantes de la historia, presta atención a los compañeros que le están explicando dentro del grupo, se nota mas participativo dando sus opiniones mas repetidamente que en otro tipo de actividades y al final de la clase el grupo como tal da opiniones generales acerca de lo que aprendieron en base a la historia y con la actividad planteada por el profesor"

In this note we can observe the very same event that happened in the previous culture-based lesson. That is the need that individuals have of contrasting the cultural manifestations from the foreign countries with the manifestations in their own culture. As a result of this common event we found again a positive impact in the students' attitudes and dispositions during the lesson

With the interest of finding out why the participants came to be interested in cultural contents in general, i.e. not only on the culture from the USA, we included some questions in the last round of interviews which let us evidence the individuals' insights.

I3MA: "Pues yo soy una persona que piensa que el mundo es muy grande. Que hay muchas maneras de pensar de hacer las cosas. En lo personal, a mi lo que tenga que ver con aprender de otros países de otras culturas me gusta mucho. Y pues en las clases de ingles, ahora que pusieron el tema de la cultura <u>me pareció muy importante.</u>"

I3SA: "Si muy chévere. Digamos que todas en cada parte, pues que Rusia, que se saludan muy fuerte y todas esas cositas que uno no sabe, pues de saber más cosas y los idiomas igual también son muy chéveres."

Once we had analyzed the third round of interviews, we could understand and conclude that the participants' motivation was not only increased by the lessons in which they had the opportunity to explore the customs and traditions from the USA. Indeed, our participants showed to be eager to learn, analyze and discuss about the way people from different cultures behave. It is given probably by human nature itself. Human beings seek to identify themselves with their peers. It is now when Sapir's (1921) words make sense when he stated that the language and the grooves in our thinking, we could understand it as our behaviors, are inextricably interrelated. Likewise, we need to cite Kitao (2000) in his claim about the positive results in the students' motivation when their curiosity about foreign countries is seized on the sake of the lesson.

Students' perceptions of the implementation of cultural contents in the EFL classroom.

In the previous section we could analyze the relevance of the so called cultural approach from the instructional perspective, in other words, the impact of cultural contents in the process of achieving the curriculum objectives which are

generally focused on leading the student to become a proficient user of the language.

However, we were glad to find that the participants also had their own opinion and perspective about this approach. In the following segments we will explore the other face of the coin. That is, we will move the perspective of the study from the relevance in the learning process and the relevance for the educators, to the point of view of the students, their insights about the implementation of cultural contents, their opinion about the importance of culture within the language curriculum. Likewise, we will explore what students think about the common lack of cultural elements in the language lesson and what they consider are the consequences of this absence.

Importance of a cultural approach in language learning: Advantages of cultural approach

In the following section we will analyze two outcomes worthy of note which were perceived during the last round of interviews. What touched our particular attention in this point was that participants themselves were plenty aware about the transcendence of the role of culture in the process of learning a foreign language.

Very alike to one of the studies mentioned in our literature review, our participants claimed the need of including meaningful cultural contents within the curriculum. The participants' answers to a question about their opinion of developing the cultural component during the language lessons let us see their need of exploring beyond the communicative-based tasks usually implemented in language schools.

I3MA: "Pues yo creo que es esencial aprender tanto de la cultura como del idioma y es bueno porque uno nunca sabe. Uno no espera quedarse aquí. <u>Y más, si sabes hablar el idioma pero no sabes las costumbre de allá pues no estás en nada</u>."

I3SA: "Porque no solo se está viniendo a aprender sobre un idioma, y sobre esto es así y así y así, tienen que ser más cosas, se está interactuando con todo"

Considering the previous answers, we can infer that the participants were naturally concerned about the inclusion of cultural material in the lessons. In the first quotation, we can associate the participant's insight with the necessity of having a pragmatic understanding of the cultural manifestations present in the context of the target language. Here we can perceive the same concern reported by Hernandez and Samaca (2006) when the individuals in their study manifested that knowing the foreing culture is important to improve the acquisition of a foreign language. Then, we can start assuming that language itself lacks of sense for an individual who is just approaching it, and who has no previous background with its culture.

After having the analysis of the need manifested by the participants, some questions related to the novelty of the finding may have came up. By "the novelty" we actually mean that it is well known that lessons based on a communicative approach involve the study of the context in which the event of speech occur. However, we went deeper in the participants' claim of cultural contents in the classroom, and we found out that students not only need the inclusion of cultural material, which in fact is highly present in the course books, but what they are really claiming is the meaningfulness in the contents. Here we have some answer which led us to evidence this claim:

I3CA: "[…]simplemente sabríamos que les gusta por saberlo mas no que significa, no si podríamos trascender en eso que a ellos les gusta, o también modificarlo en nuestra cultura o aplicarlo, entonces no, primero debemos comprender y participar de nuestra cultura **[…]** para empezar a meter otras culturas a nuestro modo de relacionarnos porque eso es algo que esta pasando hoy en día y es que no somos participes de una misma cultura y se esta dando una multiculturalidad"

This answer clearly depicts the eagerness that the participant has of understanding the language, not only speaking the language; notwithstanding the desire of being an active participant of the culture in study, which was manifested when she expressed that she could transcend by modifying the culture, which could be understood as the natural evolving process of cultures by the daily use of it. It is also important to note again that unconsciously she is proposing the method discussed some sections above. She remarks the importance of having a recognition of the own culture and the a recognition of the foreign culture. This description portrays the attempts of cultural manifestation analyzed in limitations and research implications.

Importance of a cultural approach for successful social interaction within the target culture

For this section, we wanted to highlight an aspect we consider relevant to our study, which is the "Fluent Fools" label (Bennet, 1993). With this remarkable term we found and explained in our literature review, we want to make sure students learn the language as a whole and not only parts of it.
In this part, we want to explain with the data how our participant perceives being a "Fluent Fool" without even knowing the term. The participants gave us certain information from which we can say that they would like to learn the language with all about it, not only the grammatical rules, but also the culture of that language.

Nevertheless, participants were not only interested in learning the target language culture, but also being competent in other cultures by the use of English.

Despues de haber tenido la experiencia en las clases con contenidos culturales, por que considerarías que es importante que las clases tuvieran este elemento presente?

I3MA: **"**Pues yo creo que es esencial aprender tanto de la cultura como del idioma y es bueno porque uno nunca sabe. Uno no espera quedarse aquí. Y más, si sabes hablar el idioma pero no sabes las costumbre de allá pues no estas en nada.**"**

Que tipo de clases prefieres: en las que solo se tratan temas del idioma o en las que se involucran además temas sobre cultura?

I3MA: "Para mi es muy interesante poder aprender cosas, detalles de la cultura de otro país. Por ejemplo, de Estados Unidos que es como tan importante. Es sí muy chévere. Me gusta más aprender así."

[...] entonces para ti seria el aprendizaje completo; no una cosa y dejar la otra de un lado. Te gustaría es todo completo

I2MA: "SI exacto. Creo que sería más fácil aprender así."

So far, we have been examining the participants answers based on cultural and non cultural contents, and for this matter we have a clear example of what a participant thinks about learning the culture of the language; he expresses that it is really important to learn things and how the culture of the USA called his attention into learning the language.

This is a fact we quoted in our literature review and is called the "fluent fools;" there we presented the idea of learning a language alone is not learning it completely, students also need to learn about the culture of that specific language they are learning so they can identify themselves with it and have some common aspects between their culture and the culture from another country, and by doing so students will be learning the language completely without missing anything and it will transform their extrinsic motivation into a intrinsic one, so the language will be used more often and for different situations students will be involved in.

¿Cómo te sentiste en las clases en las que hablamos sobre cultura?

I3SA: "Bien, porque es una forma de todos dar una opinión y aprender más de otras culturas y de cosas que otros saben y uno no."

In this piece of data , our participant let us see the way is more interesting for her to learn English; she expresses that she felt good about the cultural-based lessons and that this makes her feel more comfortable using the things she previously learned in the classes. Our participant let us see here that it is not only important to learn the language, but also the cultural content of that language, and how this cultural contents help her to express the ideas, participate more actively in the classes and use the language more often.

As we mentioned before, culture is an important part of teaching so students will not be "fluent fools", it is important to point out how students feel about learning the culture from other countries, what is their opinion concerning the use of a different language and how their motivation is increased when the classes have a cultural based content. The previous assert can be supported by Hernandez and Samaca (2006) when they quoted one of their participants: "culture becomes a way to learn the expressions that can't be translated and the different vocabulary which doesn't exist in the own culture" (p. 46). Learners will definitely feel more comfortable when

they are able to rationalize the words they are saying, that is, when they discover that words have history; they are culture.

For our participants it is important to use the language they are learning, to put into practice all what they learned during the sessions and try to make conversations from different topics specially those ones that called their attention as the cultural topic in the classrooms.

[...] ¿Sentiste esas ganas de conocer no importando que él estuviera utilizando el Ingles?

> **I3SA:** "Sin importar el Ingles, muy bacano, porque igual yo creo que por eso mismo, o que uno le entiende, todo lo que ha visto porque vino y el cambio"

Here we can evidence the importance students give to the use of the language and how they create scenarios to use it. No matter in which scenario, students find the need and try to use the language to formulate questions and answers.

As the teacher facilitates another context to learn the language, he also gives students a context in which they have to use the language, asking questions to another English speaker trying to make students use the language as much as possible.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This research project had as aim to implement culture in classrooms, as a way to improve students' interest in learning English. By using this strategy, students' motivation would raise when they are exposed to the culture of any country no matter if it had a reference with the target language; as long as it has a cultural reference. However some limitations were found when conducting the study.

As it is mention on Qualitative research methods: a data collector's field guide, Module 1, specifies that qualitative research is made to collect information from participants' thoughts about a specific problem or a topic regarding to cultural matters. With this module we can see that Qualitative research takes into account the different responses from different participants in order to answer the main questions given at the beginning of a study and that the amount of data you collect depends on the answers and the responses of your participants, here we found ourselves in a crossroad, because of the answers the participants gave were not clear sometimes and also some findings were establish as further research due to the lack of theoretical background to support such findings.

For the matter of cultural identification, we got to a difficult point because some of our participants did not have a sense of their own culture, some of them said that culture for them was what they were taught at home during their life like values, customs etc. while others refer to culture as the food and cultural backgrounds from the country. It is necessary for language learners and also for any human being to know where they come from and which are the cultural implications that come with that certain culture in order to become completely competent in other languages and to be competent as called themselves from a certain country. Here we would like to further explore the fact on how Colombian culture is influenced by other cultures, how this influences by other cultures might by affecting our own culture and our definition of Colombian culture. Since

Colombia has many immigrants from other countries such as China, United States among others some of our participants talk about how this people coming from other countries and other types of cultures can affect our own and how those people by coming to Colombia may influence us just bringing their food and festivals. This mixture of cultures creates confusion among our participants and it will be a good place to depart a new research in order to conclude how immigrants can affect a country's culture.

With the previous finding we can see an emerging window that links us to deal with globalization, due to the immigrants in Colombia, this window is a very important part for a further discussion, we found some important information gathered from our participants as it is mentioned above on how they perceived their culture and how the moving from people from other countries is creating a mixed culture and the original per say Colombian culture is getting lost. Here we can talk about multiculturalism and how this is linked directly to the globalized world we have these days, how it expands in a country and why is that multiculturalism is going on in a country are some very interesting questions to dispose ourselves to study in the future.

At last, we found that students' motivation is not always linked to the fact that they connect the study of English as an opportunity for their futures, like having a better job or a travel to another country with scholar or work projects; the intrinsic motivation plays an important part here because students first interest is on approve the module as a requirement and not as a future plan.

It is interesting to notice how the extrinsic and the intrinsic factors can get to be so blend-in, that they may be confused. Thus, we could assume that the extrinsic motivation in the learners may set a first instance in which students can be conveniently led to a cultural identification.

For this matter, for all of us teachers to be or researchers in the area of language teaching is very interesting that we found several interesting topics that could lead new studies for other researchers in the future; it will be interesting to take these topics and reproduce them in another context, where students are from a different level of English and from another University. This study was mainly focus on how students' attitudes and motivations change along with their motivation when they are being exposed to several cultures.

We could notice that the increasement of motivation in our participants occurred when the cultural contents were presented in the classroom, but when it was a grammar based class the students motivation was not as high as it was during the cultural contents; so in order to maintain the motivation high, the classes needed to have a cultural content present even when teaching grammar. Something that was difficult for us because we had to manage either topics or contents between the cultural background and the curriculum contents. Improvement in the use of the language was shown through the cultural contents as well as their attitudes and dispositions change from non cultural lessons to the cultural based lessons.

CONCLUSION

At this point, when everything has been set on the table we could start wrapping up and concluding the different aspects that were proposed from the very beginning of this study. In order to do so, we will bring concluding perspectives from both roles present in a learning context, the perspective of the educator, and the perspective of the learner.

EFL facilitators have been aware of the need and the advantages of exposing learners to cultural contents. However, there has also been the inquiry of when is it too much or when is it too little in terms of the exposure to culture-based lessons (Önalan, 2005). According to the findings of the present study, we could conclude that the use of cultural contents is a constant source of opportunities to drive the learners to experience the identification process with those fellow beings who use the target language as a way to develop their lives. By this means, learners are able to realize the target language is not just the filler of a course book, but it is the life that surrounds others, just as their native language is constructs the life that surrounds their existence. And this is one of the key aspects found during this study, the benefits of leading the learners to those attempts of cultural identification, in which the educator let the language to become the tourist guide through the wonderful sightseeing of the culture.

Therefore, the results born from this research are an invitation letter to make the language that tourist guide, and not only central focus of the learning encounters.

On the other hand, we have the perspective of the learners towards the implementation of the cultural contents. Learners themselves have claimed the importance of including this kind of contents in the regular language lessons. Once that learners finds the pleasure of discovering the language through the culture,

they are able to determine the moment when they are becoming fluent fools (Bennet, 1993), or the moment when they are becoming actual users or possessors of the language. When the learners start having this level of appropriation with the language the different external factors that may be influencing their motivation will become internal factors that turn the vision that learners have about themselves within a classroom.

In order to conclude, we could sum up the role of the facilitator within the present study as that of the feeder of the natural questions that the learners have of the world, the feeder of the students' natural motivation. And we could sum up the role of the EFL student as that of a world explorer who uses the target language as the main tool to go through the bushes of the lands in exploration.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

Lesson Plan:

Aims:

At the end of this session Ls will:

- Be familiarized with a famous celebration around the world (focused on the USA).
- Be able to contrast a special American tradition with a similar Colombian tradition.
- Put into practice the language to write a postcard.
- Be able to get familiar with the values behind San Valentine's day.

List of material: Vidoebeam, Laptop, Video about San Valentine's Day in the world, List of common activities that take place on San Valentine's day, Postcard sample, Reading about Valentine's Day origins, Reading about the origins of "Dia del amor y la Amistad" in Colombia, Simpsons' episode based on San Valentine's day**.**

Stage/TIME	PROCEDURE
Warm Up.	*Whole-group activity.* Ls will share with the class an anecdote in which they gave or were given a present on "Día del amor y la Amistad."
Engagement.	*Whole-group activity.* Ls will watch a video in which San Valentine's celebration is shown. After the video, instructor will elicit from Ss general information about this tradition in the United States.
Study.	*Pair-work activity.* Ls will read a brief description about the origins of San valentine's day.
Activation.	*Whole-group activity.* Students will tell the class their opinion about this celebration. They will be asked to find the values and significance this celebration had in its origins
Engagement.	*Whole-group activity.* Ls will watch a segment from an episode in The Simpsons

	series. *Whole-group activity.* Ls will watch a video that presents San Valentine's celebration in a university in the USA.
Study.	*Pair-work activity.* Ls will read a list of activities that are commonly carried out on San Valentine's day. They will highlight the activities they already know or those that they like the most.
Activation.	*Whole-group activity.* Once Ss have read about the origins of San Valentine's day, and they have watched some videos that present the current celebration, Ss will contrast these two pieces of information in order to elicit their own opinion about the values they may find in this celebration.
Contextualization.	*Individual activity:* Ls will read a text that presents the origins of "Dia del Amor y la Amistad" in Colombia. *Whole-group activity.* Ls will be asked to analyze the celebration's values in its origins and the current values behind the special date. *Group-work activity.* Ls will establish a comparison between San Valentine's celebration and "Dia del amor y la Amistad" in Colombia. *Whole-group.* Instructor will elicit the similarities and differences between these two similar celebrations and how values have changed throughout the time for both celebrations.
Activation.	*Individual activity.* Ls will take a look at a model of a San Valentine's day postcard. They will be engaged to write one postcard addressed to a relative or a friend.

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