UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA

FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA, LETRAS Y CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

CENTRO DE POSGRADO

MAESTRÍA EN LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA A LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLES COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

The Influence of Cultural Topic Activities on Oral Communicative Competence with EFL A2 Level Students

Trabajo de titulación previo a la obtención del Título de Magister en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

Autora:

Patricia del Carmen Galarza Quezada

C.I.: 0101991677

Directora:

Mst. Ana María Calle Calle

C.I.: 0102305562

CUENCA-ECUADOR

2017

Resumen

El lenguaje y la cultura tienen una relación inseparable y mutuamente dependiente. Hoy en día, es vital que profesores de inglés proporcionen a los estudiantes una conciencia intercultural para desarrollar la competencia comunicativa intercultural. Por lo tanto, el aprendizaje de cualquier idioma nuevo sin el conocimiento de su cultura sigue siendo incompleto. El objetivo del presente estudio es demostrar si el uso de temas culturales influye en el incremento de la competencia comunicativa oral en los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera del nivel A2 del Instituto Universitario de Lenguas de la Universidad de Cuenca durante el ciclo septiembre 2016 – enero 2017. Este estudio se basó en la teoría sociocultural, la cual sostiene que los estudiantes aprenden a través de la interacción al centrarse en un tema. Además, la instrucción se basa en contenidos que crean situaciones basadas en el contexto comunicativo para adquirir el inglés como lengua extranjera. Cuatro temas culturales fueron desarrollados en clase en un período de 36 horas. Las herramientas utilizadas para recolectar datos incluyeron una rúbrica de habla usada para la pre-prueba, post-prueba y dos pruebas, una rúbrica de percepción del estudiante, una entrevista, una encuesta y un diario del maestro. Los resultados cuantitativos y cualitativos de este estudio demuestran que las actividades temáticas sobre la cultura estimulan a los estudiantes a aumentar su competencia comunicativa oral y, por lo tanto, los profesores de inglés no pueden seguir enseñando el lenguaje sin cultura. Es responsabilidad de todo maestro conducir a los estudiantes hacia una competencia comunicativa oral real, la cual se puede lograr a través de actividades de temática cultural. La conciencia de la cultura motiva a los estudiantes a entender y respetar las idiosincrasias de cualquier lengua meta.

Palabras claves: conciencia cultural, competencia comunicativa, sociocultural.

Abstract

Language and culture have an inseparable and mutually dependent relationship. Nowadays, it is crucial for English teachers to provide students with intercultural awareness to develop intercultural communicative competence. Therefore, learning any new language without mindfulness of its culture remains incomplete. The goal of the present study was to see if cultural topics impact in anyway the increment of oral communicative competence in a class of 29 EFL students with an A2 English level at the University Language Institute at Universidad de Cuenca during the September 2016- January 2017 semester. This study was based on the sociocultural theory, where second language students learn through interaction with peers and content-based instruction, which creates context-based communicative situations to acquire English as a foreign language. Four cultural topics were developed in class over a period of 36 hours. The instruments used to collect data included a speaking rubric used for the pre-test, post-test and two quizzes, a students' perception rubric, a students' interview, a survey, and a teacher's journal. Quantitative and qualitative results of this study show that culture-themed activities do stimulate students to increase their oral communicative competence, and therefore, English teachers cannot afford to continue teaching language without culture. Thus, it is the teacher's responsibility to lead students towards a full oral communicative competence, which can be achieved through culture-themed activities. Cultural awareness motivates students to understand and respect any target language's idiosyncrasies.

Keywords: cultural awareness, communicative competence, sociocultural.

UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

Tables

Universidad de Cuenca
Cláusula de Licencia y Autorización para Publicación en el Repositorio Institucional

Yo, Patricia del Carmen Galarza Quezada en calidad de autora y titular de los derechos morales y patrimoniales del trabajo de titulación "The Influence of Cultural Topic Activities on Oral Communicative Competence with EFL A2 Level Students", de conformidad con el Art. 114 del CÓDIGO ORGÁNICO DE LA ECONOMÍA SOCIAL DE LOS CONOCIMIENTOS, CREATIVIDAD E INNOVACIÓN reconozco a favor de la Universidad de Cuenca una licencia gratuita, intransferible y no exclusiva para el uso no comercial de la obra, con fines estrictamente académicos.

Asimismo, autorizo a la Universidad de Cuenca para que realice la publicación de este trabajo de titulación en el Repositorio Institucional, de conformidad a lo dispuesto en el Art. 144 de la Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior.

Cuenca, Septiembre del 2017

Patricia del Carmen Galarza Quezada

C.I.: 0101991677

Universidad de Cuenca
Cláusula de Propiedad Intelectual

Patricia del Carmen Galarza Quezada, autora del Trabajo de titulación "The Influence of Cultural Topic Activities on Oral Communicative Competence with EFL A2 Level Students", certifico que todas las ideas, opiniones y contenidos expuestos en la presente investigación son de exclusiva responsabilidad de su autora.

Cuenca, Septiembre del 2017

Patricia del Carmen Galarza Quezada

C.I.: 0101991677

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my immense gratitude to my thesis director, Master. Ana María Calle, for her useful comments, remarks, and engagement. She has guided me with patience and wisdom to conclude this study. Likewise, I would like to thank the participants of this study, my EFL A2 level students, who have willingly participated in all stages of this research.

I want also, to express my most profound gratitude to the three most important men in my life: Fernando, Christopher, and Vladimiro for keeping me harmonious and for encouraging me throughout this study journey and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. To my sister, Mariana, who sacrificed our afternoon coffees. And, to my dear family and friends, especially to Yolanda, Kevin, Rosita, and Lucy for being supportive in one way or another, at all times. Finally, to my silent and faithful companion, Romano, my cat. This achievement would not have been possible without all of you. Thank you!

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my dearest uncle the Priest Tio Manuelito for making possible my overseas academic and cultural experience in the U.S.A. and the acquisition of the English Language. Thank you, Tio! Moreover, to my beloved mother Marina, who has been an inspiration my entire life and who, through her guidance has brought me to be who I am now.

Introduction

Due to globalization, internationalization and immigration, people all over the world are experiencing an explosive intercultural exchange. Consequently the need or demand for bilingual or multilingual speakers is growing; this situation promotes the spread of teaching and learning foreign languages, especially English (Yue, 2014).

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is mandatory up to a certain level in most educational centers and particularly at the University of Cuenca. The academic goals of English teaching in Ecuador are apparent concerning the four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Many English teachers think that the four language skills are the only significant goals during EFL teaching and many of them are not aware of the fundamental aspects of including culture as part of the language (Yue, 2014). The truth is, as many linguists are well aware of the fact that culture teaching is the fundamental basis for the skills mentioned above. It is time to change the narrow view that language has only four skills and broaden the language teaching scope to the implementation of culture as the fifth language skill in the language learning-teaching process (Tomalin & Stempleski, 2013)

To communicate internationally, one must be aware of the cultural implications and differences among languages; therefore, culture should be acknowledged as a key element in the process of language teaching and learning (Chahak & Basirizadeh, 2012). When communicating it is essential to avoid confusions or miscommunications; therefore, language students must draw their attention to being culturally aware of the target language. Cultural norms differ from one culture to another and not being culturally aware when communicating, can lead to conflicts

among people from different cultural backgrounds plus, learners who live abroad face

serious problems when they do not know the ways of looking at things or doing

things and expressing things in the target culture. Now, to contribute to the solution of

this situation, language students should acquire a thorough understanding of the

target language plus culture. The study of another language's culture allows students

to respect and understand the idiosyncrasy of other forms of manner and viewpoints

(Chahak & Basirizadeh, 2012). Language and culture are interrelated; therefore,

language cannot be taught without culture and similarly, Peck (as cited in Chahak &

Basirizadeh, 2012) states that foreign language teaching without the study of culture,

is mistaken and incomplete.

This study is about acquiring the English language through the study of a

content area, in this case, "Culture" therefore the teaching and learning process, was

based on Content-Based Instruction (CBI) in order to develop the ultimate goal which

is oral communicative competence (Rodgers, 2006). CBI creates context-based

communicative situations, in the same way as the sociocultural theory, where second

language students learn through interaction with peers and subject-matter core.

Many studies were done before demonstrating the close connection of English

as foreign language teaching and teachers' Intercultural Communicative Competence

(ICC); therefore, ICC is a must among teachers in order to raise students' ICC (Yue,

2014; Dimas, 2016; Li, 2016).

The goal of the present study is to see if cultural topics influence in any way

the increment of oral communicative competence in EFL students of the A2 level at

the University Language Institute (ULI) at Universidad de Cuenca. The present study

presents seven chapters with information on: The Scope of the Study, Theoretical Framework, Literature Review, Methodology, Findings, Discussion and, Conclusions plus Recommendations.

The first chapter, the scope of the study, provides a description of the study. It begins with a brief introduction of the topic, background information and justification and the purpose of this research. Additionally, it presents the statement of the problem, which leads to the research question that is the reason of this study. To conclude, this chapter contains the general and specific objectives of this research.

Chapter two incorporates the theoretical framework. This chapter is divided in three different theories that were used in this study and they are as follows: Sociocultural theory, Content Based Instruction + Oral communicative competence, and Cultural Awareness.

Chapter three the literature review discusses language acquisition in relation with culture. First, it analyses and discusses the major studies on the role of culture in language learning. Second, a group of scholars discuss the role of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and to conclude after the analysis of this two major areas within the literature review, there is a summary of the most important findings in the area of teaching and learning a foreign language.

Chapter four describes the research methodology applied to a group of University EFL A2 level students. It contains a detailed description of the participants, intervention, instruments and procedures during the intervention plus de quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

Chapter five shows the research findings. It deals with the quantitative and qualitative results of this study.

Chapter six discusses the importance of the results from the quantitative and the qualitative data research. It also connects the quantitative and qualitative results to the question raised in this study. Besides, this chapter explains the relationship between the results and the existing results as shown in the literature review. In order to fulfill with the need of objectivity, this discussion will also show limitations if any.

Chapter seven presents the conclusions and recommendations based on the research results for this study.

To conclude there is a reference list and the appendices section with the material used in this research such as: the authorization to carry on with this investigation, the students' consent form, students' survey, the rubrics used for the pre and post-test and student's perception rubric.

Chapter I

The Scope of the Study

1.1 Introduction: Background, Rationale, Research purpose

Understanding a language consists not only of the knowledge of grammar, morphology, phonology, and, lexis, but also the knowledge of certain features of the culture. Over the years, researchers have argued that an integral part of learning a foreign language is acquiring knowledge of the culture associated with it (Frank, 2013). Many EFL teachers have asked themselves the question, "How can we incorporate cultural knowledge and understanding within the context of our English language classes?" (Frank, 2013, p. 2). Teachers who have not been exposed to the English speaking culture and have not spent time outside of their countries may have difficulty understanding the diversity and complexity of English language culture (Frank, 2013). Recently, culture has taken a significant place in foreign language teaching; therefore, cultural awareness research is increasing. For years it has been known that culture and language are interwoven. (Crozet &Liddicoat, 1999; Jiang, 2000; Chahak & Basirizadeh, 2012; Frank, 2013; Heidari, Ketabi, & Zonoobi, 2014). In addition, Chahak and Basirizadeh (2012) define culture "as our continent, and as our collective identity" (p.522). On the other hand, for Heidari, Ketabi and Zonoobi (2014), culture refers to the appreciation of the music, literature, and food. However, anthropologists see culture also as the human behavior patterns that were learned within that culture.

Choudhury (2014), states that the term culture was first used and defined by the pioneer English Anthropologist Edward B. Tylor in his book, *Primitive Culture,*

published in 1871. Tylor (as cited in Choudhury, 2014) said that culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (p. 2).

Nowadays, language learners should be aware that there are many ways of looking at things and many ways of doing things as well as expressing them. Acquiring the knowledge of another culture allows language learners to respect and understand other points of view, other ways of doing things, and other forms of manner (Chahak & Basirizadeh, 2012). Culture cannot be taught without language and likewise, language cannot be taught without culture. Peck maintains that "without the study of culture, foreign language instruction is inaccurate and incomplete" (as cited in Chahak & Basirizadeh, 2012, p.522). Canale (as cited in Chahak & Basirizadeh, 2012) believes that in order for second language students to meet their communicative goals and to acquire sociocultural knowledge, they should be taught culture and not only in the language classes, but also in social studies classes in order to understand social values and social meanings of utterances.

There are many other reasons why language learners should be familiarized with cultural components, for instance, to develop communicative skills, to use more authentic language, to motivate language acquisition, and to develop intercultural an international language (Chahak & Basirizadeh, 2012).

Cultural Awareness develops students' critical thinking, so language and culture are intricately associated, and if separated, the significance of either language or culture is lost (Brown as cited in Frank, 2013). The culture we belong to definitely influences the way people act, behave, think, interact, communicate, and transmit this knowledge from generations to generations. Very often, comparisons with the

native culture and the target culture take place during the learning process. Therefore, Liu (2014) states that teachers and learners should know this.

Language cannot always be translated from literal meaning. Individual words possess implications that cannot predict the meaning from the word itself. In English, the meaning may be positive, negative, or neutral and it depends on the situation. Therefore, when learning a foreign language, we learn the target culture as well and it is not simply explained from the dictionary (Liu, 2014, p. 243).

It is important that all language students first have cultural awareness of their own culture in order to make connections across cultures. When the students are asked about culture, they often refer to food, music, literature, art, clothing, holidays as well as social interaction, values, ideas, religion, and attitudes. However, Cohen et al. (as cited in Frank, 2013, p.4) refers to the elements of culture as "the beliefs, values, customs, products, and the communication styles of a given culture or society." As it can be observed, culture is a broad concept, and EFL students should be aware of the idiosyncrasy of the target language.

Kumaravadivelu (2008) considers that it is important to research the relationship between culture and L2 learning, since teaching a language is more complicated than language teachers have been willing to acknowledge when teaching an L2.

The goal of Intercultural Language Teaching (ILT) is to go beyond teaching linguistic skills and to include the learning of the target language culture, which will result in the acquisition of intercultural competence (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999). Byram (as cited in Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999) gives a very clear definition of what a competent intercultural speaker is:

An intercultural speaker is someone who can operate their linguistic competence and their sociolinguistic awareness of the relationship between language and the context in which it is used, in order to manage interaction across cultural boundaries, to anticipate misunderstandings caused by difference in values, meanings and beliefs, and thirdly, to cope with the affective as well as cognitive demands of engagement with otherness (Byram, 1995. p. 115-116).

The current study addresses the development of oral communicative competence through culture-themed activities. In this study, quantitative and qualitative data was used to test Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as a framework in the learning-teaching process in language acquisition, which predicts that culture-themed activities develop oral communicative competence or the opportunity to talk. Rosenthal (as cited in Allahyar & Nazari, 2012) argues that learning interaction or students' engagement in interaction is crucial in EFL classrooms.

Content-based Instruction (CBI) is one method to teach language by integrating at the same time content learning and language learning (Tian & Wen-Wen, 2016). Content-based foreign language instruction was used in the class by introducing four cultural topics in order to boost students to learn the target language and to use it from the beginning as a real means of communication.

The reasons for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data are to bring together the strengths of both forms of research to corroborate results.

1.2 Statement of the Problem, Research Question

Cultural topics have not been part of the syllabus at the University Language Institute (ULI) at University of Cuenca in Cuenca, Ecuador. Culture was hardly taught within all English classes and levels, perhaps because most EFL teachers do not see the importance of teaching culture and similarly, students lack cultural awareness and have a low command of the speaking skill. Every semester, the ULI analyzes the final evaluation exams of every English class by skills; therefore, the results are given to all the teachers at a final meeting in order to structure attainable goals within the institution based on the final averages. For instance, the students' scores in speaking for A2 levels show an average of around 12/20, which is very low (Torres, 2015) (Coordinación del Programa de Créditos de Ingles del Instituto de Lenguas de la Universidad de Cuenca, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial for language learners to develop oral communicative competence, which is one of the most important goals in acquiring a language. Consequently, to communicate orally, interesting and motivating cultural topics will allow students to develop this skill, instead of limiting students to the textbook readings.

The significance of teaching culture lies in the fact that "unlike speaking or writing, culture does not represent a separate domain on L2 instruction; instead, the learning of the L2 culture makes learners better communicators" (Hinkel, 2001, p. 444). The lack of cultural awareness in most EFL students is a weakness that most students have and should not be overlooked. Acquiring only the linguistic forms of a language is not enough for learners to be considered proficient in the target language (Kraschner as cited in Frank, 2013). The goal of this research is to confirm this statement by implementing four U.S. cultural topics in classroom activities. These

replace the traditional topics in the textbook in order to develop students' oral communicative competence and to increase the understanding and respect for the target language's culture. All of these aspects will lead students to become successful communicators in the target language.

Language learners who study a foreign language with the purpose of better understanding a language, culture, and society are entirely motivated. Positive attitudes towards the target culture and language determine the acquisition of a good pronunciation and as well as an accent. This type of outgoing learners often communicates more with foreign language speakers and are exposed to spoken language that will lead them to imitate speech accurately and to become communicative competent.

1.3 Research Question:

To what extent do four culture topic activities improve students' oral communicative competence in EFL A2 level students?

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 General:

- To establish the extent to which culture-themed activities (or cultural awareness) influence the development of the students' oral communicative competence.

1.4.2 Specific:

- To explore students' perceptions when practicing oral communicative competence with cultural-themed activities.

- To analyze the effect of cultural topics in the development of oral communicative competence in an EFL class.

- To evaluate whether students experience leads to enhancement of their oral communicative competence.

This study took place at the ULI of Universidad de Cuenca during the September 2016- January 2017 semester. The participants were 29 EFL students with an A2 level of English (A2 level is based on the European Framework of Languages). Four cultural topics were developed in class in a period of 36 hours. This study was geared to a better understanding of the English Language as a whole. Nowadays more and more research is being done on how a language without its culture is not complete and it is vague. Culture awareness motivates students to understand and respect the target language's idiosyncrasies. Chahak and Basirizadeh (2012) argue that acquiring cultural knowledge in the teaching-learning process motivates students to use authentic language to develop authentic oral communication skills and to increase intercultural communicative competence.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky's social constructivist paradigm is the foundation to most

sociocultural theories; they contemplate the fact that knowledge is constructed

socially while people interact and share knowledge. Social events and social

relations are key for learning to take place, and for people to interact with one

another in a collaborative setting (Wang, Bruce, & Hughes, 2011). Sociocultural

theories state that knowledge is a construction among individuals or among members

of a society (Wang, Bruce, & Hughes, 2011).

Similarly, Turuk (2008) makes a case that in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory,

social interaction is the key to the development of language cognition and learning or

understanding, and points out that in communication, language is a social device.

Contacts and interactions with people allow them to acquire knowledge; therefore,

the sociocultural theory relies on the fact that authentic learning takes place at the

moment when the learner actively transforms his/her world and does not just follow it,

Donato

(as cited in Turuk, 2008).

The principles of sociocultural theory in L2 classroom environment arises

evidently in the task-based approach. Social and collaborative aspects of learning

are emphasized by this approach (Turuk, 2008). Ellis (as cited in Turuk, 2008) states

that sociocultural theory concentrates in how an L2 learner accomplishes a task and

how interaction among learners can help the process of second language acquisition.

Ellis argues that teachers should concentrate in the properties of tasks which are

geared to the enhancement of promoting communicative competence as well as L2 acquisition (Nunan, Seedhouse, as cited in Turuk, 2008).

The importance of meaning construction and fluency in L2 classrooms is acknowledged by Seedhouse (as cited in Turuk, 2008) when he suggested that in L2 classrooms, form and accuracy should be focus at the same time with meaning and fluency in order to build up L2 learners proficiency language level. In support of the idea that task-based contexts encourage language learners to utilize their linguistic resources and to impulse them (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013).Turuk, (2008) illustrates another opinion on task-based

> a more optimistic view comes from Kumaravadivelu (1993) as cited Kumaravadivelu (2006) who advocates that task-based activity is not linked to any particular approach, and is therefore a useful method for the teaching of language-centred tasks, learner-centred tasks and learning-centred tasks. He recommends sequencing of tasks in a suitable manner to ensure that the demand on language is compatible with learner's levels of proficiency. The central focus of task-based approach is on the role of interaction and collaboration among peers and how learners scaffold each other through interaction, a point that is essential in Vygotsky's concept of learning. (p. 255-256).

Therefore, task -based approach is geared to have learners interacting and collaborating with each other to acquire new knowledge which is necessary in the concept of learning by Vygotsky. Students do learn from each other and not only from what the teacher says in class. Turuk, (2008) cites that "Vygotsky claims that this is what also happens in schools. Students do not merely copy teacher's

capabilities; rather they transform what teachers offer them during the processes of appropriation" (p. 246).

Sociocultural theory acknowledges language as a "tool for thought" (Mitchel et al. 2013, p.248); recently sociocultural theories follow a more meaning-base on language as well as functional and language perspectives, and they label it as "linguistics of communicative activity" (Mitchel et al. 2013, p. 248). Meaning that language is not ruled by only grammar systems acquired before being able to communicate but, it is about communicative resources which are "linguistically-mediated communicative and cognitive activity" (Thorne and Lantolf as cited in Mitchell 2013, p. 248). Based on the above mentioned concepts, it can be concluded that when learning a new language, it is crucial for the learners to be in contact with their peers to attain new knowledge and to enhance their previous one.

2.2 Content Based Instruction + Oral Communicative Competence

The origin of Content Based Instruction (CBI) in second language acquisition took place in Canada in the 1960s, where L2 learners were immersed in this education approach, but, in the 1980s linguists began using CBI approach in EFL and ESL college classrooms, and later on it became popular in other countries as well. For the purpose of illustration, CBI is the way language is taught by simultaneously integrating language learning and content learning (Tian & Wen-Wen, 2016).

Content Based Foreign Language Instruction, encourages students to learn a new language and to use it from the start as a real means of communication. Grabe and Stoller (1997) as well as Tian and Wen-Wen (2016) stated that,

The theoretical foundation of CBI mainly derives from Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis, Swain's output hypothesis and Cummins' framework of language proficiency. Krashen claims that language acquisition relies on "meaningful and comprehensible input", and it focuses on meaning rather than on form [5]. (p.3).

Consequently, Krashen, (as cited in Tian & Wen-Wen, 2016), claims that a successful way of acquiring a second language is when the learning environment of the second language is similar to the first language learning environment.

In a language learning setting, CBI creates context-based communicative situations, similarly to sociocultural theory, where L2 students learn through interaction with peers and subject-matter core. This is why the input of authentic or natural language and the understanding of content is very important in acquiring languages. The goal is to stimulate the learner's interests; therefore, teachers use activities based on CBI (Tian & Wen-Wen, 2016).

When we talk about meaningful language communication, we talk about accuracy and significant content in all spoken or written utterances; the two components must go together in order to fulfill the needs of communication (Grabe & Stoller, 1997).

Students and teachers need to negotiate language form as well as content, a concept that is reinforced by recent discussions of sociocultural approaches to second language acquisition also known as Vygotskian approaches, which are generally consistent with CBI (Grabe & Stoller, 1997, p. 7).

CBI is considered a teaching method where language skills and thematic contents are combined simultaneously, and its theoretical foundation is based on

Krashen's comprehensible input which means that the focus is on meaning rather than on form (Tian & Wen-Wen, 2016).

The thematic contents mentioned above allow students to learn a language and to be able to communicate their thoughts, ideas, knowledge, background knowledge, feelings, and most important of all culture. When we are learning a second language we construct meaning and it could not be perfect but this process relates to the fact that errors are welcome in any situation in the process of acquiring a language and when communicating.

The goal of Communicative Language Teaching is to assist students to acquire communicative competence by using all language skills plus culture in order to communicate authentically with others; therefore, the communicative approach is the theory that states that language is communication (Rababah, 2002).

Communicative Competence involves the knowledge in which native speakers know how to say things, when, where, how and all these aspects empower them to interact effectively with other native speakers; these features are deep-rooted in their cultural context as well as the non-verbal communication signs such as gestures, postures, facial expressions used in interpersonal communications (Savignon, 1976). Language learning is a deeply social event which requires the fusion of a wider range of elements of the L2 culture. Language is socially and culturally bound (Dörnyei, 2003).

Cultural Awareness becomes a useful objective separate from language. If, however, language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the very core of language-teaching. There are degrees of communicative competence as well as degrees of linguistic competence, but accuracy is not essential to communicative

competence. For instance, putting emphasis in developing linguistic competence rather than developing communicative competence strategies will hinder the ability to use the language effectively when communicating with native speakers (Savignon, 1976).

The main goal of teaching English is for the students to develop communicative competence and be successful at communicating with in the real world (Rababah, 2002). Canale (as cited in Rababah, 2002) states that communicative competence involves linguistic, sociolinguistic, strategic and discourse competence.

Learning a foreign language with the absence of its culture is unthinkable; therefore, being able to speak a language well without understanding the social or philosophical context in which it exits makes a person a complete fool. English teachers must be ready to provide students with the level of cultural and intercultural communicative competence (Choudhury M. H., 2013).

2.3 Cultural Awareness

Learning a foreign language always involves learning a foreign culture; a language is closely related to culture; therefore, they are interrelated. When an L2 learner is only given grammar, phonetics, syntax and some of the social conventions related to L2, this approach will not give the learner the insights of the daily lives of the people whose language the learner hopes to learn. Culture involves a community, a family, traditions, and the whole idiosyncrasy of a country. We are all part of a culture and the use of the language expresses that culture. When

communicating with L2 native speakers, you have to understand their culture in order to understand them (Brown, 1994).

In the same lines, Kramsch (1993) states that very often one reads in teachers' guide-lines that language teaching consists of teaching the four language skills and 'plus culture'. Cultural Awareness becomes an instructive objective in itself, separate from language. If, however, language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the very core of language-teaching. Halliday "anchors culture in the very grammar we use, the very vocabulary we choose, the very metaphors we live by" (as cited in Kramsch, 1993, p. 8). Most syllabi for EFL programs do not include culture. It is considered an optional topic; besides, it is not given the importance it should have in the learning process of any language. Culture is needed among students to become proficient and effective communicators and to allow them to acquire second language sociocultural competence. For an EFL student it is crucial to have the ability to function in an L2 community. Hymes (as cited in Hinkel, 2001) emphasizes that culture learning is an integral part of language learning. This fact influences community values, day by day interaction, behavioral norms and speaking, plus the sociocultural expectations of an individual's roles. Thomas, (as cited in Hinkel, 2001) explains that violations of cultural norms of appropriateness in interaction between Native Speakers (NSs) and Non Native speakers (NNSs) often lead to socio-pragmatic failure. In fact, this gap is very common among people from different cultures trying to communicate with each other due to the fact that NNSs are not aware of the NSs' target culture. Therefore, uncomfortable breakdowns in communication, misunderstandings, and stereotyping take place.

As we can see, language without culture is unthinkable as well as is human culture without language. A given language is a mirror of a given culture. Brown (1994) describes the relation between language and culture as follows: "A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture" (p.165). This states that culture and language are inseparable; they go hand and hand. Gao (2006) presents an interdependence of language and culture where language learning is culture learning and as a result, language teaching is cultural teaching. This author states that foreign language teachers should be aware of the place of cultural studies in the classrooms and attempt to enhance students' cultural awareness to increase their communicative competence.

Consequently, according to Tomalin & Stempleski (2013), the international role of the English language and globalization are the two main reasons to teach culture as the fifth language skill, in addition to listening, speaking, reading and writing. The fifth language skill will teach students to learn, to understand and appreciate the values, the ways of doing things, overall, the idiosyncrasy of the target culture. It is important for EFL students to learn the qualities of other cultures, understand them and respect them. Since we live in a globalized world learning a second language should involve the understanding, the tolerance, the respect, and the acceptance of the cultural differences.

Also as Abdollahi-Guilani, Yasin, Hua, and Aghaei, (2012) stated that culture emphasizes people's behavioral forms or lifestyles in for example greetings, eating, making friends, giving approval, or dissatisfaction. In this way, Damen, (1987)

regards the knowledge of culture as the fifth skill for language learners besides writing, speaking, reading, and listening skills. For that reason, Damen (1987), insists that culture must be taught in every language class. Similarly, Sun (2015) suggests the following: "We should lay equal stress on cross-cultural communication competence and oral English teaching for the purpose of improving the students' cross-cultural oral communication ability" (p. 7). This is why, one of the fundamental goals of language teaching is to communicate with others freely and improve the overall cultural accomplishments.

The development of oral communicative competence is due to the opportunities the students will have to practice the language in and out of the class setting. Krashen points out that "The basic function of the classroom is to provide students with the chance of knowledge input and place to which they get no access elsewhere" (as cited in Sun, 2015, p. 7). This is why teachers must give students the opportunity to practice the target language in situations which native speakers may come across in their daily life; for that reason, oral English allows students to have access to improve their verbal communication skills as well as the nonverbal skills. Therefore, Cross-cultural communication is the central part of communicating orally (Sun, 2015).

To conclude, most linguists believe that incorporating culture into the language teaching-learning programs has a motivating effect on the language learner and in the acquiring process of it. Therefore, the students will have the opportunity to compare, contrast and see for themselves the similarities and differences among cultures. Due to globalization, language learners need to understand and familiarize

themselves with other cultures that will lead them to respect and accept other

cultures as well as their own.

Chapter III

Literature Review

The scholarly literature that discusses language learning in relation with culture, points at two topics of importance. First, a number of scholars discuss the role of culture in language learning, (Lessard, 1996; Ho, 2009; Dai, 2011; Chahak, 2012; Afrin, 2013; Chaudhury, 2014; Yang & Chen, 2014). Second, an important group of scholars discuss the role of Intercultural communicative competence (ICC). The scholars include but are not limited to Chaudhury, (2013); Yue, (2014); Chaudhury, (2014); Dimas and Li, (2016). After an analysis of these two aspects in the literature, there is a summary of major findings in the area of foreign language learning.

3.1 The Role of Culture in Language Learning

What follows next, is a summary of major findings and the analysis of different studies that have taken place in the field of the language teaching process in order to develop communicative competence trough cultural awareness as well as research done in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) environments in different countries.

To begin, culture has been defined in many different ways but a definition that illustrates how the literature approaches culture states that culture is "the accepted and patterned ways of behavior of a given people" (Peck as cited in Chahak, & Basirizadeh, 2012). This definition of culture makes it evident that group identity is a key component of culture because group identity guides us into how far we can go as

individuals. Also, group identity allows individuals to be aware of what their responsibility is within the group. Thus, it is very imperative for students to acquire a deep understanding of the target language's culture in order to enhance comprehension, interpretation, translation or written and spoken language as well as body language. All these aspects allow students to elude misunderstandings (Chahak & Basirizadeh, 2012). This initial approach of the scholarly literature leads to the understanding that cultural knowledge helps students understand and respect idiosyncrasies and other forms of manner. To sum up, language learning instruction without culture is incomplete and vague and, thus, language learners should be aware not only of the language but of the culture.

Continuing with the definition of culture, there is a very emphatic study by Lessard (1996). This author writes about a descriptive case study of sixteen Chinese EFL teachers' perceptions of culture in EFL learning and teaching. Teachers and learners were interviewed and their answers led to very emphatic conclusions. The conclusions include the view of how interrelated language and culture are and how it has changed over time. Culture is the context for the use of a language when communicating; thus, foreign language learners must involve cultural competence.

An interesting aspect came out of the participants' responses in the study by Lessard (1996). The relevant aspect is that some teachers admitted that they do not understand the meaning of culture. Others said that culture has a broad definition and it is complicated. They also showed their support for the role of culture in EFL education in China. These participants' responses, however, revealed that foreign language linguists, theorists and teachers still have a lot of work to do in grasping and connecting and communicating both the reality and concept of culture within

foreign language education. In a few words, the study by Lessard (1996) recommends that it is crucial to have culture awareness and to know how to incorporate culture in teaching EFL classrooms.

Beyond the definition of culture per se, the scholarly literature approaches the reasons to teach culture in language classes. Chahak and Basirizadeh (2012) argue that there are several reasons for foreign language learners to be acquainted with the target language cultural components. The reasons are that culture leads students to be able to use authentic language, to get motivated in the learning process, to develop the most important language goals which are communication skills, and to improve intercultural language. As these are the benefits of culture, there are also some disadvantages when culture is not present.

In regards to the disadvantages, Chahak and Basirizadeh (2012) emphasize that learning a language without its culture endangers students to feel alienated from members of their home culture, from the new target language, and even from themselves. In other words, teachers need to understand that students benefit from cultural awareness and, in turn, teachers need to be sensitive to the importance of promoting cultural understanding. This way, teachers increase students' cultural feelings and self-awareness.

Another important point that needs to be addressed is that if we wish the learners to master another language, we need to help the learners become communicatively competent in that language as much as possible. For Canale and Swain (1979) and Canale (1983), the main goal of this communicative competence is to provide students with meaningful

interactions in authentic or real life situations with native or native-like

speaker of target language (p. 523).

Furthermore, the aspect of culture as a skill is also present in a study by Yang

and Chen (2014). The authors acknowledge in their study that culture is one of the

five goals of learning a foreign language. Other scholars follow the same trend. To

illustrate, Kramsch (1993) stated that language teaching consists of teaching the four

language skills plus culture. Similarly, Gao (2006) stresses that language learning is

culture learning and as a result, language teaching is cultural teaching. Therefore, it

is clear that many scholars agree that culture is another language skill. Emphatically,

Tomalin (2008) calls culture a fifth language skill. Despite all this, it is evident that

foreign language teacher's perception on including culture in their teaching process is

not clear.

To further reinforce the importance of culture in language classes, Yan and

Chen (2014) as well as Kumaravadivelu (2008) aim that due to peoples' mobility

around the world and the formation of diverse or multi-cultural community created by

globalization and internationalization, the requirements for foreign language

instructors and learners to develop intercultural capability has been reinforced as an

essential component in Level Two classrooms.

The scholarly work, thus, shows that since 1996, more and more linguists and

foreign language teachers are well aware of the fact that teaching culture is a crucial

part of teaching language. Yang and Chen mention that in 2007, a Modern Language

Association of America (MLA) reported that nowadays it is very important to teach

both language and culture in foreign language learning in secondary level. This is just

to show that culture continues to be an important element in foreign language

education in the 21st century. Foreign language teachers' views influence the development of teaching culture; also their beliefs about culture may affect in one way or another the ways of teaching culture.

To conclude with the scholarly views on culture, it is evident that teaching culture in foreign language classes is recognized as a need to engage and motivate students because it is considered a skill that students should acquire. This review of the literature leads to an understanding that culture is of primary importance in language learning. However, the scholarly literature also emphasizes that teachers have a duty in relation to culture. It is logical to deduce that the duty of second language teachers is to be aware of the anthropological, sociological, and cultural knowledge of the target language. This way, teachers can pass onto their students the language as a whole. In short, teachers would have to possess what scholars refer to as Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which is the second major topic of the literature.

3.2 The Role of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Yue (2014) from the Hangzhou Normal University in China, states that major intercultural exchanges are being experienced by people throughout the whole world. Also, the mentioned author states that there is a great demand for bilingual people and people who can speak more than two languages. These aspects encourage the development of the teaching and learning of foreign languages, especially English. In fact, in China the aspect of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is a prerequisite for English teachers to help raise students' ICC. Thus, the aim of the present study is to boost some specific strategies to promote teachers' ICC in the

EFL teaching environment. The origin of this study took place after several studies showed that teachers with weak cultural awareness could never be good examples to their students. For that reason, the main drive of this investigation was to raise teaching strategies to promote ICC in EFL teaching as well as to find out the difference between present ICC and ultimately, ICC in EFL teaching, and to propose suggestions and strategies to promote ICC in EFL teaching.

The study by Yue (2014) is very emphatic about the importance of ICC because, even though the main participants of the study are EFL students, the author focuses on the importance of ICC as a skill that teachers should acquire. The results of the analysis of the teacher's interviews of this study show that teachers have problems in ICC and in Chinese EFL teaching. Therefore, there is an urgent need to train teachers with the specific teaching strategies.

In addition, in the study by Yue, (2014) "Strategies to promote Intercultural Communicative Competence in EFL Teaching" eight Chinese teachers were asked four questions in regards to their cultural awareness, their intercultural knowledge, and competence. The findings show that teachers are not aware of the fact that cultural awareness is a part of intercultural competence and they lack knowledge of intercultural teaching. Also, the differences between country cultures have not been pointed out at all in their answers. In other words, even though teachers are aware of the importance of Intercultural Competence and cultural awareness in English teaching, they do not have the knowledge of intercultural teaching.

This leads to the idea that teachers should improve their culture awareness and understand essential ICC knowledge. One way of obtaining first-hand cultural materials of the target language is to go abroad to study and to experience foreign

customs, cultural tradition, history, geography, and the way of doing things, so that they can really understand the idiosyncrasy of the target language countries. Another way is for teachers to get involved in self-development, to acquire appropriate teaching strategies, instructional materials and teaching approaches that will help teachers prepare students to become successful bilinguals and intercultural individuals who will be able to perform better in both local and international situations.

However, there is still a gap in all these findings. The reason is that there is a need for a new method of language teaching and learning, which must shift the focus of attention from the linguistic forms to the ultimate goal, which is communicative competence. Further studies are needed to find the way for teachers to acquire the essential strategies to promote teachers' ICC in EFL teaching.

Another study concerned with teaching culture in English language classrooms was written by Choudhury (2014) from Jazan University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He raises a very important question in this study: "Is it necessary to learn about the culture of the target language to acquire English as a foreign or second language?" (p. 1). For about a decade, many scholars in the fields of applied linguistics and sociolinguistics have researched whether it is necessary to tech and learn about the culture of the target language in EFL or ESL classes. This article is geared to delineate the relationship between culture and language. Also, the article discusses the role culture plays in EFL and ESL teaching and learning, and how to teach culture in the classrooms. Thus, the aspect of how to teach culture is of particular relevance.

To clarify how to teach culture in the classrooms, it is recommended to use authentic materials because it is rewarding and stimulating for both language learners and teachers. Many aspects of culture that are not usually found in textbooks are present in newspapers, literature, music, films, plays, poems, children's books, and they provide a rich source for cultural learning. Valdes (as Cited in Choudhury, 2014, p. 16) says that "values that underlie the behavior of characters and points of view of the authors" in any literature piece shows culture and students should not judge these values but understand them and respect them. Valdes also divides cultural information into eight categories: linguistic, geographical, historical, festivals, illustrations, everyday life, citizenship, song, music, and rhymes (as cited in Chaudhury, 2014, p.17).

Similarly, to these previous studies, Dimas (2016) demonstrates through scholarly work how two Colombian language teachers integrated the principles of ICC in their teaching. In this study, the faculty's and the students' perspectives on language learning and teaching as well as the relationships between ICC and cultural realism are evident. Therefore, people need to engage actively and critically with the idiosyncrasy or the world of other cultures. In short, the relationship between their own culture and the target languages' culture is clear. They are also in contact with people who are constantly moving or in contact through many different technological resources as a result of this people's popular culture.

Additionally, Dimas (2016) displays in the results that there is students' openness to not only acquiring the linguistic aspects of the target language. Also, they are willing to expand and understand the intercultural aspects of the two

languages in class for both their native and the target language, by understanding the speakers' identity and personality through their lived experiences.

The study by Dimas (2016) leads to a logical inference, which is that the ultimate purpose of foreign language classes is for students to acquire the ability to be competent speakers. Thus, when learning a foreign language, the goal is to achieve oral communicative competence in order to interact successfully. Moreover, when communicating, it is important for the teachers as well as for students to have their social and own identity. People must reveal a variety of roles when interacting with native speakers of the target language. That is why, in many teaching and learning situations, the inclusion of intercultural aspects from their own culture as well as from the target language and culture is required.

Different language learning processes begin by establishing the concepts and rationalities for these processes as the integration of ICC at the Modern Languages Program at Universidad EAN, in Colombia which proposed students, teachers, and the institution to work together on linguistic skills, approaches, information. More importantly, critical cultural and political awareness are key elements for language students to empower themselves to communicate successfully in different circumstances (Dimas, 2016).

In short, this research by Dimas (2016) shows that the professors of this study included the ICC model in their lessons. The professors achieved this by incorporating in their classes both linguistic and cultural aspects from the perspectives of the participants in the course. The other aspect shown in this research was the teachers' process to rethink their teaching techniques and to reflect on them as intercultural speakers. One of the most essential of characteristics

gathered from this experience in the classroom was to include the students' personal aspects which directed them to their commitment and their learning outcome. This means that the aim of ICC is not to merge cultures but to make people aware and respect other ways of doing things and to appreciate the new perspectives that each culture brings to the individual.

Regarding the latter idea, it is valuable to mention a personal recollection of a previous reading. The source of the reading is Kumaravadivelu (2008), who states in his book *Cultural Globalization and Language Education*, that preparing language learners in this century is to prepare students with global cultural consciousness. The author points out that cultural globalization will construct individual's self-identity based on a strong foundation of cultural globalization awareness.

The previous idea is reinforced in the study by Dimas (2016) in regards to mutual understanding and appreciation of different cultures and of different ways of communicating. The author states that this "takes place in the instances of language negotiation and cultural understanding that are required not only classrooms but also in societies" (p. 9).

To conclude, it is evident from the above information that a language cannot be learned without culture and that culture cannot be separated from language. All EFL and/or ESL students must be taught the language with the culture associated with such language. This will allow them to communicate successfully in real life situations. If a non-native speaker is not aware of the culture, this will cause difficulties with native speakers. In other words, knowing the language without its culture is not enough. To avoid these problems, students must acquire proper

cultural awareness in learning EFL/ESL classes. Therefore, it is reasonable to think that their syllabus must include culture along with the language. In sum, teachers must have cultural knowledge in order to transmit it to the students.

3.3 Summary of major findings in the area of foreign language learning

A relevant study about the need for teachers to have cultural knowledge was written by Li (2016). This study is about the cultivation of students' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which is one of the main goals in teaching English in Chinese colleges. Li (2016) wishes to generate a way of teaching culture through what the author considers an Intercultural Oriented Process in order to promote college students's ICC. This study was conducted with two first-year classes of Shanghai Dianji University. The two classes were randomly divided into Experimental Class (EC) with thirty-eight students and Control Class (CC) with thirty-nine students, respectively. All participants had almost the same overall English proficiency plus the same English teacher. In addition, all students used the same textbook in class plus they all attended the same number of teaching hours.

Li used qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data. In addition, the author used four instruments to look at the effectiveness of Process-oriented intercultural teaching. The four instruments are first, a pre- and a post-test. Second, self-report scales which aimed to measure students' ICC from the perspective of affect and behavior. Third, a satisfaction questionnaire, which was given at the end of the semester. Fourth, a set of semi-structured interviews with the teacher and the fifteen students chosen randomly in EC.

The results are given in two sections. "First, the changes of students' ICC from the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions; second, students and teacher's views towards the Process-oriented intercultural teaching and reflections on improving the teaching practice" (Li, 2016, p. 529).

The above study creates the Process-oriented intercultural teaching mode to promote college students' ICC grounded in the reality of cultural teaching college English courses in China. Also, the study carries out a comparative experiment in Shanghai Dianji University. Based on the statistics and analysis shown in this study, it is clear that Process-oriented intercultural teaching is much more effective than traditional teaching in the context of any college English classroom. Besides, there is not a significant difference to the students' ICC on affective and behavioral perspectives in the EC (experimental class) after the study.

To conclude, Process-oriented intercultural teaching impulses students to be more active, aware, interested and confident in learning English than before. Moreover, Process-oriented intercultural teaching will provide higher satisfaction to teacher and students. Given the importance of the existing study on Process-oriented intercultural teaching, other research work on a larger scale is expected in the future on the positive effects of Process-oriented intercultural teaching. The reason why this is a reasonable expectation is that further studies would provide sufficient and more convincing data.

Despite the need for further studies, it is clear that nowadays, addressing culture in EFL classrooms and intercultural language teaching as well as learning, reflects the awareness more and more people have. Teachers who prepare language learners with the proper tools so that the students become competent both in

language and in culture, prepare their students for intercultural communication in our growing multicultural world. Ho, S. (2009), from Victoria University in New Zealand did an ongoing study of cultural content and the effect of intercultural language learning on university students of an EFL learning program in Vietnam.

Ho (2009) analyzes the basic assumptions about teaching culture from two EFL textbook units of Speaking and British Culture used in a Vietnamese university. The units dealt with two topics: families and food and drinks. Many interactive tasks and activities were used to engage learners in culture learning. The participants were target groups of English-majoring students in a Vietnamese university in Central Vietnam. The cultural topics were imparted to students who had different background knowledge plus many difficulties in learning English in order to engage them actively in cultural issues of the units. For this, it was necessary the students' knowledge about their own culture as well as the target culture. However, there were some limitations that are worthwhile mentioning. For instance, the units do not acknowledge the relationship between language and culture, which means there is a static view of the culture. Another limitation stated that learners lack opportunities to explore themselves the target culture and to compare their own culture with the target culture. Furthermore, there is not a dynamic view of culture because it only illustrates some stereotypical information of it and the tests only show an understanding of cultural facts.

In this scenario, EFL teachers need to change from a traditional methodology to an inter-cultural one in order to improve the students linguistic and intercultural competences. It is recommended for learners to be exposed to situations where they can explore the target culture to build their own knowledge and understand it better

(Ho, 2009). There are many constraints shown in this study, which influence the development of cultural awareness such as the teacher's cultural knowledge, the limited amount of native English speakers to interact with and to learn culture from, the time dedicated to culture teaching in each lesson and the educational system in Vietnam. Despite all these limitations, if teachers learn how to include language and culture in language teaching, they can create a more engrossing and flexible learning environment, which may have an impact on their language teaching methodology and syllabus design. It is recommended for Vietnamese education to not concentrate so much on testing but to change foreign language education into a more intercultural education.

All these changes are challenges for EFL learners as well as for teachers because they need to accomplish certain foreign language educational goals in our modern and changing world. Moreover, the main challenge is to apply cultural knowledge to the target culture as some scholarly literature highlights.

In regards to the above-mentioned aspect, there is a very relevant study by Naima Afrin (2013) in Bangladesh. The author provides information on how essential is to teach cultural awareness in Asia to increase the growth of EFL language learning and teaching. The study is important because nowadays, EFL students learn only the rules of language but they lack the ability to apply the knowledge in the target culture. Afrin (2013) tells us about a research project carried out among English schools from different universities of Bangladesh and shows us information about its findings, which are geared to analyze the concept of culture, the teaching strategies and material used to address culture in EFL classes. For the study, it was essential to find out the perceptions and attitudes of teachers towards culture in their

EFL classrooms. Consequently, the instrument or method used in this project was a questionnaire plus an open-ended section. The latter was designed for the teachers to reflect and answer on their way of teaching culture and the material used in the learning-teaching process. The participants were twenty-five University EFL instructors holding a Master's degree and Ph.D. as well, with more than ten years of experience in TEFL.

The results and conclusions drawn from the research questions show that all members of the educational community that was observed, need to be aware of cultural contexts that are absent in the English classes. Given that there is an absence of cultural context, the study confirms that students would benefit from cultural topics added to the language instruction. Afrin (2013) bases his conclusion on the fact that the questionnaire and open-ended section results point to the fact that all educational members at the English program should be aware of what is missing in the cultural context and that there is a long way still to acquire Intercultural Awareness that is expected in language programs.

As a result, cultural topics must be implemented systematically in every class in order to create awareness in the learner of their own culture as well as the target culture. For this, strategies and material had been implemented in EFL classrooms among several universities in Bangladesh, in order for the students to acquire culture knowledge. It is clear that it is not an easy task to build up towards the Intercultural Awareness expected in the EFL program, but it is time to start.

Based on the literature review analyzed herein, it is clear that when developing cultural awareness in the classroom, it is important to help students distinguish between the cultural norms, beliefs, or habits of the majority within the

target language community. This means that it is important for the students to create a real content situation where they can talk about their own culture with native speakers of English by using their learned knowledge of the target language. However, this is not an easy process and, therefore, teachers cannot expect all language learners to be fluent at the same level native English speakers are. What teachers can encourage is that students understand not only the language but most aspects of the culture.

In regards to how teachers can implement cultural knowledge to a language class, there is a very informative work by Dai (2011). The purpose of this paper is to search for effective methodologies to transmit culture communication in EFL classrooms. It is also a study of the cultural-based language teaching in China. Dai (2011) emphasizes the importance of acquiring cultural knowledge in the study of a target language and in the use of several effective and successful techniques in the cultural based courses. The scholar also highlights that it is necessary for teachers to use cultural information to make the teaching experience as engrossing as possible for both teachers and students. To sum up, this study confirms the belief that teaching language means teaching culture. Beyond this, the role of language teachers is to utilize different methods to help students overcome the difficulties in language and culture learning. However, it is not an easy task to teach culture knowledge. Teachers must have culture awareness in order to provide students with cultural information to communicate successfully in any occasion. All these scholarly findings lead to the question about how to perform different ways in teaching different cultures.

Regarding different ways to teach culture, Dai (2011) describes "How beneficial is to create cultural contexts" (p. 1031) and the author also provides "Tips on teaching practice" (p. 1034). To display this information, Dai (2011) refers to the fact that the ultimate way of acquiring a second language is through total immersion in the culture of that language. Teachers can create a communicative environment where students can acquire the language and where culture acquisition is gradually interiorized, creating a cultural context is maybe one of the best ways for language students to acquire the skills of speaking and writing. This way, the target language is being used to fulfill the ultimate purpose of a language, which is communication. However, in many language teaching environments, the dominant methodology is still geared to structure rather than culture teaching. Particularly in China, there is not a consistent methodology in teaching culture as Dai (2011) highlights. Consequently, there is a need for an effective method to combine both language and culture and for this, teachers must be well aware of many aspects of the target culture in order to transmit this knowledge to their students. Dai (2011) proposes that teachers need to concentrate on collecting information, on using different types of activities in class, and on positive interactions.

Concerning specific tips on teaching practice, Dai (2011) proposes that it is important to encourage students in culture comprehension and appreciation. To achieve this goal, teachers are expected to help students by personalizing activities and content. For instance, students can connect what they are learning to their real experiences of creating similar events or situations. By expanding on their real world experiences, the teacher helps students make connections. These types of methods engage students and raise their understanding and their learning.

Another tip is to help raise student's autonomy in group work through activities where they make their own decisions, like choosing topics, a peer to work with, the materials to be used, the presentations, etc. This way, there is a lot more of interactions of students with the class since the students cooperate, help, influence and share with each other. In turn, team-work spirit helps students achieve their goals. Peer evaluation or peer feedback on everyone's performance is key because it helps the students see their problems. Besides, this also helps them be aware of their mistakes to avoid them and perform better next time. The last tip for teachers is to incorporate scientific reading activities. Not only culture acquisition takes place in class but also through readings. For this, teachers must prepare their lessons carefully with cultural information readings and use strategies to find out the students' comprehension and understanding in order to become active learners during and after the class.

To conclude, acquiring a new language is engrossing and knowledge building. It involves not only the language, but culture with all aspects that include but are not limited to customs, social issues, science, moral values. All this knowledge will be of great use in the students' everyday life. Therefore, the use of this information and the different topics will enhance the learning experience. It was found that language teachers must understand that it is necessary to use an effective methodology to teach culture, which means that all teachers should be aware of the importance and the necessity to use practical techniques. Also, teachers should use all the material available in teaching culture contents when teaching a language. This would lead students to develop the needed cultural awareness in order to understand the world in a better manner while they use the language they learned.

In our local context, teaching culture within EFL classes at the ULI of Universidad de Cuenca is neglected, and teachers are not aware of the importance of integrating culture in foreign language teaching as well as to place culture as a significant component in this process (Heidari, Ketabi, & Zonoobi, 2014).

Cultural acquisition should be a priority in the study of language courses as Dai (2011) suggests that teachers should familiarize themselves with practical, effective teaching techniques that have been successful in cultural based language classes. Therefore, including Culture as the fifth language skill (Dimas, 2016) within the teaching-learning-language process is a must in our context, in order to ensure the students learning process to be well rounded and to lead students to be successful at communicating.

The idea for this research topic came out of the absence of teaching culture in the English syllabus at the ULI at the University of Cuenca, Ecuador, Culture has been neglected and still is in the teaching-learning language process (Appendix G). Additionally, the low oral communicative competence score (12/20) of all A2 level English students at the end of the semester in July 2015 (Credits Coordination results at the ULI). Being the main goal of this study to find out: To what extent do four culture topic activities improve students' oral communicative competence in EFL A2 level students?

Chapter IV

Methodology

4.1 Research methodology

This study uses a sequential embedded mixed method design in order to gather information by using quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments and strategies. The two ways of data gathering are combined in the analysis through connecting or embedding the data. "Embedded mixed method design involves the sequential use of the data, but the core idea is that either quantitative or qualitative data is embedded within a larger design" (Creswell, 2013, p. 16). Sequential mixed methods lead you to start out with quantitative research and then to build on the data to later explain by using qualitative research (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative data tends to be open-ended without predetermined responses as in this study data gather from the students' interviews and observations in this case carried out by a teachers' journal, while quantitative data usually includes closed-ended responses for instance found on questionnaires and for this study a student's perceptions questionnaire was used plus other quantitative instruments as the pre- and post-test and two quizzes. All of these procedures were merged into a mixed methods design

4.1.1 Participants

This study was carried out with a group of twenty-nine student participants, ages ranging from nineteen to twenty-five, ten men and nineteen females. These students attended the A2 level of English class at the ULI of Universidad de Cuenca during the

semester September 2016 - January 2017. This class is a requirement for all university students to graduate from their respective schools. It is necessary to mention that one female student moved to another country in the middle of the study. The ULI of Universidad de Cuenca granted the appropriate permission for this research to be applied to the group of students mentioned (Appendix A). The researcher also fulfilled the role of teacher with these participants.

4.1.2 Students' Informed Consent

To start out, the students were informed of this study and they understood the purpose of it. It was clear to them that it was a voluntary participation and that the results would not affect their grades in any way. Then, an informed consent letter was designed for the students to read and sign. The consent form was written in Spanish to make sure that they all understood what they were signing. In addition, the students were guaranteed anonymity. Furthermore, it was understood by the students that all the data gathered would solely be used for this research project. Since all students were adults, no parental consent was required (Appendix B).

4.1.3 General Procedure

After receiving the informed consent signed by students, a focus group of six students was randomly chosen to find out which cultural topics to include during the intervention process; therefore, a survey was applied to the focus groups. A pre-test was conducted before the intervention process. This process lasted approximately seven weeks and included the following topics: Thanksgiving, Halloween, U.S. states and music Blues as well as Jazz. The researcher used a journal to register students'

reactions during the intervention. Later a post-test was conducted and a questionnaire of student's perceptions was filled out by most of the participants.

4.1.4 Instruments and Data Collection Procedures.

4.1.4.1. Survey

Before choosing the cultural topics to be covered in class, a focus group was formed by six students who were chosen randomly. For this type of selection capital Excel program designed to do so was used. A survey was designed and applied to the focus group and the students were asked five questions on their cultural background knowledge of the U.S. culture, their own culture, and on whether the students were interested in being culturally aware and as well as the cultural topics they were most interested in (Appendix C). The researcher along with the students agreed on the topics to be included in the syllabus and therefore, to be covered in class.

4.1.4.2 Pre-test

By having the cultural topics sorted out, a lesson plan was used in order to start out developing the topics in and out of the class. However, before starting out with the topics, a pre-test was applied at the very beginning of the intervention by using a Speaking Rubric approved by the ULI at Universidad de Cuenca, which was the instrument used to test student's oral communicative competence (Appendix D). The goal of the pre-test was to have a reference point on the following linguistic aspects of Speaking: Comprehension, Fluency, Grammar, Vocabulary and Pronunciation, to be able to compare at the end of the study with the final results of

the post-test by applying the same Speaking Rubric, and thereby see whether or not there was any improvement, decline or stagnation in the students' oral communicative competence. It is important to mention that to obtain valid data, the scores or information gathered in the pre-test and in the post- test were witnessed and graded by a consensus between the teacher and a delegate, another English teacher from the ULI.

4.1.4.3 Intervention

After having the pre-test scores, it was time to work on the intervention, which began by defining the order of the topics to be delivered. For the lesson planning a CBI approach was used where language was taught by integrating language learning as well as content learning (Tian & Wen-Wen, 2016). Therefore, the goal of this intervention was to guide students to acquire the communicative competence skill by using all language skills plus culture, in order to use the language authentically with others.

The sociocultural theory was applied as well when students interacted actively with peers to develop all the activities based on a specific content which was a cultural topic. Also Flipped Learning was used to teach culture, because it is the way the teacher carries on with the classes, and the students were engaged in active learning by acquiring previous class knowledge on the given topic through exposure to new material outside the class for example via watching videos, readings, and online exercises. Class time was used through hard work so the students assimilated that new knowledge through different class strategies. To sum up, culture became the core of language teaching, because language is a social practice.

To begin with, the lessons were designed for an A2 level class (Appendix F).

The objectives of these lessons were:

- To have a deep understanding of the cultural topic, including its history in some cases, the traditions, the origin, the customs, and celebrations.

- To comprehend and internalize the vocabulary related to the topic.

- To learn about how people in the United States celebrate the different holidays.

- To develop their writing skills through a paper on the cultural topic towards the end of each lesson.

- To improve and develop partnership skills by working with their classmates on various tasks, in some cases.

The goal of the lessons was:

- To stimulate interest in the cultural topic as well as vocabulary building.

The activities done in class were as follows:

- Reading exercises with the background information, reading comprehension, fill in the blanks, comparisons, use of new vocabulary in context.

- To watch videos related to the chosen topic as well as videos using the new vocabulary in order to consolidate it.

- Use of songs, listen to music for specific purposes.

- To prepare oral presentations in class and individual conversations.

- To work on intonation and pronunciation, as well as on oral presentations and speaking appropriately.

- Vocabulary matching reading, and writing about what was learned on the cultural topic.

- In-class activity: joining the class's celebration of the topic.

- Students' responses to questions on the cultural topic.

To begin with the classes, the students were given handouts with materials to work on the following contents on cultural topics:

The reading / Tape script	Phrase Match
Listening Gap Fill	Listening for details
Choose the correct word	Multiple Choice
Put the text back together	Spelling
Scrambled sentences	Discussion
Student survey	Writing and homework
Oral presentations speaker	A native guest

The students in groups went over the lexicon. It is crucial for the students to understand the lexicon first and then use it in context, as in a reading where all the previous vocabulary was in context. After the reading, the students tested each other for comprehension, and then they shared their understandings and the questions that came up within the groups during this activity. Here the students practiced oral production when sharing their findings. Once the topic was clear to all students, they could perform the above-mentioned contents and activities. One was writing about what they have learned through this topic, and the students were asked more specific questions on the topic discussed earlier. In these situations, students learned the target language by using the language to obtain information; therefore, language is

given in a meaningful contextualized form. Students learn a second language when the information they are acquiring is interesting and they know that it will take them to a desired goal, which is to be able to communicate. Therefore, the ultimate goal in this study was for the students to develop oral communicative competence.

Other activities were used to teach the same cultural topic, such as videos, role plays, research done by the students or dialogues among students or teacher-students and students with native English-speaking guests. Native English speaker guests were invited to the class, and the students were exposed to different pronunciation and expressions. In these activities as well, gathering information for the journal was crucial.

It is important to mention that flipped learning method was used in class in order to teach culture and to develop all the language skills. Flipped learning is the idea of swapping the classroom where students used to acquire knowledge to outside the classroom. The roles of the teachers have changed and the students' as well, and the class time has a different role. Students learn at home by going over the teaching material uploaded by the teacher on an educational platform. Here the students acquire knowledge and then bring it into the class in order to work collaboratively with their classmates and construct knowledge-based on the analysis of the acquired information (Jinlei, Ying, & Baohui, 2012). Flipped learning is a different learning model that helps students acquire content not in the classroom as the traditional way, but it is shifted forward from the classroom to home. It is then followed by classroom activities where the teacher takes the students into a new way of active learning by using a constructivist approach (Seery, 2015). Tucker (2012) states the ultimate goal of the flipped classroom is to flip the traditional instructional approach. Therefore, the

instruction given in class is now accessed at home or outside the class. Home is the place where students learn and class turns to be the place to practice and to work out problems and advance concepts, and as Jinley, Ying and Baohui (2012) stated to engage in collaborative learning (Tucker, 2012).

4.1.4.4 Teacher's Journal

During the process mentioned above, information was obtained by observation and registered in the Teacher's Journal; it was important to record as much information as possible on the student's oral communicative competence and student's behavior, feelings, and reactions to the activities, participation, use of the target language and so on. Furthermore, the journal includes information on the activity itself since the topics were on culture. This information was gathered solely by the researcher to be analyzed qualitatively.

4.1.4.5 Oral Quizzes

In addition, during the intervention the students were evaluated orally twice; the idea was to see the students' progress on oral communicative competence as well as content matter based on the cultural topics covered in class. The students were evaluated through an oral quiz of 5 points each by using the same rubric used in the pre and post-test. These data gathered in the pre-test, post-test and two quizzes provided the quantitative results.

4.1.4.6 Student's interview

After completed the four topics in class, an interview was carried out with each student before the post-test, where the students were asked the following question:

What do you think about learning U.S. cultural topics in your English class, and how has this approach influenced your oral communicative competence?

The question was asked in English first, and if the students didn't understand the question, they were asked in Spanish. The idea was to be able to register the students' feelings or opinions on the topic. The students' answers were typed in the computer by the teacher. Some students replied in English and others used both English and Spanish as it was expected.

4.1.4.7 Student's Perception Rubric

In addition, a questionnaire with the same objectives as the ULI Speaking rubrics, was administered to the students in order to know about the students' perception on handling their own oral communicative performance. This rubric has been used for many years at the ULI, to guide the teacher on how the students perceive their different language abilities. The rubric was sent to the students by e-mail to be filled out and, while not all of them answered, more than 68% did complete the rubric (Appendix E). The data gathered was also a part of the quantitative analysis.

4.1.4.8 Post-test

The second quantitative instrument is the ULI speaking rubric for the post-test on oral communicative competence; it was used at the very end of this study in order to compare the results with the pre-test. It is important to mention that the same standardized rubric for speaking from the ULI was used as well. The questions employed in the pre-test were also used in the post-test. The validity and importance of this instrument is that it serves to determine the students' progress in regards to

the development of their oral communicative competence. Also, the validity of this tool resides in the fact that there is a comparison between the pre-test and pro-test results, which allows an objective analysis of changes in the students' oral communicative competence after learning cultural topics.

To conclude, the data collection for the quantitative and qualitative data analysis took place in a 2A Level class of 29 students at the ULI during the September 2016 – January 2017 semester for a period of 36 hours where four different U.S. cultural topics were applied in class.

4.2 Data Analysis

The goal of this research is to see if the content of four cultural topic activities influence students' oral communicative competence. Different instruments were used to collect data and to measure the required aspects for this study to be later analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

The results of the quantitative data are expressed as absolute frequency, meaning that the analysis was done with the total number of participants in order to categorize the students' oral communicative competence by linguistic aspects of speaking through the use of stacked-bar diagrams. The Shapiro Wilk test of normality was used in this case because the samples were small. Thus, for the test of related samples and intra-group of linguistic aspects of speaking (more than two) non-parametric tests were used respectively, the Wilcoxon test and the Kruskall Wallis. Also, for the comparison of linguistic aspects of speaking within the pre-test and for the final results an ANOVA test was applied. For a better visualization, a diagram of boxes and beams (and histograms) were used. The processing of the data was

done with the SPSS STATISTICS 23 software, and the tables and graphs were done in Excel 2016.

The tools used to collect statistical data which is analyzed later on, included a Speaking Rubric used for the pre-test, post-test and two quizzes, plus the students' perception rubric in order to show the results in a final comparison among all four cultural topics.

For the qualitative data analysis, the tools used were: a Survey, Teachers' Journal, and the Students' Interviews. The data was interpreted, transcribed, categorized to find out the recurrent topics based on each tool used in analyzing the information.

In the next chapter called "Data Analysis and Results" the instruments used to gather data were analyzed individually because each instrument backs up the results obtained; then, the information gathered was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively respectively.

Chapter V

Data Analysis and Results

In this chapter are the results of the analysis and discussion of the quantitative and qualitative data collected during the research. It includes the results of all the instruments used in this study. To analyze the pre-test and post-test, the two oral quizzes, the student's perceptions of their speaking skills plus the overall statistical analysis of each cultural topic, a quantitative analysis was conducted to interpret the aforementioned data. Additionally, the findings of the data gathered from a survey applied to the focus group, the teacher's journal and the students' interview on whether cultural topics influenced their communicative competence are presented in a qualitative manner.

The data gathered in this research addresses the general objective: To establish the extent to which culture-themed activities (or cultural awareness) influence the development of the students' oral communicative competence.

In addition, the information below addresses the following specific objectives: to explore students' perceptions when practicing oral communicative competence with cultural-themed activities: to analyze the effect of cultural topics in the development of oral communicative competence in an EFL class, and to evaluate whether students experience leads to enhancement of their oral communicative competence.

5.1 Quantitative Results

5.1.1 Pre-test

The pre-test was applied to the students before the intervention. As mentioned before, the linguistic aspects of speaking of the pre-test were: Comprehension, Fluency, Grammar, Vocabulary and Pronunciation (Appendix D). After quantitatively analyzing the data, the results of the pre-test were as follows in each linguistic aspect of speaking: on a scale of 0.5 to 2, therefore, the total grade was over /10 points, it was found that almost half of the study group, thirteen students had two points in Comprehension, meaning, they fully understood the questions asked, and responded correctly without any repetition. Eight participants reported Fluency in speaking implying that speech is effortless and smooth. Eight students reported no more than two errors in Grammar during the interview. Nine students, who used the Vocabulary according to the level, communicated effectively and explained their ideas with eloquence. Finally, eight participants were verified to have a clear Pronunciation, with correct stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns.

In Figure 1, one can see the scores obtained by the students in each category of the linguistic aspects of speaking, which reflect the competencies reached by each student at the moment of speaking.
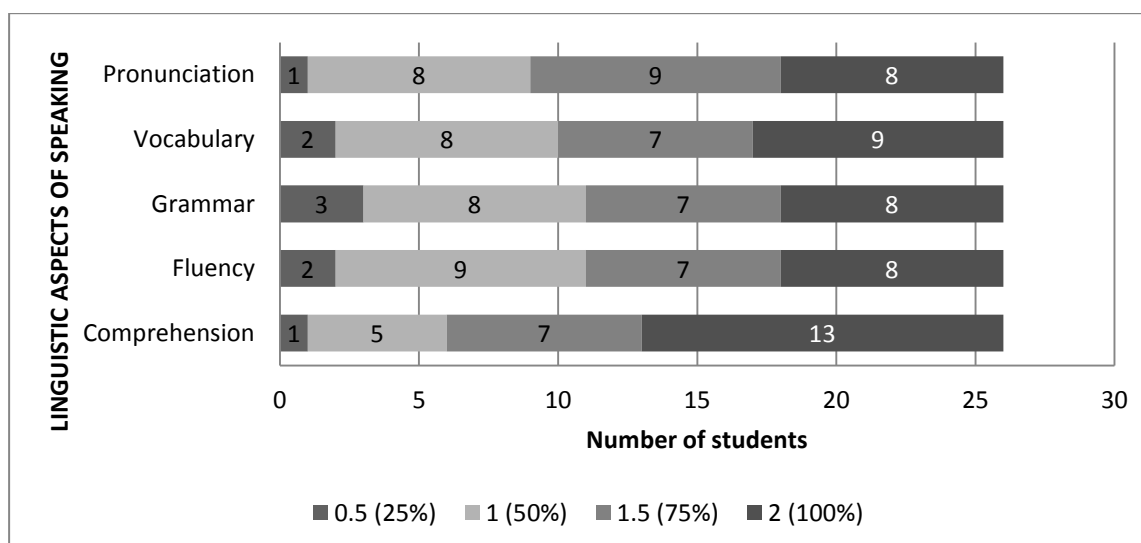
Figure 1. Development range of linguistic aspects of speaking Pre-test

5.1.2. Post-test

In the post-test, it was clear that twenty-four students reached the maximum score in Comprehension. One participant understood most of the questions asked with minor repetitions (1.5 points), and another participant understood what was asked with several repetitions (1 point). Around twelve students achieved an excellent performance in Grammar (2 points). Four students at the moment of oral communication showed an unstable Fluency and the sentences were incomplete. In Grammar, the students reported competencies equivalent to all levels of development from 0.5. In the remaining linguistic aspects, Pronunciation and Vocabulary, it is observed that more students reached 2 points compared to the number of students in the pre-test. The details of the frequency of the development achieved by the students are shown in Figure 2.
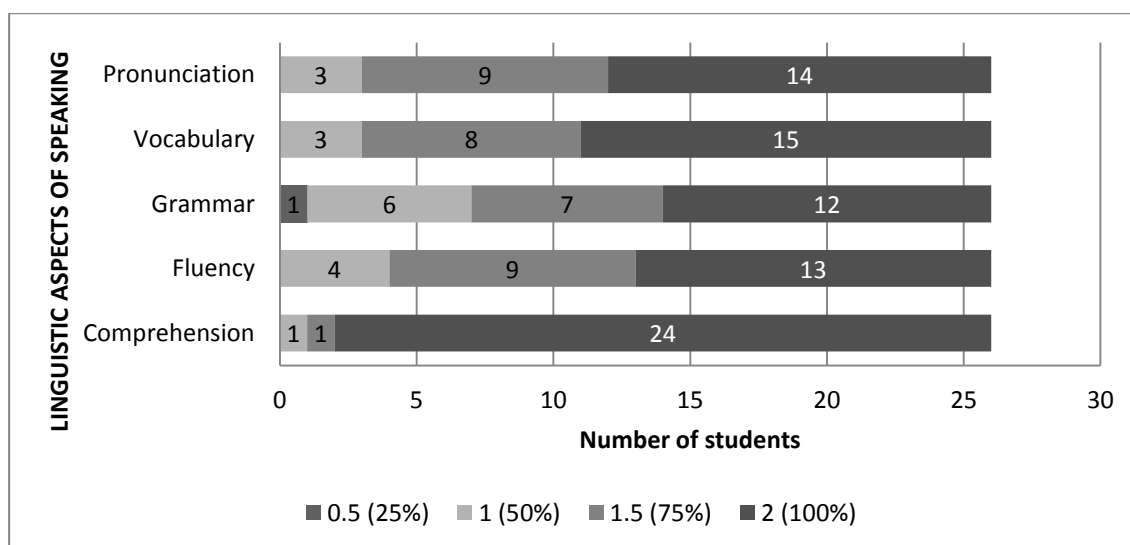
Figure 2. Development range of linguistic aspects of speaking Post-Test

5.1.3 Students' perception

Results regarding students' personal perceptions on developing cultural language skills revealed that nine students thought that they had 100% in the development of Comprehension. Seven students thought that their Fluency reached a 50 %. Also, ten students mentioned that their level of Grammar and Pronunciation, reached a development of 75%. Seven students thought that their Vocabulary reached a 70% (see Figure 3). The sole purpose of this instrument was to explore students' perceptions when practicing oral communicative competence with cultural-themed activities (Appendix E).
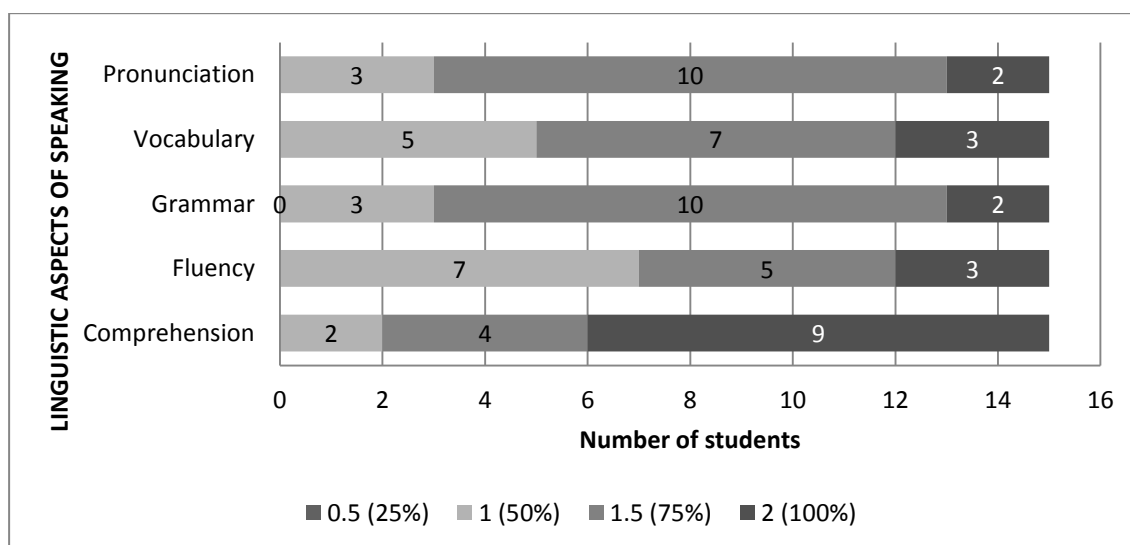
Figure 3. Student'**s** perception on the linguistic aspects of speaking

The average results showed that Comprehension was the skill that students thought as the most developed after dealing with cultural subjects, with a mean of 1.73 (SD = 0.37). Also, Fluency was the weakest skill with a mean of 1.37 (SD = 0.40). The student self-scores ranged between 5 and 9.5 with a mean of 7.47 (SD = 1.32).

Table 1

Students' perceptions: Descriptive of Perceptions

Ling. Aspects	Median	Mean	SD
Comprehension	2	1.73	0.37
Fluency	1.5	1.37	0.4
Grammar	1.5	1.47	0.3
Vocabulary	1.5	1.43	0.37
Pronunciation	1.5	1.47	0.3
Total	7.5	7.47	1.32

The data from the students' perceptions are referential only, they were not used in the final analysis of the data gathered along this study.

5.1.4 Quizzes

After the pre-test, the first oral speaking quiz on the first two cultural topics: "Halloween and Thanksgiving" was applied; then a second quiz on the remaining cultural topics: "The U.S. Sates and Music: Jazz and Blues" was applied to the students. The statistical results show a significant difference between the pre-test and the first quiz on Halloween and Thanksgiving as it is shown in Figure 4. It was determined that the average total scores in the students during the intervention reported significant differences ($p = 0.022$) with medians of 7.75 ($\square = 7.31$; SD = 2.25) and 8.5 ($\square = 8.12$; SD = 1.34) respectively with a mean difference of 0.81 points. On the other hand, the results show no major significance between the second quiz and the post-test.

The scores of the participants on the activities on "Halloween and Thanksgiving" and "U.S. States and Music: Jazz and Blues" and the post-test were similar differences of means with no statistical significance.

The recorded average of "U.S. States and Music: Jazz and Blues" and in the post-test was nine with averages of 8.54 (SD = 1.34) and 8.63 (SD = 1.49) respectively.

The variation of data from the last three tests was small (the standard deviation was less than 20% of the mean).

After the application of the pre-test and oral quiz on "Halloween and Thanksgiving", a second quiz on the "U.S. States and Music: Jazz and Blues" was applied. Then a post-test was conducted at the very end. The results are displayed on Figure 4 where it is clear that between the pre-test and the first quiz on "Halloween and Thanksgiving" there was a slight increment, but if one observes the

results of the first quiz and the second quiz on the "U.S. States and Music", there is not a significant statistical difference. In the same way, it seems that comparing the results of the second quiz with the post-test, there is no significant difference; here the results show a similar result; therefore, there was a stagnation in these two last
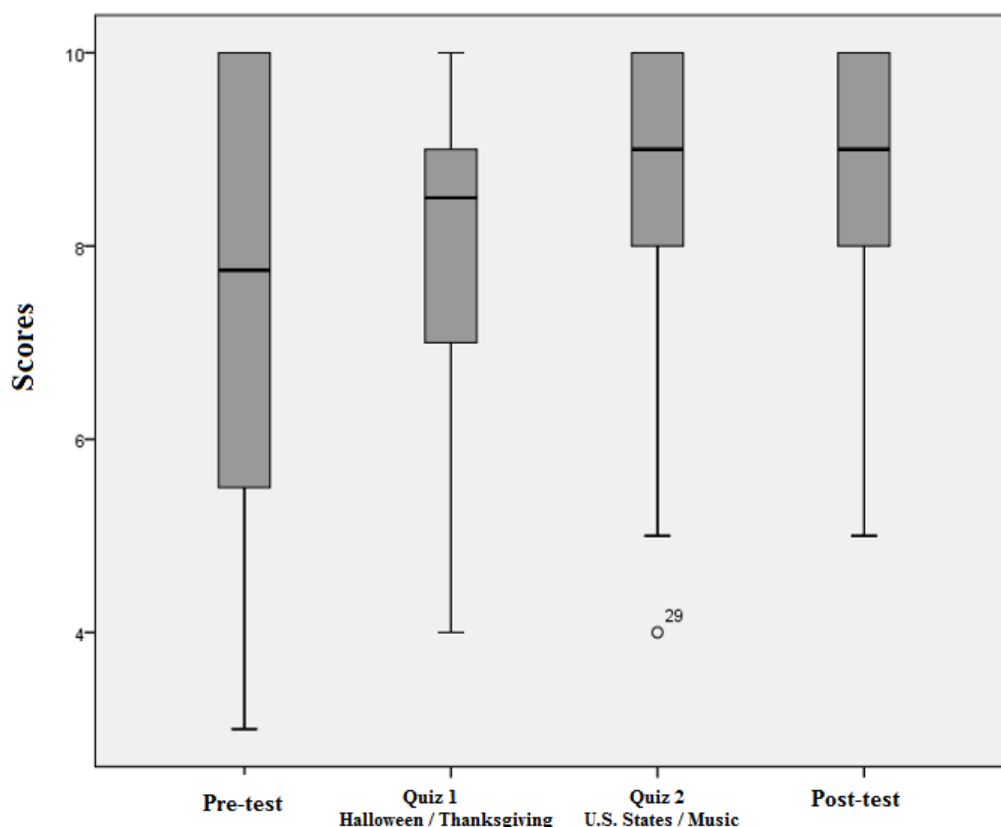
tests.

Figure 4. Scores attained in the Oral Quizzes and in the Pre and Post-tests

To conclude, the Speaking skill requires time to practice and to interiorize the new vocabulary in order to communicate successfully. Between the cultural topics acquired, the students did not have much time to use what they learned. Therefore, limited time to practice can be seen in this case as a limitation.

Here are the quantitative findings of the pre-test and post-test.

The analysis performed among the Linguistic aspects of the Speaking Rubric, did not reflect significant differences in the students' grades in the pre-test (p = 0.44) and the post-test, grades ranged between 1.4 and 1.6 points. In the post-test we found a statistically significant difference between the students' skills scores. Comprehension was the linguistic aspect of speaking with the highest average score (☐ = 1.9; SD = 0.216) versus Grammar development with a mean of 1.6 (SD = 0.462). Fluency, Vocabulary and Pronunciation reported averages of 1.7 (see details in Table 2).

Table 2

Comparisons of Linguistic Aspects of Speaking

Ling. Aspects		Pre-Test	Post-Test
Comprehension	Mean	1.6	**1.9**
	SD	0.464	0.216
Fluency	Mean	1.4	1.7
	SD	0.489	0.373
Grammar	Mean	1.4	**1.6**
	SD	0.498	0.462
Vocabulary	Mean	1.4	1.7
	SD	0.495	0.353
Pronunciation	Mean	1.4	1.7
	SD	0.438	0.351
P		0.44	0,006*

Note: *significant difference*

The statistical results show that in the pre-test, the students scored grades between 3 and 10 points with a mean of 7.20 (SD = 2.23), normal behavior (p = 0.183) and high data variability, while in the post-test students reported scores between 5 and 10 points with a mean of 8.63 and a low variability of data (SD = 1.49). Also, there was a negative asymmetry of -0.817, the non-parametric test for

two related samples (Wilcoxon) showed significant differences. Figure 5 shows the behavior of the data in the pre and post-tests.
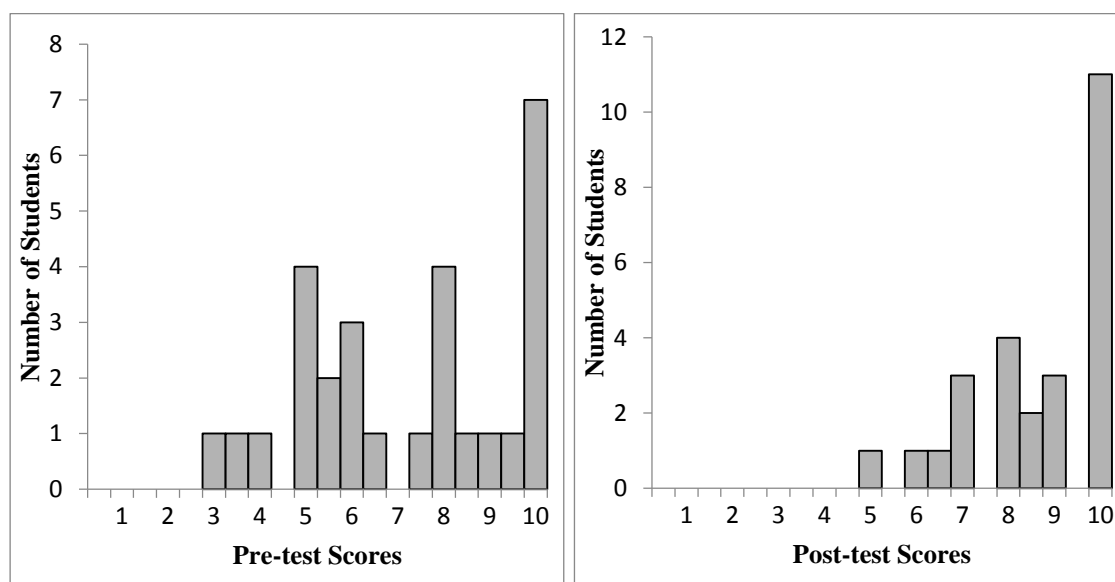
Figure 5. Scores of the Pre and Post-tests

Grades awarded to students in the five tested linguistic aspects of speaking reported significant differences ($p < 0.05$). In Comprehension, there were no negative changes reported, but 11 positive changes and 15 were even. The greatest number of 12 positive changes were recorded in Vocabulary 12. Grammar and Fluency resulted in 16 even results and two negative changes were shown in Grammar, Vocabulary and Pronunciation. In all cases the average scores were higher in the post-test (see Table 3).

Table 3

Registered Changes between the Pre- and Post-test

Ling. Aspects	Negative changes	Positive Changes	Tie or Draw	P
Comprehension		11	15	.00*
Fluency	1	9	16	.01*
Grammar	2	8	16	.04*
Vocabulary	2	12	12	.01*
Pronunciation	2	10	14	.01*

Note: *significant difference*

5.2 Qualitative Results

5.2.1 Survey

The survey helped choose the four cultural topics that were covered in class. A focus group of six students answered five questions on their cultural background knowledge of U.S. culture and their own culture and on whether they were interested in being cultural aware and if so, the cultural topics that interested them the most. After the students had answered these questions, it was evident that they lacked cultural knowledge of the U.S. They had not been taught cultural topics in their previous English classes. Many cultural topics arose in their answers, and this information helped to identify the students' cultural interests.

Here are all the topics the students chose: Easter, Independence Day, Valentine's Day, Christmas, food, traditions, July 4th, native groups, Thanksgiving, Halloween, sports, music, lifestyle, the States, celebrations, politics, business in the U.S.A., Wall Street, tales, and literature. Four of these topics were chosen and for this, the teacher students discussed information to decide which would be the most important and representative of the U.S.A.

The researcher along with the students agreed on the topics to be included in the syllabus and therefore, to be covered in class.

The topics were:

1. Halloween

2. Thanksgiving

3. U.S. states (one state per student)

4. Music: Blues and Jazz

5.2.2 Students' Interview

After the four topics were covered through the intervention, an interview on the students' perceptions was carried out to all the students. The students responded to what they thought about learning U.S. cultural topics in their English class and how this approach has influenced their oral communicative competence. The data collected here was analyzed and some ideas or topics that were most recurrent among the students' answers, and their thoughts were categorized as follows:

1. understanding of the culture and the language

2. productive and helpful information that gained students' interest

3. topics of interest

4. vocabulary development through new words and phrases

5. development of their oral communicative competence.

These categories can be corroborated by the information gathered during the interview which reveals important opinions that show how students appreciated learning about cultural topics of the U.S.A. Here are some quotes of what they said:

"Lots of interaction, learned from peers about history, traditions, new vocabulary,

interesting." Another student said: "Interesting to learn about the culture of other countries, I see on the social network that people celebrate these holidays and did not understand but now I do" Most students clearly saw the benefits of the new vocabulary acquisition; for instance, they said, "New vocabulary useful", "I learned a lot of new words", "new words", "new phrases, new words", "Interesting topics all of them, I can express myself differently with new words, "now I know and understand many things, very good". Also, students show their developing of their oral communicative competence by saying: "Yes it was productive, interesting, didn't know before, improve speaking yes", "I love it teacher, to learn about Thanksgiving, Halloween, music, now I can talk about it." To conclude, the students made some comments on the content of the topics for instance: "Culture is important to learn and understand plus it was fun to celebrate the holidays and the music", "Now I know more about the states of the history and the life in the U.S., why they speak English."

Overall, it can be seen that the students saw the use of learning culture and the acquisition of vocabulary which led them to an understanding of the cultural topics and to develop their Speaking skill, due to the fact that it was clear they saw the importance of learning and using new vocabulary. Also major students' interaction made them feel more comfortable to acquire knowledge. Even though some topics were more interesting than others the students now will be able to understand information on the given topics as mentioned by a student on social networking pages or by communicating authentically with native English speaking people.

5.2.3 Teacher's journal

Teacher's journal is focused on the information by observation recorded by the teacher in all the activities that took place in the classroom, focusing in the students' overall behavior and in the way they acquire knowledge and learn English. It is vital to mention that the analysis of data from a journal involves examining patterns in order to come up with common topics.

This journal's data was carefully analyzed qualitatively and the relevant aspects that the journal revealed had to do with topics that were categorized as being the most relevant and persistent as well. To outline the categories, the commentaries were assembled and divided according to their essential aspects. Some ideas or topics that were most frequent among the students' answers and their thoughts were categorized as follows:

1. Engagement

2. Affectivity

3. Productivity

4. Attention

5. Use of the target language

When the cultural activities were being developed in class, students worked in pair and groups; most students participated by asking questions on the topic, or vocabulary, or ways of expressing themselves. They were engaged in the process of acquiring knowledge of the cultural topics and also the students perceived the class as interesting because they were involved with the cultural topics and they shared their findings from the material given to them. They also shared their questions or misunderstandings. Several questions were directed to the teacher and other

classmates, showing the students' interest in the given topic. It can be observed that the level of participation was high specially while working collaboratively with peers in groups or pairs.

Therefore, engagement was observed when students were interacting with their peers and trying to communicate with them. This means that they were, for instance: concentrated and were interested in what the other students had to say.

Regarding the second category, affectivity, it was observed in the following situations that when working in groups it was clear to see that the students were cordial with each other and that they worked in harmony. In very few instances, one or two students had a know-it-all attitude or seemed bored, but in general, most students had little or no background on the cultural topics knowledge; consequently, they showed interest and worked collaboratively with peers. They acted comfortably with the group members. They even celebrated when after working hard they managed to accomplish an activity or a goal. That is just one example of affectivity shown among students within groups and with other groups as well.

Consequently, affectivity was reflected by any behavior that had to do with being comfortable, relaxed, or at ease with peers as well as with the teacher; an example found in the teacher's journal says: "Students enjoy the activities, and seemed to enjoy."

Some students were very interested in music and many shared their misconceived ideas about blues and jazz, but the activities done in class show how productive they were in acquiring new vocabulary, history, or the origins of the music also when the students participated in information sharing, activities done in groups. Each group shared their assigned topic to be researched to share their findings with

others later; therefore, at the end of the session, they all knew all the aspects of the cultural topic.

To conclude, productivity was seen in the results of completing assignments and being eager to see outcomes. Also, at the end of the lesson the students were required to produce what they learned in either a written or oral production. An instance of this can be seen in the Teacher's journal: "Students answer content questions correctly."

Students listen carefully to all the instructions and assignments for each cultural topic. They paid attention, because after each activity randomly chosen students were going to be tested by answering questions on the content either orally or written and to illustrate the use of the new vocabulary and showed that they developed speaking fluency.

A next category, attention, was observed when all students made eye contact with the teacher and followed all that was said and done in class, perhaps because they were interested in the given topic as well as in the information and activities that came along with. An example can be seen in the following statement: "Students seemed attentive and questioning."

In general, students used English to communicate with their peers as well as with the teacher; they hardly ever switched to L1 unless it was strictly necessary or to fulfill activities or to share previously gather information on the cultural topic. The following are examples quoted in the Teacher's journal: "Students use English most of the time;" "students ask for permission to use L1 to ask a question." The students made a great effort to only use the target language even after the tasks were finished.

Chapter VI

Discussion

This chapter discusses the significance of the results from both the quantitative and the qualitative research in this study. Additionally, this section links the quantitative and qualitative results to the questions in this study in order to analyze the relation between the two aspects. Finally, this section explains the relationship between the results and the existing studies as presented in the literature review. In order to comply with the need for objectivity, this discussion will also refer to any limitations when applicable.

The quantitative aspect is of high significance for this study because it focuses on the students' perceptions regarding their oral communicative competence after learning about culture. Within the oral communicative competence, this study uses a student's perception rubric as the instrument to analyze such competence.

To begin with, the quantitative student's perception rubric instrument allows some results that respond to two questions in this study. The first question is about the need to explore students' perceptions when practicing oral communicative competence with cultural-themed activities. The answer to this question is that the tendency in the perceptions of students is towards ensuring that comprehension is enhanced through cultural-themed activities. Also, students respond that grammar and pronunciation have been enhanced, and there is no doubt that these linguistic aspects are intimately related to oral communicative competence.

The other question this instrument responds to is the one about the need to analyze the effect of cultural topics in the development of oral communicative competence in an EFL class. The clear response is that the students have acquired the necessary tools to comprehend several aspects of oral communicative competence, such as content, vocabulary, and grammar.

The limitation of the student's perception ULI speaking rubric instrument is that not all students answered the respective questions, which limits the number of responses that can be used for discussion in this section.

Even though, quantitatively speaking there is no significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test as the grades showed, there is a tendency that in a way indicates by some means positive influence of the cultural topics in students' communicative competence.

The quantitative instrument ULI speaking rubric for the post-test serves to determine the students' progress in regards to the development of their oral communicative competence. The results of the pre and post-test show the validity of this instrument which allows an objective analysis of changes in the students' oral communicative competence after learning cultural topics. Even though there is neither a significant improvement or a huge increment in the total results, it shows that the use of some topics worked better and aided increase the oral communicative competence.

The fact that students showed in the post-test that they have reached the maximum score in the skill of comprehension, it indicates that oral communicative

competence has certainly somehow enhanced through the learning of cultural topics in the context of the language class.

While there is no significant difference between the overall pre-test and the post-test grades, the feature that deserves discussion is the difference between the linguistic aspects of speaking students possessed at the time of the pre-test as compared to the ones during the post-test. It is presented that the oral communicative competence was enhanced in some way and this showed in the students' skills to communicate during the post-test. Thus, this responds to the question about the need to analyze the effect of cultural topics in the development of oral communicative competence in an EFL class. The answer is that the effect of learning cultural topics is positive in regards to the ability to communicate in oral manner because the students in some way had developed this skill.

Also, the post-test evaluated whether or not student experience led to enhancement of the oral communicative competence. The answer to the question of evaluation is, therefore, that skills were by some means enhanced when performing oral communication.

The discussion now moves onto the qualitative aspect of this study. The qualitative research used three instruments: a survey, an interview, and a teacher's journal.

First, the analysis of the survey inquired about the presence of cultural topics in the students' previous regular English classes and about the cultural topics that interest students. There are two main sets of results that are worth mentioning in this study. The first set has to do with the fact that cultural teaching topics are not present

in the English class, according to the students surveyed. The second set of results refers to the cultural topics that students prefer or were most interested in. In regards to the lack of cultural teaching in the English class, students widely expressed that they had not been exposed to culture before or in their previous levels. Students stated that this lack of culture makes language classes boring and too geared toward grammar; besides, the topics used in classes were not relevant. This finding relates to the existing results in the literature review (Lessard – Clouston, 1996; Kumaravadivelu, 2008; Chahak & Basirizadeh, 2012 & Yang & Chen, 2014), in the sense that very often teachers do not expose their students to culture, or teachers are not culturally aware and sometimes they are not even conscious that culture should be included in a language class. Moreover, at Universidad de Cuenca, there is a general lack of exposure to culture in English language classes and that is why this study came about.

When it comes to topics of cultural interest, the results from the survey also have an intimate relationship with the existing results. The relationship is that it is important to motivate students to learn language through cultural knowledge, and this is confirmed through the answers provided by the students surveyed. In fact, students have a very clear idea of the cultural topics that interest them, which were Easter, Independence Day, Valentine's Day, Christmas, food, traditions, the 4th of July, native groups, Thanksgiving, Halloween, sports, music, lifestyle, the states, celebrations, politics, business in the USA, Wall Street, tales, and literature. These topics are of cultural interest and students know that they are attached to the language they are learning. Some of them have encountered some information or ideas in social networks but are not able to understand. This confirms that students

have an interest in culture and thus, if students do not learn culture, they are going to feel alienated from members of the target culture, as Chahak and Basirizaded (2012) emphasize.

The importance of the survey for the students is that they are now aware about the meaning of culture and they also learned about history, customs, people, food, traditions, facts, and the music of the USA, which are all cultural topics of interest for the class.

It is necessary to highlight that there is a limitation when it comes to the survey.

The limitation has to do with the fact that the survey was applied to the focus group, which included six students. This number is not necessarily representative of how a majority of students feel. Another limitation has to do with the fact that students do not understand with certainty what culture means. Moreover, during the survey, there was the need to explain to students the meaning of culture; consequently, the answers could be elicited from them.

The second instrument that requires discussion is the students' interview. The importance of this instrument is that students got to express the importance of culture in the development of their oral communicative competence. Most students referred to several categories that were positively influenced within the language learning process. These categories are the following in the order of importance as expressed by the students interviewed:

1. understanding of the culture and the language

2. productive and helpful information that gained students' interest

3. topics of interest

4. vocabulary development through new words and phrases

5. development of their oral communicative competence.

These results respond to the specific question this study proposes, which is about exploring students' perceptions when practicing oral communicative competence with cultural-themed activities. The clear answer students provided in the interview, showed that activities used with topics that are cultural-themed, effectively influenced the categories mentioned above in the context of the English language class. Additionally, these results respond to another specific question in this study, which is about the need to evaluate whether students experience leads to enhancement of their oral communicative competence. The answer is that students did benefit from the experience they had in class as this leads to a much better level of oral communicative competence among themselves and also with the teacher. Therefore, there is a feeling of improvement in speaking and in other areas.

In addition, there is a coincidence between the interview results and the findings in the existing literature review, particularly in regards to the aspect of the willingness students usually have to study not only the linguistic aspects, but also the intercultural aspects of the language, as Dimas (2016) states. This coincidence is relevant because the existing results and the scope of this study focus on the fact that students can communicate in a successful manner in real life situations if they learn not only language but culture as well.

Another relevant coincidence between the interview results and the existing literature review relates to the engaging characteristics of interactive tasks in the English language class. During the interview, students expressed that they certainly

felt motivated and their level of interest increased due to the interactive tasks that were used as a strategy to engage learners in class. Similarly, Ho (2009) expresses that interactive tasks play a very important role in engaging students during the language learning process; therefore, there seems to be a positive influence by the combination of cultural topics and interactive activities.

A third coincidence with existing results is related to the fact that students have the perception that culture becomes alive when being taught not only language, which is precisely the idea that Ho (2009) expresses regarding the reality that there is a static view of culture.

A fourth coincidence resides in that existing results state that the use of effective activities and material used in class to transmit culture communication, is the key to success in EFL classrooms (Dai, 2011). The results of the students' interview are similar, because the students expressed their interest due to the effectiveness of the topics plus the material used and the activities performed. Moreover, the students felt that the learning experience was engrossing for both teacher and students.

An aspect that is important to mention is that there is a limitation with personal interviews because students may feel satisfied enough with the class and in turn, this could influence them to give positive answers during the interview with the teacher.

To continue with the discussion of results, the third instrument analyzed herein is the teacher's journal. The teacher's journal is an important instrument because it provides meaningful information about the students' dynamics in class as cultural topics are being taught. The dynamics are significant because they are an indicator of the students' level of interest and involvement within culture knowledge

acquisition. The relevant aspects that the journal reveals have to do with engagement, affectivity, productivity, attention, and use of the target language.

These outcomes respond to the objectives this study proposes, which are to analyze the effect of cultural topics in the development of oral communicative competence in an EFL class, and to evaluate whether students' experience leads to enhancement of their oral communicative competence. The fact that students during class express their thoughts about the activities being productive and helpful shows engagement of the students within the class. They also mention the topics being of interest, which clearly shows the classes as being productive in the sense that by acquiring cultural knowledge, the students will be able to communicate better. In the current literature, there are some similar findings by Yang and Cheng (2014) that show culture as an important element in foreign language education, and that it is evident that teaching culture in foreign language classes is recognized as a need to engage and motivate students because it is a language skill that should be acquired.

Affectivity is also a very important aspect found in the teacher's journal. For EFL students to acquire the language better, they need a motivating and relaxing environment in order to become competent intercultural speakers as described in the literature review by Byram (as cited in Crozed & Liddicoat, 1999). Byram asserts that a competent intercultural speaker is someone who manages a linguistic competence and a sociolinguistic awareness of the linking between language and the environment, as well as someone who can deal with the affective and cognitive demands needed to interact with others. In class and in the interviews, the students talk about the class environment being easy going and relaxed. For instance, one student said:

"I enjoyed the culture classes, motivating, fun we laughed and learned too" (student).

A stressful environment sometimes prevents students from learning. Students' expressions like: "Motivating, fun, it was different, interesting, great activities, helpful, improve, understand" show engagement, affectivity, productivity, and attention.

Another important aspect found in the journal was the use of the target language where at times, the students used only English among themselves as well as to communicate with the teacher. The students rarely used L1 to communicate with the teacher, but they did on some occasions, use L1 to communicate and understand the tasks with their group peers. As mentioned in the interview, the students described the fact that they acquired many new words, phrases, and expressions that enabled them to speak and exteriorize their thoughts. This confirms the use of the target language to communicate with others.

The use and practice of the target language is a very important aspect in communication. Dimas (2016) states that learning culture and not only language leads students to successfully communicate in real life situations or authentic communication. Therefore, the results do show that students have acquired cultural and linguistic knowledge to help them develop oral communicative competence.

To sum up, both the quantitative and qualitative instruments used in this study have some limitations, but overall, they lead to a very important consideration, which is that oral communicative competence is positively influenced by the teaching of cultural knowledge in the context of the EFL class.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and Recommendations

This section presents the conclusions and recommendations based on the research for this study. The first conclusion is that the use of cultural knowledge in the English language class is an effective teaching tool. Even though the statistical analysis does not show a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test, there is a positive tendency to reach communicative competence through the use of cultural topics. The improvement was observed particularly in the areas of comprehension, pronunciation, acquisition of new vocabulary as a tool to communicate efficiently, and cultural awareness. All of these areas lead students to orally communicate more efficiently as compared to teaching that does not include cultural topics.

A clear recommendation that should be mentioned has to do with the need to do further studies regarding the grammar and fluency aspects. The reason for this recommendation is that these two aspects were the weakest areas of development in this study despite the inclusion of cultural topics, as shown in the quantitative report. At the moment students had to communicate their knowledge orally, they were able to effectively demonstrate an understanding of the culture attached to English language, the appropriate vocabulary, and the correct pronunciation. However, grammar and fluency still needed development. Based on this result, a question for future studies would be 'How can teachers incorporate all the skills plus culture in order to develop grammar and fluency along with the other skills?'

The second conclusion is that it is necessary that English teachers be aware of the importance of culture in language teaching. Based on several scholarly studies such as Chahak and Basirizadeh (2012), Dimas (2016) and Choudhury (2014) it is evident that teachers should be culturally aware but also willing to teach culture in the context of the English language class. A highly important recommendation is based on the study by Lessard-Clouston (1996), in which the educational system in China made cultural awareness in teaching a mandatory component of English language teaching. This study suggests that along with this mandatory component, teachers must be willing to learn culture and to implement it in class. Thus, the recommendation herein is to apply this component at Universidad de Cuenca so that teachers begin to incorporate cultural topics in English language classes. The question for further studies is how to motivate teachers to learn culture and how to ensure that they include cultural topics in their classes. However, a significant recommendation in this aspect involves the students as well. Further studies would ideally concentrate not only on how to prepare teachers but also how to motivate students to be interested in learning beyond the plain language. The reason for this recommendation is that very often students lack the motivation to acquire knowledge in general.

The third conclusion is that English teachers should be culturally aware so that they can transfer this knowledge to their students. In other words, it is not only recommended that teachers understand the importance of culture in the class, but also that teachers acquire cultural awareness. For teachers to acquire cultural awareness, it is not only necessary that they learn what a given topic is about but that they actually experience culture in an English-speaking country. This can be

possible through cultural exchange programs as suggested by Yue (2014). An alternative to this recommendation could be to have English teachers attending workshops with native speakers of English who can help teachers develop cultural awareness.

A final conclusion is that learning English without learning the culture attached to it makes the learning experience rather impractical because at best, students will only be able to communicate general information without any cultural content. This is a limitation in real life because daily conversation with English speakers is often about cultural topics that include but are not limited to traditions, food, politics, music, holidays. This conclusion is the basis for a final recommendation in regards to the need to implement cultural knowledge as an essential part of the curriculum for English language teaching. Further studies can certainly focus on analyzing the ideal practical techniques for cultural-based language teaching in English classes. Future studies that concentrate on this area can be an excellent instrument for teachers who are ready to teach culture along with language. The reason they would be excellent instruments is that they would guide teachers on integrating intercultural communicative competence into English programs.

To conclude, culture-themed activities influence the development of the students' oral communicative competence, and therefore, English teachers cannot afford to continue teaching only language without culture. Students need to be able to communicate effectively in the contemporary world that demands professionals who are not only able to talk but have the capacity to show they have cultural knowledge. Thus, it is the teacher's duty to lead students towards a full oral

communicative competence, which can be achieved through cultural-themed activities.

References:

Abdollahi-Guilani, M., Yasin, M. S., Hua, T. K., & Aghaei, K. (2012). Culture-Integrated Teaching for the Enhancement of EFL learner tolerance. *Asian Social Science*, 115-120.

Afrin, N. (2013). Developing real life experience through teaching culture in the efl class: fostering the learning through intercultural awareness. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, 2*(1), 70-76.

Allahyar, N., & Nazari, A. (2012). Potentiality of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory in exploring the role of teacher perceptions, expectations and interaction strategies. *WoPaLP, 6*, 79-92.

Brown, H. D. (1994). *Teaching by principles.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Chahak, S. M., & Basirizadeh, F. S. (2012). The Study of Culture of Foreign Language Teaching. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 2 (6) 522.

Choudhury, M. H. (2013). Teaching Culture in EFL: Implications, Challenges and Strategies. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 20-24.

Choudhury, R. U. (2014). The role of culture in teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. *Jazan University: Kingdom of saudi Arabia. Retrieved on 17th November*.

Creswell, J. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Sage publications.

Crozet, C., & Liddicoat, A. (1999). The challenge of intercultural language teaching: Engaging with culture in the classroom. In *Striving for the third place: Intercultural competence throught language education* (pp. 113-125).

Dai, L. (2011). Practical techniques for cultural-based language teaching in the EFL classroom. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 2*(5), 1031-1036.

Damen, L. (1987). *The fifth dimension in the language classroom* (Vol. 11478). Boston: Addison Wesley Publishing Company.

Dimas, H. M. (2016). Integrating the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in a Foreign Language Program: Faculty Considerations upon Leaving the Haven of Native Speakership. *English Language Teaching, 9*(4), 1-9.

Dörnyei, Z. (2003). Attitudes, orientations and motivations in language learning: Advances in theory, research, and applications. In *Language learning* (pp. 3-32). Nottingham: University of Nottingham.

Frank, J. (2013). Raising Cultural Awareness in the English Language Classroom. *English Teaching forum, 51*(4), 2-11.

Gao, F. (2006). Language is culture-on intercultural communication. *Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 58-67.

Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (1997). Content-based instruction: Research foundations. In W. Grabe, & F. L. Stoller, *The content-based classroom: Perspectives on integrating language and content.* (pp. 5-29).

Heidari, A., Ketabi, S., & Zonoobi, R. (2014). The role of culture through the eyes of different approaches to and methods of foreign language teaching. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*(34).

Hinkel, E. (2001). Building awareness and practical skills to facilitate cross-cultural communication. In *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 443-458). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Ho, S. T. (2009). Addressing culture in EFL classrooms: The challenge of shifting from a traditional to an intercultural stance. *Electronic journal of foreign language teaching, 6*(1), 63-76.

James P. Lantolf, S. L. (2015). Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Development. In B. v. Williams, *Theories in Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 207-226). New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.

Jiang, W. (2000). The relationship between culture and language. *ELT journal, 54*(4), 328-334.

Jinlei, Z., Ying, W., & Baohui, Z. (2012). Introducing a New Teaching Model: Flipped Classroom. *Journal of Distance Education, 4*, 46-51.

Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2008). *Cultural globalization and language education.* Yale University Press.

Lessard-Clouston, M. (1996). Chinese teachers' views of culture in their EFL learning and teaching. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 9*(3), 197-224.

Li, Z. (2016). An empirical study of Process-oriented intercultrual teching in Chinese College English classroom. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 7*(3), 527-533.

Liu, Y. C. (2014). The use of Target-Language Cultural Contents in EFL Teaching. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 4*(6).

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2012). *Research Methods in second language acquisition.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Mitchell, R., Myles, F., & Marsden, E. (2013). Sociocultural perspectives on second language learning. In R. Mitchell, F. Myles, & E. Marsden, *Second Language Leraning Theories* (third ed., pp. 220-249). New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

Rababah, G. (2002). Communication Problems Facing Arab Learners of English. *Arabs; Communiction Strategies*, 1-26.

Rodgers, D. (2006). Developing Content and Form: Encouraging Evidence from Italian Content-Based Instruction. *The Modern Language Journal, 90*(3), 373-386.

Savignon, S. J. (1976). Communicative Competence: Theory and Classroom Practice. *Central States Conference on the Teahcing of Foreign Languages*, 1-23.

Seery. (2015). Flipped learning in higher education chemistry: emerging trends and potential directions. *Chemistry Education Research and Practice, 16*(4), 758-768.

Sun, C. (2015). The cultivation of Cross-Cultural Communication Competence in Oral English Teaching Practice. *English Language teaching*, 8 (12), 7.

Tian, D., & Wen-Wen, Y. (2016). A Study on the Application of CBI in College English Writing Teching. *DEStech Transactions on Social Science, Education and Human Science, (eshd).*

Tomalin, B., & Stempleski, S. (2013). *Cultural Awareness.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Torres, R. (2015). *Coordinación del Programa de Créditos de Ingles del Instituto de Lenguas de la Universidd de Cuenca.* Cuenca.

Tucker, B. (2012). The flipped classroom. *Education next, 12*(1).

Turuk, M. (2008). The relevance and implications of Vygotsky´s sociocultural theory in the second language classroom. *Arecls, 5*, 244-262.

Wang, L., Bruce, C., & Hughes, H. (2011). Sociocultural Theories and their Application in Information Literacy Research and Education. *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, 296-308.

Yang, X., & Chen, D. (2014). Do instructors´ perceptions on teachng culture in foreign language classroom make a difference: Lessons from a qualitative study of language instructors and learners. *The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning, 4*(2), 1-14.

Yue, S. (2014). Strategies to promote Intercultural Communicative Competence in EFL Teaching. *Sino-Us English Teaching, 11*, 583-604.

Appendices

Appendix A: UIL permission to apply the study to EFL students A2 level

Appendix B: Students Consent Letter

Appendix C: Students Survey

Appendix D: ULI Speaking Rubric

Appendix E: Students' perception Rubric

Appendix F: Lesson Plan

Appendix G: ULI Syllabus for English level 2A (September 2015- February2016)

Appendix A

ULI Permission to Apply the Study

Cuenca, 19 de septiembre del 2016
Oficio No. 002-16-09-2016-UIL

Lcda. Patricia Galarza.
Ciudad

De mi consideración:

Con un cordial saludo y por medio del presente me permito comunicar a usted que el Consejo Académico del Instituto Universitario de Lenguas, en su sesión ordinaria de fecha 16 de septiembre de 2016, conoció la petición presentada por usted en donde solicita, se le autorice aplicar la propuesta de investigación de su diseño de tesis como estudiante de la Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada, en el curso tercero " 3 A" del Programa de Inglés de Créditos durante el ciclo académico Septiembre 2016 Febrero 2017.

Al respecto el Consejo Académico luego del análisis correspondiente resolvió: Acoger favorablemente la solicitud presentada, y autorizar a la Lcda. Patricia Galarza, realizar la propuesta de investigación de su diseño de tesis en el curso tercero " 3 A" del Programa de Inglés de Créditos durante el ciclo académico Septiembre 2016 Febrero 2017.

Particular que comunico para los fines legales pertinentes.

Atentamente:

Ab. Diana Carolina Cunalata Vázquez
SECRETARIA DEL CONSEJO

cc. Archivo

Appendix B

Students' Informed Consent

UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA, LETRAS Y CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
CENTRO DE POSGRADO
MAESTRÍA EN LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA A LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLES COMO
LENGUA EXTRANJERA
RESEARCH PROPOSAL

TITLE: The influence of Cultural topic activities on Oral Communicative Competence with EFL A2 level students.

TEMA DE TESIS:

La influencia de actividades con temas culturales en la competencia comunicativa oral en estudiantes del nivel A2.

El propósito de la presente investigación es determinar hasta qué punto la enseñanza de temas culturales de los Estados Unidos contribuyen a mejorar la competencia comunicativa oral en estudiantes del nivel A2 en clases de inglés como lengua extranjera.

Solicito su participación voluntaria en este estudio, si acepta usted deberá participar en dos evaluaciones orales una al inicio y otra al final del presente ciclo de clases tal como llenar dos encuestas, una al principio, y otra al final.

Como se menciona, su participación es voluntaria y puede retirarse el momento que desee. No tendrá que dar explicación alguna de las razones del abandono. El hecho de no participar o de retirarse no le traerá ninguna consecuencia en su rendimiento.

Su participación es anónima, y con su firma usted autorizará que los resultados de la investigación sean publicados en un documento final y en posibles eventos de socialización.

Consentimiento del participante

El participante ha sido informado sobre la investigación a realizarse.

Yo estoy de acuerdo en participar en esta investigación.

Firma:_____   Fecha:
Octubre 11, 2016

Appendix C

Survey

ENCUESTA/SURVEY

CONOCIMIENTO DE LA CULTURA DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS

1. ¿Le han enseñado temas de cultura de los Estados Unidos en los niveles de inglés anteriores a éste?
   Si   No.

2. Si su respuesta fue si, ¿puede indicar que temas de Cultura de los EEUU le enseñaron?

3. ¿Está usted interesado/a en aprender sobre la Cultura de los EEUU?

   Si   No

4. Si su respuesta fue positiva, indique por qué es importante saber sobre la Cultura del idioma que usted está aprendiendo.

5. Si usted cree que el conocimiento de la Cultura de un idioma es importante indique que temas le gustaría aprender de la Cultura de los EEUU.

Appendix D

ULI Speaking Rubric

RUBRICS FOR SPEAKING

NAME: ------------------------   LEVEL: Credits _____

Comprehension	2	Fully understands the questions asked, and answers correctly without any repetition.
	1,5	Understands most of what was asked and said with little repetition.
	1	Understands what was asked and said after some repetition.
	0,5	Understands too little even after constant repetition and rephrasing.
	0	Does not have the ability to understand questions and respond appropriately.
Fluency	2	Speech is effortless and smooth.
	1,5	Speech is occasionally hesitant, with some unevenness caused by rephrasing and groping for words.
	1	Speech is frequently hesitant and jerky; sentences may be left uncompleted.
	0,5	Speech is very slow and uneven, except for short or routine sentences.
	0	Speech is so halting and fragmentary that conversation is virtually impossible.
Grammar	2	No more than two errors during the interview.
	1,5	Few errors, but no weakness that causes misunderstanding.
	1	Occasional errors showing imperfect control of some patterns that cause occasional misunderstanding.
	0,5	Constant errors showing imperfect control of basic patterns that prevent constant misunderstanding.
	0	Almost entirely inaccurate phrases that severely prevent communication.
Vocabulary	2	Vocabulary covered in the course was used to communicate effectively and express ideas eloquently.
	1,5	A few minor difficulties arose from not using appropriate vocabulary.
	1	Choice of words sometimes inaccurate and limitations of vocabulary sometimes prevent communication.
	0,5	Limited vocabulary prevents communication.
	0	Communication is severely hampered due to lack of vocabulary.
Pronunciation	2	Clear pronunciation with correct stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns.
	1,5	Occasional mispronunciations which do not interfere with understanding.
	1	Some mispronunciations lead to occasional misunderstanding.
	0,5	Understanding is difficult due to unclear pronunciation.
	0	Unintelligible pronunciation interferes totally with understanding
TOTAL /10		

Appendix E

Student'**s Perception Rubric**

Level: Credits 3A is the same level as A2 European Framework of Languages

SPEAKING

NAME: --------------------------   **LEVEL: Credits 3A**

Indicate with an X what is your perception of the English language when communicating ORALLY.

Answers:

- 2   =   100%
- 1.5   = 75%
- 1.0   = 50%
- 0.5   = 25%
- 0   = 0%

COMPREHENSION		FLUENCY		GRAMMAR		VOCABULARY		PRONUNCIATION	
2		2		2		2		2	
1.5		1.5		1.5		1.5		1.5	
1.0		1.0		1.0		1.0		1.0	
0.5		0.5		0.5		0.5		0.5	
0		0		0		0		0	

Appendix F

Lesson Plan

Direct Instruction Model --ENGLISH			Teacher: Patricia Galarza G.
			School: ULI Univ. Cuenca

Subject: English Credits 3A
Date: November 17, 2016
Block: ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4
Semester: ☒S1 ☐S2

Students will engage in:
☒ independent activities ☐ pairing ☐ centers
☒ cooperative learning ☐ hands-on ☐ lecture
☐ peer tutoring ☐ whole group instruction
☐ visuals ☐ technology integration
☐ simulations ☐ a project ☐ Other:

Standards/Objective Met:

Talk about cultural Topics that will lead students to develop their Oral Communicative Competence

Time	Procedures Followed:			Materials/ Text References
5 Minutes	**Class Starter:** Video. A short video on Customs and Traditions on U.S. Thanksgiving			Computer. Projector youtube.
10 Minutes	**Review of Previously Learned Material/ Lesson Connections:** Review: Thanksgiving Lexical Contents			Hand-outs
10 Minutes	**Statement of Objectives:** Talk about the most important facts about Thanksgiving Celebration			―
10 Minutes	**Literature--New material:** Speaking: conversation about the video	**Guided Practice** Teacher - Student Interaction	**Independent Practice** Group work conversation share facts	Info. from previous videos.
20 Minutes	**Grammar—New Material** Reading Content-based	**Guided Practice** Teacher gives instructions for task	**Independent Practice** students read + do exercises	Hand outs
25 Minutes	**Writing—New Material** Speaking	**Guided Practice** T's — Ss. Interaction	**Independent Practice** Oral presentation on Content ss. practice.	posters whiteboard.
10 Minutes	**Lesson Review/Reteach:** T. asked ss questions to check their understanding + give feed back + evaluation.			
	Present Closure			

Homework Given: SS will watch another video online. on Thanksgiving. on the History. ss need to be ready to share their understanding next class

Teacher Notes: T = Teacher
SS = students.

Patricia Galarza

Note: printable courtesy of LessonPlans4Teachers.com

Appendix G

ULI English Syllabus for A2 level September 2015 – February 2016

SÍLABO

FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA

DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS

Período Académico: Septiembre 2015 – Febrero 2016

NOMBRE DE LA ASIGNATURA: Inglés   CÓDIGO: 7343

Denominación oficial de la asignatura: Inglés III Créditos

CARRERA	DEPARTAMENTO DE IDIOMAS
CICLO O SEMESTRE	TERCERO (CRÉDITOS)
EJE DE FORMACIÓN	Básico Obligatorio

CRÉDITOS SEMESTRALES:

TEÓRICAS

PRÁCTICAS

TEÓRICO-PRÁCTICAS   6 créditos

TOTAL

MODALIDAD:

PRESENCIAL   ✓

A DISTANCIA

SEMIPRESENCIAL

PROFESOR(ES) RESPONSABLE(S):

DESCRIPCIÓN DE LA ASIGNATURA:

El idioma inglés es uno de los idiomas más hablados en el mundo a tal punto que es considerado una lengua franca en un gran número de países. Es el lenguaje utilizado en varias áreas tales como las relaciones internacionales, negocios, marketing, medicina, investigación, tecnología, sólo por nombrar unas pocas. Por lo tanto, es crucial para los estudiantes universitarios ser capaces de utilizar este lenguaje con precisión, puesto que este conocimiento les permitirá tener mejores oportunidades de trabajo o estudios de postgrado en el extranjero.

El nivel 3 de los cursos de créditos se enfoca en desarrollar fluidez en las cuatro destrezas básicas (leer, escuchar, hablar y escribir) a través de una variedad de actividades y tareas comunicativas que dirigen a los de un nivel A2 a un B1 del marco de referencia europeo para idiomas. Las características de este curso no sólo destacan la práctica a un nivel intermedio del idioma en clase sino también el desarrollo de tareas de la vida real. Se enfoca en material pedagógico y material real que servirán al estudiante enfrentarse a textos académicos y de tipo general de acuerdo al nivel.

PRE-REQUISITOS		CO-REQUISITOS	
Asignatura	Código	Asignatura	Código
Inglés I		No aplica	
Inglés II			

OBJETIVO(S) DE LA ASIGNATURA:

Objetivo(s) general(es)

El estudiante será capaz de entender los puntos principales de una conversación habitual y clara sobre asuntos cotidianos que se dan generalmente en el trabajo, escuela, hogar, etc.; puede defenderse en la mayoría de situaciones en conversaciones que surgen cuando por ejemplo viaja a un área donde se habla el lenguaje; puede producir textos simples y relacionados sobre tópicos que le son familiares o de interés general; puede describir experiencias y eventos, sueños, esperanzas, metas y ambiciones y brevemente puede dar razones y explicaciones en opiniones y planes.

RESULTADOS O LOGROS DE APRENDIZAJE, INDICADORES DE APRENDIZAJE, CONTENIDOS DE LA ASIGNATURA Y SITUACIONES DE EVALUACIÓN

RESULTADOS O LOGROS DE APRENDIZAJE	INDICADORES DE APRENDIZAJE	CONTENIDOS LEXICALES Y GRAMATICALES	SITUACIONES DE EVALUACION
El estudiante puede:	El estudiante:		
LISTENING Identificar, extraer e inferir información general y específica en temas cotidianos o de interés personal así como también en temas de conocimiento y cultura general escuchando diferente material de audio.	• Reconoce las ideas principales e información concreta en los diferentes ejercicios de audio presentados.	✔ Technology ✔ Interpersonal relationships: relations between sexes, family structures and relations, relations between generations.	Trabajo en clase y deberes Trabajos y tareas en línea Pruebas orales y escritas Examen Interciclo Examen Final

	• Responde a preguntas acerca de los diferentes ejercicios de audio presentados. • Deduce información no establecida en los diferentes ejercicios de audio presentados. • Reporta el tema y las ideas principales de los diferentes ejercicios de audio presentados.	relations at work ➢ Education ➢ Experiences ➢ Memories ➢ Food preferences ➢ Business, services, and shopping preferences ➢ Social problems in your community ➢ Dreams, hopes, goals, ambitions, wishes, decisions ➢ Other topics related to students' field of interest	
READING Identificar, extraer e inferir información general y específica en temas cotidianos o de interés personal así como también en temas de conocimiento y cultura general a través de diferente material de lectura.	• Responde a preguntas acerca de las diferentes lecturas presentadas • Reconoce las ideas principales e información concreta en las diferentes lecturas presentadas • Deduce información no establecida en las diferentes lecturas presentadas. • Reporta el tema y las ideas principales de las diferentes lecturas presentadas.	➢ Present tenses ➢ Past tenses ➢ Future tenses ➢ Perfect tenses ➢ Conditional tenses ➢ Modals ➢ Connectors	Trabajo en clase y deberes Trabajos y tareas en línea Pruebas orales y escritas Examen Interciclo Examen Final
SPOKEN INTERACTION Interactuar y opinar sobre temas cotidianos o de interés personal así como también en temas de conocimiento y cultura general en diferentes situaciones comunicativas.	• Reacciona a la interacción con su interlocutor utilizando vocabulario y frases de acuerdo a la situación. • Se comunica utilizando estructuras gramaticales de acuerdo a la situación.		Trabajo en clase y deberes Trabajos y tareas en línea Pruebas (diálogos en pares, grupos y con el profesor, role plays) Examen Interciclo Examen Final o Proyectos

	• Se comunica con fluidez. • Pronuncia con claridad. • Utiliza entonación de acuerdo al contexto requerido.		
SPOKEN PRODUCTION Describir y narrar temas cotidianos o de interés personal así como también temas de conocimiento y cultura general en diferentes situaciones comunicativas.	• Describe o relata los temas con una organización y secuencia coherentes. • Argumenta coherentemente sobre un tema. • Pronuncia con claridad. • Se comunica utilizando estructuras gramaticales de acuerdo a la situación • Se comunica con fluidez. • Utiliza entonación de acuerdo al contexto requerido. • Utiliza vocabulario y frases relacionados al tema.		Trabajo en clase y deberes Trabajos y tareas en línea Pruebas (diálogos en pares, grupos y con el profesor, role plays, exposiciones orales) Examen Interciclo Examen Final o Proyectos
WRITING Escribir textos interrelacionados de carácter narrativo, descriptivo, explicativo y argumentativo sobre temas cotidianos o de interés personal así como también temas de conocimiento y cultura general a través de diferente material de escritura.	• Utiliza signos de puntuación • Usa conectores de secuencia, contraste, adición, transición, ejemplificación para entrelazar textos • Mantiene consistencia en el uso de estructuras gramaticales. • Presenta un orden lógico y secuencial de las ideas dentro de cada párrafo y en todo el texto	➤ Pre-Writing and Writing process ➤ Types of paragraphs and texts ➤ Paragraph structure and text organization (parts) ➤ Mechanics of writing(punctuation)	Trabajo en clase y deberes Trabajos y tareas en línea Pruebas Examen Interciclo Examen Final **Folder** de escritura que contenga textos interrelacionados de carácter narrativo, descriptivo, explicativo y argumentativo sobre temas cotidianos y de interés personal. temas de

			conocimiento y cultura general.
	• Usa vocabulario y frases de acuerdo al tema planteado.		

NÚMERO DE SESIONES, ESTRATEGIAS DE APRENDIZAJE Y RECURSOS O MEDIOS PARA EL APRENDIZAJE

NÚMERO DE SESIONES	ESTRATEGIAS DE APRENDIZAJE (actividades)	RECURSOS O MEDIOS PARA EL APRENDIZAJE
El curso se desarrolla en 96 horas divididas en 4 sesiones de una hora y media diarias durante 16 semanas.	Discusiones Dramatizaciones Lecturas y actividades de comprensión de textos Escuchar material de audio y realizar actividades de comprensión de estos Ejercicios de vocabulario Presentaciones orales Diálogos en pares y en grupos Ejercicios gramaticales Juegos y competencias en pares o grupos Ejercicios de pronunciación Actividades online	Texto guía OPENMIND 3, libro del profesor, libro de trabajo, hojas de trabajo, aula, pizarra, CDs, reproductor de CDs, laboratorio de cómputo, proyector, sala de video, televisor, reproductor de DVDs, videos, plataforma virtual, actividades de la plataforma del texto guía.

CRITERIOS PARA LA ACREDITACIÓN DE LA ASIGNATURA

	Calificaciones Parciales (25)	Examen Interciclo (20)	Calificaciones Parciales (25)	Examen Final escrito-oral (30)
Exámenes	_____	20	_____	30
Escucha	5	_____	5	_____
Lectura	5	_____	5	_____
Habla	5	_____	5	_____
Escritura	5	_____	5	_____
Gram. y Voca.	5	_____	5	_____
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

TEXTOS Y OTRAS REFERENCIAS REQUERIDAS PARA EL APRENDIZAJE DE LA ASIGNATURA

Textos principales de consulta.

5

Autor	Título del texto	Edición	Año publicación	Editorial
Rogers, Mickey; Taylore-Knowles, Joanne; Taylore-Knowles, Steve et. al	OPENMIND 3	I	2010	MacMillan

Documento(s) de Internet
Web propia del estudiante

Autor(es)	Título del documento	Nombre del texto	Dirección URL	Fecha de consulta
MacMillan Oxford Cambridge	Student's Access Learning Resource Bank Touchstone Arcade	OpenMind American Headway Touchstone	www.mindseries.net www.elt.oup.com/student/americanheadway www.cambridge.org/touchstonearcade	2014 2014 2014
Instituto Universitario de Lenguas	Database Credits 3	Database Credits 3	http://evirtual.ucuenca.edu.ec/course/view.php?id=5192	2015
Varios autores	Diversos links para el aprendizaje del inglés proporcionados a los estudiantes a través del uso de la plataforma virtual	Diferentes páginas webs relacionadas a la enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés	Diferentes URLs	2015

_____
Mst. Rosita Torres Ortiz
DIRECTORA INSTITUTO UNIVESITARIO LENGUAS

_____
Mst. Ximena Orellana Mora
COORDINADORA INGLÉS CRÉDITOS

Cuenca, Septiembre 14, 2015