THE USE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS BASED ON POP CULTURE TO FOSTER CULTURAL AWARENESS OF FIRST-SEMESTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLES

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SEPTEMBER 6TH, 2025

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20191265011

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A monograph submitted as a requirement to obtain the major of Bachelor in Foreign Languages with Emphasis in English

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Acknowledgments

We would like to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to our families and friends, whose undying support fueled our motivation to undertake and fulfill this research project. Special thanks to our thesis director and university educators for providing invaluable contributions to this project and to our professional growth. We would also like to thank the English Basic Skills subject headteacher at ECCI university who gladly allowed us to implement this project with her group of students.

Abstract

Culture is an integral part of language learning, nevertheless, some programs neglect to include this factor within the scope of their thematic content. For this reason, the present study proposes a series of authentic materials based on United States pop culture, within a didactic unit, to foster the development of first-semester students' cultural awareness. This action research project, which took place at a University in Bogotá, Colombia, aimed to examine how these materials supported participants' process of discovering different cultural elements within the U.S. context. The researchers also sought to implement and identify possible contributions of inquiry-based learning approach in participants' cultural awareness development, as the literature suggests that this pedagogical model can foster the understanding of other cultures within a language classroom. The research findings indicate that authentic materials support learners' cultural awareness development given the culturally imbued content they provide which learners referred to when expressing ideas about U.S. culture.

Keywords: *Authentic materials, cultural awareness, pop culture, inquiry-based learning*

Resumen

La cultura es una parte integral del aprendizaje de idiomas, sin embargo, algunos programas ignoran incluir este factor en el alcance de sus contenidos temáticos. Por esta razón, el presente estudio propone un conjunto de materiales auténticos basados en la cultural popular de los Estados Unidos en una unidad didáctica para fomentar el desarrollo de la conciencia cultural de un grupo de estudiantes de primer semestre. Este proyecto de investigación-acción, que se llevó a cabo en una universidad en Bogotá, Colombia, busca examinar cómo estos materiales apoyan el proceso de descubrir diferentes elementos culturales del contexto estadounidense. Los investigadores también buscan implementar e identificar posibles contribuciones del enfoque de

aprendizaje basado en investigación en el desarrollo de la conciencia cultural de los participantes, dado que la literatura sugiere que este modelo pedagógico puede fomentar la comprensión de otras culturas en un aula de clases de idiomas. Los hallazgos de la investigación indican que los materiales implementados apoyan el desarrollo de la conciencia cultural de los aprendices debido al contenido culturalmente impregnado que proveen y al que ellos se refieren cuando expresan ideas sobre la cultura estadounidense.

Palabras clave: *Materiales auténticos, conciencia cultural, cultural popular, aprendizaje basado en investigación*

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Chapter I

Introduction

Over the last thirty years, scholars and academics in the English as a foreign language (EFL) field have agreed that there is an undeniable link between language and culture (Dema & Moeller, 2012), arguing that learning about one improves the understanding of the other. Kramsch (1998) proposed one of the cornerstone ideas that support this argument, stating that language expresses, embodies, and symbolizes cultural reality; moreover, this author claims that "culture is semantically encoded in the language itself (...) and [it is] expressed through the actual use of the language" (1998, p.14). In recent decades, the widespread focus on communicative language teaching has taken attention away from cultural matters in ELT classrooms (Rehaiem and Hussain, 2022), which we, the researchers, observed while examining the current Basic English Skills syllabus at ECCI University. The prominence of communicative competences in the program neglects culture as an integral component of the language learning process, restricting students' language learning to communicative and structural perspectives. The situation at hand contradicts Kovács' statement that "the culture of the people who use the target language as native speakers cannot and must not be ignored in the language teaching and learning process." (2017, p.79).

Considering this issue, and given that culture and language shape each other simultaneously, the researchers draw on Rehaiem and Hussain's perspective that comprehending ideas from foreign speakers requires developing awareness of their cultural background (2022). The researchers propose fostering the development of first-semester EFL learners' cultural awareness through the implementation of a culture-centered didactic unit that incorporates a set of authentic materials based on pop culture. According to Kostadinovska (2016, p. 323), pop

culture has a considerable presence in students' everyday experiences, and using its elements (e.g., movies, TV shows, or videos) can strengthen connections between learners and the target culture context. Thus, employing these resources as authentic materials in EFL lessons may enable students to discover features within a target culture.

This monograph consists of six chapters that present information as follows. Chapter One discloses the problem statement, the description of the problem, the justification, the research question, and the objectives of this research. Chapter two discloses the literature review and research reports on the concepts of cultural awareness, pop culture, and authentic materials. Chapter Three outlines the research design, Chapter Four describes the pedagogical intervention, and Chapter Five discusses the data analysis and findings of the intervention. Finally, Chapter Six presents the conclusions, pedagogical implications, limitations, and further research drawn from this project.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The focus of EFL programs on communicative goals by highlighting aspects such as grammar and vocabulary tends to overlook the importance of culture in the language learning process, as observed in the syllabus of the Basic English Skills subject at ECCI University. The program this subject belongs to centers on building language skills for business purposes, such as managing organizational processes, which explains the communicative emphasis of the examined syllabus. To address this issue, the researchers held a pedagogical intervention with a group of 8 first-semester students in the subject.

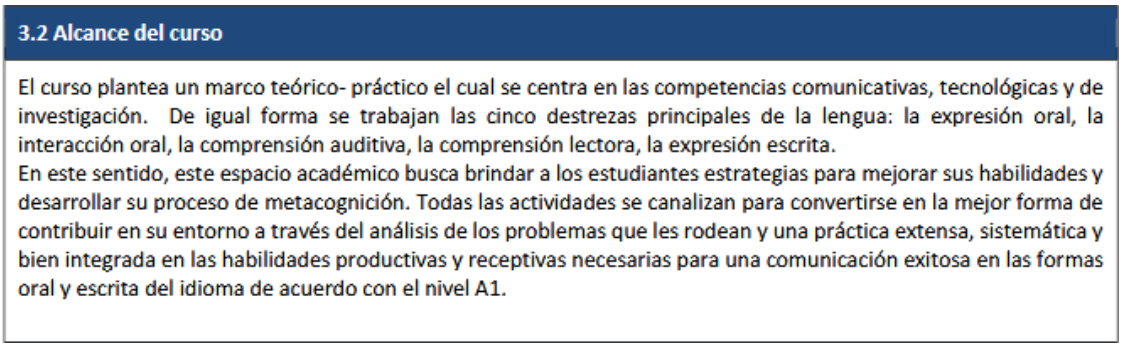
1.2. Description of the Problem

The syllabus of the Basic English Skills subject relegates cultural matters to prioritize other aspects of language, such as vocabulary and grammar structures. Kovács (2017) contends

that the teaching and learning processes must not ignore the people and cultural backgrounds that shape these languages. In view of this argument, as well as the strong connection between language and culture (Dema & Moeller, 2012), the researchers consider that this syllabus lacks relevant components (such as cultural traits of English-speaking cultures) that are integral in an EFL classroom where learning language goes beyond a structure-centered view. The following figure presents the scope of the subject, where this issue is observable.

Figure 1

Course Scope of the Basic English Skills Syllabus



3.2 Alcance del curso

El curso plantea un marco teórico- práctico el cual se centra en las competencias comunicativas, tecnológicas y de investigación. De igual forma se trabajan las cinco destrezas principales de la lengua: la expresión oral, la interacción oral, la comprensión auditiva, la comprensión lectora, la expresión escrita.
En este sentido, este espacio académico busca brindar a los estudiantes estrategias para mejorar sus habilidades y desarrollar su proceso de metacognición. Todas las actividades se canalizan para convertirse en la mejor forma de contribuir en su entorno a través del análisis de los problemas que les rodean y una práctica extensa, sistemática y bien integrada en las habilidades productivas y receptivas necesarias para una comunicación exitosa en las formas oral y escrita del idioma de acuerdo con el nivel A1.

In this section, the researchers observed that this syllabus focuses on the development of five language skills (oral expression, oral interaction, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing expression) and the improvement of investigation, communication, and technology-related competences. There is no mention of cultural matters or similar components within the scope of the program, even though theoretical conceptions and research studies have deemed these as strongly linked to language and its learning process (Dema & Moeller, 2012). The figure below displays the thematic and language contents of weeks one and two of the syllabus.

Figure 2.

Excerpt from Weeks 1 and 2 of the Basic English Skills Syllabus

CROSS-CONTENT	WEEK	COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS/ TEACHING-LEARNING STRATEGIES	GRAMMAR/ PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY	VOCABULARY/ TEXT TYPES	ENTREGABLES SUGERIDOS
Actividad Final Sugerida: Noticiero-Relato de historias					
Identity	**WEEK 1**	**COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS** • Talk about your home, where you live and who you live with • Ask about other people's homes • Talk about yourself **TEACHING-LEARNING STRATEGIES** • Show and tell • Reading task	**GRAMMAR** • Simple present (to be)	**VOCABULARY** • Family • Possessive Adjectives • Possessive Case • Occupations and Professions • Numbers: Years and Phone Numbers • Adjectives • Physical appearance. • Feelings and emotions. • Seasons. **TEXT TYPES** • Descriptive paragraphs • Guide • Poster • Maps • Questionnaire • Signs • Directions • Interview	Podcast (lugares de interés en mi localidad) Describir los lugares y personas de interés en el contexto inmediato de los estudiantes
	WEEK 2	**COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS** • Talk about where places are • Talk about the type of places people will find in towns, villages, etc., in local context • Describe places. **TEACHING-LEARNING STRATEGIES** • Video about students´ home. • Reading task	**GRAMMAR** • Simple present (to be) **PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY** • Exploring IPA chart	**VOCABULARY** • Locations. • Prepositions of place. • Giving Directions • There's / There are • This, these, that and those • Objects in the house • Furniture • Parts of the house • Colors, textures, materials, and shapes **TEXT TYPES** • Explanatory paragraph • Informative paragraph • Diary • Documentary form • Informative paragraph • Descriptive paragraph • Advertisement	

The core theme in these weeks is "Identity", which mainly centers on learners' experiences and communicating them in the English language. There is a section dedicated to communicative language functions that establishes what students must be able to convey through language at the end of each week. Additionally, the syllabus presents a grammar section (focused on simple present tense), a vocabulary list, and a suggested activity. Similar to Figure 1, there is no mention of content, methods, or materials to teach about another culture, as it is not an

interest of this syllabus. The absence of cultural themes was constant throughout most of the document, which evidences the problem this project seeks to address.

1.3. Justification

The analysis of the Basic English Skills syllabus revealed a prominent focus on grammar and vocabulary teaching, situated in scenarios related to professions, family, or food. As a result, the syllabus neglected the component of culture, an integral element of language learning due to its tight connection with language itself. As Santana and Cely-Betancourt (2021) argue, teachers cannot expect to teach language without involving cultural elements; therefore, it is necessary to shift this practice to one that includes diverse elements, so students experience a learning process that is not strictly bound to grammar or vocabulary features. With this situation at hand, the researchers designed and implemented a didactic unit that incorporated authentic materials based on pop culture, supported by their own previous experiences with said resources, which they considered meaningful for learning about language and culture.

In addition to this, theory states the potential benefits of including authentic materials, based on pop culture, in an EFL classroom. For example, these products can have the form of music, videos, readings, and more (Werner & Tegge, 2021), which allows educators to implement them in different forms and, hence, include different ways students can learn more comfortably. Moreover, authentic materials display real language use, instead of the one observed in workbooks (p. 14). In sum, integrating authentic material in a language classroom enhances learning opportunities and could be more appealing and effective for students.

This study benefits its participants by providing an alternative way of learning English that prioritizes cultural content thanks to the implementation of authentic learning sources and student-centered learning activities, without necessarily neglecting the linguistic factor. These

sources potentially show a more realistic landscape of the target culture and the language employed within it.

1.4. Research Question

The research question for this study is: How does the use of authentic materials, based on pop culture, support the development of first-semester EFL learners' cultural awareness in a private university?

1.5. Research Objectives

The general objective of this research study is to examine how the use of authentic materials, based on pop culture, supports the development of first-semester EFL learners in a private university. Additionally, there are two specific objectives. The first one is to include the categories of U.S. culture in which first-semester EFL learners show lower levels of awareness in the design of a didactic unit. The second specific objective is to identify the impact of a theory-based approach on the cultural awareness development of first-semester EFL students in a private university.

Chapter II

Literature Review

This chapter discloses the definitions and theoretical foundations the researchers established as the fundamental constructs of this project. More specifically, this chapter addresses the concepts of culture, cultural awareness, pop culture, and authentic materials in the language teaching field. Each section includes a review of relevant academic literature that reflects the research landscape surrounding the key concepts of this study.

2.1. Culture

The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology (2006) provides several perspectives that have proposed different definitions for culture. Some of these definitions come from areas such as anthropology and humanities. The definition given from the perspective of sociology integrates aspects from different stances and links them to the concept of society, which has had a strong influence on shaping culture throughout history:

> Culture refers to the symbolic element of social life, which has been variously conceptualized, identified, and studied: signifiers and their signifieds, gestures and their interpretation, intended and unintended meanings, written discourse and effective speech, situational framing and scientific paradigms, and moral and political ideals. Concretely, culture refers to those social objects and activities which are primarily or exclusively symbolic in their intent or social function, such as art, music, and sports. (pp. 111-112)

To complement this concept, the researchers take the definition of culture by Byram that suggests a shared set of "ideas, values, and (...) knowledge common to a particular social group and the manifestations of them in behavior and artifacts" (2007, p. 52). The key words here are "behavior" and "artifacts", as authentic materials can reflect such features through art, music, and sports, according to the first definition. These definitions emphasize symbols and artifacts as culture bearers and thus are useful in teaching and learning about another culture. Therefore, it is relevant for this project to establish a series of cultural categories to discern what elements integrate culture and to shape the themes the intervention has to address.

2.1.1. Categories of Culture

Barkan contends that culture is divided into two components: material and non-material. Typically, non-material elements of culture can change in time, as well as material elements

(2017, p. 52). The following paragraphs present the definitions of these categories and the features that characterize them. The paragraphs below present and describe these elements, as categorized by Barkan (2017).

2.1.1.1. Material Components. Material culture refers to all those artifacts and physical objects that reflect the lives of people within a culture; it also refers to those objects that these people employ constantly, such as “tools and technology, clothing, eating utensils, and means of transportation” (2017, p. 52). This definition informs the study by providing a list of different elements that can convey cultural information. Additionally, as the definition states that material components are physical and observable, it allows for the pedagogical use of other artifacts not listed by Barkan, for example, news reports or multimedia.

2.1.1.2. Non-Material Components. "Non-material" refers to ideas, norms, and forms of organization that are intangible, meaning that they integrate the thoughts and worldview of people. Examples of these are symbols, language, norms, rituals, and values (2017, p. 52).

2.1.1.2.1. Symbols. Symbols are objects that do not have value in themselves but for what they mean to the people from a culture. These underlying meanings can come from historical events or religious beliefs, which people associate with a specific object over time. The same applies to gestures and nonverbal communication. Similarly, as with meaningful objects, gestures have a specific meaning beyond themselves (2017, p. 53).

2.1.1.2.2. Language. Language is the cornerstone of communication and culture. It is the means humankind employs to communicate, educate, grow, and see the world. Language is a system code that is intertwined with the culture it is shaped by, and thus, language becomes a complex system in which culture is created and expressed (2017, p. 53).

2.1.1.2.3. Norms. "Norms" refers to a set of rules and codes commonly accepted to establish appropriate behaviors within a society. Norms can be formal, like the ones in national legislation, traffic laws, or schools' rulebooks. Norms are also informal, less important, or not based in the law, but they still affect the behavior of people. Such norms can be manners and forms of interaction depending on the situation (2017, p. 56).

2.1.1.2.4. Rituals. These are more formally called ceremonies. Rituals are actions that are embedded in the culture and have an important meaning in each one. These rituals also entail a transition to another stage in life. Examples of rituals are graduations, marriage ceremonies, and others established within each culture (e.g., festivities). It is worth noting that, as these rituals are a way of reflecting cultural practice, they pass from generation to generation (2017, p. 57).

2.1.1.2.5. Values. Values are the "criteria of what is desirable or undesirable and right or wrong [which shapes] culture's norms" (2017, p. 59). Thus, these principles provide understanding about the moral guidance and worldview of a culture, which have a direct influence on its accepted behaviors.

2.2. Cultural Awareness

Many definitions and comments nourish how this research project contemplates the concept of cultural awareness. El-Hussari contends that cultural awareness refers to the process of "discovering the meaning of text in relation to its context of situation, a process during which students negotiate and create a new reality by using their own frames of reference" (2011, p. 115). This definition emphasizes recognizing new meanings within another culture through the exploration and interpretation of its texts, keeping in mind the context they originate from, as well as one's background. Therefore, this context-based discovery experience adds another layer of depth to the EFL learning process.

The previous definition placed meaning discovery at the core of cultural awareness. Similarly, Heinzmann highlights acknowledging inner culture when learning about other ones: “Cultural awareness is the recognition of the nuances of one’s own and other cultures” (2023, p. 12). In short, Heinzmann (2023) and El-Hussari (2011) highlight the importance of self-acknowledgment when developing cultural awareness, which makes prior knowledge and experiences relevant when learning about other cultures.

This inner and external acknowledgment process becomes central to this project, as Tomlinson (2001) states that cultural awareness leads to “understanding of your own and other people’s cultures” (as seen in Nechifor & Borca, 2020, p. 295). Based on these definitions and the various perspectives they offer, this research views cultural awareness as a process of discovering, acknowledging, and recognizing features from other cultures as well as one's own. This process enables learners to develop comprehension of the cultures addressed in class, as well as understanding similarities and differences among them.

2.2.1. Research Reports on Cultural Awareness

This segment presents several research reports on cultural awareness development in the ELT and EFL fields. First, Finkbeiner et al. (2023) undertook an exploratory study employing a mixed research method to enhance prospective teachers' language awareness and cultural awareness for improved international cooperative learning at four different campuses in Germany and Israel. The findings revealed a significant improvement in participants perceived English language proficiency and cultural awareness. Finkbeiner's study informs this research project due to its successful improvement of language skills and cultural awareness by applying a pedagogical process such as cooperative learning. This entails two things: first, cultural awareness is relevant in the current research landscape, and second, the challenge of fostering it

encourages educators and researchers to implement different teaching and learning strategies that are becoming more prominent in the language teaching field.

Masitoh et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study to examine foreign and second language students' learning strategies and the role cultural awareness played in determining these strategies. The study involved eight Indonesian learners who were studying different languages. Through detailed interviews and thematic analysis, the researchers identified six distinct learning strategies used by the participants. The results highlighted that as the learners progressed, they became increasingly aware of the cultural aspects of the languages they were learning, which in turn influenced their choice of strategies and enhanced their language acquisition process. The results of this research emphasize how learning a language also entails the acknowledgement of non-linguistic factors, such as cultural features.

Similarly, Diab et al. (2018) employed mixed methods in an experimental study to investigate the effectiveness of using the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach to enhance the cultural awareness of EFL pre-service teachers. The study involved 38 third-year students enrolled in the English Language section from Benha University. The results showed a statistically significant improvement in the cultural awareness of students in the post-assessment compared to the pre-assessment. These results revealed a positive outcome regarding cultural awareness while using alternative pedagogical approaches in the classroom, as also seen in Finkbeiner et al. (2023). This study displays an interest in using alternative methods to foster cultural awareness among students, which aligns with the interests and goals of this research project.

The study by Nechifor and Borca (2020) utilized qualitative methods in a descriptive research inquiry to establish the place of cultural elements within the triad of cultural awareness,

cultural competence, and literacy. 129 participants filled out a questionnaire in which they explained their reasons for taking a Romanian language class, revealing their reasons for studying a language (motivation, support, and job advantages). These factors are crucial for those students who aim to integrate the target language culture into their learning process. According to these results, the students are "more attracted to the culture of the target language community" (p. 300). This paper informs about the motivations of foreign language students, which relate to their interest in cultural matters.

These results in the interest of students are also present in the project led by Kızıltan and Ayar (2020), which used mixed methods in a quasi-experimental study to examine the potential influence of caricatures on L2 learners in terms of gaining cultural awareness and enhancing their motivation levels. The study involved 67 Turkish learners of English at a state university in Ankara, Turkey, divided into two groups (47 and 20). The findings indicate that the first group, which aimed to learn the target language through cartoons, adopted a more positive attitude towards the language and its culture. This paper aligns with this research project due to its success in using authentic material to foster cultural awareness and motivation for EFL students. As observed in several studies disclosed in this review, the use of alternative materials or methods is likely to evoke positive responses from learners regarding different cultures, their values, circumstances, views, and so on (Gómez, 2018; Martínez-Hernández et al., 2018; Soyoof, 2018; Kara, 2023). (Mencionar páginas del documento de citas)

Finally, other inquiries complement our understanding of cultural awareness and its functionality in education. Abdelnaeim and Ghanem (2024) mentioned the usefulness of non-traditional pedagogical methods in reading comprehension, translation tasks, and development for cultural awareness. Chasciar (2024) studied children's acknowledgment for culture through

recognition processes in a summer camp. Finally, Estrada-Chichón and Sánchez-Cabrero (2023) analyzed various episodes from the TV show Peppa Pig to identify British cultural elements present on the show and its usefulness in developing cultural awareness in children. In conclusion, this literature examination exhibits the numerous instances, contexts, and processes cultural awareness has an impact on, showing its relevance in pedagogy and the language education field and thus making this research project pertinent.

Table 1

Research Reports on Cultural Awareness

Author(s) and year	Method	Purpose of study	Population	Research type
Abdelnaeim, A. Ghanem. A (2024)	Mixed	To examine the effect of using the connectivism approach on developing secondary-stage students' cross-cultural awareness and translation performance	Thirty-two first-year secondary stage students were randomly assigned.	Quasi-experimental
Chasciar, D. R. (2024)	Mixed	To assess the influence a culture-based curriculum may have on children's acknowledgment of culture.	100 children that are 7-12 years old and are part of different rural communities.	Descriptive
Diab et al. (2018)	Mixed	To investigate the effectiveness of using the CLIL approach to enhance EFL student teachers' cultural awareness.	38 third year students enrolled in English Language section, Faculty of Education.	Experimental

Estrada-Chichón, J. L., & Sánchez-Cabrero, R. (2023).	Quantitative	This study focuses on creating a catalog featuring elements representative of British culture present in the animated television series Peppa Pig.	Eleven pre-service teachers.	Descriptive
Finkbeiner, C., Olson, M., Ost, W. S., & Shonfeld, M. (2023).	Mixed	The aim is to raise prospective teachers' language awareness and cultural awareness for cooperation in international contexts.	75 students and five instructors from four different campuses in Germany and Israel participated in the project in 2019.	Exploratory
Kızıltan, N., & Ayar, Z. (2020).	Mixed	To study the potential influence of caricatures on L2 learners in terms of gaining cultural awareness and enhancing their motivation levels.	67 Turkish learners of English language at a state university in Ankara, Turkey, that were divide in two groups (47 & 20).	Quasi-experimental
Masitoh et al. (2023)	Qualitative	To examine foreign/second-language learning strategies and the role cultural awareness played in determining these strategies.	Eight Indonesian learners of different languages.	Descriptive

Nechifor, A.; Borca, A (2020)	Qualitative	To establish the place of the cultural elements within the triad of cultural awareness, cultural competence, and cultural literacy in Romanian lessons.	129 participants filled out a questionnaire explaining why they wanted to take a Romanian language class.	Descriptive

2.3. Pop Culture

This section explores several definitions that authors have proposed for the concept of pop culture. According to Merskin (2008), as seen in Werner and Tegge (2021), pop culture encompasses objects and practices that appeal to many people. Furthermore, a vast number of people can create and consume these widespread objects and practices (p. 4), indicating a connection between pop culture and massive consumerism. Moreover, Merskin also mentions that individual works not originally meant to be widely known or referenced can become appealing and leave a mark on culture (p. 5). This perspective highlights personal expression and illustrates that, historically, people have not always consumed mainstream content but also have embraced less prominent works and made them popular.

Maudlin and Sandlin's definition (2015) complements the previous one, contending that pop culture is constructed by texts that reflect the cultural landscape of a specific place and time. They also highlight the text-reader interaction, as receptors can create new meanings evoked from these texts. This definition stresses the relevance of texts (or pop culture products), as they mirror worldviews and ways of living in a specific context. Additionally, the interpretations and perspectives of the public are also pivotal to understanding why these texts became mainstream and left a mark on culture. Similarly, Beach and O'Brien (2008, as cited in Visco, 2021) list time-

bound elements that can be a part of pop culture, for example: music, movies, comic books, graphic novels, slang, TV shows, and the internet.

In the same line, the definition of Delaney on pop culture also mentions that pop culture involves "the products and forms of expression and identity that are frequently encountered or widely accepted, commonly liked or approved, and characteristic of a particular society at a given time" (Delaney, 2007, p. 6). This definition adds the idea that pop culture is widespread because of its presence and acceptance among a set of people. Following this precept, something is popular if it is considerably accepted by the people who made it mainstream. Therefore, consuming a product that is culturally popular could lead to discovering another culture.

As observed above, several authors have proposed definitions of pop culture, as it is a topic of interest given its connection to media and mass consumption. Even so, the researchers deemed it adequate to include Visco's (2021) definition, which views pop culture through a pedagogical lens, arguing that:

pop culture is a set of beliefs, practices, or objects that are prominent or ubiquitous in culture and can in many ways transcend language, race, ethnicity, and religion. No matter what your definition is, the main idea is that pop culture can and should be used in your classroom to help engage students, to give students ownership of their learning. (p. 27)

This definition emphasizes the prominent presence of three main factors in a specific culture (beliefs, practices, and objects) while also focusing on the pedagogical benefits that might entail when employing these, which is a cornerstone of this study.

Considering these definitions, the researchers view that pop culture comprises products and practices that people broadly create, consume, and accept. As these factors are widespread in a community, they tend to reflect its cultural landscape, bound by time and space. In pedagogical

terms, teachers can employ pop culture products as resources to foster students' engagement and ownership of their learning process.

2.3.1. Key Features of Pop Culture

In this section, there is a description of key aspects of pop culture relevant to its employment in language teaching. First, pop culture manifests in different forms and through various means, such as music, TV shows, videos, cinema, books, memes, digital platforms, YouTube, and so on (Werner & Tegge, 2021). Additionally, according to Rothoni (2017, as seen in Werner & Tegge, 2021, p. 5), the people who consume these are not passive, filterless receptors. This idea is relevant to this study because these resources can support a broader learning process where students incorporate their previous knowledge and new ideas rather than just absorbing what they perceive from these products.

Pop culture also has a globalized nature. This feature entails that if something becomes popular in a location, it might reach other parts of the world through mass media, which is one of the most common means learners use to approach a target language (Grau, 2009, as seen in Werner and Tegge, 2021, p. 5). Hence, if teachers seek to promote discussions about foreign cultures, it could be adequate to rely on media or products coming directly from these contexts. Doing so implies that teachers and learners have the possibility to discover other cultures through an inside perspective, rather than from outer portrayals.

Pop culture may benefit learners' engagement, as educators can include meaningful excerpts of media in the classroom. As pop culture manifests in different forms (Werner and Tegge, 2021), teachers have the opportunity to present information and tasks through various means that broaden the range of input, as well as the interactions between students and the target language in these resources. By doing so, teaching practices would not solely focus on

developing structural or communicative knowledge but also on discovering non-linguistic features such as cultural matters or day-to-day language use.

In sum, ideas from various authors suggest that educators can leverage pop culture towards building lessons focused on topics beyond structural and communicative content. Hence, the researchers consider that pop culture provides a set of meaningful and appealing resources that broaden the language learning and teaching processes. Considering this, it is now adequate to observe research reports on the implementation of pop culture elements in EFL contexts.

2.3.2. Research Reports on Pop Culture

This section presents a review of research studies regarding pop culture within the ELT and EFL fields. Gómez (2018) conducted a case study to analyze how discussions around news reports from English-speaking countries developed the intercultural communicative competence of four EFL students at the tertiary level. The gathered data suggests that news reports allowed the participants to learn in depth about other cultures' practices, beliefs, and so on; plus, in the discussions, students shared opinions, understood more complex aspects of different cultures, and critically compared target and native cultures. The author concludes that news reports in discussion-focused classrooms supported the development of participants' intercultural communicative competence by fostering learning of deep cultural features and current states of different cultures, while also enabling them to develop critical skills and empathy toward individuals from oppressed backgrounds. This study emphasizes two elements of popular culture (mainstream news portals and relevant events) that educators can use to help learners discover foreign cultures, and its findings align with the forthcoming studies as it illustrates the effects of these sources on students' acknowledgment of different cultures.

The study by Martínez-Hernández et al. (2018) sought to employ TED talk videos to improve EFL learning with a group of thirty-one public school teenage students. The findings of this action research indicate that these videos increased students' motivation to participate, employ the language, and share opinions based on the ideas from these resources. As observed in other reports (Gómez, 2012; Barekat, 2014; Bernal-Pinzón, 2020; Chaya & Inpin, 2020; Karyuatry, 2020; Namaziandost et al., 2022), participants felt more engaged, prepared, and open to different activities, as the linguistic input was comprehensible and showed how language is employed in context. Finally, the interest of learners in lessons rose thanks to the themes of the videos, which were related to culture and social situations, something participants found captivating. The authors concluded that TED Talks are valuable resources for increasing students' motivation and exposing them to real language use, while the socio-cultural content of these resources provides learning and discussion opportunities beyond language focus.

Yue (2019) reported how foreign films (e.g., Disney's Mulan) helped thirty undergraduate students from a Chinese university to develop their intercultural communicative competence and how they interpreted these. The results of this case study indicate that students eagerly identified American assumptions and portrayals of Chinese culture in the western film and compared these to the original tale and their experiences. Participants' responses toward the actions of the main characters varied, and they critiqued how Disney showed Chinese people in the film. The researcher concludes that films can be instrumental in the development of students' intercultural communicative competence, as they allow the discovery of another culture, requiring students to be active viewers. This work is significant to this project because it presents the benefits of implementing pop culture-based materials in the classroom towards students' critical thinking and recognizing other cultures.

Other studies sought to observe the effects of implementing pop culture-based resources in EFL/ELT classrooms. For example, Kara (2023) and Soyoof (2018) employed tools such as Google Trends and video games, respectively, as they are available on the internet and offer different forms of input that adjust to various learning styles. Accordingly, both authors highlight the multimodal quality of these materials, which can evoke positive responses towards learning English and discovering a target culture. Furthermore, the work of Isariyawa et al. (2020) adds to this, as its implementation of literature succeeded in supporting learners' proficiency and cultural knowledge improvement thanks to the variety, real-life language examples, and cultural input of the resources. These research studies are relevant to this project, as they emphasize the importance of finding diverse learning resources that help students to feel more compelled and comfortable in the learning process, which might have positive effects on students' language proficiency, attitudes in class, and culture acknowledgment.

Table 2

Research Reports on Pop Culture

Author(s) and year	Method	Purpose of study	Population	Research type
Gómez., L.F. (2018).	Qualitative	To observe how discussions around news reports nourished participants' intercultural communicative awareness.	4 EFL university students.	Case study
Isariyawat, C., Yenphech, C., & Intanoo, K. (2020).	Quantitative	To investigate the attitudes of learners towards literature, and discover the impact of literary texts on cultural awareness and language skills in a Thai college context.	100 English major students at Buriram Rajabhat University.	Correlational study

Kara, S. (2023).	Quantitative	Including Google trends and record its effects in the improvement of the listening and speaking skills at a Iraqi university.	40 students from a private university in Erbil, Iraq.	Quasi-experimental
Martínez-Hernández, M., Vargas-Cuevas, J., & Ramírez-Valencia, A. (2018).	Qualitative	To present the TED platform as a tool for learning English as a foreign language.	31 high school students at a public institution in Bogotá, Colombia.	Action research
Soyoof, A. (2018).	Qualitative	To describe the participants' views on the usefulness of videogames to foster cultural knowledge and sensitivity acquisition.	Six Iranian male EFL learners.	Case study
Yue, J. (2019).	Qualitative	Observe how including foreign films in an English classroom foster the development of intercultural communicative competence.	One group of undergraduate students at a Chinese university.	Case study

2.4. Authentic Materials

Authenticity refers to the quality that a product has of being created within the target language for social or communicative aims (Little & Singleton, 1988). Accordingly, Bacon and Finnerman (1990) refer to authentic materials as those texts native speakers create with purposes aside from language learning. Moreover, authentic materials can take various forms, such as documentaries, cartoons, and videos (Fitria, 2022). With these definitions in mind, the researchers view authentic materials as a set of resources native speakers produce and consume

for purposes unrelated to language learning, such as informational or communicative ones. The following paragraphs present a review of recent literature regarding the use of authentic materials in EFL/ELT contexts.

2.4.1. Research Reports on Authentic Materials

Given the various forms authentic materials can adopt and the language learning opportunities their contents provide, several authors have conducted studies to analyze their influence on different areas of EFL/ELT. For this reason, the researchers gathered information from different educational inquiries centered on applying these materials in English teaching and learning contexts. The paragraphs below present the reports of these studies.

Castañeda-Usaquén (2012) conducted an exploratory and interpretive case study with 51 eighth-grade students at a public school in Bogotá, Colombia. She aimed to implement culture-based authentic materials, such as videos and readings, among other resources, to describe and understand students' perceptions of the culturally imbued materials and the foreign cultures depicted in them. Findings in the data suggest that culture-based materials and proper tasks encourage learners to make sense of other cultures by comparing them to their lives, which leads to a more empathetic understanding of other cultures' beliefs, practices, and lives. The author concludes that these resources helped students' cultural awareness development through the proposed tasks, students' view of culture in a comparative perspective, and the cultural focus of the lessons. Castañeda-Usaquén's study is significant for this project, as it highlights the importance of employing authentic materials and meaningful tasks in a culture-centered classroom, where learning is a product of a reflective process triggered by the contents of the learning resources.

The work of Gómez (2012) complements the findings of the previous study. Through a qualitative action research project, the author included short stories as authentic literacy texts alongside four different constructivist approaches to examine learners' intercultural communicative competence development and to assess the effectiveness of these approaches. The participants were 23 advanced-level students in a modern language program at Universidad Pedagógica Nacional in Colombia. Findings suggest that authentic texts provide real language use in context, offer a myriad of possible tasks and learning scenarios, and the employment of proper approaches and activities enhances the teaching potential these resources offer. This study solidifies the view of authentic materials as an engaging and promising factor in the process of culture recognition and meaning negotiation. Additionally, this study informs the present research, as the emphasis is not only placed on the sources and materials but also on the selected activities and approaches to fulfill teaching and learning goals.

Bernal-Pinzón's (2020) study presents more favorable results with respect to including authentic materials in an EFL classroom. This qualitative action research inquiry aimed to identify how authentic materials and culturally relevant tasks can enhance the intercultural competence of 22 sixth-semester EFL students at a private university in Tunja, Colombia. Data analysis revealed that learners not only acknowledged unknown features of other cultures but also of their own, enabling them to be more open to cultural differences and to see situations through other people's eyes. The author concluded that implementing authentic tasks and materials helped participants develop cultural baggage, interculturality, and language skills; additionally, educators must carefully implement these resources, always keeping possible adaptations and learning goals in mind. The author also highlights the importance of letting students explore authentic materials in their early language learning stages to encourage

understanding and inquiring through sources different from workbooks, dictionaries, and other traditional means.

Similar findings are present in Chaya & Inpin's (2020) report on the effects of movie-based mobile learning on learners' intercultural communicative competence and speaking skills development. This quasi-experimental inquiry took place at a private college in Bangkok with two groups (control and experimental groups) of first-year students. The data analysis indicated that intercultural communicative competence and speaking skills highly improved in the experimental group, as evidence of sensitivity and understanding toward other cultures is more prominent, which justifies the need for cultural focus in language learning environments. Furthermore, learners' response to the implemented approach was positive, as it offered appealing and relatable learning resources while also presenting language use in real-life contexts, which benefited linguistic and cultural knowledge acquisition. The authors highlight the importance of implementing comprehensible authentic materials and planning well-designed lessons with specific goals, approaches, and tasks that fully leverage what these materials can offer to EFL learners, which is also noticeable in other research studies, such as Bernal-Pinzón's (2020) and Gómez's (2012).

Almajali's (2022) quantitative quasi-experimental project focused on identifying how authentic materials affected participants' levels of cultural awareness and motivation to learn a second language; moreover, the author sought to gather participants' reactions regarding these learning resources. The researcher divided 40 tenth-grade students from a national school in Jordan into a control and an experimental group, which received traditional methods and exposure to authentic materials, respectively. The researcher gathered data through pre- and post-tests and a cultural-awareness-assessment rubric. Findings suggest that cultural awareness and

motivation levels increased in the experimental group and remained the same in the control group, as the implemented materials presented language in context and were appealing to participants. The author concludes that implementing authentic materials in an EFL classroom positively impacts learners' cultural awareness, motivation, and language learning, and also fosters teachers' creativity in planning lessons, designing tasks, and selecting supporting material.

Other studies addressing authentic materials have revealed different upsides of their use besides their effects on cultural understanding. Barekat et al. (2014) conducted a quasi-experimental study to compare the impact of authentic and traditional materials on participants' listening skills, and the results displayed a higher effectiveness of authentic materials in improving said skill compared to inauthentic resources. Castillo-Losada et al. (2017) conducted a mixed-methods project to analyze the contributions of authentic materials and tasks on participants' communicative competence development, whose findings indicate that said materials and tasks allow learners to make more use of L2 for communicative purposes, while positively impacting learners' "linguistic and affective domains" (p. 103). Finally, other studies focused on authentic materials in EFL highlight their effectiveness in improving reading fluency and alleviating reading anxiety (Namaziandost et al., 2022), their significance in complementing coursebooks and syllabi (Karyuatry, 2020), and their support in expanding learners' vocabulary (Marpaung & Situmeang, 2020). In sum, these reports exhibit the broad range of areas in the EFL/ELT fields that authentic materials positively impact; moreover, they offer valuable guidance regarding culture acknowledgment, which is central to this research project.

Table 3

Research Reports on Authentic Materials

Author(s) and year	Method	Purpose of study	Population	Research type
Almajali, C. (2022).	Quantitative	Identifying the effect of using authentic materials on the participants' cultural awareness and motivation to learn L2. Researchers also sought to gather their responses to these materials.	40 tenth graders at one ISO national school in Jordan. Participants were divided into either the experimental or control group.	Quasi-experimental
Barekat, B., & Nobakhti, H. (2014).	Quantitative	To examine the effect of authentic and inauthentic materials in cultural awareness and listening skill training of intermediate EFL learners.	60 intermediate level learners from the Novinpouyan Cultural Institute in Arak, Iran.	Quasi-experimental
Bernal-Pinzón, A. N. (2020).	Qualitative	Identifying the role of authentic materials and tasks focused on cultural topics to develop participants' intercultural competence.	22 sixth semester students from an English language class at a private university in Tunja, Colombia.	Action Research
Castañeda-Usaquén, M. E. (2012).	Qualitative	Using culture-based materials so students interpret and understand other cultures and share their opinion about them.	51 low level EFL eight grade students at a school in	Interpretive case study

			Bogotá, Colombia.	
Castillo-Losada, C. A., Insuasty, E. A., & Jaime-Osorio, M. F. (2017).	Mixed methods study	Analyzing how much authentic materials and tasks contribute to the improvement of participant's communicative competence.	Two a2 level English class groups.	Quasi-experimental, descriptive design.
Chaya, P., & Inpin, B. (2020). Movies and mobile phones.	Mixed-methods	Investigating the effects of Movie-based Mobile Learning on learners' enhancement of intercultural communicative competence and speaking skills.	Two groups of first year college students in Bangkok.	Quasi-experimental
Gómez, L.F. (2012).	Qualitative	To include authentic literary texts through four methodological approaches to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence.	23 advanced level students at the modern language program from UPN.	Action Research
Karyuatry, L., Nurkamto, J., & Rochsantiningsih, D.(2020).	Quantitative	Exploring and identifying what authentic materials are used in teaching speaking at the tertiary level.	2 teachers from a private university at Indonesia	Case Study
Marpaung, M. S., & Situmeang, H. J. P. (2020).	Quantitative	Improving learners' vocabulary mastery using authentic materials and multimedia.	Groups A and B of tenth graders at a high school in Indonesia.	Comparative design.

Namaziandost, E., Razmi, M. H., Tilwani, S. A., & Gilakjani, A. P. (2022).	Quantitative	Investigating the effect of using authentic materials on EFL learners' reading comprehension, motivation and anxiety.	58 male Iranian EFL divided into two groups.	Quasi-experimental

Chapter III

Research Design

This chapter outlines the research design employed to conduct this inquiry at ECCI University, detailing the type of study, data collection instruments and procedures, as well as the context and population involved in this project.

3.1. Type of Study and Method

This proposal aims to conduct an action research study. Creswell (2012) defines action research as an inquiry process conducted by teachers, principals, researchers, and other agents to address a specific educational issue, gather relevant information and data about it, and subsequently construct and apply a course of action to improve or solve said problematic (p. 577). This type of inquiry differs from other qualitative designs because it not only focuses on gathering information but also urges researchers to formulate solutions to the problems the study addresses. For this reason, the researchers deem it adequate to undertake this form of research, as there is a specific issue (lack of emphasis on cultural awareness development in this particular context) and a plausible solution (implementing authentic materials based on pop culture in a didactic unit). In addition, it is necessary to elucidate that this project seeks to gather mixed data, which the forthcoming paragraphs elaborate on.

3.2. Data Collection Techniques and Procedures

3.2.1. Pre- and Post- Intervention Questionnaires

Cresswell (2012) includes questionnaires as a form of interviewing, where researchers formulate a series of closed and open-ended questions and then administer them to participants to assess the research goals and align findings with those of the examined literature. For this project, the researchers implemented one questionnaire at the beginning of the intervention and another at the end. Both questionnaires included a series of statements linked to awareness of specific aspects of the cultural categories proposed by Barkan (2017). The participants expressed their perception of each statement through a five-point Likert scale that ranged from "Totally disagree" to "Totally agree". In addition to the scale, the participants provided a written example to support their selection on each statement.

In order to measure participants' cultural awareness, the researchers adapted the MyCAP questionnaire model from Medina and Kiefel (2021). This model employs scales in a series of statements to assess different dimensions of cultural awareness. The researchers adjusted this model to emphasize the recognition of U.S. cultural elements, which is the culture that this project centers on. Hence, the researchers employed a similar adapted model to measure the cultural awareness of participants before and after the intervention. The following paragraphs provide specific descriptions of the pre- and post-intervention questionnaires.

The pre-intervention questionnaire consisted of thirteen statements, where eleven had a direct relationship with the categories of culture proposed by Barkan (2017). The first two statements correspond to the categories of symbols and language, respectively; statements 3 and 4 correspond to the norms category; statements 5 through 7 address the category of rituals; statements 8 and 9 correspond to the values category; finally, statements 10 and 11 correspond to

the category of material components. Also, there are two final statements related to cultural topics and the implementation of authentic materials in the subject, for which participants did not need to provide written supports for their selections[1]. The researchers assorted the categories in the questionnaire following the order Barkan presented in his text, as he describes each one independently without assigning a hierarchical sequence.

The post-intervention questionnaire consisted of eight statements. Six of these focused on the cultural categories the intervention centered on, as per the results of the pre-intervention questionnaire. The first statement corresponds to the Norms category; statements 2 through 4 correspond to the category of Rituals; and statements 5 and 6 correspond to the category of Values. Finally, the last two statements (7 and 8) sought to gather the participants' perceptions regarding how much the resources and activities in the intervention represented aspects of the U.S. culture and whether they helped them discover these features. Additionally, the participants did not need to provide written supports for their selection on these final statements[2].

3.2.2. Students' Artifacts

Krajcik and Shin (2014) refer to these as all those products that learners create, which prove and exteriorize their knowledge of a topic. These are explicit pieces that teachers can review to observe students' understanding and to improve upon it by providing constructive, meaningful feedback (pp. 289-290). For researchers, artifacts serve as evidence of content comprehension and can also reflect students' opinions on assignments and their themes. For this reason, the researchers considered it appropriate to incorporate these as data collection

[1] For further details refer to Annex A1
[2] For further details refer to Annex A2

instruments to complement and validate the information that participants provided in another key data collection instrument: the post-lesson survey.

3.2.3. Post-Lesson Surveys

Cresswell (2012) defines surveys as a set of "procedures (...) investigators administer (...) to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics" (p. 376). This instrument is adequate given that it allows for a systematic and organized recollection of data from a group of numerous participants in different instances during the intervention. The researchers administered four surveys (one at the end of each lesson) through the Google Forms platform. Each survey consisted of two sections: in the first one, the participants had to provide general information such as their name and date of the session. The second section included several items: first, one question where participants expressed how much they learned from the different elements of U.S. culture during each lesson through a five-point Likert scale that ranged from "Nothing" to "Quite much"; second, an open-ended question where participants highlighted what they learned in each session; finally, in items 3 through 6, participants had to select one of the lesson materials (e.g., video, song, TV excerpts, etc.) and then express through five-point Likert scales (ranging from "Totally disagree" to "Totally agree") their opinions on different statements related to the use of authentic materials in the class[3].

3.3. Context and Participants

This research project took place throughout four lessons of the Basic English Skills subject from the Modern Languages program at ECCI University in Bogotá, Colombia. According to the projected professional profile for this major, graduates are expected to develop

[3] For further details refer to Annex A3

solid communicative competences in foreign languages, which they can employ to fulfill administrative or organizational duties (ECCI, n.d.). The population involved in this study consisted of 21 first-semester students enrolled in this subject at the time of the intervention. Furthermore, 8 of them attended every session and submitted all the information required by the data collection instruments. Consequently, the researchers decided to focus on the data these 8 participants provided throughout the entire intervention.

3.4. Role of the Researchers

The researchers had three key roles. First, the researchers elaborated a didactic unit, comprising 4 lesson plans, that focused on learners' cultural awareness development using authentic materials based on pop culture. Second, the researchers implemented the proposed didactic unit during the intervention while teaching about the required grammar content, as agreed with the subject headteacher. Finally, the researchers collected and analyzed the data gathered from each of the post-lesson surveys, the participants' artifacts, and the pre- and post-intervention questionnaires.

Chapter IV

Pedagogical Intervention

4.1. Theory of Learning

To formulate a didactic unit that fosters learners' cultural awareness development, the authors centered its design around socio-constructivism as the central learning theory. According to Kanselaar (2002), constructivism's core idea is that knowledge "is built" from a human's previous experiences, which is the foundation of newer, more complex learning. In addition, constructivism contends that learners form knowledge by interacting with their peers in contextualized situations (Kanselaar et al., 2001), which implies a social dimension of this

theory, widely known as socio-constructivism. Proposed by Vygotsky in 1968, this theory contends that education is a process fueled by culture and language in which students interact to create meaningful knowledge and comprehend the world (Akpan et al., 2020). In sum, the view of socio-constructivism informs this proposal, where students interact with each other and with authentic materials to create new meanings when discovering another culture through inquiry-oriented activities.

4.2. Inquiry-Based Learning

Inquiry-based learning is a constructivist approach that advocates for enhancing learners' agency in the learning process (Becker, 2020). The main aspect of this approach, herein referred to as IBL, is that learners must create and answer questions to comprehend any topic. The main goal of inquiry-based learning is to fuel learners' curiosity and provide them with the tools to generate new knowledge (Smegen & Ben-Horin, 2021). Dema and Moeller contend that this learning approach is adequate to promote discovering other cultures because it is a student-centered approach, and thus "[it] places the learners in the role of inquirers who investigate and discover their own, as well as a second or third culture." (2012, p. 81). Also, they highlight the meaningful knowledge this approach can provide, given it requires learners to be more active and engaged when discovering new aspects of a culture (p. 81).

IBL consists of a series of stages or steps where the teacher initially presents relevant information and then provides students an inquiry space that leads to a final discussion where they present their answers to the lesson question. The instructional design subsection provides a description of the way researchers adjusted this approach into the lessons. Finally, it is imperative to understand that teachers have a relevant role in this approach. Teachers not only provide learning tools and information sources that are relevant, but they also "create inquiry

questions that provoke interest in the target culture and will lead to important discoveries about the L2 culture and people, and thus, develop understanding of cultural differences" (p. 81). In brief, the conceptualizations of Becker (2020) and Smegen & Ben-Horin (2021), as well as the ideas of Dema & Moeller (2012) inform this study about the appropriateness of the inquiry-based learning approach in fostering learners' cultural awareness development.

4.2.1. Principles of Inquiry-Based Learning

This subsection presents the principles that set the foundation of an inquiry-based learning process. Allan and Powell (2007) provide a list of principles that inform the researchers' understanding of this approach and allowed them to shape the lessons, activities, sequence, and other features relevant to this intervention. These are the principles:

4.2.1.1. The responsibility of learning process lies on students. IBL focuses on active student participation rather than mere memorization, fostering learners' knowledge construction and encouraging intrinsic motivation, which is crucial in taking responsibility for one's own learning. This approach has social and individual dimensions: students may feel accountable to their group as they strive to contribute and avoid letting others down, while also being driven by their personal contribution to the overall inquiry within the group. These factors work together to enhance engagement and accountability in the learning process.

4.2.1.2. Group work as a cornerstone of learning. Small-group discussions combined with individual accountability yield positive outcomes, making this approach adequate in enabling learners to develop collaborative skills and construct knowledge through them. This method places a strong emphasis on small-group collaboration, as such work fosters motivation, emotional engagement, and interpersonal development. This approach also entails facing challenges, which educators can mitigate by supporting learners' inquiries.

4.2.1.3. Teachers support the student-led learning process. In this approach, educators transition from a traditional instructor to a facilitator, encouraging student-led learning and guiding learners through the discussions of their outcomes. Each session begins with a motivational component, where the tutor inspires curiosity about the lesson topic using examples and students' previous knowledge as triggers. In addition, they provide key sources of information, prompting students to seek additional resources independently. During the activity, students work in small groups to elaborate an answer to the lesson inquiry question, report their findings, and engage in peer discussions to exchange feedback. The session concludes as teachers highlight key contributions from each group, reinforcing the inquiry outcomes, which encourages further learning through this approach.

These principles describe IBL as a student-centered learning process that teachers or students can trigger by formulating questions or ideas prior to the inquiry. Implementing peer discussions is crucial in enabling students to share their ideas, understand different perspectives, and construct knowledge collaboratively through interactions with materials, the teacher, and their classmates. These principles guide the pedagogical intervention, as they describe different factors that are pivotal in shaping lessons through this approach, which the researchers complement by including authentic materials to support learners' inquiries about U.S. cultural elements.

4.3. Didactic Unit

Rodríguez (2010) defines this as an instrument useful to organize and articulate a teaching and learning sequence, integrated by a set of meaningful and coherent objectives, resources, and activities, all of which are established around a thematic core (in this case, U.S. cultural elements). Furthermore, Garcia's definition (2009) mentions other elements that are also

important for the development of a didactic unit, such as methods and pedagogical strategies, and students' acknowledgment of the learning process, both being highly relevant in fulfilling the aims of this project.

4.3.1. Components of the Didactic Unit

The analysis by Astudillo-López (2015) of Diez-Rodríguez's (2009) didactic unit provides a comprehensive list and description of the key components within a didactic unit. This list includes (1) a general description of the unit, (2) the learning objectives, (3) thematic contents, (4) sequence of activities, (5) resources and materials, (6) setting organization, and (7) assessment. As this study focuses on cultural awareness development, the use of authentic materials based on pop culture, and the inquiry-based learning approach, the researchers adapted Astudillo-López's description of the didactic unit items to better fit the goals of this research. The following table summarizes each component of a didactic unit:

Table 4

Description of the Elements of a Didactic Unit

Didactic Unit	
Component	**Description**
General description	In this section the authors disclose the main and specific topics of the unit, methodological approach, number of students, number of sessions and moment of implementation.
Didactic objectives	Main and specific goals and purposes of the didactic unit focused on students' learning during each lesson.
Thematic contents	A description of the core theme and secondary elements of the unit, which the teachers will initially present and foster so the students build understanding of them throughout each session.

Activities' sequence	Description of the activities that will take place during each session, considering a logical and coherent order, where goals and roles are established.
Resources and materials	A list and description of the authentic materials and additional resources employed throughout the unit. It is imperative to justify its appropriateness regarding the cultural contents and themes each session centers on.
Setting organization	Physical space, specific time and total length of each session.
Assessment	Description of students' results in relation to the didactic objectives established beforehand.

4.4. Instructional Desing

This section presents a description of the step-by-step process the researchers employed during the four lessons in the intervention. Researchers designed this by adapting the inquiry-based learning stages in Pedaste et al. (2015).

4.4.1. Instruction

In the initial phase of the lesson, the teachers activated learners' prior knowledge via questions and introduced the grammar topic, which was cause and effect clauses in all lessons; in addition, each lesson presented different verb tenses, as the subject headteacher requested. Thus, lesson one focused on simple present tense, lesson two focused on simple past tense, and lessons three and four focused on simple future tense (with "will" and "going to," respectively). The main resources teachers employed were a Canva slideshow with explanations and examples of language use, as well as the classroom board. In addition, teachers expected learners to recall linguistic and thematic content from previous lessons and to understand the form and use of the corresponding grammar components. Even though grammar is not the anchor point of this

project, researchers considered necessary to include short grammar-focused sections at the start of each lesson to present new topics established in the subject syllabus; as a result, researchers included this stage in the intervention even though it does not integrate the structure Pedaste et al. (2015) presented in their literature examination.

4.4.2. Conceptualization

At this stage, teachers introduced a new topic connected to a U.S. cultural element. As the literature suggests, the cultural categories do not follow a hierarchical order. Hence, the researchers ordered the themes in the didactic unit, considering how these connected with the grammar requirements in the syllabus. The table below illustrates the final sequence of the cultural and grammar topics in the didactic unit:

Table 5

Thematic and Grammar Contents for the Didactic Unit Lessons

Lesson	US Culture topic	Grammar topic
1	Common values and related behaviors in the United States	Cause and effect clauses and simple present tense
2	Laws (formal norms) in the United States	Cause and effect clauses and simple past tense
3	Common life stages of people in the United States	Cause and effect clauses and simple future tense (will)
4	Festivities in the United States	Cause and effect clauses and simple present tense (going to)

The teachers presented the definition of each category to students and activated their prior knowledge by asking them if they knew or remembered anything related to these. The teachers also presented more specific information about these topics, for example, the first and

second amendments in lesson 2 or a list of common festivities in the United States in lesson 4. Teachers employed the same resources as in the introductory stage. The main goal of this stage was to establish a thematic focus in the lesson, as well as to present new information to students regarding U.S. culture. Finally, the students' expected outcome was to learn about different aspects of the U.S. culture and to recall previous knowledge related to these elements.

4.4.3. Orientation

In this phase, teachers introduced students to the authentic materials of the lesson, which conveyed information about the cultural topic. The teachers provided some context and preliminary information before presenting said resources. The table below describes the specific resources and discloses the lessons they integrated:

Table 6

Description of the Implemented Authentic Materials

Lesson	Resources	Description
1	Season 7 episode 23 of "The Simpsons" (TV episode excerpt)	This episode narrates an awkward situation where citizens must decide whether if deport or not immigrants. In this episode, learners can identify behaviors and attitudes related to American values, and how they are represented in a popular U.S. TV show.
	"American values and assumptions" (Online article)	This online article from the University of Portland describes some of the most common values that U.S. citizens adopt. This article works as an insight on American values and their influence on citizens' behaviors.
2	"This is America" by Childish Gambino (Music Video)	This video depicts situations that the first and second amendments gave rise to, to an extent. For example, gun violence and race crimes are an effect of the second amendment. The purpose of the song is to condemn gun-related violence and media hypocrisy, which the first

		amendment allows. Even though the video was released more than 6 years ago, the issues it addresses are currently observable in the United States.
	Excerpts from media reports on "RuPaul's Drag Race" (Infographic)	This resource includes three direct quotes from two media reports about RuPaul's Drag Race, a popular U.S. reality show. This show, the themes it depicts and the protagonism of drag queens is a direct effect of the first amendment. The show has been televised since 2009, and it is still one of the most renowned reality TV shows in the United States. Its concept was so successful that it has adaptations in Chile, the United Kingdom, the Philippines, and more countries.
3	Season 27 episode 9 of "The Simpsons" (TV Episode excerpt)	This episode shows the evolution of Bart Simpson's life, from his early childhood to adulthood. Throughout this episode, students can perceive and understand diverse, common events that a regular American citizen might go through during their life, as seen in the common situations the episode portrays.
	"Life stages" (Online article)	This online article by Disability Hub, presents descriptions of life stages and their characteristics in the United States. Each life stage has its own PDF guide, so students can find additional sources for their inquiry process.
4	Season 1 Episode 10 of "Modern Family" (TV Episode excerpt)	Modern family was one of the most popular U.S. sitcoms from 2009 until its finale in 2020. The show depicts the lives of different citizens from different backgrounds who integrate the same family. The show has depicted different festivities in the United States. Given its popularity, light-hearted themes and tone, and its portrayal of Christmas in the U.S, it is appropriate as authentic material to convey cultural information on the topic of festivities.
	"Origin of Christmas" (Documentary excerpt)	The History Channel is a popular documentary outlet in U.S. media. In this case, to inform students about the origins of this festivity and to use its contents to provide examples of language use, the researchers decided to include it as another authentic material for this lesson.

After showing each resource, the teachers asked for students' reactions and opinions about them and what they perceived in relation to the cultural category of the lesson. In addition, the teachers presented examples of language use employing clause models based on the contents of the resources, which linked the cultural and grammar components of the lessons. The teachers also added practice exercises so students could test their grammar and thematic knowledge. Then, the teachers presented the inquiry question students had to answer at the end of the session. The following table shows the questions proposed for each lesson.

Table 7

Inquiry Question in Each Lesson

Lesson	Question
1	What are some behaviors connected to the (value) in the United States?
2	What situations did the (first or second) amendment give rise to in the USA's recent history?
3	What are some situations connected to the (life stage) in the United States?
4	What is the origin of (festivity) and its common practices in the U.S.?

After disclosing the question, the teachers told students about the product they had to present their answers through. More specifically, in lessons 1 and 4, students had to create an infographic that expressed three ideas in the form of cause-and-effect clauses related to behaviors connected to common values (for lesson 1) and to the origin and practices of a festivity (for lesson 4). For lessons 2 (Amendments) and 3 (Common life stages), students had to write down answers in the form of cause-and-effect clauses on a sheet of paper. In all lessons, the teachers

randomly assigned a topic students had to focus on in the activity and also emphasized the importance of mentioning the sources of information the students based their answers on. Students were expected to acknowledge the U.S. cultural element within the authentic materials, to participate in the practice exercises, and to express their understanding of culture-related content in the authentic materials.

4.4.4. Investigation

This stage sought to promote learners' inquiry about U.S. culture by answering the lesson question and elaborating a specific product or artifact (notes or infographics). Here, learners collected information from different sources to construct their answer and integrate it into the product. Teachers encouraged students to gather information from several sources to have a broader understanding of the topic. The teachers employed a Canva slideshow to disclose the lesson question and the activity. At the end of this stage, the teacher indicated to students that it was time to present their answers.

4.4.5. Discussion

The final phase required students, depending on the activity, to present their ideas and answer(s) to the lesson question, as well as their explanations based on the authentic materials and additional information they compiled. Teachers encouraged students to ask their peers questions, provide feedback, add additional information, and present arguments for and against others' ideas. The teacher wrote down information on the board or on the screen to recall the most important aspects of the discussion as a way to conclude the lesson.

The model by Pedaste et al. (2015), adapted to this study, suggests a practical order of interrelated sections that promotes students' agency in constructing knowledge regarding different features of another culture, thus nourishing their cultural awareness. Moreover, this

model provides a crucial guideline for the general articulation of the instructional design and lesson planning processes, given the step-by-step sequence it presents[4].

4.5. Learners' and Teachers' Roles

This section discloses and establishes the actions and responsibilities that students and the teachers will assume during this pedagogical intervention, which is a pivotal step in undertaking this stage of the research project. The main objective of teachers is to adopt an alternative teaching role that does not align with instruction-centered methods. Following ideas from Pedaste et al. (2015), teachers adopted a guiding role that does not fully control the class and the learning process. Instead, teachers accompanied and supported students on every stage established in this approach, thus making students the principal responsible for the process (like a coach leading a team).

As teachers distance themselves from being an authority, they must carefully build an environment where students can take initiative on their inquiries, feel curiosity, and develop answers to different questions (García and Raña, 2018, p. 57). Therefore, teachers must carefully plan classes, select adequate material, and formulate questions that adjust to learning needs. In the final stages of the lesson, teachers become discussion mediators, as they provide feedback and encourage students to disclose the answers they formulated and to exchange ideas with their classmates. Finally, teachers constantly exemplify the inquiry process through asking questions about different phenomena and developing a process to reach answers and build new knowledge.

On the other hand, students must be aware and active in all the procedures around their pedagogical process (García and Raña, 2018, p. 57). This includes considering their previous knowledge to acquire possible answers to the question, receiving and providing feedback,

[4] For a detailed view of the implanted didactic unit, refer to Annex B

collecting and employing information, and sharing their ideas and answers in the final activities. Moreover, students must develop abilities to work with others in a group to achieve a common goal.

In sum, roles in an inquiry-based learning environment do not follow a traditional English class organization, where teachers are the core of the lesson most of the time. For the purpose of this intervention, the focus shifted as lessons transitioned from teacher-focused to learner-centered, thus creating a space where participants took control of their learning process and relied on teachers as support, not as sole sources of knowledge.

4.6. Instructional Objective

The main instructional objective of the intervention was to support learners' cultural awareness development by having cultural categories as thematic axes, supported by authentic materials based on pop culture. The specific instructional objectives were: first, to teach learners about values, behaviors, laws, life stages, and festivities in U.S. culture. And second, to teach learners how to express ideas regarding the aforementioned areas of U.S. culture using cause-and-effect clauses.

As previously mentioned in the theoretical framework of this study, Barkan (2017) describes symbols, language, values, norms, and rituals as the categories of culture. However, the researchers selected the categories of values, norms, and rituals for the design of the didactic unit. The researchers made this decision based on the results of the implemented pre-intervention questionnaire to inform themselves about the U.S. cultural categories the participants were less aware of[5].

[5] For further details on the results of the diagnostic questionnaire, refer to Chapter V

Chapter V

Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter presents the data analysis and findings of the intervention process that took place at ECCI University during four lessons in the Basic English Skills subject, from which the authors gathered a set of mixed data. First, the researchers disclose the data analysis techniques and the sections they divided this analysis into to better understand the data, the information within it, and how it sheds light on the subject matter of this study. Secondly, the researchers present and discuss the data in each section, as well as their entailments towards fulfilling the objectives of this project.

It is necessary to clarify that, as established in previous pages, culture is a broad topic of discussion in several areas of academic endeavor. Therefore, the answers this analysis process will produce focus on the definitions of culture (The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology, 2006; Byram, 2007), cultural categories (Barkan, 2017), pop culture (Merskin, 2008; Maudlin and Sandlin, 2015; Beach and O'Brien, 2008; Delaney, 2007; Visco, 2021), and authentic materials (Little & Singleton, 1998; Bacon and Finnerman, 1990; Fitria, 2022), as well as on the research goals established throughout this document. By doing so, the discussion and interpretation of the findings will be more concrete and focused on fulfilling the central aim of this study: to examine how the use of authentic materials, based on pop culture, supports the development of first-semester EFL learners in a private university.

5.1. Techniques for Data Analysis

As this project has a mixed character, it is key to establish the techniques the researchers employ to analyze quantitative and qualitative data. For the case of the data gathered through the participants selections on the Likert scales, the researchers implement a descriptive analysis. This

type of data examination entails numerical data organization and presentation that facilitates drawing succinct ideas from broad data sets (Mishra et al., 2019). Additionally, the researchers present summaries of this data by including mode and median as the focal measures of central tendency (Sheard, 2018). Additionally, the researchers include various tables and graphs throughout this chapter to visually represent the data.

On the other hand, to analyze qualitative data from sources such as written supports in questionnaires and surveys and artifacts of the participants, the researchers employ a content analysis approach. Kleinheksel et al. (2020) highlight its value in qualitative data as it gives textual information a high degree of importance when revealing new information about a research subject. This process involves a series of steps that enable the researchers to gain more comprehension of the data and its contribution to this research by identifying, labeling, grouping, and describing similar units of meaning. This process further assists them in presenting organized and correlated qualitative data that address the aims of this project.

As a general analysis strategy, the researchers employed data triangulation thanks to its usefulness when creating connections between the gathered information. Triangulation confers validity to the research results as it relates them to different data collection instruments and resources (Carter et al., 2014). More specifically, the researchers employed method triangulation to connect various data collection sources around the same subject matter. This means that when analyzing data, it is necessary to consider multiple instruments to ensure the validity of the results (ibid.). In the case of this research project, it includes questionnaires, surveys, and students' artifacts.

5.2. Phases of the Data Analysis

This mixed-data analysis is divided into three phases for two reasons: first, to have a more organized view of the data and the results they provide to this project, and second, to address each of the objectives of this study. The first phase involves the analysis of the pre-intervention questionnaire. In this preliminary examination, the researchers gathered an initial set of data on cultural awareness of the participants to establish the categories the intervention would focus on developing, which is one of the specific objectives of this project.

The second phase includes the mixed-data analysis of each post-lesson survey and the qualitative data in the artifacts of the participants. This section addresses the general objective of this research and the remaining specific objective.

Finally, the third phase of the analysis examines the data from the post-intervention questionnaire. Here, the researchers compare this data with the one from the pre-intervention questionnaire to assess the development of cultural awareness of the participants and its extent. This phase will further complement the fulfillment of the general and the second specific research goals.

5.2.1. Phase 1

Before the pedagogical intervention, the researchers compiled information through a questionnaire to identify the categories of US culture that participants conveyed less awareness of, which they included within the didactic unit. The criterion for identifying these cultural categories was to select the ones connected to the statements with the lowest average selection by the participants. In phase three, the researchers compare this diagnostic data with the one from the post-intervention questionnaire to determine the cultural awareness development of participants.

The questionnaire consisted of thirteen statements. Their distribution in this instrument adopted the order of the cultural categories Barkan proposed (2017): one for symbols (objects that lack inherent value, but stand for something else), one for language (system code intertwined with the culture surrounding it), two for norms (socially acceptable ways of behaving), three for rituals (established procedures and ceremonies that often mark transitions in the life course), two for values (criteria of what is desirable or undesirable and right or wrong), and two for material components (objects that constitute a society's material culture). The researchers included a 5-point Likert scale next to each statement, which the participants used to convey their opinions about each one. Additionally, under each of the first eleven statements, the participants wrote a short example to justify their selections. The chart below presents the data from each statement.

Table 8

Average Selections of Participants in the Pre-Intervention Questionnaire

N° in questionnaire	Category	Statement	Average selection in the Likert Scale
1	Symbols	I am aware of the meaning of USA's national symbols.	2,25 (Between "Disagree" and "Neutral")
2	Language	I am aware of the variety of themes when learning English, aside from grammar.	3,50 (Between "Neutral" and "Agree")
3	Norms	I am aware of the current presidential election process in the US.	2,25 (Between "Disagree" and "Neutral")
4	Norms	I am aware of amendments in the USA law and how these affect civil life.	1,50 (Between "Totally disagree" and "Disagree")

5	Rituals	I am aware of the different life processes that a US citizen faces until early adulthood.	1,88 (Between "Totally disagree" and "Disagree")
6	Rituals	I am aware of the festivities in the USA and their origins.	2,63 (Between “Disagree” and “Neutral”)
7	Rituals	I am aware of the meanings and practices of such festivities.	1,75 (Between "Totally disagree" and "Disagree")
8	Values	I am aware of which values people have in the United States.	1,50 (Between "Totally disagree" and "Disagree")
9	Values	I am aware of the influence of USA values in the behavior of its citizens.	1,75 (Between "Totally disagree" and "Disagree")
10	Material components	I am aware of commercial products’ influence in USA’s culture	2,63 (Between “Disagree” and “Neutral”)
11	Material components	I am aware of the influence mass media has on USA’s culture.	2,75 (Between “Disagree” and “Neutral”)

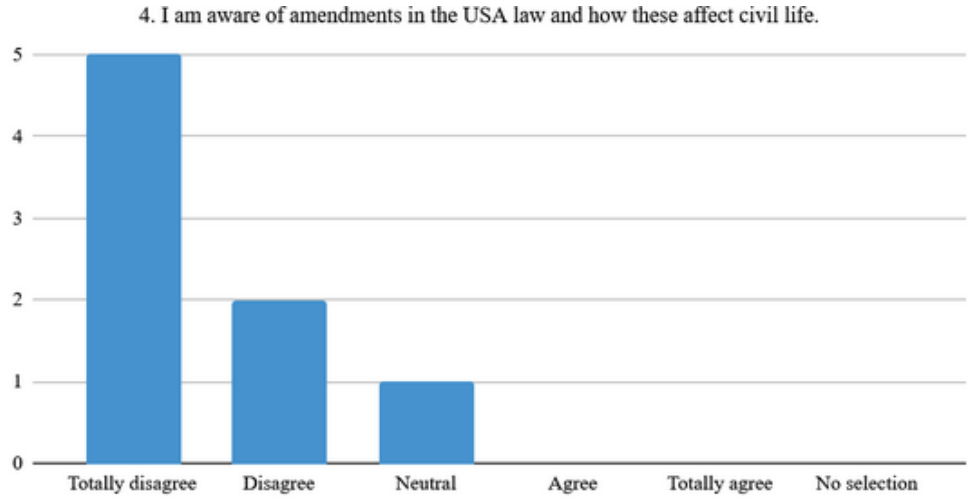
Out of the 11 statements that also required written justifications from participants, the researchers centered on the ones highlighted in the chart, as per the selection criterion. Therefore, the data analysis focuses on these specific statements and the cultural traits they address. The following pages present the specific data from each of the selected pre-intervention questionnaire statements.

Statement 4, which addressed the category of Norms, revolved around one of the key components of the US national constitution: amendments (BBC, 2024). The statement was -I am aware of amendments in the USA law and how these affect civil life-. The mean value of

participants selections on the Likert scale was 1,50. Specifically, five of them selected option 1 (totally disagree), two chose option 2 (disagree), and one selected option 3 (neutral). Therefore, I It is possible to infer that the perception of their awareness about this aspect of US culture was low. The following figure illustrates this data.

Figure 3

Participants' Selections on Statement 4 of the Pre-Intervention Questionnaire



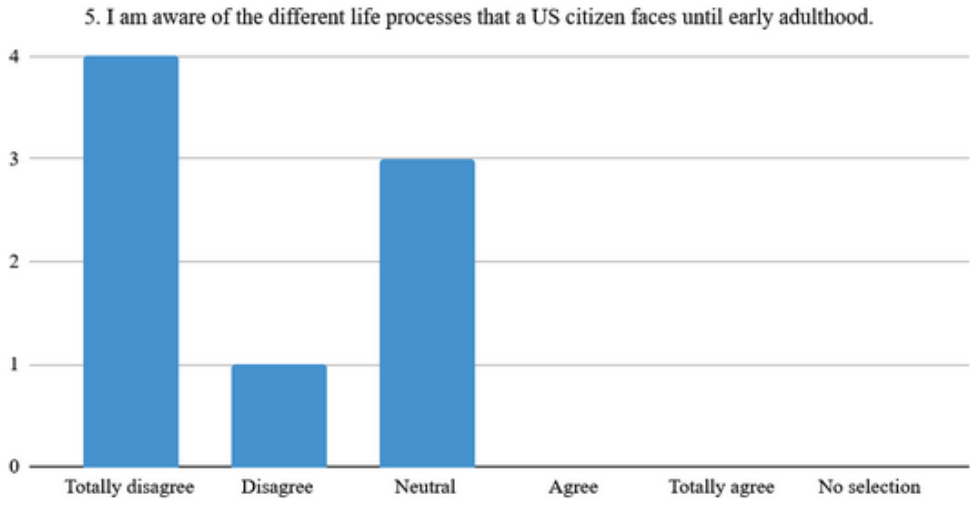
Regarding the written support of the participants, all who selected option 1 expressed total unawareness in this regard. Likewise, one of the participants who selected option 2 indicated a similar idea. The remaining one stated that US laws are akin to Colombian ones but did not elaborate. Finally, the participant who selected option 3 provided a slightly more knowledgeable example, contending that life in the US is heavily affected by the lack of gun-bearing regulations[6]. According to the data, the researchers inferred that this was one of the cultural categories the participants showed less awareness of, given the considerable number of them who selected options 1 and 2, and the examples they supported their selections with.

[6] For further details refer to Annex C1

Statement 5 addressed the life-stages feature of rituals. The statement said: I am aware of the different life processes that a US citizen faces until early adulthood. The average selection of the participants was 1,88. Specifically, four of them selected option 1, one chose option 2, and three selected option 3. This information suggests that they were totally or partially unaware of this cultural feature. The graph below presents this data.

Figure 4

Participants' Selections on Statement 5 of the Pre-Intervention Questionnaire



As for the written supports, the four participants who selected option 1 expressed a complete lack of awareness about this. On the other hand, the participant who selected option 2 assumed that life stages in the US were not different from those here. Three participants selected option 3 and presented responses related to discovering life stages through media and mentioning factors that influence this cultural trait such as violence, bad habits, consumerism, and debauchery[7]. The data gathered from the selections and written supports of the participants implied that this was one of the US cultural features they showed less awareness of.

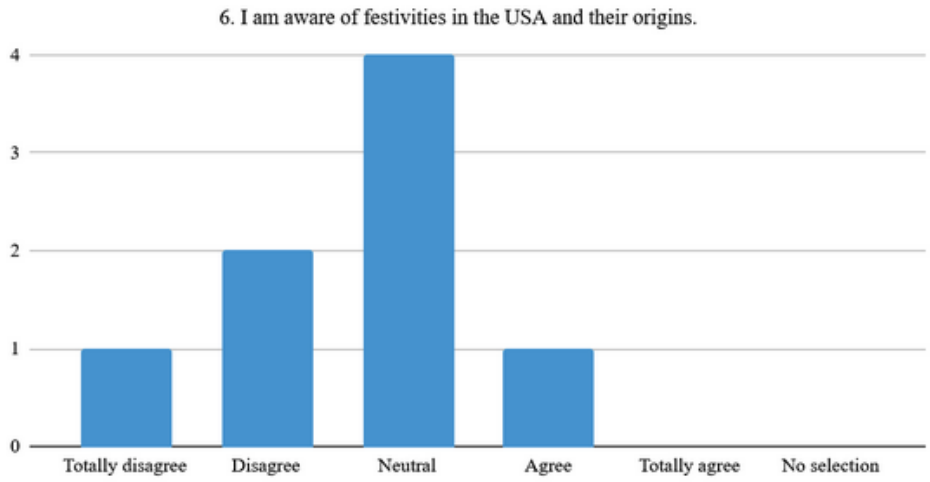
[7] For further details refer to Annex C2

Although results from statement 6 were not among the lowest in the pre-intervention questionnaire, it is necessary to include them here because they set a foundation for the results of the following statement, as both address the category trait of festivities. Therefore, the paragraph below presents and discusses the data from this statement.

Statement 6, based on common celebrations, was -I am aware of festivities in the USA and their origins-. The average selection among participants was 2,63. Concretely, one of them selected option 1, two chose option 2, four selected option 3, and one chose option 4 (agree). Therefore, their general perception of this statement was between negative and neutral. The graph below displays this information.

Figure 5

Participants' Selections on Statement 6 of the Pre-Intervention Questionnaire



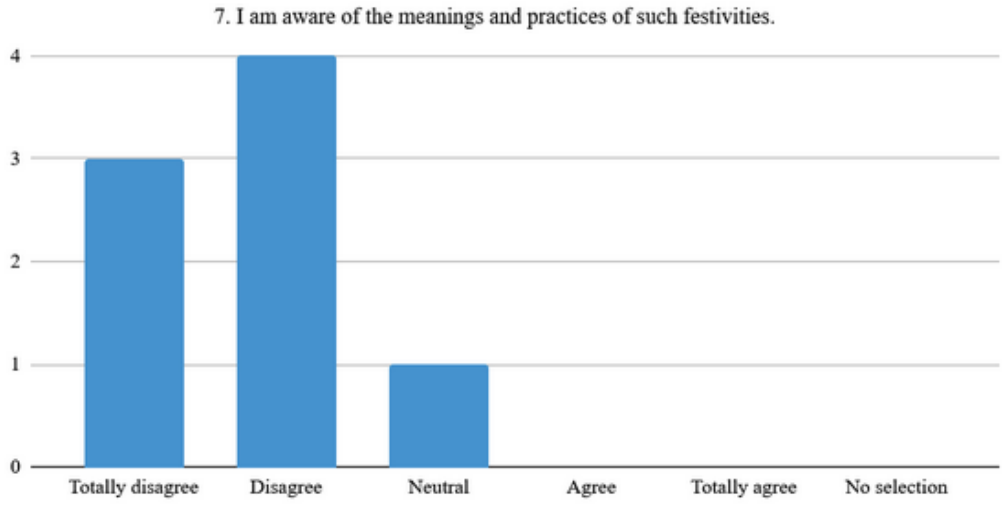
Among the participants who selected options 1 and 2, two mentioned Thanksgiving and Easter in their written supports, but none provided any examples of their origins. The ones who selected option 3 provided some examples of festivities (e.g., St. Valentine's Day, Easter, and St. Patrick's Day). However, nobody provided a clear example about the origins of any of these celebrations. Similarly, the participant who selected option 4 only named some of the

aforementioned festivities and included Independence Day[8]. Several participants showed a general awareness regarding popular festivities in the US; however, the aspect of origins was absent from their answers, which their selections partially convey.

The seventh statement focused on the aspect of rituals known as meanings and practices. The statement was -I am aware of the meanings and practices of such festivities-. The average selection made by the participants was 1,75, meaning that they partially or strongly disagreed with the statement. More specifically, three participants selected option 1, four chose option 2, and one selected option 3. The graph below presents this data.

Figure 6

Participants' Selections on Statement 7 of the Pre-Intervention Questionnaire



As for their written supports, the participants who selected option 1 expressed their lack of knowledge about the meanings of festivities in the US. Two of them mentioned festivities such as Thanksgiving or Independence Day and even disclosed a common practice (having turkey for dinner), but, they did not address the aspect of meanings. Three out of the four participants who selected option 2 expressed basic ideas about festivities in the US, but did not

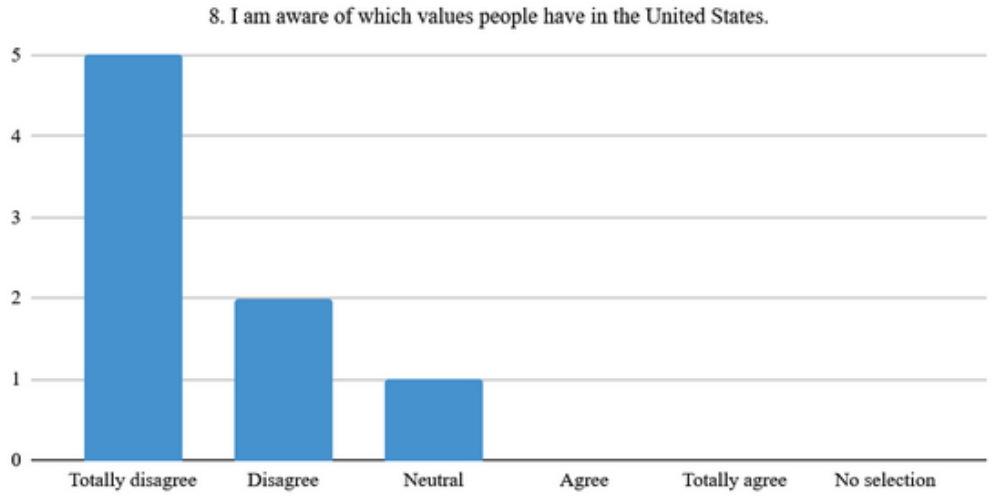
[8] For further details refer to Annex C3

refer to the meanings or practices behind these, whilst the remaining one did not provide an answer. Finally, the participant who selected option 3 mentioned some popular US festivities but did not disclose their meanings or regular practices[9]. In parallel with the results of statement 6, this data suggests that participants were aware of widespread US festivities, yet key components such as practices and meanings, which this statement addressed, were not highly observable in their supporting answers.

Statements 8 and 9 revolved around the cultural category of Values. Statement 8 was -I am aware of which values people have in the United States-. The average selection among participants was 1,50, meaning that the general perception toward this statement was between disagreement and total disagreement. In more detail, five of them chose option 1, two selected option 2, and one selected option 3. The graph below displays this information.

Figure 7

Participants' Selections on Statement 8 of the Pre-Intervention Questionnaire



Most of the participants selected option 1 and, through their written supports, expressed their lack of knowledge in terms of the usual values people have in this culture. One of them

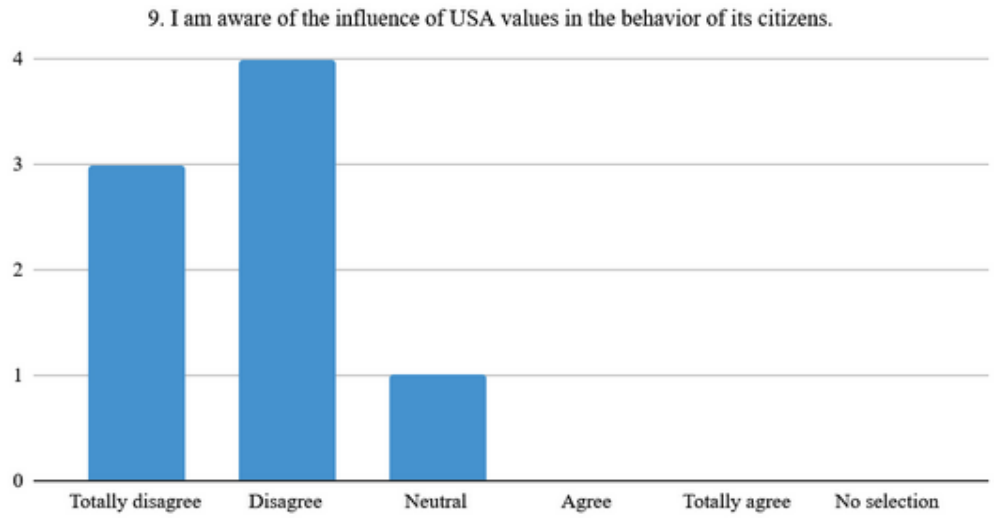
[9] For further details refer to Annex C4

mentioned that people in this country are respectful of the laws. Similarly, the two participants who selected option 2 limited their answers to mentioning aspects such as respect and basic values. The only participant who selected option 3 assumed that values in the US were similar to the ones we have in this context, but did not elaborate further[10]. Considering the perceptions that participants conveyed in their selections and supporting answers, it is possible to infer that they lacked awareness in regard to this cultural category,

In Statement 9 -I am aware of the influence of USA values in the behavior of its citizens-, the mean value of participants selections was 1,75, indicating a general perception between disagreement and total disagreement. In more detail, three of them selected option 1, four selected option 2, and one selected option 3. The following graph depicts the data.

Figure 8

Participants' Selections on Statement 9 of the Pre-Intervention Questionnaire



Similar to the results from the previous statement, the viewpoint of the participants and their supporting answers indicated a lack of awareness. One of those who selected option 1

[10] For further details refer to Annex C5

expressed not knowing anything about this cultural aspect; another one just mentioned people in the US have mutual respect, whilst the third one did not provide an elaborate answer. Three participants who selected option 2 mentioned that values establish conduct codes, and that values and behaviors worked similarly in the US and other countries by shaping the identity of people. Finally, the participant who selected option 3 stated that values in the US were influential in improving general conduct and behavior in the country[11]. Considering this data, it is adequate to infer that participants' awareness of this cultural trait was among the lowest in comparison to the other ones addressed in the questionnaire.

As observed throughout this phase of the analysis, namely, in the qualitative data from the supporting examples, the researchers recognized that these reflected the quantitative component of the questionnaire. In sum, this phase of the data analysis suggests that the participants expressed a prominent lack of awareness of the cultural categories of values, norms, and rituals compared to the other ones also present in the pre-intervention questionnaire. In this phase, the researchers identified the US cultural categories participants were less aware of and included them in the didactic unit, thus fulfilling the first specific objective of this study.

5.2.2. Phase 2

This phase presents the data analysis of the instruments employed during the pedagogical intervention of this project. In each lesson, the researchers used two mixed-character instruments to record the participants' cultural awareness development: a post-lesson survey and participant-made artifacts. This data serves two purposes: to examine how the implementation of authentic materials based on pop culture supported cultural awareness development, and to determine the contributions of the chosen learning approach. By examining the data and identifying features

[11] For further details refer to Annex C6

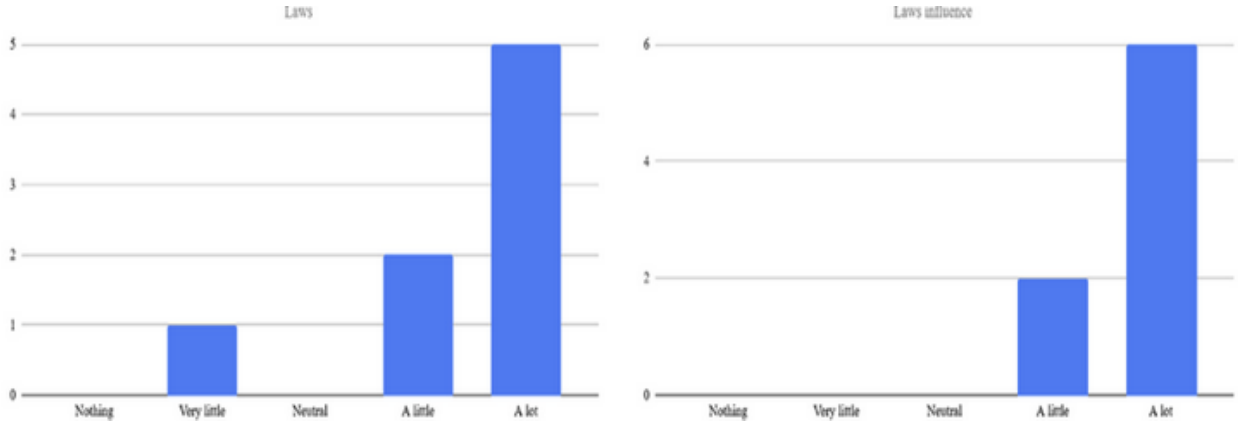
from the authentic materials and the sources participants employed in the inquiry activities, the researchers seek to fulfil the aforementioned research goals. Since each lesson focused on a different cultural category, based on the results of phase 1, the pages below present the data following the order that Barkan (2017) proposed.

5.2.2.1. On the Category of Norms. For the session centered on the cultural category of formal norms (laws) in the US, the researchers emphasized two of the most important ones in the US Constitution: the first and second amendments (BBC, 2024). The artifact that participants created was a set of sentences that addressed situations in the US that either the first or second amendments provoked. The following paragraph presents the information gathered from the first question of the post-lesson survey.

Regarding this instrument, the results from the question -How much did you learn in today's lesson regarding these elements of U.S. culture?- presented the following information. The average selection among participants was 4,38, between “a little” and “a lot”. In more detail, one of them selected option 2 (very little), two chose option 4 (a little), and five selected option 5 (a lot). Moreover, for the same question centered on the influence of laws, their average selection was 4,75. Specifically, two selected option 4, and six chose option 5. The graph below displays this information.

Figure 9

Participants' Selections on Question 1 of the Post Lesson Survey Regarding Laws



Based on the data from this statement, participants demonstrated a clear awareness of the two features associated with formal norms in the foreign culture. The mean scores (4.38 and 4.75, respectively) indicate that such recognition was not coincidental but rather a result of the cultural focus of the lesson. These results suggest that the intervention effectively facilitated participants' ability to discern the importance of these cultural features and to broaden their understanding of the target context. The following section presents the findings related to question two.

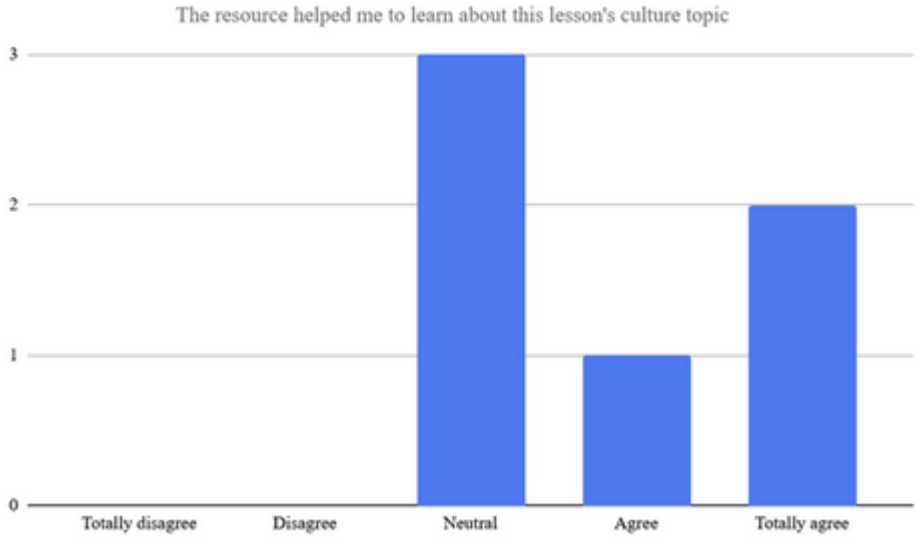
As for the second question in the post-lesson survey, every participant highlighted the aspect of laws in their answers. More specifically, four of them mentioned terms such as laws and amendments, and three highlighted laws and the grammar topic of the lesson. The remaining participant highlighted understanding the amendments and their influence on this foreign culture[12]. Taken together, these answers solidify the numerical data identified in the previous question and emphasized participants' recognition of laws as a cultural element within US culture.

[12] For further details refer to Annex D1

Concerning the fourth question, for the statement -The resource helped me to learn about this lesson's culture topic-, which addressed the employed music video, six out of the eight participants expressed their perceptions. Their average selection was 3,83, between “neutral” and “agree”. More specifically, three of them chose option 3 (neutral), one selected option 4 (agree), and two chose option 5 (totally agree). The graph below presents this data.

Figure 10

Participants’ Selections on Question 4 of the Post Lesson Survey Regarding the Music Video



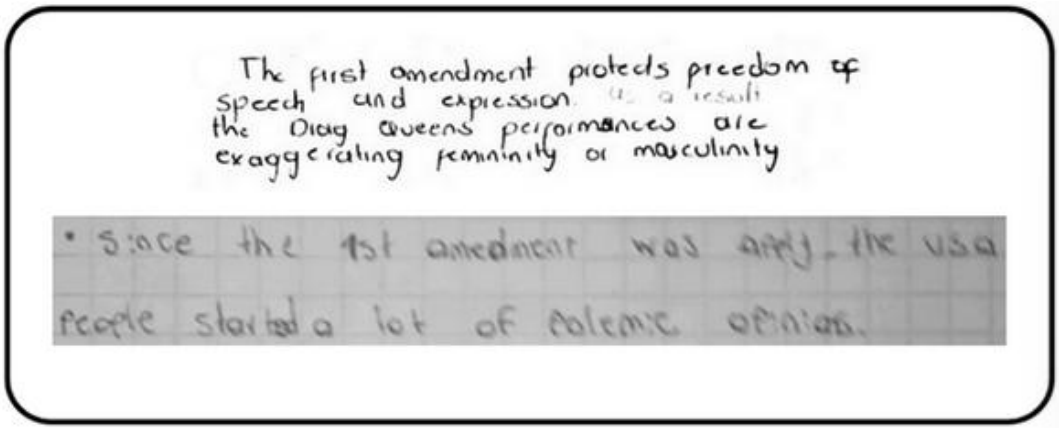
This data shows participants’ recognition of the cultural element in this category as the average selection tends towards general agreement. These results complement the ones obtained from previous items in the survey, solidifying a consistent quantitative data in participants’ perceptions. Considering these two elements, it is possible to infer that the authentic material supported participants’ cultural awareness development regarding this category.

In relation to the artifacts, the participants created a set of sentences that expressed relationships between events that occur in the US and the amendments presented in class. In the corresponding session, participants answered the lesson question by complementing what they

discovered through the authentic material, employing external information and incorporating it into their sentences. The figure below presents excerpts centered on the participants understanding about the first amendment.

Figure 11

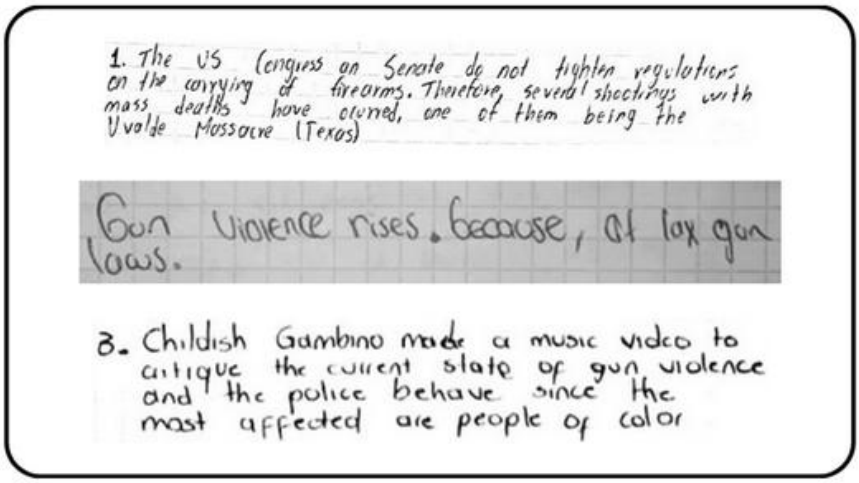
Excerpts from Participants' Artifacts Addressing the 1st Amendment



These statements address key components of the lesson: the cultural element of laws and features from the implemented authentic materials. Both statements highlight the core characteristic of the first amendment (freedom of expression) and its effect on US culture. The first statement expresses a correlation between these effects and the authentic material by highlighting the extravagance of the performances in RuPaul's Drag Race. In addition, the second statement contends that controversial opinions occur due to the protections the first amendment provides. These statements reflect an acknowledgement of the first amendment and the authentic material support in the development of participants' cultural awareness. The excerpts in the following figure present recognition that participants expressed about the second amendment.

Figure 12

Excerpts from Participants' Artifacts Addressing the 2nd Amendment



Direct references to the second amendment are prominent in these statements, which reflect the contents of the implemented authentic material and the support of the inquiry process. The first two statements focus on the consequences of the second amendment by stressing the mild treatment applied to it, even after tragic events such as the one referenced in the first statement. On the other hand, the third statement focuses on the music video and how it reflects the second amendment from a perspective dictated by race, which is a crucial theme in this resource. This statement exemplifies the process of recognizing the meaning of foreign texts, bearing in mind the context from which they come, as El-Hussari (2011) discloses in his definition of cultural awareness.

These excerpts suggest that participants discovered this cultural element directly from the authentic material. Moreover, considering the external information present in the first excerpt, it is possible to infer that the implementation of the learning approach also supported the development of participants' cultural awareness of this category.

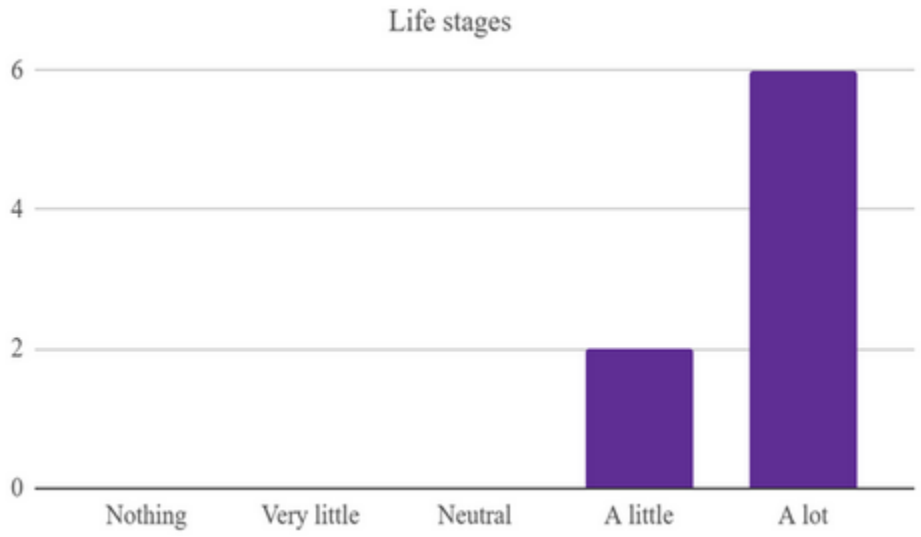
5.2.2.2. On the Category of Rituals. As the cultural category of rituals involves life stages and festivities, the researchers formulated one lesson for each feature. Accordingly, the analysis of this category contemplates the data regarding life stages and festivities separately. Therefore, the forthcoming paragraphs present the data analysis regarding life stages.

5.2.2.2.1. Life Stages. The lesson centered on this cultural trait focused on some common life stages within the US culture, namely infancy, childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood (DisabilityHub, n.d.). The artifact participants created was a list of statements about regular situations connected to the life stage they were assigned to write about. The following paragraph discusses the data from the post-lesson survey**.**

Regarding the first question of the post-lesson survey -How much did you learn in today's lesson regarding these elements of U.S. culture?-, the average selection of participants was 4,75, between the options “a little” and “a lot”. Specifically, two of them selected option 4, while six chose option 5. The graph below illustrates this data.

Figure 13

Participants’ Selections on Question 1 of the Post Lesson Survey Regarding Life Stages



This data indicates that all participants considered that they recognized this US cultural element throughout the session. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that the lesson emphasized this foreign cultural trait, allowing participants to identify and understand it throughout the resources and the activity. The data from question two provides varied information on the specific aspects of the lesson each participant highlighted as relevant.

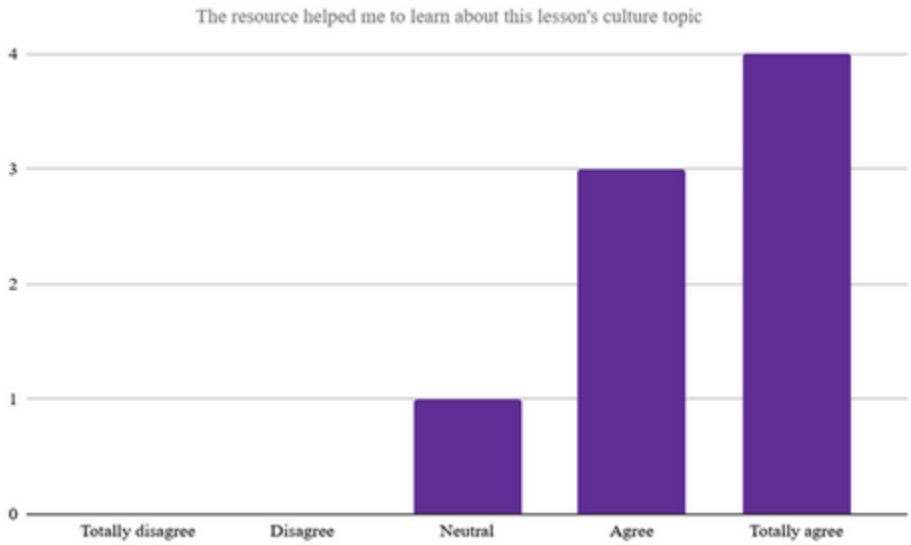
Concerning the participants' written answers to question 2: -Mention the topic addressed in class and what you learned about it-, the obtained data complements the information of the previous question in different ways. For example, two of them stressed life stages and mentioned the ones presented throughout the lesson. In addition, one participant highlighted life stages and how some people experience them in the US. Conversely, four participants only referred to the verb tense presented in the lesson's initial section (simple future using “will”)[13]. Although the general perception of the participants in the scales indicated a focus on cultural acknowledgment, these written answers highlight an element of the lesson that is not related to culture: the grammar content.

Despite the focus several participants had on grammar, the selections on the statement from question 4 -The resource helped me to learn about this lesson's culture topic- suggest that most of them considered the authentic material was supportive in discovering this cultural matter. In this case, the average selection among participants was 4,38. Specifically, one of them selected option 3, three chose option 4, and four selected option 5. The graph below presents this data.

[13] For further details refer to Annex D2

Figure 14

Participants' Selections on Question 4 of the Post Lesson Survey Regarding the Simpsons Episode

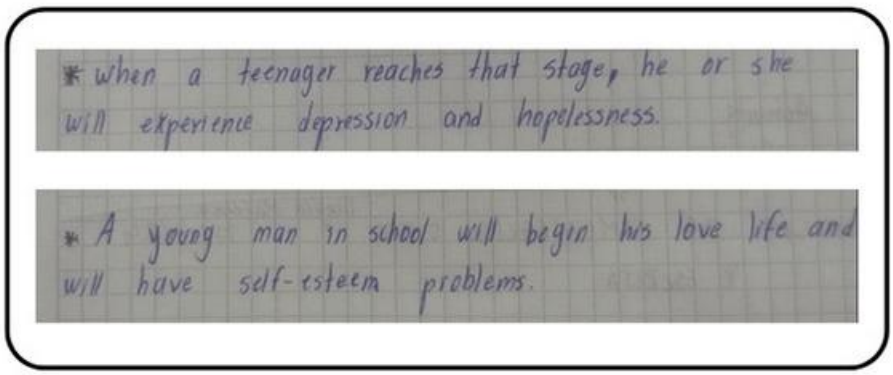


As seen above, most of the participants considered the TV episode to be relevant in helping them acknowledge this cultural category in US culture. The data makes it adequate to infer that participants connected the episode's content to the addressed topic, showing how this authentic material made cultural traits more understandable. Thus, the researchers consider that the implemented material illustrated situations that characterize each life stage in this foreign culture, which supported learners' cultural awareness development.

About the artifacts, participants created a list of affirmations addressing possible situations connected to the specific life stage each group inquired about. Even though the data suggests that some participants conveyed cultural recognition based on the implemented material, several others expressed ideas that do not have an exclusive connection to US culture. The following paragraphs disclose data from excerpts of these artifacts.

Figure 15

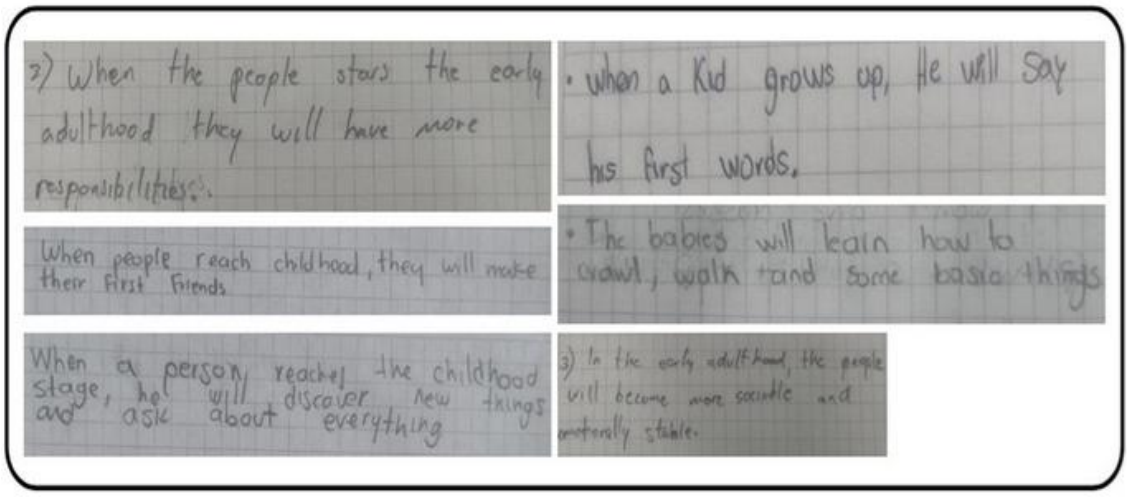
Excerpts from Participants' Artifacts Addressing Life Stages



These excerpts from participants' artifacts indicate awareness about situations related to the life stage of adolescence in the US, a crucial aspect of the TV episode's main plot. On the one hand, the first excerpt points out depression and hopelessness, mental health issues in the US that the episode portrays in the scene where the family celebrates Bart's birthday, but he feels overshadowed by his sister. On the other hand, the second excerpt focuses on two social life factors associated with adolescence: undertaking a romantic relationship and having self-confidence issues. These situations are present in the episode when characters interact with each other and doubt themselves (for example, in the party scene where Milhouse flirts with a girl but gets rejected). It is possible to argue that these excerpts consist of general descriptions of adolescence in the US, and that they reflect some of the contents in the authentic material.

Figure 16

Additional Excerpts from Participants' Artifacts Addressing Life Stages



The excerpts in Figure 16 address different life stages and situations related to each one. The infancy excerpt describes typical actions of babies, while those addressing childhood highlight characteristics such as having curiosity and forming friendships. Regarding early adulthood, participants mentioned aspects like becoming more sociable and responsible. This data suggests participants' understanding of this cultural trait, though not as one exclusive to US culture. Consequently, the researchers infer that participants' awareness of this cultural trait is observable but not limited to the culture this study focuses on.

To summarize, some excerpts from the artifacts indicate acknowledgment of this cultural category and thus a development of participants' cultural awareness. The excerpts in Figure 15 imply a connection with the TV episode and the foreign cultural feature it portrays. Although the ideas in most of the excerpts in Figure 16 indicate understanding of this cultural trait, they do not focus on US culture. Situations such as children saying their first words, or babies learning to walk are convergence points among many cultures. In brief, there are a few cases where the cultural awareness development of participants is noticeable, as well as the support from the

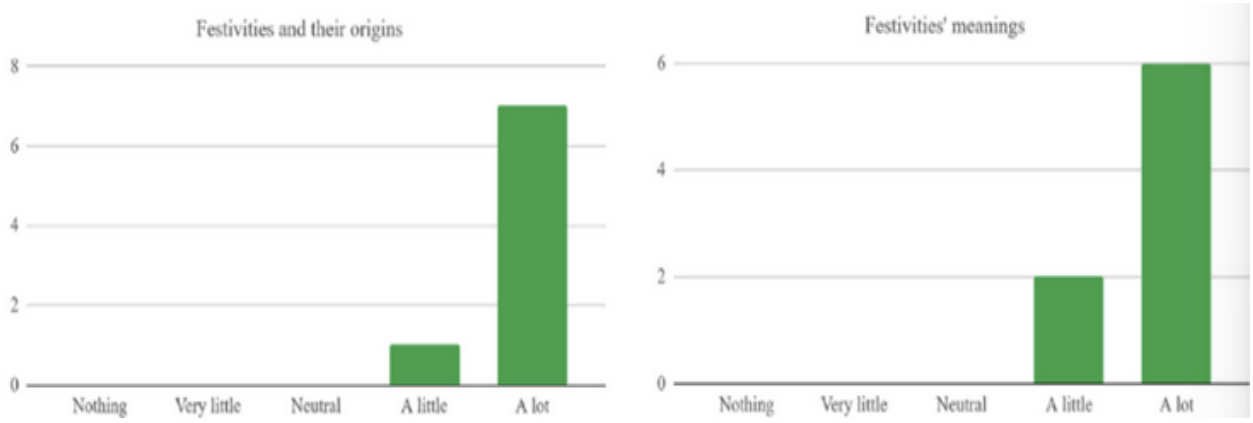
authentic material; however, the ideas most participants expressed do not have a strict connection to the target culture of this study.

5.2.2.2.2. Festivities. For the lesson addressing festivities, the researchers centered on some of the most popular ones in the US (Dumitru, 2024) and how people celebrate them, another aspect of rituals that Barkan proposes. Said festivities were (Christmas)Thanksgiving, Independence Day, St. Patrick's Day, and St. Valentine's Day. In groups, the participants created an infographic that disclosed the origins and usual activities of the festivity they were assigned. The following paragraphs address the data gathered from the post-lesson survey.

For the first question in the post-lesson survey -How much did you learn in today's lesson regarding these elements of U.S. culture?-, when referring to festivities and their origins, the average selection was 4,88. More specifically, one of them selected option 4, and seven chose option 5. Similarly, when referring to recognizing the meanings of these festivities, their average selection was 4,75. In more detail, two selected option 4, and five chose option 5. The following chart depicts the data.

Figure 17

Participants' Selections on Question 1 of the Post Lesson Survey Regarding Festivities



Most participants expressed acknowledging US festivities, their origins, and meanings throughout the lesson. For this reason, the researchers infer that participants had a positive perception with respect to discovering this cultural feature, as the lesson allowed them to connect celebrations with their significance within the foreign culture. The data from the second question presents the various topics participants highlighted from the lesson.

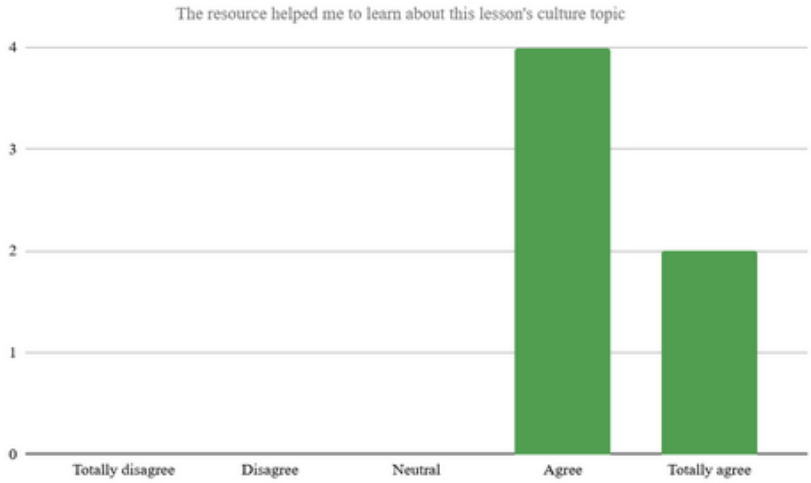
For the statement in question two -Mention the topic addressed in class and what you learned about it-, as in previous cases, some participants highlighted the cultural topic of the lesson, some others the grammar content, and a few stressed both. Specifically, two of them mentioned discovering the topic of festivities in the foreign culture; other two only mentioned some of the grammar contents of the class; three participants highlighted both aspects, and one of them highlighted the cultural theme of the lesson while also referring to how people in the US celebrate these festivities[14]. In brief, some participants prioritized the cultural aspects of the class over the grammatical ones and vice versa, while a few highlighted both of them. This aligns with the findings from the same question regarding the cultural elements previously addressed.

For the statement -The resource helped me to learn about this lesson's culture topic-, which addressed the TV episode excerpt, six out of the eight participants expressed their perceptions. Their average selection was 4,33, between “agree” and “totally agree”. More specifically, four of them chose option 4 (agree) and two selected option 5 (totally agree). The following graph

[14] For further details refer to Annex D3

Figure 18

Participants' Selections on Question 4 of the Post Lesson Survey Regarding the Modern Family Episode

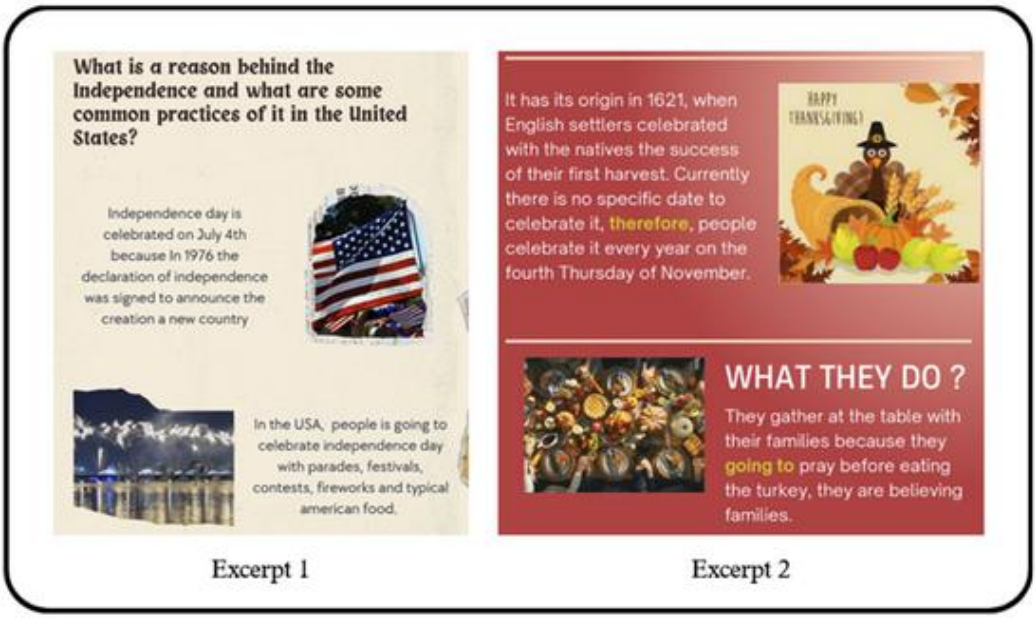


The data suggests that all participants agreed with this statement. Taking into account the recognition of US festivities expressed in questions one and two, it is possible to infer that the material supported their awareness development, as the material focused on portraying how Christmas is celebrated in the US. The forthcoming paragraphs address the data in the artifacts.

In regard to the artifacts, the participants created an infographic that disclosed the origin and usual celebration activities of the festivity they inquired about. Although the support of the authentic material is not as evident as in previous categories, the contributions of the selected learning approach are more notable in these artifacts. The figure below presents two excerpts that summarize what participants discovered about this cultural trait.

Figure 19

Excerpts from Participants' Artifacts Addressing Independence Day and Thanksgiving



Excerpt one addresses both aspects of the festivity it talks about: Independence Day. Participants mention the date of origin, as well as some regular practices, such as parades and fireworks shows, which fulfill the requirements of the guiding question. As the information presented in this excerpt was not included by the researchers throughout the lesson, it is adequate to suggest that the inquiry process was meaningful in providing participants with an opportunity to discover this foreign celebration.

Similarly, the second excerpt, where participants addressed the festivity of Thanksgiving, evidences their acknowledgment of this foreign cultural trait as they highlight the date of celebration and the reason behind it. They also mention the most popular way of commemorating it: having dinner, which frequently includes turkey, alongside relatives and praying beforehand. It is worth noting that the participants highlighted terms from the grammar section of the lesson,

such as “therefore” and “going to”. This emphasis on grammar reflects some of the answers they provided to the second question of the survey.

Nevertheless, this excerpt also suggests that the inquiry-based learning approach was meaningful in developing participants' cultural awareness of this trait. The data gathered from these artifacts present two main findings: First, the participants were able to develop their awareness of the foreign culture regarding the festivities they inquired about. This time, cultural awareness development relied more on the teaching methodology, specifically the inquiry activity, as the artifacts present information that the participants gathered from sources different from the implemented authentic materials. This finding aligns with Dema & Moeller's statement about this teaching approach, which enables participants to adopt an active role when inquiring about meanings within a foreign culture (2012), as observed in the different sources they included in their artifacts. Second, similarly to the data from previous lessons, the participants not only focused on the cultural element of the lesson but also on the grammar aspect, as they followed and applied specific features to convey their discoveries.

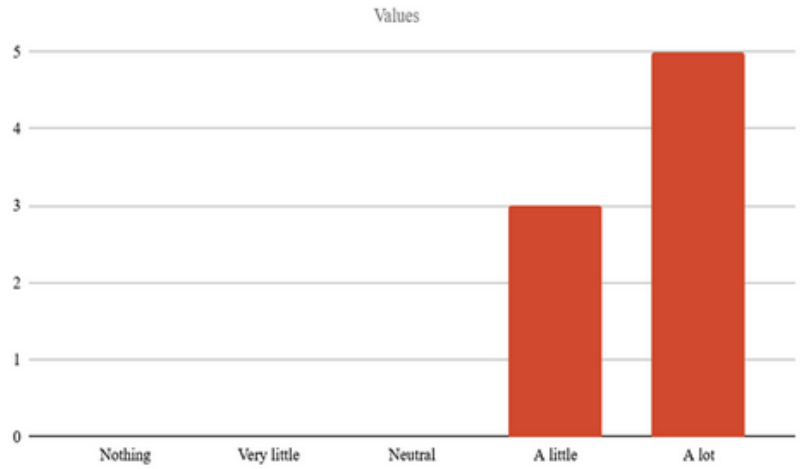
5.2.2.3. On the Category of Values. For the lesson centered around common values in the US, the researchers included a list of these based on Barkan (2017). The selected values were independence, equality, individualism, consumerism, democracy, patriotism, and work ethic. Additionally, this lesson required participants to create an infographic that described the behaviors of people connected to these values. The forthcoming paragraph presents the data analysis gathered from the first post-lesson survey.

The mean value of participants selections on the category of Values in the question -How much did you learn in today's lesson regarding these elements of U.S. culture?- was 4,63,

between “a little” and “a lot”. Specifically, three of them chose option 4, and five selected option 5. Refer to the graph below for a visualization of the data.

Figure 20

Participants’ Selections on Question 1 of the Post Lesson Survey Regarding Values



According to this data, all participants expressed that they recognized features about this US cultural element. Considering this, the researchers suggest that the class effectively conveyed the cultural focus on regular values in the US, which was one of its main aims. However, the data in the following paragraph presents a different scenario, where participants highlighted another aspect of the lesson.

Regarding question 2 -Mention the topic addressed in class and what you learned about it.-, most of the participants highlighted grammar content. Three participants mentioned the verb tense of the lesson; two referred to cause and effect clauses; one pinpointed connectors; and another participant named some of these grammar features. On the other hand, one participant listed laws, personal development, and education, which reflected cultural traits from the TV episode that were not the central topic of the lesson[15]. In sum, the participants' answers were

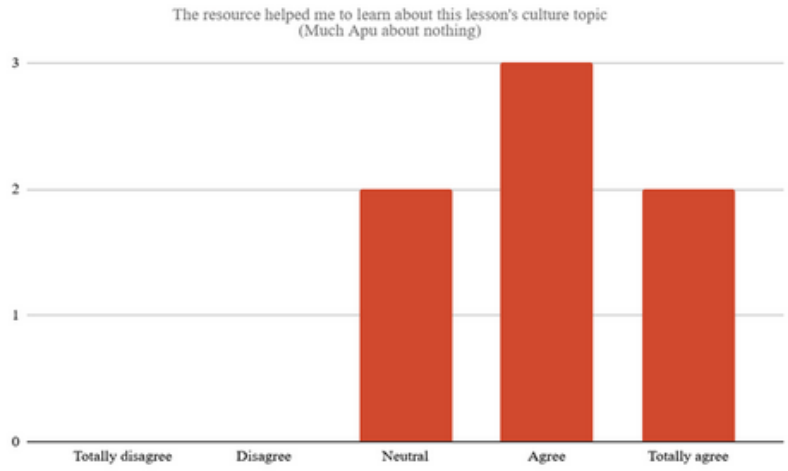
[15] For further details refer to Annex D4

compelling, as most of them stressed the grammar content instead of the cultural ones when highlighting a thematic feature from the lesson.

Despite this emphasis on grammar, participants' selections in the fourth statement from question 4 -The resource helped me to learn about this lesson's culture topic- suggest that the TV episode supported recognizing the cultural matter of the lesson. Their average selection was 4,00, which means general agreement. In more detail, two of them chose option 3, three selected option 4, and the remaining two selected option 5. The subsequent graph provides a visual representation of this data.

Figure 21

Participants' Selections on Question 4 of the Post Lesson Survey Regarding the Simpsons Episode



According to the data in this statement, it is adequate to infer that the TV episode supported participants in the process of understanding this element of US culture, considering their acknowledgement of it in the first question. This information aligns with the discoveries the participants conveyed through their artifacts, which the forthcoming paragraphs present.

With respect to the artifacts, the group activity of the lesson required participants to answer the guiding question through an infographic, which centered on the US value each group was assigned. The figure below presents an excerpt from one of the artifacts.

Figure 22

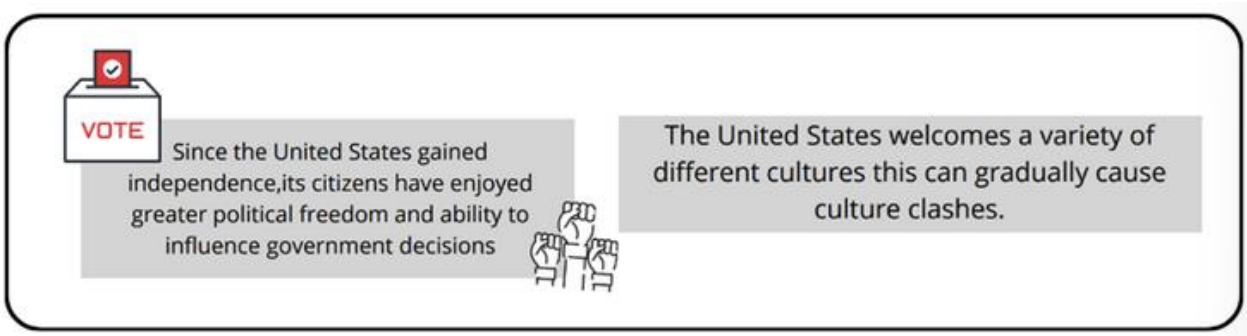
Excerpt from a Participants' Artifact Addressing Patriotism



This excerpt indicates that the participants manifested an understanding of the value of patriotism in the US based on ideas such as general standards, moral dignity, pride, and liberty. Some of these appear in the implemented authentic material. For example, one of the characters explains his behavior by saying: "I only did it because I love this land, where I have the freedom to say and to think and to charge whatever I want" (Cohen & Dietter, 1996); this connection between resource and artifact evidences recognition of US values that the authentic material presented. The following excerpt centers on the value of democracy.

Figure 23

Excerpt from a Participants' Artifact Addressing Democracy



In the figure above, participants highlighted the power people in the US have over political decisions and how they celebrate this. On the other hand, they expressed that opinions can be radical and disrespectful, which can provoke conflicts. Additionally, they claim that the cultural diversity of the country is positive, but it is also the cause of political and social disputes. Based on these excerpts, the researchers argue that cultural awareness development on this matter was noticeable, as it reflects Heinzmann's (2023) concept, which involves the recognition of nuances within other cultures. Accordingly, what the participants express goes beyond identifying common cultural aspects, as they address complex and contradictory issues associated with the value of democracy in this foreign culture.

As for how the authentic material conveys this aspect of culture, the influence of social and political decisions is a key point of the plot of the TV episode. In addition, this resource portrays derogatory views and attitudes some people have in this country, which is related to the cultural clash. For example, when Springfield citizens dialogue with the city mayor, he accuses immigrants of being responsible for all the negative situations in town. Moreover, the cultural variety within this territory is the core of the conflict, which the participants highlighted

in their artifacts. In sum, the excerpt in Figure 23 suggests an understanding of the value of democracy while also relating to the implemented material content.

Figure 24

Excerpt from a Participants' Artifact Addressing Consumerism



In Figure 24, which addresses the value of consumerism, participants expressed their understanding by describing behaviors and situations associated with it. For instance, the participants affirm that people in the US consume more than necessary. The TV episode portrays this when characters need to buy anything that allows them to feel safe, namely, when Homer purchases a rock to keep tigers away. The researchers also identified ideas unrelated to the implemented material, specifically, in the statement focused on the post-WWII economic growth of the US, which the researchers attribute to the inquiry process, as the lesson did not present this factor.

To summarize phase two in relation to the post-lesson survey data, the researchers outline two main findings. First, the participants' selections suggest that the lessons enabled them to identify the cultural category each one sought to emphasize, while the implemented authentic

materials supported the development of cultural awareness to varying degrees. Based on their average selections, participants perceived the materials as most supportive in understanding life stages (4.38), followed by festivities (4.33), values (4.00), and norms (3.83). Participants' written answers to question 2 revealed that the research problem was particularly evident in the lesson on values, where participants predominantly emphasized grammatical content, whereas responses from the other sessions demonstrated a more balanced focus on cultural and grammatical features.

The researchers distinguish two findings drawn from the data in the participants' artifacts. First, it is possible to argue that the materials supported this process by offering culturally imbued content that participants incorporated into their artifacts, as seen in direct references within those addressing norms. Moreover, the artifacts related to values and life stages which convey connections to the materials, further strengthen this argument. And second, the learning approach contributed to participants' awareness development as suggested by the artifacts addressing the categories of norms, values, and, most prominently, festivities. Excerpts referring to historical events and information not included in the lesson indicate that the inquiry-based approach also supported cultural awareness development. In sum, the findings in the artifacts make it adequate to suggest that the participants' cultural awareness development was evident, as well as the support from the implemented authentic materials and the learning approach.

5.2.3. Phase 3

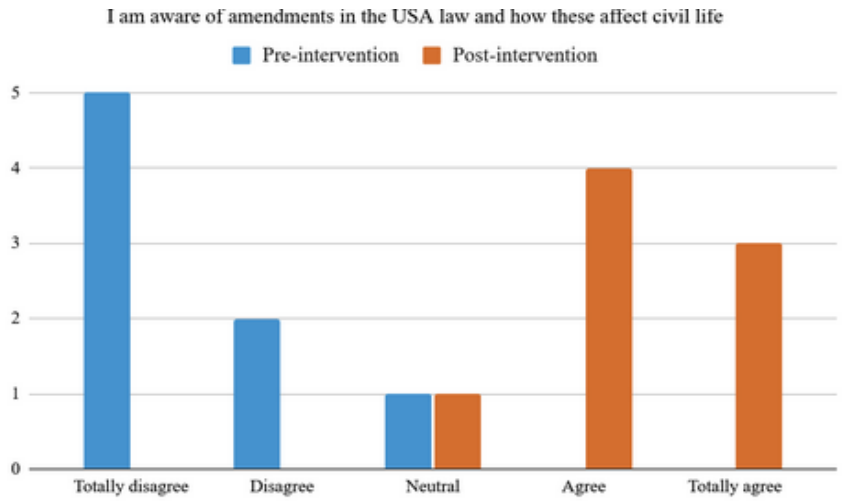
The final phase of this chapter presents the analysis of the mixed data from the post-intervention questionnaire, which involves the participants' selections and written supports. This analysis follows the order of the cultural categories of phase 2, allowing the researchers to compare this data with that of the pre-intervention questionnaire. It is worth noting that the

researchers selected specific written supports, taking into consideration their adequacy in fulfilling the research goals. In doing so, this data further contributes to the fulfillment of the general and the second specific objective of this study, which seek to examine how the implementation of authentic materials, based on pop culture, supported cultural awareness development, and to determine the contributions of the implemented learning approach, respectively.

5.2.3.1. On the Category of Norms. In the case of the cultural category of norms, the data in the questionnaire complements the data from previous instruments. For the statement -I am aware of amendments in the USA law and how these affect civil life-, the average selection among participants was 4,25. In more detail, one of them chose option 3, four selected option 4, and three chose option 5 (totally agree). The graphic below presents this information compared to the pre-intervention questionnaire data.

Figure 25

Participants' Selections in the Pre- and Post-Intervention Questionnaires Regarding Norms

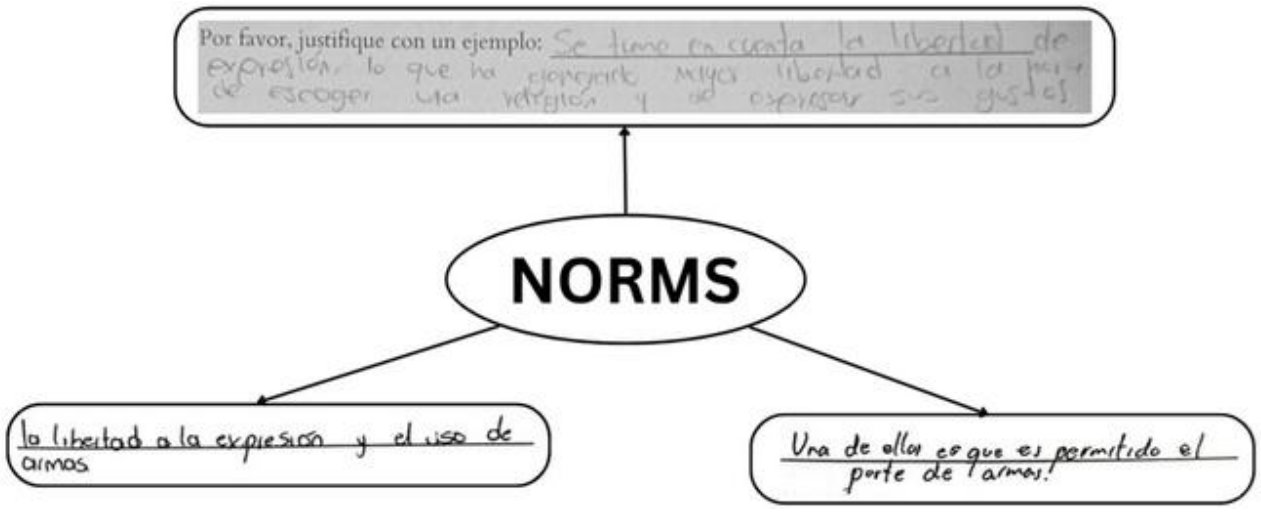


This data indicates that participants mostly or totally agreed on being aware of this US cultural element. Given that the average selection for the same statement in the pre-intervention

questionnaire was 1.50, it is possible to suggest that their overall perception increased substantially. The consistency between this data and the one from phase 2 highlights the support of the authentic material and the inquiry-based learning approach in fostering participants' recognition and understanding of this cultural element in the US. Participants' written answers supported these selections and reflected their growing awareness in this regard. The figure below illustrates this.

Figure 26

Selected Participants' Written Supports in the Post-Intervention Questionnaire Regarding Norms



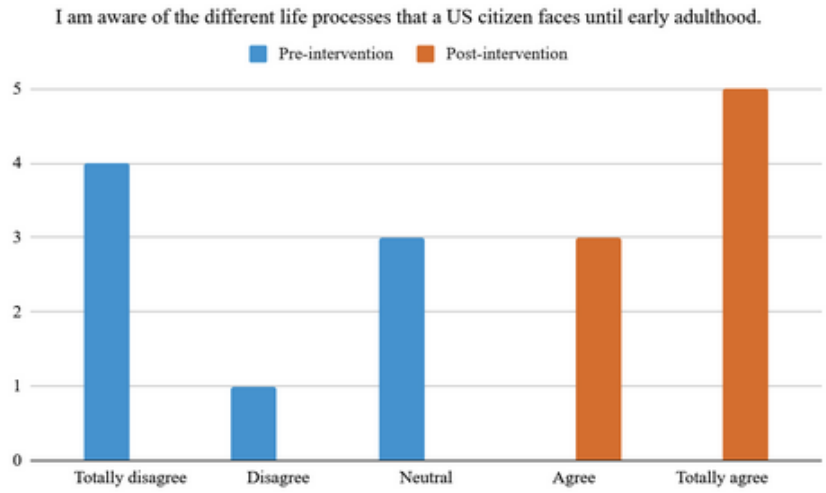
In general terms, one participant stated that the prominence of the first amendment in the US has enabled its citizens to manifest ideas in unlimited ways; furthermore, two participants highlighted the entitlement US citizens have to bear firearms (which the second amendment advocates for). These examples of awareness about US norms reflect the selections the participants made in the previous statement. Additionally, considering the data in the artifacts, in which participants reference the lesson materials and refer to information not disclosed in class, the researchers attribute the development of cultural awareness of this category to the authentic materials and the learning approach.

5.2.3.1. On the Category of Rituals.

5.2.3.1.1. Life Stages. The second statement addressed the cultural trait of life stages. The mean value of participants selections was 4,63. In more detail, three of them chose option 4, and five selected option 5. The graph below presents a comparison with the pre-intervention questionnaire data.

Figure 27

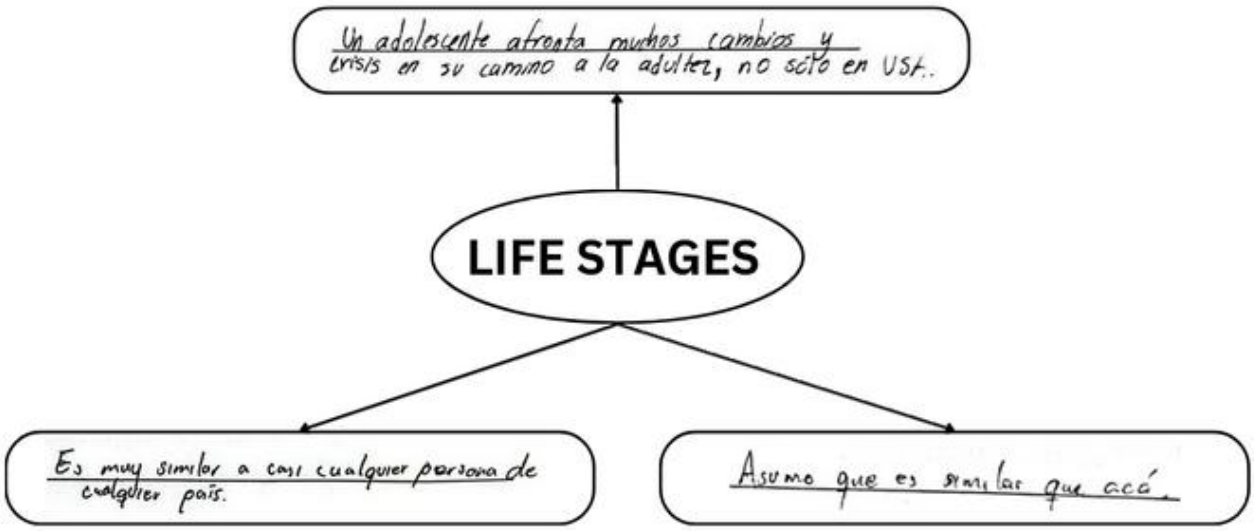
Participants' Selections in the Pre- and Post-Intervention Questionnaires Regarding Life Stages



The data indicates participants' total agreement on their awareness of this US cultural element. Comparing these selections to the ones in the pre-intervention questionnaire (which averaged 1,88), it is adequate to infer that the latest perceptions of the participants on their awareness are more solid. The combination of this data and the findings from phase 2, make it possible to suggest that the implemented materials played a meaningful role in supporting awareness development. To support these selections, it is necessary to examine their written answers on what they discovered about this cultural trait. The following figure depicts these responses.

Figure 28

Selected Participants' Written Supports in the Post-Intervention Questionnaire Regarding Life Stages



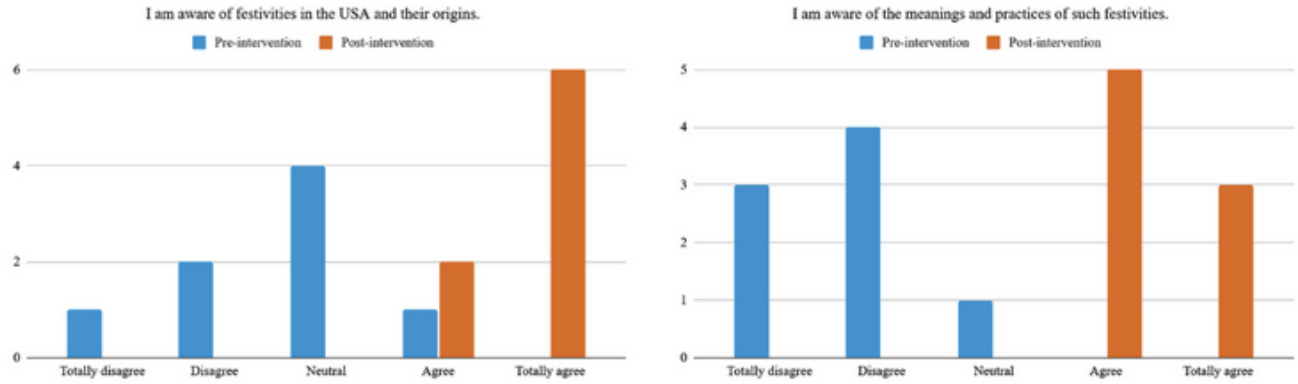
These answers provide valuable insights. One participant noted that these stages involve various changes in people's lives (as seen in the narrative thread of the implemented material). Moreover, all of them indirectly compared this foreign cultural trait with what they know from other cultures, including their own. These ideas reflect Heinzmann's (2023) and Tomlinson's (2001) conceptions of cultural awareness, as one of them recognized nuances in the foreign culture, while simultaneously all of them identified parallels with other cultures and their own. Overall, the participants' selections and written responses indicate the development of cultural awareness of this trait, which the authentic material supported as examined in the second section of this analysis. However, the ideas most of them expressed are not only observable in the culture this study focuses on, which aligns with the findings of the previous phase.

5.2.3.1.2. Festivities. Regarding the third and fourth statements, which address the origins and usual celebration practices of common US festivities, the participants had average selections

of 4,75 and 4,38, respectively. In the case of the third statement, two of them chose option 4, and six selected option 5. In the case of the fourth statement, five participants chose option 4 and three selected option 5. The graphs below illustrate this data.

Figure 29

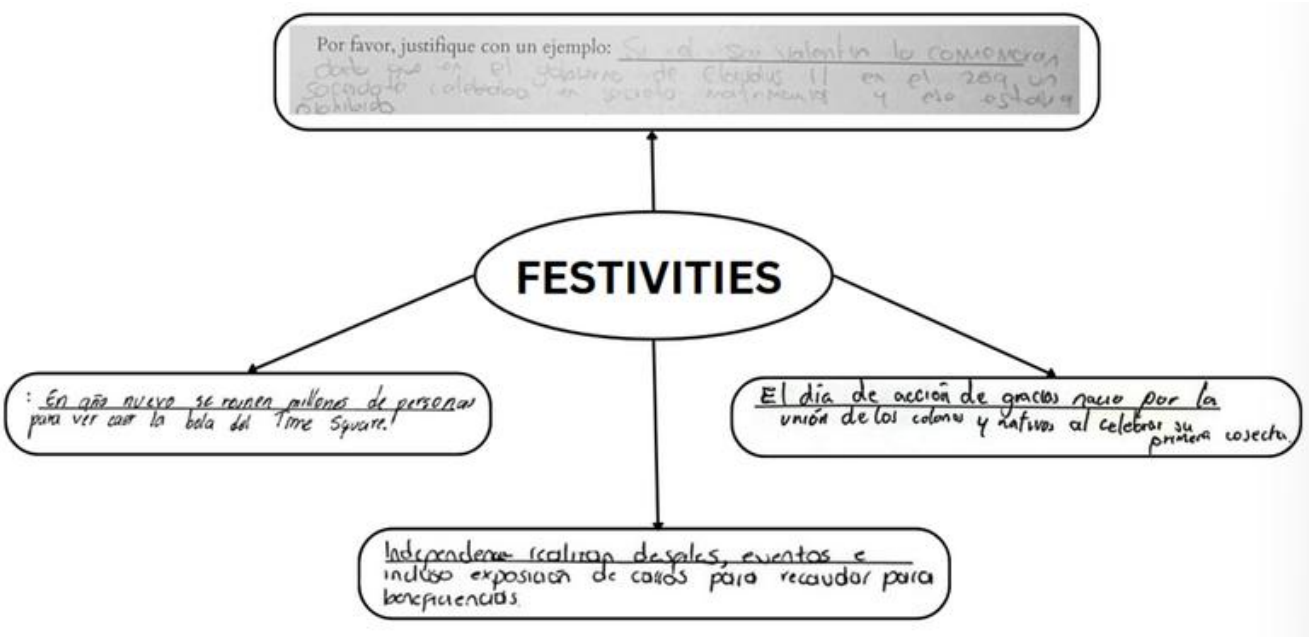
Participants' Selections in the Pre- and Post-Intervention Questionnaires Regarding Festivities



The data suggests participants' agreement on their awareness of these foreign cultural features. For the same statements in the pre-intervention questionnaire, the average selections of the participants were 2,63 and 1,75, which indicated that they did not feel aware of these traits. The contrast between these selections in both questionnaires makes it adequate to argue that their perceptions of cultural awareness improved significantly. To validate this, the following figure presents excerpts of the participants' written supports for their selections.

Figure 30

Selected Participants' Written Supports in the Post-Intervention Questionnaire Regarding Festivities



These written examples refer to origins and practices of different US festivities. Regarding origins, a participant described how St. Valentine's Day came to be following the illegal celebration of forbidden marriages centuries ago. Another participant who wrote about Thanksgiving highlighted its roots in celebrating the companionship between native Americans and English settlers during their first harvest. On the side of practices, the participant who addressed Independence Day mentioned several celebration activities, such as having parades and fundraising events. Another participant expressed that one of the customs in the US to welcome the new year is to gather around Times Square and watch the ball-drop event.

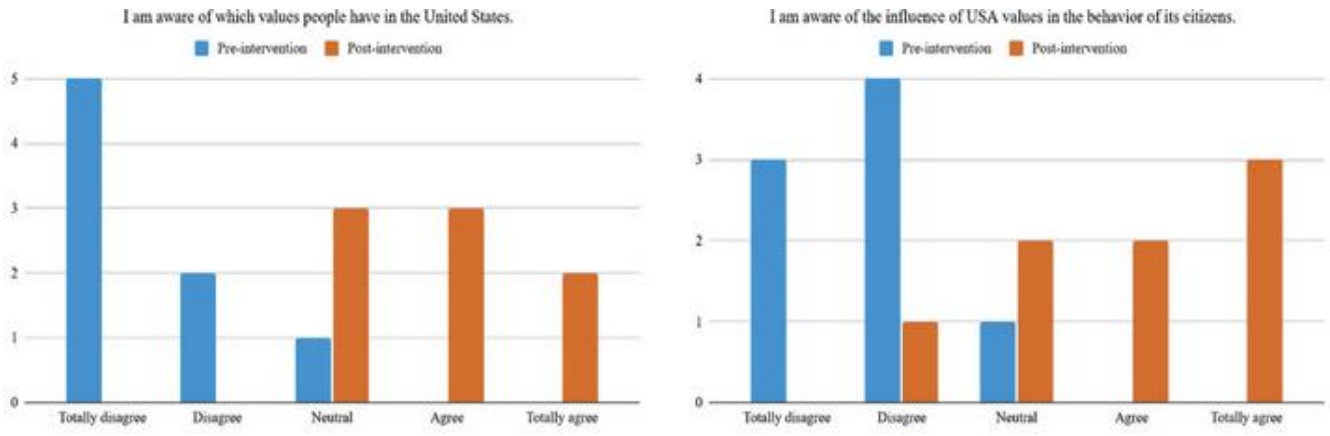
In short, these answers and the artifacts examined in phase 2 addressed the origins and practices of US festivities not included in the authentic material. The data suggests that participants recognized this cultural element by gathering information beyond what was

presented in the lesson. This finding aligns with Smegen and Ben-horin's definition of IBL, as the main goal of this approach is to foster learners' meaning construction by providing adequate resources (2021). Therefore, the researchers conclude that the learning approach contributed most to participants' awareness development of festivities in the US, rather than the implemented material.

5.2.3.2. On the Category of Values. The fifth and sixth statements addressed awareness about common values in the US and their influence on the behavior of its citizens, respectively. In this case, the selections of participants resulted in an average of 3,88 for both statements. In the case of the fifth one, three of them chose option 3, three selected option 4, and two chose option 5. For the sixth statement, one participant selected option 2, two chose option 3, two selected option 4, and three chose option 5. The graph below compares this information with the pre-intervention questionnaire data.

Figure 31

Participants' Selections in the Pre- and Post-Intervention Questionnaires Regarding Values

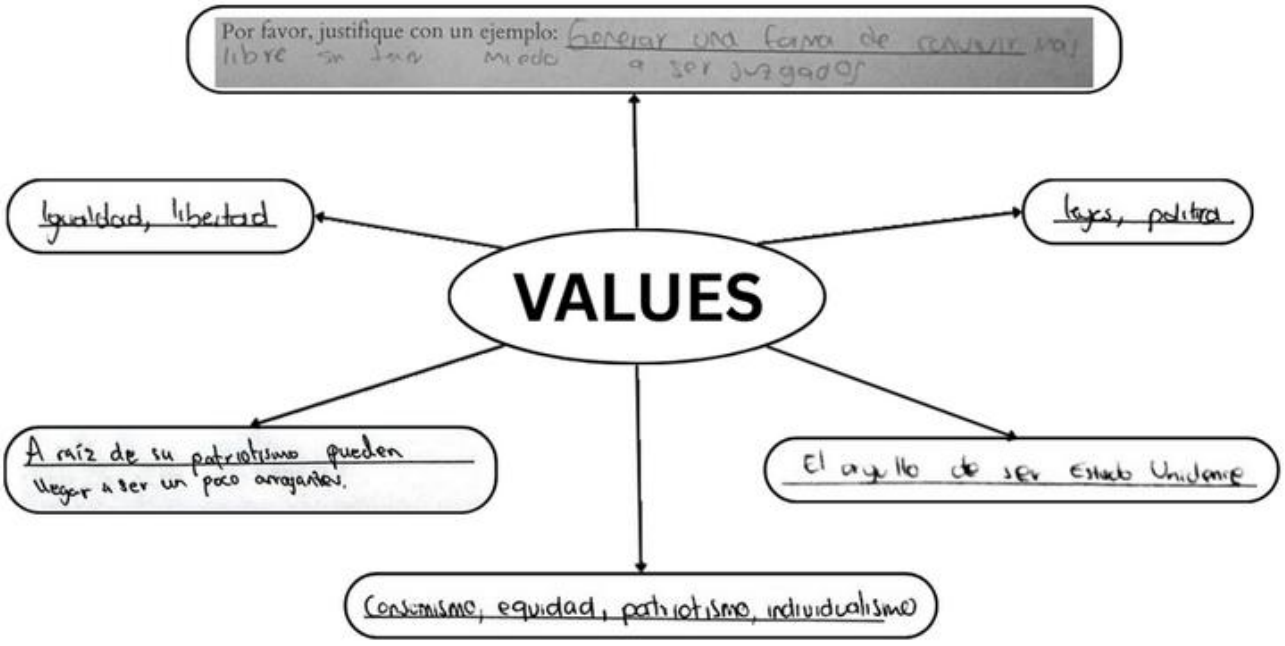


The data indicates that participants tended, for the most part, to agree on being aware of these US culture features. Compared to their respective average selections in the pre-intervention questionnaire (1,50 and 1,75), their awareness perceptions of US values significantly increased.

As with the previous categories, the following figure presents the participants' written supports to observe whether their recognition of this foreign trait matches the perceptions expressed on the scales.

Figure 32

Selected Participants' Written Supports in the Post-Intervention Questionnaire Regarding Values



Several participants mentioned aspects they associate with this US cultural trait: equality, freedom, pride, consumerism, patriotism, and individualism. One participant noted that people in this country can be slightly arrogant due to their prominent patriotism, while another one affirmed that equality drives US citizens to coexist without judging. These ideas respectively convey situations present in the TV episode, such as Springfield citizens' derogatory actions toward immigrants, and the conclusion of the episode when characters learn to respect each other's differences and backgrounds. Moreover, these excerpts mirror Heinzmann's (2023) conception of cultural awareness, as participants acknowledged nuances within US culture. This

indicates participants' understanding of this foreign cultural element, aligning with Tomlinson's (2001) definition.

In sum, the data presented in this phase solidifies the information from the previous one. Considering the comparison between their selections in both questionnaires and the ideas present in their written supports, it is possible to suggest that, by the end of the intervention, the participants expressed higher awareness of the cultural categories addressed in each lesson. By recalling the findings from phase two, the researchers suggest possible connections that the implemented authentic material and the learning approach have with the participants' responses in the post intervention questionnaire. In doing so, the researchers validate that the authentic material supported participants' cultural awareness development by including culturally imbued contents that they integrated in their responses. Moreover, the data in phases two and three make it possible to infer that the learning approach supported learners' cultural awareness, taking into account the information they disclosed in the different instruments that no lesson presented.

Chapter VI

Conclusions

This research project sought to examine how the use of authentic materials within a didactic unit supports the development of first-semester EFL learners' cultural awareness in a private university. Accordingly, the researchers established the central constructs of the study: cultural awareness, informed by the conceptions of El-Hussari (2011), Heinzmann (2023), and Tomlinson (2001); pop culture, based on Visco (2021) and Delaney (2007); and authentic materials, defined by Bacon and Finnerman (1990), and Fitria (2022). Throughout the four-lesson intervention, the researchers implemented a didactic unit that included authentic materials

from the US alongside the inquiry-based learning approach, following Dema and Moeller's (2012) proposals, which supported the pedagogical and research aims of this project.

The data analysis revealed two main findings. First, participants' cultural awareness development was evident, as indicated by the increase in their selections from the pre- to the post-intervention questionnaire, and in the participants' responses to the second question of the post-lesson survey (most notably in the categories of norms, life stages, and festivities). Second, the implemented authentic materials supported this development, as observed in participants' direct references in their artifacts, particularly in the category of norms. Additional data from the categories of life stages and values further suggest this support, since the information in some responses to the post-intervention questionnaire and in the artifacts present similarities with the contents of the materials.

According to these findings, the researchers address the general and specific objectives of this project as follows. For the general one - to examine how the use of authentic materials, based on pop culture, supports the development of first-semester EFL learners in a private university-, the researchers suggest that the implemented authentic materials supported participants' awareness development of US cultural elements. These materials did so by providing culturally imbued contents that the participants employed to construct their understanding of these cultural features. The researchers sustained this claim through the analysis of qualitative evidence gathered from participants' artifacts, and from their responses to the post-intervention questionnaire. Additionally, the quantitative data from the post-lesson survey and the post-intervention questionnaire further support this argument.

Regarding the first specific objective -to include the categories of U.S. culture in which first-semester EFL learners show lower levels of awareness into the design of a didactic unit-, the

data analysis of the pre-intervention questionnaire indicated that values, norms, and rituals (festivities and life stages, for this last one) were the US cultural categories that participants conveyed less awareness of. The researchers selected these categories following a criterion based on participants' selections, in which those with the lowest averages would be the thematic axes of the didactic unit.

Finally, with respect to the second specific objective -to identify the impact of a theory-based approach on the cultural awareness development of first-semester EFL students in a private university-, the researchers implemented the inquiry-based learning approach, based on Dema and Moeller's (2012) view of its adequacy in fostering the discovery of other cultures in language learning contexts. The data analysis in phase two suggests that this approach influenced learners' cultural awareness development as indicated in the qualitative data from their artifacts addressing norms, values, and more prominently, festivities. In several artifacts, the participants disclosed information, such as historical events or relevant situations in the U.S. that the lessons did not cover, citing its corresponding sources. Moreover, data from the post-intervention questionnaire corroborates this information, given that several participants expressed similar ideas as in their artifacts. The researchers attribute this acknowledgement of U.S. cultural traits to the learning approach, since participants gathered information from sources different to the ones included in each lesson and integrated them into their artifacts and responses to the post-intervention questionnaire.

It is worth highlighting that the data analysis also revealed findings that the initial research objectives did not consider. Information in the post-lesson survey of the Values session indicated that most of the participants stressed learning about the grammar content, which the lesson did not emphasize as much as the corresponding cultural category. The researchers

attribute this to the academic program scope the participants belong to, which centers on developing English competences for business-related purposes. Additionally, the analysis of participants' artifacts on life stages suggested that while they recognized features of this cultural element, these were not exclusive to U.S. culture. The researchers noted similar ideas in participants' responses to the post-intervention questionnaire, as they claimed that these features are observable in other cultures as well.

6.1. Limitations

This study faced several challenges that may have influenced its findings and conclusions, more specifically, during the intervention phase. First, the university scheduled academic events that overlapped with the intervention sessions the researchers had established beforehand, which caused the intervention to take place in two separate weeks, each integrated by two lessons, instead of four consecutive sessions during one week. Another relevant obstacle consisted of the program syllabus, as the researchers and subject headteacher agreed to include some of its grammar components in the didactic unit to conduct the intervention without interrupting students' learning pathway at that moment.

Including grammar also affected the study, given that the researchers had to spend a fraction of the lessons time on instructing about this aspect, which disrupted the research and pedagogical aims of the intervention. In relation to this, the research findings indicated the participants highlighted grammar learning over the cultural content of some lessons, more prominently in the Values session. The researchers attribute students' emphasis on structural contents to the scope of the foreign languages program, centered on developing communicative competences and grammar knowledge.

6.2. Pedagogical Implications and Further Research

As the conclusions revealed, implementing authentic materials based on pop culture in a didactic unit enables fostering students' cultural awareness development. However, as additional findings suggested that the learning approach was important in supporting learners' recognition of features from another culture, it is necessary that teachers complement the integration of authentic materials with learning approaches and strategies that provide broader learning opportunities. Additionally, it is relevant to consider a selection criterion of materials that adjusts to curricular needs but also fosters learning beyond the traditional scopes of these programs.

As this study focused on supporting university students' awareness development of U.S. culture, the researchers consider possible scenarios where authentic materials based on pop culture could also benefit EFL classrooms. For example, exploring more than one culture simultaneously can expand the scope of culture-centered lessons, as authentic materials, activities, and learning goals would not be limited to fixating on a single context, allowing learners to construct broader cultural perspectives. Furthermore, implementing such materials and methods in academic stages, such as primary and secondary levels, can promote cultural discovery earlier on, as well as the use of learning resources different from workbooks or dictionaries.

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Annexes

Annex A. Data Collection Instruments

A1. Pre-Intervention Questionnaire Format



Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
Facultad de Ciencias y Educación
Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés

Apreciado/a estudiante. Este cuestionario corresponde al proyecto de investigación sobre el uso de elementos de la cultura popular estadounidense para fomentar la conciencia cultural en el aula de clase.

En este cuestionario encontrará dos secciones, en la primera deberá diligenciar información básica como nombre, edad y fecha. En la segunda sección encontrará una serie de 13 afirmaciones, las cuales buscan entender su conocimiento respecto a distintas areas de la cultura estadounidense. Para completar este cuestionario, debe leer cada afirmación y seleccionar la casilla que más se adapte a su opinión. Las 5 posibles respuestas son:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo. (2) En desacuerdo. (3) Neutral. (4) De acuerdo. (5) Totalmente de acuerdo.

Además de dichas selecciones, habrá un espacio para ilustrar sus respuestas a través de ejemplos breves que pueda suministrar.

Por favor, responda con la mayor sinceridad posible. Tenga en cuenta que las respuestas son anónimas y no suponen una calificación ni una afectación a su proceso educativo.

Información básica

Nombre: _____ **Apellido:** _____

Fecha: _____ **Edad:** _____

Cuestionario

		1	2	3	4	5
Símbolos	1. Soy consciente del significado de los símbolos patrios de los Estados Unidos.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

Lenguaje	2. Soy consciente de la variedad de temáticas a la hora de aprender inglés, además de la gramática.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

Normas	3. Soy consciente del proceso de elección presidencial en Estados Unidos.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

	4. Soy consciente de las enmiendas en la ley estadounidense y cómo estas afectan la vida civil.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

Rituales	5. Soy consciente de diferentes procesos de vida que un estadounidense afronta hasta la adultez temprana.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

	6. Soy consciente de las festividades estadounidenses y sus orígenes.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

	7. Soy consciente de los significados y prácticas de dichas festividades.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

Valores	8. Soy consciente de cuales son los valores estadounidenses.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

	9. Soy consciente de la influencia de los valores estadounidenses en el comportamiento de sus ciudadanos.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

Productos materiales	10. Soy consciente de la influencia que los productos comerciales tienen en la cultura estadounidense.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

	11. Soy consciente de la influencia de los medios masivos en la cultura estadounidense.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

Sobre aprender inglés	12. Considero que en las clases de inglés se tratan temas relacionados con culturas extranjeras de otros países.	○	○	○	○	○
	13. Considero que es necesario y útil el uso de recursos que provengan de culturas angloparlantes para aprender de ellas y de su idioma.	○	○	○	○	○

¡GRACIAS POR PARTICIPAR!

A2. Post-Intervention Questionnaire Format



Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
Facultad de Ciencias y Educación
Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés

Apreciado/a estudiante. Este cuestionario corresponde al proyecto de investigación sobre el uso de elementos de la cultura popular estadounidense para fomentar la conciencia cultural en el aula de clase.

En este cuestionario encontrará tres secciones, en la primera deberá diligenciar información básica como nombre, edad y fecha. En la segunda sección encontrará una serie de 8 afirmaciones, las cuales buscan entender su conocimiento respecto a distintas areas de la cultura estadounidense abarcadas a lo largo de la intervención. Para completar este cuestionario, debe leer cada afirmación y seleccionar la casilla que más se adapte a su opinión. Las 5 posibles respuestas son:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo. **(2)** En desacuerdo. **(3)** Neutral. **(4)** De acuerdo. **(5)** Totalmente de acuerdo.

Además de dichas selecciones, habrá un espacio para ilustrar sus respuestas a través de ejemplos breves que pueda suministrar.

Por último, hay una sección de comentarios finales donde puede suministrar retroalimentación o comentarios relacionados con su experiencia durante la intervención.

Por favor, responda con la mayor sinceridad posible. Tenga en cuenta que las respuestas son anónimas y no suponen una calificación ni una afectación a su proceso educativo.

Información básica

Nombre: _____ **Apellido:** _____

Fecha: _____ **Edad:** _____

Cuestionario

		1	2	3	4	5
Normas	1. Soy consciente de las enmiendas en la ley estadounidense y cómo estas afectan la vida civil.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

Rituales	2. Soy consciente de diferentes procesos de vida que un estadounidense afronta hasta la adultez temprana.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

	3. Soy consciente de las festividades estadounidenses y sus orígenes.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

	4. Soy consciente de los significados y prácticas de dichas festividades.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

Valores	5. Soy consciente de cuales son los valores estadounidenses.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

	6. Soy consciente de la influencia de los valores estadounidenses en el comportamiento de sus ciudadanos.	○	○	○	○	○

Por favor, justifique con un ejemplo: _____

Sobre la intervención	7. Considero que el material auténtico utilizado en el aula (video musical, textos online, episodios de TV, etc.) representa los temas tratados acerca de la cultura estadounidense (Leyes, valores, rituales)	○	○	○	○	○
	8. Considero que los materiales y actividades me permitieron aprender sobre la cultura estadounidense.	○	○	○	○	○

Comentarios sobre la intervención

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

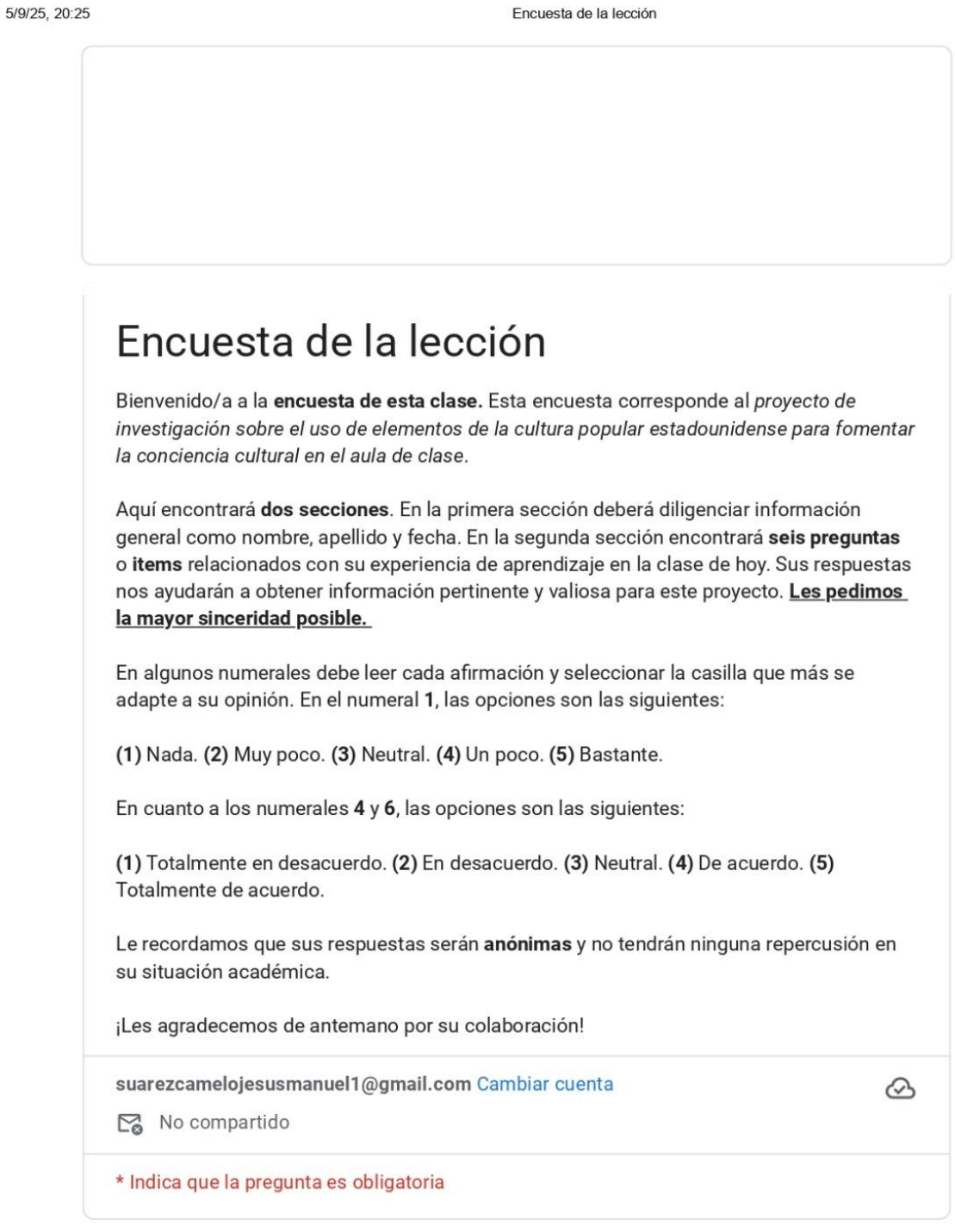
_____

_____

_____

¡MUCHAS GRACIAS POR PARTICIPAR!

A3. Post-Lesson Survey



5/9/25, 20:25 Encuesta de la lección

Encuesta de la lección

Bienvenido/a a la **encuesta de esta clase.** Esta encuesta corresponde al *proyecto de investigación sobre el uso de elementos de la cultura popular estadounidense para fomentar la conciencia cultural en el aula de clase*.

Aquí encontrará **dos secciones**. En la primera sección deberá diligenciar información general como nombre, apellido y fecha. En la segunda sección encontrará **seis preguntas** o **items** relacionados con su experiencia de aprendizaje en la clase de hoy. Sus respuestas nos ayudarán a obtener información pertinente y valiosa para este proyecto. **Les pedimos la mayor sinceridad posible.**

En algunos numerales debe leer cada afirmación y seleccionar la casilla que más se adapte a su opinión. En el numeral **1**, las opciones son las siguientes:

(1) Nada. **(2)** Muy poco. **(3)** Neutral. **(4)** Un poco. **(5)** Bastante.

En cuanto a los numerales **4** y **6**, las opciones son las siguientes:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo. **(2)** En desacuerdo. **(3)** Neutral. **(4)** De acuerdo. **(5)** Totalmente de acuerdo.

Le recordamos que sus respuestas serán **anónimas** y no tendrán ninguna repercusión en su situación académica.

¡Les agradecemos de antemano por su colaboración!

suarezcamelojesusmanuel1@gmail.com Cambiar cuenta

No compartido

* Indica que la pregunta es obligatoria

Nombre *

Tu respuesta

Apellido *

Tu respuesta

Fecha *

Fecha

dd/mm/aaaa

1. ¿Cuanto aprendió en la sesión de hoy con respecto a los siguiente elementos de la cultura estadounidense?

	Nada	Muy poco	Neutral	Un poco	Bastante
Símbolos patrios	○	○	○	○	○
Idioma	○	○	○	○	○
Procesos electorales	○	○	○	○	○
Leyes	○	○	○	○	○
Influencia de las leyes	○	○	○	○	○
Etapas de vida	○	○	○	○	○
Festividades y sus orígenes	○	○	○	○	○
Significados de las festvidadesValores	○	○	○	○	○
Valores	○	○	○	○	○
Influencia de los valores en los habitantes	○	○	○	○	○
Influencia de los productos materiales	○	○	○	○	○
Influencia de los medios masivos	○	○	○	○	○

2. Mencione el tema tratado en clase y qué aprendió al respecto. *

Tu respuesta

3. Seleccione **uno** de los materiales utilizados por los docentes en esta clase. *

- ◯ Película o serie (Extracto)
- ◯ Canción (O vídeo musical)
- ◯ Articulo/Reportaje periodístico
- ◯ Reportaje audiovisual
- ◯ Articulo en linea

4. Seleccione la opción que más se acomode a su opinión sobre cada afirmación con respecto al uso de **este recurso** en clase. *

	Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Neutral	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo.
Este recurso me resultó entretenido	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Estoy familiarizado/a con este recurso	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Disfruto el uso de este tipo de recurso	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Me ayudó a aprender sobre el tema cultural estadounidense de la clase de hoy	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Me ayudó a aprender sobre el tema gramatical de hoy	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

5. Seleccione **uno** de los materiales utilizados por los docentes en esta clase.

- ◯ Película o serie (Extracto)
- ◯ Canción (O vídeo musical)
- ◯ Articulo periodístico
- ◯ Reportaje audiovisual
- ◯ Artículo en linea

6. Seleccione la opción que más se acomode a su opinión sobre cada afirmación con respecto al uso de **este recurso** en clase.

	Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Neutral	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo.
Este recurso me resultó entretenido	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Estoy familiarizado/a con este recurso	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Disfruto el uso de este tipo de recurso	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Me ayudó a aprender sobre el tema cultural estadounidense de la clase de hoy	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Me ayudó a aprender sobre el tema gramatical de hoy	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Annex B. Implemented Didactic Unit

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Didactic Unit</th></tr>
<tr><td>Subject name</td><td>Basic English Skills</td><td>Number of students</td><td>21</td></tr>
<tr><td>Number of sessions</td><td>4 Sessions
(October 7, 9, 16 and 17)</td><td>Methodological Approach</td><td>Inquiry-based learning</td></tr>
<tr><td>General topic</td><td>Features of United States culture</td><td>Specific topics</td><td>• Laws and amendments (formal norms) in the U.S.
• Common values in the U.S.
• Common life stages in the U.S.
• Festivities in the U.S.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Didactic objectives</td><td colspan="3">General objective
To foster cultural awareness development by employing authentic material from the U.S. in the form of music videos, TV shows excerpts, media reports and online articles which depict specific cultural features of the U.S. through an inquiry-based learning approach.

Specific objectives

To employ authentic materials to display different features of the U.S. culture (Laws, values, life stages and festivities) to foster knowledge construction.

To foster a student-centered environment where learners have more control over their learning process, supported by teachers’ constant feedback.

To promote communication and inquiry as the main forms of knowledge construction, as students communicate with each other to make decisions, interpret resources, make answers to the lesson’s questions, give and receive feedback, and share their answers with the class.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Thematic contents</td><td colspan="3">Core theme: Features of United States culture.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Complementary themes: Laws, values, life stages and festivities.

The specific subthemes that integrate this didactic unit are:
The first and second amendments of the U.S. constitution (laws or formal norms).
Independence, Equality, Individualism, Consumerism, Democracy, Patriotism, Work ethic (Common values).
Infancy, childhood, adolescence, early adulthood (Common life stages).
St. Patrick’s Day, St. Valentine’s Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Eve (Festivities).</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Lessons sequence</td><td>Grammar presentation: The lesson starts with an introduction of a grammar topic (cause and effect clauses, and one verb tense such as simple present, simple past, simple future with “will" and “going to”) that students will employ when formulating their answers. During the explanation, the teacher provides examples and exercises to improve students’ understanding.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Conceptualization: The teacher introduces a new topic in class: the thematic focus, which is one of the aforementioned U.S. cultural features. The teacher presents a definition and basic characteristics of it within this culture. Then, the teacher asks students what they understood and if they have doubts. Students ask questions, give opinions, and take notes.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Orientation: The teacher presents the authentic resource, as well as additional information about it. Additionally, the teacher will tell students about the final activity in the lesson. On each class, students must answer a question and present the results of their inquiry in different forms depending on the lesson. The teacher will randomly assign a value, an amendment, a festivity and a life stage to each group in each respective session. The questions proposed for each lesson are:

Question for Lesson 1: What are some behaviors connected to the (value) value in the United States?

Question for Lesson 2: What situations did the (first or second) amendment give rise to in the USA's recent history?

Question for Lesson 3: What are some situations connected to the (life stage) life stage in the United States?

Question for Lesson 4: What is the reason behind (festivity) and its common practices in the U.S.?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Investigation: Students start gathering information from different sources and forms (videos, texts, etc.), they share this information with</td></tr>
</table>

	their teammates and compile each other's ideas. While gathering information, students work on the final product (sentences list or infographic) they will present in the upcoming stage. The teacher supports students who have doubts about cultural or linguistic matters, and about the information they employ. At the end of this phase, students make links between gathered information and build answers to the question posed earlier in the lesson.
	Discussion: Students, depending on the nature of the activity, present their answers to the lesson question, as well as the sources they employed. After presenting their answer, other students can comment about what their classmates presented. The teacher acts as a mediator by assigning turns, giving students time limits to talk and provide feedback. While students share their answers, the teachers write essential students' contributions on the board. The lesson concludes with a general recall of what took place during the discussion.
Resources and materials	**Lesson 1: Values and attitudes in the United States** • **Episode "Much Apu about nothing" from The Simpsons:** The Simpsons is one of the most watched TV shows produced in the U.S. Its demonstration of Mid-class American lifestyle creates a sensation of relatability with its audience. This episode represents the influence common U.S. values (e.g., independence, equality, individualism, democracy and patriotism) have on citizens' behaviors and attitudes. The central plot represents this, as a group of citizens must decide whether to approve or reject the presence of an immigrant civilian. The representation of the aforementioned values makes this episode adequate for the lesson. • **Article "American values and assumptions":** This article by the University of Portland provides students with more information about common U.S. values and consequent attitudes and behaviors. This article is a useful source of inquiry for students because it presents definitions and explanations about this cultural trait. **Lesson 2: Laws and amendments in the United States** • **Music Video "This is America" by Childish Gambino:** This video depicts situations that the first and second amendment gave rise to, to an extent, in U.S. history. For example, gun violence and race crimes are an effect of the second amendment. On the other hand, the purpose of the song is to criticize the state of gun-related violence and media hypocrisy around these problematics, which the first amendment

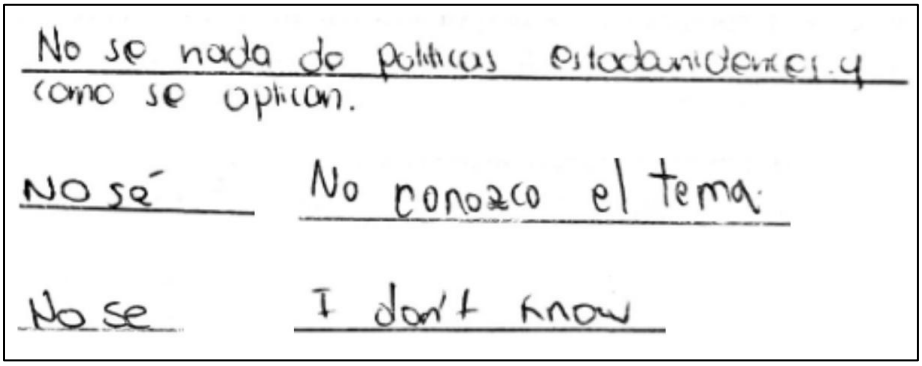
	advocates for. Even though the video was released several years ago, the issues it addresses are currently observable in the United States. • **Compilation of media reports excerpts on RuPaul's Drag Race:** This resource includes three direct quotes from two media reports about RuPaul's Drag Race, a reality show in the United States. This show, the themes it depicts and the protagonism of drag queens is a direct effect of the US constitution's first amendment. The show has been televised since 2009, and it is still one of the popular reality TV shows in the United States. Its concept was so successful that it has adaptations in Chile, the United Kingdom and the Philippines, to name a few countries. **Lesson 3: Life stages** • **Episode "Barthood" from The Simpsons:** As mentioned before, The Simpsons is a popular Sitcom that represents common situations that regular U.S. citizens might experience. This episode covers a life process from childhood to young adulthood, showing possible scenarios related to these stages. Thus, this resource is useful for students to comprehend U.S. citizens' potential attitudes related with these stages. **Lesson 4: Common festivities' origins, meanings and practices in the United States** • **TV Episode excerpt "Undeck the halls" from Modern Family:** Modern family is one of the most popular sitcoms in the U.S. since its premiere in 2009. The show portrays the lives of different U.S. citizens from different backgrounds and generations who belong to the same family. Thus, it is appropriate as an authentic material to present information on the topic of Christmas in the U.S. • **"Origin of Christmas" by History Channel – Documentary excerpt:** The History Channel is a renowned documentary outlet in U.S. media. In this case, the teachers decided to include this excerpt to provide examples of language use and to inform students about the origins of this festivity.
Setting organization	**Space:** Classroom with projector.
	Time: Monday, October 7th. Wednesday, October 9th. Monday, October 14th. Wednesday, October 16th.

	Lessons estimated length: 90 minutes per session. 360 total minutes.
Assessment	**Lesson 1:** The assessment of students is based on an infographic focused on the common U.S. value that the teacher assigned to each group. Students must include in their infographic an answer to the question, the sources they used to construct this answer, and employ the vocabulary and structures the teacher explained at the beginning of the lesson. **Lesson 2:** Students' assessment is based on a sentence list, where they address at least three situations the first or second amendment provoked to a certain extent. Students must include in their list an answer to the question, the sources they used to construct this answer, and employ the vocabulary and structures the teacher explained at the beginning of the lesson. **Lesson 3:** The assessment of the students is based on a sentence list where they talk about at least three events connected to the U.S. life stage the teacher assigned to each group. Students must include in their list an answer to the question, the sources they used to construct this answer, and employ the vocabulary and structures the teacher explained at the beginning of the lesson. **Lesson 4:** Students' assessment is based on an infographic where they talk about the origin, and at least two common practices of the assigned U.S. festivity. Students must include in their presentation an answer to the question, the sources they used to construct this answer, and employ the vocabulary and structures the teacher explained at the beginning of the lesson.

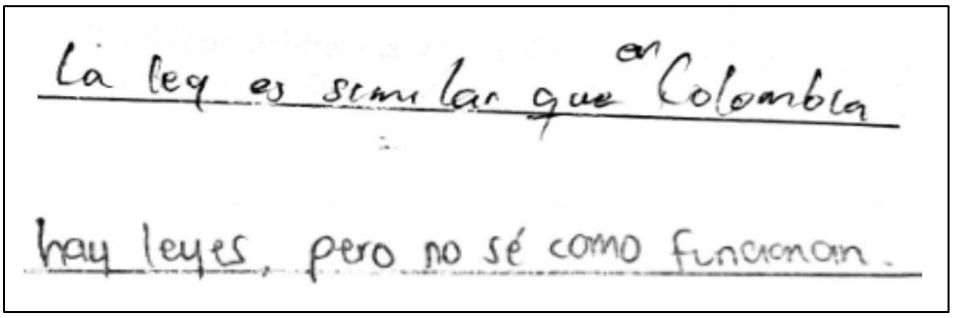
Annex C. Students' Written Answers to the Pre-Intervention Questionnaire

C1. In Statement 4

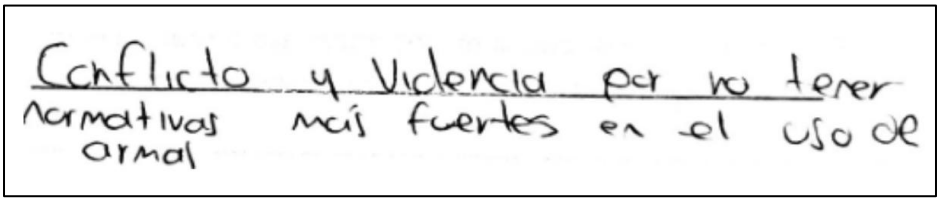
Option 1 (Totally Disagree)



Option 2 (Disagree)

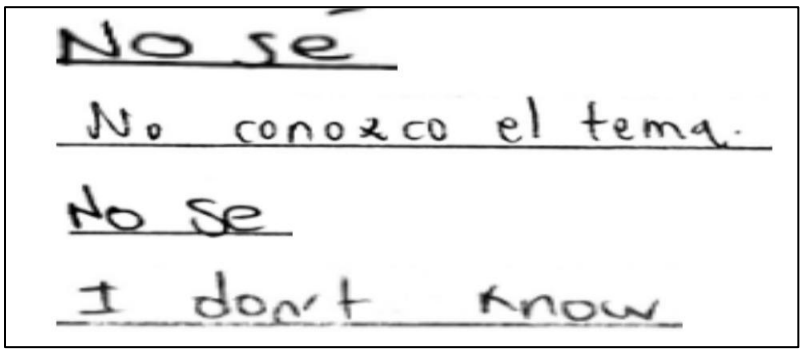


Option 3 (Neutral)

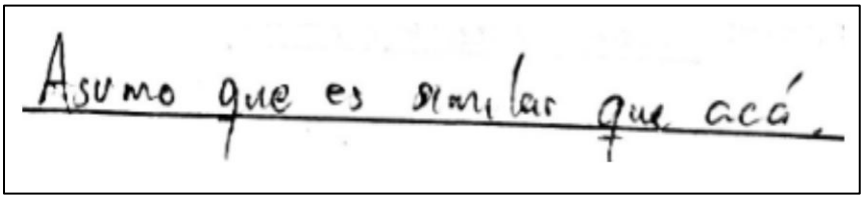


C2. In Statement 5

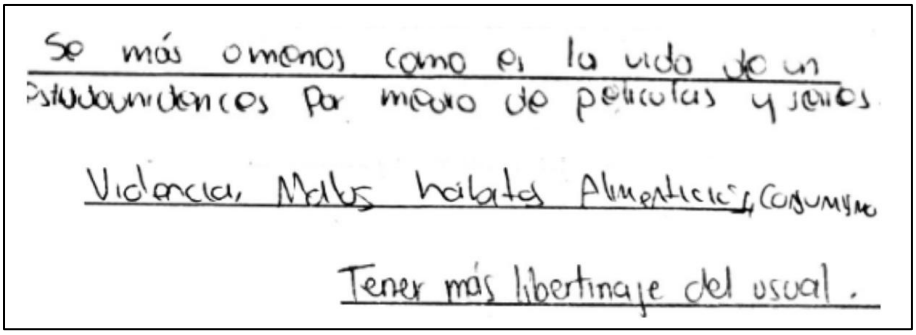
Option 1 (Totally Disagree)



Option 2 (Disagree)

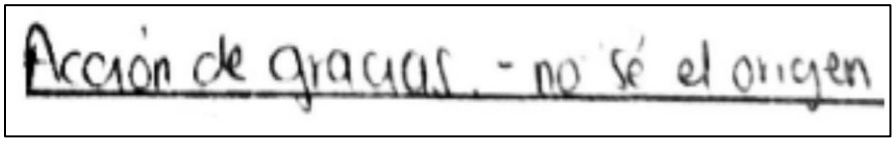


Option 3 (Neutral)

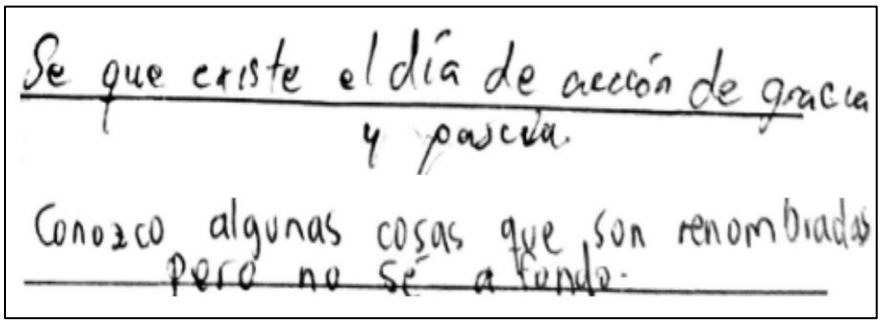


C3. In Statement 6

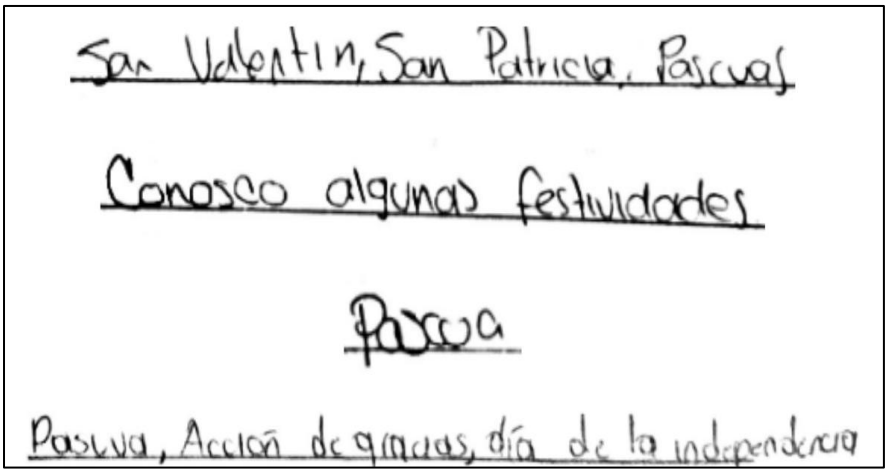
Option 1 (Totally Disagree)



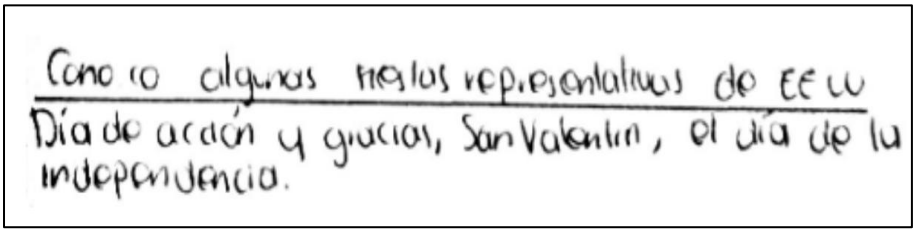
Option 2 (Disagree)



Option 3 (Neutral)

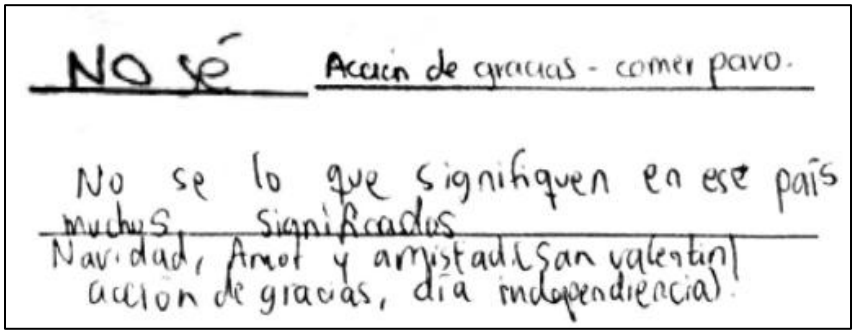


Option 4 (Agree)

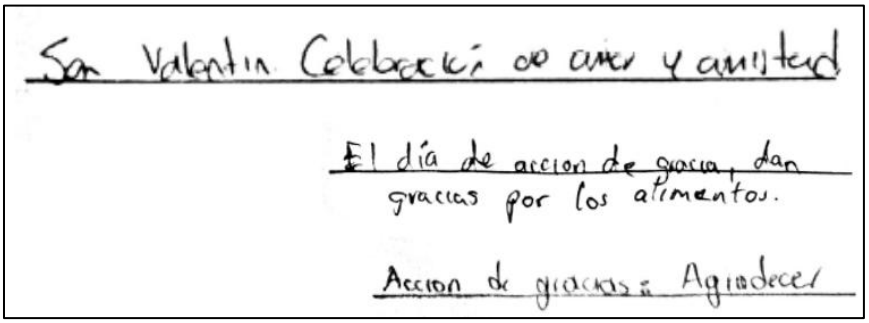


C4. In Statement 7

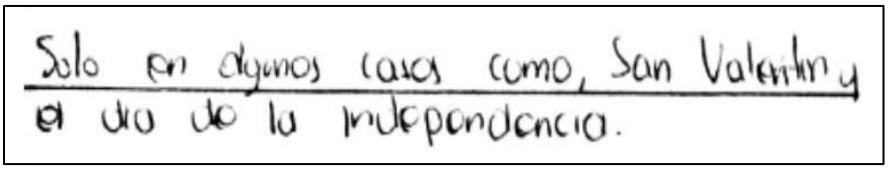
Option 1 (Totally Disagree)



Option 2 (Disagree)

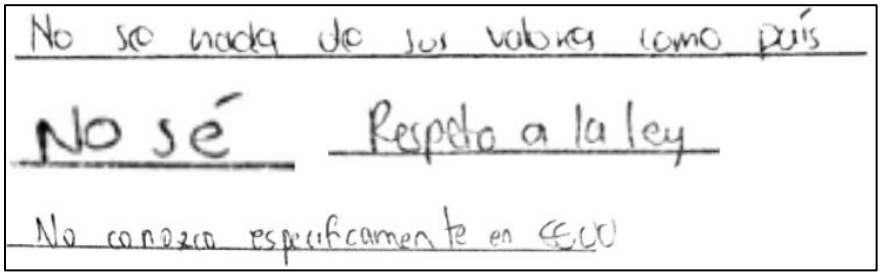


Option 3 (Neutral)

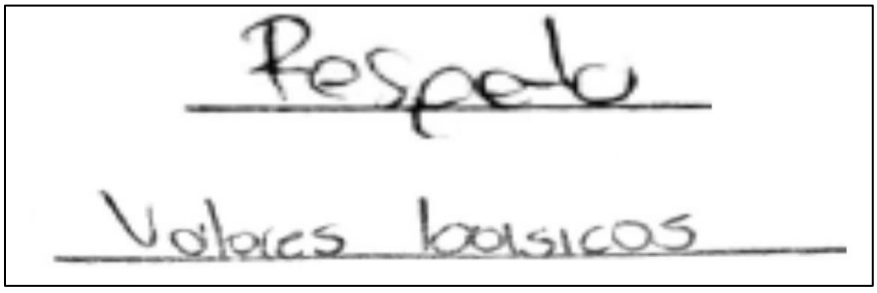


C5. In Statement 8

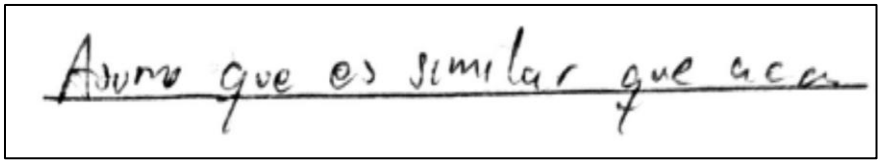
Option 1 (Totally Disagree)



Option 2 (Disagree)

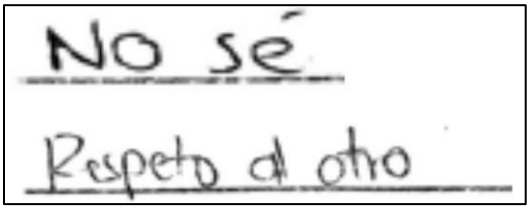


Option 3 (Neutral)

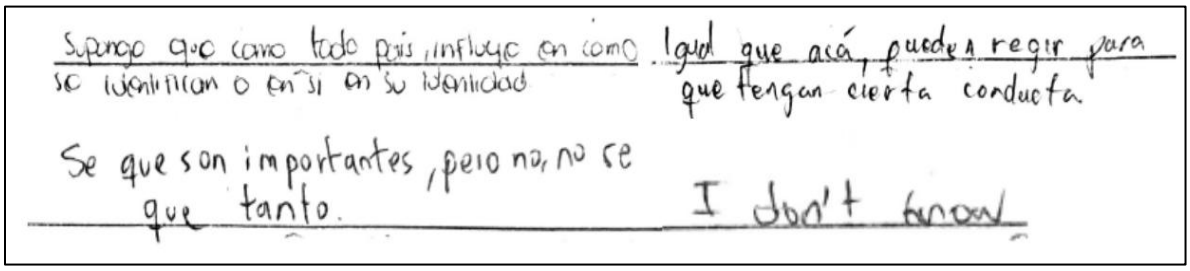


C6. In Statement 9

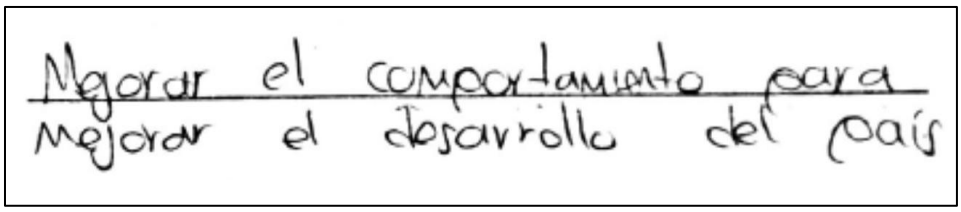
Option 1 (Totally Disagree)



Option 2 (Disagree)



Option 3 (Neutral)

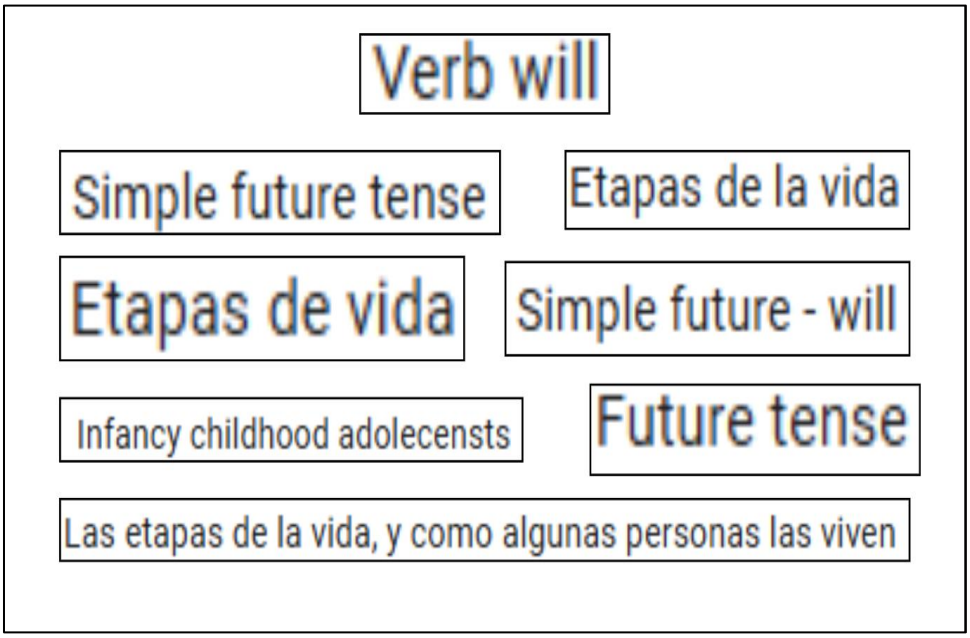


Annex D. Students' Written Answers to Question 2 From the Post-Lesson Survey

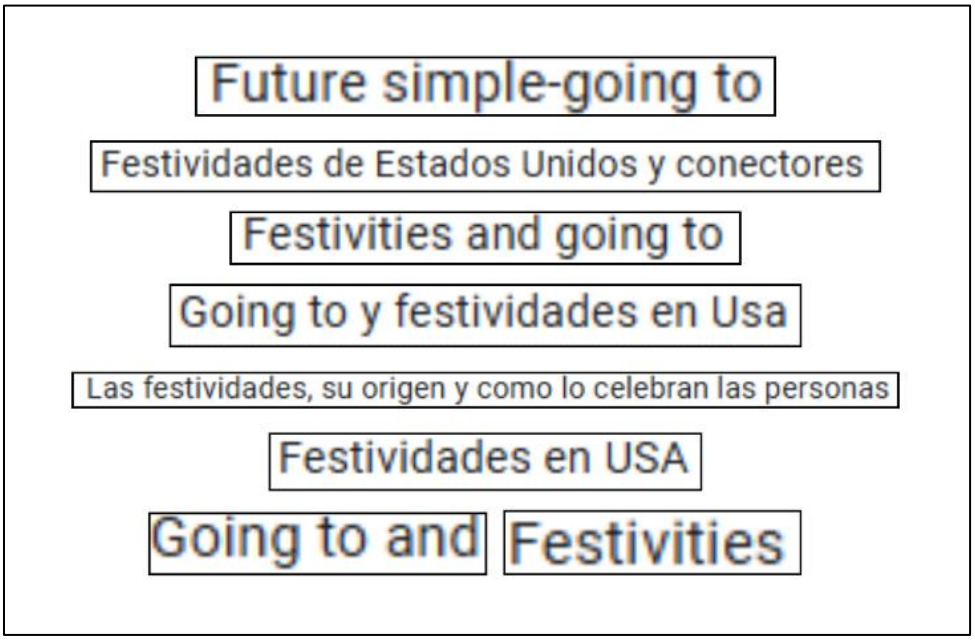
D1. In the "Norms" lesson



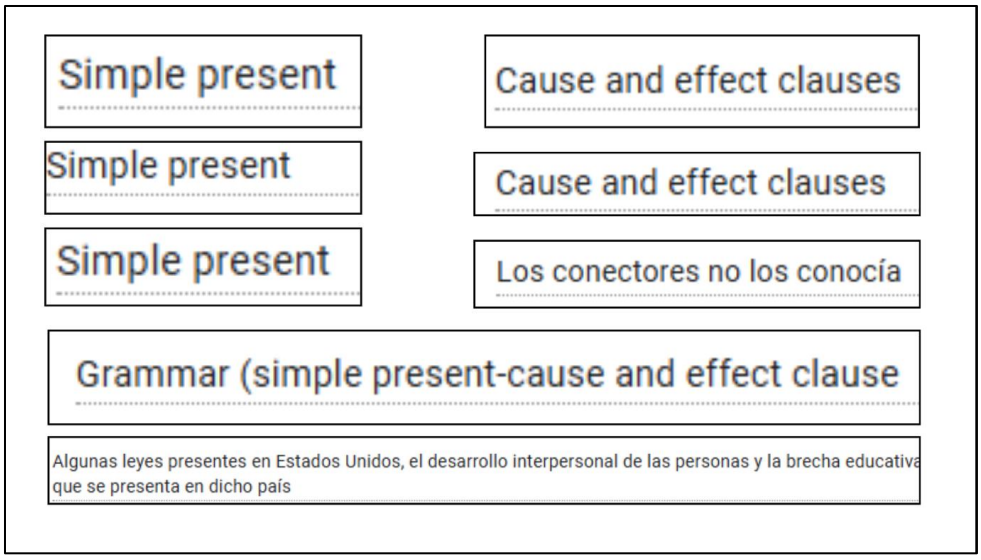
D2. In the "Life Stages" lesson



D3. In the "Festivities" lesson



D4. In the "Values" lesson



Annex E. Students' Consent Form



Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
Facultad de Ciencias y Educación
Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés

Consentimiento para participantes

Título del proyecto: *"The Use of Authentic Materials Based on Pop Culture to Foster Cultural Awareness of First-Semester University Students"*

Estimados estudiantes.

Somos estudiantes de la Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas y estamos llevando a cabo un proyecto de investigación en el cual se busca implementar una serie de 4 clases donde se recopilarán sus perspectivas y opiniones sobre las mismas. Esto tiene el fin de presentar un informe final enfocado en el uso de elementos de la cultura popular, como material auténtico en el aula de clase para el desarrollo de la conciencia cultural. La información recopilada por medio de observaciones de clase, artefactos o productos creados por los participantes, encuestas y un cuestionario final, se utilizará con fines investigativos y educativos. Esta información se incluirá en un documento y su sustentación correspondiente para obtener el título de Licenciatura en lenguas extranjeras con énfasis en Inglés. Su participación es voluntaria, y su decisión de participar o no, no afectará sus calificaciones ni su situación en la universidad.

Propósito del estudio:

El propósito de este estudio es implementar una serie de cuatro clases enfocadas en el desarrollo de la conciencia cultural de los participantes por medio del uso de elementos populares de la cultura tratada como material auténtico.

Funciones del participante:

Los participantes tendrán unas funciones concretas que se describen a continuación:

- Participar en seis sesiones (una de presentación, cuatro de intervención pedagógica y una de cierre) y en su desarrollo de acuerdo a lo propuesto por los docentes investigadores.
- Diligenciar las fuentes de información necesarias para el desarrollo del estudio (Cuestionario pre-intervención, cuatro encuestas al final de cada clase y un cuestionario al final de la intervención).
- Estar dispuesto a la organización de clase propuesta por los docentes, según se requiera. Esto se refiere al trabajo grupal que se realizará en todas las sesiones.
- En caso de ser necesario, traer elementos pertinentes para el desarrollo de ciertas sesiones. Los docentes se encargarán de informar con previo aviso cuáles son estos elementos. En caso de que no sea posible traer dichos elementos, se establecerán otros en un diálogo con los participantes. Si no es posible traer elementos de ninguna índole, la responsabilidad de suministrarlos recaerá exclusivamente en los docentes y los participantes no se verán afectados de ninguna manera.

Qué se recopilará:

- Información diagnóstica de la conciencia cultural de los estudiantes, suministrada a través de un cuestionario preliminar.
- Impresiones de los estudiantes respecto al desarrollo de las clases y el material implementado a través de encuestas al final de cada sesión y un cuestionario final.

- Observaciones de los investigadores registradas antes y durante la intervención a través de un formato de observación y notas de campo respectivamente.

Uso de los Datos Recopilados:

Los datos recopilados se utilizarán para obtener información relevante en el desarrollo de una monografía, la cual será presentada a un panel de evaluadores. Esto con el fin de obtener el título de Licenciatura en lenguas extranjeras con énfasis en Inglés.

Confidencialidad:

Todos los datos recopilados de los participantes se mantendrán confidenciales y se utilizarán únicamente para los fines mencionados anteriormente. Los nombres de los estudiantes y cualquier otra información identificativa no serán mencionados de ninguna manera en el reporte final de este proyecto.

Participación Voluntaria:

La participación es completamente voluntaria. Los participantes también pueden retirar su autorización en cualquier momento sin ninguna penalización, es decir, si desea retirarse en cualquier instancia del proceso, no habrá consecuencia alguna. Si el estudiante decide no participar, su decisión no afectará su situación académica ni su relación con la universidad de ningún modo.

Consentimiento:

Al firmar a continuación, usted está dando su consentimiento para permitir que los docentes investigadores Manuel Suárez y Mateo Gomez recopilen y utilicen los datos correspondientes como se describe anteriormente. Si tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud sobre este estudio, no dude en ponerse en contacto con los docentes Manuel Suárez y Mateo Gomez.

Consentimiento del participante

Yo, _____ (nombre del participante), acepto participar en el estudio realizado por Manuel Suárez y Mateo Gomez, y doy mi consentimiento para la recopilación y el uso de mis comentarios y aportes relacionados con la clase como me fue informado.

Firma del estudiante: _____

Fecha: _____

Les agradecemos su cooperación y apoyo.
Atentamente,

Jesús Manuel Suárez Camelo
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CC. 1000494188

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CC. 1000698654