

**DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE THROUGH THE EXPOSURE TO
AUTHENTIC MATERIAL IN A PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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2015

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ever since, I started doing this project, I could realize how much I have learned since the time I came to the University for the first time. I have grown up not only professionally but also in a personal way, and I would never have been able to obtain this without the guidance of my advisors, the cooperation of my friends and colleagues and the support and patient of my family during all this process.

This a great opportunity to express all my acknowledgment to all the people who contributed me a grain of sand when I was looking for become an English teacher. First of all, I want to thank God for guided me spiritually during this career, I also want to thank to my family, especially to my mother Blanca Erlinda Muñoz and my father Nolberto Palacio, inasmuch as they are the mainstay in my life, they have been carrying, guiding and advising me in all the decisions that I have been taken. Likewise, I want to thanks to my sister Lina and my brother Edwin, since they have been the greatest proof of friendship, and partnership in moments when I felt to give up my goals, sad or that I could not continue with this learning process. Thank you so much to my great friend Luisa, as she has been showing me her unconditional friendship since we began to study at school, being a support in all aspects of my life.

I also want to thanks to the university for gave me the opportunity to study this career. Thanks to Mauricio Castillo the person who taught me the real passion and beauty of weightlifting, he supported and guided me in different sporting university events that allowed me to grow up and achieve different goals for my life. I want to say thank you to my professors during this degree, as they taught me every single day how to become a better teacher. Thank you so much Clarita, you are one of the greatest teachers I have ever had, you made me love the English language teaching and believe in sociolinguistics as a fundamental tool in the

development of our society. I also want to thank you Enrique, you have taught me the importance of the continuous learning in the field of education and for advising me in the designing of this paper. Thank you so much Sandro, you not only was an advisor in this last stage, you also was a good friend and professor who accompanied me during this learning process; with your advisement I have learned most than I learned in a while.

Finally, I want to offer my sincere acknowledgment to my partner Jennifer, you not only were my partner conducting, guiding and writing this project, you also were the person who has been supporting me professionally as you have been giving me your unconditional friendship, even in the most difficult moments.

Edna Palacio

For me, the achievement of this goal looked like a never ending road for many years.

After doing other things for a while such as enrolling in another career, working and other factors, many people have supported me on this road and this is the perfect time to thank all of them for believing in my strength, understanding my frustration times and through their love and patience they showed me the importance of not giving up, standing up again and continuing after falling.

I want to praise God for being a vital part of my spirituality and for blessing me every day. To my father who gave his life, money, time and effort to give me the best education he could afford. Unfortunately he is no here today to witness this moment of happiness and pride but I know he is very happy wherever he is, looking at the fact that his only daughter has finally accomplished her goal. To my mother, who has sacrificed her life for giving me the best, who

day by day and by her example showed me that the struggle is unstoppable and that the great sacrifices always have its rewards.

I want to thank my best friend Adriana, who has believed in me despite my difficulties and my fears; who has seen me to fall and has always helped me up continuing to move on and go forward when there has been resistance.

I also want to thank John Villalobos, my love, who taught me that with dedication, perseverance, struggle and conviction one can get what one wants. A person, who through his love, patience, pride and happiness to see me grow academically and personally was the biggest reason to focus my ideals and always keeps me going despite the difficulties and when I was about to give up.

Edna I want to thank you for letting me be part of this project; I know that this process was not easy, but this would not have been possible without your help; Sandro, thank you for your patience and for guiding us in this writing.

Jennifer Pulido

RESUMEN

A través de este proyecto de aula, fue posible explorar y analizar el desarrollo de la competencia intercultural a través de la exposición a material auténtico en una escuela pública ubicada en Pereira, Risaralda, Colombia.

Por medio de la creación de una propuesta metodológica, los practicantes diseñaron y guiaron una implementación realizada en un grupo de quinto grado conformado por treinta y cinco (35) estudiantes. Este proyecto se llevó a cabo durante un período de tres meses con una intensidad horaria de tres horas por semana y cuarenta y cinco (45) minutos por cada clase en el segundo semestre de 2014. Los datos fueron recolectados mediante una "reflexión sobre la acción" que fue escrita después cada clase.

Sobre la base de los resultados de este proyecto de aula, se puede concluir que no solamente es crucial presentar elementos de los países nativos y extranjeros por medio de materiales auténticos, sino también del uso de material editado y el diseño de actividades para integrar todos los estilos de aprendizaje.

ABSTRACT

Throughout this classroom project, it was possible to explore, and analyze the development of the intercultural competence through the exposure to authentic material in a public primary school located in Pereira, Risaralda, Colombia.

Towards the creation of a methodological proposal, the practitioners designed and guided an implementation conducted in a fifth grader's group conformed for thirty five (35) students. This project was conducted during a period of three months with three hours per week and forty-five (45') minutes of intensity each class in the second semester of 2014. The data was collected by using a "reflection on action" stage written after each class done.

On the basis of the results of this classroom project, it can be concluded that it is not only crucial to present elements of native and foreign countries throughout authentic materials, but also the use of edited material and the design of activities to integrate all leaning styles.

1. JUSTIFICATION

Due to the necessity to interchange information with foreign societies, the English language has become the universal language; therefore, the intercultural competence needs to take a stronger role in order to increase learners' awareness. Bonilla (2012) cites in her paper McLaren (1994) "As our world nowadays is becoming more open to other cultures due to globalization and the influx of new technologies, developing intercultural competence is necessary to understand contemporary sociocultural behaviors, which implant overlapping of cultures. [...]" People have had the opportunity to learn more about other culture and foreign societies through the use of the technology as well as language and culture.

Moreover, taking into consideration the previous factor, the role of an educator is to guide learners finding similitudes and differences between native and foreign countries, combining the teaching of grammatical forms of the language with intercultural aspects. Rodríguez (2003) states that "every time students do any exercise, they can compare and contrast their own culture to see what is accepted or not in the new one"; it means that students could reflect and expand their points of view of social aspect from their country and the foreign ones, assimilating the variations of a target language.

Several projects have been proposed by different people and organizations to develop the English language all over the world, highlighting the importance of connecting language and culture due to the notable role of the cultural diversity and the multilingualism, Organización De Las Naciones Unidas Para La Educación, La Ciencia y La Cultura (UNESCO) 2005 states that the *Initiation of Languages* is a project whose intention is to encourage the linguistic and

cultural diversity as well as multilingualism; this objective has a strong connection with this classroom project, as it demonstrates that teaching a foreign language into the classrooms is not only the grammatical part, but it is to implement the intercultural competence in the English classes.

According to the previous facts, the importance of teaching the intercultural competence in classrooms, rises from the necessity of several factors; one of this, is the inevitability to make a connection between culture and language; Rodríguez (2003) cited Brown (1980) to express that “the acquisition of a second language is often the acquisition of a second culture”; other ways, implementing the intercultural competence in an English class, students will increase their awareness not only of the foreign language culture that has been learned, but also the culture of their native country by using implicitly and explicitly grammatical forms of the language.

To strength the intercultural competence, there is an emphasis in promoting at least a bilingual education in the XXI century, the UNESCO claims that the universality in researches and scientific debates, has been imposing English as the language in dominance. This influential position increases controversial attitudes in the fields of humanistic, social sciences, information technologies and more areas since the English language is the vector which restricts other languages.

Nevertheless, the intercultural competence is often ignored, the Council of Europe (2006) expresses that “the sociolinguistic component strictly affects all language communication

between representatives of different cultures, even though participants may often be unaware of its influence”. In addition, Bonilla (2012) says that “In the case of teaching, it has long been thought that teaching English is teaching the language itself, so teachers center their attention on language forms and functions, overlooking social and cultural factors generated by this interrelationship.” It means, that English teachers as a foreign or second language, should focus their attention on sociolinguistic and intercultural facts, instead of teaching only grammar; then, the grammar could be incorporated in an implicit and/or explicit form. Although, the intercultural competence is often disregarded by educators in language classroom and speakers of the language, it is important to increase awareness of the intercultural competence in the society. As concerning the importance of teaching intercultural facts along with the English language in order to strengthen learners’ perception of this competence, this could be developed in a successful way.

In addition, Rodríguez points out that students are able to convey meanings meanwhile teaching culture in classrooms is being conducting. Furthermore, to know what people imply with certain behavior and to discover the accepted practices in a country, “students go beyond the classroom to discern the implications of language as a way of viewing life” Rodríguez (2003). Colombian schools prompt the necessity to find and implement ways to start getting a close look at cultures in classrooms; Rodríguez (2003) claims that:

“Teachers cannot teach the culture itself, but they can present language activities in which culture is discussed and structural goals are met. By providing elements of the target language, teachers highlight elements of the target culture while making students more aware of their own culture.”

Since an English teacher needs to present elements that allow students to increase their learning and awareness of foreign and native language and culture, this classroom project firmly believes that implementing intercultural competence in the classroom provides learners a real example of the language in use in a real context by using carefully selected materials in our curriculums that may combine the culture and language. Gilmore (2007) states that teachers “can also be exploited to develop students’ intercultural competence by exposing learners to unfamiliar behavioral patterns”; considering this point of view, the necessity to implement intercultural competence and the advantages of using authentic materials in classrooms, it is possible to say that this classroom project is reasonable, as it is mandatory for students to develop their competences while they are learning and using a second language.

The significance of implementing this classroom project in a Colombian public primary school, is to develop the intercultural competence to the exposure to authentic material. This implementation will be conducted in a 5th graders’ group from a public school in Pereira – Colombia, which aim is to analyze the development of learners’ sociocultural competence throughout the implementation of authentic materials in classrooms by collecting data from several classes that have been guided during the teaching practicum.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 Teaching aims

General

➤ Facilitators will develop intercultural competence by using authentic materials.

Specific

➤ Facilitators will guide students in the acquisition of sociocultural aspects of foreign countries.

➤ Facilitators implicitly will strengthen learners' sociolinguistic awareness of the native and foreign language.

2.2 Learning aims

General

➤ By the end of the implementation, students will increase their interest and awareness in sociocultural differences and similarities of native and foreign countries.

Specific

➤ Students will be able to express similarities and differences related to typical food of Colombia and foreign countries.

➤ Students will be able to express orally and in written form typical food from different regions in Colombia and in other countries.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Intercultural competence

The concept of intercultural competence has been changed for the last years; Bennett in 2011 stated that “Intercultural competence is a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that supports effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural context”. It means that, the intercultural competence is part of the knowledge in which people can effectively interact with other people from other societies with different believes, religions, culture, nationalities and geographic groups. Before going beyond into this concept, the definitions of intercultural and competence we will be presented to clarify each field.

The UNESCO in 2013, points out the concept of competence as having the appropriate capability to behave in particular scenarios; it means that competence includes cognitive, functional, personal and ethnical components; likewise, the UNESCO in the same year defines intercultural as the interaction among members from different cultural groups. Moreover, the intercultural competence is the capability to succeed in communication with people from other cultures; this ability can be acquire and develop at a young age. Taking into consideration the previous definitions, intercultural competence is the way people from different cultures interchange information about certain topics and how successful they are with the manner in which they communicate among each other.

Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman (2003) cited by Irving in 2008, describes the term of intercultural competence as the ability to think and act in an appropriate intercultural way. Furthermore this term will be expanded quoting Byram (1995) cited by Coperías (2010):

Refer to having adequate relevant knowledge about particular cultures, as well as general knowledge about the sorts of issues arising when members of different cultures interact, holding receptive attitudes that encourage establishing and maintaining contact with diverse others, as well as having the skills required to draw upon both knowledge and attitudes when interacting with others from different cultures. One way to divide intercultural competences into separate skill is to distinguish *savoirs* (knowledge of culture), *savoir comprendre* (skills of interpreting/relating), *savoir apprendre* (skills of discovery/interaction), *savoir être* (attitudes of curiosity/openness), and *savoir s'engager* (critical cultural awareness) [...].

The interaction and the knowledge of certain language and cultural behavior among different societies are the basis of having intercultural competences; due to the fact that this competence includes the awareness of all skills involved, to improve the understanding not only of the language but also of the culture. Additionally Bonilla emphasizes in this concept pointing out Cruz (2007) following consideration:

Deepening into the concept of interculturality, it also entails the idea that language is not isolated from but a part of culture. This idea is supported by the conception that teaching the language must focus on use, since in real situation it is never 'out of context'. Bearing in mind that culture is part of most context, communication is rarely culture-free.

In this sense, the concept of interculturality involves the idea that language form and its functions are totally connected with culture, as it makes part of real life communication between native and foreign speakers; since the concept of sociocultural competence has been related to intercultural competence, people have been involved into the globalization inasmuch as it has been arising the necessity to interchange culture, believes, customs and information among people. To achieve this, the intercultural and the sociolinguistic competence has to increase the awareness as it deals with the social language use and the linguistic forms.

3.2 Sociolinguistic Competence

The definition of sociolinguistic competence is rather ambiguous, for that reason the progress and background of it will be reviewed. This concept was analyzed by Canale & Swain (1980) quoting Chomsky as the first in introducing sociolinguistics in 1965, who explains the abstract terms “in modern linguistics” indicating a necessity to study the language through idealized abstractions. Moreover, Chomsky defined ‘competence’ as “a linguistic system (or grammar) that an ideal native speaker of a given language has internalized”. He claimed that the term ‘Competence’ as “the speaker-hearer knowledge of the language” and ‘performance’ is the actual use of the language in concrete situations. Additionally, Canale and Swain cited in his book Campbell & Wales (1970) and Hymes (1972) to analyze a broader notion of ‘the communicative competence’ and to explain that this competence includes the knowledge of grammatical abilities defined as “knowledge of the rules of language use” and contextual/sociolinguistic competence.

This classroom project agrees with a variety of perspectives about sociolinguistic competence; some clear definitions will be presented by diverse applied linguists and experts in this field. Graham (1997) defines the sociolinguistic competence as the ability to produce and understand language which is proper for certain social situations, also it is concerned mainly with the awareness of sociocultural rules of language use. Additionally, Graham stated that the sociolinguistic competence “implies knowledge of the rules of discourse, which govern the way in which language structures can be combined to produce unified texts in different modes for instance, speeches, academic articles, or operating instructions. More specifically, these rules cover the way in which grammatical links bind language together (cohesion) and the appropriate combination of utterances (coherence)”. According to this, it is possible to say that sociolinguistic competence is a diverse term, since it refers to aspects that relate culture and language.

The Council of Europe (2001) clarifies that “the term competence cannot be defined explicitly: Certain aspects of competence do not seem to be amenable to definition at all levels; distinctions have been made where they have been shown to be meaningful.”; in spite of this statement, the Council of Europe also expresses that sociolinguistic competence “refers to the sociocultural conditions of language use. Through its sensitivity to social conventions (rules of politeness, norms governing relations between generations, sexes, classes and social groups, linguistic codification of certain fundamental rituals in the functioning of a community), the sociolinguistic component strictly affects all language communication between representatives of different cultures, even though participants may often be unaware of its influence”.

As sociolinguistic competence is defined as the skill in which language use is part of the communicative competence, Meyerhoff in 2006 defines it as “The skills and resources speakers need to deploy in order to be competent members of a speech community using language, not only grammatically but appropriately in different contexts, domains or with different interlocutors”. In accordance with the previous contributions, it is a fact that the sociolinguistic competence is a broad term which mainly concerns on how appropriately is the language used and performed in a certain contexts; a person who has in a foreign language a proficiency level on this competence, integrates the grammatical form of the language used and a knowledge of appropriate behaviors and social conventions in a different social setting.

Nevertheless the appropriate use of the language in different social settings is frequently ignored by language users, as according to the Council of Europe (2001) “the sociolinguistic component strictly affects all language communication between representatives of different cultures, even though participants may often be unaware of its influence”. Nonetheless, it has been growing the necessity to teach the social aspect of the language, since the lack of sociolinguistics rules restricts language communication; Spolsky (1998) believes that the sociolinguistics is the study of language that “must deal with ‘real’ texts that make up human communication and social situations in which they are used.”

From the concepts of intercultural and sociolinguistic competence, it is relevant to make a connection between authentic material and those concepts, since the use of tools such as: newspapers, magazines, books, videos and the media, allow people to be connected with real

life communication. In the following section the concept of authentic material will be expanded in order to give clear definitions, examples about the use, characteristics and types of it.

3.3 Authentic Materials

Defining the concept of authentic material it is necessary to distinguish the differences between authentic and edited or created materials as those cannot be interpreted as the same term, Richards (2006) distinguishes authentic materials from created materials explaining that “created materials refers to textbooks and other specially developed instructional resources”. Crossley, et al. (2007) in favor of the use of authentic materials give a wide explanation about this term including that “They provide cultural information about the target language” and “exposure to real language”, “relate more closely to learners’ needs” and “support a more creative approach to teaching”; yet Richard argues against it as he expresses that “some authentic materials often contain difficult and irrelevant language”.

Into the concept of authentic materials, there are some agreements and disagreements by different experts in the field of education. Little, Devitt, & Singleton (1989) quoted by Peacock in 1997, explain that this term is called a “commonly accepted definition as materials produced ‘to fulfill some social purpose in the language community’ that is, materials not produced for second language learners. Some of the examples are newspapers, poems, and songs”. In contrast, Widdowson (1998) wrote against the use of these kind of materials, due to the difficulty to contextualize them, “language that is authentic for the native speakers cannot possible be authentic for learners”. Widdowson’s quote means that these materials cannot be

useful for language learning and teaching, since it is not possible to have the same use in classrooms as in real life.

Nevertheless Widdowson declines the use of authentic materials into classrooms, Martinez (2002) states that these tools “would be material designed for native speakers of English used in the classroom in a way similar to the one it was designed for”. It is possible to say that the success while using authentic materials into an English class depends on the use and the focus given to those materials, yet there is evidence some ambiguity about this term, Mishan (2003) explains that the ambivalence is due to the context and the reality of conditions of authenticity. While comparing several considerations about authentic materials, some differences in this field are demonstrated; although, these materials would be defined as the input which are used by natives’ users of the language to connect socially among them; therefore, these materials are used in the native and pure forms of the language, that can be adapted for different purposes in any class.

When students are exposed to authentic material, they can learn real formal and informal aspects of the foreign language. Martinez (2002) states that while listening to authentic materials “students are exposed to real discourse” and that “language change is reflected in these materials”. He states that authentic materials “bring learners closer to the target language culture with the materials of native speaker: Books, articles, newspapers, and so on also contain a wide variety of text types, language styles not easily found in conventional teaching materials.” It is a fact that these kind of materials provide a wide perspective of cultural views, social practices and behaviors. Mishan (2003) explains that thought out the use

of authentic texts, the norms and behaviors of the target language culture could be represented. Besides they represent language that is in current use being interest to the learners into the classes. It means that authentic materials include contemporary world topics, that would be familiar and informative interesting waking learner's curiosity.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Context

In agreement with the guided teaching practicum professor, this classroom project will be implemented in some of the classes we are in charge to guide in a public primary school in Pereira – Risaralda in Colombia as part of the academic subjects required by the University we enrolled.

This is a branch located between apartment and house buildings nearby Alamos neighborhood and it belongs to the main school in La Julita bypath. In this branch, there is one kinder garden, one first grade, one second grade and one third grade; the fourth and fifth have two group per each grades. There are 3 bathrooms, a kiosk, a teacher's lounge and a courtyard, which is surrounded by those rooms and from inside the classrooms there is a view towards it. In the assigned group's classroom for the implementation there are 38 chairs organized in six columns, a teacher's desk, and a bookshelf with some student's books, there is a white board and its lightness is low and the room size is reduce for the amount of chairs and students inside it.

Each grade has a teacher for all subjects, including the English classes even though they do not have a degree in teaching English as a foreign or second language. Due to this fact, the program of Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa from Universidad Tecnologica de Pereira, has made an agreement with the public school with the purpose of permitting practitioners from

teaching guided practicum class to lead this subject for a period of 3 months each semester, with 3 hours per week and forty- five (45') minutes of intensity each class.

The school year is divided into four (4) periods; each period covers for about two months of the year. Inside the curriculum, the English area develops: “competencias de area y laborales”; also, it has “Estandar por competencia” which is aligned with the “Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Ingles” (2006). In fifth grade, there are assigned “contenidos para desarrollar las competencias” and it is composed by four (4) skills (Saber, hacer, ser and evaluación) those are designed with the purpose of improving the communicative competences (reading, writing, listening and speaking).

While conducting this English class in fifth grade, we will probably find some limitations into and outside the classroom. One of the main limitations is related to the layout of the classroom due to the fact that it is not big enough for the amount of students. Also, there are other restrictions outside the classroom by the sport class that other group takes that day. Additionally, the English classes are after the break, and are affected due to the fact that learners have thirty minutes of break and the administrators allow them to have more than that. It means, that English classes have to start fifteen or twenty minutes after the established time.

4.2 Participants

This classroom project will be carried out with 35 fifth graders, whose ages range between 10 and 12 years old. It is expected that all learners are in *Basic 1 (A 2.1)* level according to the “Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: Ingles” (2006). Nonetheless, and taking into account what we had evidenced during the sessions of the English class until now, the limitation of those learners are the capability to work on input (listening, reading) and output (writing, speaking) activities by themselves; for this reason, we strongly believe that there are few students whose English range do not belong to this level.

According to the developed activities in the English sessions, we can infer that learners’ interests are based on their own learning styles, including visual-spatial style, kinesthetic, linguistic, and some of them prefer interpersonal or intrapersonal style. Additional to this, learners have expressed their interest to work having their chairs organized not all the time in rows, but sitting in different shapes, for instance, U or circle shape.

Considering that there are two practitioners working in this classroom project, the role will be different while conducting the English classes and collecting the data.

First of all, the participant one (1) who is in charge of guiding the English class of fifth grade in the school, will have the role as teacher and designer, inasmuch as she will design each lesson and will conduct it into the classroom. In addition, she will have the role as a complete observer, which Meriam (2009) describes as “a member of the group studied and conceals his or her role from the group so as not disrupt the natural activity of the group.” Furthermore, the role of the participant two (2) will be as complete observer who is described

by the previous author as the person in charge of only observing the learners' and teachers' behaviors.

4.3 Instructional design

This classroom project is aimed at focusing special attention on developing intercultural competence in a group of fifth graders in a public school in Pereira. According to McLaren (1997) quoted by Bonilla (2012), “as our world nowadays is becoming more open to other cultures due to globalization and the influx of new technologies, developing intercultural competence is necessary to understand contemporary sociocultural behaviors, which implant overlapping of cultures. [...]” Taking into account the importance of teaching the intercultural competence, the implementation of this project into the English area of fifth grade will increase their sociocultural competence not only the foreign language culture that has been learned, but also the culture of their native country by teaching grammatical forms of the English language explicitly, which consists of involving students attention towards a specific learning objective in a structured environment in a logical order through demonstrations, explanations and practices. In addition, we will implement the implicit teaching that involves teaching a certain topic in an implied manner in which the objective is not expressed.

The lessons which will be designed for implementing this classroom project, will be framed into the Engage, Study and Activate procedure (ESA) proposed by Harmer (2007), which consists of:

- The Engage stage consists of engaging students to what is going on during the class.

- The Study stage refers to any teaching and learning element where the focus is on how something is constructed.
- And the activate stage means any stage at which students are encourage to use all or any language they know. (see annex 1)

This procedure allows us to use three basic lesson procedures: “Straight arrows”, this procedure is followed by the three stages in sequence. “Boomerang” is when the teacher may move back to any stage of the lesson and return to the last stage. Or “patchwork” it is used to go back to something designed to clear up problems that have arisen during the lesson. During the designs of the lessons, depending of the necessities of the learners, the aim of the lesson, the results of each activity that we implement in class, and the requirements expressed in the curriculum.

4.4 Resources

Given the fact that this classroom project aims to use authentic materials to strengthen learners’ intercultural competence, and the different learning styles of the learners which are visual-spatial, kinesthetic, linguistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal style, the tools implemented in classes will be: images, videos, laptop, flashcards, posters, fragments of magazines, video beam, sheets of paper with activities to develop in or out of class, and sources from internet.

4.5 Reflection stage

During the implementation for this classroom project, a format of “Reflection on Action” which is the reflection made after each class, will be fulfilled as this permits us to think and analyze about our experiences to work in an action plan which allow the achievement of the objectives. Additionally, after each class is done, the teacher-designer and the observer will write together a reflection based on the format given by the guided teaching practicum’s professor (See annex 2).

5. RESULTS

In this section we will present the results of the implementation of this classroom project. These results will be covered in terms of strengths and challenges regarding professional growth, students' responses and language outcomes.

5.1 Professional growth

To begin, we will present our reflections about professional growth, which are based on the results upon the implementation, regarding what we learnt in our professional life. In the first part of the lesson planning we found the coherence in the sequence of the stages and the flexibility in the implementation of the procedure as strengths. Additionally, the design of the task for the different learning styles as well as the institutional limitations that affect the flow of the class were identified as challenges.

5.1.1 Lesson planning

5.1.1.1 Strengths

The strengths related to lesson planning are the coherence in the sequence of the stages and the flexibility in the implementation of the procedures. The first positive aspect evidenced was the organized and related way in which the activities were conducted since that permitted students to move progressively throughout the lesson. To illustrate, in the fourth implementation (see annex 3), learners were asked to identify common ingredients used in Colombia based on a video called "cooking in Colombia" in order to write them in English or

in Spanish for being shared with the group; after that, students were asked to find the meaning of the unknown words, and it was an opportunity to clarify and share the proper ingredients from Colombia. Finally, they were asked to produce written and oral sentences with the collected information. It was observed that learners were able to identify key words in a video about typical Colombian food in order to write them in a subsequent activity, and finally use them in oral form. Murcia (2002) presents the basic principles of lesson planning, which explains that a lesson plan has coherence and flow in which, the activities are not divided and have transitions from one to another allowing students to understand each activity. From this, we learned that the cohesive order of the procedures and the activities designed had allowable progress where practitioners and students could move through the tasks proposed for that lesson, taking into account the contextual variables in the learning scenario.

The second positive aspect related to lesson planning is the flexibility of the lesson that permitted to adjust some of the activities proposed when dealing with unexpected problems. Flexibility is considered as one of the main principles of lesson planning, which is based on the ability to deal with unexpected issues, relaying on alternative tasks and exercises (Robertson, 2015). During some implementations, some situations aroused that made us reconsider the execution of activities that were very demanding; this could be done effectively due to our ability to make adjustments in real time. As an example, in the twelfth implementation learners were asked to watch a video, writing some countries and the typical food which is served there as breakfast; since students could not collect the information required due to the speed of the video, the activity was modified, making them work in pairs

instead and assigning them particular countries; The change was registered in this lesson plan's reflection (see annex 4). As Radencich and McKay (1995, cited by Liu, 2008) propose:

“[...] when teachers plan for flexible grouping, they consider the strengths and weaknesses of each grouping approach and then put them together to allow the teacher to best meet the needs of the classroom. The groups are formed and dissolved as needs change to allow for maximum flexibility, avoiding the static nature of the grouping patterns of the past.”

Additionally, in the same article, Liu quoted Ford (2005) to suggest that “while it often is possible to form and reform groups during a single lesson on any one day of instruction, it is more important for teachers to look at their classroom program over time”. From this, we learned that it is essential for a teacher to be able to make adjustments in the activities during the lesson even though the modifications were not planned. Additionally, taking into consideration what Liu stated before, it is possible to make adjustments in the activities that were previously planned to be developed individually for being carried out in groups, according to different needs observed in the moment so that group work could be promoted.

5.1.1.2 Challenge

In this section the challenge faced during the implementation is related to lesson planning that concerned to the amount of time spent in the design of tasks for the different learning styles. Since students do not learn in the same way, practitioners had to create an activity that involves all the types of learning, spending more time than expected searching for alternatives that were appropriated for all learners. For instance, at the beginning of the implementation, it

was realized that classes had to be widely supported by different tools such as videos, worksheets, songs, readings, and games related to food in order to bring together all learning styles, being a long search that required the selection of resources that could fit different skills. A balance of different learning styles should be pursued by second and foreign language teachers as a single teaching approach could not suit all learners, so they must be integrated throughout different tasks (Xu, 2011). Due to this, we concluded that designing activities that involve all communicative skills, aligned with different topics, takes a lot of time due to the difficulties for finding suitable tools for the demands of the activities.

5.1.2 Institutional limitations

In this section, institutional limitations that affected the expected development of the class will be explained. Due to the educational activities organized by the school, and not being notified in advance to the practitioners, the development of some classes had to be modified and some lesson plans had to be adjusted. To evidence this, one of the reflections written to collect data for this classroom project showed the following:

“An aspect that did not go that well during this class, is that some of the students did not attend the English class, because the school was in the science’s week and some learners were presenting their projects. It was a problem because the activity in the class was graded and they had to present it in order to get grades for the final grade, yet those learners had the opportunity to present it individually or in groups; however those students did not have the same process while doing the exercise” (Reflection N°11) (see annex 5)

A way that we found to solve this challenge, was to allow absent students to present the activities covered in class; also, we reviewed the topic the following class. To conclude, the

difficulties we faced due to institutional activities did not affect the progress of the class inasmuch as learners had opportunities to review by themselves the topics covered in missing sessions and to do the tasks asked by the practitioners.

5.2 Students' responses

In this section, we will focus our reflection on students' responses. First we will present a strength related to students' attitudes towards the English class. Additionally, a challenge in terms of learners' anxiety will be explained.

5.2.1 Strengths

A positive aspect evidenced was learners' attitude towards the English class. During the time the practicum took place, students participated in different ways: questioning and requesting clarifications, taking the initiative to express their thoughts and responding teacher's questions when they were asked to do it. Jusoff (2009) points out that "students with positive attitudes will spend more effort to learn by using strategies such as asking questions, volunteering information and answering questions", which means that learners' attitude is an influential and valuable factor that determines success in language learning. At the end of the course, learners had to search about and get acquainted with typical national and international food, taking into account the topics covered in class. They presented an individual project about a typical breakfast from a specific country, which had been previously assigned, using recyclable material as evidence of accomplishment.

From this situation we learned that by fostering learners' motivation and innovation through a final project, students increase their participation and interest to show what they have learned, being part of different activities. Lee (2002, cited in Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2010) expresses that long-term projects make students involve in their own language learning process, increasing their motivation and demonstrating an active role. As a result of the conducted implementation, it was evidenced that through the presentation of their final project, students increased their interest in sociocultural differences between their native and foreign countries. This achievement was proposed in the general objectives of the learning aims in this project: *“By the end of the program students will increase their interest in sociocultural differences and similitudes among native and foreign countries”*.

5.2.2 Challenge

Although it is not registered in the reflections, a challenge evidenced during the implementation was the learners' anxiety when they were asked to perform an oral presentation in English, not only in front of the teacher, but also in front of their classmates. As students had to show what they have learned, they expressed their feelings of doubt and fear to fail in their presentations. To exemplify, once the final project was explained by the facilitator, they felt concerned about how to do the presentation and the teacher and peers' reaction instead of what they had to present.

In agreement with Shangping & Qingyan (2015), speaking activities tend to be regarded as anxiety-prone inasmuch as they need learners to show directly what they have learned to the public, receiving a straightforward evaluation from both the instructor and their peers.

Besides, Alahem (2013) expressed that “anxious students are often concerned about the impressions they leave in others’ minds. Such students if confronted in a classroom with an uncomfortable learning situation, may choose to pullback from the activity, believing they cannot perform in English”. However, the same author said that for some students the anticipative anxiety of speaking in public can prove productive oral production in some situations. This occurs due to the fact that students are likely to prepare to the performance making the speech prone to be successful.

To deal with this challenge and reduce learners’ anxiety, it was decided that learners had to present their projects in their own stands into the classroom, instead of performing in front of the entire group; also, each student had to attend at least to three peer’s presentations. We learned from this that a pleasant classroom environment can benefit the learning process, specially, when teachers’ role is to provide tools and different opportunities to lower learners’ fear when they have to communicate in a foreign language.

5.3 Linguistic outcomes

To close the results' section of this classroom project, the linguistic outcomes will be presented. As strengths, students described in oral and written form the typical breakfast from different regions of Colombia and other countries (annex 6). Nevertheless, the challenge was considered when learners could not reach the differences and similarities between Colombia and foreign countries, as it was proposed in the specific objectives of this classroom project.

5.3.1 Strengths

It was evidenced that learners were able to produce in oral and written form simple sentences about the typical breakfast from Colombia and other countries, reaching one of the objectives proposed in this classroom project, which refers to the production skills that students had to develop. This was possible thanks to the exposure to sociocultural input of their native and foreign language through videos, images, and realia in order to expose students to communicative scenarios. To illustrate, after different visual and aural tools were shown to students, they were asked to write sentences in simple present tense to mention what people from different regions in Colombia and in other countries eat for breakfast (See annex 7). Additionally, they not only had to perform their final project, but they had to participate in activities that were guided during the practicum. To support this, Rodriguez (2003) stated that culture cannot be taught by itself; instead, English teachers must provide language activities in which elements of the native and foreign language are discussed, highlighting their characteristics and promoting awareness of the native culture. From this we learned that, inasmuch as nowadays the sociolinguistic competence has been playing a powerful role in

language teaching scenarios, teachers have to include different activities where linguistic elements can be developed.

5.3.2 Challenges

Finally, the aspect considered as a challenge was the unexpected lower students' level, which did not permit to cover grammatical topics to express similarities and differences related to Colombian and foreign food. Despite the fact that the Estándares Básicos de Competencias en Lenguas Extranjeras: ¡El Reto! (2006) state that learners should have been able to accomplish some standards such as *“relaciono ilustraciones con oraciones simples”*, *“demuestro conocimiento de las estructuras basicas del ingles”* and *“menciono lo que me gusta y lo que no me gusta”*, it was evidenced that learners did not have those abilities because they were able only to use isolated words. In order to face this challenge and from the necessity to start the implementation, we decided to modify the framework to help learners to cover the topics that they should know from the last courses. Due to this change, at the end of the implementation, students could express through oral and written form simple sentences to describe typical food from Colombia and foreign countries even though they could not achieve one of the objectives of the project. From this challenge we learned that although there are some criteria that must be followed by English teachers from public institutions, they are not applied. In this case, the standards were not aligned to the objectives proposed initially to guide the topics chosen for the target population.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The present classroom project aimed to develop the intercultural competence through the exposure to authentic material in a Colombian public primary school. Based on the general teaching objective, it is concluded that it is crucial to present elements of native and foreign countries throughout authentic materials such as: videos, songs, images and short readings as these permit learners to be connected with real social aspects. According to the results, learners were able to produce in oral and written form simple sentences about food from Colombia and other countries, thanks to the exposure to authentic sociocultural input of the native and foreign countries, as it exposes students to a communicative scenarios.

The use of the authentic materials was an important tool throughout the implementation; nevertheless, practitioners had to use not only authentic materials but also edited materials. They designed activities to integrate all learning styles, spending more time than expected looking for alternatives that were appropriate for all learners. For this reason, it is recommended that for succeeding in an intercultural class, teachers should consider the use of a variety of tools due to the difficulty to find the adequate authentic materials for all learning styles.

Considering the ability to express sociocultural differences and similarities of native and foreign countries by learners, it was concluded that they did not achieve the objective proposed as they did not have the expected communicative competences that permit to express similarities and differences of the sociolinguistic aspects they were exposed to. It is

suggested that for developing sociolinguistic activities in class, it has to be taken into account that not all learners have enough developed communicative competences.

On the other hand, into the specific learning objective, it can be concluded that through a cohesive order of the procedures in the lesson plan, learners can move throughout the activities proposed, permitting them succeed and produce what they have learned. According to the results, it is recommended that the tools, topics and activities are not only the important aspects presented in an English class, but also the coherence of the stages to help learners to achieve a communicative purpose.

In most of the cases, teachers are expected to find behavioral issues into the English classes; however, in the case of the practitioners the unexpected limitations were related to the communicative competences that learners were supposed to have achieved, and the institutional limitations that occurred throughout the classes. Those restrictions made practitioners to change the planned sessions and this caused a reduce time for the implementation making all the objectives were not achieved.

Although the time of the implementation was not enough to achieve all the objectives proposed, practitioners highlight that the time spent in writing this paper was more than expected. Nevertheless, the process done in this classroom project was relevant to make them raise their experiences in their professional growth of teaching English as a foreign language. Concluding that the intercultural competence should be included in the academic curriculums in public primary schools in Colombia.

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8. ANNEXES

Annex I: Lesson Plan Format

LESSON PLAN

Date of the class:		Class Number:
AIM:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 		
Estándares Básicos de Competencias (MEN):		
Estándar General:		
Estándares Específicos:		
Assumed Knowledge:		
Materials:		
STAGES	PROCEDURE	
	TEACHER AND LEARNER ACTIVITY	
Engage:		
Study:		
Activate:		
EXTRA-CLASS WORK, ANNOUNCEMENTS, THINGS TO CONSIDER:		

Annex II: Reflection on Action Format:**REFLECTION ON ACTION****What went well?**

How do you know that?

What didn't go that well?

What would you do different next time?

Annex III: Lesson Plan of Implementation 4:

LESSON PLAN

Date of the class:	Class Number:
<p>AIM: At the end of the lesson learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify typical ingredients from Colombia. • Write and read simple sentences by using information from a video; when being asked by the teacher. 	
<p>Estándares Básicos de Competencias (MEN):</p> <p>Estándar General:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mi pronunciación es comprensible y hablo de manera lenta y pausada. <p>Estándares Específicos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Busco oportunidades para usar el inglés. - Respondo preguntas sobre mis gustos y preferencias. <p>Indicadores de logro:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilizo el idioma ingles para hablar sobre mi comida favorita. - Utilizo el idioma ingles para nombrar ingredientes basados en un video. 	
<p>Assumed Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocabulary of fruits, vegetables, grains and meat. 	
<p>Materials: board, markers, flashcards (images), tape, real material (objects) of fruits, vegetables and grains, video, laptop, tv.</p>	
STAGES	PROCEDURE TEACHER AND LEARNER ACTIVITY
<p>Engage: Guessing game. (9:05 – 9:10)</p>	<p>Teacher paste on the board 7 flashcards (fruits, vegetables, grains, meats), then asks to Students what each ingredient is; the Teacher tells to Students to close their eyes and T removes one of the flashcard and students have to guess what is the missing flashcard.</p>
<p>Study: Video – typical food in Colombia (9:10 – 9:50)</p>	<p>Teacher asks to students what typical food do they know from Colombia.</p> <p>Teacher shows to students a video about typical food from Colombia called “<i>Cooking in Colombia</i>”.</p> <p>Teacher plays again the video and asks Students to write in their notebooks some ingredients that they watch from the video.</p> <p>T asks students to find the meaning of the unknown words using the dictionary, for then clarify proper ingredients from Colombia.</p>

Activate: Sharing information (9:50 – 10:05)	Students will write some simple sentences by using the information they will collect from the video; the Teacher will writes on the board one example as a model. To share the sentences, students will be ask to read their sentences.
EXTRA-CLASS WORK, ANNOUNCEMENTS, THINGS TO CONSIDER: T gives to the Ss a work sheet with a soup of letters; Ss have to see the image of the implements of the kitchen, give the name and find them in the soup of letter.	

Annex IV: Reflection on Action of Implementation 12:

REFLECTION ON ACTION

(Implementation 12)

In this lesson plan some changes were made in order to accomplish better the aims of lesson, also the changes were made to take more understandable the topic and the video for the students and to take a grade of work in class.

The first change was in the second part of the lesson "Which country is it?", students were asked to write in their notebooks the countries they could identify from the video; after that they make a list of those countries by calling to list to take some grades of participation of the students. From this change I decided to assign a country to each student in order to collect information about the typical breakfast of the country assigned.

What went well?

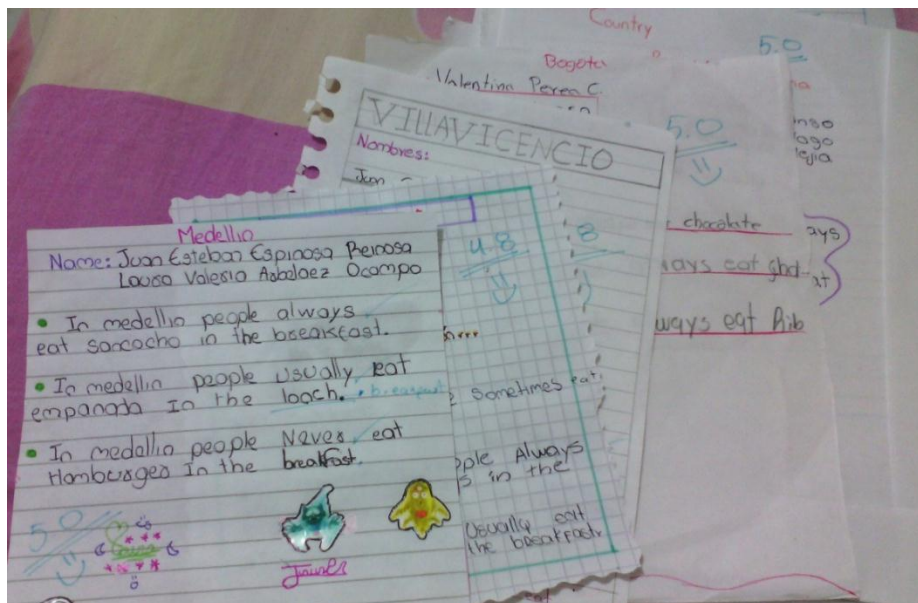
What I consider that went well during this class is in the first and the second part of the lesson

Annex V: Reflection on Action of Implementation 11:

What didn't go that well?

An aspect that did not go that well during this class, is that some of the students did not attend the English class, because the school was in the science's week and some learners were presenting their projects. It was a problem because the activity in the class was graded and they had to present it in order to get grades for the final grade, yet those learners had the opportunity to present it individually or in groups; however those students did not have the same process while doing the exercise.

Annex VI: Sentences by Students about Typical Food from Colombia:



Annex VII: Photos of Final Project:





