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*Including Cultural Awareness as a Meaningful Component  
when Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Enhance  
Students' Pragmatic Competence*

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

## **ABSTRACT**

This action research intends to increase interest in the culture of the foreign language and to determine that integrating cultural components into the English as a Foreign Language classroom curriculum enhances the students' pragmatic competence, from ages around thirteen and fifteen, both genders and Hispanic groups. After conducting several data collection tools, it is discovered that students can attain an excellent level of pragmatic competence without emphasizing especially on cultural contents so that this ability is obtained through the exposure to the language and different linguistic components such as grammar, syntax, semantics, among others. Therefore, in this particular case pragmatic competence is not only improved by taking into account cultural awareness in the English classroom. However, teaching culture allows students to gain confidence when interacting in real-life situations.

## 1.1 Introduction

Throughout the history of Teaching English as a Foreign Language, (From now on TEFL) teachers, curriculum developers and linguists have focused on the teaching and learning of vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing and listening. Despite the acknowledgment of the importance of teaching and learning about culture and pragmatics, some have argued that both culture and pragmatics are learned along with vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, and listening. However, some people have claimed that culture and pragmatics deserve a more important role in the process. In order to make this happen, it is imperative to demonstrate its relevance as well as suitable techniques to be implemented.

## 1.2 Rationale

Teaching English not only implies to explain grammatical structures, pronunciation rules, and lexical items that are in fact necessary when learning the foreign tongue, which are also included as part of the classroom curriculum, but also a set of cultural components and pragmatics that are found through the real-life context where the target language is spoken. Therefore, educators must keep that in mind at the moment of thinking about mediation activities, assignments or preparing lesson plans because both language and culture go hand in hand, and lead students to accomplish a meaningful learning.

Dr. Wenying Jiang in her article entitled *The Relationship between Language and Culture*, she states that “*Another metaphor used to symbolize language and culture is the iceberg. The visible part is the language, with a small part of culture; the greater part, lying hidden beneath the surface, is the invisible aspect of culture.*” (Dr. Wenying Jiang, 2000) This reveals that culture is an enormous piece of the learning puzzle that is not being considered as important as it should be.

In Costa Rica, the integration of culture as part of the classroom curriculum is, in some way, taken for granted. Syntactic rules, pronunciation patterns, and vocabulary are matters that are still overemphasized when learning English. This now occurs through the



use of myriad technological tools as a motivating way to get learners involved in their learning process, and also the Ministry of Education (MEP) intends to fit them into a spot in the light of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Consequently, language teachers and MEP are burying their heads in the sand ignoring the reality and just seeing the visible tip of the iceberg as Dr. Jiang says.

This study is important in order to highlight that teaching culture in the English as a Foreign Language classroom cannot be left out of the learning process so that it allows students to use the target language effectively with different situations and context in order to be competent in the real world where English has now become a lingua-franca and even embraces cross-cultural exchanges.

### **1.3 Purpose**

The goal of the present study is to arouse interest in the culture of the foreign language, and to confirm that integrating cultural components into the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom curriculum enhances the pragmatic competences of the students in Costa Rican high schools.

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

To enhance students' pragmatic competence through the integration of cultural awareness with eighth graders in the Bilingual Experimental High School of Grecia.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

- a. To diagnose student's pragmatic competence through their previous cultural knowledge.
- b. To implement activities and strategies that contribute to highlighting cultural awareness as a meaningful component in the teaching process to understand cross-cultural meaning.
- c. To evaluate the impact of incorporating cultural matters into the learning process of the foreign language in students' pragmatic performance.

### **1.3.3 Research Questions**

- a. What is the role that cultural awareness plays in enhancing pragmatic competence?
- b. How significant is including cultural awareness to enhance students' understanding of the English language?

**CHAPTER II**  
**LITERATURE REVIEW**

## 2.1 Literature Review

*“Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going.”* - Rita Mae Brown

This quote by the American writer Rita Mae Brown states that culture is defined by a language through the people who uses it daily, and that is something language teachers are not considering very relevant in the TEFL process. In fact, educators need to consider its importance because students are learning a different language.

Teachers should assuredly know that culture is a continuously changing element that needs to be incorporated into the foreign language classroom syllabus, and also pragmatics, which is an intrinsic aspect that is not usually taken into account in the TEFL process. Therefore, it is significant for students to deal with cultural components and pragmatics to accomplish an authentic language.

According to the study of Ben Temam, which is entitled *The Awareness of Culture in Developing Foreign Learners’ Pragmatic Competence*, it is said that *“Culture has many disparate definitions according to different trends and interpretations. Culture is believed to be one of the most complicated words in the English language and giving a precise definition of it is time-consuming.”* (Temam, 2016) This means that culture is one the most important components of human beings’ lives that needs to be included in the EFL classroom even though it might be taken for granted.

Also, in the same study of Ben Temam, he mentions that *“Douglas Brown defines culture as the ideas, customs, skills, arts and tools that characterize a given group of people in a given period of time, whereas Nelson Brooks refers to culture as the total way of human life.”* (Temam, 2016) It confirms that culture is included in every aspect of the human life. Therefore, it should be included when learning any language.

Regarding United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, it is said that

*...culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses in*

*addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.* (UNESCO, 2002)

This definition evidently means that every individual aspect of humans' lives belongs to culture. It does not matter how hard people try to change it. It is always going to be part of their lives. Generally speaking, culture is like an imperceptible fabric that covers up society completely. It is not just about a way of acting, feeling, reacting and thinking, but a mode of living and its personality as well. It includes diverse forms and expressions of society.

Thus, values, customs, traditions, routines, practices, habits, ways of being, clothing, languages, and behaviors are all characteristics that are involved in every single one.

According to Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada in its article Center for Intercultural Learning, it is stated that

*Culture rules virtually every aspect of your life and like most people, you are completely unaware of this... In fact, the things produced by a culture which we perceive with our five senses are simply manifestations of the deeper meaning of culture – what we do, think and feel. Culture is taught and learned and shared – there is no culture of one. And yet, culture is not monolithic – individuals exist within a culture. Finally, culture is symbolic. Meaning is ascribed to behavior, words and objects and this meaning is objectively arbitrary, subjectively logical and rational.*  
(Global Affairs Canada, 2012)

This basically means that culture is an indispensable component in every society, and sometimes people are not conscious about its importance so that it is always found in each activity they do daily.

Concerning the study of Helena Brdarić, which is named The Importance of Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom, she mentions what Professor Ismail Çakir said, and it is that “*Culture is an essential part of every person's identity but language is the most expressive part of that culture. Furthermore, a person's way of thinking, emotions and communication can be affected by a change from one culture to another.*” (Brdarić, 2016) It is stated that culture is implied in every aspect of people's lives, and language is a way into which culture is expressed through words. That is the reason why she reaffirms in her same article that “*...language and culture are inseparably linked and that they have to be paired with one another in the EFL*

*syllabi.*” (Brdarić, 2016) It is undeniable that if culture and language are linked, there is a need that culture should be include in the EFL curriculum for the students to be competent when communicating successfully.

Also, in her same study, Helena Brdarić adds that “*Culture can also be seen as a context in which we exist and affect each other.*” (Brdarić, 2016) That affirms that culture is reflected through the context in which the language is used.

According to the research *The Impact of Cultural Based Activities in Foreign Language Teaching at Intermediate (B1) Level*, which is carried out by Yakup Doganay and Aida Maksut Yergaliyeva, it is said that

*For a long time it has been argued that teaching a foreign language through lingua-cultural approach should be given the importance it deserves. Therefore, many scholars have paid plenty of attention to developing the notion ‘intercultural communicative competence’ and contribute ideas of implementing cultural based activities into process of foreign language teaching. With the works of scholars such as Byram (1989; 1994a; 1994b; 1997a; 1997b) and Kramsch (1988; 1993; 1996; 2001) people, involved in language teaching, have begun to understand the intertwined relation between culture and language.* (Doganay, 2013)

As a result, it is more common to see how well-known publishing homes such as Cambridge and Oxford have included in their EFL books sections about culture, which contain articles, projects, and questions, among others in order to raise awareness about its importance. This also helps teachers to find the time or necessary inspiration to implement it in an easier and smoother way into their lessons.

In regard to Jerrold Frank in his article, which is entitled *Raising Cultural Awareness in the English Language Classroom*, he states that “*The Standards for Foreign Language Learning (NSFLEP 1999) provides a framework for students to integrate the philosophical perspectives, the behavioral practices, and the products-both tangible and intangible-of a society.*” (Frank, 2013) He determines that culture can be divided into three components of a model that is called the 3P’s of culture. They are basically: perspectives, practices and products.

Also, Jerrold Frank says in his same article that perspectives refer to “...*what members of a culture think, feel, and value.*” (Frank, 2013) This is about ideas, beliefs or thoughts that are significant in people’s lives.

Likewise, perspectives form practices, which comprise traditions and specific behaviors within a culture. For example, the way people communicate can be different from culture to culture. Practices also comprise formal and informal behaviors, such as wedding traditions (formal behavior) and how people dress (informal behaviors).

Finally, in his same article, Jerrold Frank states that products are “...*technology, music, art, food, literature, among others; the things members of a group create, share, and transmit to the next generation.*” (Frank, 2013)

Similarly, in her same study, Helena Brdarić sums up what Jerrold Frank said previously, and it is that

*Culture can be summarized within a 3P model – perspectives (what members of a culture think, feel and value), practices (how members communicate and interact with one another) and products (technology, music, art, food, literature, etc.; the things members of a group create, share, and transmit to the next generation). These aspects transcend human life completely. (Brdarić, 2016)*

As it is mentioned previously, the three prior components are transferred throughout time from human to human, and as they are part of culture, they need to be taught in the EFL classroom as well.

Furthermore, in her same study, Helena Brdarić emphasizes that “...*students must be acquainted with perspectives, practices and products of a target language culture in order for them to communicate successfully.*” (Brdarić, 2016) She confirms that the three components of the model of the 3P’s of culture, which were mentioned by Jerrold Frank previously need to be taught in order for the students to be highly competent communicatively.

As an example of the reason why the three prior components need to be taught in the EFL classroom, in her same study, Helena Brdarić says that

*...there is an undeniable difference between the Western world and indigenous tribes. Perspectives, practices and products of the West strive for progress, financial well-being, technology, etc. Also, products as tangible things are often considered more important than perspectives and practices. On the other hand, less developed communities, such as tribes, cherish spiritual over material aspects of life. They focus on unity, faith and humanity rather than on products. This is just an example of a 'gap' or 'culture shock' that is present not only within the mentioned instance but it can be seen in every culture. Not everyone values the same things. Language is a bond that can bridge every gap but not without cultural awareness. (Brdarić, 2016)*

With this example, Helena Brdarić demonstrates that all aspects of culture need to be taught to students in order for them to avoid misunderstandings and comprehend differences and similarities that people have in every society.

Moreover, language and culture go hand in hand. There are significant characteristics that represent the individuality of each society. Therefore, when learning a foreign language, it is indispensable to be familiar with its culture and society. Concerning Claire Kramersch, who is a renowned researcher of linguistics, she points out in her article, which is entitled Culture within Language, three ways in which language and culture relate.

*First, language expresses cultural reality (with words people express facts and ideas but also reflect their attitudes). Second, language embodies cultural reality (people give meaning to their experience through the means of communication). Third, language symbolizes cultural reality (people view their language as a symbol of their social identity) (Kramersch, 2012)*

In fact, these three simple ways that Ms. Kramersch establishes actually determine that language is a representation or even a whole picture of what culture is like for native speakers because it is fully integrated within it and helps echo through the way they think, feel and act with others as well.

Regarding Chia-Lin Hsin in her study, which is named Language and Culture in Foreign Language Teaching, she restates what Douglas Brown once said, and it is that “*A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture.*”



(Hsin, 2014) This means that language and culture are only one together. There cannot be culture with no language or even language with no culture.

Correspondingly, in the same study of Ben Temam, he finds out that students considered through questionnaires that culture is a meaningful matter in the learning process. (Temam, 2016) In other words, even the students acknowledge the importance of learning the culture of the target language.

According to the study of Yakup Doganay and Aida Maksut Yergaliyeva, they find out the following results after applying their questionnaires about culturally-based activities, and the students' perspectives of those activities. Below you can see the results from the study.

Table 1. Number and percentages of the students answered with YES/NO

	<u>Ans.</u>	<u>N.Std</u>	<u>%</u>
Do you enjoy working with other students in groups?	YES	75	% 91
Are you anxious or stressed when you work collaboratively with your peers?	NO	76	% 92
Do cultural-based activities help you to overcome your anxiety or stress?	YES	72	% 87
Do you like watching authentic extracts in target language about your culture?	YES	82	% 100
Do you like watching authentic extracts in target language about other cultures?	YES	80	% 97
Do you like behaving as if you are a foreigner in your dialogues?	YES	73	% 89
Do you like searching other cultures in projects?	YES	80	% 97
Do you like being involved in discussions about other cultures?	YES	74	% 90

Taken from the study of Yakup Doganay and Aida Maksut Yergaliyeva (Doganay, 2013)

As it is shown, they came to the conclusion that students feel more motivated when doing culturally-based activities. In other words, this is another benefit of implementing cultural awareness in the EFL classroom because it creates a better atmosphere, rapport, and even helps them reduce their level of anxiety. (Doganay, 2013)

Hence, the task of educators is to help students comprehend their innate culture and society in order to associate and contrast them with the ones of the target language. In so doing, foreign language learners could benefit greatly from them when getting to fit into a different society, being respectful of dissimilar perspectives that people may have, being tolerant towards a new society, and even towards a modern one where some normal behaviors and ways of being are considered as taboos in their own culture.

According to Barry Tomalin and Susan Stempleski in their study, which is entitled *Cultivating Intercultural Communication Competence through Culture Teaching*, they have considered that teaching culture should contribute:

- *To help students to develop an understanding of the fact that all people exhibit culturally-conditioned behaviors.*

- *To help students to develop an understanding that social variables such as age, sex, social class, and place of residence influence the ways in which people speak and behave.*
- *To help students to become more aware of conventional behavior in common situations in the target culture.*
- *To help students to increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of words and phrases in the target language.*
- *To help students to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, in terms of supporting evidence.*
- *To help students to develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture.*
- *To stimulate students' intellectual curiosity about the target culture, and to encourage empathy towards its people. (Stempleski, 2014)*

It is demonstrated with these principles that they describe what culture is and has continually been, which it is a manner that makes people be and act the way they do because it establishes certain conditions and behaviors to every specific region. All individuals acquire them from very young and finish up transmitting them to their children.

Concerning the same study of Helena Brdarić, she says that

*...teachers should have a developed understanding of cross-cultural awareness so they will be able to incorporate culture or culture-oriented topics into their teaching. This will offer their students a great opportunity to become familiar with a certain culture and bring versatility into the EFL classroom. (Brdarić, 2016)*

It is demonstrated that language teachers should travel and experience cross-cultural differences and similarities in order to include them in the EFL classroom because culture is a characteristic in disguise that brings the students the opportunity to be acquainted with real-life situations that happen to people that speak English.

Additionally, in her same study, Helena Brdarić comments that “*...students must acquire knowledge about the target language and then reflect their own culture in relation to other cultures. Students must acknowledge that not everyone in this world lives in the same way and values the same ideas.*” (Brdarić, 2016) She states that students not only have to learn many

different elements about the foreign language, but also compare their own culture with others. In that way, they will understand that people are different.

Likewise, in her same study, Helena Brdarić says that

*Unfortunately, teachers who have spent a little or no time outside their own countries might experience problems with depicting the features and complexity of the target culture. However, through the use of Internet sources and other valuable sources found in digital and print media they can collect numerous data which will familiarize their learners with interesting cultural facts. (Brdarić, 2016)*

She highlights that even if teachers do not have much experience with the target culture, there are ways in which they could use several sources to bring up culture into the classroom, but the more exposure educators have towards culture of the target language, the less problems they will face when dealing with cultural issues in the classroom.

Moreover, in the same study of Helena Brdarić, she states that

*Since the English language is widely used as a lingua franca, there is a growing need for competence in English in the everyday life of non-native speakers of English. They need to be fully prepared so they can overcome misunderstandings that could happen while communicating with speakers of English. Therefore, learners should be made familiar with the cultural differences that affect their communication. Even though a language is best learned in an authentic context, students must be prepared before travelling abroad and that is what foreign language instruction is about. (Brdarić, 2016)*

She recognizes that English has now become a bridge language so that students need to achieve certain English proficiency level to be competent in the world and be prepared to face real-life situations if teachers give them an authentic language, which could help them avoid misunderstandings, accept differences and identify similarities.

Besides, in her same study, Helena Brdarić comments that

*...the English language is widely spoken as a lingua franca all around the world. That is the main reason why English language learners must be equipped with intercultural competence, if there is to be complete understanding among the non-native users of English who come from diverse cultural backgrounds.*

It shows that learning English has changed its direction in recent years because it has become a lingua-franca, which means that a lot of people around the world speak, and even numerous cultures run into one another in many circumstances. Therefore, it is essential for students to embrace cross-cultural differences and similarities to be fruitful with the target language today.

According to Chia-Lin Hsin in her same study, she says that *“Considering an English-as-a-lingua-franca situation, a Chinese speaker might communicate with a Japanese speaker using English as a medium. Thus, different sense of cultural contents should be assigned in different FL learning contexts, depending on the needs of learners.”* (Hsin, 2014) She reaffirms that people that use English as a way to communicate with other people that speak different languages need to have a broad cultural notion, which should be included as part of the learning process, and be selected depending on what the learners require the language for.

In fact, in her same study, Helena Brdarić mentions that

*Since language is a culturally conditioned phenomenon, it is necessary to raise awareness of cultural otherness. Each culture has distinctive rules and social courtesies that are irrelevant in other cultures. In order to minimize possible misunderstandings, teaching culture along with language can provide students with greater cultural sensitivity and can help them to adjust to other cultures when necessary.* (Brdarić, 2016)

This displays that for her there is a need to make learners aware of the importance of the target culture so that each one is different, and teaching culture can help to avoid misunderstandings and accept different cultural characteristics, which they could face up in the future.

On the other hand, Helena Brdarić remarks that

*...teachers are under the influence of mainstream educational policy, which is generally monocultural and associates teaching additional languages with their national culture. It remains to be seen if English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers can become aware of the importance of a common intercultural ground, which can be provided by teaching English as a lingua franca combined with teaching ELF users' cultures.* (Brdarić, 2016)

She emphasizes something very significant here, and it is that teaching English is usually predisposed by the educational programs that tend to highlight the native culture, which put the target culture aside from the learning process. However, educators should be aware that learning English has changed meaningfully into a bridge language that encompasses cross-cultural differences and similarities nowadays.

Besides, in her same study, Helena Brdarić keeps saying that *“In order to achieve complete foreign language acquisition, it is important to deduce which aspects of culture should be taught and in which manner to incorporate a unity of culture into EFL teaching.”* (Brdarić, 2016) That demonstrates that language teachers have to pick out which cultural components need to be taught in order for students to acquire the target language successfully.

In addition to that, Helena Brdarić remarks something very vital in her same study, and it is that *“If learners do not appreciate what they have in their own country, they will not appreciate another’s values. Accordingly, teachers must create a “culture friendly” atmosphere in a classroom before they start teaching other cultures.”* (Brdarić, 2016) In other words, language learners need to appreciate their own culture to be able to appreciate and understand another. Also, educators have to include cultural components in the ELF classroom, but in a gradually and friendly way.

Regarding Ben Temam’s previous study, he says that

*...when it comes to the study of language in use, there is a field of pragmatics that requires the presence of cultural knowledge. Thereby, the pragmatic aspects of language demand the use of authentic materials or genuine samples of spoken discourse to do so.* (Temam, 2016)

This points that exposing students to authentic materials generate a sense of achievement, increase their confidence and prepare them for real-life situations.

Concerning the same study of Helena Brdarić, she states that

*There are numerous sources for integrating culture in the classroom, among others, books, poetry, newspapers, magazines, radio clips, television shows and movies. Using such materials can provoke many questions about how and where people live, how they spend their time, how they dress, what and how they eat and many other items of interest.* (Brdarić, 2016)

This addresses the idea that authentic materials open the door towards culture, and students start wondering about different cultural aspects of society.

In addition, in his same study, Ben Temam mentions that Douglas Brown in 2000 said that “...giving interest to the authentic language in use and contexts, not just focusing in the usages and accurateness of the language, in order to fulfill the goals of communication.” (Temam, 2016) In other words, taking into account authentic language along with culture and pragmatics should be prioritized in order to make sure that students will attain the needed tools to be competent in the target language. This is the reason why culture has been recognized as the fifth skill when learning a language.

Also, in Ben Temam’s study, he confirms the previous point by saying that

*...language learning encompasses and depends upon culture learning, i.e. dealing with language means dealing with a total system of life. That is to say, culture is integrated as a fifth skill along with the four traditional skills, but its function is to interfere and overlap with listening, reading, speaking, and writing.* (Temam, 2016)

As it has been demonstrated before, pragmatics is already included when learning a language. However, it has been left out of the EFL classroom, but most of teachers do not know how to define this concept and its relation with culture appropriately.

According to the study of Sofiane Kada, which is entitled Culture and Pragmatics in Language Teaching and Learning, he mentions that “...pragmatics is defined as the study of communicative action in its socio-cultural context.” (Kada, 2017) This demonstrates that pragmatics is all the action taken by the speakers in different real-life situations, and it can be defined as the study of language in use.

Likewise, David Crystal in his video named English Lang: Pragmatics, which can be found on YouTube, he says that “Pragmatics is the study of the choices you make when you use language. The reasons of those choices and the effects of those choices conveyed.” (Crystal, 2014) It proves that everything a person says can be analyzed, and that can help us understand better the context, background, cultural situation, emotions, among others. In other words, it is crucial to implement this in the EFL classroom in order to facilitate cross-cultural communication as well as avoid misunderstandings that might emerge from interaction of people of different cultures.

To illustrate this point, in the same study of Sofiane, he exemplifies the term pragmatics as follows:

*For instance, if we take the word “Beautiful “; we look at the dictionary and we find word beautiful means something very nice. This what language means by itself, we called this the semantics meaning. Now, if we take the same word and use it in a particular context; we found someone horrible that we hate and we will say to him/her, well you look beautiful today. Do we mean nice? The contrast of what the word actually means here, we used the word in a particular context but we gave it another explanation. This is the aim of Pragmatics.*  
(Kada, 2017)

This example shows clearly how important it is to raise awareness of culture when TEFL because students need to deal with the way authentic language is used by native speakers, how much it can change according to the context, and as a result their pragmatic competence benefits their understanding and implementation of the language.

Besides, in the same study of Sofiane Kada, he says that *“Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to comprehend, construct, and convey meaning that is both accurate and appropriate for the social and cultural circumstances in which communication occurs.”* (Kada, 2017) It shows that pragmatic competence is a communicative component that has to do with the speech and the proper use of language in context.

Also, in the same study of Sofiane Kada, he mentions that *“In simple term, pragmatics is about culture, communication and in the case of foreign language, about intercultural communication. In order for foreign language learners to acquire pragmatic competence, they need to acquire cultural understanding and communicative skills.”* (Kada, 2017) This states that pragmatic competence can be achieved if students are exposed to culture and communicative skills.

Additionally, in Sofiane Kada’s prior study, he states that *“...pragmatic competence is a combination of the linguistic and social aspects of the language in which people need to be competent and communicate effectively.”* (Kada, 2017) He demonstrates that pragmatic competence deals with linguistics or the structure of the language, which covers phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics, and sociocultural elements that are typical of the language.

Moreover, in the same study, Sofiane Kada mentions that *“The study of pragmatics explores the ability of language users to match utterances with contexts in which they are appropriate”* (Kada, 2017) and also mentions something that Dewey once said, and it is that *“We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience.”* (Kada, 2017) He says that pragmatics is used when learners use the language appropriately in context. Also, he says that reason of learning is not focused on the experience people have, but the reflection they get from the experience.

Furthermore, in Sofiane Kada’s previous study, he says that *“The four skills in language learning: reading, writing, listening, and speaking do not occur in isolation in communicative texts or activities.”* (Kada, 2017) There should be a link that unites the four skills in one to enable language learners to be competent in the real world, where English is now used as a bridge language, and basically that is the reason why culture and pragmatics need to be taught in the EFL classroom in order for students to be successful language users and communicate appropriately in any circumstance, at any moment, with any person or even anywhere in the world.

Correspondingly, if students developed such connection along with culture and pragmatics, they would achieve a meaningful learning and probably language would be mastered because the linguistic parts of the language would be stored in the long-term memory subconsciously so that they would come up naturally. In doing so, they would put into practice the structures and knowledge they have learned by facing real-life situations, and even cross-cultural differences and similarities would awaken their critical thinking.

Likewise, in Sofiane Kada’s prior study, he states three points that shape a good pragmatic competence in language learners in the following way:

1. *The goals and objectives of a language course should be designed to meet the need of the language learner to help them develop and improve their communicative competence. First, the language teacher and the learner should pay attention to design communicative activities which would help to develop the communicative competence.*
2. *The language teacher should design the course material to engage the learners in the pragmatic, coherent and functional uses of language for communication purposes. The pragmatic competence of the learner must be well developed; consequently, he or she will be able to conduct communication appropriately. The development of coherence and the*



*ability to react in different situations shows a good level of functional competence. The grammar of the target language should not be taught in isolation with its use. The learner should be able to put his or her knowledge of language into practice.*

*3. There are a number of activities useful for the development of pragmatic competence. Moreover, they should raise the learners' awareness of the importance of such competence in the process of acquiring the target language. The purpose of the application of different teaching and learning activities is to help students become more effective, fluent, and successive communicators in the target language. (Kada, 2017)*

He mentions three important aspects that are needed to develop pragmatic competence in the EFL classroom. Firstly, the goals of the course should be concerned with the learners' needs. Next, the course materials should involve language functionality. Finally, activities should guide learners to be competent in the target language.

Finally, in the same study of Sofiane Kada, he says that

*Since pragmatic competence is a combination of these factors, the development of the pragmatic ability should be accepted as one of the primary teaching goals. Students will be able to act different communicative patterns, they will find themselves active and involved in concrete acts in the classroom. Pragmatic competence will secure them good levels of grammatical competences as well. They will react fluently, coherently, and adequately. What is more, pragmatic competence will urge their critical thinking. (Kada, 2017)*

To sum up, he recognizes that pragmatic competence should be included in the EFL classroom so that it involves numerous aspects along with culturally-based knowledge, which will lead learners to be successful in using the target language appropriately.

# **CHAPTER III**

## **DESIGN AND METHOD**

### **3.1 Research Method**

This is an action research because EFL teachers encounter several issues related to culture awareness and its relation to pragmatic competence in the EFL classroom, which can be analyzed deeply through the use of action research guidelines. Also, this method allows to take into account numerous factors such as teachers' performance, students' cultural knowledge, EFL classroom curriculum, students' pragmatic competence, and culturally-based activities execution.

### **3.2 Type of Approach**

This study takes into account students' knowledge and teachers' underlying opinions, reasons, motivations, beliefs and thoughts towards the integration of cultural components that need to be taught in the EFL classroom as a way to improve students' pragmatic competence using a method of observation based on a qualitative data analysis that aims to collect non-numerical information that provides insights into the problem and helps in developing ideas.

### **3.3 The Context**

The Bilingual Experimental High School of Grecia is located in Barrio Latino, which is an urban area and is fifteen minutes away from downtown Grecia. Most of the people of the region are Costa Rican and employees. Also, the official language is Spanish. The public services around are the clinic, school and community center.

#### **3.3.1 Setting**

The study is carried out with eighth graders in a listening and speaking classroom at the Bilingual Experimental High School of Grecia. The facilities of the high schools are a library, a gym, outdoor areas, a computer science lab, a music classroom, a cafeteria and common areas.

### **3.3.2 Participants**

This study is done with twelve eighth-grade students of the Bilingual Experimental High School in Grecia, of which eight students are male and seven are female. The majority of them come from a public school and have already taken some English courses before.

## **3.4 Data Collection Procedures and Tools of Initial Research**

### **3.4.1 Procedures of Initial Research**

The present study is an attempt to examine and confirm how cultural awareness can enhance students' pragmatic competence in the EFL classroom so that culturally-based contents are being disregarded. On the opposing side, teachers focus on grammatical structures, vocabulary items, among other related topics, which are important when learning English, but do not allow students to develop their pragmatic competence.

### **3.4.2 Instruments**

#### **3.4.2.1 Observations**

##### **3.4.2.1.1 Students Observation**

The student observation is conducted to provide information about the students' pragmatic competence and the level of cultural awareness using a checklist.

##### **3.4.2.1.2 Teacher Observation**

The teacher observation is implemented to know if the educator implements culturally-based activities and if so, how successful they are in order to enhance students' pragmatic competence using a checklist.

### **3.4.2.2 Interview**

The interview, which is composed by a series of closed questions, is conducted in order to gather information about teachers' perspectives regarding cultural awareness in the EFL classroom as well as its relation to the development of students' pragmatic competence.

### **3.4.2.3 Diagnostic Tests**

#### **3.4.2.3.1 Pre-Diagnostic Test**

The pre-diagnostic test, which is composed by multiple choice questions, is done to evaluate the students' prior knowledge about cultural aspects and pragmatic competence. Therefore, it allows to decide what cultural topics can be omitted, reinforced and taught before planning.

#### **3.4.2.3.2 Post-Diagnostic Test**

The post- diagnostic test, which is composed by multiple choice questions, is carried out in order to assess the success of the implementation of the culturally-based activities.

### **3.4.3 Diagnostic Data Analysis**

When it comes to English Teaching as a Foreign Language, it has been identified that language teachers, and even MEP tend to focus more on linguistic competence and on trying to fit students into a spot in the light of the Common European Framework of References by using different technological tools, which are important aspects when learning any language. However, culture and pragmatic competence are still being left out of the students' learning process. Therefore, learning the English language without taking into account culture and pragmatics in the classroom is like learning how to swim with no arms.

### 3.5 Action Plan

The following chart describes the strategies, activities, instruments and among others that are used to take corrective measurements and address the problem.

Session	Activity
1	Students observation
	Teacher observation
2	Teacher interview
3	Pre-Diagnostic Test
4	Lesson plan #1
	Lesson plan #2
	Lesson plan #3
5	Lesson plan #4
	Lesson plan #5
	Lesson plan #6
6	Post-Diagnostic Test

# **CHAPTER IV**

## **FINDINGS**

## **4.1 Data Analysis**

### **4.1.1 Students Observation**

According to the students observation instrument applied on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the following results were found:

- Students used native language when approaching the teacher and each other and also the use of daily expressions, collocations, idioms, slang, jargon, phrasal verbs, and interjections, among others is not tangible at all.
- Students' talk-time is maximized. However, they were presenting an oral assignment about sports and teams. This activity was prepared at home in advance which does not demonstrate their actual abilities to communicate naturally or spontaneously.
- At the end of each presentation students were asked a few questions, this allowed them to show their previous knowledge about American culture as well as motivating them to pay attention and learn new things.
- The pragmatic competence was not demonstrated throughout the lesson.
- The students did not show knowledge of culture besides the topics they were talking about. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the students show interest towards the American culture.

### **4.1.2 Teacher Observation**

According to the teacher observation instrument applied on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the following results were stated:



- Teacher used English most of the times. However, at times she code-switched. In addition, she did not reinforce the use of English.
- Teacher took notes, but she did not provide any feedback.
- Class activity was not authentic due to the need of memorization. Students did not use the language in a natural manner.

#### 4.1.3 Teacher Interview

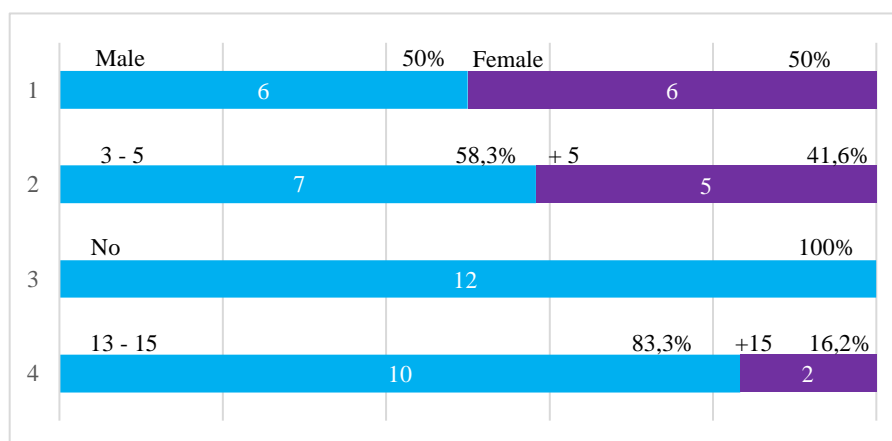
According to the teacher interview instrument applied on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the following results were encountered:

Throughout the interview, the teacher acknowledged the importance of teaching culture and pragmatics as a mean to help students be tolerant. The educator explained that her students are willing to learn about it. Also, she explains that students can learn grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation or even semantics along with culture and pragmatics. She claims to include these kinds of components sometimes by the use of readings, videos and worksheets. However, expresses that the main difficulty is related to the lack of time constraints.

#### 4.1.4 Pre- Diagnostic Test

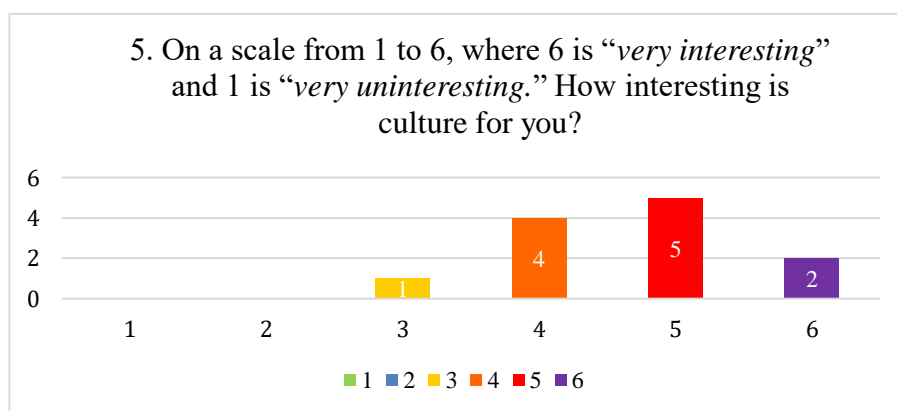
According to the pre-diagnostic test that was conducted with students on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, the following results were gotten:

##### Section I. Personal Information.

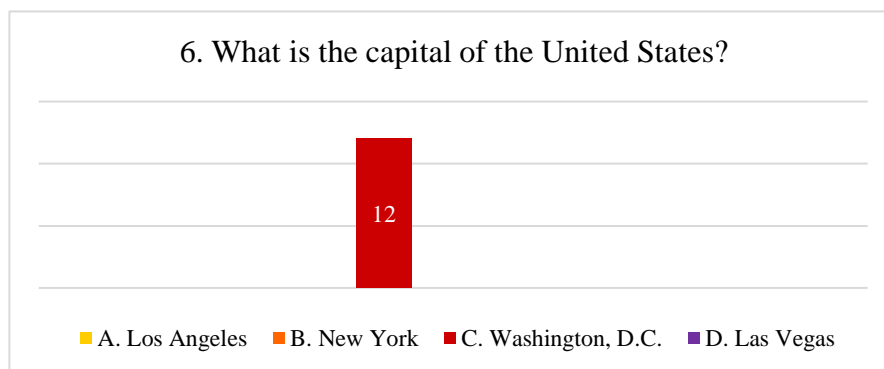


The Pre-diagnostic test shows that six of the students are male and six are female. Also, seven students have been studying English since three or until five years, which means that English has been taught to them since school. On the other hand, five students have been studying it for more than five years. None of them have taken extra English lessons besides high school, and ten students are from thirteen to fifteen years old and only two students are more than fifteen years.

## Section II. Cultural Awareness.



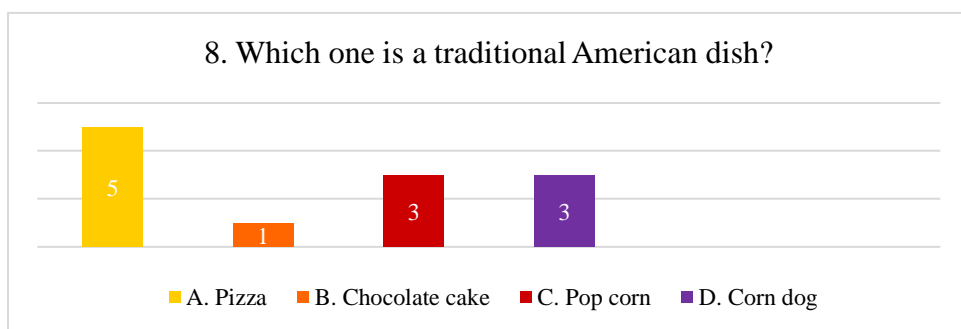
The majority of the students think that culture is interesting in their learning-process.



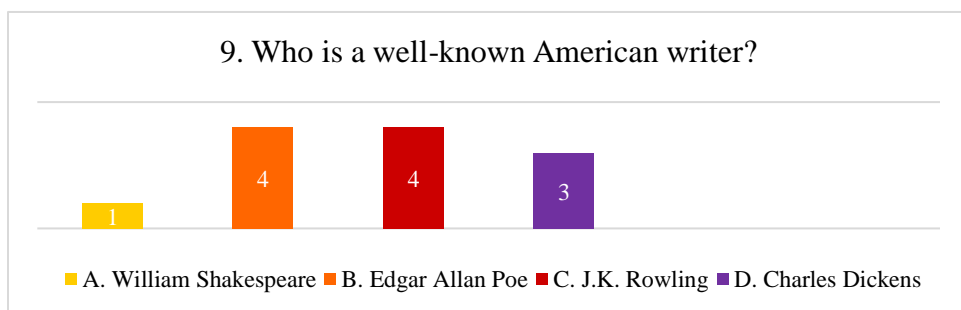
All students answer this question correctly, and know that the capital of the United States is Washington, D.C.



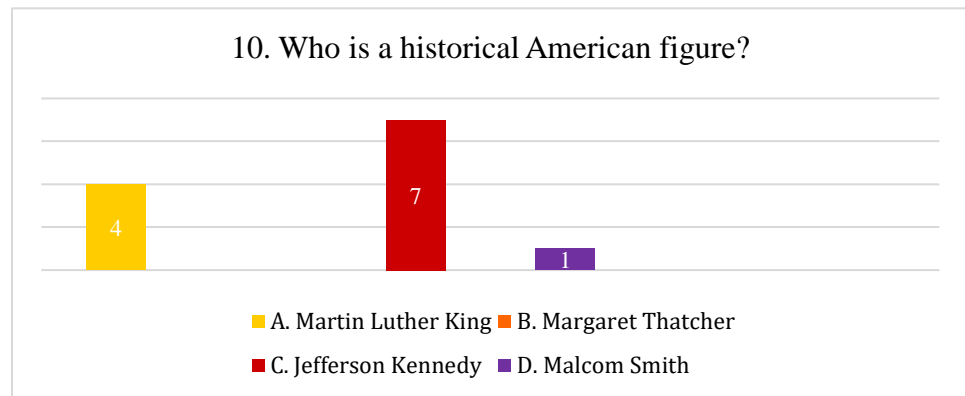
The majority of the students answer correctly; however, four students select the third option 'John Washington', especially because they associate the last name with 'George Washington.'



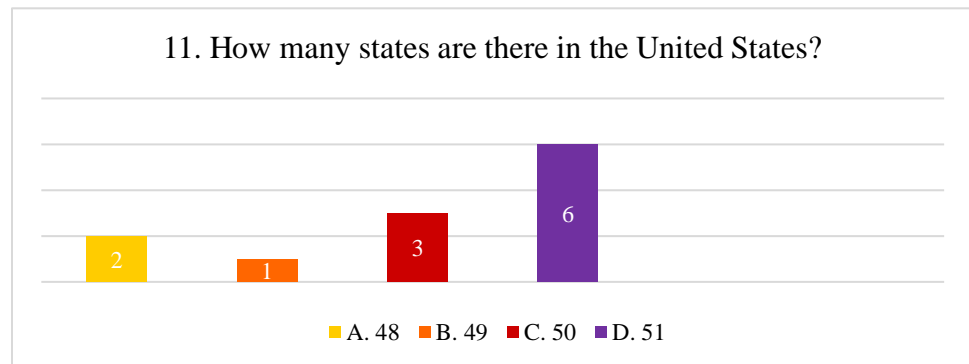
Five students think that pizza is a traditional American dish. Also, one student thinks that chocolate cake is as well as three of them think that pop corn is, and just three students answer correctly.



Only four students answer correctly so that this is a topic, which they need to improve because they confuse British authors with American ones.



Only four students answer correctly so that this is another topic, which they need to improve.

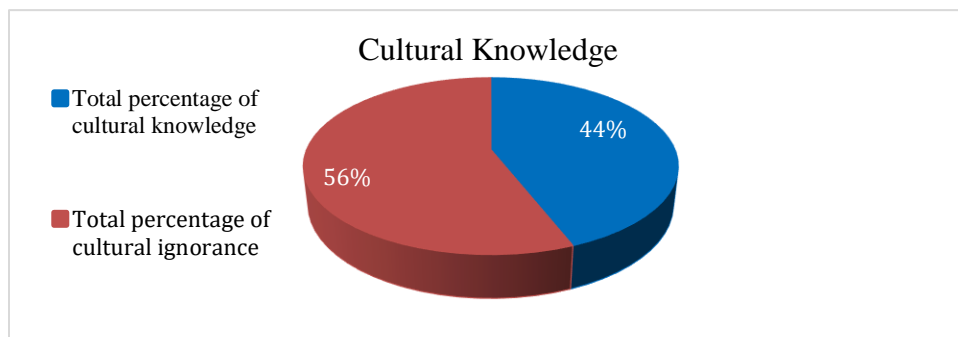


The majority of the students answer incorrectly. Only three students reply correctly. This is another cultural matter that they need to know about American culture.



Only three students answer correctly so that it is determined that students have a little knowledge about American landmarks, and this is another potential topic to be taught.

### Summary of the Cultural Knowledge



Students have less than fifty percent of cultural knowledge, which means that this is a subject that needs improvement

### Section III. Pragmatic Competence.

13. Read the following statement and choose the correct meaning for the phrase *'pretty cool.'*  
That car is **pretty cool!**

---

12

---

■ A. Fast   
 ■ B. Cold   
 ■ C. Nice   
 ■ D. Expensive

All students answer this questions correctly, and know that the meaning for the phrase *'pretty cool'* is nice.

14. What is the common way of saying the following price in the United States? **\$20.99**

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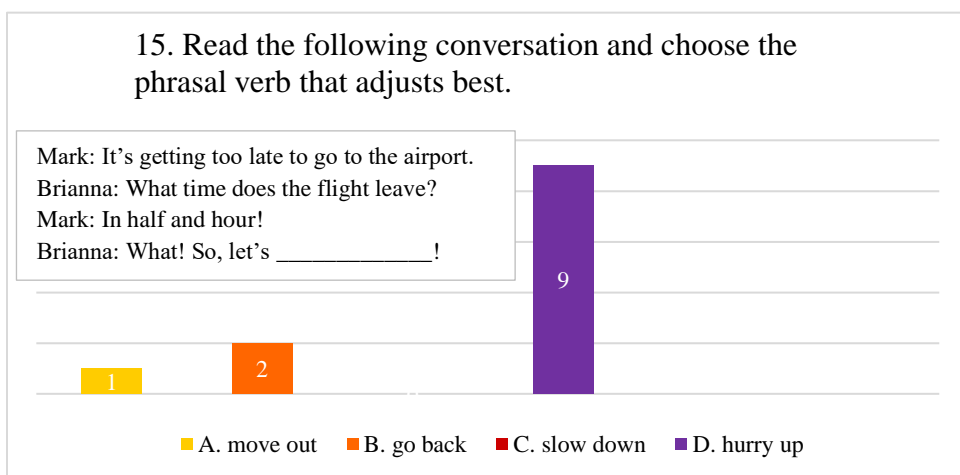
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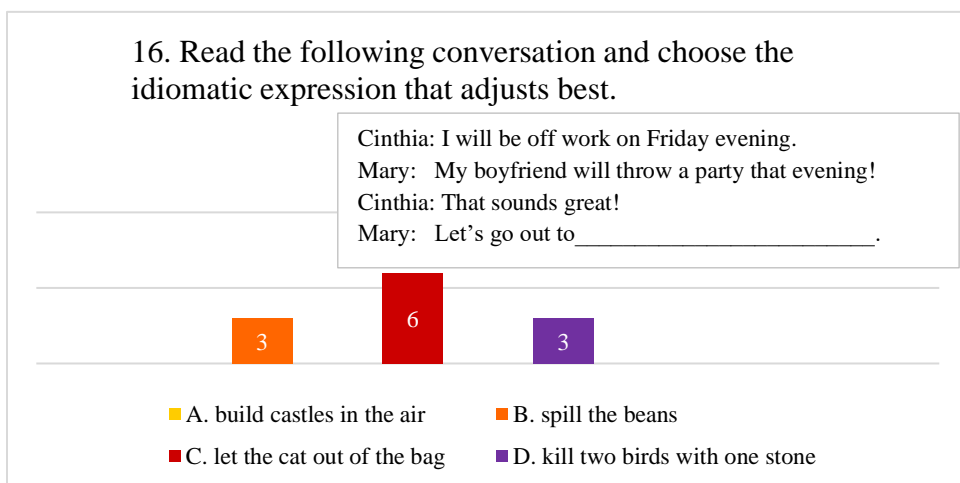
■ A. twenty point ninety-nine                      ■ B. twenty ninety-nine  
■ C. twenty dollars and ninety-nine cents    ■ D. two thousand ninety-nine cents

Only three students answer correctly. This happens because students are not used to this way of saying prices in the U.S., and they have never gone to an American store to buy something or talk to a native speaker about

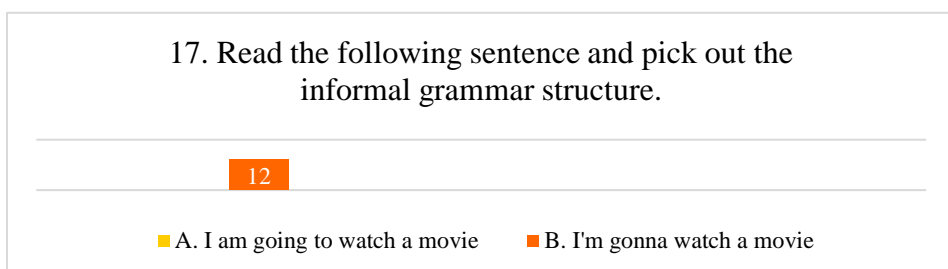
money. Therefore, this is another potential topic about pragmatics that needs to be taught.



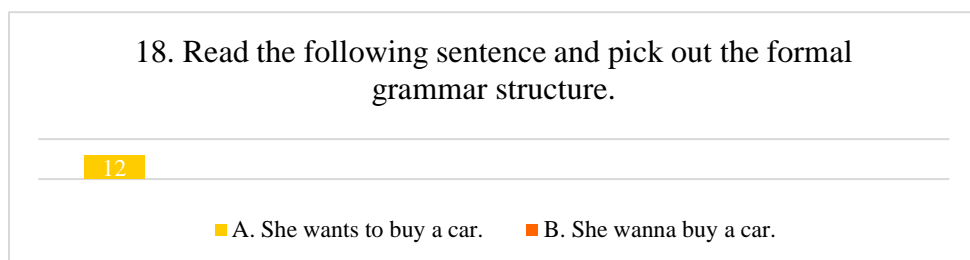
The majority of the students answer correctly, and it seems that they know how to use phrasal verbs suitably.



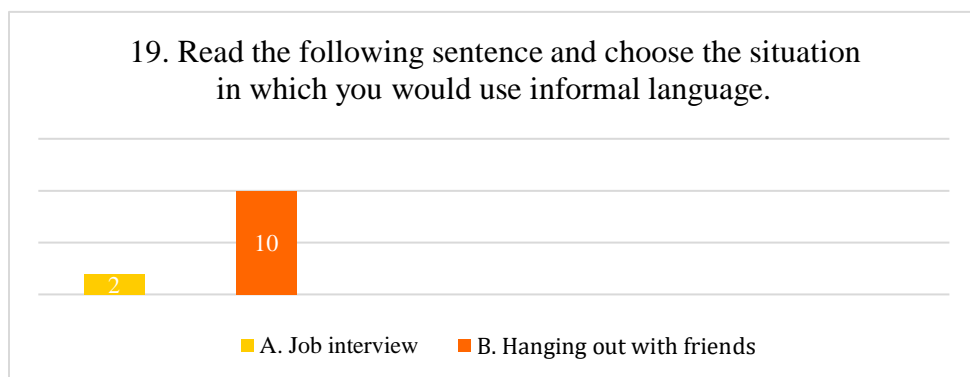
The two correct option is “to kill two birds with one stone.”  
 Four students answer correctly. Therefore, this is another potential topic about pragmatics that need to be taught to students.



All students answer correctly, and they know the difference between informal and formal language.

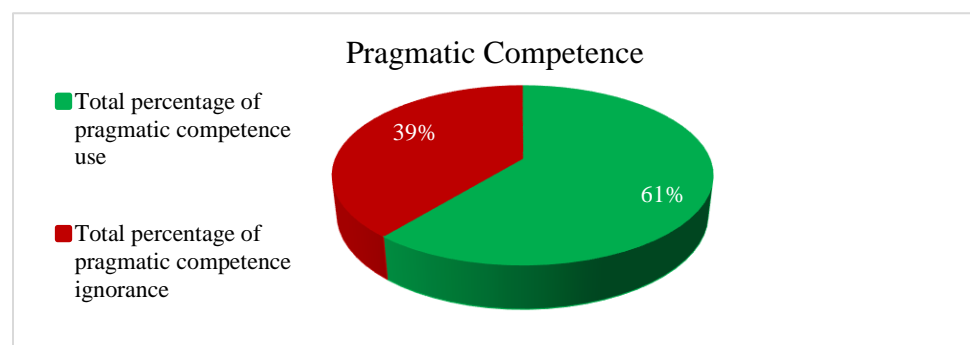


all students answer correctly, and they know the difference between informal and formal language.



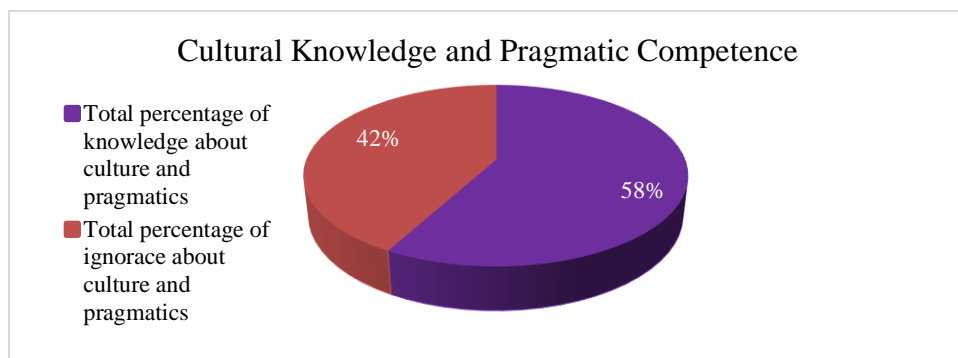
The majority of the students answer correctly, and it seems that they know when to use informal or formal language.

### Summary of the Pragmatic Competence



Students have a very good level of pragmatic competence, which means that they have acquired it indirectly and it is not related to how much cultural knowledge they know about.

### Summary of the Pre-diagnostic Test

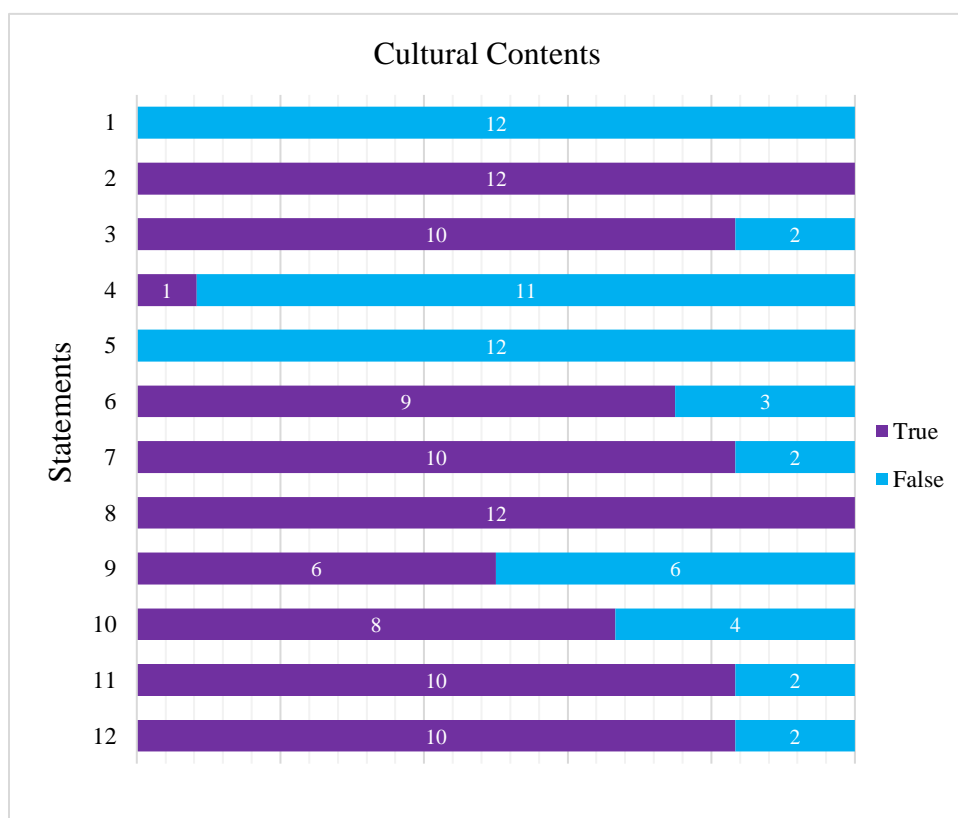


Students have a certain level of cultural knowledge and pragmatic competence; however, cultural knowledge needs to improve more than pragmatics because it is acquired indirectly and it is not related to cultural knowledge.

#### 4.1.5 Post-Diagnostic Test

According to the post-diagnostic test that was conducted with students on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the following results were found:

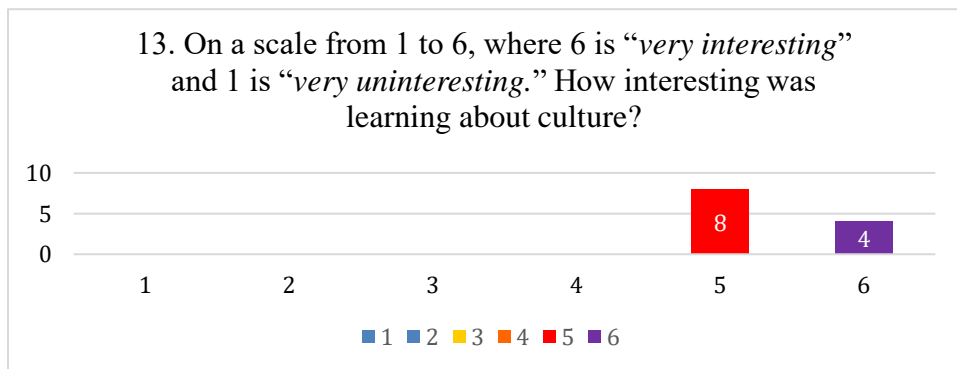
#### Section I. Cultural Contents.



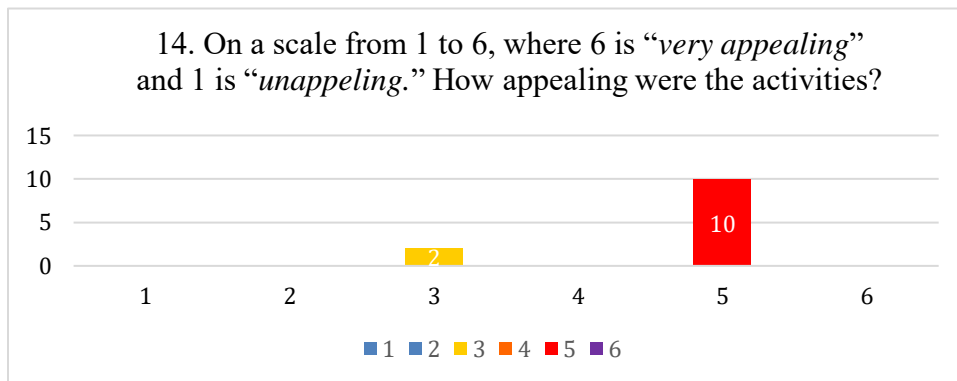


Students have improved incredibly their cultural awareness.

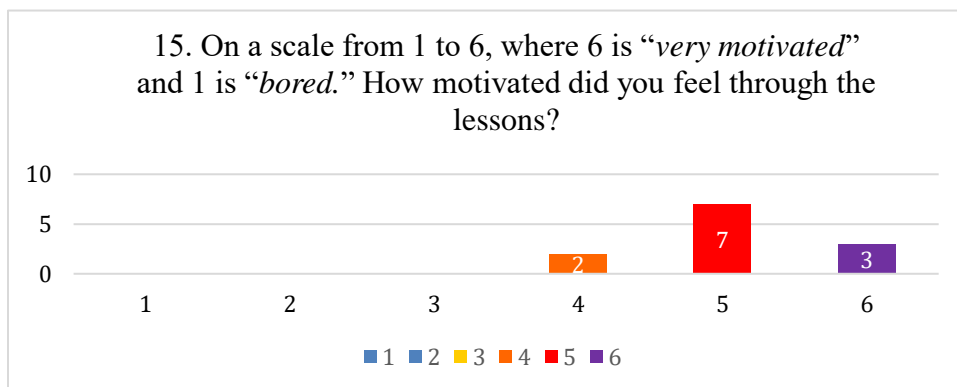
## Section II. Personal Opinion.



The majority of the student think that learning culture is interesting.

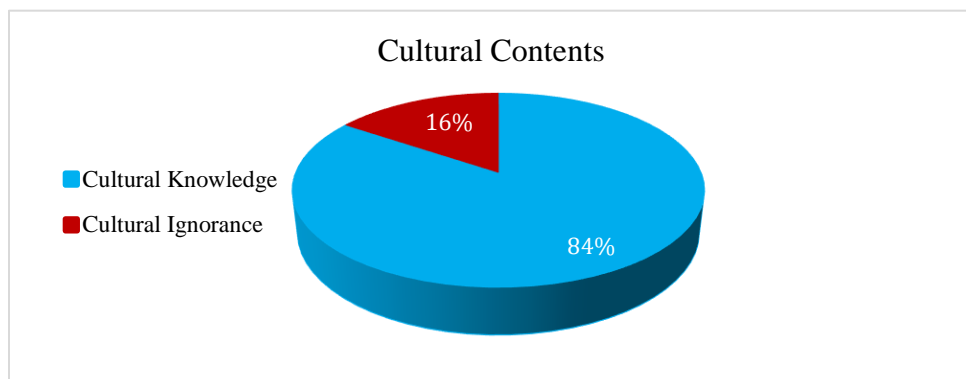


The majority of the student think that the activities made by the teachers were very appealing.



The majority of students feel motivated through the lessons.

### Summary of the Post-diagnostic Test



Students have improved their cultural knowledge meaningfully.

#### 4.2 Restatement of Questions and Discussion of Results

According to the results in this study, the students learn pragmatics in an indirect and subtle manner, however they do not learn cultural components the same way. Perhaps the fact this is a bilingual high school plays an important role in these findings. Maybe, because they spend more time than regular high school students, they are more exposed to the language and they do encounter a more extended variety of topics. In other words, culture and pragmatics do not affect each other in this particular case.

**CHAPTER V**  
**REFLECTIONS**

## **5.1 Reflection on Feelings and Experiences**

This study demonstrates that it is possible to achieve pragmatic competence without focusing principally on cultural components. In this particular case, it can be said that students' pragmatic competence is not something that depends only on how much they know about the target culture, but it is an element that can be developed when interacting with other linguistic components such as grammar, syntax, semantics, among others or even when being exposed to context and how the English language is used in real-life situations.

Additionally, students have attained an excellent level of pragmatic competence in an indirect and subtle way, which is surprising and shocking because the main goal of this action research is to improve that competence through the implementation of cultural components in the English classroom. Similarly, it is relevant to take into account that the English teacher claims not to have enough time to cover cultural components; however, students have achieved a good level of cultural awareness as well.

## **5.2 Plan for Further Action**

Some changes that can be taken into consideration are:

- To evaluate the level of pragmatics through the implementation of an interview to students, which could provide more authentic and real data.
- To eliminate the teacher interview and change it for a written test, which could be more meaningful by measuring the cultural knowledge of the teacher.
- To apply the instruments with other groups and different grades.

# **CHAPTER VI**

## **CONCLUSIONS**

## 6.1 Outcomes

- Students' pragmatic competence is higher than their cultural awareness.
- Students think that learning culture is interesting and motivating in their learning process.
- Students' cultural awareness is good despite not having covered these topics on the regular bases.
- Students think that the implemented activities were appealing.
- Students' English level proficiency is quite good taking into account that they have never taken extra English classes.
- Teacher claims that teaching culture is a time-consuming activity.
- The implemented mediation activities were successful because there was an increase in the students' cultural awareness.

## 6.2 Implications

Cultural awareness plays a secondary role when enhancing pragmatic competence so that students demonstrate an excellent pragmatic competence level despite of the lower level of cultural awareness. Furthermore, teaching culture helps students to be more familiar with some topics and express themselves with more confidence in different social and real situations.

## 6.3 Strengths

- Different instruments were conducted and aimed to get more reliable and integral information.
- Various mediation activities were applied, which helped students improve their cultural knowledge and consolidate the pragmatic competence through the real-life use of the language.
- Students had an excellent English language proficiency level, which allowed them to take enough advantage of the activities.

- Students had enough time to assimilate the cultural contents throughout the activities.
- The group was small, which allowed them to receive more individual feedback, personal attention and monitoring.
- Students had two teachers that enabled them to ask questions, keep on track, motivate, and encourage them.
- The facilities were adequate because there were enough space, illumination and technological equipment.
- The student book contains some small parts related to culture.

#### **6.4 Limitations**

- The lesson plans were applied continuously, which caused some degree of tiredness in the students.
- Students had a tendency to speak in Spanish among them, and the teacher had to remind them to speak English often.
- The researchers are not teachers in the chosen group.

# **CHAPTER VII**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**



In this study, it is recommended the following:

- Not taking for granted the students' knowledge without applying an instrument to assess how much they know about any topic because the teacher might be surprised.
- Taking from five to ten minutes at the end of day to add something about culture in the lesson plan in order for students to become more familiar with real-life topics, which might open their minds towards different points of view, and become more tolerant and empathetic.
- As an English teacher, it is necessary to learn about the target language culture in order to be able to bring it up in the classroom when possible.
- Teacher should not avoid a topic because of its complexity instead they should find and try different ways to address it.
- At an institutional level, they could have a culture fair that highlights the American culture for the students to be more familiar and immerse them in a real-life environment that allows them to become confident.
- The English language curriculum should include at least some cultural components and something about pragmatic competence through the different lessons and activities as well as being evaluated.

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# ANNEXES





# Teacher Interview

The purpose of this interview is to analyze how language teachers take into consideration English culture as a meaningful component as well as to identify how they approach pragmatic competence in the EFL classroom. The information collected is going to be used only for an action research of the Universidad Latina de Costa Rica and is going to be strictly confidential.

High School: Bilingual Experimental High School of Grecia

Date: April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Subject: Listening and Speaking

## Section I. Personal Information.

1. How long have you been an English teacher? \_\_\_\_\_

## Section II. Culture and Pragmatic Competence in the EFL Classroom.

2. How do you define cultural awareness? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How do you define pragmatic competence? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What do you think about teaching culture and pragmatics? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What do you emphasize more when teaching English?

- Linguistic competence
- Culture and Pragmatic competence
- Both of them

6. If you picked out '*Linguistic competence*' only in the previous question, what other activities or techniques do you use in order for your students to accomplish an authentic language without taking into account culture and pragmatic competence? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. On the other hand, if you picked out '*culture and pragmatic competence*' or '*both of them*', how often you emphasize your classes on culture and pragmatics?

- Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Hardly ever



7.1. How do you integrate culture and pragmatics into your classes? \_\_\_\_\_

---

7.2. How hard is to include culture and pragmatics in your classes?

- |  |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely difficult<br><input type="checkbox"/> Rather difficult<br><input type="checkbox"/> Fairly difficult<br><input type="checkbox"/> Not difficult |
|--|

7.2.1. If you picked out '*extremely difficult*', '*rather difficult*', or '*fairly difficult*', why do you consider that including culture and pragmatics could be challenging?

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7.2.2. On the opposing site, if you picked out '*not difficult*', why do you consider that teaching culture and pragmatics is not a complex task? \_\_\_\_\_

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7.3. Do you think that teaching grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation or even semantics is more important than teaching culture and pragmatics? Why or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

---

7.4. Do you consider that including cultural components of the target language can enhance your students' pragmatic competence? Why or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

---

7.5. How do you assess your students' cultural awareness and pragmatic competence? \_\_\_\_\_

---

7.6. What do you think about the English classroom curriculum that MEP has intended for EFL students? Do you think culture and pragmatics is included among the topics the program has? Why or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

---

7.7. In your opinion, what would you change from the English classroom curriculum that MEP has designed in accordance with culture and pragmatics? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Pre-Diagnostic Test

The purpose of this pre-diagnostic test is to determine students' cultural knowledge and degree of pragmatic competence. The information collected is going to be used only for an action research of the Universidad Latina de Costa Rica and is going to be strictly confidential.

High School: <u>Bilingual Experimental High School of Grecia</u> Date: <u>May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019</u> Grade: <u>Eighth</u> Subject: <u>Listening and Speaking</u>	Total points: 14 pts. Obtained points: _____ Obtained percentage: _____
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## Section I. Personal Information.

- Genre  Male  Female
- How long have you been studying English?  
 2 years  3 - 5 years  More than 5 years
- Have you taken extra English lessons besides high school?  Yes  No
- Age  13 - 15 years  More than 15 years

### Instructions

Mark with an (x) the correct answer for each question below.

## Section II. Cultural Awareness.

- On a scale from 1 to 6, where 6 is "*very interesting*" and 1 is "*very uninteresting*."  
How interesting is culture for you?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- What is the capital of the United States?
  - Los Angeles
  - New York
  - Washington, DC.
  - Las Vegas
- Who is a former United States' president?
  - Abraham Lincoln
  - William Walker
  - John Washington
  - Tommy Carter

### Cultural Awareness

Total points: 7 pts. Obtained points: _____ Obtained percentage: _____
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8. Which one is a traditional American dish?
- a.  Pizza
  - b.  Chocolate cake
  - c.  Pop corn
  - d.  Corn dog
9. Who is a well-known American writer?
- a.  William Shakespeare
  - b.  Edgar Allan Poe
  - c.  J.K. Rowling
  - d.  Charles Dickens
10. Who is a historical American figure?
- a.  Martin Luther King
  - b.  Margaret Thatcher
  - c.  Jefferson Kennedy
  - d.  Malcom Smith
11. How many states are there in the United States?
- a.  48
  - b.  49
  - c.  50
  - d.  51
12. Which is a famous landmark in the United States?
- a.  The Memorial of Liberty
  - b.  Red Stone
  - c.  Mount Rushmore
  - d.  The Silver Gate

### Section III. Pragmatic Competence

13. Read the following statement and choose the correct meaning for the phrase '*pretty cool.*'

That car is **pretty cool!**

- a.  Fast
- b.  Cold
- c.  Nice
- d.  Expensive

#### Pragmatic Competence

Total points: 7 pts.

Obtained points: \_\_\_\_\_

Obtained percentage: \_\_\_\_\_

14. What is the common way of saying the following price in the United States?

**\$20.99**

- a.  twenty point ninety-nine
- b.  twenty ninety-nine
- c.  twenty dollars and ninety-nine cents
- d.  two thousand ninety-nine cents

15. Read the following conversation and choose the phrasal verb that adjusts best.

Mark: It's getting too late to go to the airport.  
Brianna: What time does the flight leave?  
Mark: In half an hour!  
Brianna: What! So, let's \_\_\_\_\_!

- a.  move out
- b.  go back
- c.  slow down
- d.  hurry up

16. Read the following conversation and choose the idiomatic expression that adjusts best.

Cinthia: I will be off work on Friday evening.  
Mary: My boyfriend will throw a party that evening!  
Cinthia: That sounds great!  
Mary: Let's go out to \_\_\_\_\_.

- a.  build castles in the air
- b.  spill the beans
- c.  let the cat out of the bag
- d.  kill two birds with one stone

17. Read the following sentence and pick out the informal grammar structure.

- a.  I am going to watch a movie.
- b.  I'm gonna watch a movie.

18. Read the following sentence and pick out the formal grammar structure.

- a.  She wants to buy a car.
- b.  She wanna to buy a car.

19. Read the following sentence and choose the situation in which you would use informal language.

- a.  Job interview
- b.  Hanging out with friends

# Post-Diagnostic Test

The purpose of this post-diagnostic test is to determine how much students learned from the lesson plans that highlighted cultural knowledge. The information collected is going to be used only for an action research of the Universidad Latina de Costa Rica and is going to be strictly confidential.

Bilingual Experimental High School of Grecia Date: <u>May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019</u> Grade: <u>Eighth</u> Subject: <u>Listening and Speaking</u>	Total points: 12 pts. Obtained points: _____ Obtained percentage: _____
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## Instructions

Mark with an (x) the correct answer below.

### Section I. Cultural Contents.

Statement		True	False
1	The capital city of Florida is Miami.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The capital city of Indiana is Indianapolis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	The name of the American anthem is Star Spangled Banner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	The American flag has fifteen stripes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	The Independence Day is on June 4 <sup>th</sup> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Thanksgiving Day is the fourth Tuesday in November.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	The Mount Rushmore has the heads of four presidents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	The Golden Gate is in San Francisco, California.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	The Old Man and the Sea is written by Ernest Hemmingway.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Biscuits and gravy are a common American breakfast.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Theodore Roosevelt is a former American president.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Benjamin Franklin is a former American inventor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Section II. Personal Opinion.

13. On a scale from 1 to 6, where 6 is “*very interesting*” and 1 is “*very uninteresting.*”

How interesting was learning about culture?

1	2	3	4	5	6

14. On a scale from 1 to 6, where 6 is “*very appealing*” and 1 is “*unappealing.*”

How appealing were the activities?

1	2	3	4	5	6

15. On a scale from 1 to 6, where 6 is “*very motivated*” and 1 is “*bored.*”

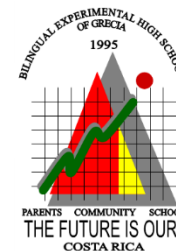
How motivated did you feel throughout the lessons?

1	2	3	4	5	6

# Lesson Plan #1

Ministerio de Educación Pública  
 Bilingual Experimental High School of Grecia  
 English Department  
 Teacher: Iris Natalia Mora and José Pablo Corrales  
 Level: 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
 Group: 8 - 2

Target Content: American Culture and Pragmatics  
 Method: Communicative Approach  
 Time: 120 min (3 lessons)  
 Date: Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019



➤ General Objective: To identify American symbols, holidays, authors, landmarks, the States of the U.S. and pragmatics			
Linguistic Objectives	Mediation Activities	Time	Indicators
	<b><u>Routine</u></b> Greetings, call the roll, and write the day.	5 min	
	<b><u>Warm-up</u></b> Students watch a video about the American anthem. Then they are given the lyrics in a worksheet and answer some questions. (Annex 1 and 2)	5 min	
<b><i>Listening/ Reading</i></b> Recognizing the States in the U.S. and their capitals	<b><u>Presentation</u></b> Students see a map of all fifty States in the United States and their capitals. Also, they are given a worksheet. (Annex 3 and 4)	6 min	Recognizes the States in the U.S and their capitals by using a map of the U.S.
<b><i>Listening/ Reading</i></b> Identifying American symbols	Students watch a video of American symbols and are given a worksheet. (Annex 5 and 6)	5 min	Identifies American symbols by watching a video
<b><i>Reading/ Writing</i></b> Recognizing American holidays	<b><u>Controlled Activities</u></b> Students read a text about American holidays, and complete some exercises about them in the same worksheet. (Annex 7)	7 min	Recognizes American holidays by reading a text and completing some exercises
<b><i>Listening/ Reading / Speaking</i></b> Describing American holidays	In group of four people, students are given a description of a specific holiday, which has to be summarized and presented in front of the class. (Annex 8)	12 min	Describes American holidays by summarizing a text and presenting it in front of the class
		<b>40 min</b>	

<b><i>Listening/ Reading/ Speaking/ Writing</i></b> Setting up an oral presentation about the States of the U.S.	Students are given some states of the U.S. In four groups, they choose one and answer some questions that are given in a worksheet. They research on the internet to answer them. Then, create a presentation and show it to the rest of the class. <b>(Annex 9 and 10)</b>	17 min	Sets up an oral presentation about the States of the U.S by choosing some States and answering questions
<b><i>Listening/ Writing</i></b> Guessing missing words of an American song	Students listen to an American song named ‘My Country This of Thee’ and complete the lyrics with the missing words in a worksheet. <b>(Annex 11 and 12)</b>	6 min	Guesses missing words of an American song by listening and completing the lyrics
<b><i>Listening/ Speaking</i></b> Creating a conversation about American landmarks	Students watch a video about the Top 10 American landmarks. In pairs, they select one and create a conversation about two friends that want to travel to that specific place, in which they mention activities, plans, days of lodging, transportation, etc. Some will present their conversation to the rest. <b>(Annex 13)</b>	17 min	Creates a conversation about American landmarks by watching a video and selecting one landmark
		<b>40 min</b>	
<b><i>Listening/ Reading/ Writing</i></b> Identifying important facts about the Statue of Liberty	Students watch a video about the Statue of Liberty and answer some questions in a worksheet. <b>(Annex 14 and 15)</b>	9 min	Identifies important facts about the Statue of Liberty by answering questions
<b><i>Listening/ Reading/ Writing</i></b> Recognizing American authors	Students watch a video presentation about American authors. Then select one and using the internet, make a list of the most well-known artworks; novels, poems, books, etc. <b>(Annex 16)</b>	10 min	Recognizes American authors by watching a PPT presentation and making a list of their artworks
<b><i>Listening/ Reading/ Speaking</i></b> Describing American authors	<b><u>Free Activity</u></b> Students play a game named “guess who”, and they choose from a poster board made of several envelopes one envelope that contains a flashcard with a picture of an American author and the rest have to guess who the writer is. <b>(Annex 17)</b>	10 min	Describes American authors by playing a game named “guess who”.
<b><i>Listening/ Speaking</i></b> Reviewing American culture	<b><u>Consolidation</u></b> Students discuss about cultural differences and similarities Americans have with Costa Rican people. Besides, American cultural aspects that caught their attention and give their opinions about them.	10 min	Reviews American culture by discussing about differences and similarities Americans have with Costa Rican people
<b><u>Farewells</u></b>		1 min	
		<b>40 min</b>	



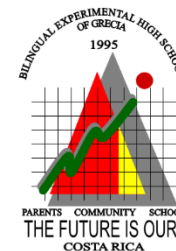
<b><i>Listening/ Reading/ Writing</i></b> Recognizing American icons	<b><u>Extra Activity</u></b> Students match words with the pictures of American icons and answer some questions in a worksheet. <b>(Annex 18)</b>	7 min	Recognizes American icons by answering questions
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<b>Curriculum Accommodations</b>	<b>Materials:</b> computer, projector, speakers, and whiteboard.	
	<b>Annexes</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Access: handouts' font 16</li> <li>❖ Significate: sit at front, individualized attention, regular monitoring and tutor's assistance.</li> <li>❖ Non-significate: check class work and regular monitoring.</li> </ul>	<b>Annex 1:</b> Video <b>Annex 2:</b> Worksheet <b>Annex 3:</b> Map of the U.S. <b>Annex 4:</b> Worksheet <b>Annex 5:</b> Video <b>Annex 6:</b> Worksheet <b>Annex 7:</b> Reading passage <b>Annex 8:</b> Holidays' descriptions <b>Annex 9:</b> States of the U.S. <b>Annex 10:</b> Worksheet	<b>Annex 11:</b> Song <b>Annex 12:</b> Worksheet <b>Annex 13:</b> Video <b>Annex 14:</b> Video <b>Annex 15:</b> Worksheet <b>Annex 16:</b> Video presentation <b>Annex 17:</b> Poster board <b>Annex 18:</b> Worksheet
<b>Chronicles</b>		

# Lesson Plan #2

Ministerio de Educación Pública  
 Bilingual Experimental High School of Grecia  
 English Department  
 Teacher: Iris Natalia Mora and José Pablo Corrales  
 Level: 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
 Group: 8 - 2

Target Content: American Culture and Pragmatics  
 Method: Communicative Approach  
 Time: 120 min (3 lessons)  
 Date: Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019



➤ <b>General Objective:</b> To identify American food, former presidents, historical figures and pragmatics			
Linguistic Objectives	Mediation Activities	Time	Indicators
	<b><u>Routine</u></b> Greetings, call the roll, and write the day.	5 min	
	<b><u>Warm-up</u></b> Students play “ Chinese whispers” in order to review a few key words for the next activity (students pass an oral message from classmate to classmate by whispering into their ears, the last student has to say the secret word aloud. They play in two teams, the group which says the right word wins).	10 min	
<b><i>Listening/ Reading</i></b> Recognizing some uncommon American dishes	<b><u>Presentation</u></b> Students watch a video about American food. Then they are given a worksheet about the video. They solve in pairs and then check along with the teachers. ( <b>Annex 1 and 2</b> )	15 min	Recognizes American dishes by watching a video and completing a worksheet
<b><i>Listening/ Speaking</i></b> Describing American dishes	<b><u>Controlled Activities</u></b> Students will discuss a few questions about American food in pairs. ( <b>Annex 3</b> )	10 min	Describes some American dishes by discussing questions on a piece of paper
		<b>40 min</b>	

<b><i>Listening/ Reading/ Speaking/ Writing</i></b> Setting up an oral presentation about the most famous former American presidents	Students are given some famous former American presidents. In four groups, they answer some questions that are given in a worksheet. They research on the internet to answer them. Then, create a presentation and show it to the rest of the class. ( <b>Annex 4</b> )	20 min	Sets up an oral presentation about famous former American presidents by answering questions on a piece of paper
<b><i>Listening/ Writing</i></b> Guessing missing words of an American song about presidents	Students listen to an American song of famous former American presidents and complete the lyrics with the missing words in a worksheet. ( <b>Annex 5 and 6</b> )	10 min	Guesses missing words of an American by listening and completing the lyrics
<b><i>Listening/ Speaking</i></b> Creating a conversation about American famous former American presidents	Students discuss a few wrap-up questions about famous former American presidents in pairs and create a conversation. ( <b>Annex 7</b> )	10 min	Creates a conversation about famous former American presidents by discussing a few questions
		<b>40 min</b>	

<b><i>Listening/ Reading/ Writing</i></b> Identifying American historical figures	Students complete a worksheet in order to review some previous knowledge. ( <b>Annex 8</b> )	5 min	Identifies American historical figures by completing a worksheet
<b><i>Listening/ Reading/ Writing</i></b> Recognizing American historical figures	Students watch a PPT about American historical figures in order to learn a few facts about some American historical figures. ( <b>Annex 9</b> )	10 min	Recognizes American historical figures by watching a PPT presentation
<b><i>Listening/ Reading/ Speaking</i></b> Describing American historical figures	<b><u>Free Activity</u></b> Students play a board game about American historical figures in groups. ( <b>Annex 10</b> )	10 min	Describes American historical figures by playing a board game
<b><i>Listening/ Speaking</i></b> Reviewing American culture	<b><u>Consolidation</u></b> Students make a circle and discuss the cultural differences and similarities Americans have with Costa Rican people. Besides, American cultural aspects that caught their attention and give their opinions about them.	14 min	Reviews American culture by discussing about differences and similarities Americans have with Costa Rican people
		1 min	
		<b>40 min</b>	

<p><b><i>Listening/ Speaking</i></b> Applying vocabulary about American culture</p>	<p><b><u>Extra Activity</u></b> Students play named 20 questions. One of the students is given a former president or historical figure's name and the rest of the class have to guess who the person is by asking yes or no questions.</p>	<p>10 min</p>	<p>Applies vocabulary about American culture by playing a game</p>
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<p align="center"><b>Curriculum Accommodations</b></p>	<p><b>Materials:</b> computer, projector, speakers, and whiteboard.</p>
	<p align="center"><b>Annexes</b></p> <p><b>Annex 1:</b> Video  <b>Annex 2:</b> Worksheet  <b>Annex 3:</b> Questions  <b>Annex 4:</b> Worksheet  <b>Annex 5:</b> Song  <b>Annex 6:</b> Worksheet  <b>Annex 7:</b> Questions  <b>Annex 8:</b> Worksheet  <b>Annex 9:</b> PPT presentation.  <b>Annex 10:</b> Board game</p>
<p><b>Chronicles</b></p>	

- ❖ Access: handouts' font 16
- ❖ Significate: sit at front, individualized attention, regular monitoring and tutor's assistance.
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