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Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con énfasis en inglés como
Lengua Extranjera para Alumnado Adulto y para Alumnado Infantil

Approaches for Integrating Culture in the Bachelors Program
of English at Universidad Nacional

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Monday, November 17th, 2008

**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA Y LETRAS
ESCUELA DE LITERATURA Y CIENCIAS DEL LENGUAJE
SISTEMA DE ESTUDIOS DE POSGRADO**

**MAESTRÍA EN SEGUNDAS LENGUAS Y CULTURAS CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLÉS COMO
LENGUA EXTRANJERA PARA ALUMNADO ADULTO Y PARA ALUMNADO INFANTIL**

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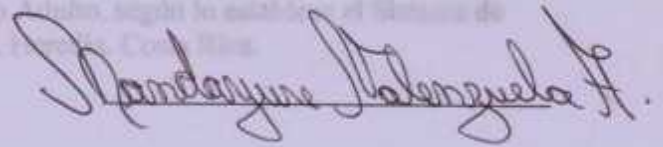
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Resumen

El propósito para realizar este proyecto de investigación por seis semanas, fue para investigar los acercamientos utilizados por los profesores en el Bachillerato en la Enseñanza de Inglés (BPEE) y la integración de la cultura en sus lecciones en la Universidad Nacional (UNA). La investigadora también establece identificar técnicas efectivas, materiales y actividades implementadas en los tres cursos durante la incorporación de la cultura.

Los datos fueron recogidos, por medio de la observación de lecciones, mediante entrevistas a estudiantes y profesores, se filmaron actividades culturales, se fotografiaron, y se recolectó material diverso (programas de estudios, distribuciones, etc.), cuestionarios completados por los alumnos, y al fin un diario y una auto-descripción de los profesores.

Los resultados indican que los estudiantes parecen preferir el material auténtico y las actividades para construir su conocimiento intercultural. Las técnicas utilizadas por los profesores sobre todo concuerdan con su propio ensayo de auto-descripción, lo que afirman los estudiantes en su entrevista, sugiriendo que la incorporación de la cultura es casi siempre efectiva en el curriculum. Las técnicas que probaron ser más eficientes en los tres cursos son las experimentales, audiovisuales y cognitivas combinadas con el método de comparación entre la cultura extranjera y la cultura nativa del estudiante.

Además, el último resultado, que contradicha una investigación diferente (e.g. Medgyes, 2006), fue que los profesores no nativos son capaces como los profesores nativos de incorporar la cultura nativo con éxito a sus lecciones.

Keywords:

Palabras Clave: Integración Cultural, Cultura Dominante, Conciencia Inter cultural, Métodos y Técnicas de Aprendizaje para Profesores, Profesores con conocimiento de ingles como idioma natal, Estudiantes con conocimiento de ingles como idioma natal, Componentes Culturales

This work is presented to obtain the Master in Second Languages and Cultures degree with emphasis in English and Foreign Languages for Adult Learners, according to what is

Trabajo presentado para optar al grado de Maestría en Segundas Lenguas y Culturas con Énfasis en Inglés como Lengua Extranjera para Alumnado Adulto, según lo establece el Sistema de Estudios de Posgrado de la Universidad Nacional. Heredia. Costa Rica.

Abstract

The purpose in conducting this six-week period research project was to investigate the approaches used by professors in the Bachelor's Program of English Education (BPEE), to integrate the teaching of the target culture in their lessons, at Universidad Nacional (UNA). The investigator also set out to identify effective techniques, materials and activities implemented in the three courses during the incorporation of the target culture.

Data were gathered by observing lessons, conducting student and teacher interviews, videotaping cultural activities, taking photos, collecting artifacts (syllabuses, handouts etc.), by having students complete a questionnaire and an open-ended journal and by having professors complete a short self-descriptive essay.

Results indicate that student-participants appeared to prefer authentic materials and activities when constructing their cross-cultural awareness. Teachers' approaches and techniques mostly matched their self-descriptive essay and students' claims in the interview, suggesting that the incorporation of the target culture is mostly effective throughout the curriculum. The approaches proven to be more efficient in all three courses are the experiential, media, and cognitive approaches combined with the comparing and contrasting method of the students' target and native culture.

Furthermore, another finding, contradicting a different research (e.g. Medgyes, 2006), was that non-native teachers are as capable as native teachers to successfully incorporate the target culture in their lessons.

Keywords:

Culture integration, Hegemonic Culture, Cross-cultural awareness, Teacher's approaches & Techniques, Materials, Non-native vs. Native teachers, Non-native teachers & Non-native students, Knowledge Base, Culture Components.

This work is presented in order to obtain the Masters in Second Languages and Cultures degree with emphasis in English as a Foreign Language for Adult learners, according to what is established in the Postgraduate Program of Universidad Nacional, Heredia, Costa Rica.

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EFL - English as a Foreign Language

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L2A - L2-acquired Noun

USA - United States of America

List of Abbreviations

- ESL – English as a Second Language
- EFL – English as a Foreign Language
- BPEE – Bachelor's Program of English Education
- UNA – Universidad Nacional
- USA - United States of America

I. INTRODUCTION

was a matter of considerable interest to those scholars who the role of culture in foreign language acquisition over the past decades. The field is highly multidisciplinary, contributing to the knowledge base from such areas as psychology, linguistics, anthropology, and education. As a matter of fact, sociolinguist scholars and psychologists in particular have explored cultural phenomena from their relationship with language learning.

Foreign language learning is composed of several linguistic competencies such as grammatical competence, communicative competence, linguistic proficiency, as well as a change in attitude towards one's own or another culture. In the last two decades, there has been a rebirth of interest in the study of language in relation to history, which has led to a shift of focus from individualism and individualism to community and to critical theory. (Hosner, 19)

At any rate, foreign language learning is foreign culture learning, and, at the least or another, culture has been taught, even implicitly, in the foreign language classroom. Nevertheless, a debatable aspect is what is meant by the term "culture" and how it is integrated into language learning and teaching. According to Krashen:

"Culture in language learning is not an independent fifth skill, added on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one, ready to enlighten the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their home-own communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them" (15)

I. INTRODUCTION

The topic of teaching and learning culture has been a matter of considerable interest to language educators and much has been written about the role of culture in foreign language instruction over the past decades. The field is highly multi-resourceful; contributions to the knowledge base have come from professionals in psychology, linguistics, anthropology, and education. As a matter of fact, intercultural scholars and psychologists in particular have studied cultural phenomena apart from their relationship with language learning.

Foreign language learning is comprised of several linguistic components such as grammatical competence, communicative competence, language proficiency, as well as a change in attitudes towards one's own or another culture. In the last two decades, there has been a rebirth of interest in the study of language in relation to society, which has led to a shift of focus from behaviorism and positivism to constructivism to critical theory. (Brown 18)

At any rate, foreign language learning is foreign culture learning, and, in one form or another, culture has been taught, even implicitly, in the foreign language classroom. Nevertheless, a debatable aspect is what is meant by the term "culture" and how it is integrated into language learning and teaching. According to Kramsch:

"Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them" (35)

The purpose of this study is to shed some light on the role of teaching culture in the Bachelor's program in English Education (BPEE) at Universidad Nacional (UNA). The main premise of this paper is that educators cannot go about teaching a foreign language without at least offering some insights into its speakers' culture. This project describes the approaches and techniques implemented, during the teaching of culture and whether or not they are put into practice, in the three observed courses. Mentors cannot go about fostering "communicative competence" without taking into account the different views and perspectives of people in different cultures which may enhance or even inhibit communication. After all, as Kramsch, in Crawford-Lange and Lange, affirms "communication requires understanding, and understanding requires stepping into the shoes of the foreigner and shifting the cultural baggage, while always 'putting (the target) culture in relation with one's own.'" (149)

In this research project, groups from the second, third and fourth level of the BPEE were observed at UNA during a six week period. The techniques used by professors to implement the teaching and learning of the target culture, as well as activities and materials applied to facilitate this process, served as the basis for analysis of the instructor's approaches to teach culture. Furthermore, a series of interviews with the professors and students of each setting were carried out in order to process and analyze the data collected and support the final conclusions. This research paper discusses the strengths and weaknesses of each class, regarding the incorporation of the target culture in the weekly lessons. Videos were taken of each class while culture was being integrated, to help visualize the approaches followed by the facilitators during this research. The data gathered was of qualitative nature; nevertheless, some information was obtained through a questionnaire about the learners' contact with the target culture and a journal on the students' opinion of the cultural themes covered in class.

This paper also includes a self-description of each professor, which portrays the approaches and techniques they apply in their classes. These descriptions are put side by side

with the researcher's findings and compared with the observation reports, interviews, students' claims and the observer's conclusions. Finally, the syllabuses are briefly analyzed regarding the intended presentation of culture in the classroom in relationship with the actual implementation of the target culture observed in each class.

The literature review, the researcher's findings and the interpretation of the data collected were essential to determine the strengths and weaknesses concerning the teaching/learning of the target culture in all three classes. Upon completion of this paper, suggestions are provided to improve the integration of culture in each class. The conclusions are of great importance since second language learning requires a great amount of instruction on the target culture, which in turn will determine the type of educators that these learners will become in the future in an ESL/EFL¹ classroom.

1.1 Relevance, Purpose and Characteristics of the Study

1.1.1 Relevance

The issues addressed in this investigation are also described in many previous studies that explain the relationship between language and culture, the way they are interconnected and the failure of Foreign Language Acquisition when the native culture is unfamiliar to foreign language learners. More specifically, this investigation seeks to identify the approaches that professors use in the BPEE at UNA in Heredia, Costa Rica, in order to incorporate culture in their lessons.

This study will attempt to inform what are the effective approaches and techniques used to instruct culture in second language classrooms according to experts' claims, the

¹ Even though the terms ESL and EFL are very alike and have a similar meaning (teaching students English as a second or third language), there is a distinction between the two. English as a Second Language teaching refers to teaching English in a country where English is already the main or official language. Students learning English live or will live in a country where their native language is not used. On the other hand, English as a Foreign Language is teaching English in countries where English is not a language of majority. Students in this case, study English in their own country either for academic or travel purposes (Cautrell 1-2)

students' preferences and the investigator's interpretations. Upon the completion of the study, educators may benefit from experiences and techniques that their colleagues successfully implement in their lessons. This aspect is helpful for non-native professors that instruct a language since resources for the foreign culture could be limited or inexistent.

Another factor to be considered is teacher's development in culture education and the obstacles in this sector. No doubt they can benefit from experienced language instructors. According to Crawford-Lange (159), institutions of higher education should train language teachers in integrating culture and language in their lessons. This research focuses on identifying if proper target culture integration in fact takes place at UNA and which approaches are used to do so.

Non-native foreign language teachers may not be able to successfully plan and implement target culture awareness in the classroom or might not stress the importance of culture education in second language teaching. The instruction of culture has great significance in a foreign language classroom and even greater is the relationship of language and culture. Non-native foreign language facilitators might fail to effectively incorporate culture in a lesson since their contact with the foreign country may be limited. Thus, it would be detrimental "To study a language without studying the culture of native speakers of the language is a lifeless endeavor" Crawford-Lange and Lange (140). Hence, language educators ought to build students' cultural awareness and, therefore, develop their second language skills.

The study needs to raise students' and instructors' awareness on the significance of a strongly-based cultural background knowledge when teaching and learning a foreign language. Both parties can profit from the findings. Facilitators may benefit from successful approaches and techniques implemented by their colleagues in the teaching and learning process of culture. Students, on the other hand, may gain knowledge on how vital culture is in second language learning. By demonstrating how important the role of cross-cultural

awareness is in the field of second language learning, the participants are likely to be motivated to travel to an English-speaking country and experience the target culture directly.

Finally, the university itself could gain from the findings of this investigation since recommendations will be provided upon summarizing the phenomena observed. The curriculum of the BPEE at UNA could improve culture teaching from the suggestions offered upon completion of the study. If the findings show inadequacies in the teaching of culture in light of the literature reviewed, suggestions will be supplied to improve these approaches, techniques and extra materials. On the other hand, the successful approaches and techniques used to integrate culture in these lessons will be supported by the literature review. The latter findings will also be recommended for future implementation of the target culture in second language classrooms.

1.1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this research project was to discover the approaches professors use in the BPEE to introduce the culture of the target language to future English educators. Each facilitator's cultural knowledge base is pointed out. The materials used in class to incorporate culture and their authenticity are analyzed. Whether the teaching of the target culture progresses or remains static between the three levels of the BPEE, is determined. Finally, the data collected at the end of this research will contribute to identify the approaches professors use to incorporate culture, the help the extra materials provide to support the teaching of culture and whether these two aspects relate to the teachers' contact with the target culture or not.

1.1.3 Characteristics of Study

This research paper aims to recognize the different approaches professors use to teach culture in the BPEE at UNA. The ways professors incorporate culture in class during this

study are described in detail by the researcher as well as the teacher's knowledge base and any contact they may have with the target culture. While carrying out this investigation, the researcher examines the use of extra materials employed to reinforce cultural teaching, their relation to culture, and their effectiveness in describing cultural features of the target traditions, as well as promoting cross-cultural awareness.

There are four levels in the BPEE, all of which have six courses in both semesters. The researcher has chosen to observe and analyze three courses, one of each level (levels two through four) in the second semester, all of which are required to integrate culture in their curriculum and teach it successfully to students of the BPEE. The three classes to be observed at UNA are: 1. Oral expression: Society and Humanity taught in the second semester of Level Two; 2. Language and Culture taught in the second semester of Level Three; and 3. Victorian Literature taught in the second semester of Level Four. Along with culture, these courses integrate oral expression, the relationship between culture and language, and literature readings.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to analyze the approaches and techniques implemented by the different professors in charge of the courses: Oral Expression, Language and Culture, and Victorian Literature at UNA, by conducting observations and surveys in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in the integration of the cultural component.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

- a. To identify and analyze the different approaches professors use to teach culture to

future ESL/EFL teachers in the BPEE at UNA, through observations, interviews and journals.

- b. To point out the implementation of the approaches that are more successful in the teaching of the target culture, from students' statements during the interview and journal as well as any findings in the observation reports.
- c. To evaluate the teaching/learning process of culture in the classrooms up against the literature review and the experts' recommendations gathered during this study.
- d. To describe the materials and activities that professors use to integrate the cultural component in their lessons by carrying out observations and interviews; so as to determine their effectiveness or unsuccessfulness in raising students' cross-cultural awareness by comparing results from the observation reports, learners' statements during the interview and literature review suggested by experts.
- e. To illustrate the professors' knowledge base of the target culture, the way they teach it and their use of extra materials by measuring up the findings from observations, interviews and students' journals.
- f. To determine whether their extensive or limited contact with the target culture is affecting the way culture is integrated in the classroom by monitoring the approaches and materials they use to enhance the culture teaching in their classrooms and the reaction of the students.
- g. To verify whether the teaching of the target culture progresses or remains static between the three levels of the BPEE, by comparing and contrasting the findings from the observation reports with teachers' and students' claims during their interviews.
- h. To provide suggestions for any inadequacies related to culture integration within the BPEE so fellow instructors can take advantage of such resources and techniques in future ESL/EFL classrooms.

1.3 Population, Procedure and Research Setting

1.3.1 Population

Most of the student-participants (35 out of the 43) are already second language teachers and the rest are planning to work in the same field once they finish the BPEE. Eight out of the forty-three participants observed have been to the United States, Canada or England. The majority of them have cable TV and are able to watch movies, shows and documentaries in English. The learners are all of Costa Rican background and range from 18 to 30 years of age. Some have had contact with exchange students from the United States and have even hosted these students in their homes.

The three teacher-participants have finished the Bachelor's degree of English Education at UNA in Costa Rica, Central America. They all three have occupied themselves with the teaching of English as a second language either in high schools or public universities. Two of the three instructors attained their Master's degree and worked in the United States after finishing their undergraduate studies at UNA. The facilitator of the Victorian Literature class visited North America during her undergraduate studies for a yearlong semester abroad. The teacher-participants keep in contact with host families and friends from the United States and still visit on regular occasions. Finally, all three professors have had extensive experience in teaching ESL/EFL classes in Costa Rican universities. More specifically some of the subjects they have taught in their classrooms are literature, reading and writing, while incorporating the target culture at the same time.

1.3.2 Procedure

In order to determine whether they have had contact with the target culture and have not solely relied on the instructors' knowledge, the students were interviewed and required to fill out a survey. Through the questionnaire, it was determined that eight out of the forty-three

learners had visited the United States or one more English-speaking country (either England or Canada). During their interviews, the professors expressed the significance of experiencing the target culture in order to build cross-cultural awareness. The students, on the other hand, were given the opportunity, through a journal and an interview, to convey their thoughts on their instructors' approaches, techniques and materials used in class to integrate the target culture. Their answers were compared to their teachers' statements and to the researcher's observations. The data collected was helpful to determine whether the approaches, techniques and materials facilitated in the teaching/learning of culture in the three courses. Finally, the analysis of the data served as the basis for deriving conclusions and recommendations for the BPEE under study.

The data analysis process began with a review of the proposal and the plans with which the research project had started. Scanning through the data collected, aided in making sure that it is complete and sufficient to identify the approaches, materials and techniques used by facilitators to integrate the target culture into their classrooms. Patterns, organized in different categories, were formed through the examination of the observations, interviews, students' journals, teachers' self-descriptions, photographs, and other data collection instruments used in the study. The conclusions of the research were categorized in nine different sectors surrounding the main objective of this study, the approaches used in the ESL/EFL classes at UNA to incorporate the target culture. Each sector was supported by literature review and the findings gathered from the data collection instruments. Next the comparing, matching and contrasting of the observation reports to students' and teachers' interviews, journals, photographs and other data collection instruments, led to the linking of all the information and the theorizing process. Data analysis depends on theorizing; as it is the most fundamental tool of a researcher's qualitative project and its conclusions. The act of theorizing was used to develop questions during the observations and extend the study into an even deeper level as well as confirm explanations of emerged phenomena during this project.

The phenomena surfacing was compared and contrasted to the literature review and the statements of both the teacher-participants and student-participants.

Finally, in order to confirm some of the findings and work on the reliability and validity of this study, some results were shared with some professor and student-informants as well as an authorial figure, the head of the English department. From the participants' reaction and/or feedback, the appropriate recommendations to improve the incorporation of the culture teaching within the English program at UNA, were provided and supported with proper literature review accordingly.

1.3.3 Research Setting

The research setting was Universidad Nacional, the "Omar Dengo Campus" located in Heredia, Costa Rica, in Central America. The observations took place in the School of Philosophy and Literal Arts. The students enrolled in the BPEE belong to the School of Literature and Language Sciences. The lessons observed took place in two different locations within the building. All of the classes of Language and Culture were carried out in the regular assigned classroom. Some of the classes of the Oral Expression course took place in the laboratory, where the students had full access to the technical equipment (video beam, TV, computers) for their presentations. All the classes of Victorian Literature were delivered in the regular classroom assigned for that course. Finally, the regular classrooms have a large number of desks that could effortlessly accommodate all the students. The desks were easily rearranged in circles if needed for any group activities or discussions, leaving plenty of space for the technical equipment used in class instead of the laboratory.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to talk about culture, a person needs to understand what culture really is; however, each anthropologist has his or her own definition. For example, the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis as shown in Seelye in his book *Teaching Culture: Strategies for intercultural Communication*, states “different language patterns yield different patterns of thought”(22-23) while Brooks (124) in his article *Culture in the Classroom* identified five different types of culture: biological growth, personal refinement, literature, fine arts, and patterns of living, basically the way of life of a person. Along the same lines, Seelye describes culture as patterns of everyday life that “enable individuals to relate to their place under the sun” (26). Evidently, he strongly believes that language has no meaning without culture, which is better explained as the theory of sociolinguistics--the study of the effects that cultural norms, and context of society have on language. Hall, on the other hand, describes “culture as communication and communication as culture” (140-141). Therefore, he addresses the important correlation between language and culture. From the above we may defer a more general definition of culture as a person’s social values, beliefs, art forms and kinesics.

The *key* tool for learning in any classroom is language, which is used to communicate with people and learn about the world and other people. The cultural involvement in a classroom begins the moment a student moves from the declarative knowledge of the language to language use. While Crawford-Lange and Lange (140) claim that “Language is a tool--a tool of communication”, Seelye, in the same article, avows “...without a cultural context a word has no meaning” (143). According to such statements, language and culture cannot be separated in any ESL/EFL educational environment since one cannot be taught without the other. Likewise, Brooks (123) in his book *Language and Language Learning* states “Linguistic characteristics should be viewed as cultural elements and cultural learning requires the vehicle of language.” To further explain the relationship between language and

culture, Kramsch (220), in her book *Language and Culture*, claims that language expresses, embodies and symbolizes cultural reality.

Although prominent researchers like Chomsky (15) support grammar in the language teaching, Hymes (25) quoted in Seelye's book *Teaching Culture: Strategies for Intercultural Communication* believes linguistic theory should be seen as an integration of communication and culture. Hymes' theory derives from what a learner should know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community. Therefore, when a learner attains communicative competence, he also acquires knowledge and ability for knowledge. Canale and Swain (qtd. in Damen 252) have also analyzed communicative competence into four dimensions: grammatical, discourse, strategic and sociolinguistic. The latter is defined as the understanding of the social context in which communication takes place. Vygotsky (33), in Byram's book *Mediating Language and Culture*, highlights the central role of social interaction in language learning and emphasizes the significance of the social practices that individuals engage in; a theory described as constructivism.

A qualitative study like this is based on the constructivist or naturalistic approach or the interpretative approach by Hernandez-Sampieri et al. (4). To better support the theory of constructivism, Collins, Brown and Newman, (qtd. in McLoughlin and Oliver 3) in the book *Language and Language Learning*, perceive learning as a situated achievement, incorporating cultural activity in a range of authentic settings. Within the last ten years, the culture of education has also undergone transformation: teachers have been encouraged to plan more collaborative structures for learning, which have been shown to be effective in terms of learning outcomes Crook claims (qtd. in Byram 30). These pedagogies spring from a common source: constructivist learning theory (Duffy et al qtd. in Byram 35). Constructivism is characterized by a set of principles that relate to how knowledge is created and how individuals develop understanding. Based on the work of Vygotsky (qtd. in Lantolf 33), socio-cultural theory, for example, emphasizes that learning is a form of enculturation in

which the individual is socialized through gradual participation in tasks, scaffolded or assisted by adults until full competence is attained. Another interpretation of constructivism is situated cognition, based on the work of Lave and Wenger (qtd. in Blair 27), who claim that learning is best achieved when it is encountered, used and applied in real world contexts.

According to the literature review by Seelye, Brooks, Kramsch, Brown, Byram et al., whenever cultural education takes place in a classroom, it usually appears after language learning. Very rarely will the cultural aspects be taught before or during language teaching and learning. Students and educators both recognize the importance of the interconnection between language and culture; however, culture generally has a peripheral position within the classroom rather than a central one. Crawford-Lange and Lange (141), in their article *Doing the Unthinkable in the Second-Language Classroom* claim that there might be two possible explanations for this particular situation of culture instruction in a second language classroom: (a) educators might feel inadequate in their knowledge of the foreign culture because of limited experiences with the unknown culture and (b) facilitators' training in the cultural field may be insufficient.

Another major issue in a foreign language classroom could be that even if students are instructed about culture, they are not taught how to interact with the target culture or its members since professors might not be equipped with the appropriate tools to instruct them, a concept contradicting the recommended approach to teaching culture, constructivism. From the literature review presented above, it is evident how vital the relationship and coexistence of culture and language is in a second language classroom. If culture were to be neglected during the teaching process, failure of learning the language would follow. In the case of culture instruction in class, Nostrand, in Seelye (25) *Teaching Culture: Strategies for Intercultural Communication*, suggested that facilitators should focus on two goals: cross-cultural communication and understanding.

McGroarty and Calvin (81), in their article *Culture as an issue in Second Language Learning*, state that, as significant as culture has been described in second language teaching, it is still sometimes ignored by researchers and by curriculum planners alike. The reason seems to be that culture is too complicated to portray. According to the article *Doing the Unthinkable in the Second-Language Classroom* by Crawford-Lange and Lange (143), institutions of higher education should train language instructors in integrating culture and language in their lessons. This research focuses on identifying if this in fact takes place at UNA and which approaches are used to do so. McGroarty and Calvin state "that it is not only the students that bring culture into the classroom, but the second language teachers do as well, consequently, they should be appropriately trained" (82). The article continues to explain the main issues educators face when incorporating culture into their class: what to teach and how to teach it.

Depending on the learners' needs, the type of institution involved in the language culture teaching process and the resources that are available to both the instructors and the students, certain approaches will be more appropriate or feasible than others. McGroarty and Calvin (88) provide a variety of approaches to integrating culture in a second language classroom and suggest that they are easy to use and very effective in the ESL/EFL field: a. Conventional Academic Approaches, b. Observational Approaches, c. Media Approaches, d. Experiential Approaches and e. Cognitive Approaches.

To begin with, the Conventional Academic Approaches are comprised of lectures and readings. Lectures, delivered either by instructors or learners, are used in order to convey new perspectives on already known information whereas readings, taken from textbooks, provide students with cultural aspects that they do not normally find in their native environment. The Observational Approaches consist of native informants or long-time sojourners as well as the instructors' personal observations. This is recommended by McGroarty and Calvin (87) in order to reinforce what the students already know about the target culture as well as provide

new information from another's point of view. The media approaches comprise of films or videotapes and other useful artifacts. This approach is usually used to create discussions, debates, or comparison and contrast activities between the two cultures (the native and the target). The Experiential Approaches include role plays, simulation games and cross-cultural exercises. With these activities students are required to experience how it 'feels' to be an individual from the target country and to behave in the target culture. Cognitive Approaches consist of culture assimilators, culture capsules and culturgrams. McGroarty and Calvan (88) refer to these techniques as adaptable and quite useful in the second language classroom, since most of these derive from work in the cognitive psychology field. Last but not least, McGroarty and Calvan (89) suggest that instructors may interrupt a planned lesson, a lecture, a presentation, a role play etc. and briefly comment on the cross-cultural meanings of what the learners have done or said. All of the above approaches can be effective ways in increasing cross-cultural awareness and raising the pupils' interest for the target culture.

There is growing evidence that one very crucial factor affecting the reading comprehension of second-language learners is a lack of necessary cultural background knowledge. For this reason, Gathbonton and Tucker, Kujooory, and Johnson (qtd. in McKay 18), support that "It is essential that teachers make sure the learners have the essential needed cultural and world background in order to interpret the text provided." In this study, in the Victorian Literature class, the professor presented historical, geographical, cultural background to the students in order to facilitate their understanding of the texts and promote discussions in class. A facilitator cannot expect students to comprehend a reading without an introduction to its background. As the educator of the Victorian Literature at UNA explained during her personal interview with the researcher, most of the students at the university come from rural areas in Costa Rica and have little or no contact with people from other cultures. For this reason, it is the facilitators' duty to promote the learning of the native culture of the students while maintaining the teaching of the target culture.

To further support the importance of developing students' cross-cultural awareness Seelye (15) in his book *Experiential Activities for Intercultural Learning*, also affirms "...in the final analysis no matter how technically dexterous a student's training in the foreign language, if the student avoids contact with native speakers of that language and lacks respect for their world view, of what value is the training?" The learners' contact with the native speakers that Seelye speaks of could take place in the classroom with the instructors themselves or with guest speakers, either students or facilitators from other English-speaking countries. The three courses observed in this study were taught by Non-Native teachers, even though Native teachers are teaching in other courses or other universities.

In a study carried out by Barratt and Kontra (219) in Llorca's Book, to investigate the differences between Native-Speaker Teachers (NSTs) and Non-Native-Speaker Teachers (NNSTs), it was shown that both groups have their disadvantages and advantages in the ESL classrooms. There were three cases observed, two in Hungary and one in China, in which most of the respondents had a NST and were asked to write the advantages of having such an instructor. The learners expressed that a NST was original, had an authentic pronunciation and wide vocabulary, knew a lot about culture and was very relaxed about grades and error corrections. They stressed the fact that they resorted to authentic material tasks for implementing the four basic skills and supplied more cultural information. However, the NSTs were not familiar with the students' L1 or the native culture. In contrast, NNSTs are part of that culture and can easily predict any problems that may occur in the language learning and teaching environment. This places a great advantage on instruction by NNSTs over NSTs since students, as they stated on a questionnaire, felt they would learn more about culture of English-speaking countries if taught by a NNST who can make connections to their own native culture. That is a concept that Miranda (2008) also supported during her interview and added that the teacher does not have to belong to the same culture of the students, but it is necessary to have experienced it for a certain period of time.

Based on the literature review stated above, an interesting question emerged: Who is more suitable to teach culture?, the Native Speaker or the Non-Native Speaker?. (Maniello 1), in his article *When the Teacher is a Non-native Speaker*, states that "...There is no denying of the importance of other attributes, most notably teaching qualifications, professional skills, and experience." Both Native and Non-Native teachers, have to be equipped with the appropriate knowledge, a well-based academic background and must know how it may or may not affect culture integration in the second language teaching classroom. Instructors' cross-cultural experiences and the way they share these with their students, either through materials they have created or by narrating personal experiences, can facilitate the pupils' learning of a second culture. Ward (534) implies that a genuine commitment to language teaching can allow the instructors to do research when they do not know how to use extra resources and seek help from others, to travel and live in other countries, to inform themselves about the topic.

Safabi, (qtd. in Medgyes 430-433), carried out a study about ESL/EFL jobs across the world that examined which teachers were preferred, either native speakers or non-native. The findings of this investigation revealed that an educator's lack of native insights about the use of American English and the culture's expectations could affect their teaching skills. On the other hand, in certain countries, even backpackers with no teaching qualifications or experience are extended a warm welcome to instruct English as a second language only because they are natives, "a term that includes birth and education in an English-speaking country, cultural affiliation, political allegiance, self-identification and more" (Medgyes 433). The author concludes that even though non-native instructors might have long stays in English-speaking countries, they are hard working and dedicated, they will never be able to perform as well as their native colleagues.

On the other hand, NNSTs can be set as a model to second language learners since they studied English after they acquired their native language, unlike NSTs who acquired

English as their mother tongue-two completely different processes according to Krashen (qtd. in Valverde 95). There are many advantages of having a NNST as an English teacher, as described by Llurda (223): a. They can teach language learning strategies more effectively. b. They are a good learner model. c. Supply more information about the English language. d. Can anticipate and prevent language difficulties. e. Benefit from using the students' mother tongue and culture to make connections. Consequently, "...It is possible to assert that sharing the students' mother tongue greatly benefits learners" (Maniello 1). This suggests once again that native educators are not necessarily better or preferred than non-native teachers. On the contrary, it is a benefit for students to have an instructor who shares the same linguistic and cultural background with them. Hence, L1 culture knowledge will always be an advantage in a second language classroom environment.

Finally, the materials used in an ESL/EFL classroom to incorporate culture effectively are of great importance. Materials and activities should promote constant real life conversations during which students are able to communicate and integrate their knowledge about the target culture and language. Both Tomalin and Stempleski (15) state that the most effective activities for integrating the target culture in the foreign language learning/teaching classroom require either homogenous group or pair activities, which will promote interpretation of other ethnic groups as well as theirs and, therefore, healthy communication. After all, communication requires understanding, and understanding requires stepping into the shoes of the foreigner and shifting the cultural baggage, while always "putting (the target) culture in relation with one's own" states Kramsch (149) in her book *Language and culture*. Wen-Ling and Chism (172) stress the importance of students getting acquainted with their own culture in order to learn about the target culture in the target language. The most effective activities and materials to support this would be realia that promotes real communication in group or pair activities, sharing their experiences in class and the media (i.e. home videos, movie clips or videotaped excerpts from newscasts and TV programs from

the target culture), as Medgyes (440) adheres. All materials and techniques mentioned above encourage learners to compare their own culture with the target culture and make meaningful connections while using the latter as means of communication.

In conclusion, culture integration in a second or foreign language classroom has been proven to be essential. Brooks (25), in his book *Mediating Languages and Cultures*, states that, "Without language there is no culture and without culture there is no language." Furthermore, it can be assumed from all of the above sources that culture can be taught the same and even more successfully by a non-native than by a native instructor. It is a major advantage for the student learning another language when the facilitator shares their mother tongue and culture. Besides, with the right background, experience, commitment and resources (activities, textbooks and materials), non-native and native educators can instruct as effectively an ESL/EFL classroom.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.2 Data Collection Instruments

Qualitative researchers, including ethnographers, deal with empirical data or potentially verifiable information obtained from the environment and accessed via human senses. "Sources and types of data are limited only by the creativity and energy of the researcher" (LeCompte and Preissle 158). Data are any kind of information which researchers can identify and accumulate to facilitate their answers to their queries. The most common categories of data collection used by qualitative researchers are observations, interviews, designed instruments, and content analysis of collected artifacts.

In order to collect data for this study, the researcher decided to use a more general data collection procedure instead of an analytical one. The heuristic/synthetic type of research was helpful in this study since it is less explicit and focuses on the understanding of a phenomenon that occurs in the classroom, in this case, the integration of the target culture in the non-native classrooms of UNA, without isolating any themes and without making any decisions in the absence of all the data. The researcher based her investigation on three main research questions that guided her study through a six-week period: a. What is the teacher's knowledge base on culture of the target language? b. What is the teacher's methodology applied to instruct culture of the target language? c. Which are the extra materials used in the classes to facilitate the teaching of culture?

The methods of collecting data were interactive and non-interactive. The former were a couple of participant observations (one of the Language and Culture course and one of the Oral Expression class) during which the researcher interacted with her participants, interviews with the professors as well as the students, students' journals on cultural themes, and finally surveys to collect their previous and current contact with the target culture. On the

other hand, the non-interactive methods included weekly non-participant objective observations, artifacts, photos and videos taken to show cultural activities in class.

The study began by conducting a variety of non-participant observations. Even though LeCompte and Preissle (205) suggest they should be used in a later stage, for this research study they helped to gain a more objective insight of the cultural implementation in the classes. In order to complete the weekly observations, five basic questions were considered: 1. Who am I observing?, 2. When am I observing them?, 3. Why am I observing them?, 4. What phenomena did I gather? and 5. What is my commentary on what I have seen combined with the literature review I have done? During a couple of sessions, the observer participated briefly.

The participant role of the observer in the classes was not planned. Her position as a member in the lessons only occurred twice, once in the Language and Culture class and once in the Oral Expression class. In the former case, the researcher found an opportunity to ask students about the source of their knowledge about the target culture. It was an opportunity that could not be missed. In the latter case, the researcher was asked by the professor to share her personal knowledge on the topic of the day since she had been in contact with more than one culture. Nevertheless, both participant and non-participant observations contributed to the data collection for this project.

During the observations, a survey and a journal were filled out by the students. The students' questionnaire contained a set of background knowledge questions, and its purpose was to determine the contact they have had with an English-speaking country. On the other hand, the journal was comprised of six open-ended questions and was distributed to the students on a random basis. The participants had to answer the questions according to that specific session and cultural theme. This journal (guided by the investigator's original research questions) helped formulate the interview questions for the learners, in accordance to the research questions.

To complete the investigation process, the two sets of interviews were conducted, one with the professors of each course observed and one with each group. Both sets of the questions were semi-structured. A series of questions led the interviews; however, if an important fact arose, the inquiries were adjusted accordingly. The professors' set was composed of: a. experience questions--what they have accomplished academically and professionally, b. opinion questions--what they think about culture integration in the second language teaching field, c. background questions, and d. knowledge questions--what they know about the target culture and country. The students' set, on the other hand, was led by their answers in a journal they had completed in a class previous to the interview. This set of questions mostly consisted: a. opinion questions--what they think about culture integration in their lessons and/or their professor's knowledge of culture, b. attitude questions--how they feel about culture integration in class and c. some contrast questions of what the observer had noticed during observations and in students' answers in the journals.

Finally, the data collection process ended with the: a. collection of artifacts, b. photos of the participants during presentations and activities, c. short videos of cultural integration in each class and d. a short key-informant interview with the coordinator of the BPEE in order to confirm some conclusions. Upon the gathering of all the data, the professors were requested to complete a short self-descriptive essay, describing the approaches and techniques they use in their classes to integrate culture. This description was compared to the observation reports and the students' opinions during their interview. All of the above techniques contributed to completing the investigation and successfully collecting all the necessary data that would eventually identify the approaches used by the professors at UNA to integrate the target culture in their lessons.

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis process began with a review of the proposal and the plans with which the research project had initiated. The process of scanning the work followed, which helped to verify that the data collected was complete. The original objectives of this study were based on the research questions that led this investigation. In order to identify the different approaches the professors used to implement the target culture in their lessons, a semi-structured one-on-one interview was carried out. The educators' statements during these conferences were compared and contrasted with the findings of the weekly observations. Finally, the professors were asked to identify through email the techniques and approaches they use in order to incorporate the target culture in their lessons. This gave them the opportunity to analyze their answer and enabled the investigator to compare their answers to the phenomena that emerged from the observations.

The extra materials used in class were recorded according to the data found in the observation reports as well as the interviews conducted with both the professors and students. Students were asked to list the different types of materials their instructors use during class in order to incorporate the target culture, and also to provide their personal opinions on whether they considered them effective or not. During their interview, the instructors were also inquired to list the type of materials they use in class to facilitate the learning of the target culture. The answers of both parties were compared to the observation reports including some of the materials collected, and their effectiveness for culture learning was analyzed through the literature review.

A semi-structured interview was used to ask the professors to describe their knowledge base of the target culture and any contact with an English-speaking country. During the interview, they were given the opportunity to share their thoughts on the cultural integration and what they believe is the most effective technique for implementing culture

into a second language classroom. Their answers once again were compared to the observation reports and the findings.

Conclusions of the observation reports were compared to claims of the students and the actual syllabuses of each class in order to determine whether the teaching of the target culture progresses or remains static through the three levels of the BPEE. At last, all the appropriate information was gathered in order to draw conclusions from the findings and the data collected throughout the study. The data was then summarized and supported with literature review, and comparing, matching and contrasting the evident behaviors of one observation to the next.

Lastly, in order to confirm the findings of this study and ensure the reliability and validity of the research, the results were shared with some key-informants. The accuracy of some findings was confirmed by the students' reactions during the interview. Some results were reevaluated or extended according to feedback received from the coordinator of the program, peers, professors and input provided by the professors/participants of the study. In conclusion, some recommendations are made to reevaluate the implementation of the target culture in the BPEE and to share these resources with future fellow educators.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The outcomes of this study highlight some attitudes and perceptions associated to the integration of the target culture in the second language learning environment of BPEE at UNA. Broadly speaking, the themes that emerged from this investigation were related to issues of: a. hegemonic culture; b. components of culture; c. the level of cultural components; d. students' cultural awareness vs. cross-cultural awareness; e. teacher's approaches; f. materials, g. teacher's knowledge base; h. non-native vs. native speaker teachers in culture teaching; i. non-native teachers in a non-native environment. These themes are further discussed below and recommendations for improving cultural pedagogy are explored with reference to the literature review presented above.

4.1 Hegemonic culture

During the process of learning a foreign language, students generally expect to become familiar with the culture of those who speak this language as a mother tongue. In the case of languages that are associated with a single nation-state, the target culture related to the language in question also tends to be defined. In regards to English, learners of the language living in countries where English is spoken as the dominant language will naturally link the notion of the 'target culture' with visible aspects of the culture of English speakers that surround them. In non-English speaking contexts, however, the concept of a 'target culture' combined with the English language, from the perspective of foreign language learners, is potentially ambiguous.

To demonstrate the current sociolinguistic profile of the English language on a world scale, Kachru (qtd. in Llorca 217-219), provides a concentric model of English users. Based on the types and nature of spread patterns of acquisition, and the functional roles of English in various cultural contexts, this model takes the form of three concentric circles--the Inner

Circle, Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle refers to countries such as the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and part of South Africa, which have the traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English. The Outer Circle (including Bangladesh, India, Kenya and Hong Kong, for instance) represents the regions which have passed through extended periods of British colonization and have subsequently institutionalized varieties of English into governmental, legal, educational and literary domains. The Expanding Circle includes countries where English has various roles and is widely studied for more specific purposes (e.g. to conduct business, to access technology, or to access printed information in a range of academic disciplines) than in the Outer Circle. The 'performance' varieties of English used in the Expanding Circle often lack an official status and are typically restricted in their use states Kachru (qtd. in Llurda 217).

Experienced teachers of learners of English as a second language (SLA) know that education about culture is part of the instruction process. Adult ESL/EFL students themselves understand that language learning consists of more than the ability to understand new linguistic structures and the cultural context as well. Yet criticisms by Auerbach, Canagarajah, Phillipson, and Skutnabb-Kangas, (qtd. in Johnson 1-3), regarding the teaching of culture should also be mentioned at this point. These three scholars state that ESL educators and materials have hegemonic tendencies particularly in the representations of the target culture. They claim that the majority of the ESL/EFL pedagogical practices are hegemonic, in that mainstream American and British cultures are portrayed as dominant and superior to the culture of the second language student.

On the other hand, instructing culture unfortunately necessitates exclusionary practices that could be interpreted as hegemonic. Johnson (10), in his article *Teaching Culture in Adult ESL: Pedagogical and Ethical Considerations*, claims that in the same way that teaching English requires a program or an instructor to choose a particular language model (North American, British, Australian, etc) to the exclusion of others, at the same time

instruction of culture requires that only some parts of the target culture be included (3). Instructors lack time and expertise to include all relevant aspects of a target culture. The following dilemma is to include and integrate culture in their curriculum without hegemonizing. Then again, how does a person discuss culture without imposing it?

Avoiding hegemony can be complicated and difficult to complete when giving "cultural lessons." According to Johnson (2) in the absence of specific research-based and practical guidelines about teaching culture, teachers are left to teach culture as they deem appropriate. Hence, hegemony for teachers becomes inevitable. On the other hand, the students themselves yearn for cultural lessons that will assist them in their acquisition of English. Thus, students on their own do not see culture incorporation as an imposition or an inevitable hegemony, but a set of guidelines that will help them use their English in real-world situations and culturally diverse contexts (Johnson 3). This way, students led by the aspiration to learn the language in different contexts, they themselves keep hegemony from becoming harmful.

The first class observed in the current study, Oral Expression: Humanity and Society, is part of the second level of the BPEE, and it incorporates a little bit of each world culture (North American [United States, Canada and Mexico], British, African, Central American and more). If it were to mention one English-speaking culture more than any other, it would be the North American (United States) culture. The reference to it, though, was limited, making the Costa Rican culture the hegemonic culture of this course. This is not to say that there was lack of time, teacher's expertise or topics and themes on the target cultures. However, the students were deficient in motivation to further investigate any other cultures and compare them to their own. At the same time, their facilitator was short of providing them with encouragement to do the appropriate research they required outside of class and gather information on additional cultures, other than their native. With the variety of topics

this course has to offer, it could easily refer to more than one dominating target culture and compare them to the Costa Rican one.

The second class, Language and Culture, is part of the third level of the BPEE, and the hegemonic target culture mentioned is that of the United States. Johnson (2), in his article *Teaching Culture in Adult ESL: Pedagogical and Ethical Considerations*, mentions that the choice of teaching only one target culture has been criticized by Auerbach, Canagarajah, Phillipson, and Skutnabb-Kangas. This demonstrates to students that there is only one superior target culture and that it is the only one they should learn about and compare to their own. Such statement is not true. The British, Canadian and Australian cultures are as important as the one of the United States in the English-speaking environment, since all are part of the Inner Circle of English-speaking countries' cultures. The syllabus of the Language and Culture class does not promote the teaching of only 'one' or the North American culture, therefore, the teaching of any English-speaking country can be introduced and analyzed at any point.

In the third case, Victorian Literature, part of the fourth level of the BPEE, the evident hegemonic culture was of course British since the class is about literature in the Victorian times. While teaching the British culture and history, the facilitator made several connections and comparisons to the target culture of the United States and her personal experiences during her stay there, as well as to the native culture of Costa Rica. In this classroom, there is evidence of a combination of three cultures, the British, the North American and the Costa Rican, with the British one having the main role.

In an attempt to answer Johnson's (3) question: "How does an instructor discuss a culture without imposing it?", the above course can be used as an example to provide an answer. The professor managed not to 'impose' but to focus on the British culture while mentioning the culture of the United States to a great extent, both being part of the Inner circle (traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English).

4.2 Components of culture

Culture in the broad sense has two components. The first is the anthropological or sociological component of culture: the attitudes, customs, and daily activities of a people, their ways of thinking, their values, their frames of reference. The second factor is history of civilization. This constituent includes the geography, history and achievements in the sciences and social sciences as well as arts. The latter element, according to Falette's article *The Culture Test* creates a framework for the first, since it represents the heritage of a group of people (263).

The issue of the broad definition of the term 'culture' has led teachers to wonder about *how* to frame the implementation of culture. One of the more recognizable models that has been used to help raise instructors' awareness of the shades of meaning that "culture" implies is Weaver's diagram, in Dunnett, of the "cultural iceberg" (152). This model distinguishes between those aspects of culture that are visible and accessible to everyone--the "surface culture" that anthropologists have referred to as Culture with a "Big C"--and the attitudinal and behavioral norms belonging to the submerged realm of "deep culture" (culture with a "little c") that, though serving as the underpinnings for a given culture, require more intimacy to see and understand.

Both of the above components, respectively, are addressed in the three courses under study, in some more than in others. The Oral Expression class focuses mostly on the first factor of culture, the anthropological or sociological, the "deep culture" ("little c") as defined by Weaver (qtd. in Dunnett 153), without first covering the "surface culture" ("Big C") as it is recommended by Fallette (263). Topics covered in class focus on subjects like types of humor, tolerance and intolerance, jails, prisons and their restrictions and relevant examples that describe the values and norms of a culture. These aspects are part of both the sociological and the historical component. The culture mostly covered, nonetheless, in this class is the native culture of the students and the teacher. Therefore the students are not learning anything

about the target culture or any other culture for that matter. These topics are variable and extensive in information and can help students learn more about the target culture through comparing and contrasting their own values and norms with another. In more general terms, in the bachelor's program the coexistence of the two factors of culture is limited. According to the article *The culture Test* written by Fallette (263), the two components should coexist in the teaching of culture or at least the historical element should set the structure for the anthropological framework, something apparent in this course but only involving one culture, the native one.

In the second course observed, Language and Culture, part of the third level of the BPEE, the first component of culture was also evident as in the previous course. The discussion on values and themes of the target culture of the United States focused on the 'Melting Pot' theory, the differences in values and behaviors of people in the United States and people in Costa Rica, and non-verbal communication. These aspects were of a deeper level of the daily behavior ("the little c") rather than the more contextual behavior ("the big C culture"). In addition, these features of the target culture were compared to the native culture of the students as well as with a variety of other world cultures such as Chinese, French, British, Central American among others. To conclude, the incorporation of culture in this class was neither separated from the language element, nor combined (as it should have been) with the second major component of culture: history, sciences and arts.

In the third course, Victorian Literature, both components were addressed. The professor mentioned historical and geographical aspects of the British culture in the Victorian times prior to the reading assignments. The instructor gave the students the appropriate historical events of those times in order to understand the stories better. She also provided the students with maps, so they could locate them in the world and in the country of England. The facilitator supplied the learners even with examples of artistic paintings to exemplify the second component (history or civilization) of Culture (the Big "C") even better. On the other

hand, during the discussions, on the readings assigned in class, the instructor compared and contrasted values and attitudes of the Victorian era with the ones of Costa Rica or the United States nowadays. Through the latter discussions, the learners were exposed to the anthropological aspect of culture (the little "c").

This technique implemented by the facilitator of this course gave students the opportunity to be introduced equally to both elements of the culture and to more than one target culture. This method was effective, according to the literature review as it combined more than one culture at the same time and exposed students to more than one of their components. Finally, from the five observations that were carried out for each class during this study, it was noted that only one (Victorian Literature) of the three courses was able to frequently incorporate the two components of the target culture. There might be a possibility that the other two classes could have covered the two different components of culture; nonetheless, in order to come to a more concrete conclusion, a larger set of observations would have to be conducted as well as for a longer period of time and with many more classes. Thus, based on the existing data, the results demonstrate a lack of balance in the teaching of the two components in the courses observed.

4.3 Level of cultural components

As mentioned before, there are two components to the teaching and learning of culture. According to Fallette and her article *The Culture Test*, the historical and geographical aspects make up the framework for the first: it represents the heritage of a people, and as such, must be appropriated by the students who wish to understand the new target culture (262). In this ESL/EFL program, it was clear that the second factor was offered to students at a higher level than the first component. The geographical and historical aspect of a culture is best described through literature since throughout the stories and the readings one can experience the sciences, the arts, the history, a more contextual behavior of a country. In the

BPEE at UNA, it was found that the anthropological component was first addressed and followed by the more in-depth analysis of the history of the British society.

During the interview carried out with the students, the group of the Language and Culture class pointed that the cultural aspects throughout the BPEE were repetitive, and always about the same situations and same target culture (United States). Since this course is part of the third level of the BPEE, their response referred to the past three years of their education at UNA. However, the observation reports showed that the mention of the target culture was very limited in the Oral expression, second level class. As mentioned in the previous finding, the only component that was briefly addressed in this class was the sociological one. Language and Culture, a third level course, addressed many cultural themes present in the North American culture (United States) nowadays. Again, the everyday behavior of a people and attitudes, the little "c", was the main focus, and minimum exposure was provided to more contextual behavior, the Big "C". Finally, the Victorian Literature course, fourth level of the BPEE, incorporated a great amount of material of the target culture (British) and compared it with that of the United States and the modern culture of Costa Rica. Therefore, the level of integration of the target culture increased through each level and rose in difficulty and breadth.

According to the literature review and findings, it is suggested in the ESL/EFL field that educators combine the instruction of both components during an ESL/EFL program. Not only both of the elements that comprise a culture should be addressed throughout a program, but they should also be incorporated in a peripheral manner in the courses rather than in a more isolated way. The second and third level courses observed during this study failed to accomplish the former suggestion by the experts. The third course, however, was able to equally integrate both components and to help the students understand other cultures in relation to their own. The geographical and historical factor of a culture is best described through literature, a subject that cannot be offered in the initial stages of an ESL program

since it requires a higher linguistic level and command of the target culture. William Littlewood in *Literature and Language Teaching* states that, "The linguistic structures are, of course, the getaway or barrier to other levels and it is fruitless to expect pupils to appreciate literary work for which they are not linguistically ready" (qtd. in Brumfit and Carter 181). Therefore, teachers should first make sure their students in the BPEE at UNA are linguistically capable of capturing the meaning of literature in the earlier stages in order to expose them to both cultural components at the same time since the beginning.

4.4 Students' Cross-Cultural Awareness

By Seelye's (20) definition in his book *Experiential Activities for Intercultural Learning*, cross-cultural awareness means not only becoming culturally fluent in other cultures but having a solid understanding of your own culture. The methodology suggested by Crawford-Lange and Lange (1984), Kramsch (1993), Seelye (1994) and Byram (1988), (qtd. in Paige 8) in *Culture Learning in Language Education*, proposes that culture learning is attached to three fundamental learning processes: 1. The learner's exploration of their own culture; 2. The discovery of the relationship between language and culture; and 3. The learning of the heuristics for analyzing and comparing cultures. Meta-awareness and cross-cultural comparison lie in the heart of such culture pedagogy. Byram, (qtd. in Lantolf 28) in *Second Culture Acquisition*, believes that the goal of cultural instruction cannot be to replicate the socialization process experienced by natives of the culture but to develop intercultural understanding.

Before attempting to have empathy for an outside world view, one must begin by understanding what it means to be a product of a culture, what hold a culture has of its members, how culture shapes one's perceptions of reality and influences one's attitudes and reactions to different perspectives (Smith 59). According to Hall, (qtd. in Smith 60) in *Prerequisites to teaching and Learning Culture*, the best way humans can become conscious

of their own culture's system is by interacting with others who do not share that same system, in this case individuals from different cultures. The best way that teachers could effectively raise their students' cross-cultural awareness is by comparing and contrasting manners of the native and the target culture.

In regards to the Oral Expression course, part of level two in the BPEE, there were few cross-cultural discussions that promoted the learners' awareness of any target culture. From the five observations that were carried out in this course, only one class (Wednesday, October 1st, Observation No. 3, Topic: Humor) was able to increase the pupils' cross-cultural awareness by giving them the opportunity to compare more than one culture's type of humor. In the rest of the lessons, the students were unable to make any concrete or extensive connections between their native culture and another. At the same time, they were not given any opportunity by their educator to make any valid comparisons. The learners were not engaged in any activities rather than presentations, during which they had to discuss the assigned topic of the day. This consequently minimized their cross-cultural instruction and only limited them to debates about their native culture with minimum exposure to the target one.

Byram, (qtd. in Lantolf 29), suggests the comparative method in order to build one's cultural awareness of his/her own culture as well as of another culture. This method will help students learn more about their world when they are required to compare it to another unknown world. This, in turn, will allow them to learn more about another culture and become aware cross-culturally speaking. An ethnographer by definition is one who seeks to understand and explain the culture of a people. The students are only told what an ethnographer researches. Would it not be effective if the students themselves had to do the research and explain it to their peers through the process of comparison?

The students in the Oral Expression course are given no such advice or motivation to search, analyze, compare and share in class. In fact, they only spoke about their native culture

during their presentations and completely overlooked the target culture or any other culture. Methods, activities, or even discussions that could promote the exploration of the pragmatic component, and post conversations for reflection, are not part of this course. This in turn, means that the cross-cultural awareness of students is deficient and their learning of another culture is ineffective. This is not related to the amount of opportunities each class offered on the topic of culture. The literature course naturally presented more chances for cultural discussions. However, the Language and Culture class as well as the Oral Expression class are obligated, according to the director of the English department, to incorporate the target culture regularly in their classes especially since the topics of discussion are so broad, variable and can encourage comparison/contrast activities between two or more countries and/or cultures.

Instructors can promote the comparison methods of the cultures to students by simply sharing their own experiences with the target culture and comparing them to their native culture, as McGroarty and Calvin (86) suggest in their article *Culture as an issue in second language teaching*. Whether facilitators choose to use this technique to facilitate their students in understanding aspects of the target culture, or not, may be an aspect of personality. However, it is suggested by experts, such as McGroarty and Calvin (86), Hughes (165), Seelye (25) in his book *Experiential Activities for Intercultural Learning* and Hinkel (qtd. in Celce Murcia 445), that comparison and contrast activities raises the awareness of students of the target culture. In turn, this process can be sped up with the help of the facilitators that share personal experiences and give examples to learners how to begin the procedure and expand their cross-cultural awareness.

In the Language and Culture course, the situation observed was a bit different. The students were involved in discussions, presentations, role plays, and activities, with a variety of materials that promoted cross-cultural awareness. They had the opportunity on a weekly basis to share their opinions about their own cultural behaviors and values and to compare to

the target culture as well as others around the world (Chinese, Japanese, Mexican and more). They were given the chance to provide their knowledge of the target culture of the United States. They shared knowledge they had obtained by visiting the country or hosting an exchange student or by watching target culture movies. The professor in this case supplied the students with numerous topics of the target culture (the United States) as well as activities, where they were required to compare the two and reflect upon their native one. Smith (58) claims that "Trying to help students uncover their cultural identity by restricting the digging to their own backyard can be a futile effort"; therefore, ESL educators ought to make connections, comparisons and share knowledge of other cultures compared to the learners' native in order to raise their cross-cultural awareness. One cannot only uncover their own culture. What is the point? Only when students are put in the position to compare values within more than one culture are they given prospects of exploring another world.

In the Victorian Literature class, part of the fourth level of the BPEE, the educator also promotes students' cross-cultural awareness. While in observation 3 (Friday, September 19th), the teacher made connections between the Malay, the stranger/the newcomer and the feelings of culture shock one may have when visiting another place. She led discussions by asking questions and by making associations to her personal experiences, which according to McGroarty and Calvin (86-89) is considered one of the most helpful and valid technique second language teachers can use when teaching culture to their learners. Students were encouraged by this behavior to also contribute their experiences abroad in class and to make comparisons of attitudes and values. The cross-cultural awareness of the professor and the students was steadily building each class through comparing, reflecting and exploring amid the British Victorian era, the North American (the United States) and the Costa Rican modern times.

4.5 Teachers' Approaches and Techniques

When thinking about the inclusion of cultural aspects in the ESL language classroom, two important aspects should be considered carefully: 1. What to teach, and 2. How to teach it. Regarding the first point, as mentioned above, cultural topics should be chosen according to the opportunities they provide students with, so as to: a. discover similarities and differences in their native and target culture; b. explore a variety of cultural themes that allow learners to explore their native as well as the target culture; and c. learn as many cultural themes as possible from the beginning. Finnochiaro and Bonomo support (qtd. in McGroarty and Calvin 85). Regarding the second point, different approaches, methods and techniques have been suggested to assist the teaching of culture in the second language classroom. They might differ in their features, but their purpose is always the same: the systematic approach for culture teaching in the language classroom. To further distinguish one from the other, an explanation for approach and one for technique should be provided. The former is defined as a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning; it is axiomatic, and it describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. The latter is implementational, a particular trick, stratagem, contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method and in harmony with the approach. (Anthony 63-67)

In this section, the findings related to the above definitions are discussed. There were as many techniques as approaches emerging so both will be given equal recognition. First of all, there is a variety of approaches offered by McGroarty and Calvin (86-88) in *Culture as an issue in Second Language Teaching*, that were also identified during this study. The two authors claim that culture in a second language classroom can be taught through: 1. conventional academic approaches, 2. observational approaches, 3. media approaches, 4. experiential approaches, and 5. cognitive approaches. All of the above can be used within the more general and innovative language teaching approaches of comprehension-based,

production-based, humanistic and psycho-suggestive approaches or content-based approaches.

First and foremost, the Conventional Academic Approaches are divided into: a. lectures, and b. readings. Lectures are used in order to convey new information or offer new perspectives on what students already know or should know about the target culture. The lectures could be provided by an expert on the field or even the course instructor. On the other hand, the readings are taken from textbooks, scholarly sources, magazines, newspaper articles or other useful resources. These texts provide students with cultural aspects that they do not normally find in their native environment and are related with situations in the target culture. Analyzing these readings can help them develop their language skills as well as their cultural knowledge whether they are working individually or in groups.

It is apparent from the weekly observations carried out and analyzed that the approaches, which surface in the Oral Expression class, in more general terms, were that of communicative language teaching. It was more of a student-centered classroom and therefore the approaches used to integrate culture were those of the learners, as they create discussions with peers related to the topics and demonstrating film strips or pictures to the group. In more specific terms, an approach used for culture teaching was the conventional academic one. The only approach implemented in this class in order to facilitate the instruction of the target culture, was the use of lectures and readings. In this case, the lectures were the pupils' presentations and the texts were part of the book that students read and gathered most of the culture-related material.

On Wednesday, October 1st (Observation No. 3) the topic was humor. During this session the professor inquired the observer to share her insights on the subject since she was a native of another culture. This approach is identified as the observational and more specifically explained with the use of a native informant or a long-stay sojourner that can share his/her experiences and answer any questions. The educator of this course also used

personal observations from her own experiences from her stay in the United States. Finally, the media approaches were put into use by the students when they brought in examples of film strips and audio clips to further enhance their presentations.

In the case of the use of a native informant, he or she can explain in detail specific activities that take place in the target country, or expectations related to the proposed functions, or even general information about aspects of the life in the target country. These guests can answer students' questions, comment on their culture honestly and overall provide good information to learners about the target culture. This, however, is an approach that was not used in any of the classes, and could increase students' interest and knowledge of the target culture. At the same time, personal observations of the instructors themselves can help students understand better the target culture, as long as these observations take place in the target country and not in the native country. This is recommended by McGroarty and Calvan (87) in order to avoid any documentation in the variety of behavior that exists in native speakers living in their country and native speakers living in a foreign country. All three professors were able to frequently share personal experiences of their stay in the target country (in this case the United States for all three instructors)², in order to help their learners understand the target culture and its people.

Even though the general approach used in the Oral Expression class was the communicative one, the lessons were student-centered³ except for the third observed session on October 1st. On this day, there was a group discussion on the topic of humor and the class was not monopolized around the students, but engaged the entire crowd in a conversation

² The professors of the Language and Culture and the Oral Expression class, lived within the culture they had to teach (USA). Therefore, these two instructors shared personal experiences from their stay in USA. The professor of the Victorian Literature class also lived in USA and thus shared experiences of the culture she directly experienced as well as of the one she taught (British culture). Even though the latter instructor had a great knowledge of the British culture, she could not share a big variety of 'personal experiences' since she did not live in the country but in a British environment in another country.

³ Using the term 'student-centered', it should be specified that the lessons were mostly *led* by the students with minimal teacher participation or guidance for appropriate cultural norms, rather than a student-centered class where the students are the center of the learning process and the teacher is their guide.

about 'humor'. More specifically, the instructor (in her personal description of her approaches) stated that she incorporates culture teaching in her lessons by encouraging her students to adopt a retrospective, critical stand regarding the principles and values of their own culture. "From that point try to understand the principles and values expounded in the articles, videos and discussion topics approached in class", stated the professor of the Oral Expression class. She further expressed "I promote a comparative analysis of the values, behavior, and understandings implicit or explicitly addressed in the material. In my courses, I am basically interested in having students draw their own conclusions and form opinions about others based on understanding themselves as part of a culture." The above aspect was also obvious in the observation reports, nonetheless, not in an elevated degree neither focusing on one particular target culture. The students' interview claimed that there was no culture incorporation in their classroom and that they are not learning about any target culture per se. The learners' latter statement proved to be partially incongruent through the observation reports and teacher interviews.

On the other hand, some techniques that helped build students' awareness were found. Of the eight techniques that Hughes (1967) suggests in his article *Culture analysis in the second language classroom*, only three were identified in this class. As many more well known scholars have suggested various techniques to implement culture in an ESL classroom, such as Seelye, Kramsch, Crawford-Lange and Lange, Hughes (1967) narrows down these techniques to the comparison method, the culture assimilators, culture capsule, drama, audiomotor unit or total physical response, newspapers, projected media and the culture island. When teachers create discussions while pointing out differences in the two cultures, they raise their students' cross-cultural knowledge while comparing the two. As mentioned above, in previous findings, the comparison method was definitely evident. The professor required her students to compare *at times* their native culture with themes of the target culture of the United States.

Secondly, the group discussion of the third observation was based on research that the learners had conducted on newspaper or Internet newspaper articles. Hughes (167-168) suggests that good cultural insights can be found in headlines, advertisements, editorials, sports pages, comics, or weather reports. The third technique, projected media and creating group discussions, was displayed by the pupils. The learners briefly demonstrated some film strips, and provided their peers with slides and pictures of examples mostly of their native as well as of the target culture.

In conclusion, a minimum amount of techniques and approaches were used in this class to incorporate culture, mostly the native culture. Malamah and Thomas, (qtd. in Martinez 78), claim that there are two types of teaching: the traditional and the interactive. In the traditional type the professors only talk and instruct the students while in the interactive the communication between students, teachers and the book in the classroom is consistent. In this class there was a more traditional type of atmosphere. Only in this case the students were the center of it, not the teacher. The learners were assigned to present a topic for each class, whereas engaging in a discussion, a more interactive class, which involves the entire group, was not scheduled as frequently.

In the second case, Language and Culture course offered the students many more approaches and techniques that facilitated their learning of the target culture and reinforced their cross-cultural awareness. The communicative approach was put into practice in this course, combined with the Total Physical Response approach (TPR). The professor requested the students to communicate and discuss the cultural themes in class according to the readings, their research or their personal experiences with the target culture. At the same time, he created activities where he engaged them in role plays. More specifically, he incorporated culture using the media, experiential, observational and conventional approaches to facilitate his learners in understanding the target cultural values and norms.

The media approaches comprise of films or videotapes and other useful artifacts. These different artifacts can provide learners with vivid illustrations or demonstrate cultural patterns while enhancing any readings or lectures used to introduce a culture in any course. McGroarty and Calvan (87) provide ESL/EFL trainees with a variety of documentary films that include a wealth of cultural information that would be of great interest to language teachers. These films can create debates and comparison discussions between one's native and target culture. Musical instruments, types of clothing, and different foods can be considered as other interesting artifacts that also implement the teaching of culture. While implementing the media approach the instructor in this case used the film "You don't know me" to show the concepts of the 'Melting Pot' and stereotyping in the United States.

The Experiential Approaches include role plays, simulation games and cross-cultural exercises. The role plays help teachers and students comprehend the meaning of acting and being in the position of a member of the target culture, while they act out different cultural situations. During these role plays students can act out scenes from another culture they have experienced while teaching their classmates new behavioral patterns. The simulation games are created by the students and require participants to "live" according to the cultural patterns of the country under study. Lastly, cross-cultural exercises are used in ESL/EFL classrooms to portray various aspects of customary behavior in the target culture. These types of behavior may be interpersonal distance in conversation, or manner of address, gaze, gestures and much more that help both the teacher and student identify the cultural patterns and how to respond to them appropriately. For this second category (the experiential), the Language and Culture instructor engaged the students in a role play activity to demonstrate to the rest of the class the non-verbal miscommunication that can take place when the two speakers are from a different culture (Observation No. 4, on Tuesday September 23rd).

For the third category (observational), he used a long-term sojourner such as himself and his personal experiences from his stay abroad as well as his own observations and

knowledge of not only the culture in the United States but of others too. As described earlier these approaches provide students with honest descriptions of the target culture and both instructors and learners can engage in comparing the aspects noted in behavioral differences and more. An approach, strongly suggested by McGroarty and Calvan (89), that the facilitator of the Language and Culture course frequently implemented in his classes, was that of spontaneous interruptions during the planned lesson by sharing personal experiences and asking learners to share theirs. Lastly, he used the conventional academic approaches which are composed of lectures and readings, in order to introduce different culturally related communication situations. The readings were used as a source for the topics of each day as the lectures were by Dolores Rafter Arevalo (2008), an expert in non-verbal communication and professor of Penn State University in the United States.

Another set of approaches for teaching culture is termed as Cognitive Approaches. This group consists of culture assimilators, culture capsules and culturgrams. Culture assimilators are concise means of illustrating cultural contrasts in relevant behavioral terms and can help ESL/EFL learners understand why choices that seem acceptable to them are not always appropriate in a cross-cultural situation. McGroarty and Calvan (88) refer to these techniques as adaptable and quite useful in the second language classroom, since most of these derive from work in the cognitive psychology field. Culture capsules are short descriptions of differences found between the two cultures (learners' native vs. students' target culture). Similar to the culture assimilators and capsules that also appear in Seelye (111-119), are the culturgrams defined as short descriptions of major aspects of a culture (e.g. telegrams, readings about the target country, essential vocabulary etc.).

The students themselves used the cognitive approaches in order to assimilate the target culture. These approaches included culture assimilators, culture capsules and culturgrams. In the first and second observations the students handed out activities during their presentations to their peers to generate discussions and debates. The figure below shows

the professor of the Language and Culture class discussing with one of the groups about the topic and asking them questions to engage them in conversations.



Figure 1. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Tuesday, September 4th, 2008)

The technique applied in this class on several occasions was that of comparing. The facilitator inquired the learners several times to measure up to their native culture to that of the United States as well as the Chinese, or British or Central American or even the sub-cultures created within Costa Rica. Projected media, such as the lectures of Dolores Rafter Arevalo (2008) and the movie were used to raise students' cultural awareness. He also encouraged his pupils to make connections between the native and the target culture through the use of role plays, dramatizations or TPR. Finally, he generated activities where students had to compare and contrast the values of their country and those of the United States according to their knowledge. In this course, the communicative approach and TPR were combined with Gardner's approaches. All of the above blended with many different techniques of evaluating, interpreting, analyzing aspects of the target culture with the students' native culture. John Dewey (qtd. in Hall 150), describes in a simpler way "we learn by doing", and in this course, the pupils have been learning by participating in role plays, comparing and contrasting activities, culture assimilators and clusters.

"I like to use real materials related to literature such as poems and short stories in which I can come across several cultural aspects. In this way, I can have students analyze characters and their behavior as well as the main cultural themes of the story," stated the facilitator in his self-descriptive email. He also described in more detail the type of approach he uses in his lessons, the eclectic approach. He prefers to combine the content-based instruction with the theme-based instruction in order to increase students' awareness and understanding of the cultural values of the target culture, their own and other cultures as well. To accomplish this, he asks his learners to compare and contrast the cultures presented in class as they reflect and share opinions and personal experiences. These approaches and techniques identified by the instructor of Language and Culture were also recognized by the researcher during the observations. The students pointed out the same conclusions during their interview even though they expressed their disappointment for the focus *only* on the culture of the United States. "We would prefer to learn some more about the British or Canadian cultures as well," they claimed when asked to specify their previous response.

In the Victorian Literature course, a combination of many different approaches and techniques appeared that created a very concrete cultural theme in each class. The professor of this course combined Gardner's theory, the communicative approach and conventional academic approaches-lectures and readings to build her students' cultural and cross-cultural awareness. The readings and the facilitator's descriptions of the stories' background served as a basis for the learners' knowledge they needed to make appropriate interpretations. Gathbonton and Tucker Kujoor, and Johnson, in the article *Cultural Knowledge and the Teaching of Reading*, stated that there is "growing evidence that one very important factor affecting the reading comprehension of SLA learners is the lack of necessary cultural background knowledge" (qtd. in McKay 18). "It is essential that teachers make sure that learners have the required cultural and world background in order to interpret the text provided" (McKay 18-19). McKay's suggestion was one of the most consistent techniques

the professor followed in this course on a weekly basis; she first provided the background of the story to her students, assigned a reading, an activity or a film and generated discussions of comparing, contrasting, interpreting and reflecting.

The instructor herself has lived in a British household but in the United States. Having experienced both environments at the same time, she was able to provide her learners with her own experiences and knowledge of two major cultures of the Inner Circle, while putting into use the observational approaches that consist of one's own observations and personal experiences of the target culture. The media approaches, which are composed of films and other artifacts, were used to show the way of living in Great Britain in the Victorian era. One of her techniques was to provide the students with the required background knowledge needed to understand the film. She then used a session for the film "From Hell", based on the times of Jack the Ripper. After the film, the group was involved in a discussion making connections to the reading and previous sessions as well as interpreting information from real life events. Finally, with the use of experiential approaches that include role plays and other activities through which learners experience the target culture, the professor was able to make her classes even more interesting and interactive. During the last session, the students performed a short role play (the drama technique) based on the story from the Jungle book, *Tiger Tiger* and *Mosley's Brother*. The combination of all the above approaches helped to provide the students the appropriate background knowledge they required in order to understand the literature better and reflect in class. The figure below depicts the students getting ready for their presentation on *Tiger Tiger*. They painted their face and dressed accordingly to better represent the characters of the reading.



Figure II. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Friday, October 10th, 2008)

Finally, the facilitator of the Victorian Literature class provided a self-description that matched the findings of the observations as well as the students' claims during their interview. The following section, *Materials*, further supports the teachers' own description of the approaches and techniques used in each class as well as the materials that helped in the integration of the culture teaching/learning process. "The books (containing novels and stories) themselves provide the cultural material, since they reflect attitudes, customs, ways of life," she wrote. In this case, she asks questions to help the students discover relevant cultural markers or issues by themselves. "In any literature course, one should read essays written by Victorian authors that discuss the problems and issues relevant at the time of writing," she further explained. By doing this she is able to help students make connections and also expand their cultural knowledge while reading literature of another era. She finally concluded by supporting another major finding of this study, *Students' Cross-cultural awareness*, as she said: "...We keep comparing the target culture under study with our contemporary culture, the social issues of the period with those which are relevant today, the attitudes and beliefs of the past with those of today, etc. Usually we discover there are very few differences." As mentioned in the findings' section of this category, this is an exact

portrayal of the implementation of culture in this course and the facilitator managed to effectively incorporate culture in her class.

4.6 Materials

In order for an approach or a technique to be effective in the incorporation of the target culture in class, a great deal of responsibility lies on the choice of materials used in class to facilitate the teaching of culture. Some materials require specially trained teachers with near-native competence in the target language. Others are designed to replace teachers so that learning is independent. On the other hand, some dictate various interactional patterns in the classroom, others inhibit classroom interaction, while others are noncommittal about interaction between teacher learner and learner-learner. The role of instructional materials within a method will reflect the goal of materials, their form, and their relation to other sources of input and the abilities of the teachers state Richards and Rodgers (19) in their article *The Nature of Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*.

The use of supplies in an ESL/EFL classroom in order to incorporate culture in an effective way is very essential. Resources and activities should promote constant real life conversations during which students are able to communicate and integrate their knowledge about the target culture and language. The most effective activities and materials to achieve this would be to use realia that promotes real communication in group or pair activities, to have native speakers sharing their experiences in class and home videos, movie clips or videotaped excerpts from newscasts and TV programs from the target culture, as Medgyes (440) adheres.

The only materials found in the Oral Expression class were a handout given by the professor in order to aid students in organizing their comments on discussion day (that took part once in three or four weeks), and a number of digital presentations designed by the students. These materials encouraged learners to compare their own culture with the foreign

culture and make meaningful connections while using the target language as means of communication. The handout in this course was used just as an organizational technique and the presentations were developed by the students. During the presentations, many of the students showed comic strips and film clips from the target country. Yet, as seen from the observations, there were neither comments nor discussions carried out on the topics. "Using authentic sources from the native speech community helps to engage students in authentic cultural experiences", suggest Peterson and Coltrane (1) in their article *Culture in Second Language Teaching*. On the other hand, Kramsch and Robinson, qtd. in *Culture Learning in Language Education* by Paige (24-26), remind us that the use of authentic materials needs to be accompanied by an understanding of how one derives meaning from them. The two quotes above describe a couple of *key* aspects that were not present in the Oral Expression class.

In the Language and Culture class, the materials used to implement the target culture varied from handouts given by the professor, culture assimilators and cluster activities composed by the students, presentations of an expert brought in by the professor, a movie, role plays, and more.

...the role of instructional materials within a functional/communicative methodology might be specified in the following terms: 1. Materials will focus on the communicative abilities of interpretation, expression and negotiation. 2. Materials will focus on understandable, relevant, and interesting exchanges of information, rather than on presentation of grammatical form, 3. Materials will involve different kinds of texts and different media, which the learners can use to develop their competence through a variety of different activities and tasks (Richards and Rodgers 30) in the article *The Nature of Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*.

All of the materials used in both courses the Language and Culture and the Victorian Literature course met all of the above requirements. In the Victorian Literature class, students were offered different supplementary resources provided in the annexes part, in order to facilitate in the understanding of the geographical and historical component of the target culture. The professor provided a variety of activities and supplies, such as role plays, TV, movies, maps and other artifacts that demonstrated facts from the readings, organizational index cards and more. All of the materials used were connected to the readings and their goal was to simplify learning, create situations of interpretation and connections between the native and the target culture as well as modern life and the Victorian era. "The teacher can adapt their use of authentic materials..." state Peterson and Coltrane (1-2). In this case, as it was mentioned in the observation reports, the professor had to make adjustments to some of the readings due to their length. On Friday, September 26th (Observation no. 4) the organizational flash cards were used to facilitate students in summarizing the text while working in pairs or groups and discussing their answers.

Since the use of supplementary materials and their effectiveness were investigated during this study and not the textbooks, the latter will not be analyzed in detail. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that, during the students' interview of the course Language and Culture, the group claimed that the book has no relevance to the target culture and the topics are of general interest in society. The same situation emerged from the observations in the Oral Expression class, where the students' presentations focused on general topics concerning the Costa Rican society rather than an English-speaking country. Finally, in the Victorian literature course, the book is obviously more related to the culture presented in class since it has been chosen to teach the societal values and themes of Great Britain in the 17th and 18th century.

4.7 Teachers' Knowledge Base

The significance of the role of the teacher in the culture learning process should now be manifestly obvious. Byram et al. (104-116) in his article *Young People's Perceptions of other cultures: The role of Foreign Language Teaching* identified three idiosyncratic orientations that determine the teacher's contributions: 1. individual philosophy regarding language pedagogy in general; 2. the nature of personal experience with the foreign culture; and 3. expectations regarding the learning potential of a class. These authors also single out the intercultural experience as the most important factor. According to Paige (32), if a teacher's personal experience with the target culture is limited, it restricts the teacher's ability to teach culture, leads students to question the credibility of the educator to serve as a cultural informant, and thus constrains the facilitator's ability to help students bridge the home and the target cultures. Intercultural experience is ultimately combined with intercultural competence which involves knowledge, attitudes and behavior.

Each instructor's knowledge base of the target culture was addressed as well as the effects of their experience may or may not have during the cultural teaching/learning process. A semi-structured interview, carried out with each of the professors to inquire about the contact with the target culture revealed that the professors in the study have lived, worked and studied for a year or more, in the United States. As Paige (1997) and Byram (1991) claimed above, all three professors interviewed had contact with the target culture and hence should be qualified and equipped to instruct the target culture. What happens in the Victorian Literature class, where the target culture is British? That instructor has not visited Great Britain and has not had personal contact with the culture, especially in Victorian times. Is the educator perhaps unqualified or can Byram (1991) and Paige (1997) be proved wrong?

First, the instructor of Language and Culture lived in the United States for three years. He worked and studied for his masters program while he traveled across the country. He shares numerous personal experiences during class. He also engages his students in many

different cultural discussions and activities, during which he provides constant feedback, makes connections to the native culture and supplies his students with any explanations of why some features are different in the target culture. When students were asked during their interview whether they thought the teacher was equipped with the appropriate knowledge to teach the target culture, one student responded "We feel confident that he will provide us with well-founded information...He has been to the target country and every question we might have he knows how to answer it and create discussions on the topic." Another student added "...our previous teacher could not do that." In the journal the learners claimed their instructor was well informed about the cultural themes and provided many different examples as well as personal experiences compared to their native culture. "He also promotes comparison between other cultures and the Costa Rican culture," stated a male student.

The facilitator of Oral Expression spent five years in the United States, where she studied for her PhD in sociology and a minor in sociology education with a focus on the African diaspora, between the years 1988 and 1993. She also shares many personal experiences from her stay in the target country during the discussion sessions or after students' presentations. She has the strongest knowledge base of the three instructors observed; nonetheless, the target culture integration in the classroom is not as evident as it appears to be in the other two classrooms. The incorporation of the target culture and of any culture for that matter is limited or close to none⁴. Joining this last statement to the claims of Byram (1991) and Paige (1997) mentioned above, it becomes clear that teachers does not necessitate only personal contact with the target culture that will equip them with the appropriate knowledge to teach culture. That facilitator needs to have complete access to

⁴ In order to further investigate the reason for the limited mention of the target culture in the Oral Expression class, an open-ended question (How do you choose to incorporate culture in your classroom? What are the approaches and techniques you use to do so?) was provided to each of the professors. In this specific case the instructor claimed that "I must first say that Oral Communication is not a culture course proper. However, I incorporate this skill into my classes as often as possible..." The syllabus of this course does not mention the teaching of the target culture as the center of instruction, nonetheless, according to the director of the English department of the BPEE at UNA "The subject of culture should be regularly incorporated in every class of the program...the syllabus states so as well."

resources, incorporate cross-cultural activities, use authentic materials, a different technique or approaches week by week, and promote interactive classes where students are required to share, compare, infer, interpret, and connect to their culture and others.

“...‘Intercultural Literacy’ is assessed in the four areas: academic background, language proficiency, cross-cultural experiences, and genuine commitment to teaching.” (Ward 535) All of these four aspects must be combined in order to successfully integrate the culture in class. The last professor observed was the one of the Victorian Literature class, who spent the least amount of time of all three educators in the target country. This instructor spent only a year in the United States during an exchange program. Throughout her stay abroad, she lived in a British household. The mother of the host family was from Great Britain, and even though she lived in the United States, she kept her way of living very British-like. Therefore, the instructor had the opportunity to experience both major target cultures at the same time, but she has yet to have actual personal contact with Great Britain.

The latter facilitator has had the least amount of cultural contact of all, yet her classes are the richest in cultural content. She continuously engaged her students in different activities each class, which required them to make connections, share their personal experiences, interpret, compare and contrast. She brought in materials that exposed the learners to authentic language and authentic cultural aspects. She engaged students in activities during which they had to perform the characters they read about and were able to make the learning process of another language and culture more meaningful. Her classes were based on the constructivist’s approach while building cross-cultural awareness and linguistic competence through literature.

The Victorian Literature professor proved her genuine commitment to teaching and her will to research on the material she taught. In the interview she claimed that all her knowledge of the British culture was gained through reading books extensively year after year and just “...being in love with that era of British society and history,” as the professor

stated. On the other hand, Byram (1991) and Paige (1994) claim that an ESL/EFL pedagogical professional needs extensive personal contact with that target culture in order to be qualified to teach that culture. The facilitator of the three with the least personal contact with the target culture has been able to incorporate more than one culture of the Inner Circle into her classroom and built her students' cross-cultural awareness. This also proves that a professor *can* instruct a culture (other than their native), even if they have not been fully immersed in the target culture. All three instructors proved this at some degree⁵. This finding contradicts Byram and Paige's statements and leads to another question that arose during this study: Can a non-native teacher teach the target culture as well as a native speaker teacher?

4.8 Non-Native Teachers vs. Native and Culture

Safabi, (qtd. in Medgyes 438), in *When the Teacher is a Non-native Speaker*, in a study about ESL jobs across the world and which teachers are preferred (the natives or non-natives), found that a teacher's lack of native insights about American English usage and cultural expectations could be detrimental to non-natives' chances in job interviews. The non-native educators are just as capable teaching the target culture as the natives are, if not better. Being born in the target country does not necessarily mean that one is fully equipped with the strategies, theories and experience to teach a second language or culture. In this study, one of the professors proved to be fully aware of what she had to teach, how to teach it and how to build her learners' cultural awareness and cross-cultural awareness. This instructor has proven that one does not have to visit or live in the target country in order to teach that target culture. Through her commitment to teaching and reading about the target culture, the facilitator became cross-culturally competent to a level where she can teach the target culture

⁵ The Language and Culture teacher spent three years abroad and was able to successfully and regularly integrate the culture of the United States in his classes. The instructor of the Oral Expression class spent six years in the United States and was also able to effectively (even though rarely) incorporate the culture of the United States in her classes. Lastly, the Victorian Literature facilitator spent one year in the United States and had no contact with Great Britain. Yet, she was able to efficiently and frequently integrate both target cultures in her lessons.

without being a native. Through her educational experience and research, she has supplied herself with all the necessary tools required to enter a second language classroom and to instruct second language learners at least two target cultures part of the Inner Circle.

Finally, the learners were inquired whether they liked having a non-native speaker teacher or preferred a native speaker instructor. The students of the Oral Expression class expressed that they thought their facilitator knew the target culture well; though, there were no activities or approaches followed in class to incorporate it. The researcher at that point suggested that they incorporate comparison examples between their native and target culture, to enhance their cross-cultural awareness. A suggestion that was adopted in the following class and proved that all this group requires is motivation and guidance through the target culture teaching and learning process. Altogether, the professor was not thought of as unqualified or inadequate to teach culture, even though this class needs to be guided towards building their cross-cultural awareness.

The students of the Victorian Literature class were asked the same question and agreed that they preferred the non-native teacher. Their preference was due to the fact that their educator was able to explain the cultural themes in a very creative way that helped them understand the target culture and the readings better. They enjoyed how different the instructor's classes were each week and they claimed "she is as qualified to teach both the American and the British culture as is any other native teacher," "...plus she is fun and able to draw a 'picture' of that society," they concluded.

On the other hand, when the students of the Language and Culture class were asked if they would prefer having a Native speaker teacher instruct them about culture, a mixed set of answers was collected. One male student answered "yes" and another female student claimed "no." The former learner stated "I say 'yes' because a native speaker knows the target culture...I mean the non-native teacher does too, but natives know it better," "...they can provide us with more real examples and they are the closest some of us will get to the target

culture.” On the other hand, the female student claimed “I say ‘no’ because the native teachers are not from our culture...they do not know our culture and cannot compare”, “...the non-native teachers know the target culture well enough and also our native culture and can compare the two and help us understand both better.”

With these words, another question arose: Is the non-native speaker teacher to non-native speakers students a better combination rather than native speaker teacher to non-native speaker students? Nevertheless, further investigation in the future may easily prove that students prefer non-native speaker teachers over native, because a lower level of performance may be required of them, hence the level of anxiety may be lower. On the other hand, from the students that claimed to prefer non-natives versus native speaker teachers (about 20 out of the 49 that provided an answer), only 5 of them had a point of reference to compare between the two and make a fair choice. The rest of the students that showed preference for the non-native speaker teachers simply claimed that they felt more comfortable with them, and that liked that fact that they shared the same cultural background.

4.9 Non-Native Teachers, Non-Native Students and the Target Culture

The non-native speaker teachers (NNSTs) can be set as a proper student model, since they learned English after they acquired their native language, unlike native speaker teachers (NSTs) who acquired English as their native language—two completely different processes according to Krashen (1981). Based on this concept, there are many advantages of having a NNST as an English teacher, and Llurda (15) describes: a. they can teach language learning strategies more effectively, b. they are a good learner model, c. supply more information about the English language, d. can anticipate and prevent language difficulties, e. benefit from using the students’ mother tongue and culture to make connections. “...it is possible to assert that sharing the students’ mother tongue greatly benefits learners”(Maniello 1) since learners and teachers can communicate in their native language or make connections between

the native culture and the target. This proves once again that native teachers are not necessarily better or preferred than non-native teachers. On the contrary, it benefits students if their instructor shares the same linguistic and cultural background with them.

The majority of students from the three courses claimed they preferred their non-native teacher over the native teacher. They were able to connect to their instructors and share that common ground since they once had to endure the same route of learning a foreign language and culture. The non-native educators have experienced the process and therefore know the difficult areas, the challenging spots, the strategies that work, and the connections to the students and their own culture.

In a study carried out by Barratt and Kontra (qtd. in Llurda 220) to investigate the differences between Native Speaker Teachers (NSTs) and Non-Native Speaker Teachers (NNSTs), it was shown that both groups have their advantages and disadvantages in the ESL/EFL classrooms. The authors described three cases, two in Hungary and one in China, in which most of the respondents had a NST and were asked to write the advantages of having such an instructor. The learners expressed that a NST was authentic, had an authentic pronunciation, wide vocabulary, knew a lot about culture and was very relaxed about grades and error corrections. A concept that the professor of Victorian Literature supported during her interview "...the teacher does not have to belong in the same culture as the students but it is necessary to have experienced it for a certain period of time, in order to make the appropriate connections." Hence, it is essential for any second language educator to be familiar with the students' native culture since expanding their cross-cultural awareness involves the connection between the two and someone who is qualified to make the link possible.

Medgyes (434), in his article *When the teacher is a non-native speaker*, claims that long stays in English-speaking countries, hard work and dedication might help narrow the gap, but very few NNSTs are ever able to catch up with their native colleagues. This claim

seems to contradict this research study at Universidad Nacional since all three professors were fully familiar of the target cultures they were teaching. More specifically, the professor of the Victorian Literature class was able to teach the British culture as native-like as possible, through her different techniques, materials, descriptions, connections and interpretations, without even having visited that target country.

5.3 Heterotopic Culture

As explained in the Ecology section, there are three circles designed that comprise the English-speaking countries of the world and their culture. Kaitera (2010, in Llanos 2017) designed the concentric circles model of the heterotopia, the Father circle, and the Mother circle. The Father circle is what is the most important in this case since it encompasses the values of the UK, U.S.A., Australia and Canada. All four countries are English-speaking and have similar cultures to that of the Great Britain society, and are therefore part of the large circle. "Learners are affected in their language acquisition by their perception of the target culture. If the language learner perceives the target culture as well as his native culture in positive terms, their proficiency in the L2 is enhanced" (Llanos 2017, in Johnson 2017). Hence, similar target cultures to the native culture could provide not only an enhanced second language experiential but a cultural one also.

Culture legitimacy is difficult to meet in a second language learning environment. Instruction may lack time and expertise to teach a culture other than the one they have been exposed to. However, in the case of the professor of the Victorian Literature course, it was proven that even though she has not been exposed to the British culture as much as in the

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section provides recommendations for some of the above findings that set out to further advance the integration of culture in the BPEE at UNA. Some of the recommendations are addressed: a. to the coordination, b. to the professors and c. to the students of the program. A literature review is also provided so as to support the suggestions given by the researcher and to provide a concrete ground of her interpretations. Finally, a set of general suggestions are supplied for the program to consider the implementation requirements of the target culture in the future.

5.1 Hegemonic Culture

As explained in the findings' section, there are three circles designed that comprise the English-speaking countries of the world and their culture. Kachru (qtd. in Llorca 217) designed the concentric circles model of the Inner circle, the Outer circle, and the Expanding circle. The Inner circle is what is the most important in this case since it encompasses the culture of the UK, U.S.A., Australia and Canada. All four countries are English-speaking and have similar cultures to that of the Costa Rican society, and are therefore part of the Inner circle. "Learners are affected in their language acquisition by their perception of the target culture. If the language learner perceives the target culture as well as his native culture in positive terms, then proficiency in the L2 is enhanced" Brown (qtd. in Johnson 2). Hence, similar target cultures to the native culture could provide not only an enhanced second learning experience but a cultural one also.

Culture hegemony is difficult to avoid in a second language learning environment. Instructors may lack time and expertise to teach a culture other than the one they have been exposed to. However, in the case of the professor of the Victorian Literature course, it was proven that, even though she has not been exposed to the British culture as much as to the

one of the United States, she was equally able to instruct and incorporate the appropriate target culture efficiently. A discovery that proves an instructor does not *only* require time and expertise to include more than one target culture in the classroom, but also a strong will and many resources.

A recommendation for this finding would be first to the coordination of the BPEE. For classes like Oral Expression or Language and Culture, where a variety of different society themes are covered, more than one culture may be developed. A comparison of themes and values can easily be executed in regards to the British, the American and the Costa Rican culture. An extensive research of all three can be made by students and teachers, within or outside class followed by comparing and contrasting techniques.

The professors of each course in the BPEE should motivate the discussion of other cultures of the Inner circle in their classrooms. According to Wikipedia online encyclopedia⁶, Costa Rica stands as the most visited nation in the Central American region with 1.9 million foreign visitors in 2007. Most of the tourists come from the U.S. and Canada (46%), and the E. U. (European Union) (16%) (Wikipedia, 2008: 5.1). That is at least three English-speaking countries from the Inner circle that visit Costa Rica each year.

In order to enhance their second language learning and culture process students should do research on more English-speaking countries than just the United States or their native country. All three courses investigated have a great advantage of providing a variety of discussion topics. Many opportunities of comparison, contrast, reflection, interpretation and more techniques suggested by scholars for culture incorporation in a second language classroom are provided in these classrooms. In the Oral Expression class, culture can be explored by students and professors in regards to all the topics offered in the sessions. Students can expand their cultural knowledge at the same time as they practice their oral

⁶ Based on the Information Technology Services (ITS) in the University of North Carolina, at this point in time Wikipedia is one of the top most reliable sources for worldwide information and statistics. In fact, it surpasses the encyclopedia Britannica in consistency and reliability (2).

speaking skills. In the Language and Culture class, the hegemonizing of the culture in the United States is obvious. Due to the variety of topics in this class as well the integration of more than one culture may be straightforward and enriching. In the Victorian Literature class, because of the instructor's and students' past contact with the United States' culture and the subject of the course (British Society), there was a mixture of cultures and no one superior emerged.

Finally, by integrating more than one dominating target culture in the second language learning classrooms, not only will the learners expand their cross-cultural awareness but the lessons will become more interactive and educational in a more global sense. The presentation of more than one culture will create debates and discussions, during which students and teachers can learn about the world while comparing it to their own culture. "Periodic reference to the mother culture and to the third or fourth cultures can help keep the discussion on a higher level of abstraction and avoid a supercilious, judgmental approach," Jarvis (153) confirms in his article *Making Cross-cultural Connections*.

5.2 Cultural Components

In this section it was pointed that the historical component, which in fact is a framework for the sociological and anthropological factor of culture, is developed during the fourth level of the BPEE. The anthropological component is extended much earlier without the learners having any background on the history or geography of the target cultures. "Culture is in the process of becoming and should therefore be taught as a process. To study culture as a body of facts is to study the characteristics of culture; to study culture as process is to study its essence" (Crawford-Lange and Lange 144).

Culture should be taught as a process of the historical element as well as the anthropological factor throughout the BPEE. Cultural aspects should equally be distributed in all courses and focus on different features of the target culture while providing characteristics

of other cultures as well. In this way students advance in their multicultural skills while developing their second culture knowledge in all components equally all throughout the four years of their BPEE studies. The historical or geographical factor is seen as the framework to the sociological one according to Fallette (263) in her article *The Culture Test*. Therefore, why is it offered in the literature classes in the fourth level, at the end of the program? Learners should have the option of choosing a literature course earlier on in the program, where they can learn the routes of the target culture and as they progress within the curriculum they can better comprehend the values and behaviors of the target culture. The two components of culture should not be separated through their studies, but combined with language and presented at the same time. "Knowledge of historic accomplishments can instill pride in one's background and give one a sense of cultural roots," Seelye (240) in his book *Teaching Culture* confirms and, therefore, places the importance on the historical aspect as much as on the anthropological one. As mentioned in the findings section, Littlewood in Brumfit expressed that learners are more than capable to comprehend literature as long as they are linguistically ready, hence, students can be exposed to literary work much sooner in the BPEE (181).

5.3 Cross-Cultural Awareness

To further support the above theoretical framework on students' cross-cultural awareness, it should be mentioned that the process of it is much easier than it looks. Weeks et al. quoted in *Prerequisites to teaching and learning Culture* by Smith (59) claim that information about another culture is useless "unless persons recognize their own culture-based values, feelings and attitudes." Then again, if one is not put into the situation of comparing his/her own culture to someone else, he/she will not be able to understand the values of his/her own native culture. As Hall, quoted in Smith, describes it "the best of

becoming conscious of one's own culture is by interacting with others who do not share that same cultural system..."(60)

The majority of the classes observed incorporated comparisons and contradictions between the values, behaviors, norms of the target culture and that of the students. Although, is that enough to build the students' cross-cultural awareness in four years? Is it enough to provide activities or films or slides and pictures and expect learners to compare and make connections? Perhaps something more can be done.

Recognizing that we "can never see through another's eyes; we must see through our own" Robinson stresses (qtd. in Smith 58), the overall goal of the program for the learner should: a. raise their consciousness in regard to perspective and perception and b. increase their ability to recognize at least in a limited way what things might look like from the viewpoint of members of another culture. A key aspect that was suggested during the students' interviews was that they would like guest native speakers in their classrooms more often. Considering the above statements the researcher takes the liberty of making two important recommendations.

First, the activities and techniques executed during class should be continued since the process of comparing and making valuable connections with one's own culture can be a concrete basis to raising cross-cultural awareness. On the other hand, an aspiring suggestion is to create an opportunity for the learners to become part of a two-way immersion or bilingual program. These programs would give the chance to students to travel to an English-speaking country, most likely the U.S. (due to proximity), and study for a long-term or short-term period. In turn, this prospect would allow students to experience the target language and culture first hand and through their own eyes, not their teachers.' This is an aspiring suggestion, as mentioned above, because of the grand limitation of financial difficulties. Though, this restraint could be overlooked if a beneficial deal is made between the two institutions in both countries. For example, the masters program in second languages and

cultures at UNA already has a relationship with Penn State University in the United States as well as other well-known universities. An agreement could be reached between the two institutions where a Costa Rican student could visit the country for three months and be hosted by a family and study. At the same time a Costa Rican learner's place could be taken by a student from the United States who would come to Costa Rica and do the same accordingly. In this way, the students would only have to pay for the air fare and 'exchange lives' for a short period of time while gaining the experience of a life time. This plan of course would have to be agreed upon by between the two universities without the meddling of other companies or extra fees.

Knowing that the above recommendation would be a painstaking procedure and difficult to achieve, another suggestion follows. Including students from English-speaking countries in more than one course throughout the program could also fulfill cross-cultural awareness. Many exchange students have been noticed around campus already taking classes at UNA. Once more, an agreement could be arranged between the two institutions, where the university in the United States provides its students with extra credit if they attend at least two classes in the Costa Rican university during their studies here. This would enable the learners of the BPEE to have an opportunity to interact with native speakers and even host them in their houses and classes. At the same time, the native speakers could gain knowledge, university credits and cross-cultural awareness themselves. During class time, the students could be involved in pair or group activities, during which they can learn about each other's cultures, language and values.

5.4 Teachers' Approaches and Techniques

Teachers can make a difference in the way we see ourselves. They can structure the curriculum so that students can examine the many ways cultural conditioning affects the quality of human thought and actions. "Culture is dictatorial unless it is understood and

examined” affirms Hall (qtd. in Seelye 21) in *Teaching Culture*. Thus, teachers should select the appropriate approaches and techniques to integrate culture into their classrooms. According to Seelye (143) in his book *Teaching Culture*, the adaptation in course content already part of the curriculum is the best way to achieve multicultural objectives. One major suggestion in all of the above courses would be, to promote the necessary changes in the syllabus if it sets out to advance the implementation of the target culture and of others.

Culture can be incorporated in all of the courses offered by the BPEE, except the pronunciation classes. Even though the curriculum in the description of each course observed does not require the integration of the target culture, it should nonetheless not be omitted since language cannot really make sense without culture. “Linguistic characteristics should be viewed as cultural elements and cultural learning requires the vehicle of language”, describes Brooks (78) in his text *Language and Language Learning*. Teachers could claim that the syllabus, which has been constructed by the official curriculum of the program, does not require the teaching of culture in a class and is therefore not incorporated. Perhaps, the case here is to review the plan and re-evaluate the syllabus to make clear the integration of culture in all courses throughout the four levels.

From the findings of this study, it was clear that the most effective approaches of integrating culture in the classroom were those of communicating with students or creating activities and discussions through the task-based approach. These two techniques were evident mostly in the Language and Culture and Victorian Literature classes, where the target culture was implemented the most. A recommendation to the former class would be, within the selected approach, to use more interactive activities during which students can interrelate while learning about a new culture. More activities, in which students are required to research cultural aspects based on the topics bring their findings to class, share, compare and reflect with peers, should be designed in the BPEE. After all, “we learn by doing”, as suggested by Dewey (qtd. in Crawford-Lange and Lange 143).

In the Oral Expression class, there was lack of integrative activities for culture even though the communicative approach was applied. Due to the variety of topics that are addressed in this class the amount of techniques and approaches that could be followed for the incorporation of culture could be endless. Perhaps, a proposed process of integrating culture step by step and promoting more discussion opportunities could be offered in this case: a. the teacher or curriculum identifies discussable themes, b. students and instructors personalize discussions to their own native culture, c. reflection and further discussion should follow, and lastly, d. students should be required to share emotions, arguments and opinions while relating to another culture and reflecting upon their native. The above procedure would help in making the Oral Expression class a more interactive session rather than a monopolized one (learners speaking only). During the students' interview (from their journal entries), they claimed that there is no culture integration during the class. "Sometimes the teacher will clear some of our doubts if we mention something about culture", said a male student. As suggested above, the teachers are the ones who bring culture into the classroom. "Teachers as well as learners learn by doing and the teachers learn side by side with their students", Seelye claimed in Crawford-Lange and Lange (156). By following the suggested procedure above both the learners and the instructors can take advantage of the numerous topics of this course and learn about a variety of cultures in relation to their own.

The different techniques and activities that can be used to improve the integration of culture in this course are recommended by Hughes (162-164) in his article *Culture analysis in the second language classroom*. Primarily one of the techniques he suggests is the comparison method that was observed already in this class; but it was implemented to a lesser degree. Culture assimilators, culture capsules, drama and role plays, newspapers and other realia, projected media, and finally a creation of a culture island in the classroom, are also culturally engaging activities for second language pupils. The latter is a bit difficult to accomplish especially when other lessons are carried out in the same classrooms, as a result

keeping posters and authentic items in class would be complex to complete. The way to accomplish this last activity and prolong a creative atmosphere in the class is by inquiring the students to bring a different item that describes the target culture and discuss it in class. This, in turn, could be achieved by comparing the items, making connections between their own culture and the target culture, while creating a different 'cultural island' each class.

Along the same lines, a similar suggestion should be provided for the Victorian Literature class. In this case, the class seemed to be interactive very few times and mostly teacher-centered. If the above procedure is followed along with some of the techniques offered by the observer, the class would be even more creative than it is. However, in this case, the students would also be required to provide information and any research findings on the target culture. Some of the students of this class have lived in the United States for quite some time and consequently can share personal experiences from their visit as well as bring items of that culture into the classroom. The learners and facilitator can compare the items between the British, United States and Costa Rican culture and learn about each one by interacting and reflecting accordingly.

From the journal entries it was derived that the pupils' attitude towards culture teaching and learning is not very serious. The Victorian Literature class could not define the cultural theme of the day clearly; they could not make any connections to their own culture, when asked by the professor. In the Oral Expression class students claimed that they were not encouraged by anyone to discuss the target culture in class and therefore did not do it. The Language and Culture group stated that the same cultural themes were being addressed level after level and they were becoming weary of the situation. Perhaps, the above suggestions could be considered and motivate the students in the cultural teaching and learning process. Also, instructors may have to encourage learners to carry out their own research and bring it to class in order to discuss and compare their findings. Another recommendation to the coordination of the program would be to test the cultural aspect. These culture tests may

motivate students to participate more in target culture discussions, learn more about culture, and also have fun while solving different cultural situations while practicing their language skills. "The easiest way to get an objective overview of attitude shift in students is to give a pretest at the beginning of the course, and a post test at the end", Seelye (165) confirms in his book *Teaching Culture*. He offers different approaches to testing culture in a superficial and a more profound way. The coordination of the BPEE could perhaps consider these tests, which may reinforce students' cultural knowledge and could ultimately aid in the cultural skill development.

5.5 Materials

The key resources found in all the courses was the textbook and materials brought in by the teachers (organizational handouts, comparison handouts, videos, slides, maps, paintings) and by the students (realia, slides, presentations, culture clusters activities and assimilators). "More often than not it is up to the instructor to alter materials to express a two-dimensional or multi-dimensional outlook", argues Dunnett (149). Therefore, the teachers are the ones that should choose the correct supplies in order to improve the target culture teaching and learning process in class.

Some methods require the instructional use of existing resources, and realia. Some assume teacher-proof materials that even poorly trained teachers can teach with. Some resources require specially trained teachers with near-native competence in the target language. Some are designed to replace educators so that learning is independent. Some dictate various interactional patterns in the classroom and others inhibit classroom interaction, while others are noncommittal about interaction between teacher-learner and learner-learner. The role of instructional supplies within a method will reflect the goal of materials, their form, their relation to other sources of input and the abilities of the instructor

(Richards and Rodgers 18-22) in their article *The nature of approaches and methods in language teaching*.

A variety of materials can be suggested in order to implement the instruction of the target culture within this program. When asked during the interview, the students claimed that they would like their professors to provide more videos, commercials, TV series, movies, presentations, realia, CDs and other more creative ways to incorporate culture in the classroom. The above suggestions were offered mostly by the Oral Expression group and the Language and Culture class. The students of Victorian Literature were pleased with the selection of activities and resources brought to class, as well as their relevance to the target culture.

Hughes (167) suggests a variety of techniques, as mentioned in the previous category. He also offers us the appropriate materials to be used with each technique. He uses procedures for teaching cultural awareness such as, comparison method, culture assimilators, and culture capsules. The three techniques can be demonstrated to students through handouts or slides. Students, on the other hand, can solve them by role playing or presenting in class. The drama technique which involves acting out misunderstandings that happen in the target culture is one way to engage students in a sample of a real situation taking place in the target culture. Another technique is the audio-motor unit or total physical response-oral demands to the students, during which they are given instructions by the professor and have to act out the cultural situation for their classmates. These techniques as well can be on a handout, CD audio, or a slide demonstration that they have to interpret and analyze in class. Newspapers with authentic language or comic strips, projected media-films, filmstrips, slides-can serve as a creative cultural discussion opening. Culture Islands create a classroom ambience with posters, pictures, bulletin boards, which can be adjusted the different levels and purposes since classes are utilized by other groups as well.

According to Blatchford (132), newspapers can be an excellent source for target culture topics of discussion and source of authentic language. Some of the sections that could be helpful are: the horoscope, the classified, the front page, letters to the editor, the comic section and more. All these materials can enhance the culture teaching in all the courses as well as expose students to the authentic language of the target country. Finally, it seems that in the 21st century we live in, the technological features have taken full control of the classroom and have captured the attention of both students and educators. Thus, including a TV, a TV series, a movie, a commercial, a song, a comic strip, a slide of a picture or a slogan, can make a great difference in the ambiance of the classroom, as well as initiate multidimensional debates related to the target culture while using the target language.

5.6 General Recommendations

Overall, any ESL/EFL (English as a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language) program should strive to strengthen its intercultural curriculum and should attempt to follow the following general suggestions:

- a. Hire non-native or native teachers that have a strong target cultural knowledge base or that have done an extensive research on the target culture and are well trained to teach language as well as culture. This way students experience both types of teaching approaches.
- b. Provide intercultural and cross-cultural training opportunities that will include updated activities, techniques, approaches, and methods to future or present instructors of the BPEE.
- c. Integrate intercultural education with language instruction in the syllabi. Make culture a more evident factor in the syllabus so as it is clear whether it should be frequently incorporated or not.

- d. Establish which courses will either focus exclusively on culture and which ones only on the target culture.
- e. Provide students with activities, tours, films, conversation groups during which they can take advantage of the exposure to the target language and culture.

Further, the study should be designed to be carried out in a multicultural environment. This study explored the experiences and the perceptions of EFL in Cambodia where the participants had the same cultural background. It would be worthwhile to conduct a larger scale study of EFL in countries or environments with students and teachers from different cultural backgrounds. It would be very interesting to observe how the teaching of culture is addressed in these situations, which culture is addressed and which concepts, what issues are covered by teachers and the learners in regards to cultural differences, if teachers are trained to deal with multicultural classrooms, what techniques are used, what is the teachers' knowledge base of their students' culture, and other topics that could emerge in a more global setting.

Furthermore, this study shed light to some social approaches used by class to incorporate the social aspect, such as group, being the cognitive, social, communicative, experiential approaches and some learning different techniques. It would be interesting for future (SL/EFL) research to further explore some of these approaches, techniques and materials used here and investigate their use in a multicultural teaching environment as well. On the other hand, since there is a difference between EFL and ESL students, another interesting future research could be the investigation of the difference in approaches, techniques, concepts and their level of difficulty between the two environments (EFL and ESL).

Many helpful approaches, techniques, resources and some interesting findings were discussed during this study, unfortunately. In the future a similar study would have to include more quantitative data as well as more social observations, journals, focus groups, etc. to explore

VI. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The results of this study suggest that additional research of a qualitative and quantitative nature will be able to provide rich, profound descriptions of the way culture teaching and learning is addressed in the second language classroom within a multicultural environment. This study explored the approaches used by non-native professors at UNA in Costa Rica where the participants had the same cultural background. It would be enlightening to conduct a larger scale study of ESL/EFL teachers in an environment with students and teachers from different cultural backgrounds. It would be very interesting to observe how the teaching of culture is addressed in these classrooms, which culture is addressed (of which country), what issues arise between the educator and the learners in regards to cultural differences, if instructors are trained to deal with multicultural classrooms, what techniques are used, what is the teachers' knowledge base of each student's culture, and other aspects that could emerge in a more global setting.

Furthermore, this study shed light to some useful approaches used in class to incorporate the target culture, some of these being the cognitive, media, conventional, experiential approaches and more, including different techniques. It would be motivating for future ESL/EFL trainees to further explore some of these approaches, techniques and materials found here and investigate their use in a multicultural learning environment as well. On the other hand, since there is a difference between ESL and EFL students, another insightful future research could be the investigation of the differences in approaches, techniques, materials and their level of difficulty between the two environments (ESL and EFL).

Many helpful approaches, techniques, materials and more interesting findings were detected during this study; nonetheless, in the future a similar study would have to include more quantitative data as well as many more observations, journals, interviews etc. to collect

sufficient evidence that will create a more concrete base for this study. A more extensive research on the approaches and techniques used by professors to incorporate the target culture in the BPEE at UNA, would provide an even more widespread set of findings, recommendations and insights.

A yearlong investigation on the incorporation of culture in the BPEE at UNA would also provide a more variable set of conclusions, since the study will be based on more classes, more semesters, more levels, and many more data collected. As suggested in the recommendations section, culture can be tested; this way students' and professors' awareness of the importance of culture will rise significantly. If culture were to be tested, a longer future study on the same topic would also provide qualitative as well as quantitative results. Overall, with more time, resources and even different research settings a future study based on the same topic would result in a more solid set of findings.

VII. CONCLUSION

This research project set out to investigate and identify the different approaches employed by the instructors in the BPEE at Universidad Nacional in order to implement the teaching of the target culture. The study was of a qualitative nature. It not only discovered the variety of approaches utilized by the professors in the three courses, but many more valuable findings that could benefit the future of this program, its students as well as its facilitators.

As Seelye (120) suggests in his book *Teaching Culture*, "different teachers will use different means to accomplish the same cultural goals." The teachers must provide a combination of classroom and out-of-class activities that will enable all students to meet the course objectives. These activities will only be able to meet their objectives only if the materials used will also be productive and designed to fulfill the course's goals. Not many authentic materials were found during this study, even though many experts suggest their use in second language classrooms in order to enhance the integration of the second language and culture. The Victorian Literature class, on the other hand, incorporated a variety of different activities and materials combined with a range of approaches and techniques. It turned out to be the richest in cultural materials of all. Seelye (125) in the same text also claims that "To learn from experience is to change our way of doing and understanding." One needs to experience something in order to improve the quality of the teaching/learning process.

Some of the most useful approaches in incorporating the target culture in the classes of the BPEE at UNA were found to also be supported by some experts and suggested by others. Some of these approaches and techniques found in the courses were recommended, as mentioned before, by Hughes, Seelye, McGroarty and Calvin and many more scholars that are experts in implementing culture in an ESL/EFL environment. These same approaches, techniques and materials were also put into use in various observed classes by the instructors and also accepted very well by students that participated in class and expanded their cultural

awareness. These same approaches, like the media, cognitive, conventional, experiential, communicative and many more mentioned in this project are recommended to be used in ESL/EFL classrooms in order to integrate cultural studies. The learners observed in various parts throughout the study, stated that they enjoyed the authenticity in the approaches or materials their professors used. This in turn, raises their cross-cultural awareness since they are put into the position to compare their native to the target culture.

Each class has a different purpose described in the Plan of Studies in the program. Each course comprises of different objectives and different areas of interest. Nevertheless, each class is required to include the teaching and learning process of the target culture in their lessons, according to the director of the BPEE. The head of the English department claims that all courses should integrate a large amount of culture teaching in their classes and that students should be motivated to look for material that will increase their cultural awareness and they will use to teach their peers. On the other hand, this is not clearly mentioned in the syllabuses (which are not provided in the annexes because special permission is required to publish). Thus, there might be a possibility of instructors following the syllabus and therefore not integrating enough cultural material in their classes and not because of inexperience or personality or lack of materials, resources or textbooks. In this case, the syllabuses could be carefully revised and include the amount of culture that should be incorporated in each class throughout the curriculum. This way both the facilitators and the students are clear on the amount of the target culture and the linguistic components that they will cover throughout the semester. At the same time there will not be any further contradictions between the director, the instructors, the actual implementation of culture in class and the syllabuses.

Upon the completion of the main objective of this study, many more findings were discovered in the process. A hegemonic culture was evident in each class, except in the Victorian Literature where two dominant target cultures were covered. Throughout the curriculum within the three different levels investigated, the researcher noticed that each class

rose in difficulty and expanded in breadth in regard to cultural components. On the other hand, not all the cultural aspects were addressed in each class, but were somewhat secluded from the language teaching process. A separation that experts frown upon as they suggest that culture and its different components be covered as a process and interchangeably, not in an isolated fashion.

The above approaches, techniques, activities, materials and choice of cultural components' instruction should ultimately have one goal: raising the students' cross-cultural awareness. Why is cross-cultural awareness important? Hall, (qtd. in Smith 60), suggests that an effective way to awaken what he calls the "cultural unconscious" is through "the cross-cultural technique," which in turn involves encounters across countries. Students will only be able to learn about their native and target culture if they are put in a position to compare the two and reflect upon their findings. Hence, teachers have very important task of choosing appropriate materials and approaches of promoting cross-cultural competence in their lessons.

The way each professor implements culture has no relation to the amount of time each of the professors spent abroad in the target country. Each of them was able to incorporate in some degree the target culture, whether the British or the one of the United States, as well as to create discussions during which learners were given opportunities to compare and contrast the values and attitudes with those of their own culture. In fact, it was concluded that the facilitator, who spent the least amount of time in the United States, was able to incorporate two of the dominant target cultures in her lessons, resulting in the most diverse lessons of the three. This leads to the fact that a non-native professor can incorporate the target culture in a second language classroom as well as a native one. As long as the non-native teacher is equipped with the "academic background, language proficiency, cross-cultural experiences, and genuine commitment to teaching" (Ward 535), he/she is sufficiently qualified to teach the target culture.

About 80% of the forty-nine observed students stated, during their interview, that they preferred having a non-native teacher to teach about the target culture for two reasons: a. they were qualified and had visited the target country and b. they shared the same background as native culture with them. The research project concludes proving that non-native speaker teachers are very much capable of teaching the target culture, especially when they share the same native culture with their students.

Last but not least, the terms ESL and EFL should be considered in second language classrooms. As mentioned before, the difference between the two is minimal but nevertheless existent. The former requires teaching English as a second language and the latter teaching English as a foreign language, which is ultimately the same only the place of study changes. Considering that one can learn English either in his/her country or in the target country, consequently the approaches, techniques and materials used in order to incorporate the target culture, will vary. One encounters the path of learning another language a bit easier if taught in an English-speaking country. Whereas in their native country where there is limited possibility of contact with native speakers, chances are the learner will face more difficulties. Of course, this project was carried out in a non-native environment and the participants were part of an EFL environment and not an ESL; however, the same approaches, techniques and materials suggested here would be useful in the ESL field with perhaps a higher level of challenge. Even though not much literature review has been written on this specific topic, it is suggested that adjustments be made in all of the approaches if used in the two different environments (ESL or EFL). Since the ESL and EFL learners will be taught in different environments and experience the teaching of English and culture differently, they will require different levels of difficulty in the approaches, techniques or materials used in class. ESL students will have opportunities that EFL students may not; hence, it will be required to make the materials, techniques or approaches more or less challenging in order to successfully integrate culture according to the environment the teaching/learning process is taking place.

Finally, there is abundant literature that clearly indicates the close relationship between language and culture in a second language classroom. The most relevant literature has been used to support the findings, observation reports' as well as the recommendations provided. Although the presence of cultural instruction was identified in every course, it was not equally distributed. In order to improve the setbacks discovered throughout this research study, the supported recommendations should be taken into consideration.

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IX. ANNEXES

A. OBSERVATION REPORTS

Class Observed: Oral Expression

Date of Observation: Wednesday, September 3rd, 2008

Observation Number: 1

Location of Observation: Laboratory of Filosofias and Letras Building

B.T.O.: 10:00am **E.T.O.:** 11:40am

Type and focus of observation: Approaches to integrate culture

Description of the course: This course gives the students the opportunity to develop their fluency and spontaneity while using the English language to discuss classroom material on different social, humanistic, historic and politic topics. It allows students to use their general and specific vocabulary in context while also developing their grammar structures and pronunciations skills. Students are required to use communicative strategies while discussing about real life topics. They will also undergo laboratory practice for listening activities on proposed topics.

Description of students present: There are nineteen students in this class, nine male students and ten female students. There were no absent students on this observed day. These students are part of the second level of the BPEE of English at UNA.

Methods of Data collection: Notes, the course syllabus, handouts, photos and a brief personal communication with the teacher after the observation. I was a non-participant observer.

Description of the lesson: The topic of this day's lesson was "family relations". The students were assigned to read some articles on the topic and share in class their observations and ideas. One student raised his hand and tried to explain the topic as well as make a connection to real life situations and the current situation in Costa Rica. He talked about the Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica and ironically commented that there are more immigrants than Costa Rican citizens or eventually that will be the case. Another student was called on by the professor and shared his opinions on family structures and how they have changed over the years, for example same sex parents. He explained that since family structures have changed, the family ideas and beliefs have changed as well. After the students shared their opinions on the topic, the group assigned for that day had to present. The topic of the presentation was "Infidelity". The students presenting, talked about what the causes of infidelity are, the definition of the concept, the characteristics and so forth. The pupils had a discussion conversing about infidelity when dating, if it is easy to forgive and how the levels of infidelity have changed with society e.g. multiple marriages. Students in the audience were able to share opinions on how appropriate it is to forgive and forget and how a couple deals with the children if the family has any. During this discussion each one of the speakers offered their definition of cheating and being unfaithful to someone: flirting for example, kissing, or having another relationship. They concluded that it depended on the seriousness of the relationship they had.

The next question asked by the presenters was: "why do you think men cheat more than women?", "Do you agree with this statement or has the situation in today's society changed?" One student shared "it was in the past that it was mostly men and almost no women who cheated now though many women do cheat as well". One of the presenters asked

“what is the role of women in the Costa Rican society?” A member of the audience claimed “They have an image of keeping the perfect family” and another stated “They are the head of the family in some way, at least in the house”. The presenters continued by mentioning the effects on society, families and religion that infidelity causes. “Big Love” the TV show that describes polygamous couples in the State of Arizona in the United States was briefly mentioned by a student in the audience and how that is what has become of our society these days. The topic was changed back to religion and how Catholicism in Costa Rica prohibits any type of infidelity. The presenters continued to ask their peers if they considered betrayal the sexual relationship between members of the same sex. One student answered “That may change according to the limitations set within the relationship”. Another student shared “in the Mexican culture machos (chest haired men) have a lover that their wives know of and yet say nothing”. The presenters moved on to the next topic and asked their peers if they thought that cyber infidelity was considered serious or not. At this point one student raised his hand and shared a story of an acquaintance of his. “Someone I knew was married and started talking to some girl on the net and he went to a hotel to meet her and she was his wife...they divorced after that”. After presenting all the topics, the pupils handed out an activity to their classmates. The sheet of paper included the following questions:

- a. Have you ever experienced infidelity in your life?
- b. Would you forgive the person who cheated on you?
- c. What do you think about infidelity?

The handouts were supposed to be anonymous and when they were handed back to the presenters, they were counted and analyzed. “OK so here are the results: five people have cheated and most of you claim that you would not forgive that person” stated one of the female presenters. Before the presentation was completed the students showed some caricatures and asked for the rest to reflect upon that according to that day’s topic. The pictures were taken from www.mark.com and depicted a chicken having relations with a

rooster, a Santa Claus with the snowman and more “unusual” couples that caused laughter in the audience.

After the presentation students gave advice on how to respond to infidelity and what the consequences would be if the issue was not dealt with. After the students had completed their discussion in class the professor came in the front and talked about some of their pronunciation mistakes and the appropriate corrections that should be made. “Make sure you keep eye contact with your audience, and that body language doesn’t do something different” she said. “You need to review the presentation guidelines. You must begin with vocabulary that will be incorporated in the discussion” she continued “You must be careful when saying ‘Estart’ instead of ‘Start’ or ‘manúged’ instead of ‘mánaged’ ...”. The instructor resumed correcting the pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary usage of the students during the presentation in order to improve their oral expression skills and reminded them the correct way of speaking the target language. The homework for next class was reminded to the students “Please have your Individual reports on articles that you find on next class’s topic”. The class ended at 10:30 am.

Observer’s Commentary: According to Jose Mateo Martinez (1999) who agrees with O’Neill (1991) in his book *La Enseñanza Universitaria de las Lenguas Extranjeras*, there are two types of teaching a second language in the classroom: A good teaching and a bad teaching. The good teaching is equipped with different styles in order to better the learning process. On the other hand, the bad teaching is when the class is student- centered and the learners have complete control of the classroom without any interference from the teacher. Malamah and Thomas (1987) claim that there are two types of teaching and these are: the traditional and the interactive. The traditional consists of the professors only talking and instructing the students and the interactive consists of the communication between students, teachers and the book in the classroom.

From this class observation it was obvious that the classroom was student-centered and based on what students read for the class. The topic was interesting and related to real life daily situations that engaged all of them in a discussion while sharing their personal opinions and experiences. However, there was no participation of the teacher during the class time, except in the end when the appropriate pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary issues had to be corrected. With the above summary of the two investigators' statements I do not attempt to prove the bad teaching skills of this professor nor the appropriate style of teaching. Yet, I attempt to show that the class may have taken another direction from its objective. According to the Plan de Estudios of this BPEE, the Oral Expression class is supposed to cover many different topics of our daily life and according to the coordinator of the program, all classes should integrate the target culture in all topics covered in class. From what was obvious during this observation, the target culture or any other English speaking country's culture was not even mentioned. The cultures referred to briefly were, the Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica, the Mexicans and their relations with women and men, and a television show 'Big Love' from the United States describing polygamous families. If this is a second language classroom, and culture is supposed to be as important as the language teaching, then where is it? One main question that this brings to mind is whether the professor is in charge of the description of the course or the English department of UNA. These students are part of the second year of the bachelor's degree and the first class that was observed in Oral expression, where culture could easily be incorporated; there was no reference to it.

Observer's Reflections and Applications: Language requires culture and culture requires language. Without language culture is incomplete and without culture language instruction fails. Therefore, a foreign language classroom that does not incorporate the teaching of culture along with the language, will fail to successfully instruct the appropriate expressions, vocabulary or even grammatical structures of the foreign language. All these aspects of

language are related to customs and habits the country has and therefore craft culture and its valued role in the foreign teaching field.

Foreign language learning is comprised of several components, including grammatical competence, communicative competence, language proficiency, as well as a change in attitudes towards one's own or another culture. In the last two decades, there has been a rebirth of interest in the study of language in relation to society, which has led to a shift of focus from behaviorism and positivism to constructivism to critical theory (H. Douglas Brown, 2000).

Recommendations: Since all of the themes assigned in this class relate to real life situations and subjects, the way the institution, teacher and students could incorporate culture is by describing similar situations in the target culture as well as their own culture followed by comparing and contrasting. This reinforces the awareness of their own culture while expands their knowledge on the target culture. Hughes (1986) claims that there are different techniques for teaching cultural awareness, either one's own or a target culture. The comparison method, culture assimilators, culture capsules, drama –where students can act out different misunderstandings that happen in the target culture, oral demands that students respond to, newspapers, projected media, films, filmstrips, slides and more. For this class specifically the professor was obviously not involved in the presentation of the students. Therefore the learners somehow should be encouraged to bring one or more of the above materials to integrate the teaching or comparing of the target culture in the class. If they had brought a clip of the show 'Big Love' mentioned by a member of their audience, it would have been a great way to depict some differences. Of course this would have required research and motivation from an authority in class or the program.

Class Observed: Language and Culture

Date of Observation: Thursday, September 4th, 2008

Observation Number: 1

Location of Observation: Classroom number 328

B.T.O.: 8:00am **E.T.O.:** 9:40am

Type and focus of observation: Approaches to integrate culture

Description of the course: This course seeks to bring to the consciousness of the student how to be cultural. This serves as a preliminary step to the students' development in intercultural competence. The theory of study consists of the values, attitudes, ways of thinking and of conduct, and the world vision of the target culture in reference their own culture. In the practical part of the course, different cultural manifestations in the social area are being investigated as much as of the target culture as from the native culture and the understanding of those phenomena within a determined socio-cultural context are to be determined.

Description of students present: There are twenty one students in this class, five male students and sixteen female students. There were about 4 absent students on this observed day. These students are part of the first level of the Bachelor's program of English in UNA.

Methods of Data collection: Notes, the course syllabus, handouts, photos and a brief personal communication with the teacher after and before the observation. I was a non-participant observer.

Description of the lesson: Today's topic was *sex, lies and conversation*. The reading assigned for this day was based on the North American culture. The learners had to present on this topic and create a discussion in class. The students handed to their peers a variety of topics in order to create a classroom discussion. Students get into groups or in pairs and discuss the differences between women and men. The handout given to them included the following questions:

- a. What are the communication differences between women and men in the Costa Rican culture?
- b. How do you find the lack of communication as the main reason of divorce?
- c. What are the differences of communication in female or male friendships?
- d. What are some of the body gestures people do to show us they are listening or not listening?
- e. What are some changes we can make to improve communication?

The class was divided in four groups. Group one started to share their opinions with the rest of the class. "Usually when we listen to someone talk to us we nod and say 'yes', 'OK', 'that is great' and so on", a male student shared and continued "Our answers are always misinterpreted by females as though we do not pay attention", "We men forget, why can't people just ask us and why they have to assume" said another male student in the group. After sharing their ideas, group number two was passed the torch and shared their opinions on the reasons families separate. "Other family members get involved in the family and that causes problems" said one student and her partner continued "this forms problems in communication or even cheating takes place". In group three the pupils were discussing the miscommunication taking place between women and men. A male student shares with his class "a girl was talking to me once and my gestures did not correspond with what she was saying and she thought I was not listening to her". The fourth group along with the professor's help pointed out stereotypes misconceptions and how we do not accept any difference and make assumptions about everything. After this part, the presenters moved onto the second part of their work. They showed some caricatures to the class and explained them to all, creating discussion points about miscommunication in every day life. The professor prompted the students to compare the Costa Rican culture to that one of the United States, according to what the pictures showed. "For example if there is no eye contact between men and women when females speak, they consider that they are not being listened to", "and Does

the same thing happen in other places?" he asked the students. The presenters moved on to stating the differences between the women and the men. The multitasking topic was covered between the two sexes as well as the fact that men are more competitive than women since they tend to be more passive and constantly search for agreement and reassurance on what they are saying. They later on discussed the reasons of divorce and how the preferences of men and women are different. "The men prefer to talk about sports, women or money, whereas women like to talk about support, school or work" shares a female and a male student from group two. A married male student explains that it is difficult to be immersed into the women's conversation "...and this is why I get into trouble with my wife" he concludes. "Once we compare the differences between female friends and male friends we can distinguish one from the other since females give more input and males just plain answers" continue the two presenters "...do you agree?". A student raised her hand and shared with her class "in the U.S. for example male and female relationships are more intimate but in Costa Rica that same relationship if seen working together, they will be judged by others that they ARE together." The professor interrupts at this point and claims "Good. Exactly. You are connecting the two cultures. What does that say about the Costa Rican culture versus the North American one?". "That they are more open to opposite sex relationships and we are not. We are too quick to judge" answers another male student. The professors nods and prompts the students back to the reading. He asks the class what they read about and what where the cultures mentioned there. The reading as mentioned before was based on North American behavior. A student raised his hand and contributed information on what he had read "The women in the United States are seen as the 'pushy gringas', they are considered easy and available, but women in Costa Rica are seen as weak and just more conservative even though they are not", "Exactly all these stereotypes arise throughout. Think about the Asian culture. What do you know about women from there" emphasizes the professor. "What types of gestures, or body language or visual contact can

you point out in all of these different cultures, situations?" asks the professor and keeps the students involved in a cross-cultural communication between women and men from different cultures. "I feel that when I am talking and a man is not looking into my eyes, that he is not paying attention"; "...I do not like it!". At this point the presenters took the stand again and said "this is obviously a very interesting topic. We have an exercise for you to complete. They in turn showed some cartoon pictures to the audience and asked them to comment on them. The cartoons were based on stereotypes that are formed throughout the world. "I do not want to be defined by who I am" – advertised the one, whereas another one showed a man cleaning and kissing his car while his wife was in the corner feeling 'jealous'. The professor laughed at this last one and pointed out "The car stereotype for men right? We love our car more than we love our wives. A good example".

After this presentation finished, the second pair of students came up and explained that they would present the second topic of the day 'suicide among young people (teenagers)'. They first handed out actual suicide notes they found on the internet to some groups and suicide clusters to some other groups. The suicide clusters contained stories that students had to read and offer their advice. The students got into groups of three or four and discussed the notes or the clusters they received from the presenters. One story was about three 17-year old students that committed suicide during an 11-month period. The professor went around from group to group and read the stories the students were talking about while heard their advice and analysis. He constantly was prompting them to compare with the target culture. "Think about it you guys...what are some of the reasons teenagers commit suicide here in Costa Rica and what are some for the U.S.?" "In Costa Rica it could be the economic position of the family" shared one student "...or a relationship problem" shared another. "And in the States they are always away from family....maybe they are depressed" another group offered "They have low self esteem, too much pressure". "Exactly. Good." Reassured the professor "Look at the Muslims that even die in the name of Allah", "there are many examples to find and compare,

right?." The class ended soon after this discussion with a reminder of the next classes' topic 'Ten good reasons to be a lesbian'.

Observer's Commentary: This class was obviously very interactive between the students, the instructor and the book. The facilitator constantly prompted the students back to the book and back to comparing the facts with the target culture. He was involved in the discussions in class. They were not presentations that took place in class but rather whole group discussions where students became aware of other cultures according to the topic presented that day in class. Seelye (1992) in his book *Teaching Culture: Strategies for intercultural communication* claims that because most teachers are concerned with their knowledge about the target culture, they consider themselves as the only source the students have in order to learn about the target culture. This concern creates confusion in the proper role of the teacher in the classroom. The teacher does not have to be the full center of information about culture. "The teacher has to help students develop whatever skills are necessary to make sense out of a few facts" states Seelye (1992). The latter is evident in this Language and Culture lesson, where the professor was aiding the students rather than providing them with the information. He was able to create discussions and raise questions that promoted more critical thinking about comparing cultures rather than instructing and becoming the center of the class. Implementing techniques of an intercultural perspective within an English language program can be made explicit by setting up courses or activities that focus on culture-related themes. At the same time, an intercultural view inevitably will be implicit in the materials utilized for instructional purposes. But beyond these explicit and implicit means of teaching intercultural communicative competence, the vital element which gives language courses a tone of cultural understanding in the teacher's own attitudes toward their students' background as well as the materials utilized. The purpose of the capsules is not to teach one specific way of thinking about any particular aspect of the United States culture. Rather, they are designed to help analyze different areas of culture in the United States and compare them with the students'

native culture and language. The capsules do not make any judgments about the U.S. culture. The students make these judgments on their own after investigations and thinking on their own (Dunnett, 1981). Even though the clusters in this class were brought in by the students, they were effective and nevertheless created a group discussion that made the topic of the target culture a lot less unfamiliar.

Notes: This was the first observation of the Language and Culture class. This class specifically has gone through many changes in instructors and therefore it was difficult for the professor at this time to know exactly the status of the students and the class. This is the reason for the four absent students as well as the guidelines of the presentations. The previous professor required the students to just read the chapter assigned for the day and present, whereas the current instructor required them to read, reflect, compare and present in a group discussion. He made sure of reminding them this throughout the entire class.

Class Observed: Victorian Literature

Date of Observation: Friday, September 5th, 2008

Observation Number: 1

Location of Observation: Room 328, Classroom

B.T.O.: 2:30pm **E.T.O.:** 4:00pm

Type and focus of observation: Approaches to integrate culture

Description of the course: This course explores the literature and society of Victorian England in years 1832 until 1901, in many different topics such as: a. social contradictions, b. woman's situation, c. morals, d. politic environment and many more topics that will be presented through poetry, narrations and essays. The method of analysis, social historic is used in order to analyze plays and to apply the theories on investigation projects and theory discussions.

Description of students present: There are nine students total in this class. All of them were present on this day of the observation. There were four boys and five girls sitting in a circle and discussing the topic of the day. They are part of the 4th level of the bachelors program in English at UNA.

Description of the lesson: The students were situated in a circle and discussing the articles they read, after the presentation they performed in class. The learners were assigned by the teacher to read a chapter in the book and to present it in a creative way in class. After presenting it they were given the opportunity to discuss as a group with the teacher. The teacher began by describing the situation of women in the Victorian times "male relatives were able to inherit property only, not the girls", "women lost their property to their husbands around the 1870s upon marriage", and she continued by expressing that they were minors in the eyes of the law. She referred back to the presentation performed earlier in class and made a connection to the characters of the reading "Jane expresses her inner life through paintings, just like the ones you presented in your performance Gabriela*". "Rochester was attracted

by the themes” said the professor and turned to the board to write some of those themes down for the students to remember and take notes. Themes: Sunken boat, dead

*Fake names have been given to students in order to keep their identity secret.

body, rising moon, paintings, etc. The instructor asked the learners to interpret these themes and how they represented them during their performance. The students started to raise their hand or just provide a response “Mystery” said one, “fear” said another, “Yes, the dark side, the shadow, what we do not know” continued another. “And how did you represent that in your performance?” asked the teacher. “By using the drawing of the boat and the moon and by having the blankets cover us, by turning off the lights and creating a mysterious atmosphere in the classroom” answered the same student. “Yes, perfectly described, thank you” said the professor.

After discussing the presentation the professor moved on to the analysis of the text. She asked the students to describe the meaning of the wedding dress, the physical place, the symbolism, the archetypal garden and its meaning and the characters. As she was asking the students and they were providing answers, she was writing everything on the board while creating a plot map of the reading. “In the Victorian culture it was improper for a woman to be walking alone at night with a man”, “and yet here in this reading we see those social barriers destroyed as Rochester and Jane Eyre are equal” continued to explain the professor. She then prompted the students to page 377 of the book and asked one to read the lines where this was portrayed. After reading the instructor asked the students to pretend that they are Victorian readers and that they think just like Victorians did. “How would you feel if you saw this written as freely as it is written here”, “Jane feeling like this for Mr. Rochester and walking side by side with him?”. The students remained listening to her and taking notes. She continued by explaining that Victorian readers were shocked by the garden scene and the frankness of the author about Mr. Rochester’s intentions with Jane.

Before they continued to analyze the rest of the text, the professor provided some background information about the social standards of the Victorian times. Another student was asked to read and once finished the professor inquired them to put themselves in Jane's position and describe their feelings. "Scared" said one; "in love" shared another. "Exactly" confirmed the teacher and continued to use the board to explain some of the symbols used in the story and ask for the students' interpretation. The following chapters were missing since the story is very long and therefore the professor began to provide a short summary of the readings to follow so as the students were aware of what happened later in the story. The board was used for keeping notes and describing the symbolism and metaphors found in later chapters.

Observer's Commentary: There is growing evidence that one very important factor affecting the reading comprehension of second-language learners is a lack of necessary cultural background knowledge (Gatbonton and Tucker 1971; Kujoooy 1978; Johnson 1981 in Sandra McKay's (1987) *Cultural Knowledge and the Teaching of Reading*). "It is essential that teachers make sure the learners have the essential needed cultural and world background in order to interpret the text provided" (McKay, 1987). As Rocio Miranda, English Literature professor in UNA, explained that the majority of the students in UNA university come from rural areas in Costa Rica and have little contact (actually almost none) with people from other cultures. In this class it was obvious that the professor was well informed of the target culture, the British in the 1800s, and was able to provide the students with a variety of cultural background information in order to help them in the process of analyzing and comprehending the reading.

The class was not only student- centered or teacher centered. It was more of an interactive type of teaching and learning process. The students were asked to read the chapter alone at home first and then present it in class. This way they were able to present what they learned and what they understood from the reading by pretending to be the characters and by using realia to represent symbolism and metaphors from the reading. After presenting it in class

they were given a more detailed description of the social structure and norms of that era's society by the teacher. Overall, this seemed to be a very effective way of teaching and learning, since it involved the students themselves, the teacher, little use of the book, interaction between the three (teacher, students, book) and instruction.

Observer's Reflections and Applications: Seeyle (1994) quoted in the article *Prerequisites to Teaching and Learning Culture* written by Smith (1995), stresses once again the significance of culture in language teaching and states that "language study divorced from culture is without value", "...in the final analysis no matter how technically dexterous a student's training in the foreign language, if the student avoids contact with native speakers of that language and lacks respect for their world view, of what value is the training?". All of the above statements prove that language is inseparable from culture, since it is charged with meanings and connotations which express the thought of society in which it is produced. Awareness of another or even of one's own culture is needed and is essential to understand the literature and the language being presented.

Crawford- Lange and Lange (1984) claimed that when cultural teaching takes place in a classroom, it usually appears after or around language learning. Very rarely will the cultural aspects be taught before language. Students and teachers both recognize the importance of the interconnection between the two, language and culture; however, it always has a peripheral position within the classroom rather than central one. In this observation it was evident that in this specific class culture teaching took place after the language and the reading skills were covered. Linda M. Crawford-Lange and Dale L. Lange (1984), in their article *Doing the Unthinkable in the Second-Language Classroom*, claim that there might be two possible explanations for this status of culture teaching in a second language classroom: a. teachers might feel inadequate in their knowledge of the foreign culture because of limited experiences with the foreign culture and b. teachers' training in the cultural field might be insufficient.

Finally, the greatest issue in a foreign language classroom could be that students are taught about culture; however, they are not taught how to interact with culture. Nonetheless, in this case the professor seemed well informed about the target culture and it just was a different type of strategy to represent the students' view of the reading first and then the interpretation of the text while describing the norms and the social structures of the target culture.



Figure 1. (Caption text is illegible due to low resolution)

B. PHOTO-ETHNOGRAPHY

Oral Expression- Observation One

The figure below depicts the four students assigned to present the topic of Infidelity the third day of September in the Oral Expression class. They are asking their classmates questions and involving them in discussions about different topics while presenting.



Figure I. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Wednesday, September 3rd, 2008)

Oral Expression – Observation Two

The figure below depicts the four students assigned to present the topic of Humor the twenty fourth day of September in the Oral Expression class. At this specific moment they are introducing their theme and describing how humor makes people feel and changes them.

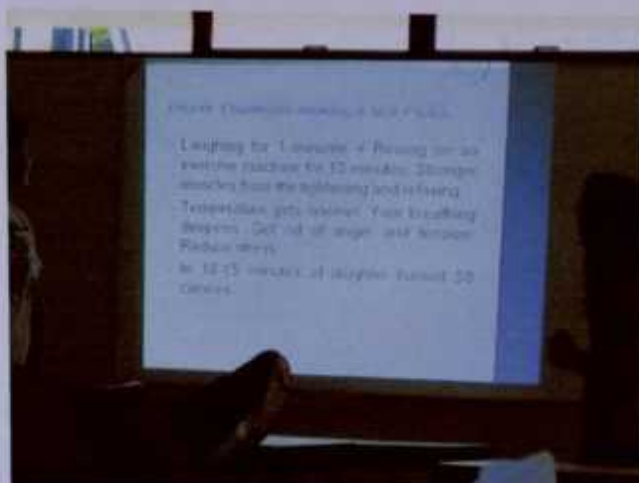


Figure II. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Wednesday, September 24th, 2008)



Figure III. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Wednesday, September 24th, 2008)

Description

The above figure depicts the same group continuing to present their topic on Humor.

Oral Expression – Observation Three

In the figure below part of the group presenting is shown as well as half of the Oral Expression class listening to the speakers present the topic of the day 'Tolerance and Intolerance'.



Figure IV. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Wednesday, October 8th, 2008)

Language and Culture – Observation One

Figure V. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Thursday, September 4th, 2008)

Description

The above figure depicts some of the groups formed in order to discuss the topics of the day. In the back once again the professor is clarifying some concepts and examples for one of the students.



Figure VI. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Thursday, September 4th, 2008)

Description

In the above picture are the rest of the students of this class reading through the culture clusters and making connections while discussing them and preparing to share with the class.

Language and Culture-Observation Two

Description

The Figure below demonstrates one of the groups discussing the difference between difficulties the gays and lesbians have to deal with in Costa Rica and in the United States. They are using their handout with the questions as guides and noting down their answers.



Figure VII. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Tuesday, September 9th, 2008)



Figure VIII. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Tuesday, September 9th, 2008)

Description

In the above picture is another pair of learners answering the same set of questions and discussing their answers. At this point the professor is going around from group to group and aiding them or asking questions in order to help think of their answers.

Language and Culture-Observation Three

The figure below depicts the professor of the Language and Culture class and half of the class. The instructor is presenting the topic on Multicultural Competence and Awareness to the class as they are listening and sharing any ideas or comments to the professor's questions.



Figure IX. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Tuesday, September 16th, 2008)

Description

The Figure below demonstrates the class of Language and Culture watching the clip of the movie *You don't know me* that the facilitator brought into class to facilitate his presentation on Multicultural Awareness and Competence.



Figure X. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Tuesday, September 16th, 2008)

Victorian Literature – Observation Two

In the figure below the students are situated in front of the Television brought into class, in order to watch the film.



Figure XI. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Friday, September 12th, 2008)



Figure XII. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Friday, September 12th, 2008)

Description

The above figure demonstrates the class during the film as the professor is sitting among them and enjoying the movie.

Victorian Literature – Observation Four

Figure XIII. (Taken by Maria K Sakaria on Friday, September 19th, 2008)

Description

The above figure demonstrates the class of Victorian Literature taking notes while the facilitator explains the concepts of the reading and provides personal examples of culture shock in her life.

C. VIDEO & CD

Description of Language and Culture

The Video taken from this class, demonstrates the three pairs of students during their role play activity and non-verbal miscommunication drama act. The one pair is describing the personal space case. The second the body touching situation and the third no eye contact when talking with someone.

Video I. (Taped by Maria K Sakaria on Tuesday, September 23rd, 2008)

Description of Oral Expression Class

The second video shows a short part of each of the groups assigned to present that day. The students dressed in special clothes and painted their faces, even acted out the characters they were representing. The first group was presenting *Mosley's Brother* and the second one Tiger Tiger.

Video II. (Taped by Maria K Sakaria on Friday, October 10th, 2008)

Description of Oral Expression

In the video taken during this class, the students are shown while sitting on the floor and following the instructions of the speakers. One of the presenters in the back of the classroom was changing the sounds while another speaker was instructing and the rest were imagining.

Video III. (Taped by Maria K Sakaria on Wednesday, October 15th, 2008)

D. QUESTIONNAIRE*Questionnaire Protocol for learners*

Project: APPROACHES FOR INTEGRATING CULTURE IN THE BACHELORS PROGRAM OF ENGLISH IN UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL

Date:

Place:

Class:

1. Have you ever been to an English speaking country?

Yes No

If yes,

- a. What country _____ When? _____ For how long? _____
- b. Country _____ When _____ How long _____
- c. Country _____ When _____ How long _____
- d. Country _____ When _____ How Long _____

2. Do you currently have exposure to Native Speakers?

Yes No

If Yes, indicate the type of exposure:

- a. personal
- b. internet
- c. chat/msn
- d. Other _____

3. Do you watch English speaking channels from cable TV?

Yes No, because I don't have cable. No, even though I have cable.

If Yes, what is the approximate amount of hours you watch English Speaking channels?

- a. 2-4 hours per week
- b. 5- 10 hours per week
- c. More than 10 hours per week
- d. Other _____

4. Do you have access Internet?

Yes. Where? _____ No

If Yes, do you use it for communicative purposes in English?

Yes No

If Yes, for what reason?

- a. to listen to music and/or watch videos
- b. to speak with people (with a headset)
- c. to chat _____
- d. to read (news, articles, etc) _____
- e. to write (emails or others)
- f. other _____

5. Do you read books in English?

Yes No

If Yes, how often? _____

- a. every week
- b. every month _____
- c. once a year _____
- d. other _____

6. Do you read newspapers in English?

Yes No

If Yes, how often?

- a. every day
- b. every week
- c. every month
- d. once a year
- e. other _____

7. Are or were you a part of any English language exchange programs?Yes No

If Yes, with how many people?

a. 1

b. 2

c. 3

d. 4

e. Other _____

How often do/did you meet to practice English?

a. once a week

b. twice a week

c. 3 times a week

d. Other _____

8. Do you participate in any other activity that requires communicating in English?Yes No

If Yes, Please explain briefly:

E. JOURNAL

Journal Questions (Based on Research questions One and Three)

Project: APPROACHES FOR INTEGRATING CULTURE IN THE BACHELORS PROGRAM OF ENGLISH IN UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL

Date:

Place:

Class:

Professor:

- a. What was/were the cultural theme of the day?

- b. What did you like about it?

- c. What did you not like about it?

- d. Did you learn something new about the target culture today? Explain.

- e. Did your professor explain all your doubts about the target culture? How?

F. TEACHERS' INTERVIEW

Interview Protocol for Teachers

Project: APPROACHES FOR INTEGRATING CULTURE IN THE BACHELORS PROGRAM OF ENGLISH IN UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Questions (Based on Research Question One)

Part I – University Studies

1. Where did you finish high school?
2. Where did you continue your university studies and in what?
3. Where did you work during your university studies? Doing what?

Part II – Experience Abroad

4. Did you leave the country during your high school studies or university studies?
5. If yes, where did you go?
6. What was the purpose of your trip to the English speaking countries?
7. What was your living situation when living abroad?
8. Did you work during the time abroad? Where? Doing what?
9. How long did your stay abroad last?
10. Do you keep in touch with that country?

Part III – Experience Post –University studies

11. What did you do when you returned to Costa Rica?
12. Where did you work?
13. What subjects did you teach at the university?

Part IV – Thoughts about Culture

14. Do you feel you would have the same base knowledge of the target culture if you had never left your country?
15. If yes, explain.
16. If no, explain.
17. Do you feel Culture should be incorporated in the Bachelors Program of English? Why or Why not?
18. How do you think the target culture should be integrated?
19. How important is culture in Literature?
20. Any other insights that you would like to share?

G. TEACHERS' SELF-DESCRIPTION

Question:

How do you choose to incorporate culture in your classroom? What are the approaches and techniques you use to do so?

Answers sent by email:

Oral Expression Class

Regarding your question about the techniques that I use to incorporate culture to my oral communication class. I must first say that Oral Communication is not a culture course proper. However, I incorporate this skill into my classes as often as possible, though more that based upon any specific technique, I try to have the students discuss culture based on the assumption that it permeates every aspect of communication. What I try to do is that my students adopt a retrospective, critical stand regarding the principles and values of their own culture, and from there try to understand the principles and values expounded in the articles, videos and discussion topics approached in class. Oftentimes, these materials involve other cultures. In those cases, I promote a comparative analysis of the values, behavior, and understandings implicit or explicitly addressed in the material. In my courses, I am basically interested in having students draw their own conclusions and form opinion about others based on understanding themselves as part of a culture, so that in the long run, they may not end up defining themselves proudly as being ethnocentric, xenophobic, or racist, as has happened to me at levels that I would never dream it could happen. The most important thing for me is to incorporate culture as a mean for making students sensitive, tolerant, and open to other ways of perceiving and understanding the world, based on understanding what makes them think as they do as part of a culture that is diverse, contradictory and uneven, though perceived as a nicely organized set of patterns of behaviors, principles, and values.

I know this may not quite answer your question, but as a sociologist my main focus is on critical thinking, which I try to promote by means of confronting students with the issues, concerns, and dilemmas that humans confront day to day cross-culturally, and with the ways in which each culture thinks about them, deals with them, and go along living their lives.

Language and Culture Class

The approach could be the eclectic one because I take little bits of CBI and TBI depending on the material I am using. For example, I can use Content Based Instruction when I focused on American Values in general or Theme Based Instruction when choosing a specific topic like education, religion or family let's say. I also like to include literary approaches such as the Mythological, Psychological and Social Studies because they all serve very well to talk and analyze culture from an individual point of view to the collective considering the whole nation or people.

To do this I need to use some techniques or methods in order to bring on or increase students' awareness and understanding of the cultural values of the target culture, their own and other cultures as well. So the following are just examples of how I try to do it:

1. I like to use real materials related to literature such as poems and short stories in which I can come across to several cultural aspects. In this way, I can have students analyze characters and their behavior as well as the main cultural themes of the story. Placing the

story or poem in a setting and period of time will give us the change to address that particular issue of the target culture.

2. At the same time, this will give us a possibility to use comparison and contrast techniques in which it is always interesting to have students compare and contrast different places and characters, but specially the way they behave and why they do it.

3. Using all kinds of readings like the ones used in Language and Culture are interesting too because you have access to a more specific cultural issues. Here you can also include handouts in which comparing and contrasting the target culture as well as the native culture will generate debate and clarification of the different ways people behave.

3. This helps to request some papers in which the students use the technique of reader response. Here they react to the text showing their feelings and emotions toward the issues discussed in class. I like this because it generates great discussions in the following class and there is not a specific grade for that, so they feel very comfortable expressing their ideas right or wrong.

4. I enjoy giving them character maps, story maps and story frames because these are a good alternative to the traditional question and discussion sessions. These also enhance reading comprehension by helping students to store and retrieve information, make connections between previous experience and reading materials, identify relationships among concepts and events, organize specific details and understand the culture presented in the text.

5. The use of movies is another interesting activity and the students love it. Sometimes a movie says more than words or even a whole lecture. We watched a couple of movies, one about music (rock and roll as culture) and another about defective people. They were shocked to know that these people are part of culture and how little we are doing to help them. After each movie, I bring a handout with questions so we can have a debate or an interesting discussion always analyzing and relating both cultures to get that cross cultural communication and understanding that we need.

6. Bringing native speakers from different parts of the culture studied is also very attractive for the students. I try to invite African American, Indians from Costa Rica and if possible Chinese people to have a variety of ideas in my Multiethnic class. Students love it and it really helps to understand that people are just people everywhere.

Victorian Literature Class

As you know, the focus in the literature courses is on the literary text and the society and culture that produces it. Usually what I do is provide the background information the students need to understand the books by means of readings, maps, and illustrations. I look for movies or video documentaries about the time period we are studying, and then we discuss what we have seen. The book (novels, stories) themselves provide the cultural material, since they reflect attitudes, customs, ways of life. In this case, I ask questions to help the students discover relevant cultural markers or issues by themselves. In the literature course it is also very useful the reading of essays written by Victorian authors who discuss the problems and issues that were relevant at the time of writing. Finally, the students have to carry out their own research on some historical, social or cultural topic and present it to the class. And at all times, we keep comparing the target culture under study with our contemporary culture, the social issues of the period with those which are relevant today, the attitudes and beliefs of the past with those of today, etc. Usually we discover there are very few differences. The objective is to create empathy between the students as readers and the authors they are reading, so that they understand that the fears, hopes and dreams of human beings transcend frontiers of time and place.

H. STUDENTS' INTERVIEW

Interview Protocol for Students

Project: APPROACHES FOR INTEGRATING CULTURE IN THE BACHELORS PROGRAM OF ENGLISH IN UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewees:

*Note: These questions were formed according to the students' answers in their journals.

Questions

Part I – The cultural theme of the day (Based on Research Question Two)

1. Do you enjoy the cultural topics presented in class?
2. What materials are used to present culture in class?
3. Would you change these materials in any way? How?

Part II – Advantages about the topics (Based on Research Question Three)

1. Do you think it is important to learn about the target culture? Why? Why not? Explain.
2. Is the North American culture the only one presented in class? Explain.
3. Is it important to present other cultures in class apart from the North American? Why? Explain.

Part III – Disadvantages about the topics (Based on Research Question One and Two)

1. Do you feel you manage the topic of culture well? Why or why not?
2. Do you feel your teacher manages the topic of culture well? Why or why not?
3. Do you feel that the topic of culture is repetitive in the Bachelors Program?
4. Do the topics of culture progress year after year or does the curriculum cover the same topics of the target culture each year? (Based on Research Objective Four)

Part IV – Importance of Culture

1. Do feel the target culture should be taught in class? Why or why not?
2. Each class do you learn something new about the target culture? Explain.
3. How would you teach the target culture to your future students?

Part V – The professor (Based on Research questions Two)

1. What are some of the materials your professor uses to integrate culture? Are they efficient? Why or why not?
2. Does your professor explain the target culture concepts to you? If yes, How?
3. Do you feel it makes a difference that your professor has been to an English speaking country? Why or why not?
4. Do you feel you would gain the same knowledge about the target culture from a Native speaker from an English speaking country?
5. How else does your professor explain your doubts about the target culture?

I. ARTIFACTS

The following pages include a variety of artifacts that was collected during the process of this study. Because these artifacts were collected by the investigator herself and not sent electronically, they are added to the research paper at the end and the pages are not numbered. Nevertheless, this section sets out to explain each artifact and its purpose in the project.

First, activities handed out by the students and the teachers in the Language and Culture and Oral Expression classes were congregated by the investigator to further demonstrate the types of materials used in the classes and to support her findings of the approaches, techniques and materials section.

Secondly, handouts distributed by the professor in the Victorian Literature class are also included in this section in order to raise the validity and reliability of the conclusions. The facilitator handed these artifacts to her students throughout the course period in order to help them visualize the fashion of the Victorian era as well as the geographical setting of Great Britain and the cities, the stories took place.

Finally, a copy of the plan of studies of the entire BPEE is provided; since it was used by the researcher all throughout the beginning stages of her investigation and helped visualize the organization of the courses in the BPEE.

In another folder attached to the final project, the readers of this research can find the questionnaires and the journal filled out by the students-participants. These two data collection tools facilitated in answering at least two main research questions and gave opportunity to the researcher to create her interview questions and further validate her findings. Along with these data collection instruments, the investigator has provided a CD with the videos that demonstrate the students of each class involved in a cultural activity. These videos set out to help visualize the culture integration in each class and the techniques used by the professors to do so.



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