The Cultural Component in English Language Teaching. A Didactic Proposal at a Public

Secondary School for Adults in Villa María, Argentina

By

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Abstract

This study aims to show the importance of the incorporation of the cultural component into foreign language teaching and learning to promote the development of students' intercultural communicative competence *(ICC)*. The main objective is to propose a meaningful didactic unit to develop an ICC in 2nd year secondary adult students at *Centro Educativo de Nivel Medio para Adultos (CENMA N° 96)* in Villa María, Argentina. This research project exposes that some adult students have little knowledge or preconceptions about the English language and the target culture. Besides, it points out that the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011)* does not include specifically the relationship between the English language and the target culture. The theoretical framework provides some key concepts that exhibit the relationship between language and culture, and the necessity to enhance an integrated teaching of both. The research is based on a mixed approach. The scope is exploratory and descriptive, and the design framework is non-experimental. Surveys were administered to seven teachers of English from CENMA N° 96*,* its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and *Extensiones (Classroom Centers)*; and 26 2nd year secondary adult students from CENMA N° 96. It was revealed that all the teachers agree on teaching the cultural component; and many 2nd year secondary adult students believe it is important to teach the culture of English-speaking countries for a better understanding of the language. As a result, this investigation seeks to make a valuable contribution to the teaching-learning process of the adult education modality.

Keywords: cultural component, English language teaching, public secondary school, adults

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Introduction

During the last decades, many specialists in the field of didactics, Byram (1989), Kramsh (1993) and Zárate (1986) among others, have focused their investigations on the close relationship between foreign language teaching and the cultural dimension.

The topic of this study is directed towards the importance of the incorporation of the cultural component into foreign language teaching, especially in the English language, at a public secondary school for adults in Villa María, Argentina. It has been observed that some students have little information or preconceived notions about English-speaking countries. Therefore, it is necessary to encourage them and stimulate the development of knowledge and respect for the target culture in order to leave behind typical stereotypes and prejudices. However, the intercultural dimension is not present in the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011).* Previous research studies highlight the relevance of the cultural component in foreign language teaching around the world to motivate students and to promote intercultural attitudes. In Argentina, this topic has been little explored in public secondary adult schools, so this investigation seeks to make a significant contribution to this adult education modality.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. In Chapter 1, the problem, the purpose and the relevance of this study are presented together with the research questions which were formulated during the exploratory stage. Then, in Chapter 2, the objectives are formulated. The main objective aims to propose a didactic unit to promote the development of an intercultural communicative competence in 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96. The specific objectives seek to explore the integration of the cultural component into the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba*; analyse the perceptions of the teachers of English at CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and *Extensiones*

(Classroom Centers), about the importance of the cultural component in foreign language teaching and its incorporation into the *English Language Curriculum for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba*; and describe the interests of 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 about the different cultural themes, educational resources and cultural activities for learning the English language. Subsequently, Chapter 3 deals with the theoretical framework and presents the context of the study. Here, the main concepts and theories are developed, as well as the main previous research projects which give an important role to the cultural component. Chapter 4 specifies the research methods, the participants, the instruments employed and how the data were collected. The results of the study are reported and analysed in Chapter 5. Finally, Chapter 6 deals with the final thoughts, implications and suggestions for further investigations and reflections oriented to improve English language teaching at public secondary schools for adults.

Chapter 1. Research Problem

1.1 Identification of the Problem

This study aims to focus on the importance of the incorporation of the cultural component into foreign language teaching; especially in the English language at a public secondary school for adults in Villa María, Argentina. This investigation suggests a methodological and didactic proposal for teaching English at *Centro Educativo de Nivel Medio para Adultos N° 96* (*CENMA N° 96*), a public secondary school for adults, in Villa Maria, Argentina. The author of this research project has worked in this institution, as a teacher of English, for twenty years and the need of thinking about an intercultural didactic proposal comes up after observing, that some adult students are not interested in learning English, show a negative attitude towards the language and the target culture, have little knowledge or have a wrong idea about them. This situation raises the necessity to find ways of encouraging secondary adult students to foster their continuous personal growth and education. Their exposure to the English language and to different aspects of a foreign culture could help them to develop an attitude of tolerance and respect not only for other cultures, but also for their own. It is important to take into account the characteristics of these secondary adult students to understand their educational context. They are citizens who decided to continue their studies in this adult education modality after having different life and learning experiences, who belong to groups of exclusion or who have not been able to complete their formal and systematic studies. For all these reasons, it is essential to recognize their interests, necessities and expectations in relation to English language learning. This implies knowing who they are and making them participants in the process of learning. As a consequence, surveys were administered to 2nd year secondary adult students to analyse their interests about the different cultural themes, educational resources and cultural activities, in order to elaborate a meaningful didactic unit for learning the English language and its culture.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

        This study seeks to offer a methodological and didactic contribution for teaching the English language to 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96. Besides, this research project attempts to show the importance of the cultural component in foreign language teaching and learning and the significance of its integration into the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba*. The author of this investigation aims to find the answer to this question: What methodological approach would be meaningful to teach the English language to 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 through the promotion of knowledge and respect for the target culture? To collect data, two different surveys were administered to: 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 and to teachers of English at CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and *Extensiones (Classroom Centers).* The results of the surveys administered to 2nd year secondary adult students have been useful to understand their perceptions and interests about different cultural themes, educational resources and cultural activities and subsequently, to elaborate a meaningful didactic unit to teach them the English language through the promotion of an intercultural communicative competence. The surveys administered to teachers of English at CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and *Extensiones (Classroom Centers)* have been beneficial to understand their perceptions about secondary adult students' attitudes towards the English language and its culture, the importance of the cultural component in foreign language teaching as an essential element in learning the language, the cultural aspects they consider should be included in the *English Language Curriculum* and the incorporation of the cultural component into the *Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba*. In the didactic unit for 2nd year secondary adult students, the purpose of the design of cultural activities is to promote students' interest towards the English language, to foster reflection on similarities and differences between the target culture and their own and to stimulate the development of intercultural awareness and intercultural skills to

overcome stereotypes or cultural misunderstandings. Besides, this proposal aspires to think about new methodological alternatives to articulate the linguistic, grammatical and cultural aspects for teaching the English language to secondary adult students at public secondary schools taking into account the possibility of the incorporation of the cultural component into the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba.*

1.3 Relevance of the Study

This research project will be useful to become acquainted with the importance of the cultural component in foreign language teaching to secondary adult students. Besides, it will suggest a methodological and didactic proposal to teach the English language to 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 taking into account the integration of the linguistic, grammatical and cultural aspects of the language to develop students' intercultural communicative competence.

For future studies, it would be helpful and meaningful to put into practice the proposed didactic unit in a secondary adult students' classroom to foster knowledge of the target culture and promote intercultural attitudes. Furthermore, it could be a big challenge for students at teacher training colleges to do their teaching practice at public secondary schools for adults and articulate the linguistic, grammatical and cultural aspects of the English language to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence through didactic units, projects, workshops, among others.

1.4 Research Questions

The specific questions to be responded are the following:

- Does the *Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011)* integrate the cultural component into the *English Language Curriculum*?
- What are the perceptions of teachers of English from CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and *Extensiones (Classroom Centers),* about secondary adult students' attitudes towards the English language and its culture, the importance of the cultural

component in foreign language teaching and its incorporation into the *English Language Curriculum for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011)?*

- What are the interests of 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 about the different cultural themes, educational resources and cultural activities for learning the English language?

1.5 Hypothesis

The main hypotheses of this project are:

- Some teachers of English from CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings) and Extensiones (Classroom Centers)* think that secondary adult students have stereotypical ideas about the target culture and have little knowledge about English-speaking countries.
- All the teachers of English from CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and *Extensiones (Classroom Centers)* believe it is significant to incorporate the cultural component into the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011)* as a vital element in learning the language.
- All the teachers of English from CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and *Extensiones (Classroom Centers)* include cultural aspects in their lesson plans for teaching the language to secondary adult students.
- Some 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 believe that it is important the teaching of cultural aspects of English-speaking countries for a better understanding of the language.
- Some 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 are not interested in learning the target culture.

Chapter 2. Objectives of the Study

2.1 General Objective

● To propose a didactic unit to promote the development of an intercultural communicative competence in 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96.

2.2 Specific Objectives

● To explore the integration of the cultural component into the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011).*

● To analyse the perceptions of teachers of English at CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and *Extensiones (Classroom Centers)*, about the importance of the cultural component in foreign language teaching and its incorporation into the *English Language Curriculum for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011).*

● To describe the interests of 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 about the different cultural themes, educational resources and cultural activities for learning the English language.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Previous Research Studies

During the exploration process of previous research projects, it has been observed that the problem of investigation of this study has not been examined before, at least in the city of Villa María, and the points of view and perspectives shown by them in the field are different from the one taken in this study. However, there are many research projects associated with the main concepts presented in this investigation in relation to the importance of the incorporation of the cultural component into foreign language teaching. Four of the most recent studies have been selected, and they are mentioned below.

The first research project was performed by Helver (2014), entitled: *Factores Condicionantes de la Cultura y la Lengua Materna en el Aprendizaje de la Lengua Extranjera en el Ámbito del Nivel Medio de los Centros de Enseñanza de Adultos de Barrios Periféricos de Florencio Varela (Conditioning Factors of Culture and Mother Tongue in Foreign Language Learning at the Secondary Centers for Adults in Peripheral Neighborhoods in Florencio Varela)*, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The investigation was carried out at *Centro de Enseñanza de Bachillerato para Adultos con Orientación en Salud (CEBAS N° 13)* in Florencio Varela, which receives students from different neighbourhoods of the district. These educational centres have been conceived with a clearly defined objective: The professionalisation of health workers in the province who have not been able to complete their secondary education. Helver explains that, in principle, it can be seen that little time has been devoted to adult secondary education in the existing literature. She states that, in general, when all kinds of documents are checked in Argentina and Latin America, especially about adult education, they refer mainly to primary education or more specifically about adult literacy. Helver conducted an exploratory study and the participants were 1st year secondary adult students at CEBAS N° 13 in Florencio Varela. Direct observation and semi-

structured interviews were the instruments administered for collecting data. The aim of the research was to link social representations, related to aspects of the mother tongue and its own culture, to the processes of foreign language development during the 1st year of secondary adult education. The idea was to identify, interpret and see how these social representations (related to aspects of the mother tongue and its own culture) impacted on adults' English language learning strategies in secondary adult schools. Helver says that taking into account these factors would give the possibility to develop an improved teaching proposal in the future for teaching secondary adult learners and updating the curriculum designs. Besides, she points out that nowadays, teaching English as a foreign language at secondary adult schools is relevant if the idea of multiliteracy and multicultural education is considered for the acquisition and mastery of skills focused on the use of information, social and cultural contexts. It was noticed in all the participants' accounts the importance of social-environmental factors in the construction of the different educational levels, and the degree of significance that learning English as a foreign language implies for the outlining of future projects. However, the main aspect is the relevance of the support provided by the school institution in the face of the difficulties that secondary adult students have in continuing their studies due to their work and social responsibilities, a fact that highlights the importance of the accompaniment of the different actors in the educational community, especially when it comes to learning a foreign language.

Helver's investigation is relevant for this study because it reflects secondary adult students' reality perfectly well. It is clear that there are not enough research projects about secondary adult education, and it needs to be further explored and curricular designs should also be updated. Although the perspective of this study is different from the one taken in this investigation, Helver focuses on conditioning factors of the mother tongue and the own culture for learning English as a foreign language. Her study reveals that secondary adult students' perceptions, preconceptions and previous experiences are significant and may influence English language learning. Likewise, this

study points out the author's perceptions of the attitudes, previous ideas and presumptions of 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 about the English language and the target culture.

The second research project that considers the background of this study was conducted by Jaramillo Ante (2015), entitled: *A Proposal to Improve Intercultural Communicative Competence Through Videos in an English Programme of a Private University, in Colombia.* The principal aim of the investigation was to improve the awareness on intercultural communicative competence of students of English, at the Universidad Autónoma de Occidente, through TV series and film-based activities. The sample group consisted of fifty-three pre-intermediate English students at a private university in Cali whose ages ranged from seventeen to twenty-eight years old, most of them belonging to the middle and low socio-economic strata. Different surveys, questionnaires and journals were developed and, as a consequence, the instruments mentioned allowed this researcher to obtain information to identify the type of activities and characteristics that they should have to improve the awareness of the intercultural communicative competence on students of this particular context through the design of a didactic unit using TV programmes and films. The results obtained in the surveys, encouraged teachers and curriculum planners to replicate this experience with the same purpose, keeping in mind the particularities of each educational context.

The topic of Jaramillo Ante's research project is related to this investigation because it points out the importance of intercultural communicative competence in English language teaching. Following this idea, this study also seeks to provide 2nd year secondary adult students' interaction with some aspects of the target culture in order to foster intercultural attitudes, comprehension of their own cultural values, beliefs and behaviours. Besides, he administered a survey to students to collect information about their background on the kind of films and TV programmes they preferred and about the perception they had about culture and how relevant it was for them. Likewise, in this research a survey was administered to 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 to

interpret their interests about the different cultural themes, educational resources and cultural activities. Also, a didactic unit was elaborated using all the information collected in the results of the analysis of the surveys during the diagnostic phase. In contrast to Jaramillo Ante's proposal, in this study 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 had the possibility to choose the cultural themes, educational resources and cultural activities, in order to elaborate a meaningful didactic unit for learning the English language.

As a third research background to this study, it is considered appropriate to cite the work carried out by Álvarez Gil (2018) entitled: *Propuesta Didáctica para la Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera Integrando Elementos Culturales (Didactic Proposal for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language Integrating Cultural Elements)*, in Spain. The principal aims of this study were to consider the importance and benefits of introducing different cultural aspects in English language teaching and in the English Curricular Design; and also, to present a didactic and methodological proposal to introduce the cultural component into compulsory secondary education. The author points out the significance of teaching the English language in real contexts together with the target culture and linguistic aspects. The main objective was to show that teaching a foreign language is closely connected to the transfer of knowledge of the target language. Besides, the author states that teachers of English have to select motivational didactic resources for teaching students.

The conclusions of the study carried out by Álvarez Gil are relevant for this research because he emphasizes the close connection between language and culture and the necessity of integrating cultural elements into English language teaching. Moreover, he suggests the incorporation of the cultural component into the Curricular Design. Similarly, in this research project the linguistic, grammatical and cultural aspects of the language were integrated in the

didactic proposal. However, in his study, there are not any surveys administered to students to find out their interests about the different cultural themes.

The fourth investigation selected was performed by Farooq et al. (2018), entitled: *English Language Teaching and Cultural Implications in Saudi Arabia*, at Taif University, in Taif, Saudi Arabia. This study focused on the perceptions and practices of teachers regarding culture and English language teaching in Saudi Arabia. In order to obtain data, 121 teachers of different cultural backgrounds at an English Language Centre of the university answered a questionnaire on their perceptions and implications of teaching the target culture in the classroom through English language courses. It was revealed that all the teachers had some knowledge about the aspects of the target culture to some extent, but how they dealt with the target culture was affected highly by certain curricular considerations and limitations. These English language teachers stated that they had to face problems to a certain extent while teaching the English language and explaining the cultural context in various situations. They noticed that sharing the culture of the target language might motivate the learners and thus enhance the learning process by observing similarities and differences among various cultures and societies. Also, they perceived that exposure to a foreign culture might help students to compare it with their own, which might lead them to understanding and tolerance. However, they expressed their limitations in teaching culture in the language classroom and mentioned the reasons including students' exposure and negative attitude towards the target culture, the curriculum and time constraints.

The results and conclusions drawn from the work carried out by Farooq et al. (2018) are of great significance for this research because they confirm that culture is a key component in foreign language teaching and when people learn another language, they learn the target culture as well. This investigation shows that teachers recognize the importance of the cultural component in English language teaching but have to cope with some limitations. Likewise, in this study a survey

to teachers of English from CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and *Extensiones (Classroom Centers)* was administered to analyse their perceptions about the importance of the cultural component in foreign language teaching at a public secondary school for adults and in the *English Language Curriculum for Secondary Adult Students.*

In conclusion, the research studies that have been chosen set precedents that highlight the relevance of the cultural component in foreign language teaching around the world and in our own country to promote intercultural attitudes. Nevertheless, this topic has been little explored in public secondary adult schools in Argentina, therefore, this investigation attempts to make a significant contribution to this adult education modality.

3.2 The Context of the Study

3.2.1 Public Secondary Education for Adult Students in Argentina

In Argentina, there has been a wide variety of educational programmes for Adult Education carried out either by the *Estado Nacional (National State)* as well as the civil society. Over time, these educational programmes have been institutionalized, incorporating different conceptions and forms.

The first evening schools for adults were created in our country in the late nineteenth century. It is worth noting that at this time it was not only illiteracy the problem of the adult population, but also the very high number of immigrants in the country, for whom the *Estado Nacional (National State)* did not provide educational policies. In 1826, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento organized and created a school to teach a group of adults in San Francisco del Monte (San Luis). Like Sarmiento, who was a precursor of Adult Education, many other teachers decided to create schools themselves, and all of them were in charge of a group of students.

In 1884, the enactment of the *Ley 1420 de Educación Común (Law 1420 of the Regular Education System)* was a decisive turning point in the development of the education system in

Argentina. The main purpose of this law was to create and offer a secular, free and compulsory education to all children and also adults. This is stated in two of its articles: N° 11[1] and N° 12[2] (the specificity of Adult Education was not recognized yet). Furthermore, it promoted the creation of adult evening schools in Capital Federal (Rodriguez, 1994).

Since the early 1990s, in Argentina, there was a process of transformation and Adult Education was taken into account. Two events were the turning point: the enactment of a resolution about Adult Education in the *Congreso Pedagógico (Pedagogical Congress)* in Buenos Aires, in 1882, and the approval of the *Primer Reglamento y Plan de Estudio de Escuelas Nocturnas (First Regulation and Evening School Curriculum)* from the *Consejo Nacional de Educación (National Council of Education)* in 1901.

In 1922, the *Consejo Nacional de Educación (National Council of Education)* definitely adopted the regulation that accepted three kinds of adult schools: primary, superior and complementary. During this period, Adult Education was characterized by a higher specificity.

In 1949, a new curriculum and programme was implemented in order to offer a more flexible service to adult students. During this period, the emphasis was placed on a social and political education (Rodriguez, 1994).

In 1965, a *Programa Intensivo de Alfabetización y Educación de Adultos (Intensive Literacy Programme and Adult Education)* was implemented. It lasted four years and during this period many educational centres were created in all the country and the curriculum was adapted to the needs of adult students.

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[1] Artículo 11: "Además de las escuelas mencionadas, se establecerán las siguientes escuelas especiales de enseñanza primaria (...) escuelas para adultos, en los cuarteles, guarniciones, buques de guerra, cárceles, fábricas y otros establecimientos donde pueda encontrarse reunido un número, cuando menos, de cuarenta adultos ineducados".

[2] Artículo 12: "El mínimo de enseñanza para las escuelas ambulantes y de adultos comprenderá estas ramas: lectura, escritura, aritmética (las cuatro primeras reglas y el sistema métrico decimal), moral, urbanidad, nociones de idioma Nacional, de Geografía Nacional y enseñanza de los objetos más comunes que se relacionen con la industria habitual de los alumnos de la escuela".

In 1968, the *Dirección Nacional de Educación del Adulto, DINEA, (National Direction of Adult Education*) was created under the jurisdiction of the *Secretaría de Estado de Cultura y Educación (Secretariat of State for Culture and Education).*

In 1978, during the military government, the DINEA transferred the basic educational services to the provinces (Rodriguez, 1994). After a while, in 1992, it was closed.

In April 1993, the *Ley Federal de Educación (Federal Law of Education*) was sanctioned and the process of transformation was deepened. It is necessary to emphasize that the development of Adult Education in the provinces was heterogeneous and unequal. Therefore, important decisions about the operation of the scheme from the provinces were needed.

The *Ley Nacional de Educación (National Law of Education) N° 26.206*, enacted in December 2006, exceeds previous legislations. The *Estado Nacional (National State)* guarantees rights, and it recognizes education and knowledge as personal and social rights for every citizen. Also, Adult Education is recognized as a permanent education modality.

3.2.2 Public Secondary Education for Adult Students in the Province of Córdoba

The modality for Adult Education in the Province of Córdoba has expanded in a variety of possibilities. Since 2005, three laws were enacted which had direct implications on Adult Education. The *Ley de Educación Técnico-Profesional (Technical-Professional Education Law) N° 26.058* enacted in September 2005, the *Ley de Financiamiento Educativo (Education Financing Law) N° 26.075* enacted in December 2005 and the *Ley de Educación Nacional (National Education Law) N° 26.026* enacted in December 2006. By the end of 2010, the *Ley de Educación Provincial (Provincial Education Law) N° 9870/2010* was enacted in line with the *Ley de Educación Nacional (National Law of Education) N° 8113/91*, and the modality for Adult Education was included into the education system. The Article N° 53 states that the purpose of this modality is to guarantee literacy and compulsory education for those people who have not finished their secondary studies.

Two cycles define the secondary school for adults: the *Ciclo Básico (Basic Cycle)*, 1st course, and the *Ciclo Orientado (Orientation Cycle),* 2nd and 3rd courses. The first one focuses on basic education and the latter deepens basic education and incorporates more specific components oriented towards training for the job world, through specific curricular subjects.

3.2.2.1 The Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba.

The *Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba* has been modified and adapted in recent years due to the particularities of the modality, especially the age, interests and expectations of adult students. For that end, many conceptual contributions have been recovered to rethink its characteristics, organization and curricular structure. Therefore, Graizer (2007) points out some elements of the specificity that a curricular design for adult students should have: flexibility, secondary adult students' previous knowledge, the inclusion of the community cultural background in which the pedagogical practices are carried out, and the incorporation of basic and specialized information regarding social, cultural, scientific, technical and technological aspects.

Since 2011, the *Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba* is characterized by: the deepening of the work in areas, *Matemática, Ciencias Naturales, Ciencias Sociales, Interpretación y Producción de Textos y Técnico-Profesional (Mathematics, Natural Science, Social Science, Interpretation and Production of Texts, and Technical-Professional)*; the introduction to the job world (Technical-Professional area); the articulation with social and production organizations; and the necessity to update the contents of the projects of each educational institution.

3.2.2.2 The Cultural Component in the English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design of the Province of Córdoba.

For a long time, teachers of English and Spanish languages at public secondary schools for adults have been discussing the need to focus language teaching on its social uses in order to train secondary adult students in the production of messages and texts, and to develop speaking, listening, understanding and writing skills.

The *Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011)* indicates that the problems related to teaching and learning of English and Spanish languages are undoubtedly specific, and each one requires particular methodological strategies. The type of knowledge and the objectives that secondary adult students are expected to acquire in each language are unique and different.

Considering the specificity of the English language, it is essential to recognize the significance of the incorporation of the cultural component into teaching secondary adult students at public schools. Some of them have little knowledge or preconceptions about the target culture. As a result, it is necessary to integrate the linguistic and grammatical aspects of the language together with the cultural ones, in order to promote students' personal growth and education. According to Moran (2001), "… the words of the language, its expressions, structures, sounds, and script reflect the culture just as the cultural products and practices reflect the language. Language, therefore, is a window to the culture" (p. 37). Consequently, if we understand language, we understand culture and vice versa.

The concept of culture is present, in a certain way, in the *Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011)*. However, it does not include the cultural component of the target culture for the teaching of English to secondary adult students. The concept of culture is related to the area of *Interpretación y Producción de Textos (Interpretation and*

Production of Texts) in which the students have to interpret, comprehend and produce oral and written texts to access the world of knowledge and culture. The purpose of this area is to train secondary adult students to be active and qualified readers and writers of social cultural texts; it means above all to take advantage of their life experience, knowledge of the world and linguistic practices in order to develop and optimise them, so that they can enter into the field of information, science and culture, and thus become citizens with full rights.

Nevertheless, this point of view of culture expressed in the *Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011)* does not incorporate specifically the relationship between the English language and the target culture. It reflects upon the importance of a sociocultural perspective for teaching the English language, but it does not integrate an intercultural dimension. As a consequence, the cultural component for teaching the English language is not included in the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011)*, in the way that the author of this study believes it would be more beneficial and meaningful for learning the language. Therefore, this study aims to make a valuable contribution to this modality through a didactic proposal which seeks to integrate the linguistic, grammatical and cultural aspects of the language to promote the development of an intercultural communicative competence in 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96.

3.3 Secondary Education for Adult Students in Villa María at CENMA N° 96

CENMA N° 96 was founded in Villa María in February 1976, with the name *Centro Educativo Nivel Secundario CENS (Secondary Education Centre)* under the supervision of the *Dirección Nacional de Enseñanza de Adultos DINEA* (*National Direction of Adult Education)* as the result of the urgent need of some trade union entities, such as the *Sindicato de Empleados Públicos SEP (Public Employees Trade Union)* which joined this institution to enable people who had not been able to finish their secondary studies the access to education. Little by little, this public

secondary adult school became the most viable way to train people and let them enter into the world of knowledge.

In 1993, this institution changed its name to CENMA N° 96, because the educational services were transferred from the *National State (Estado Nacional)* to the Province of Córdoba.

In 1995, the institution started to depend on the *Dirección de Enseñanza Media, Especial y Superior (Direction of Secondary, Special and Higher Education).*

In 1997, Adult Education was incorporated into the *Dirección de Enseñanza Media y Superior DEMyS (Direction of Secondary and Higher Education).*

In 1998 the institutional objectives of Adult Education began to be redefined, and it became part of the *Dirección de Regímenes Especiales DRE (Direction of Special Regimes).*

All these changes strengthened the objectives of the institution and the profile of adult students was taken into account. Thus, youngsters were incorporated into its academic offerings, which allowed the creation of the *Dirección General de Jóvenes y Adultos (General Direction of Youngsters and Adults)* under the supervision of Professor Carlos Brene, who still holds this position.

In 2003, the school was awarded its own building. Nowadays, it is placed on a historical heritage land where Agustín Álvarez school used to be located at 643 Santa Fe St., and in this way, it becomes part of the foundational area of the city of Villa María.

The first director was Professor Nilda Coronel de Marín, a visionary teacher, who believed and supported the project and developed it accompanied by a team of teachers who worked with constancy and determination.

CENMA Nº 96 has been permanently changing, adding a new *Extensión Áulica (Classroom Centre)* in San Martín neighborhood. Other towns, such as Tío Pujio and Alto Alegre, have also implemented the school's academic offerings, and they are now providing educational services.

In recent times, the educational demands have increased, and this institution also offers the opportunity for the completion of secondary studies to all youngsters and adults of Villa María who have failed subjects in other schools of the city, joining the *Programa de Finalización de Estudios Secundarios Plan FinEs (Secondary School Completion Plan).*

 This institution offers different modalities for secondary adult students: face-to-face education, distance education and blended learning. Besides, it provides orientations in: *Economía y Administración (Economy and Administration), Turismo (Tourism), Agro y Ambiente (Agro-Environment) and Informática (Informatics).* It has got two *Anexos (Outbuildings)*: in Alto Alegre and in Tío Pujio; one *Extensión Áulica (Classroom Centre): Extensión San Martín (San Martín Classroom Centre)*; and two educational programmes: distance and blended education.

 In conclusion, this chapter shows a brief summary of Adult Education in Argentina and in the Province of Córdoba. It also provides relevant information about CENMA N° 96 which is the school of reference in this study. It is worth noting the devaluation that this adult education modality has had in our country. Undoubtedly, the new demands of a globalized world, and at the same time the exclusion of important sectors of the population, imply the necessity to continue thinking about political and pedagogical alternatives that support the need for equal access to information, which is a right for all people.

3.4 Literature Review

3.4.1 Definition of Culture

Culture is part of our lives. Many authors have defined the concept of culture and included many elements in its definition. According to Matsumoto (2000):

Culture is a dynamic system of rules, explicit and implicit, established by groups in order to ensure their survival, involving attitudes, values, beliefs, norms, and behaviors, shared by a group but harbored differently by each specific unit within the group, communicated across generations, relatively stable but with the potential to change across time. (p.24)

In this general definition of the term culture, the elements that compose it are clearly defined. For this investigation, it is relevant to have an accurate understanding of what culture is because it is sought to show that culture and language are linked together and when teaching a foreign language, they cannot be separated. This concept can be applied in different areas. In this study, it is referred to the educational area; specifically, to cultural and intercultural approaches, methodological and didactic proposals to introduce the cultural dimension into meaningful English language activities, especially for 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96.

The relationship between culture and language has been linked from remote times. The concept of culture in relation to education is defined by Moran (2001), "The evolving life path of a group of people, consisting of a set of practices associated with a set of products, based on a set of shared worldviews among group members, and contained within specific social contexts" (p. 57). In accordance with the definition of Moran, Cavalli (2007) defines it as a collection of knowledge and creations brought into reality through language. Besides, he states that this accumulation at a global level is the product of contributions from different individuals that have been passed from one generation to the next, and that are shared by different social groups in a way that influences and transforms the lives of their members continually. Another author, Arabski (2011) mentions some significant items about culture:

Culture is elemental: People are exposed to and embedded in their own culture since birth so deeply that they may occasionally fail to recognize cultural foundations of their belief and

value systems, attitudes and emotions. Their cultural background is the frame of reference

for contacts with other cultures, and that is one of the reasons why reflection about this

background is so important to make sense of other cultures. Culture is individual. Although

individuals share common beliefs, values, history, and language, their understanding and

interpretation of these differ. Members of the same groups have personal, subjective

interpretations of cultural practice and identity. (pp. 24-25)

Language reflects culture at the same time, and it is affected and shaped by it. In Arabski's

definition, it is clear that reflection on one's own culture is necessary to understand other cultures.

Each person has his or her own perceptions, beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviors, and so on. Because

of all the things stated before, this study seeks to point out that the cultural aspects of the target

language should be included in the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design of*

Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011) to let adult students be able to interact

between cultures, get to know, understand, and recognize each other; in order to foster reflection on

similarities and differences between them and to stimulate the development of intercultural

awareness and intercultural skills to overcome stereotypes or cultural misunderstandings.

3.4.2 Theoretical Aspects Related to the Cultural Component in Foreign Language Teaching

The cultural aspects of a language are essential and have to be integrated into the teaching of

a foreign language. Language and culture are connected one to the other. Teaching a foreign

language is related to the transfer of knowledge of the target culture. The linguist Douglas Brown

(2007) points out that learning a foreign language means learning a new culture, and expresses the

relationship between the terms culture and language as follows:

It is apparent that culture, as an ingrained set of behaviours or modes of perception, becomes

highly important in the learning of a second language. A language is a part of culture, and a

culture is a part of language: The two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate

the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a

second language, except for specialized, instrumental acquisition (as may be the case, say, in

acquiring a reading knowledge of a language for examining scientific texts), is also the

acquisition of a second culture. (pp. 189-190)

Many authors like Douglas Brown (2007), Byram (1997), among others, highlight the fact

that acquiring a second language let us understand the target culture and vice versa.

Following this idea, Arabski (2011) expresses that:

In order to communicate across cultures, it is vital to comprehend cultural differences that

may facilitate or debilitate communication. The cultural background of the interlocutors

appears to have a serious influence on the quality and quantity of the communication act.

Members of different societies when interacting need to understand cultural differences that

are likely to obstruct their communication process. (p. 237)

As a result, language and culture are not and cannot be separated because they are acquired

at the same time. This study stems from the fact that some secondary adult students at CENMA N°

96 show a negative attitude towards the English language and the target culture, have little

knowledge or have a wrong idea about them, have misconceptions or preconceptions about English-

speaking countries. Consequently, the definitions mentioned before show that culture has to be

taught together with language to allow a better understanding of the target culture and one's own.

3.4.2.1 The Cultural Component in the European Framework.

Because of the work of numerous researchers who have specialized in the field of

linguistics, Byram (1997), Byram and Risager (1999), Kramsch (1993, 1998 and 2001), Sercu

(2005) or Zárate (1986 and 1995), among others, it is known that learning a foreign language

involves a cultural dimension. Due to this evolution, the *Common European Framework of*

Reference for Languages (2002) recognizes its significance and includes it to offer guidance to

education, course book writers, teaching training colleges, and so on for planning foreign language teaching in Europe.

The cultural component is also present throughout the *European Framework (2002)*. According to this document, all human skills contribute to the learner's ability to communicate. In Chapter 5, Section 1, the cultural dimension is specifically addressed, and the general skills are divided into: *declarative knowledge,* which includes knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge and intercultural awareness; *skills and abilities* (know-how) which include practical skills and abilities and cross-cultural skills and abilities ; the *existential* competence (knowing how to be) and the *ability to learn* (know how to learn) which includes reflection on the language and communication system, reflection on the phonetic system and corresponding skills, study skills and heuristic (discovery and analysis) skills. In Chapter 5, Section 2 the document deals with three linguistic skills which are: *linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic.*

In the general skills mentioned in Chapter 5, Section 1, knowledge of the world deals with the information of places, institutions, people, objects, facts and operations in different fields. This includes factual information of the country or countries in which the foreign language is spoken (main geographic, demographic, economic and political data) as an element of importance for the students. In this section, a list of the specific aspects in which the features of the European society have to be related are mentioned: 1) daily life (food, meal times, table manners; work schedules and habits; leisure activities); 2) living conditions (housing, social coverage, living standards with their regional, ethnic and social group variants); 3) interpersonal relations (social structure and relations between social classes, relations between sexes, family structure and relations, relations between generations, relations at work, relations with official bodies, relations between political and religious groups, relations between races and communities); 4) values, beliefs and behaviors in relation to parameters such as social class, professional groups, income and wealth, regional cultures, institutions, history, ethnic or religious minorities, regional identity, foreign countries,

states and peoples, politics, arts, religion, humor; 5) body language (knowledge of conventions governing behaviors that are part of the learner's sociocultural competence); 6) know how to live (social conventions relating to hospitality, punctuality, gifts, dress; refreshments, drinks and meals; conventions and taboos of conversation and behavior; manner of saying goodbye); and 7) ritual behaviors in areas such as religious practices and rites; birth, marriage and death; attitudes of the audience at a show; celebrations, festivals, dances and discos, etc.

On the other hand, the development of intercultural awareness is identified with the knowledge and understanding of the similarities and differences between one's own cultural universe and that of the community in which the foreign language is spoken. This intercultural awareness includes a recognition of the regional and social diversity of both universes, thus trying to avoid a monolithic vision of culture. In addition to objective knowledge, intercultural awareness includes consciousness of the way in which each community is viewed from the point of view of the other, very often characterized by national stereotypes.

Finally, intercultural know-how is related to issues, such as the ability to establish a relationship between the culture of origin and the foreign one ; awareness of the notion of culture and the ability to use various strategies to establish contact with people from another civilization; the ability to play the role of cultural intermediary between the foreign culture and one's own, and to resolve situations of misunderstanding and cultural conflict; and, at last, the ability to overcome stereotypes.

Furthermore, communicative competence, which is included in Chapter 5, Section 2, is divided into three sub-competences. First, linguistic competence, which includes lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic and orthoepic competencies. Secondly, sociolinguistic competence, which refers to the knowledge and skills needed to make the language function in its social dimension. More specifically, issues such as the markers of social relations, the rules of politeness, expressions of popular wisdom, register differences, and dialects and accents

would be included. Finally, the third of the competencies, pragmatics, comprises at the same time discursive competencies (ability to use sentences in organized sequences in order to produce coherent discourse) and functional competencies (functions, speech acts, schemes of communicative interactions).

This study aims at making a methodological and didactic proposal for 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N°96 to encourage their personal development and education, exposing them to the English language and to different aspects of a foreign culture to foster an attitude of tolerance and respect not only for other cultures but also for their own. To achieve this, a meaningful didactic unit that articulates the linguistic, grammatical and cultural aspects of the language was elaborated taking into consideration some aspects of Chapter 5 of the *European Framework (2002).*

3.4.2.2 The Intercultural Approach to Foreign Language Teaching.

There are many approaches towards teaching some aspects of the target culture. Risager (1998) mentions three approaches which are: the *intercultural or multicultural*, *transcultural,* and *foreign cultural approach*. Each of them shows a different aspect of the target culture. The *intercultural or multicultural approach* discusses a substantial element of comparison; the *transcultural approach* considers the foreign language as an international language; whereas in the *foreign cultural approach* the focus is only the target culture.

In recent decades, culture has gained importance in the teaching of a foreign language. Risager (2001) indicates the 1980s as the time when language teaching began to be influenced by the intercultural perspective. The latter is based on a concept of culture that accepts that different cultures are structurally related to each other. It contemplates the encounter or interaction between cultures, and their attempts to get to know, understand, and recognize each other. According to this author, the intercultural approach takes into account both the culture of the country or countries under study and one's own. It also includes the comparison of the foreign countries and that of the

students', inviting the latter to adopt a critical attitude with respect for both cultures. The ultimate aim is to develop intercultural and communicative competence, enabling students to act as mediators between the two cultures.

3.4.2.3 The Importance of Intercultural Communicative Competence in Foreign Language Teaching.

During the last decades, theoretical research studies about foreign language teaching have mentioned the importance of culture in the process of teaching and learning a language. Many terms, such as *cultural component, intercultural dimension, intercultural competence,* and *intercultural communicative competence* have been used to make reference to culture. Many authors have studied and investigated this topic, in addition to the work carried out by the Council of Europe, whose research division is dedicated to the study and promotion of language teaching and learning. One of its publications, called *European Framework of Reference for Language Learning, Teaching and Assessment* (*Instituto Cervantes, 2002)*, has become a guidebook for teaching and learning languages in Europe. It must be emphasized that it provides guidance on the need for a comprehensive approach to language and culture teaching, which is pointed out and emphasized in this research to take into consideration.

The focus on learning the culture of a particular language has changed over time. In the 1960s, the concept of social diversity within culture started to become a key element in the definition of culture. Brooks (1968) differentiates two types of culture, the big culture and the little culture. The first one is related to literature, music, art and everything connected with abstract thinking. The second one includes values, beliefs, behaviors and everything associated with culture that does not require intellectual training. This author wants to be more specific about culture and subdivides it into five groups: N°1 biological growth, N°2 personal refinement, N°3 literature and art, N°4 daily life and N°5 all the former cultures together. Brooks (1968) suggests that teachers

include culture N°4 at the beginning together with the linguistic aspects of the language, and then gradually incorporate cultures N°3 and N°5.

The cultural dimension in foreign language teaching has evolved in recent decades. This evolution has developed together with the concept of communicative competence. Hymes (1972) comes up with the term, which refers basically to abilities speakers have in their first language. Later it is appropriated and reworked by Canale and Swain (1980) who incorporate sociolinguistic competence into the components of communicative competence within the field of foreign language teaching and new approaches or dimensions (sociolinguistic, sociocultural, social, etc.). This sociolinguistic competence is related to a set of sociolinguistic rules associated with the use of the language and takes into account interpersonal relationships and the context. Therefore, the sociocultural aspects become essential in the linguistic learning of the language. The development of sociolinguistic competence provides knowledge on society and culture about the target language. It also provides the reflection on similarities and differences between the target culture and one's own; and it stimulates the development of intercultural awareness and skills to overcome stereotypes or cultural misunderstandings.

Consequently, the concept of communicative competence based upon native speaker competence started to be questioned and the replacement of the native speaker by the intercultural speaker as a reference for the foreign language learner was suggested by Byram & Zarate (1994). Thus, a model was proposed by Byram (1997) for *Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC),* as it is shown in Figure 1, involving one step further in communicative competence. This author establishes a theoretical framework for intercultural competence consisting of five interrelated skills: knowledge, interpretation and relational skills, skills of discovery and interaction skills, attitudes, and critical intercultural awareness. He points out that the success of intercultural interaction cannot be judged only in terms of an effective exchange of information. He states that the capacity of establishing and maintaining human relationships is as important as communication

itself, and that capacity, depends on attitudinal factors. Therefore, an effective intercultural interaction can take place.

Figure 1

Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Communicative Competence
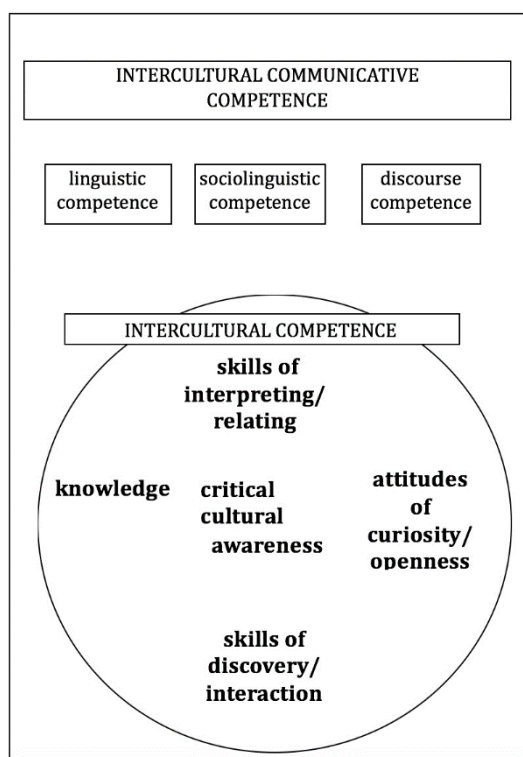
Note. The figure shows that there are connections between language competence and the competence that make up intercultural competence, and that introduction of language competence changes intercultural competence into ICC. Reprinted from *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence, Revisited* (p. 102) by M. Byram, 2020, Multilingual Matters.

Byram (2020) proposes four factors for interaction across frontiers of different countries: attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating and, skills of discovery and interaction. He emphasizes that attitudes in relation to people who are often characterized by prejudice lead to unsuccessful communication. Instead, for a successful communication people should have attitudes of curiosity and openness, and of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgement with respect to others' beliefs, values and behaviours. The previous knowledge that people have when they interact with someone from their own or foreign country includes information about the social groups and

culture of their community and the interlocutors', and knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal levels. The skills of interpreting and relating are based on existing knowledge, and it may have been acquired through formal education, or by other informal means, but it is probably conscious knowledge. The skill of discovery is the skill of developing specific knowledge as well as understanding of the meanings, beliefs, values and behaviours.

Figure 2

Dimensions of intercultural (communicative) competence

SKILLS
interpret and relate
(savoir comprendre)

KNOWLEDGE   EDUCATION   ATTITUDES
of   political education   relativising self
self and other;   critical cultural awareness   valuing other
    of   (savoir s'engager)   (savoir être)
interaction:
individual and societal
(savoirs)

SKILLS
discover and/or interact
(savoir apprendre/faire)
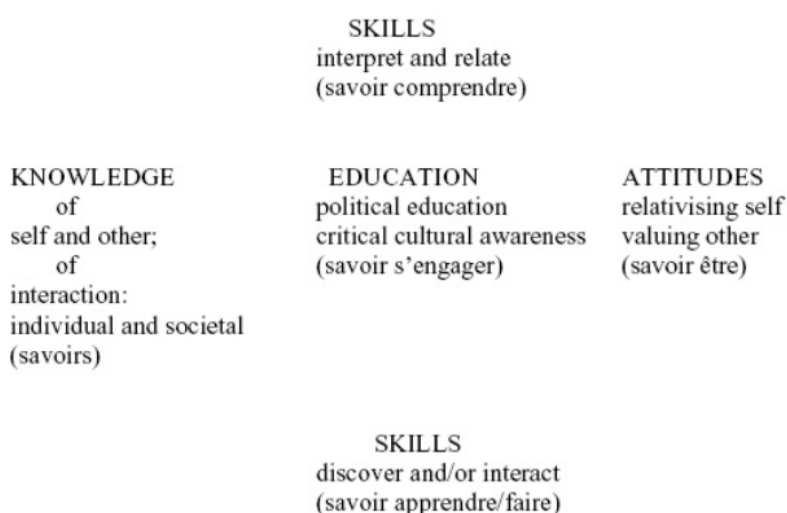
Note. The figure shows the factors involved in interaction. Reprinted from *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence, Revisited* (p. 102) by M. Byram, 2020, Multilingual Matters.

Intercultural competence is linked to communicative competence. As stated in the *European Framework of Reference for Language Learning, Teaching and Assessment* (*Instituto Cervantes, 2002)*, communicative competence includes linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence. Intercultural communicative competence is built on the basis of communicative competence, and it expands it to incorporate intercultural competence. Sercu (2005) presents the different components of intercultural competence grouped under three headings:1) knowledge, 2) skills/behavior and 3) attitudes/traits. The first one knowledge, actually *knowledges*, constitutes the knowledge dimension of the conceptual framework. It comprises knowledge of social groups in one's own country and in

the country of the interlocutor; as well as knowledge of interaction processes at the individual and social levels. *Knowing how to learn* and *knowing how to understand* constitute the skills dimension of the conceptual framework. Both of these skills are related to the ability to interpret and establish relationships between cultures. *Know-how*, on the other hand, refers to the general capacity to develop an intercultural competent manner in situations of intercultural contact, to take into account the specific cultural identity of the interlocutor and to behave in a respectful and cooperative way. *Knowing how to be* and *knowing how to engage* are linked together, since they refer to the general disposition characterized by a critical engagement with the foreign culture and one's own (*knowing how to engage*); and to the capacity and willingness to abandon ethnocentric attitudes and perceptions, together with the ability to establish and maintain a relationship between one's own culture and the foreign culture (*knowing how to be*).

As shown above, during the last decades, many authors have been studying and investigating the importance of culture in language teaching. The concept of culture has changed and evolved over time. For this study, all these contributions are relevant to highlight that the cultural component has to be included in foreign language teaching. Several references have been made to the fact that intercultural competence and communicative competence are linked together, and one complements the other. The didactic proposal of this study aims to integrate both competences. On the one hand, the linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects were taken into account. On the other hand, the cultural aspects were incorporated to make students aware and reflect upon the similarities and differences between the target culture and their own, leaving behind typical stereotypes and prejudices, as well as working together in accepting diversity, cultivating empathy and thinking critically.

3.4.2.4 The Informative and Formative Approach to Teaching the Target Culture.

In recent years, a big concern has been focused on a didactic approach of the cultural component in language teaching. The proposals for teaching the cultural component of a foreign

language are the result of different forms of understanding both culture and language. The influence of social studies has also contributed to a new perspective of culture. Thus, regarding it as a content in the language classroom, it has changed from a formal culture (a set of historical, political and geographical events connected to references about famous people or picturesque settings) to a non-formal culture (daily life, values, beliefs, etc.). The purpose of this perspective is to avoid a monolithic vision that strengthens prejudices and stereotypes. Instead, the aim is to promote a perception of culture that shows a plural, changing and complex reality of the different societies in today's world. Thus, the sociocultural aspects of the target language are essential for the linguistic learning which includes the communicative behaviour that is part of the target culture (Areizaga, 2002, p. 162). Thereby, teaching a foreign language means to bring students into contact with a world culturally different from their own and to promote intercultural communicative competence.

The new perspective of language and culture is shown in the proposals of different authors. On the one hand, language was taught (at the lower levels) and then culture (at the higher levels) as an added content; on the other hand, language and culture have been integrated from the beginning when learning the target language; integration, which is reinforced by assuming a semiotic concept of culture as a system of social meanings (Kramsh, 1988). As a consequence, many specialists are in favor of the formative approach, which focuses on teaching communicative intercultural competence and not only culture as information, as suggested by the informative approach.

3.5 A Constructivist Vision of the Teaching of Culture

The most prominent representatives of constructivism, Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, consider that people produce knowledge and form meaning based upon their experiences through different operative mechanisms that are characteristic of human intelligence, which exert a real action on the stimuli it receives: Subject and object interact constantly during the mechanism of

developing new knowledge in a dynamic and flexible adjustment, in which the process of the representation of reality and intersubjectivity is constructed and reconstructed again and again.

Considering the learning process of the foreign language-culture from a constructivist perspective requires starting from the learners' motivations as well as their level of knowledge. It also implies their active participation in tasks that, in an independent way, require processes that make them reconsider and question the new information presented. Shuell (1986, 1988) characterizes meaningful learning as an active, constructive, accumulative process which is focused on certain ends. For the construction of meaning, the learner needs to make comparisons, investigate possible connections between meaningful elements, distinguish relevant from irrelevant information and, in this process, to use and build on their existing knowledge and understanding of the world. Learners thus set their own personal learning goals. The perception of cultural information from multiple perspectives, the reconsideration of one's own convictions and attitudes towards the foreign culture and its speakers, and the discernment of those cultural representations that may appear distorted, for example, in textbooks or in the media, are also considered activities that favor constructivist learning.

3.6 The Incorporation of Cultural Contents as Teaching Resources

The research studies of many specialists, Byram (1997), Byram and Risager (1999), Kramsch (1993, 1998 and 2001), Sercu (2005) or Zárate (1986 and 1995), among others, reveal that the incorporation of cultural aspects into a foreign language classroom improves the communication of different people and communities. To achieve this, it is vital to offer some strategies to integrate the cultural aspects in the process of learning. The aim of these strategies is to help students develop the linguistic aspects of the language and, at the same time, be aware of the importance of knowing the target culture. It is necessary a change in the orientation of teaching culture: The emphasis must not be placed on knowing things about other people or adopting supposed behaviors or values, but

in developing the capacity to understand and communicate with them (Areizaga, 2001, p. 164).

Therefore, integrating culture into a foreign language classroom creates awareness, appreciation and

acceptance of other cultures.

3.6.1 Didactic Resources for the Incorporation of Cultural Contents in Foreign Language Teaching

Cultural activities should be incorporated into lesson plans to enrich foreign language

teaching and engage students in the process of learning. There are many didactic resources and

useful ideas to present culture in the foreign language classroom. As Sagredo Santos (2008) points

out, the aim of including cultural activities in the foreign language classroom is to focus on

sociocultural aspects which are connected to the language and let students develop linguistic skills

and at the same time be aware of the importance of knowing the target culture for understanding

people of different societies. Thus, students can not only know the differences between the target

culture and their own, but also find the similarities.

3.6.1.1 Authentic Materials.

Nowadays, there are a lot of didactic resources due to the presence of ICT (Information and

Communication Technologies). Thanks to these technologies, students can learn a foreign language

in a more dynamic, practical and entertaining way. As a result, teachers can take advantage of ICT

and use authentic materials to help students engage in real cultural experiences. All the definitions

highlight the fact that authentic materials mean *exposure to real language and its use in its own*

community. Areizaga (2002) points out that the incorporation of authentic materials into lesson

plans promotes a conscious development of one's own and foreign culture and intercultural

communication skills. Teachers can use many sources to design lesson plans, they include: films,

news broadcasts, television shows, websites, photographs, magazines, newspapers, restaurant

menus, travel brochures, greeting cards, podcasts, e-books, songs, novels, short stories, poems,

among others. These materials can be adapted to suit the age and the language proficiency level of students. For example, beginner students can watch a real-life video in the target language and pay attention to cultural norms as greetings, and then describe the verbal and non-verbal behaviors they observe in the video and talk about the differences and similarities with their native culture.

3.6.1.2 EFL Coursebooks. Criteria for the Selection and Evaluation of Material for Teaching the Cultural Component.

The selection and evaluation of materials for teaching the cultural component need to be oriented towards intercultural competence. Kramsch (1988) states that a textbook for foreign language teaching is a construct culturally codified, and it does not present culture and language in a real-life context; but it presents the conception that the author and editor have about language, culture and learning. For this reason, it is important to analyse these materials carefully in order to incorporate the intercultural competence in the language classroom. Activities, in these materials, have to move towards confrontation and reflection of the target culture and one's own.

In general, ESL coursebooks include cultural activities, but not all of them foster intercultural reflection. According to López Barrios & Villanueva de Debat (2008):

Activities that promote intercultural reflection make the learners notice and (more or less) critically respond / react to other cultures, languages and their speakers. The degree of reflection can be illustrated as follows in Figure 3:

Figure 3

Degree of Intercultural Reflection

C1 C2	C1 C2	C1 C2
Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3
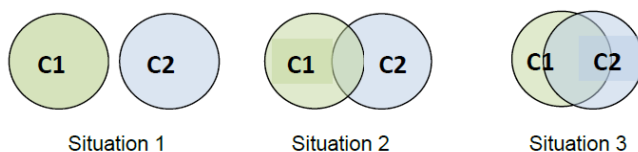
Note. This figure shows the degree of intercultural reflection in three different situations. Reprinted from *Intercultural Reflection in EFL coursebooks*, by M. L. López Barrios & E. Villanueva de Debat, 2007, *Cultural Awareness in ELT*, pp. 81-83.

In situation 1 the materials do not make the learners compare or contrast C1 and C2 but treat them separately. In situation 2 the materials attempt some degree of comparison between C1 and C2, leading to a moderate degree of reflection. In situation 3 the materials promote a higher degree of cross-cultural confrontation. In this case, learners are made to analyse information critically (pp. 81-83).

As a consequence, to foster intercultural reflection it is necessary to analyse EFL coursebooks and, if it is needed, design activities that stimulate cross-cultural confrontation.

Several researchers have provided data and made proposals for integrating culture and language into the foreign language classroom. One of the main developers of the theory of integrated language and culture learning is Byram (1993). His proposal is based on how to carry out the selection of sociocultural content for the design of a foreign language book and how to establish the criteria for its evaluation once the book is on the market. This author proposes eight categories for the minimum content of knowledge about a foreign country and its culture that should be incorporated into secondary school textbooks. The eight categories include: 1) social identity and social groups: groups, within the nation state, constructed on a different basis than national identity and which demonstrate the complexity of social identities of individuals and of a national society (social class, regional identity, ethnic minorities); 2) social interaction: conventions of behavior in social interactions taking into account the different levels of familiarity; 3) conduct and behavior: routine and commonly accepted actions within a social group - national or sub-national - and the religious and moral beliefs underlying them; routine behaviors of daily life that are not seen as significant markers of group identity; 4) political and social institutions: institutions of the state that characterize the state and its citizenship and provide a framework for the development of daily life

within the nation and sub-national groups (health care, local government, law and order

maintenance, etc.); 5) socialization and life cycle: institutions of socialization - families, schools,

employment -, and the ceremonies that mark the passage through the different stages of social life;

representation of divergent practices in different social groups, as well as national self-stereotypes

of shared expectations and interpretations; 6) national history: periods and events - historical and

contemporary - significant in the constitution of the nation and its identity; 7) national geography:

geographic factors within the national borders that are significant in perceptions of one's own

country; other factors that constitute essential information for people outside the country: 8)

stereotypes and national identity: notions of what is a typical national identity of a country; origins

of these notions.

  These proposals show the need to consider culture as an essential component in foreign

language learning from a communicative and sociolinguistic perspective, in which language is

presented in its multiple contexts of use and in its different varieties. In the surveys administered to

2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 some of these sociocultural contents were taken

into consideration for the design of the didactic proposal.

3.7 A Didactic Unit

3.7.1 Definition of a Didactic Unit

  A didactic unit is seen as a tool for educational planning in the classroom that facilitates the

achievement of the objectives proposed in the curricular design. Tann (1990) states that a didactic

unit is a programming instrument that allows an articulation between the methodological strategies

in relation to the expected achievements and, anticipating the students' training needs, it allows the

teacher to identify the objective or purpose to be achieved, the knowledge to be addressed and the

prior knowledge required. On the other hand, Escamilla (1993) defines it as: "A way of planning the

teaching-learning process around a content element that becomes the integrating axis of the process,

providing it with consistency and meaning" (p.39). Consequently, the didactic unit could be

considered as a tool for educational planning and daily work in the classroom, which takes into account all the elements of the teaching-learning process in a coherent manner and facilitates the globalization of knowledge.

3.7.2 Structure of a Didactic Unit

A didactic unit has to follow a number of steps. According to Rodriguez Gallego (2007):

In order to plan a didactic unit, it is important to clearly define the goals and objectives, to determine which contents are basic and which ones are complementary or supportive, to plan different activities for the development of the same content, to use different types of grouping, to have a variety of resources, to adapt the components of evaluation, etc. Consequently, a certain number of measures must be established that enable students to receive the most appropriate educational answer according to their characteristics, skills, capacities, interests and motivations (p. 7).

The didactic unit consists of several components. In line with Rodriguez Gallego (2007) the following elements make up the didactic unit:

1) Unit title. The didactic unit must have an interesting and catching title in order to engage students with the topic. This title can be made in the form of a statement, a problem or a question.

2) Didactic goals. These goals are at the top of the didactic unit and must be focused on specific criteria that students must develop in order to follow the path towards realizing the potential of their own skills and competences in specific knowledge fields.

3) Basic skills. These skills enable students to identify the learning that is considered indispensable in order to use the acquired knowledge. The key point to implement the basic skills and competences as a curricular component is to allow teachers and students to become part of the formal, informal, and non-formal learning; to complete the acquired learning with the different types of contents and to know how to use them in different situations and contexts.

4) Contents. The contents refer to the amount of knowledge that students must obtain significantly in order to foster and promote their personal and social development. There is a close connection between the contents and the educational goals. This relationship is based on the sense of reality and culture that are required to be reached by students (goals), and the reality that is generated inside the school atmosphere (contents).

5) Teaching/learning activities. Teachers make use of teaching/learning activities in order to develop the planned contents. The didactic sequence upon the didactic unit activities conducted is extremely important. According to its order and planning, these activities can have an excellent shape and can allow active students' participation. On the other hand, the planning of activities must show different levels of difficulty in order to pay attention to the diversity effectively and also to create an appropriate rhythm of learning. Among all the classifications about the teaching/learning activities, these are the best that suit this conception:

1. Motivation/introduction activities: Explain to students the relation between the aspect or concept to be learned and the reality. An interesting approach must be created in order to raise the curiosity of students. The topic to be studied must be related as much as possible with the social, cultural, economic and physical environment in which school life is carried out. The presentation of the unit shall not make the students think that it is a totally closed topic. On the contrary, it must encourage them to develop their own skills.

2. Previous knowledge activities: They are conducted in order to get to know the students´ ideas, opinions and conceptual right and wrong answers about contents to be developed.

3. Development activities: They allow the acknowledgment of concepts, proceedings and new activities, as well as the communication of the conducted work.

4. Consolidation activities: New ideas are compared with previous students' ideas and new learning strategies are used. Therefore, they are focused on the synthesis capacity, conclusion gathering and diagram creation, as well as patterns that offer a solution to the problem posed.

6) Didactic resources and materials. It refers to the different tools used to develop contents and to accomplish the planned didactic goals in the most appropriate way.

7) Teaching/learning evaluation process. Evaluation must be understood not only as the assessment of the acquired knowledge of students at the time the teaching/learning process ends, but also at the time of process improvement, plan modification designed by the teacher, adoption of appropriate correction mechanisms, and specific reinforcement planning.

3.7.3   *Assessment of a Didactic Unit*

Assessment is essential to measure students' progress. Rodriguez Gallego (2007) states that four stages should be considered throughout the assessment of the didactic unit. First, initial evaluation, which is performed at the beginning of the learning process. Second, ongoing evaluation, that is carried out during the whole teaching/learning process. Third, summative or final evaluation, which is done at the end of the teaching/learning process. Fourth, meta-evaluation, that is performed to show the effectiveness of the evaluation.

a) Initial, predictive or diagnostic evaluation. The information obtained from this modality might be referred to a group (classroom). In this case, it is named prognosis or diagnosis (a student). This kind of evaluation aims at knowing the students' situation at the starting point of the teaching/learning process in order to compare it with the knowledge acquired at the end of the completed work. The information gathered must allow the exploration and knowledge for each student of the classroom of:

- The degree of acquisition regarding the previous learning requirements.

- The alternative patterns or spontaneous ideas of reasoning and the spontaneous performance strategies.

- The attitudes and acquired habits in relation to the learning process.

- The representations that are carried out of the proposed areas. This is what Halwachs (1975) called adoption strategies. The set of activities for the

initial evaluation must be related to the motivation and previous

knowledge activation (open surveys and semantic networks, multiple

choice quizzes, observation patterns and interviews, among others). They

must not be identified with exams or excluding tests.

b) Formative or procedural evaluation. It always comes together with the teaching/learning

process. It has a regulatory, orientative and self-assessment approach during the educational

process. Furthermore, it provides constant information about whether the process is suitable for the

students' necessities or not. The formative evaluation must broaden some of its pillars with a

communicative approach. For Cardinet (1992), such an approach opens new perspectives to the

learning process, which overcomes some limits of the formative evaluation since it proposes the

auto-regulation by means of reciprocal evaluation, co-evaluation and auto-evaluation activities.

Upon these activities, students can build a personal system in order to learn. This evaluation system

increases the possibility of being used by the teacher at a lower cost, and it has more benefits in

terms of students' learning. Thus, the evaluation will consist of a teacher's regulation in order to

adapt the teaching process to the needs and progress of students. The students' autoregulation will

proportionate self-autonomy and the basis for a personal learning.

c) Summative or final evaluation. It aims at assessing the degree of accomplishment

obtained by each student regarding the proposed goals for a specific teaching/learning process. The

summative evaluation report must gather what has been observed throughout the unit development.

It must provide some advice and establish a reinforcement process given the case that the obtained

outcomes do not match the proposed goals. Summative or integral evaluation is understood as a

global report upon which initial knowledge (initial evaluation) manifests the path that has been

followed by the student, strategic measures that have been learned and final outcome of the whole

process. Specially upon this knowledge, previsions about what must be done in the future or what

must be done differently can be foreseen (Zabala, 1995, p. 209). The mistake of assessing all

students according to the same contents and goals (whether these have been taught or not) must be avoided.

d) Meta-evaluation. It tries to figure out to what extent the summative and final evaluations have enlarged the objectives and goals, and to which point they have been useful to accomplish the mission entrusted. Throughout the didactic unit, the most important aspect, which has not worked according to stipulations, should be changed and students' questions can be written down in a diary to take them into account for next units.

In conclusion, in Chapter 3 the author of this study has presented the main concepts that support this research and that were useful for the design of the didactic unit proposed for 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96. The concept of culture and its definition related to education, together with its evolution due to the work of many specialists Moran (2001), Cavalli (2007), Douglas Brown (2007) and Arabski (2011), have shown that the cultural component has to be taught together with the linguistic aspects of the language because they are linked together and one complements the other.

The design of the didactic unit of this study was focused on the intercultural approach, which accepts that different cultures are structurally related to each other. Besides, it contemplates the encounter or interaction between the foreign country and one's own, and it attempts to get to know, understand and recognize each other. According to Risager (2001), the intercultural approach takes into account the culture of the country or countries under study and one's own. It also includes the comparison, inviting students to adopt a critical attitude with respect to both cultures. The ultimate aim is to develop intercultural and communicative competence, enabling the students to act as mediators between them. In order to carry out this proposal, Michael Byram's theoretical ideas and ICC model (1997) was taken into account, since this researcher has been one of the main promoters of the integrated language-culture learning theory.

Moreover, it was considered the learning process of the foreign language-culture from a constructivist perspective regarding Shuell's characteristics of meaningful learning as an active, constructive, and accumulative process. The didactic unit for teaching the English language to 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 was elaborated regarding their interests about the different cultural themes, educational resources and cultural activities, and it was aimed at making comparisons, investigating, distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information, among others, in order to construct meaning.

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2002)* was also checked because it clearly expresses the close relationship between language and the cultural dimension. For the design of the didactic unit, some general and linguistic skills expressed in Chapter 5 of this document were kept in mind because they give guidance on planning foreign language teaching.

In addition, the elements to make up the didactic unit mentioned by Rodriguez Gallego (2007) were helpful to define the goals, determine the contents, and plan the activities according to 2nd year secondary adult students' characteristics, interests and motivations.

Chapter 4. Methodological Framework

4.1 Research Methods

This study is based on a qualitative and quantitative approach. Quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed, and the interpretation is the product of all the information as a whole (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2014, p. 534). Therefore, this is a mixed design study because there is an integration of both approaches, qualitative and quantitative.

A mixed research design was selected because the strengths of one method can be used to overcome the weaknesses of the other. The conjunction of qualitative and quantitative techniques produces a more complete knowledge. In this study, qualitative data are useful to collect subjective information related to perceptions and opinions and be able to understand and describe them. The quantitative research shows the results of the surveys administered to the sample groups through statistics.

The scope of this investigation is exploratory and descriptive. Exploratory studies are carried out when the objective is to examine a topic or problem of investigation insufficiently studied, which generates many doubts or has not been researched before (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2014). For this reason, as the issue of this study has not been researched before, at least in the city of Villa Maria, and the point of view shown by previous research projects done in the field is different from the one taken in this investigation, an exploratory study was carried out. The aim of descriptive studies is to specify the properties, characteristics and profiles of people, groups, communities, processes, objects or any other phenomenon subjected to analysis. In other words, they only attempt to measure or collect information independently or jointly on the concepts or variables to which they refer to, i.e., their objective is not to indicate how these are related (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2014, p. 92).

This investigation is based on a non-experimental design framework. Studies are conducted without the deliberate manipulation of variables, and we only observe phenomena in their natural environment in order to analyse them (Hernández Sampieri et al., 2014, p. 152). After administering the surveys of this study, the variables or concepts were described to arrive at conclusions.

4.2 Research Participants

This study started with an exploratory stage. The *Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011)* was examined and explored to verify the integration or not of the cultural component into the *English Language Curriculum*.

During the descriptive stage, the theoretical framework was analysed to show the importance of the cultural component in teaching and learning a foreign language.

To continue the process of investigation, some surveys were administered to:

- Teachers of English from CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and *Extensiones (Classroom Centers)*

- 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96

4.3 Instruments

The instruments administered for collecting data were a structured questionnaire for teachers of English from CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and *Extensiones (Classroom Centers)* (see Appendix A), and a structured questionnaire for 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 (see Appendix B).

It is important to point out that the surveys were carried out during the period of Covid-19 pandemic, so online questionnaires were administered for collecting data.

4.4 Data Collection Procedures

Before collecting data, the design framework and the suitable samples for this research were selected, taking into account the problem of this investigation. This study started with an

exploratory stage. The *Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011)* was examined and explored to verify the integration or not of the cultural component into the *English Language Curriculum*. During the descriptive stage, the theoretical framework was analysed to show the importance of the cultural component in teaching and learning a foreign language. To continue the process of investigation, some surveys were administered to:

- Teachers of English from CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and *Extensiones (Classroom Centers)*. The sample was composed of 7 teachers. They represented the overall population of the sample and answered a structured and semi-structured online self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed with closed and semi- closed questions.
- 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 (in Villa María, Argentina). The sample was composed of 26 students. The kind of sample was non-probabilistic and for convenience, so 2nd year secondary adult students answered a structured and semi-structured online self-administered questionnaire during a given period of time. The questionnaire was designed with closed and semi- closed questions.

Chapter 5. Collection and Analysis of Data and Contributions by Research Subjects

5.1 Collection of Data from Teachers' Surveys

A survey was administered to teachers of English from CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and *Extensiones (Classroom Centers)* to understand their perceptions about secondary adult students' attitudes towards the English language and its culture, the importance of the cultural component in foreign language teaching as an essential element in learning the language, the cultural aspects they consider should be included in the *English Language Curriculum* and its incorporation into the *Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba (2011)*.

Seven teachers of English answered a structured and semi-structured online self-administered questionnaire that was designed with closed and semi-closed questions.

Question N° 1 was a multiple-choice type, and it was oriented towards the period of experience teachers had in teaching the English language at the adult education modality.

Question N° 2 was a semi-closed type, and it was focused on finding out teachers' perceptions about the attitudes of secondary adult students at their schools towards the English language and the target culture.

Question N°3 was a Likert scale type, and the purpose was to discover teachers' opinions on Sagredo Santos' quote about the importance of incorporating cultural aspects into foreign language teaching.

Question N° 4 was a Likert scale type, and the author of this research wanted to find out if these teachers of English believed that it was important to teach the cultural component at the adult education modality and to know their opinions about its positive influence in learning the English language.

Question N° 5 was a dichotomous type, and the aim was to know teachers' opinions about the incorporation of the cultural component into the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba* as a vital element for learning the language.

Question N° 6 was a semi-closed type, and it was directed towards teachers' opinions about what cultural aspects they considered should be included in the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba.*

Question N° 7 was a Likert scale type, and it was oriented towards teachers' teaching practice and the frequency they planned lessons which included the cultural aspects mentioned in the question.

Question N° 8 was a Likert scale type, and it was aimed at finding out which activities teachers did in their classes to incorporate the cultural aspects and the frequency they included them in their classes.

5.2 Analysis of Data from Teachers' Surveys

Figure 4 shows that two teachers have worked in this adult education modality between 16 and 20 years; two teachers have worked between 11 and 15 years; one teacher between 6 and 10 years and two teachers between 1 and 5 years. This shows that most of the teachers have experience in teaching English to secondary adult students.

Figure 4

The Number of Years Teachers of English Have Taught the English Language at the Adult Education Modality
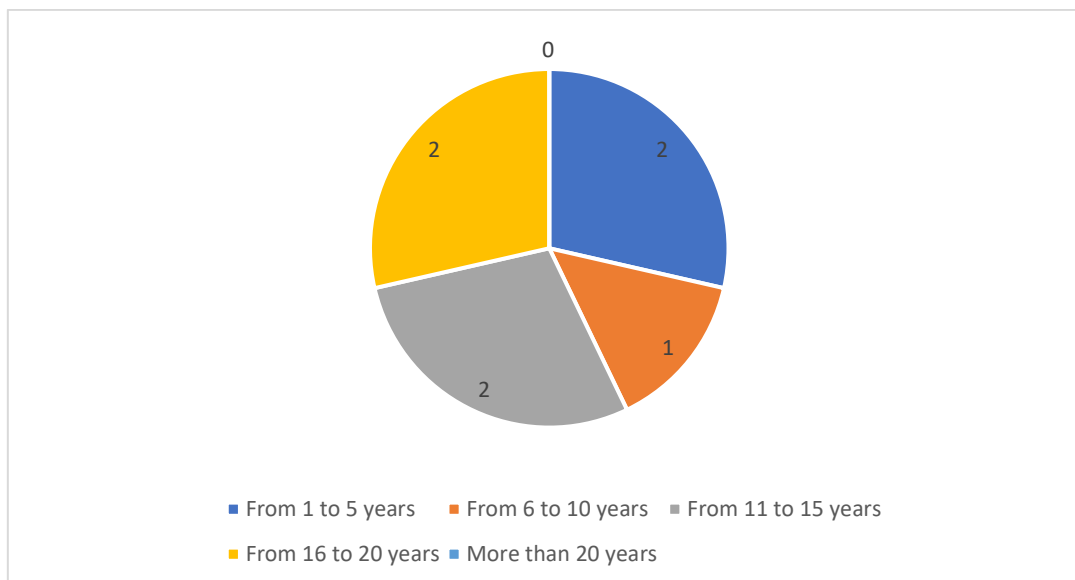
Figure 5 indicates that six teachers think that their students believe learning English is difficult; six teachers point out that their students question the reason for learning the language; one teacher thinks his or her students are very motivated in learning English; none of the teachers think his or her students are uninterested in learning English; none of the teachers think his or her students have enough knowledge about English-speaking countries; four teachers believe their students have little knowledge about the culture of English-speaking countries; four teachers think students have stereotypes of the target culture; two teachers believe students have a positive attitude towards people connected with the foreign language; and none of the teachers think his or her students have a negative attitude towards English-speaking language people.

The results of the teachers' answers indicate that some of them are similar to the perceptions of the author of this study: Students question the reason for learning the English language, they do not have enough knowledge about the culture of English-speaking countries, and they have stereotypical ideas about the target culture.

Figure 5

Teachers' Perceptions About Secondary Adult Students' Attitudes Towards the Teaching of English and its Culture
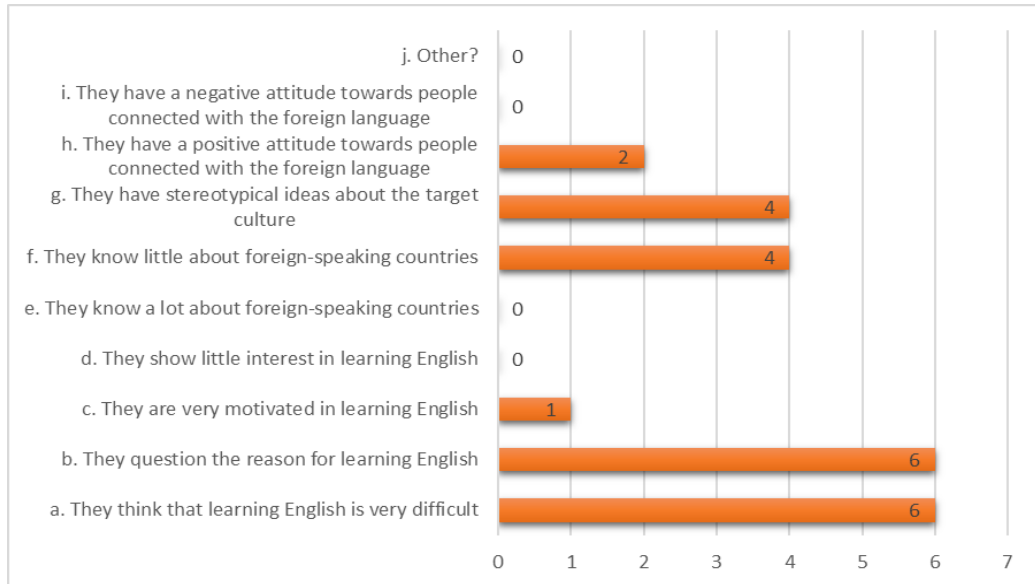

Figure 6 indicates that all the teachers completely agree with Sagredo Santos's quote. As a consequence, they believe that the cultural aspects of a language have to be incorporated into foreign language teaching because language and culture are linked together.

Figure 6

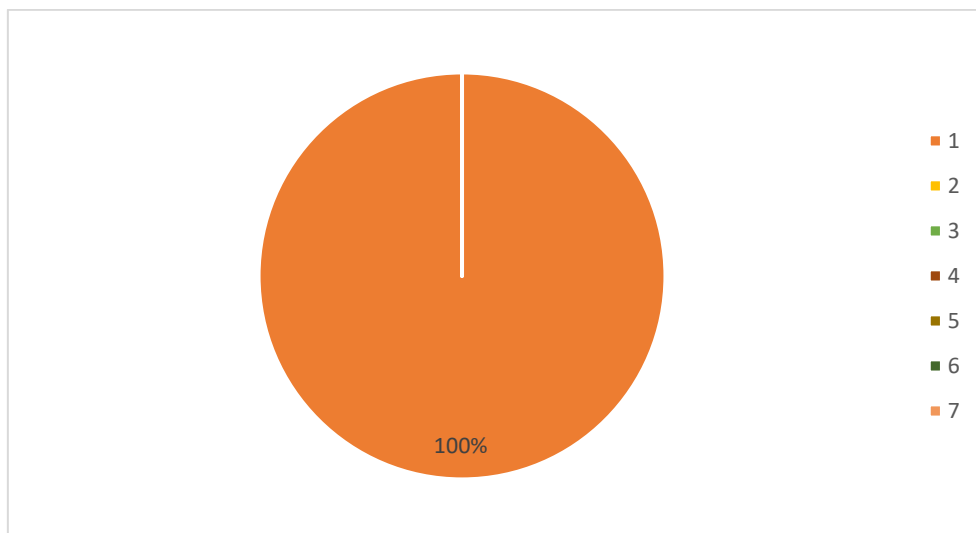*Teachers' opinions about Sagredo Santos' quote*

Figure 7 shows that three teachers fully agree that it is important to teach the cultural component at the adult education modality and that it influences students' interests in learning the English language positively; two teachers are in almost complete agreement; one teacher strongly agrees; and one teacher agrees moderately. As a result, all the teachers believe in the significance and relevance of the cultural dimension in English language teaching at the adult education modality to promote students' learning.

Figure 7

Teachers' Opinions About the Importance of the Cultural Component in English Language Teaching at Secondary Adult Students' Schools
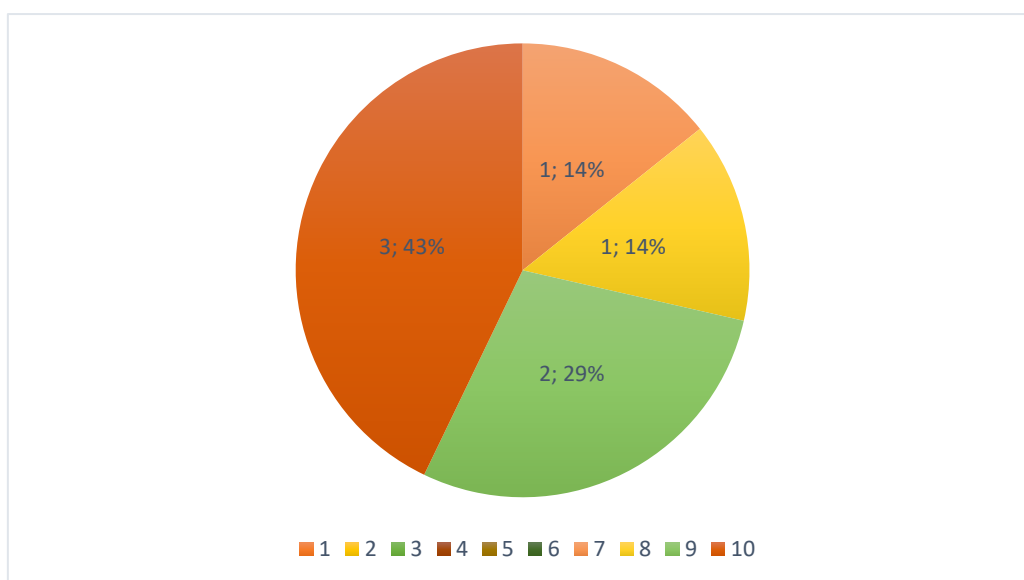
Note. Teachers had to choose a number from 1 to 10. If they completely agreed, they had to choose number 10; if they completely disagreed, they had to choose number 1. They could also choose numbers from 1 to 10 according to their level of agreement.

Figure 8 indicates that all the teachers strongly agree with the incorporation of the cultural component into the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba* as a vital element for learning the language.

Figure 8

Teachers' Opinions About the Incorporation of the Cultural Component into the English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba
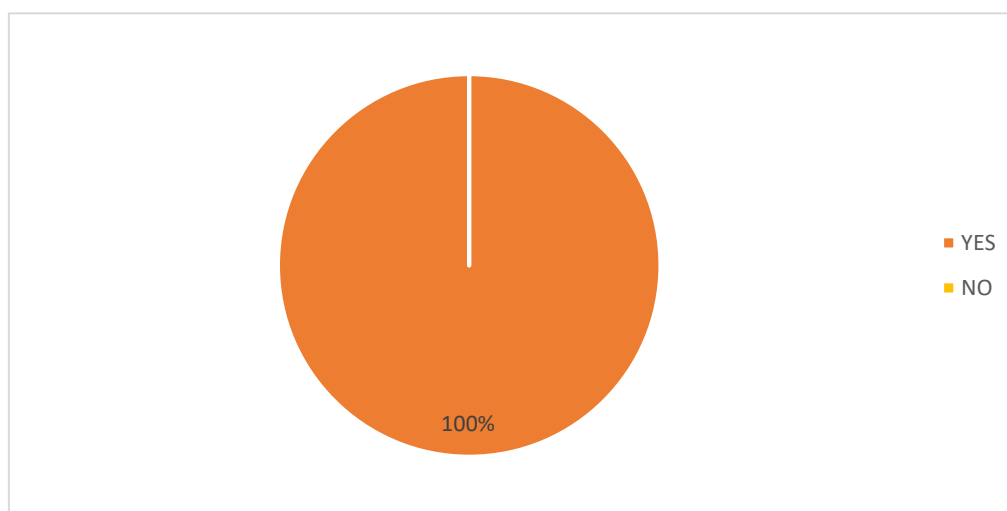
Note: Teachers had to choose *yes* or *no*. If they chose *yes,* they could answer the next question; if they chose *no,* they had to explain why. All the teachers answered positively.

Figure 9 shows the opinions of teachers about the cultural aspects they consider should be included in the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba.* Six teachers believe that traditions, folklore and tourist attractions should be included. Five teachers chose daily life and routines, living conditions, food, drinks, etc.; literature; music, theatre and art. Four teachers selected history, geography and political systems; different social and ethnic groups; education and professional life; values and beliefs; and international relations (political, economic and cultural). Two teachers chose youth culture.

As it is shown, most of the teachers chose traditions, folklore and tourist attractions, although all the aspects were selected. This means that teachers take into consideration all the cultural aspects mentioned in the survey.

Figure 9

Cultural Aspects that Teachers Consider Should Be Included in the English Language

Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba

	a- History, geography and political systems	b- Different social and ethnic groups	c- Daily life and routines, living conditions, food, drinks, etc.	d- Youth culture	e- Education and professional life	f- Traditions, folklore and tourist attractions	g- Literature	h- Music, theatre, art	i- Values and beliefs	j- International relations (political, economic and cultural)	Other?
■ Answers	4	4	5	2	4	6	5	5	4	4	
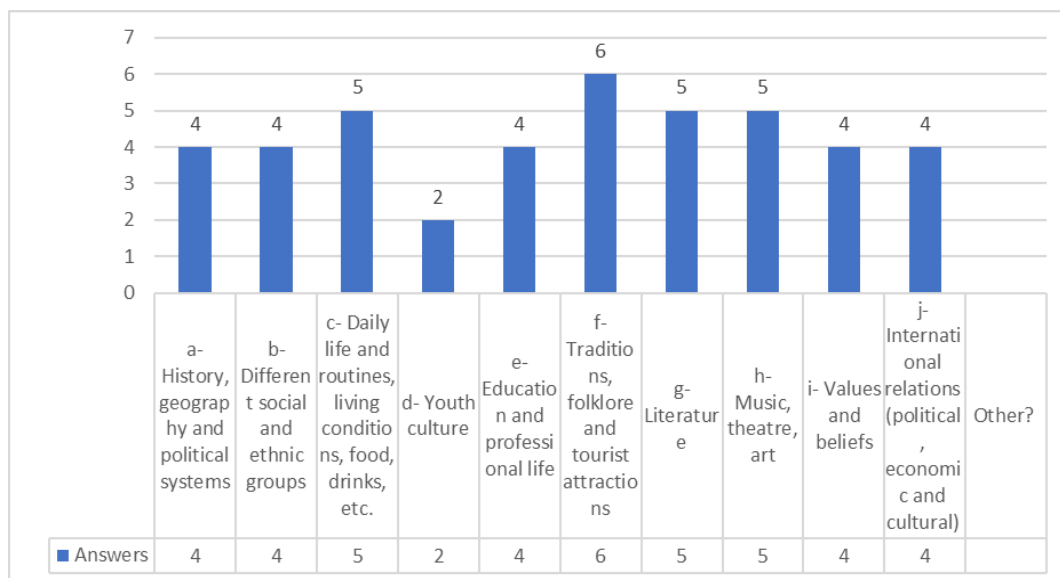
Figure 10 indicates the frequency in which teachers plan lessons that include cultural aspects. The question contains ten cultural aspects that are commonly studied. Teachers had to choose *usually, sometimes* or *never,* according to the frequency they include them in their lesson plans for secondary adult students.

Figure 10

The Frequency that Teachers of English at Secondary Adult Schools Plan Lessons That Include Cultural Aspects
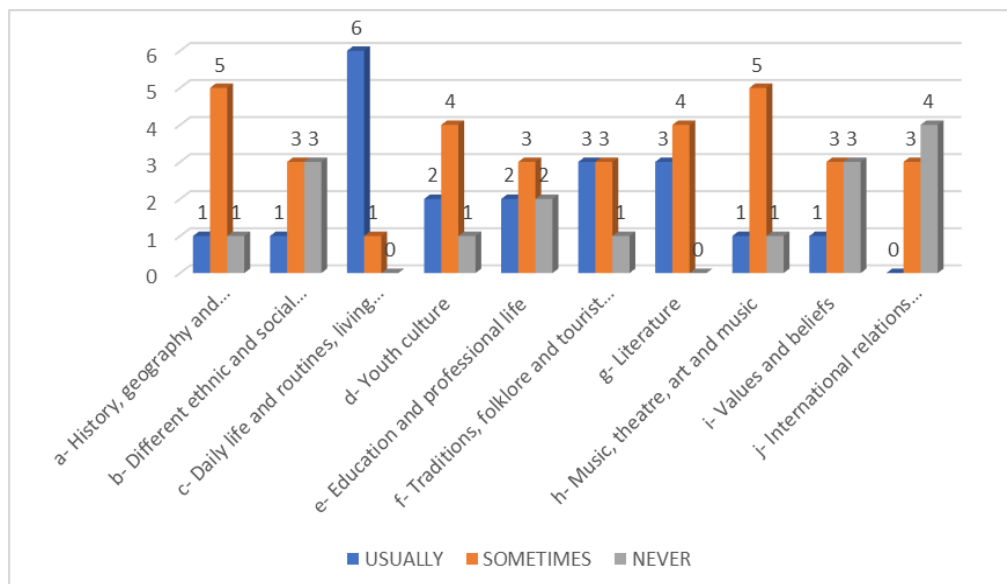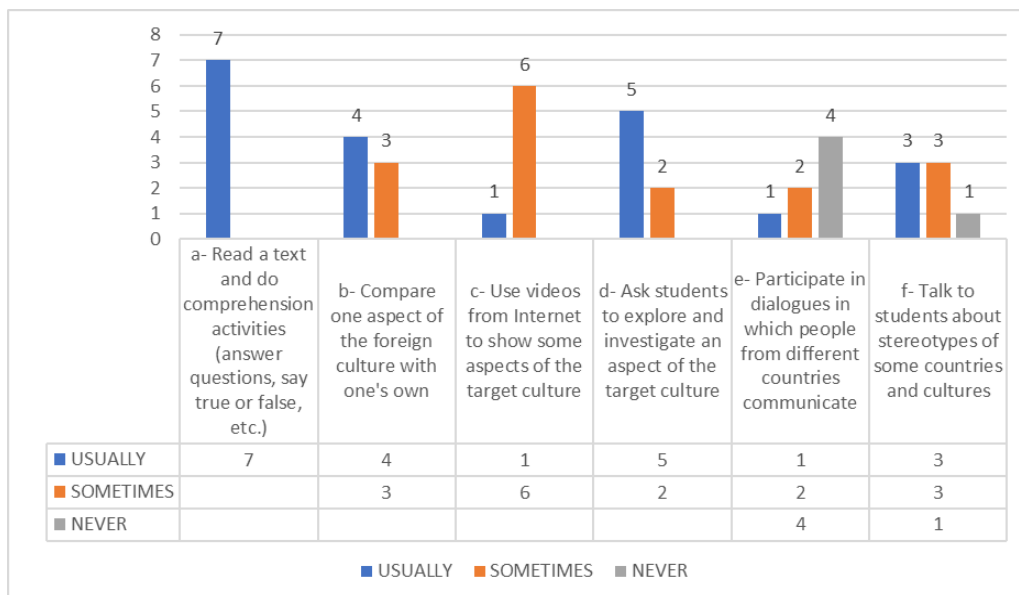
As Figure 10 shows, the most selected cultural aspect is *daily life, routines, living conditions, food and drinks, etc.,* followed by *traditions, folklore and tourist attractions*; and *literature*. Some attention is given to *history, geography and political systems;* and *music, theatre and art.* However, it is noticed the lack of attention paid to *international relations (political, economic and cultural); different ethnic and social groups;* and *values and beliefs.*

Figure 11 indicates the activities that the teachers choose to incorporate the cultural aspects into their lesson plans and the frequency they include them. In order to know which activities they use more frequently in the English language classroom, a list with six cultural activities were included. For each of them, teachers had to choose *usually, sometimes* or *never.*

Figure 11

Activities that Teachers Choose to Incorporate the Cultural Aspects into Their Lesson Plans and the Frequency They Include Them

	a- Read a text and do comprehension activities (answer questions, say true or false, etc.)	b- Compare one aspect of the foreign culture with one's own	c- Use videos from Internet to show some aspects of the target culture	d- Ask students to explore and investigate an aspect of the target culture	e- Participate in dialogues in which people from different countries communicate	f- Talk to students about stereotypes of some countries and cultures
USUALLY	7	4	1	5	1	3
SOMETIMES		3	6	2	2	3
NEVER					4	1

The results shown in figure 11 indicate that some attention is paid to the transmission of culture. The cultural activity that all the teachers include in their lesson plans has to do with reading a text and doing comprehension exercises. Another activity that is commonly used by teachers is to compare one aspect of the target culture with one's own. The use of videos to show aspects of the target culture is taken into account by teachers when planning lessons, although not very frequently. Some teachers make students investigate by themselves a cultural aspect of the target culture and to talk about stereotypes of some countries and cultures, which shows that teachers promote reflection and independent research. Therefore, these results show a constructivist vision of the teaching of culture.

5.3 Collection of Data from 2nd Year Secondary Adult Students' Surveys

The sample was composed of 26 students. The kind of sample was non-probabilistic and for convenience, so 2nd year secondary adult students answered a structured and semi-structured online self-administered questionnaire during a given period of time. The questionnaire was designed with closed and semi-closed questions.

Question N° 1 was a multiple-choice type, and students had to choose the right option according to their age.

Question N° 2 was a dichotomous type. The purpose was to know if students agreed or disagreed on the definition of culture from the Dictionary of Social Science, UNESCO, 1975.

Question N° 3 was a semi-closed type, and it was focused on students' opinions about English language teaching and the target culture.

In question N° 4 the author of this study wanted to find out what cultural aspects they would like to know about English-speaking countries. It was a semi-closed question.

Question N° 5 was a polytomous type, and the purpose was to discover if the teaching of cultural aspects of English-speaking countries would engage them in learning the English language.

Question N° 6 was a multiple-choice type, and it was oriented towards the selection of didactic resources for learning the English language and target culture.

Question N° 7 was a semi-closed type, and it was aimed at knowing students' opinions about the activities that would be engaging in working with cultural aspects in the English language classroom.

5.4 Analysis of Data from 2nd Year Secondary Adult Students' Surveys

Figure 12 shows 2nd year secondary adult students' age range. The sample was composed of 26 students in which 15 students were between 18 and 25 years old, five students were between 26 and 30 years old, one student was between 31 and 35 years old, one student was between 36 and 40 years old, four students were between 41 and 50 years old and none was more than 51 years old.

Figure 12

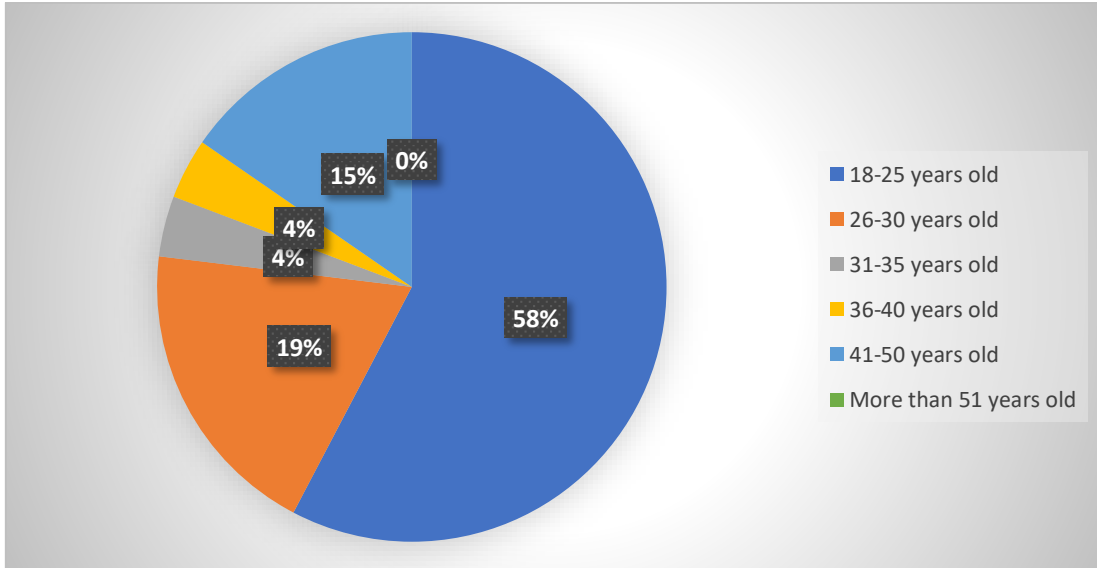*2nd Year Secondary Adult Students' Age Range*

Figure 13 shows that all the students agree on the definition of culture from the *Dictionary of Social Science, UNESCO*, 1975.

Figure 13

Students' Opinions About the Definition of Culture from the Dictionary of Social Science, UNESCO, 1975
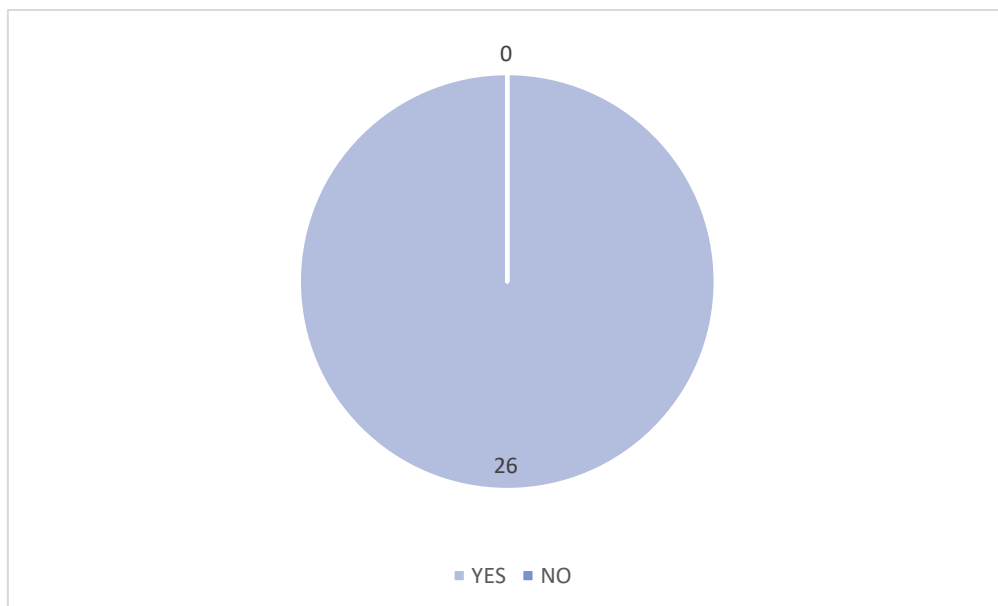

Figure 14 shows students' opinions about English language teaching and the target culture. Seventeen students think that it is important to teach the culture of English-speaking countries for a

better understanding of the language. This shows that 65% of the students consider that the target

culture is significant to learn the English language, but one student is not interested in knowing the

culture of English-speaking countries. Six students would like to know more about the culture of

English-speaking countries, nine students believe that knowing their culture better would broaden

their viewpoints. Eight students like English very much and listen to music, watch series and

movies in English. Seven students are interested in travelling and knowing the target culture, and

six students think it would help them know people and foster their social life. Three students like

English literature very much. Two students expressed other opinions, one thinks that learning the

English language and the target culture will enable him/her to travel abroad, and the other student

believes it is useful to work and to be trained in international cuisine.

Figure 14

Students' Opinions About English Language Teaching and the Target Culture
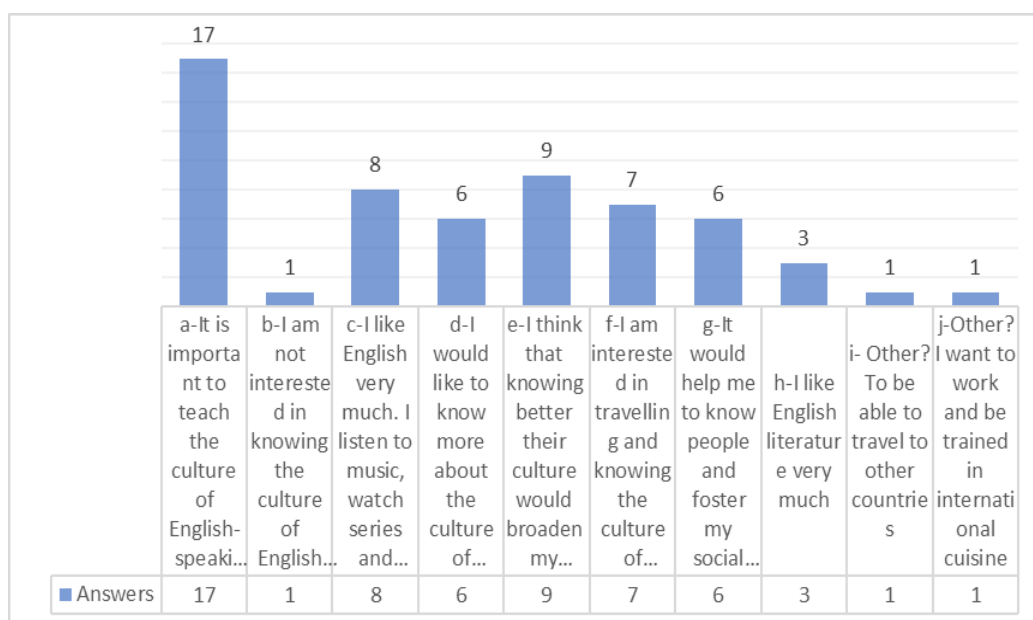

Figure 15 shows the cultural aspects that students would like to know about English-

speaking countries. First, 17 students would like to know about the daily life and routines, living

conditions, food and drinks, etc. of English-speaking countries. Second, they chose youth culture,

music, theatre and art. Third, history, geography and political systems, different social and ethnic

groups, traditions, folklore and tourist attractions. Fourth, values and beliefs and international relations (political, economic and cultural). Finally, literature. None of the students added other cultural aspects.

Figure 15

Cultural Aspects That Students Would Like to Know About English-Speaking Countries

Figure 16 shows students' opinions about the teaching of cultural aspects of English-speaking countries and their willingness to learn the English language. Fifteen students think that the teaching of cultural aspects of English-speaking countries would engage them in learning the language. Ten students are not sure, and one student does not think so.

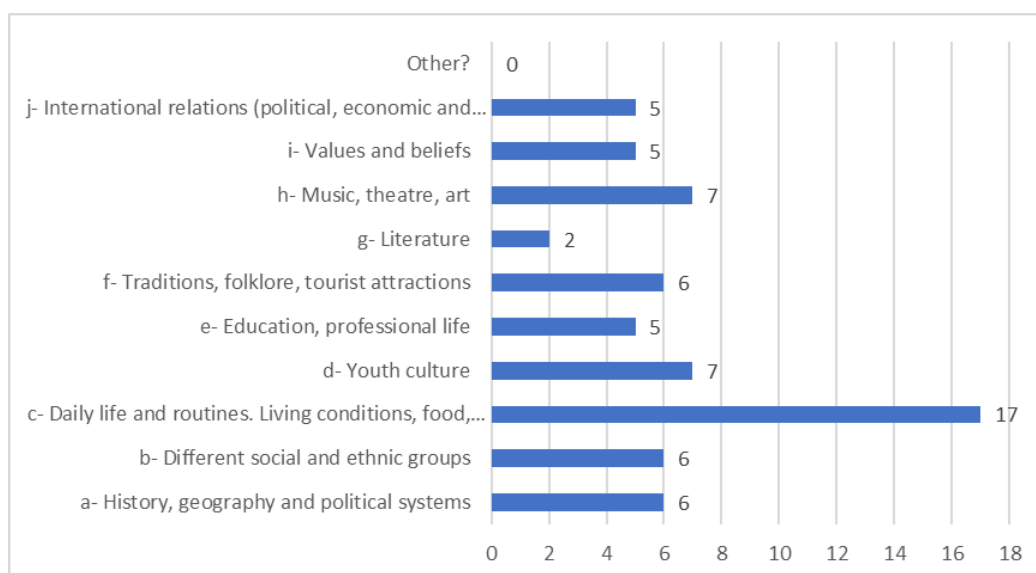**Figure 16**

Students' Opinions About the Teaching of Cultural Aspects of English-Speaking Countries and their Willingness to Learn the English Language
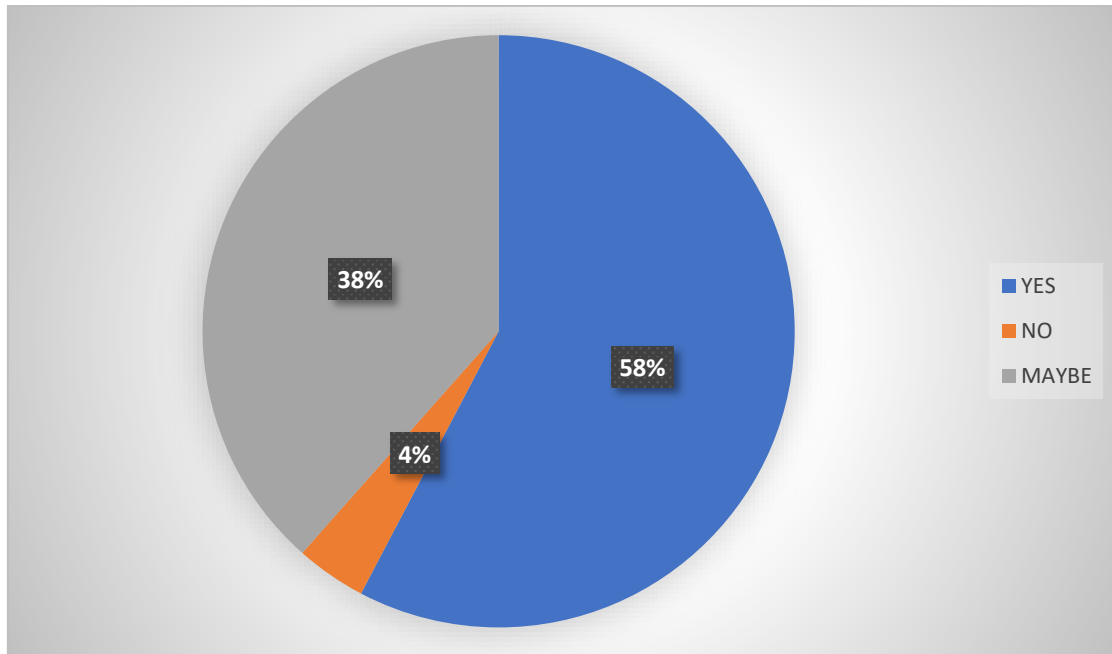
Figure 17 shows students' selection of didactic resources for learning the English language and target culture. First, students chose songs. Second, they selected films and documentary series. Third, short stories, novels, cartoons and poems, and textbooks. Fourth, videos. Fifth, they chose web pages. Finally, news in newspapers, photographs, online games, TV series, brochures, and advertisements.

Figure 17

Students' Selection of Didactic Resources for Learning the English Language and the Target Culture

Figure 18 shows students' opinions about the activities that would engage them in working with cultural aspects in the English language classroom. First, students chose to watch videos, films, series, etc. to learn an aspect of the foreign language. Second, they selected to read an authentic text and do comprehension activities. Third, they chose to compare an aspect of the foreign culture with their own. Fourth, they wanted to explore and investigate an aspect of the foreign culture. Finally, they revealed they would like to participate in dialogues in which people from different countries meet and to talk about stereotypes of some countries and cultures.
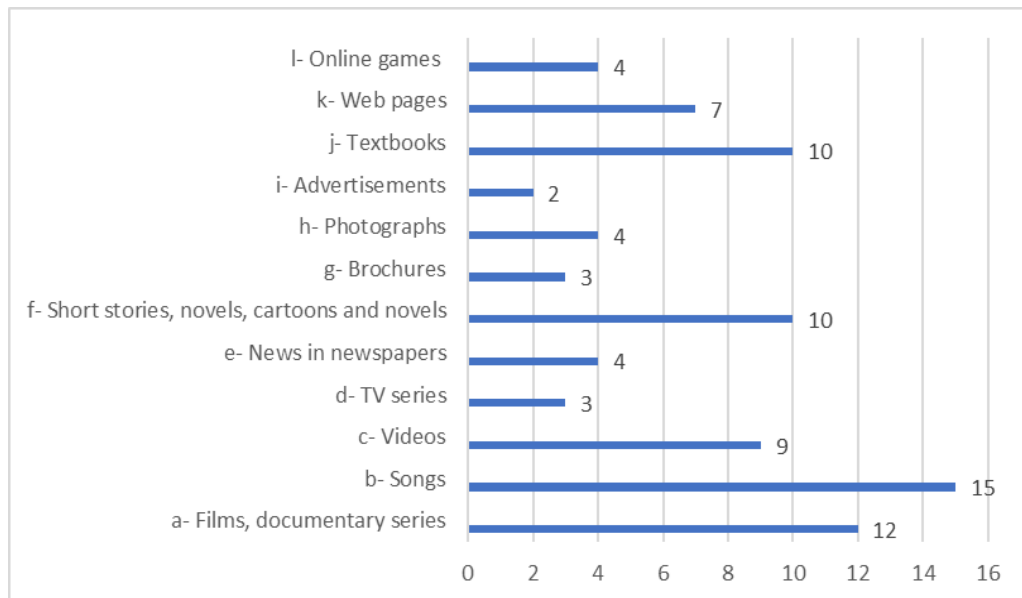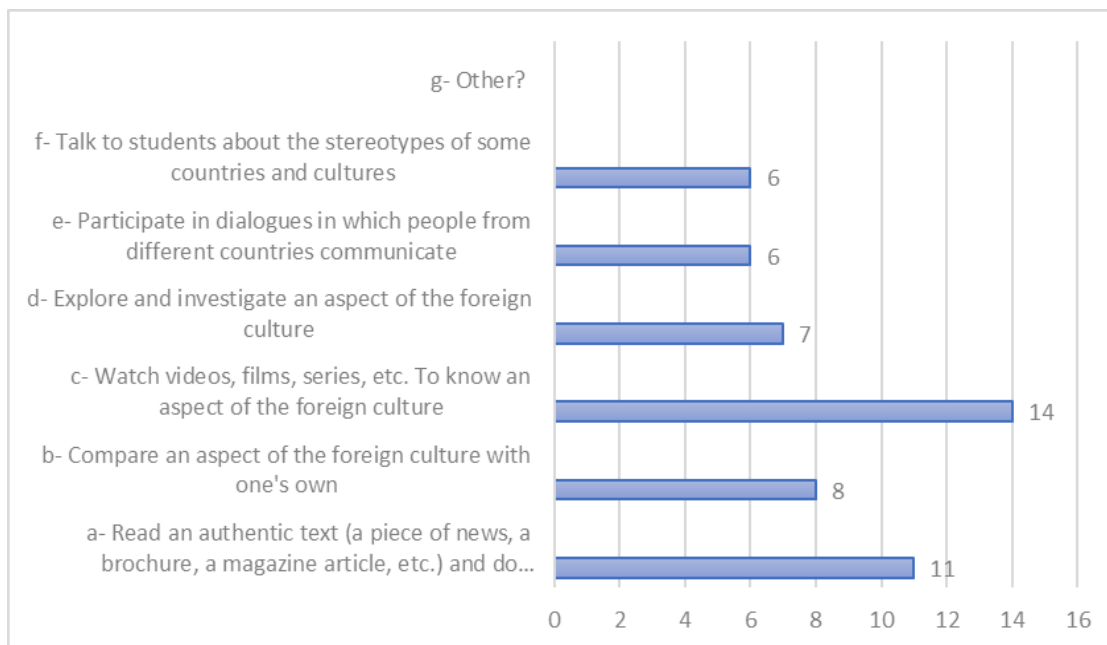
Figure 18

Students' Opinions About the Activities that Would Engage Them in Working with Cultural Aspects in the English Language Classroom

5.7 Contributions by the Research Subjects

The results of the surveys administered to the teachers of English from CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and *Extensiones (Classroom Centers)* are beneficial for this study. Most of them have been working in secondary adult schools for more than 10 years, so they have wide experience of teaching English to adult students and know their interests, necessities, difficulties and expectations very well. Teachers' perceptions about students' attitudes towards the teaching of English and the target culture show that they have preconceptions and stereotypical ideas, question the reason for learning the language, and have little knowledge about English-speaking countries. These perceptions coincide with the observations stated by the author of this study in the identification of the problem. It is also relevant to point out that the teachers believe that the cultural aspects of a language have to be incorporated into foreign language teaching because language and culture are connected one to the other. Therefore, they think that the cultural component is significant in the adult education modality to foster students' learning. Thus, they agree that its incorporation into the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba* is a vital element for learning the language. It is important to

highlight that all the teachers include some cultural aspects in their lessons and do some cultural activities in their classes.

The results of the surveys administered to 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 are relevant for this investigation and all the data collected were useful to elaborate a meaningful didactic unit to teach them the English language through the promotion of knowledge and respect for the target culture, and to develop an intercultural communicative competence. Most of the students are youngsters, between 18 and 30 years old. Many of them believe that learning the target culture is significant for a better understanding of the language. For this study, it is valuable that many students are aware of the importance of the cultural component in English language teaching. However, some students did not recognize this connection between language and culture, and one student expressed his/her discouragement of knowing the culture of English-speaking countries. Among the cultural aspects they had to choose in the survey, most of the students selected to know about the daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drinks, among others, of English-speaking countries. The activities that they thought would engage them in working with cultural aspects were: audio-visual aids, watching videos, films, series, etc.; reading authentic texts and comparing an aspect of the foreign culture with their own. Taking into account the didactic resources, they preferred songs, videos, films and documentary series, textbooks, short stories, novels, cartoons and poems. All these data were useful to elaborate the didactic unit taking into consideration students' interests, necessities and expectations.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

6.1 Final Thoughts

The literature review of this study shows that the incorporation of the cultural component into foreign language teaching helps to understand other cultures and promotes reflection in order to avoid cultural bias and challenge stereotypes. The design of a didactic unit which integrates the linguistic, grammatical and cultural aspects of the language was elaborated to engage 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 in a cross-cultural reflection for the purpose of learning English as a language of international and intercultural communication. This research focuses on the promotion of Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997) in the English language classroom for secondary adult students by helping them in learning and understanding more about other cultures and their own, thus, fostering their continuous personal development and education.

6.2 Implications and Contributions

- The need to integrate the cultural component into English language teaching at public secondary schools for adults to provide knowledge on society and culture about the target language and to reflect on similarities and differences between the target culture and their own.
- The need to integrate the cultural component into English language teaching at public secondary schools for adults to stimulate the development of intercultural awareness and intercultural skills to overcome stereotypes or cultural misunderstandings.
- The need to promote knowledge and respect for the target culture in secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 by the design of a meaningful didactic unit that articulates the linguistic, grammatical and cultural aspects of the English language.

- The need to develop specific teaching material for secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 that integrates the cultural component of English-speaking countries together with the linguistic and grammatical aspects of the English language.

- The need to articulate the Spanish language with the English language in order to broaden the knowledge and understanding of both cultures.

- This study seeks to offer a methodological and didactic contribution for teaching the English language to 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96. Besides, this research attempts to show the importance of the cultural component in foreign language teaching and learning to develop students' intercultural attitudes.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

This proposal aspires to think about new methodological alternatives to articulate the linguistic, grammatical and cultural aspects for teaching the English language to secondary adult students at public secondary schools taking into account the possibility of the incorporation of the cultural component into the *English Language Curriculum of the Curricular Design for Secondary Adult Students of the Province of Córdoba.*

For future studies, it would be helpful and meaningful to put into practice the proposed didactic unit in a secondary adult students' classroom and create an interdisciplinary didactic unit with the Spanish and history teachers.

It could also be interesting to plan an interview with a teacher, student or community member from an English-speaking country for an additional cultural viewpoint at the end of the didactic unit.

Furthermore, it would be a big challenge for students at teacher training colleges to do their teaching practice at public secondary schools for adults and articulate the linguistic, grammatical

and cultural aspects of the English language to develop learners' intercultural communicative

competence through didactic units, projects, workshops, among others.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: Survey for Teachers of English from CENMA N° 96, its *Anexos (Outbuildings)* and

Extensiones (Classroom Centers)

APPENDIX B: Survey for 2nd Year Secondary Adult Students from CENMA N° 96

APPENDIX C: Didactic Unit for 2nd Year Secondary Adult Students from CENMA N° 96

APPENDIX D: Structure of the Didactic Unit for 2nd Year Secondary Adult Students from CENMA

N° 96

Encuestadora: Vilma Beatriz Sánchez
Lugar donde se realiza la encuesta: CENMA Nº 96, Anexos
y Extensiones Áulicas del CENMA N° 96
Ciudad: Villa María   Provincia: Córdoba
Fecha: …………………………
Número de cuestionario: ....

Estimados docentes:

La presente encuesta tiene como objetivo conocer las percepciones de los docentes de inglés del CENMA N° 96, sus Anexos y Extensiones Áulicas sobre la importancia del componente cultural en la enseñanza del inglés en la modalidad de jóvenes y adultos, y en el diseño curricular de la Provincia de Córdoba de la asignatura Lengua Extranjera Inglés de dicha modalidad.
La siguiente encuesta es anónima por lo cual los/as invito a contestar con sinceridad, ya que la información solo se utilizará para fines académicos.

Instrucciones: Contestar las siguientes preguntas.

1. ¿Cuántos años hace que enseña la asignatura Lengua Extranjera Inglés en la modalidad de jóvenes y adultos?

   De 1 a 5 años
   De 6 a 10 años
   De 11 a 15 años
   De 16 a 20 años
   Hace más de 20 años

2. ¿Cuál es su percepción sobre las actitudes de los estudiantes jóvenes y adultos de su escuela acerca de la enseñanza de la lengua extranjera y su cultura? Marque todos los que considere necesarios.

   a. Piensan que aprender inglés es muy difícil
   b. Cuestionan el para qué aprender inglés
   c. Están muy motivados en aprender inglés
   d. Están poco interesados en aprender inglés
   e. Saben mucho sobre la cultura de los países de habla inglesa
   f. Conocen poco sobre la cultura de los países de habla inglesa
   g. Tienen ideas estereotipadas de la cultura extranjera
   h. Tienen una actitud positiva hacia las personas vinculadas al idioma extranjero
   i. Tienen una actitud negativa hacia las personas vinculadas al idioma extranjero
   j. Otros. ¿Cuáles? ……………………………………………………………………….

3. Indique su nivel de acuerdo o desacuerdo con la siguiente cita de Sagredo Santos A. (2005) donde 1 significa "Totalmente en desacuerdo" y 5 significa "Totalmente de acuerdo".

"Los aspectos culturales de una lengua son fundamentales y deben integrarse en la enseñanza de un idioma extranjero, dado que el patrimonio cultural que gran parte de las sociedades reciben del pasado está vertebrado a través de su lengua. En este sentido la creación popular, el arte y la acción social son transmitidos con el lenguaje".

1. ___   2. ___   3. ___   4. ___   5. ___

4. ¿Cree usted que es importante el componente cultural en la enseñanza del idioma inglés como lengua extranjera en la modalidad de jóvenes y adultos? ¿En qué medida está usted de acuerdo con que el componente cultural en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera en la modalidad de jóvenes de adultos influye positivamente en el interés de los estudiantes por aprender el idioma? Seleccione un número del 1 al 10. Si está "completamente de acuerdo" seleccione 10.
Si no está de acuerdo para nada seleccione 1. Por supuesto, puede elegir números entre el 1 y el 10 según su valoración.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. ¿Considera favorable la incorporación de aspectos culturales en el diseño curricular de la asignatura Lengua Extranjera Inglés de la modalidad de jóvenes y adultos de la Provincia de Córdoba como un componente vital para el aprendizaje del idioma?

SÍ ____   NO ____

Si su respuesta es SÍ responda la pregunta 6.
Si su respuesta es NO explique por qué.

6. ¿Qué aspectos culturales cree que deberían incluirse en el diseño curricular de la asignatura Lengua Extranjera Inglés de la modalidad de jóvenes y adultos de la Provincia de Córdoba? Marque todos los que considere necesarios.

a- Historia, geografía y sistemas políticos
b- Diferentes grupos sociales y étnicos
c- Vida y rutinas diarias, condiciones de vida, comida, bebida, etc.
d- Cultura juvenil
e- Educación, vida profesional
f- Tradiciones, folklore, atracciones turísticas
g- Literatura
h- Música, teatro, arte
i- Valores y creencias
j- Relaciones internacionales (políticas, económicas y culturales)

Otros, ¿cuáles? _____

7. Con respecto a sus prácticas ¿Con qué frecuencia planifica la incorporación de aspectos culturales en sus clases para los jóvenes y adultos de su escuela? Indique en cada aspecto la frecuencia en la que los incorpora.

a- Historia, geografía y sistemas políticos
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

b- Diferentes grupos sociales y étnicos
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

c- Vida y rutinas diarias, condiciones de vida, comida, bebida, etc.
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

d- Cultura juvenil
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

e- Educación, vida profesional
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

f- Tradiciones, folklore, atracciones turísticas
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

g- Literatura
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

h- Música, teatro, arte
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

i- Valores y creencias
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

j- Relaciones internacionales (políticas, económicas y culturales)
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

8. ¿Qué tipo de actividades realiza en sus clases para trabajar los aspectos culturales? Indique para cada actividad el grado de frecuencia.

a- Leer un texto y realizar actividades de comprensión sobre el texto (responder preguntas, decir verdadero o falso)
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

b-Comparar un aspecto de la propia cultura con el de la cultura extranjera

Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

c- Mostrar videos de Internet para mostrar un aspecto de la cultura extranjera
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

d- Pedirles a los estudiantes que exploren e investiguen por sí mismos un aspecto de la cultura extranjera
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

e- Que participen en diálogos en los que se encuentran personas de diferentes países
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

f- Hablar con los estudiantes sobre los estereotipos de algunas culturas o países
Con frecuencia   A veces   Nunca

Encuestadora: Vilma Beatriz Sánchez Prof. de inglés
Lugar donde se realiza la encuesta: CENMA N° 96
Ciudad: Villa María   Provincia: Córdoba
Fecha: …………………………
Número de cuestionario: ....

Estimados estudiantes:

La presente encuesta tiene como objetivo conocer las percepciones de los estudiantes de 2° año del CENMA N° 96 de Villa María sobre la importancia del componente cultural en el aprendizaje del inglés en la modalidad de jóvenes y adultos, los temas de interés referidos a la cultura y las actividades y los materiales didácticos de mayor preferencia.
La siguiente encuesta es anónima por lo cual los/as invito a contestar con sinceridad, ya que la información solo se utilizará para fines académicos.

Instrucciones: Contestar las siguientes preguntas.

1. ¿Cuál es su edad? Elegir la opción que corresponda.

18-25 años
26-30 años
31 a 35 años
36 a 40 años
41 a 50 años
Más de 51 años

2. ¿Está de acuerdo con la siguiente definición de cultura? Marcar la opción correcta.

Condición característica que comparte una sociedad o un grupo social en un momento determinado. Esta condición engloba los hábitos lingüísticos, las tradiciones populares, las costumbres, las creencias, las maneras de proceder, las formas de valoración, y la visión del mundo de esa sociedad. (Diccionario de Ciencias Sociales de la UNESCO, 1975).

a- SÍ
b- NO

3. ¿Cuál es su opinión acerca de la enseñanza del idioma inglés y su cultura? Marcar todos los que considere necesarios.

a. Es importante que se enseñe la cultura de los países de habla inglesa para entender mejor la lengua
b. No me interesa conocer la cultura de los países de habla inglesa
c. Me gusta mucho el inglés, escucho música y miro series y películas en inglés
d. Me gustaría conocer más sobre la cultura de los países de habla inglesa
e. Creo que conocer mejor su cultura me permitiría ampliar mi punto de vista

    f.   Me interesa viajar y conocer culturas de habla inglesa
    g.   Me serviría para conocer gente e incrementar mi vida social
    h.   Me gusta mucho la literatura inglesa
    i.   Otros. ¿Cuáles? ……………...

4. ¿Qué aspectos culturales le interesaría conocer sobre los países de habla inglesa? Marcar todos los que considere necesarios.

a- Historia, geografía y sistemas políticos
b- Diferentes grupos sociales y étnicos
c- Vida y rutinas diarias, condiciones de vida, comida, bebida, etc.
d- Cultura juvenil
e- Educación, vida profesional
f- Tradiciones, folklore, atracciones turísticas
g- Literatura
h- Música, teatro, arte
i- Valores y creencias
j- Relaciones internacionales (políticas, económicas y culturales)
Otros, ¿Cuáles? ………….

5. ¿Cree que la enseñanza de la cultura de los países de habla inglesa en la modalidad de jóvenes y adultos motivaría su aprendizaje del inglés?

a- SÍ
b- NO
c- TAL VEZ

6. ¿Cuáles de estos materiales didácticos prefiere para un mejor aprendizaje del idioma inglés y su cultura? Marcar todos los que considere necesarios.

a- Películas, documentales
b- Canciones
c- Videos
e- Series televisivas
f- Noticias de diarios
g- Cuentos, novelas, historietas, poemas
h- Folletos
g- Fotografías
h- Publicidades
i- Libro de texto
j- Páginas web
k- Juegos online

7. ¿Cuáles de estas actividades cree que lo motivaría para trabajar los aspectos culturales en la clase de inglés? Marcar todas las que considere necesarias.

a- Leer un texto auténtico (noticia, folleto, artículo de revista, etc.) y realizar actividades de comprensión sobre el texto

b-Comparar un aspecto de mi propia cultura con el de la cultura extranjera

c- Mirar videos, películas, series, etc. para conocer un aspecto de la cultura extranjera

d- Explorar e investigar un aspecto de la cultura extranjera

e- Participar en diálogos en los que se encuentran personas de diferentes países

f- Hablar sobre los estereotipos de algunas culturas o países

g- Otros, ¿cuáles? …………………………………………………………………….

Exploring Other Cultures. An Intercultural Sight of Jamaica

Basic Skills

General Competences

1- Declarative Knowledge.

A- Knowledge of the World.

● Students will need to have some factual knowledge about Jamaica (geography, language, political issues, history, culture, sports, music, religion, education, tourism, etc.).

B- Sociocultural Knowledge.

● Students will acquire some knowledge about some aspects of Jamaican daily life and routines, some kinds of typical food and music and some characteristics of Rastafarians.

C- Intercultural Awareness.

● Students will find similarities and differences between the Jamaican culture and their own in order to promote reflection upon socially constructed identities.

2- Skills and Know-how.

A- Practical Skills and Know-how.

● Students will need to have some knowledge about social and living skills.

B- Intercultural Skills and Know-how.

● Students will be able to bring the foreign culture and their own into relation with each other in order to develop intercultural sensitivity.

3- 'Existential' Competence.

● Students will be encouraged to promote intercultural attitudes, such as openness towards, and interest in, Jamaican culture; willingness to regard one's own cultural viewpoint; and ability to understand cultural differences.

4- Ability to Learn.

- Students will be able to incorporate new information into existing knowledge, modifying the latter where necessary.

    5- Communicative Language Competences.

    A- Linguistic Competences.

- By the end of this unit, students will understand the simple present tense and some vocabulary related to daily routines, food, music and lifestyles.

- By the end of this unit, students will know how to produce written English in which the simple present tense is used accurately.

    B- Communicative (Sociolinguistic and Discourse) Competence.

    - Students will be aware of the most significant differences between the customs, attitudes, values and beliefs prevalent in the community concerned and those of their own.

    - Students will know that the use of colloquial words and expressions is acceptable in songs, as well as in oral expressions and informal conversations.

Contents

  - Simple present tense: affirmative, negative and interrogative forms.

  - Daily routine verbs: wake up, eat/have breakfast/dinner, wear a school uniform, press clothes, take a taxi/bus, go to bed.

  - Food: eggs, ackee, salt fish, boiled bananas, ackee, callaloo, fritters, cornmeal porridge, brown stew, barbecue, curry chicken, rice, peas, fried plantains, cabbage salad.

  - Music: reggae.

Teaching/Learning Activities

First part: A Day in the Life of a Typical Jamaican Family

  1. **Motivation/Introduction Activities.**

A- Work in groups of 2 or 3 students. Look at the pictures and answer in Spanish: What do you think the topic will be about? Write your answers in your folders.

B- Read the questions and talk to your teacher about Jamaica. Then, watch a video and answer the questions in English.

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JGDMQCoe08

a- What is the capital of Jamaica?

b- Where is Jamaica located?

c- What is the official language?

d- What are the most popular sports?

e- What kind of music is popular in Jamaica?

f- What is the most popular religion in Jamaica?

2. **Previous Knowledge Activities.**

Answer the questions individually and in Spanish in your folders.

    a- What does the word *routine* mean to you?

    b- When you talk about a daily routine, what does it include?

    c- What do you think routine means to Jamaican people?

    d- What would that include?

3. **Development Activities.**

A- Read the words and the definitions and look at the pictures. Can you guess the meanings of these words in your language? If necessary, use an online dictionary to help you.

WAKE UP: To cease sleeping.

HOME-COOKED: *Of a meal, food, etc.*: made and eaten at home

PRESS CLOTHES: To make clothes smooth using a hot iron

WEAR A SCHOOL UNIFORM: The special set of clothes worn by children at school.

TAKE A TAXI/BUS: To ride in one.

GO TO BED: To lie down in one's bed to sleep.

BREAKFAST: A meal eaten in the morning, the first of the day.

DINNER: The meal you eat in the evening.

ACKEE: A tropical West African tree which is cultivated for its fruit and has been introduced into

the Caribbean and elsewhere

CALLALOO: A soup or stew made with greens, onions, and crabmeat or pork.

FRITTERS: A slice of fruit, vegetable, or meat covered with batter (= a mixture of flour, egg, and milk) and then fried.

CORNMEAL PORRIDGE: A breakfast porridge made with cornmeal as a primary ingredient. It may also include milk, coconut milk, sugar, and spices like nutmeg, cinnamon and vanilla.

B- Read the title and answer individually and in Spanish: What do you think the text is going to be about?

What is a day in the life of a typical Jamaican family living in Jamaica?

Most families wake up and eat a home-cooked breakfast together. Breakfast consists of eggs, ackee and salt fish, callaloo, boiled bananas, fritters and cornmeal porridge.

After breakfast, everyone gets ready for work or school. Most Jamaicans "press" their clothes in the morning. Their outfits are usually very professional and impeccable. Most men and women have a job in the hotel industry.

Children wear school uniforms.

Jamaicans typically take a taxi or bus to school. Many Jamaicans do not own a car, so they have to rely on public transportation to get them where they need to go (taxi and bus fare is quite expensive compared to what most Jamaicans make).

After work and school, Jamaicans take a taxi or bus back home and enjoy a family dinner. They like to socialize, watch TV and eat a home-cooked meal. A typical Jamaican dinner would be brown stew, barbecue or curry chicken with a side of rice and peas. Cabbage salad and fried plantains are also very popular.

Jamaicans usually spend the evenings at home with family and go to bed by 9 or 10 p.m. because they have to wake up very early.

Source: https://www.quora.com/What-is-a-day-in-the-life-of-a-typical-Jamaican-family-living-in-Jamaica

C- Read the text and say if these statements are true or false. Correct the false ones.

a- Jamaican people have breakfast at work or at school.   ………..

b- Everybody in Jamaica goes to work or school by car. ………….

c- Jamaicans are sociable and enjoy spending time with their families. …………..

d- They go to bed early. …………...

D- Answer the questions individually and in Spanish.

a- Is there anything in the text that has changed any of your beliefs or assumptions about the culture presented?

b- Name one thing that contrasts your own culture with something that you have noticed in the text.

c- Name one thing that is similar to your own culture that you have noticed in the text.

4. **Consolidation Activities.**

Write a short paragraph comparing and contrasting Jamaican and Argentinian daily routines. Use the authentic text as a model and these phrases to help you.

Phrases:

In Argentina/Jamaica people…

Everyone in Jamaica/Argentina...

In both cultures people…

In Argentina/Jamaica, breakfast/lunch/dinner consists of…

After breakfast/work/school/dinner people…

Argentinians/Jamaicans like to…

Second part: Reggae Music and Rastafarians

1. **Motivation/Introduction Activities.**

   Read the questions and discuss in pairs.

   Have you ever heard of Reggae? Have you ever listened to a Reggae song?

2. **Previous Knowledge Activities.**

   Look at the picture and answer the questions individually and in Spanish in your folder.

a-   Do you know the person in the picture? Who is he?

b-   What kind of music does he sing?

c-   Does this kind of music represent the culture of a particular country?

d-   Is this kind of music associated with a particular group of people?

e-   What kind of people do you think would listen to this particular music style?

f-   Do people in your country listen to this kind of music?

g-   What kind of people in your country do you think are interested in this kind of music?

3. Development Activities.

A- Watch a video and listen to the song *Three Little Birds* by Bob Marley. Then, answer the questions briefly in English.

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKucWGb7tvg

a- What's the name of the song?

b- Who is the singer?

c- What kind of music is it?

d- Is the song optimistic or pessimistic?

e- Do you like the song? Why? Why not?

B- Match the words to the pictures. Look up the words you do not know to do this activity.

BIRDS

SUN

MORNING

SONG

MESSAGE

C- Listen to the song again and complete the spaces with the words from activity B.

Three Little Birds
Bob Marley

Don't worry, about a thing
'Cause every little thing, gonna be all right
Singin', don't worry, about a thing
'Cause every little thing, gonna be all right
Rise up this ………………………..
Smile with the risin' …………………
Three little ……………….
Pitched by my doorstep
Singin' sweet ………………
Of melodies pure and true
Sayin', "This is my message to you, whoo-hoo"
Singin', don't worry, about a thing
'Cause every little thing, is gonna be all right
Singin', don't worry, don't worry 'bout a thing
'Cause every little thing, gonna be all right
Rise up this ……………………
Smile with the risin' ……………..
Three little ……………………
Pitched by my doorstep
Singin' sweet ……………….
Of melodies pure and true
Sayin', "This is my ………………………to you, whoo-hoo"
Singin', don't worry, about a thing
Worry about a thing, no
Every little thing, gonna be all right
Don't worry
Singin', don't worry, about a thing
I won't worry!
'Cause every little thing, gonna be alright
Hmm don't worry, about a thing
'Cause a every little thing, gonna be all right
I won't worry
Baby don't worry, about a thing
'Cause every little thing, is gonna be all right
Say, don't worry about a thing, no girl
'Cause every little thing gonna be all right

C- Watch this video and answer the questions individually and in Spanish.

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mziAj41g1-Q

a- What is your reaction to what you have seen?

b- Is there anything in the video that has changed any of your beliefs or assumptions about

the culture presented?

c- Was there anything that made you feel uncomfortable or seemed inappropriate in regard

to your own views of this community? Explain what and why.

d- Name one thing that contrasts with your own culture that you have observed in the video.

4. **Consolidation Activities.**

Work in groups of two and click the following links to find information about the

Rastafarians.

Answer the questions in simple sentences. Then, write a short paragraph with all the

information.

Source: https://www.uri.org/kids/world-religions/rastafarianism

Source: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Rastafari

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rastafari#Music

a- Who are Rastafarians?

b- What do Rastafarians believe?

c- What is Rastafarians' lifestyle like? For example: habits, living conditions, and behaviour.

d- What do Rastafarians look like?

e- What kind of music do they like?

f- Where do Rastafarians live?

Didactic Resources and Materials

The didactic resources and materials used to elaborate this didactic unit were: Internet sites,

songs and videos.

Teaching/Learning Evaluation Process

Initial, Predictive or Diagnostic Evaluation

This evaluation will be done through observation during the motivation /introduction activities.

Formative or Procedural Evaluation

This evaluation will take place during the development activities. The teacher will adapt the teaching process to the needs and progress of students.

Summative or Final Evaluation

It will take place during the consolidation activities. It aims at assessing the degree of accomplishment obtained by each student regarding the proposed goals for a specific teaching/learning process.

Exploring Other Cultures. An Intercultural Sight of Jamaica

This didactic unit was elaborated taking into account the results of the surveys administered to a sample of 26 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 in Villa María, Argentina. The results show that they are interested in knowing about daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drinks, among others, about English-speaking countries. The didactic resources they prefer are: songs, films, documentary series, textbooks, shorts stories, novels, cartoons, poems, videos and web pages; and the cultural activities they have chosen are: watching videos, reading authentic texts, doing reading comprehension activities, and comparing an aspect of the foreign culture with their own.

The author of this study did some research about English-speaking countries and decided to choose Jamaica for the design of this didactic unit because the official language is English and due to its unique culture, rich heritage and cultural diversity. As a result, it was possible to elaborate a meaningful didactic unit based on interculturality, and at the same time integrate the linguistic and grammatical aspects of the English language in order to promote the development of an intercultural communicative competence in 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96.

The didactic unit is based on the theoretical framework of this study. Above all, Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997) was considered as the basis for integrating language and culture, Chapter 5 of the *European Framework of Reference (2002)* was useful to plan the different competences and skills, the elements to make up the didactic unit mentioned by Rodriguez Gallego (2007), and the constructivist perspective by Shuell (1986, 1988) was taken into consideration regarding students' motivations and level of knowledge.

The didactic unit is divided into two parts. In the first one, the topic is related to a day in the life of a typical Jamaican family. In the motivation/introduction activity, students will look at some pictures and guess what the topic will be about. They will work in groups of 2 or 3 students and

exchange opinions in Spanish. They will have 5 minutes to write the answers in their folders. After

that, the teacher will ask the different groups to read their hypotheses aloud and he/she will write

the answers in English on the board. The students will copy the sentences in their folders. After that,

the teacher will write some questions in English about Jamaica on the board and will ask students if

they know the answers to explore their previous knowledge about it. Due to the fact that it is

important for students to have factual information about Jamaica, the teacher will show them a

video about this country with aspects regarding the geographic location, language, political issues,

history, culture, sports, music, religion, education, tourism, among others. After that, the teacher

and the students will lead a discussion, all together, to answer the questions and reflect on the

aspects presented in the video. Then, the students will copy the questions and the answers in their

folders.

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JGDMQCoe08

Questions:

a- What is the capital of Jamaica?

b- Where is Jamaica located?

c- What is the official language?

d- What are the most popular sports?

e- What kind of music is popular in Jamaica?

f- What is the most popular religion in Jamaica?

In the next step, the previous knowledge activity, students will respond to critical thinking

questions. These questions are based on the concepts of knowledge, attitude, skills of interpreting

and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction by Byram's model of Intercultural

Communicative Competence (1997). They are aimed to determine the current knowledge and

attitudes of 2nd year secondary adult students at CENMA N° 96 around the topic of daily routines, prior to reading an authentic text. The questions they will have to answer are the following:

a- What does the word *routine* mean to you?

b- When you talk about a daily routine, what does it include?

c- What do you think routine means to Jamaican people?

d- What would that include?

Students will answer the questions individually and in Spanish, due to their current language level, to think about them more deeply and to reflect more carefully.

They will be challenged to think about their prior knowledge as well as attitudes towards daily routines in another country. These critical thinking questions will show the students' existing knowledge and assumptions. Besides the sub-competences of knowledge and attitude, the critical thinking questions will provide an initial framework for students to explore skills of relating and discovering. Question b- will help students to find out the routines of their own, and questions c- and d- will provoke students to think about their assumptions or stereotypes of Jamaican people. The purpose is to get students to start thinking about their own daily routines and possible characteristics of Jamaican people in order to find similarities and differences between each other.

In the developing activities, some vocabulary about daily routine verbs and food will be presented as a pre-reading exercise about Jamaican daily routines. The teacher will read the words and definitions in English and will show some pictures to make students comprehend in an easier way, and guess the meanings in Spanish. If they are not able to understand any of the meanings, they can look up the words in an online dictionary. After that, an authentic text will be presented. Students will work individually, and they will read the title and guess what the topic will be about. They will say their opinions in Spanish, and the teacher will write their ideas in English on the

board. Then, they will compare the answers with the hypotheses they wrote in groups during the motivation/introduction activity to see if their predictions were correct or not.

Next, students will have to read the text. The teacher will provide some reading comprehension strategies. He/she will ask students to underline cognates and circle the words presented in the pre-reading exercise. After that, he/she will ask students to read the text and look up in an online dictionary the words that they consider important to understand it better. Then, they will do a comprehension activity. They will say if the statements are true or false, and they will have to correct the false ones according to the text.

After reading the text comprehensively, students will answer individually and in Spanish three Intercultural Competence questions:

a- Is there anything in the text that has changed any of your beliefs or assumptions about the culture presented?

b- Name one thing that contrasts with your own culture that you noticed in the text.

c- Name one thing that is similar to your own culture that you noticed in the text.

These questions will give students the possibility to reflect upon their assumptions and beliefs about cultural routines in Jamaica and Argentina.

Finally, in the consolidation activities, students will write a short paragraph comparing and contrasting the daily routines of both cultures. The teacher will use some examples of the authentic text to explain some grammar rules about the simple present tense. After that, he/she will write on the board some phrases that will be helpful for students, and he/she will tell them to use the authentic text as a model.

The teacher will facilitate the process of learning, encouraging students to be responsible and autonomous. Students will work together and support each other to find information using different tools and resources in order to complete the task.

Phrases:

In Argentina/Jamaica people…

Everyone in Jamaica/Argentina...

In both cultures people…

In Argentina/Jamaica, breakfast/lunch/dinner consists of…

After breakfast/work/school/dinner people…

Argentinians/Jamaicans like to…

In the second part of the didactic unit, the topic is related to reggae music and Rastafarians, who are members of a distinct religious and cultural minority within Jamaican society. In the motivation/introduction activity, students will read the questions written on the board and discuss in pairs for two minutes: *Have you ever heard of reggae? Have you ever listened to a reggae song?* While students are talking, the teacher will play reggae music in the background. After that, the teacher will ask them if they have ever heard of this particular musical style before, if they think this represents the culture of a particular country or region somehow and why/why not, and what kind of people they believe would listen to or be interested in that particular musical style. Here, it should be interesting to note if students bring out any stereotypical ideas about reggae.

In the previous knowledge activities, students will look at Bob Marley's picture and answer the questions individually and in Spanish in their folders. They will have ten minutes to write the answers. After that, the teacher will lead a discussion to see if they think this singer represents the culture of a particular country and why/why not, and what kind of people they believe would listen to or be interested in that particular musical style. Students will answer the questions based on the concepts of knowledge, attitude, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction according to Byram's (1997) model.

a-   Do you know the person in the picture? Who is he?

b-   Does he represent the culture of a particular country? Why? Why not?

c-   What kind of music does he sing?

d-   Is this kind of music associated with a particular group of people?

e-   What kind of people do you think would listen to this particular music style?

f-   Do people in your country listen to this kind of music?

g-   What kind of people in your country do you think are interested in this kind of music?

In the development activities, students will watch a video and listen to the song *Three Little Birds* by Bob Marley.

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKucWGb7tvg

After that, students will answer these questions briefly in English:

a- What's the name of the song?

b-Who is the singer?

c- What kind of music is it?

d- Is the song optimistic or pessimistic?

 e- Do you like the song? Why? Why not?

It is worth noting that 58% of 2nd year secondary adult students have chosen *songs* in the first place as a didactic resource for learning the English language and target culture, that's why it was decided to include a song as a motivating tool in this didactic unit.

After that, students will work with some vocabulary of the song and will match the words to the pictures. They will look up the words in an online dictionary to do this activity. Then, students will listen to the song again and will complete the spaces of the lyrics with the words from the previous activity. The teacher will point out and explain some colloquial words and phrases which are acceptable in songs, as well as in oral expressions and informal conversations.

The next activity aims at fostering intercultural awareness by finding similarities and differences between the Jamaican culture and their own. Students will watch a video and will

answer some questions individually and in Spanish to explore cultural practices of a subculture in order to promote reflection upon socially constructed identities.

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mziAj41g1-Q

a- What is your reaction to what you have seen?

b- Is there anything in the video that has changed your own beliefs or assumptions about the culture presented?

c- Was there anything that made you feel uncomfortable or seemed inappropriate in regard to your own views of this community? Explain what and why.

d- Name one thing that contrasts with your own culture that you have observed in the video.

In the consolidation activities, students will work in groups of two people and will click on the following links to find information about Rastafarians. They should explore the Internet sites using the reading techniques of skimming and scanning (previously explained by the teacher) to extract pertinent information. Once they have the appropriate information, they should use it to respond in simple sentences to the given questions. After that, they will organize the information and write a short paragraph about Rastafarians.

Source: https://www.uri.org/kids/world-religions/rastafarianism

Source: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Rastafari

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rastafari#Music

a- Who are Rastafarians?

b- What do Rastafarians believe in?

c- What is Rastafarians' lifestyle like? For example: habits, living conditions, and behaviour.

d- What do they eat?

e- What do Rastafarians look like?

f- What kind of music do they like?

g- Where do Rastafarians live?

In the surveys administered to 2nd year secondary adult students, 26% chose *web pages* as a didactic resource and 42% selected *reading authentic texts* as cultural activities, that's why it was decided to include them in this didactic unit.

This activity shows a constructivist perspective, as Shuell (1986, 1988) points out, because students need to make comparisons, investigate possible connections between meaningful elements, distinguish relevant from irrelevant information and, in this process, to use and build on their existing knowledge and understanding of the world. They require reconsidering their own convictions and attitudes towards the foreign culture and its speakers, and distinguish from those cultural representations that may appear distorted, for example, in textbooks or in the media.

In conclusion, this didactic unit has been elaborated, taking into account the contributions of three authors: Byram (1997), Rodriguez Gallego (2007) and Shuell (1986, 1988).

Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997) has been useful because he states that the capacity of establishing and maintaining human relationships is as important as communication itself, and that capacity depends on attitudinal factors. Therefore, this didactic unit has taken into consideration on the one hand, the linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects of the language, and on the other hand, the cultural aspects have been incorporated to make students aware and reflect upon the similarities and differences between the Jamaican culture and their own, leave behind typical stereotypes and prejudices, as well as working together in accepting diversity, cultivating empathy and thinking critically.

The elements that Rodriguez Gallego (2007) mentions have been used to make up this didactic unit: unit title, didactic goals, basic skills, contents, teaching/learning activities, motivation/introduction activities, previous knowledge activities, development activities, consolidation activities, didactic resources and materials, and teaching/learning evaluation process.

These steps have been practical to plan, define the goals, determine the contents, think about the activities according to 2nd year secondary adult students' characteristics, interests and motivations.

Moreover, it was considered the learning process of the foreign language-culture from a constructivist perspective regarding Shuell's characteristics of meaningful learning as an active, constructive, and accumulative process. The activities of this didactic unit were aimed at making comparisons, investigating, distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information, among others, in order to construct meaning.