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Español	**Inglés**
1. Contenido cultural	Cultural Content
2. Cultura	Culture
3. Lecciones personalizadas	Customized lessons
4. Aprendizaje del Inglés como segunda lengua	EFL learning
5. Desarrollo de Materiales	Materials Development (MD)

RESUMEN DEL CONTENIDO: (Máximo 250 palabras)

El presente estudio cualitativo-descriptivo es una investigación-acción que explora la contribución de lecciones personalizadas con contenido cultural para el aprendizaje del Inglés como segunda lengua en estudiantes de pregrado del Programa de la Licenciatura en Inglés de la Universidad de la Amazonia. Tres importantes factores motivaron este estudio: Desarrollo de materiales, Cultura y Aprendizaje del inglés como segunda lengua. Esta investigación se realizó con un grupo de 17 estudiantes de pregrado del Curso Inglés Básico II. Los instrumentos usados para recolectar la información fueron: lecciones desarrolladas por los estudiantes con la correspondiente auto-evaluación, notas de campo de los docentes, encuestas de las percepciones de los estudiantes al final de cada lección. Los hallazgos sugieren que el diseño de materiales basado en principios de adquisición de una segunda lengua tales como: contenido relevante y significativo,

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variedad de actividades, diseño atractivo, oportunidades para comunicarse y la aplicación de estrategias de aprendizaje promueve la idoneidad y efectividad de los materiales, lo que resulta en un aprendizaje más eficaz. Adicionalmente, el uso de contenido cultural en las lecciones hace la comunicación más significativa permitiendo a los estudiantes de pregrado construir conocimiento cultural y desarrollar entendimiento cultural de los aspectos políticos, sociales y económicos presentados en los materiales personalizados. Finalmente, tener en cuenta los estilos de aprendizaje y proveer estrategias de aprendizaje en las lecciones contribuye al aprendizaje del inglés como segunda lengua en estudiantes de pregrado.

ABSTRACT: (Máximo 250 palabras)

This qualitative descriptive action research study explores the contribution of customized lessons with cultural content to EFL learning in undergraduates from the English Language Teaching (ELT) programme at Universidad de la Amazonia. Three major concerns motivated this study: Materials Development (MD), culture and EFL learning. This study was conducted with a group of 17 undergraduates from the Basic English II course. The instruments used to gather the data were students' artefacts with the corresponding self-assessment, teachers' field notes and the surveys on students' perceptions. The findings suggest that designing customized lessons anchored in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) principles such as relevant and useful content, variety of activities, appealing layout, communication opportunities and the application of learning strategies fosters materials suitability and effectiveness, which results into a more effective language learning. Additionally, using cultural content in the lessons makes communication more meaningful by allowing undergraduates to build cultural knowledge and develop cultural understanding of both the local and foreign political, social and economic issues addressed in the customized materials. Finally, addressing

learning styles and providing learning strategies in the lessons contributes to EFL learning in undergraduates.

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The Contribution of Customized Lessons with Cultural Content to EFL Learning among

Undergraduates from Universidad de la Amazonia

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Dedication

To my loving mother; Bella Lucy Gomez Medina to whom I owe everything I have and everything

I am. Without her unconditional support this would have been impossible.

Hans Humberto Oviedo Gómez

To Enrique Álvarez Carrera and Denis Mariela Guayara Oviedo who are my exemplary parents

that always believed in me and gave me love, support, and encouragement to meet my goals.

Henry Alberto Álvarez Guayara

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Abstract

This qualitative descriptive action research study explores the contribution of customized lessons with cultural content to EFL learning in undergraduates from the English Language Teaching (ELT) programme at Universidad de la Amazonia. Three major concerns motivated this study: Materials Development (MD), culture and EFL learning. This study was conducted with a group of 17 undergraduates from the Basic English II course. The instruments used to gather the data were students' artefacts with the corresponding self-assessment, teachers' field notes and the surveys on students' perceptions. The findings suggest that designing customized lessons anchored in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) principles such as relevant and useful content, variety of activities, appealing layout, communication opportunities and the application of learning strategies fosters materials suitability and effectiveness, which results into a more effective language learning. Additionally, using cultural content in the lessons makes communication more meaningful by allowing undergraduates to build cultural knowledge and develop cultural understanding of both the local and foreign political, social and economic issues addressed in the customized materials. Finally, addressing learning styles and providing learning strategies in the lessons contributes to EFL learning in undergraduates.

Keywords: Cultural content, culture, customized lessons, EFL learning, materials development (MD)

Introduction

The General Education Act 115 (1994) and national polices and initiatives such as Estándares Básicos de Competencias de Lenguas Extrajeras – Inglés" (2015), the National English Programme Colombia Very Well! (2015) and the Colombian Framework for English (COFE) Project (1991), Colombia Aprende, among others, frame this study. The main purposes of these policies are to guarantee the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL henceforth) to the student population, satisfy the need of incorporating appropriate language learning materials for the teaching of English, and conceive the English language as a means to promote the understanding of ones and the cultures of others. Therefore, the present study advocates the design and implementation of materials with cultural content to foster EFL learning among a group of undergraduates.

Designing materials that meet students' needs and learning preferences has become a valuable pedagogical activity for English language teachers. In this regard, Nuñez and Tellez (2009) explain that developing materials is indeed of great concern for teaching, as these teaching resources contribute to boost students' language learning processes. However, the materials used at Universidad de la Amazonia are commercial textbooks that do not respond to the specific learning needs of the students.

Having this idea in mind, this study stems from the need of developing customized materials (lessons) to foster EFL learning among undergraduate students. We want to emphasise on the fact that customized materials draw on the economic, social, cultural and academic needs of our context. Thus, this study aims to explore the contributions of customized lessons with cultural content to EFL learning among a group of undergraduate learners from the ELT programme at Universidad de la Amazonia. Following these particular group of undergraduates'

preferences and learning needs, the content of the developed lessons reflects cultural aspects from Colombia and the USA.

This study also rooted from the need expressed by this group of undergraduates who wanted to learn English by using the English language to explore their own cultural background. In addition, they wanted to explore cultural aspects from the culture of the target language. Likewise, this concern emerged as a response for the lack of culture-based materials since, as mentioned above, the ones used at Universidad de la Amazonia fail to address this essential need. In this sense, Núñez, Pineda and Tellez (2004) explain, we as teachers "become aware of our immediate realities. Such consciousness allows us to become sensitive to the needs of our students and to examine if the materials employed are helping them to achieve their particular language objectives" (p. 129). Consequently, this study aims to bring cultural elements bounded in the use of the language to foster the learning of English in undergraduates.

This research report is divided into 5 chapters. Chapter I presents the research problem, related studies, research question and objectives of the study. In chapter II the reader finds the Literature Review that addresses the theoretical framework underlying the three main constructs of this study materials development, culture and EFL learning. Chapter III describes the methodological design of this research project; the first part refers to the instructional design of this study which contains the pedagogical intervention, the main instructional objective and specific objectives, and the importance of this intervention as an innovation. This section also covers the theory of the nature of language and the theory of language learning, the methodological approach underlying the pedagogical intervention, the instructional phases, topic selection and development, and finally a sample of the customized lessons. The second part of this chapter deals with the research design including the research approach, type of study,

description of the context and the participants, and the instruments for data collection. Chapter IV

consists of the procedure followed for data analysis, the statement of the research categories and

the corresponding evidences. Finally, chapter V has to do with the conclusions, pedagogical

implications, limitations of the study and questions for further research.

Chapter I

Research Problem

Statement of the Problem

This qualitative descriptive action research study looked into the contribution of customized lessons with cultural content to EFL learning among undergraduates from the Language Teaching Programme at Universidad de la Amazonia. It is important to highlight that the lessons were developed by the two teacher-researchers incorporating the SLA principles by Tomlinson (1998) and the MD framework proposed by Núñez, Téllez and Castellanos (2012). This project is developed based on the ideas presented in the vision and mission of the ELT programme at Universidad de la Amazonia, which aim to prepare professional educators with high competences in the use of the English language.

Based on our teaching experience and permanent reflection as educators from the ELT programme at Universidad de la Amazonia, we identified that EFL materials used in the ELT programme fail to engage undergraduates from the Basic English I course in EFL learning; we also noticed that the type of content and learning activities were not sufficiently appealing and challenging for undergraduates. To ratify these concerns, we conducted a Likert scale survey (See Appendix A) with the undergraduates and language teachers of Basic English I, and recorded undergraduates' voices that provided further information regarding this issue. These results evidenced that undergraduates were concerned with the issue of including cultural content in the materials to be used in the EFL classes.

We also conducted the Likert scale survey with language teachers of Basic English II from the ELT programme. Teachers' voices revealed that developing customized materials is a task that has not been carried out by teachers in the Amazonian region being informed by a

theoretical framework. Furthermore, designing customized materials for EFL learning is a new

tendency that needs to be explored and expanded by teachers in the ELT context. Additionally,

designing customized materials for EFL learning is an academic activity that should not be

confined to professional text developers exclusively, but rather to English teachers. In this regard,

Kessler and Plakans (2001) highlight:

> The need for materials developed by teachers in our field is essential because these
>
> individuals are the most immediate experts on the needs of English Speakers of Other
>
> Languages (ESOL) learners, the cognitive abilities of different age groups, and the
>
> language learning process of their specific learners. As developers, however, teachers
>
> need to consider creating and implementing a systematic process for ensuring the
>
> usability of their materials (p. 15).

This leads us to consider that the development of customized lessons with cultural

content will provide undergraduates with more meaningful learning experiences.

This information gathered reveals the need of developing customized lessons with

cultural content to promote EFL learning. Based on the information obtained in the Likert scale

survey, Graph 1 shows that most of the undergraduates considered that knowing about their own

culture would motivate them to learn English. Additionally, wall paintings in the main campus

evidence how the students from the English programme feel comfortable expressing and

representing their own culture using the English language. This result was also evidenced in the

Community visit, as can be seen in Picture 1.

Graph 1

Likert Scale Survey

Talking about my own culture motivates me to learn English

■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree

Source: Personal Creation

Picture 1

Community visit

Similarly, undergraduates considered motivating to talk about other cultures to learn

English, as seen in the graph bellow.

Graph 2

Likert Scale Survey

Talking about foreign cultures motivates me to learn English

■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree

Source: Personal Creation

Finally, regarding undergraduates' perception towards adapted and customized materials, the majority of them agreed that these materials are appropriate to learn English. In other words, most of the undergraduates claim that they prefer materials that are adapted and created by the teacher (see Graph 3).

Graph 3

Likert Scale Survey

Materials adapted and created by the teacher are appropriate for my language learning

■ Strongly disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree

Source: Personal Creation

Related Studies

The related studies selected to frame the literature review of this study were materials development, culture and EFL learning which are of great concern for the EFL field. These studies were useful to identify how the theoretical constructs of this study had been previously approached by other teacher-researchers at the local and international teaching contexts. This was done because it was demanding to find research studies that deal with the same constructs of this study in a related way. The studies reported were searched from the following sources: Science Direct, Profile, English Teaching Forum, International Journal of Basic and Applied Science, among others.

In relation to materials development and EFL learning, Duarte and Escobar (2008) carried out an action research study to explore the impact that the different types of materials have on undergraduate students' motivation to learn English. Duarte and Escobar (2008) refer to materials as the different types of resources available for the use in the EFL context: materials evaluation, which is the process of evaluating materials for its suitability with the context; materials adaptation, which involves changing the currently used materials to fit specific purposes; and materials development, which means teacher-made materials to fit the lessons. The study was conducted with 15 students from an English intensive course at a public university and the data-gathering instruments were a need assessment, progressive questionnaires and a final questionnaire. The findings of the study suggest that the content and organization of the activities of the materials fostered students' motivation. These authors added that adapting materials can affect and influence students' motivation in the EFL learning positively. This study was really meaningful to our research in the sense that it provides a better understanding of the impact

materials have on students' learning processes. This means that contextualized materials, adapted or developed, motivate and engage students in the EFL lessons.

Likewise, Thomas (2014) conducted an action research study that explores the contributions of using locally relevant authentic materials to improve EFL learning. The population for this study were a group of future English teachers from Chile. The researcher conceived authentic materials as the ones used to communicate meaning since they are relevant, related to the local context and promote real communication through communicating meaning and information. The instruments for data collection were a set of locally relevant authentic materials that focused on surface cultural topics such as: arts, customs, food, places, situations, and traditions that are locally relevant. In addition, these materials prompted critical thinking and cross-cultural interaction by including deep culture content like attitudes, perceptions, and values. The conclusions of the study reveal that authentic materials "enrich EFL teaching and learning when the materials are selected with sensitivity to the local context" (p. 21). In this sense, the author determined that authentic materials are relevant for students when they interact directly with them, and when their realities are addressed in the materials. This study provides us meaningful insights on the importance of including undergraduates' realities into the materials and supports the need to exploit materials that fit local specific needs.

In regards to culture and EFL learning, the exploratory study developed by Álvarez and Bonilla (2009) describes and reflects upon a dialogical experience between two teachers in the Languages Programme from Universidad de La Salle. To collect the data, researchers used samples taken from students' written production. This was done to demonstrate how culture is being addressed in that context. The researchers concluded that collegial dialog serves as a main source for professional development and experiences in the EFL context help to open viewpoints

regarding intercultural awareness. This research study helps us to understand the importance of integrating culture in the teaching of English for teachers to act as mediators between cultures; consider dialogs as an important resource to recognize new perspectives, share ideas and generate new interactions; and continue exploring the implications of analysing cultural aspects related to native and the target language as a strategy to foster EFL learning.

Similarly, Tseng and Chao (2012) developed a quantitative study related to culture and EFL learning in college students in Taiwan. The main goal of this study was to explore which factors of integrating culture into the EFL classroom influence students' language learning. To collect the data, the researchers developed questionnaires that aimed to reflect participants' understanding of culture in language teaching. The findings of the study revealed that culture significantly motivated students to learn a foreign language and encourage teachers to consider including cultural aspects in their teaching context. These results are closely related to our goal of integrating culture into our customized lessons, as it is expected that the cultural content has positive influence in undergraduates' EFL learning.

In relation to materials development and culture, Meraji and Zamanian (2014) developed a quantitative research study, which aims to explore the risks and benefits of integrating the mother tongue's culture in the development of language learning materials. The researchers explored the contributions of participants' native culture in the learning materials in terms of language proficiency and motivation. The study was conducted in a group of pre-university students and the instruments to collect data were two different versions of a chapter in a course book; one version only presented elements from the target language while the other version was adapted and it offered cultural elements from participants' culture. The results of the study reveal that aspects of the native culture improves language proficiency, and aspects of the target

language boost students' motivation. Having these ideas in mind, this study offered valuable

information regarding the implication of integrating content from the duo target and native

culture as an element to enhance students' motivation and language proficiency.

Similarly, the action research study developed by Rico (2011) addresses the three

constructs of our study: materials development, culture, and EFL learning. The purpose of the

study was to promote the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

through the adaptation of materials, establishing three cycles as follows: recognition of the

problem, intervention, and evaluation. The study was carried out with undergraduate students of

Spanish as a major language in a university in the United Kingdom and the instruments used for

data gathering were: students' observations, teacher's checklist, and students' portfolios. The

findings of the study determined that adapted materials contribute to the development of

students' dimensions of ICC at a different pace, being knowledge and awareness the first

dimensions developed. In addition, the implementation of the activities positively impacted

students' attitudes regarding language learning and culture as they began to critically evaluate

their own and others' cultures. The cited study consorted with the importance of integrating

culture to materials highlighting the capacity of materials to overcome stereotypes and prejudices

regarding other cultures.

To sum up, the review of the previous studies helped us to have a wider panorama in

terms of the main foundations of our research study, which are of research concern not only in

our local context but also in Latin-America and around the world.

Setting

This research study was developed at Universidad de la Amazonia, a state university located in

Florencia – Caquetá, southern Colombia, with a population of 17 first-semester undergraduates

from the ELT programme. As this study was conducted during two semesters, the participants

moved from Basic English I (1ˢᵗ semester) to Basic English II (2ⁿᵈ semester). Basic English II

course has a total of 10 hours per week. The participants, 7 women and 10 men, are in an average

age of 18 to 25 years. The materials used during these courses are: New Headway Elementary

Student's Book, New English File Pre-Intermediate Student's Book, and Full Contact

Interchange. The ELT programme from Universidad de la Amazonia aims to train teachers with

high levels of language and pedagogical competence. This is done to promote English language

teaching and learning at the local and national contexts. Based on the CEFR levels for languages,

the participants' command of the English language falls into A1 (breakthrough) – A2 (waystage)

levels.

Rationale

This research study represents the opportunity for us to go beyond the limitations found

in our educational context. This implies a wide range of challenges that make us ponder on our

teaching practices. To this respect, Dewey (as cited in Cook, 1993) asserts that teachers who are

open-minded, responsible and dedicated are able to act and face these challenges in a more

critical and organized manner; this allows to go beyond the boundaries of tradition and authority.

Likewise, Farrell (2008) pinpoints how being able to identify, document and act towards

unexpected events in the classroom unveil new understandings of the teaching and learning

processes. Correspondingly, developing customized lessons was our first experience as material

developers. Systematizing this experience is a highly beneficial endeavour for our teaching

practices since it allowed us to tackle a problem in our context by exploring our creativity,

teaching and learning knowledge, and analytical reasoning.

We intend to achieve personal and professional fulfilment in two different ways. First, by

listening to undergraduates' voices, catering for their needs and going beyond to support their

learning; and second, by developing customized lessons that respond to the particular needs and

profiles of our undergraduates. As stated by Nuñez and Tellez (2015), developing materials

"raises teachers' awareness of personal and professional growth by enhancing their discipline,

knowledge, pedagogical practices, and research projects as well as fostering self-confidence,

creativity and self-esteem" (pp. 66-67). Accordingly, the development of these lessons could

foster both, EFL learning among undergraduates and our professional development.

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for language teaching,

learning and evaluating (2000) describes in a "comprehensive way what language learners have

to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they

have to develop so as to be able to act effectively" (p. 1). In that sense, students who participate

in this research study will have the opportunity to interact with customized lessons with cultural

content that may help them to promote and foster their EFL learning. In addition, undergraduates

will have the opportunity to interact and express their opinions regarding cultural aspects from

two different cultures, Colombia and the USA. Furthermore, we want to set a basis for teachers in

our context who seek to follow MD as a research concern.

This study expects to contribute to the local and regional context in terms of fostering

undergraduates' EFL learning by developing customized lessons with cultural content and having

student's reflect on their own learning processes. Moreover, we aim to promote the incorporation

of cultural aspects in the EFL classrooms in our region. Another contribution is to raise

awareness on MD as both an academic and practical undertaking, as many teachers in our region

are not aware of this fact.

Research Question and Objectives

This research project aims to answer the following question: how do the development

and implementation of customized lessons with cultural content contribute to t EFL learning

among undergraduates at Universidad de la Amazonia? To answer the research question, we

established the following objectives:

The general objective is to analyse the contribution of developing and implementing

customized lessons with cultural content to EFL learning among undergraduates. Then, we

established the following specific objectives: (a) to explore undergraduates' responsiveness to

cultural issues and activities in their process of learning English, (b) to describe the incidence of

learning activities that cater for students' learning styles and provide learning strategies to reach

undergraduates' learning goals, and (c) to assess the suitability and effectiveness of customized

lessons in helping undergraduates' EFL learning.

Chapter II

Literature Review

The theoretical constructs that frame this action research study are materials development, culture, and EFL learning. These concepts will be discussed in light of recent literature and research on the fields of language teaching and learning, and applied linguistics.

Materials Development

As Materials Development (MD henceforth) is one of the main constructs that informs this study, we want to emphasize on MD as a field of study. To this respect, Tomlinson (1998) envisions MD as "anything which is done by writers, teachers or learners to provide sources of language input and to exploit those sources in ways which maximize the likelihood of intake: in other words, the supplying of information about and/or experience of the language in ways designed to promote language learning" (p. 2). In the same line of thought, Núñez and Téllez (2015) claim that "language pedagogy and applied linguistics have recently recognised that MD is a field of study focused on the effect of materials on the teaching-learning process of a foreign language" (p. 57). Hence, creating customized lessons need to be approached as both an academic and practical endeavour that capitalizes on both students' learning process and teacher's practice.

Conceptualizing language learning materials. These resources are fundamental in any language teaching and learning classroom as they are a primary source of the target language. In this sense, Richards (2001) asserts that "instructional materials generally serve as the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom" (p. 251). Likewise, Núñez et al. (2012) affirm that "materials… are socio-cultural resources that facilitate not only linguistic interaction but also cultural exchanges between the

various human groups" (p. 10). In addition, Xiaotang (2004) claims that "materials are the most powerful device in spreading new methodological ideas and in shaping language teaching and learning practice" (p. 1). Given these reasons, researching on developing language learning lessons with cultural content brings new insights on how to apply these sources of language and culture information to the teaching practice and benefit, thereby, the learning process of our undergraduates.

Classifying language learning materials. The term "materials" is generally associated with course books and commercial didactic resources used in language teaching and learning. It is important to realize that materials go beyond that narrow perspective. To this respect, Tomlinson (2012) claims that materials are any resource used in the classroom to foster language learning, this includes videos, graded readers, flash cards, games, websites and mobile phones among others. In terms of their classification, Tomlinson (2001) states that these pedagogical resources "can be informative (informing the learner about the target language), instructional (guiding the learner in practising the language), experiential (providing the learner with experience of the language in use), eliciting (encouraging the learner to use the language) and exploratory (helping the learner to make discoveries about the language)" (p. 143). This broad panorama serves to meet educational purposes set by educational institutions and language teachers, as well as students' language learning and affective needs.

Language teaching materials are also represented in a number of choices. They may be "...visual, auditory or kinaesthetic, and they can be presented in print, through a live performance or display, or on a cassette, CD room, DVD or the Internet" (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 66); materials include "...the adaptation and or creation of a learning teaching exercise, a task, an activity, a lesson, a unit, or a module" (Núñez et al., 2009, p.16); and they also refer to "... a book, a

module, a didactic unit, a workshop, a worksheet, a lesson, or a learning task. This typology responds to local needs of teaching settings" (Núñez & Téllez, 2015, p.57). As can be seen, language learning materials entail a wide range of resources and purposes that can be used for language learning.

The aforementioned taxonomy, leads us to define the materials proposed for the pedagogical intervention of the present study, which are customized lessons developed taking into account Second Language Acquisition (SLA hereafter) principles and framework for MD. We want to emphasize on the fact that the customized lessons that we developed specifically in this study present cultural aspects from both countries (Colombia and the USA) because this was a key issue revealed by undergraduates' voices. In addition, our experience as part-time teachers in this context showed that customized materials are an evident need at Universidad de la Amazonia.

Going glocal. Materials should be informed by both global and local issues. In this regard, Tomlinson (1998) purports that the materials used in language teaching processes can be global or local materials. The author further declares that global materials are developed by publishing houses and produced in large scale with a huge population in mind. On the other hand, the author explains that local materials are developed by teachers and students to fit their specific educational needs. Thus, addressing the local needs of teaching context (Graves, 1996; Harwood, 2010; Núñez et al., 2004; Núñez and Téllez, 2009; Núñez et al., 2009; Masuhara, 1998; and Tomlinson, 1998, 2003, 2011) is a feature of contextualized materials, and including global issues that have a local connotation in our context (Duarte & Escobar, 2008; Goldstein, 2015; Tomlinson, 1998) bring far more possibilities to enhance the learning and the teaching of English.

A misconception regarding the development of language learning materials. The scholar and practical exercise of developing materials is usually seen as a non-academic activity. This misconception refers to the perception many individuals have in the sense that developing materials only involves creativity and imagination; that it is usually seen as a non-theoretical activity, not as a scholar or academic one (Heilenman, Richards and Samuda, as cited in Harwood, 2010). However, Low (as quoted in Núñez & Téllez, 2009) states that "designing appropriate materials ...is a strange mixture of imagination, insight, and analytical reasoning" (p. 175). Similarly, Harwood, 2010; Núñez et al. 2004; Núñez and Téllez, 2009; Núñez and Téllez, 2015; Núñez, Téllez, Castellanos and Ramos (2009); Ramos and Aguirre (2014); and Tomlinson (1998, 2003, and 2011), among others affirm that in materials development there are creative and rational processes involved. Besides that, as Núñez et al., (2013) assert:

> It (MD) demands an informed methodology that allows validating the efficiency, appropriateness and relevance of materials within the context of learning a language. We cannot continue thinking that materials development is a practical activity which does not involve a theoretical endeavour" (p.10).

This leads us to conclude that by developing materials, teachers are able to explore not only their pedagogical and discipline knowledge, but also their creativity, which in turn, offers them the possibility to attain further personal and professional growth.

Contesting authentic versus non-authentic materials. For the purposes of this research study, we want to stress on the difference of authentic and non-authentic materials. According to Richards (2001) one of the biggest issues regarding the use of materials in a course is related to the decision of using authentic and/or created materials (non-authentic materials). In this sense, we want to define what authentic materials are. Based on Richards (2001), Gilmore

(2007), and Montijano (2014) authentic are the materials that are not conceived for teaching purposes. For instance, texts, poems, menus, videos are some of the resources mentioned by the authors as authentic materials used in the EFL context. On the other hand, non-authentic materials refer to "textbooks and other specially developed resources" (Richards, 2001, p. 252). According to Montijano (2014) teacher-made materials represent the best option students can have in terms of language learning materials since they fit different learning styles and cater the needs of the context. Consequently, the materials for this study are customized lessons that carefully address our undergraduates' needs, interest and expectations so as to motivate their learning process.

Customizing EFL materials. Based on the aforementioned aspects, materials used in the EFL contexts need to go hand to hand with curriculum and course design. In this regard, Núñez and Tellez (2009) and Núñez and Téllez (2015) suggest that EFL teachers are professionals able to develop innovative, attractive, meaningful and suitable materials. Similarly, Nuñez et al. (2004) contend that the production of materials needs to be focused on specific needs and learning objectives. Consequently, developing customized materials adjusted to the profile and needs of the students, results in the creation of an atmosphere that facilitate, prompt and improves learning and teaching processes.

Principled materials. There is a number of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) tenets that guide materials development. We developed our materials (customized lessons) anchored in the following SLA principles proposed by Tomlinson (1998) and explained by Núñez and Téllez (2009). First, to engage students in the EFL lessons; the content needs to be considered as relevant and useful to them. Second, Núñez and Téllez (2009) clarify that materials should achieve "impact through novelty, variety, attractive presentation and appealing content" (p. 157).

The third SLA principle states that materials development presents opportunities to facilitate self-investment as a means to make students discover language knowledge by themselves through the application of learning strategies. The last SLA principle considered for developing our customized lessons is to offer plenty of opportunities to communicate in the target language (Núñez and Téllez, 2009). Finally, given the previous reasons, materials development plays a key role in the English learning in terms of integrating both productive and receptive language skills, and motivating students by addressing their needs and interests. Subsequently, developing our customized lessons based on principles is fundamental in this research study to achieve the learning goals proposed.

English teachers as text developers. We, as professional teachers, often approach the challenge of creating our own teaching materials. This implies a reflexive and analytical process of reviewing our knowledge and pedagogical practices. As implied by Núñez et al. (2004), Núñez and Téllez (2009) and Núñez et al. (2009) MD is not a task that should be entrusted only to publishing houses, but to EFL teachers. Likewise, Kessler and Plakans (2001) asserted that the teaching field needs more teachers willing to develop customized materials, because they are the ones who know students' specific traits and needs. For this reason, the fittest people to attend such needs and traits and bring the materials they create to their classes are teachers, since they are the experts in guiding and apprising students' learning processes.

The role of reflection in MD. The scholar activity of creating and designing materials entails constant reflection and evaluation of teachers' pedagogical practices. With reference to reflection, Núñez et al. (2006) contend that "reflecting is a vital activity for professional and personal development since it leads the teacher to... make changes and implement innovations not only to the methodological approach, but also to the selection and development of

meaningfully contextualized materials" (pp. 114-115). Besides this, MD contributes powerfully

to teacher personal and professional development (Núñez & Téllez, 2009; Núñez & Téllez,

2015). Therefore, developing (creating or adapting) customized materials help teachers to

identify and address students' needs and preferences, become more active agents in their

student's learning processes, empower themselves as a result of reviewing theories, and develop a

sense of commitment to improving their teaching practices.

To conclude, for the purposes of this study, we envision MD as the process that brings

out the possibility to test our discipline knowledge in terms of creating better learning and

teaching conditions in our pedagogical setting. Our customized lessons aimed to integrate

cultural aspects considered by undergraduates into our lessons. Additionally, approaching

materials designed as a principled activity is essential to achieve students learning goals and

enhance teachers' professional development.

Culture

It is a known fact that language and culture are tightly related. For this reason, learning a foreign

language like English implies learning about the culture of that language, as stated in the teaching

principle argued by Brown (2001) and Tudor (2001). Based on this assertion, it is our intention to

support the process of learning English in undergraduates through the design of customized

lesson that privilege cultural content.

Conceptualizing culture. To define culture, it is necessary to explore different

perspectives and scholars in relation to this construct. To this respect, McLaren (2003) defines

culture as a social group perception of its own life conditions. Additionally, Damen, Dolby,

Freire and Macedo, McLaren, Nieto, Robinson, Roth and Harama, Storey, (as cited in Castañeda,

2012), assert that culture is a determinant factor in human relationships because cultural traits

affect the way people understand the world. This, undoubtedly has an impact on how people interact within a social group and among other cultures. In addition, Álvarez and Bonilla (2009) define culture as a sphere of knowledge in which the frameworks of assumptions, ideas and beliefs can be used to "interpret people's actions, patterns of thinking and human artefacts (art, literature, etc.)" (p. 161). The authors further assert that "culture is not a monologic phenomenon due to the fact that its reading requires the conjunction, interrelatedness and interaction of several disciplines" (p. 161). Henceforth, to understand the concept of culture we need to accept the interaction of several disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, pedagogy, linguistics, etc., and acknowledge that culture is inherent to human beings; thus, culture is relevant to language learning and individuals' interaction with language learning and teaching materials, two main concerns of this research study.

   Relating language and culture. Having explored different conceptions of culture, it is necessary for this study to establish a relationship between language and culture to understand how this has an impact on teaching and learning a language. According to Kramsch (1998) "language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in context is bound up to culture in multiple ways." (p. 3). The author further identifies key elements of the relationship between language and culture: "language expresses our cultural reality" (Kramsch, 1998, p.3), as it expresses speakers' beliefs, ideas, facts, and knowledge about the world; "language symbolizes our cultural reality" (Kramsch, 1998, p.3) since speakers identify themselves by the way they use the language as a mechanism to express their social identity. Finally, language embodies cultural reality since a cultural group does not only express experiences but also create experiences via the use of the language. This is a way to express meaning while communicating beliefs, ideas, facts, values and knowledge in different contexts.

Likewise, language expresses culture and determines social interactions within a group and among cultures. In reference to the close relationship between language and culture, the former is not independent from the latter; it has a vital role in the perpetuation of the cultures (Kramsch, 1998). Furthermore, Byram (1998) mentions that separating language from culture goes against the nature of language; Goldstein (2015) identifies culture as inseparable from language; and Gladstone (1980) asserts that "language and culture are inexorably intertwined" (as cited in Álvarez and Bonilla, 2009, p. 19). In this sense, the relationship between language and culture permits the awareness of different cultural codes, beliefs, creeds, ideas, facts, values, etc. Taking into account the aforesaid insights, language and culture need to go hand-to-hand in the materials for language teaching and learning that teachers bring to the EFL classrooms to capitalize on students' language learning.

Language is one of the major ways in which culture manifests itself in human interaction within a historical setting. According to Kramsch (2012), "culture in language study has to be seen as a way of making meaning that is relational, historical, and that is always mediated by language and other symbolic systems" (p. 71). Moreover, based on Moran's ideas, Álvarez and Bonilla (2009) suggest that "language is the means to manipulate or use varied cultural products or it is also the mechanism to understand the perceptions, values, attitudes, and beliefs that rule ways of life" (p. 154). The previous ideas play a key role in developing the lessons intended to teach and learn EFL in this study, which deem the cultural content as a vehicle to understand, value and respect our own culture and become aware of the cultures of others.

Culture in EFL learning. Having mentioned the importance of culture in human interactions and its relationship with language, exploring culture in EFL lessons represents a

challenge for educators. In this sense, Castro (2002) explains that the challenges of an intercultural class come from the fact of choosing the appropriate cultural content since it must be relevant and useful to foster learning. Additionally, Meraji and Zamanian (2014) and Tomalin and Stemplasky (1990) purport that culture of the mother tongue (L1) could be used as the starting point for EFL lessons, and that culture-oriented lessons are valuable for EFL learning and teaching, respectively. Furthermore, Byram and Risager (1999) state that teachers are mediators among cultures. Correspondingly, teachers as mediators have the responsibility to help students understand, value and respect their own cultures as well as others to plant the seed for approaching cultural diversity from a critical stance.

It is a duty of English teachers to perform a triple role as promoters of culture in the EFL classroom, mediators of culture teaching practices, and developers of culture learning activities. Following Byram and Risager (1999), teachers "... needed to foster in our students a critical approach to culture" (p. 153). That is to say, educators should foster in students a critical view to understand their own and the cultures of others by assuming a non-judgmental position in regards to culture of the target language, based on the understanding and worthiness of their own culture.

As stated before, culture is not a static concept, it can be understood from different perspectives based on the fact that culture entails all the features that a particular group of people hold. According to Hall (1989), culture can be seen in two levels: explicit culture which refers to laws, government systems, and economy among others; and implicit culture that deals with customs, traditions and perceptions. In this sense, Castro (2002) adds that understanding one's own implicit culture is fundamental to understand others' cultures. Consequently, bringing culture to the classroom is unavoidable demand that can be satisfied via the development and implementation of customized materials with cultural content, aiming to increase students'

motivation towards the English classes, awareness of the role of cultural issues in learning

English, and benefits in terms of recognizing and valuing their own culture as the basis for

understanding and respecting the cultures of others.

All in all, as we express our reality through language, it becomes the means by which a

social group expresses its culture, and cultural holds a central place in our study. Thus,

meaningfully integrating culture into the customized lessons may motivate undergraduates in the

process of learning English.

EFL Learning

The national government in Colombia framed English teaching under an EFL setting to

provide more competitive citizens for this globalized world. This fits with Dubin and Olshtain's

(1986) statement that affirm that one of the purposes of incorporating and EFL setting for

language teaching is to make communication possible with other countries around the world and

promoting personal and professional development. All in all, EFL learning is an important

concern for this study as it fits with both, undergraduates' educational needs and the national

policies of our country.

Learning a language is a process that develops differently in each person; as a result of

that, individual differences in traits, personality, beliefs and assumptions in regards to learning

are present. This leads us to assume that students heavily rely on their learning styles and the

learning strategies provided. In this regard, Oxford (2003) explains that "learning strategies and

learning styles are among the main factors that help to determine how well our students learn a

second or a foreign language" (p. 1). As well as this, Tomlinson (1998) pinpoints that addressing

learning styles is part of the SLA principles for MD. Accordingly, it is essential to start exploring

the significance of these two factors in the process of learning English assisted by development of customized lessons with cultural content.

Language learning styles. As stated before, learning is not homogeneous as approaches and strategies are not equally suitable to all students. This means that individuals draw on different approaches to learn, as asserted by Dunn and Grigs (1988): "learning style is the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others" (p. 3). In light of this, we infer that learning styles rely on different learning approaches.

In the same breath, Oxford (2003) claims that "learning styles are the general approaches, for example, global or analytic, auditory or visual, that students use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subject" (p. 2). In addition to this, Ehrman and Oxford (1990) and Shrum and Glisan, in Richards and Renandya (2002), claim that some dimensions of the learning styles contribute to language learning (see Table 1, below), which presents the different dimensions of language learning styles as follows: analytic - global, sensory preferences, intuitive - random, sensory - sequential, orientation to closure and competition cooperation. On the basis of what has already been argued, we can conclude that language input provided and expected classroom interaction need to consider all these dimensions of learning styles to guarantee the same learning opportunities for each one of the students, which can also be mirrored in the materials teachers developed for their English classes to provide a more conducting setting for language learning.

Table 1

Key dimensions of Language Learning Styles

Analytic - global	Analytic learners: Focus on grammatical details; do not participate well on communicative activities. Global learners: Like interactive activities, using main ideas, difficulties with grammatical details.
Sensory preferences	Focus on physical and perceptual learning such as: visual, auditory, and hands on.
Intuitive / Random Sensory / Sequential	Intuitive - random learners: non-sequential, abstract or random thinking to get the global picture. Sequential - sensory learners: prefer well-ordered and step by step information.
Orientation to closure	Learners with little tolerance towards ambiguity. They prefer to know all rules and then use metacognitive skills like planning and organizing.
Competition cooperation	Competitive learners are motivated by competition, winning is very important for them. Cooperative learners prefer working with others in a helpful and supportive situation.

Source: Adapted from Shrum and Glisan, in Richards and Renandya, 2002

Learning strategies. To understand how learning strategies work, it is necessary to define

learning strategies as a central aspect in EFL learning. With reference to learning strategies,

Oxford (1990) asserts they are "steps taken by students to enhance their own learning" (p. 1).

Also, Chamot and O'Malley (1996) understand learning strategies as special thoughts or

behaviours that students use to comprehend, understand, learn and handle new information.

Concerning this, the use of learning strategies helps students to become more aware of their own

learning processes as they become more autonomous during the development of the classes.

Concerning the application of learning strategies, Strevens (as cited in Oxford (1990),

claims that the use of the appropriate learning strategies foster language proficiency and improve

students' self-esteem. Besides, Oxford (1997) suggests that learning strategies are vital for

language learning since they "are tools that foster active self-directed involvement" (p. 1). As can

be seen in Diagram 1, learning strategies facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval and use of

a new language (Oxford, 1997). In view of that, this study intends to promote the conscious

application of learning strategies, as mechanisms that make undergraduates aware of their own

learning processes, to make EFL learning more effective.

Diagram 1

Language learning strategies
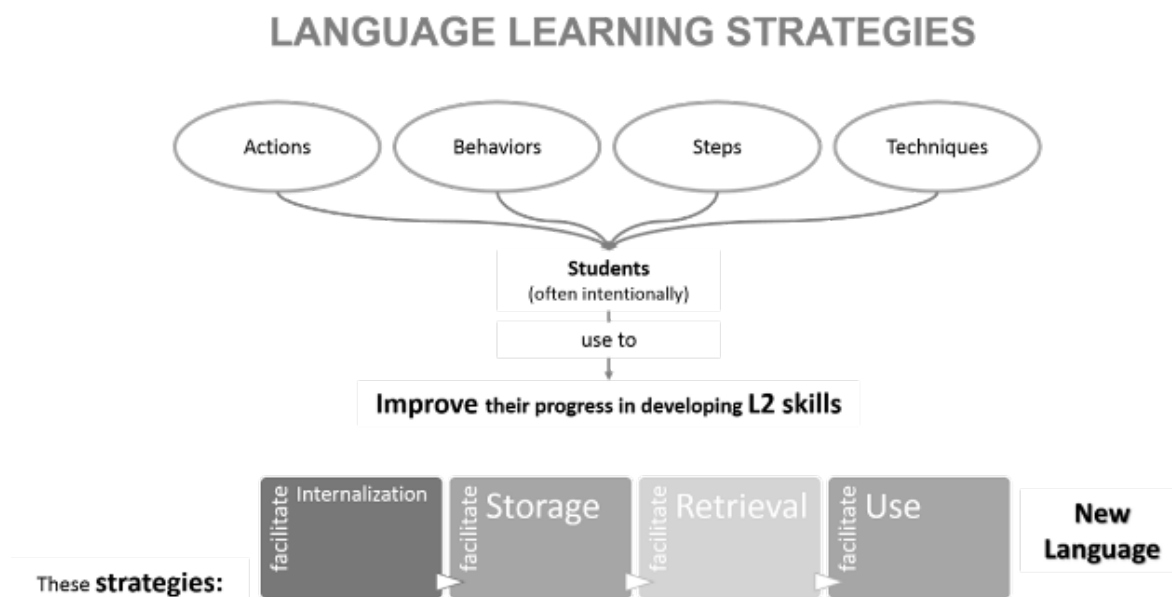
Source: adapted from Oxford (1997)

To summarise, this study regards EFL learning as a process aided by a series of

strategies suggested for undergraduates' application, and guided by a learning approach that

harmoniously integrates the target language and meaningful cultural content in the materials

(customized lessons) used in the EFL classroom. The idea of providing learning strategies is to

make both learning and teaching more efficient, as a result of generating undergraduates'

awareness of their learning process, which might, in turn, help them become independent. In essence, learning styles and learning strategies need to go hand to hand when designing language learning materials.

Having discussed our three theoretical constructs, the following section is devoted to the methodological design of this study.

Chapter III

Methodological Design

This research project's main purpose is to explore the contribution of customized lessons to EFL learning among undergraduates from Universidad de la Amazonia. To achieve this goal, we developed four customized lessons and selected their content based on the results obtained from the Likert scale survey for the needs analysis that we conducted before designing the pedagogical intervention. The idea behind this was to provide undergraduates with customized lessons with cultural content that gradually helped them make progress in the process of learning English

Instructional Design

Pedagogical intervention. The pedagogical intervention for this research study is the development and implementation of customized lessons with cultural content to contribute to EFL learning. These pedagogical resources were developed following the framework of the essential components proposed by Nuñez and Tellez (2009) in the process of creating and adapting language learning materials, as well as the framework for materials development as envisioned by Núñez et al. (2012). A merge of these two frameworks results in the following systematic procedures: need analysis, setting the objectives, selecting the content, selecting and developing the materials (lessons), organizing content and activities, assessment, and evaluation.

Recognizing that materials are driven by SLA principles (Tomlinson, 1998), the following principles were considered to achieve the goals of this study. First, materials are relevant and useful to the learner; second, they provide a variety of activities, attractive presentation and appealing content; third, materials facilitate students' self-investment; and fourth

materials offer communicative opportunities. Assimilating this informed methodology to develop contextualized materials may guarantee better learning and teaching processes.

Main instructional objective and specific objectives. The main instructional objective is to develop customized lessons with cultural content for undergraduates of the ELT programme at Universidad de la Amazonía. To achieve this main goal, we stated three specific objectives: a) to create a classroom environment that promotes EFL learning through materials with cultural content; (b) to sensitize undergraduates in regards to the importance of articulating culture to both the materials, that suit their particular needs and profiles, and the English class; c) to design customized lessons incorporating the materials development framework proposed by Núñez, Téllez and Castellanos (2012), and incorporating several Second Language Acquisition (SLA) principles based on Tomlinson (1998); and (d) to implement the customized lessons in the classroom and adjust them to fulfil the expected learning purposes.

Intervention as an innovation. Being innovative in the educational field means to deliver an action plan that represents novelty for the students, the context and the teacher. As respects to innovation, Rogers (as cited in Kirkland and Sutch, 2009), understands it as "the application of a new resource or approach that changes social practice, creating some value (...) by altering the social practice of teaching and learning (...) if the ideas seem new to the individual" (p. 14). In other words, the implementation of these four lessons, represents a new challenge for us as novice text developers and researchers in terms of envisioning an innovative pedagogical intervention for EFL learning in the classroom.

On the subject of triggering changes to solve a problematic situation, Hannan and Silver (2001) assert that an innovation carefully brings changes to improve, solve or ease a given problem. It is also a contribution to language teachers, whose concern is to encourage students to

refine their language skills through a variety of both pedagogical strategies and learning approaches. Along similar lines, Markee (1997), Rudduck (1991), Wedell (2009), and Willis & Willis (1996) affirm that there is number of factors that interplay an innovation: collecting information, changing old habits of thoughts and observation, deciding about the usefulness or the adoption or rejection of such changes, ratifying or refuting the decision of the previously made decisions, and planning the educational change, taking into account the individuals and their context. Under these circumstances, the participants of this study may benefit along with their teaching contexts, since these future language educators might, to a certain extent, help others to understand their own and the culture of others, contributing thereby to their students' learning.

As the main objective of this research study deals with developing customized lessons with cultural content to foster undergraduates' EFL learning, we ought to address the issue of innovating through MD. Concerning innovation through MD, Nuñez et al., (2009) contend that "...most EFL/ESL teachers are creative professionals who have the potential to explore their creativity and embark upon the fascinating task of developing their own didactic materials based not only on their teaching experience, but also on their expertise in the cognitive and learning processes needed by EFL/ESL learners" (p.16). Conveniently, developing customized lessons is a new challenge for us as teachers and researchers, for our undergraduates in their process of learning a foreign language, and for the ELT community of teachers from the ELT programme at Universidad de la Amazonia.

The theory of the nature of language. There are several theoretical perspectives regarding the nature of the language that suit different learning and teaching contexts. Following Tudor's (2001) ideas, the theory of the nature of language for this study is the culture and

ideology perspective. In this sense, Tudor (2001) explains that language is regarded as a linguistic system, as a functional tool for a specific transactional goal for a pragmatic purpose, and a medium for self-expression of an individual of a speech community. Acknowledging that the culture of a particular social group is represented by the language this group holds, Brown (2001), Norton, Stevick and Tudor (as cited in Tudor, 2001), state that "learning a language implies learning the culture of the language" (p. 1). Thus, the culture and ideology perspective provides great support to this research study by combining both culture and language as an essential component to understand the world.

The theory of language learning. Another important aspect to bear in mind when developing the pedagogical intervention is the theory of language learning. In this sense, Rico (2005) declares that materials developers need to be coherent when selecting a theory of language learning, a method and an approach as those aspects have to be correlated to the syllabus. In line with this point of view, resorting to the analytical learning to underpin this pedagogical intervention, may foster the use of deductive analysis to help undergraduates pick up language features and develop language knowledge on their own. As well as this, Tudor (2001) adds that the use of analytical learning promotes the development of the cognitive skills necessary for language learning. This study draws on this perspective as it provides the opportunity to build up language knowledge by means of interacting and analysing the language provided in the lessons and the content.

Methodological approach underlying the pedagogical intervention. To develop this research project, the pedagogical intervention and the materials designed are presented in four customized lessons. These four lessons were also planned and designed considering Content Based Instruction (CBI) as each one of them present cultural content related to different aspects of both

countries, Colombia and the USA such as the origins of these two different cultures, their electoral systems, their social and economic relationships, the Free Trade Agreement and the possibilities to build a better society out of their differences. A pillar of CBI is regarding the language as a vehicle for communicating (situations, topics, themes or other academic subjects) and not a topic or a subject on its own (Xiaotang, 2004). In addition to this, Dueñas (2004) claims:

> content-based approaches suggest that optimal conditions for learning a second or foreign language occur when both the target language and some meaningful content are integrated in the classroom, the language therefore being both an immediate object of study in itself, and a medium for learning a particular subject matter (p. 74).

Unlike approaches that excessively focus on grammar, the appropriate integration of meaningful content to language use for communicative purposes may lead undergraduates to express cultural knowledge and develop cultural understanding of both the native and foreign political, social and economic issues addressed in the customized materials, in the quest of promoting EFL learning among undergraduates.

Instructional phases. The design and implementation of the pedagogical intervention entail five stages as follows:

*Phase 1. Diagnose or exploration***.** We diagnosed our undergraduates to identify their needs by designing and administering the Likert scale survey.

*Phase 2. Sensitization***.** We informed our undergraduates about the research study and invited them to participate. Subsequently, the participants signed a consent letter (Appendix B).

Phase 3. Development. We analysed the information gathered in the surveys. Based on that information we created the four customized lessons incorporating cultural content and language to the lessons.

Phase 4. Adjustment. We piloted the data gathering instruments with a group similar to the target one to tune up the customized lessons.

Phase 5. Implementation. Undergraduates worked on the 4 lessons under our pedagogical guide to observe the interaction between them and the lessons.

Topic selection and lesson development. The selection of the topics, content, and type of activities took into account our undergraduates' preferences. To do so, we used a Likert scale survey (see Appendix A) to gathered information in regards to the most appropriate content, learning activities and learning strategies for the customized lessons. The analysis of this data provided sound information to start designing the lessons. The topics in the lessons are: the origins of two different cultures, Colombia and the USA (lesson 1), the electoral system in the USA and Colombia (lesson 2), the relationship between Colombia and the USA – the Free Trade Agreement (lesson 3) and finally, building a better society from our differences (lesson 4).

As mentioned earlier, the pedagogical intervention of this study (see Table 2 below) was the development and implementation of four customized lessons, each one addressing a single language skill namely, reading, listening, writing and speaking; being the last two delayed as they are productive skills. All the lessons deal with vocabulary in context that served as the initial language input to facilitate learning; they also followed Chamot et al. (1999) overt-model of strategy instruction in which undergraduates were informed about the name of the learning strategies, use and application; and were designed to contribute to the learning seen in each of the

language skills. The activities proposed involve identifying, comparing, contrasting, representing,

analysing and reflecting on the different topics addressed in the different lessons.

Table 2

Pedagogical Design

	Intervention	Data collection Instruments
Pedagogical Design 4 lessons	Lesson 1: Fostering Reading	Students' artefacts Field notes Surveys
	Lesson 2: Fostering Listening	Students' artefacts notes Surveys
	Lesson 3: Fostering Writing	Students' artefacts Field notes Surveys
	Lesson 4: Fostering Speaking	Students' artefacts and self-assessment Field notes Surveys

Source: Personal Creation

Sample of the customized lessons: The four customized lessons are shown in

Appendixes C, D, E and F.

Research Design

Research approach and type of study. This study follows a quantitative, interpretative

and descriptive research approach. However, we completed it with information gathered in two

surveys to obtain information on the phenomena that was not easily observed. This type of

research study suits our research inquiry since it recognizes an unresolved situation in a social

milieu aiming at solving and improving it (Sandin, 2003, Burns, 2010). It also supports the

outcomes within a natural context and favours interaction with the participants (Snape and

Spencer, 2003). Thus, this research approach suits our study because the main goal is to tackle a problem or situation presented in a natural context.

This is an action research study, which in Burns' (1999) words entails "a systematic and self-reflective approach to collecting and analysing information to help teachers to explore issues that they face in their classrooms to change or improve their current practice" (p. 14). Additionally, Burns (1999) further emphasises on the importance of "exploring and discovering more about a specific issue which has significance for a teacher in relation to his/her own teaching classroom and students" (p. 114). To accomplish the goals of this study, it was conducted in five phases. Phase one, problem identification, the problem was co-constructed with the help of undergraduates. Phase two, a Likert scale survey for need analysis was conducted to discover learning preferences and favourite content. Phase three, the design of the customized lessons based on: SLA principles, materials development framework and undergraduates' preferences. Phase four, piloting and adjusting the four customized lessons and the data collection instruments. Phase five, implementing lessons, gathering and analysis of the information.

Participants. The participants of this study were 17 undergraduates, 7 women and 10 men, from the ELT programme at Universidad de la Amazonia and two English teachers ascribed to this programme. The participants were attending the Basic English I and II courses; during the Basic I course they participated in the diagnosis phase of this study and during the Basic English II course they participated in the implementation phase. The technique we followed to choose the participants of this study was the "convenience sampling technique" that consists of a sample where the participants are selected taking into account the convenience of the researcher; for instance, due to the availability or accessibility (Stevens, 1996). We, the two teachers, perform a

triple role while conducting this study, both of us were the teachers in Basic English and I and II

courses, researchers of this study and developers of the customized lessons.

       Data-gathering instruments. Three data collection instruments serve this purpose:

students' artefacts including the corresponding self-assessment, teachers' field notes, and surveys

administered at the end of each lesson.

       In relation to artefacts, Barnhardt, Kevorkian, and Delett (as cited in Chamot, 1999),

provide a definition: "evaluation of a collected, organized, annotated body of work, produced

over time by a learner, which demonstrates progress toward specific objectives" (p. 6).

Additionally, Arhar, Kelly and Kasten (2001) state that "artifacts and documents provide

descriptive records that can enable the researcher to derive insights different from those provided

by observations and interviews" (p. 163). This data collection instruments provided valuable

information related to what undergraduates did during the lessons, in terms of learning English

while dealing with the four language skills.

       Regarding field notes, Burns (1999) affirms that they "are descriptions and accounts of

events in the research context which are written in a relatively factual and objective style. They

generally include reports of non-verbal information, physical settings, group structures and

records of conversations and interactions between participants" (p.87). In the same line of

thought, Hopkins (2008) claims that field notes "is a way of reporting observations, reflections

and reactions to classroom problems" (p. 103). Based on these authors, we decided to use field

notes to collect information during the development of the lessons, while one of us was guiding

the class the other one was taking notes. In addition, we wrote the field notes taking into

consideration the aspects concerning this study, which are the contributions of customized

lessons with cultural content to EFL learning (see appendix H).

In reference to surveys, Bell (1993) states that "the aim of a survey is to obtain information which can be analysed and patterns extracted and comparisons made" (p. 10). The surveys on students' perception were conducted with all of the undergraduates to record their perceptions towards the customized lessons, their learning preferences, the cultural content, and learning activities (see appendix G).

We have already described the instructional and research designs of our study. In the next section we centre our attention on the analysis of the data we gathered through the students' artefacts with the respective self-assessment, our field notes, and the surveys on students' perceptions administered at the end of each lesson.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis and Findings

This study aims to describe the contribution of customized lessons to t EFL learning among undergraduates from the ELT programme at Universidad de la Amazonia. To collect the data, we used the following instruments: students' artefacts including the respective self-assessment, teachers' field notes, and surveys on students' perceptions administered at the end of each lesson. This section describes the process followed to analyse the data gathered in our research study.

Having concluded the implementation of our pedagogical intervention, we used the grounded theory approach to analyse the data collected, which according to Cresswell (2013), is a "qualitative research design in which the inquirer generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, an action, or an interaction shaped by the views of a large number of participants" (p. 83). To this respect, the data gathered in our research study served as basis to set explanations that answer our research question. Additionally, Corbin and Strauss (2008) assert that "grounded theories, because they are drawn from data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action" (p. 12). Likewise, the data gathered underpinned the contribution of customized lessons with cultural content to EFL learning among undergraduates.

We started the data analysis process by exploring the students' artefacts with the corresponding of self-assessment done in the four lessons, the transcriptions of the field notes, and systematization of the surveys on students' perceptions conducted after each lesson. After doing this, we cypher the data with the use of the colour coding technique, which in words of Stottok, Bergaus and Gorra (2011) "uses coloured fonts to assign certain codes, concepts and categories to the text, with codes being keywords or short sentences, concepts being

interrelationships of codes, and categories being interrelationships of concepts" (p.1). In the same line of thought, Zieman's affirms that this technique is "an effective way to begin thematic analysis of written data" (as cited in Klein, 2012, p. 62). Therefore, this technique helped us to identify common and recurrent patterns from the different instruments for data collection.

Having done this, we proceeded with the process of data reduction to condense the number of emergent patterns referring to the same salient issues, which served as basis to create related groups that explained the phenomena. We triangulated the data collected considering Dezin's and Lincoln's (2005) insights since it involves analysing students' work, their perceptions and researchers' points of view. In the process of triangulating we included undergraduates' perceptions and our own insights and reflections.

Similarly, Freeman (1998) explains that triangulation "means including multiple sources of information or points of view on the phenomenon or question you are investigating. (…) you might conduct observations and interviews, and collect student work to study the question you have" (p.97). Likewise, Guion, Diehl & McDonald (2002) assert that data triangulation "is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies by analyzing a research question from multiple perspectives" (p.1). In this study, the data triangulation took into account our three instruments: students' artefacts including the respective self-assessment, teachers' field notes, and surveys on students' perceptions administered at the end of each lesson. We decided to follow this process to have a better understanding of the phenomena that took place during the intervention phase of the present study and more solid and valid research categories that answer our research question.

After this carefully review and analysis, we identified three research categories with its corresponding sub-categories, as can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Research categories and sub-categories

Research Question	Categories	Subcategories
How do the development and implementation of customized lessons with cultural content contribute to EFL learning among undergraduates at Universidad de la Amazonía?	Designing principled customized lessons	Are relevant and useful to the learner Provide a variety of activities, attractive presentation and appealing content Facilitate students' self-investment Offer communicative opportunities
	Fostering cultural knowledge and understanding	Expressing cultural knowledge Developing cultural understanding
	Addressing learning styles and learning strategies	Considering learning styles in EFL learning Applying learning strategies in EFL learning

Source: Personal Creation

Research Categories of Analysis

As this research study aims to identify the contribution of customized lessons with cultural content to EFL learning among undergraduates from the ELT programme at Universidad de la Amazonia, three research categories emerged from the data collected.

Designing principled based customized lessons. In this category, the main basis to support our findings is the fact that materials are informed by Second Language Acquisition (SLA) principles, which have the potential to contribute to EFL learning among undergraduates. As stated by Núñez and Téllez (2009) "materials development entails the blending of reasoning and artistic processes, which are guided by some tenets and essential ingredients that help both language learners assimilate and provide teachers with the groundwork to embark on the materials development route" (p. 175). In the same breath, Tomlinson (2010) argues, "materials

should not be random recreations from repertoire nor crafty clones of previously successful

materials" (p. 82). Thus, SLA principles informed our customized lessons in an attempt to

maximise the effectiveness of the materials and boost the process of learning the language.

It is also important to consider that one of the objectives of this study was to provide

undergraduates with innovative and suitable materials anchored in students' language learning

and affective needs, as opposed to the commercial course-books that respond to the one size fits

all principle. In this sense, we followed Tomlinson's (2010) ideas because materials nurture the

principled implementation of language learning development and acquisition theories, as well as

teaching principles. As the purpose of this study was to create and provide materials that greatly

contribute to EFL learning among undergraduates, the subcategories that feature this category are

named and drawn upon the SLA principles. First, customized materials are relevant and useful to

the learner; second, they provide a variety of activities, have attractive presentation and appealing

content; third, they facilitate students' self-investment; and fourth, they offer communicative

opportunities.

***Are relevant and useful to the learner*.** This first sub-category is featured by

undergraduates' perceptions on the content presented in the lessons. Furthermore, this sub-

category is relevant to our research study because for learning to take place, undergraduates need

to relate the content of the lessons to their realities and life conditions and to perceive them as

useful. To this respect, Rico (2005) states that "materials will focus on understandable, relevant,

and interesting exchanges of information, rather than on the presentation of grammatical form"

(p. 105). Keeping this idea in mind, the customized lessons aimed to provide relevant topics to

make undergraduates feel at ease to perform in the class. During the development of the second

lesson, in which the topic was electoral systems in Colombia and the USA, undergraduates were

asked to answer three questions after listening to an audio recording about the Colombian

electoral system. In the following excerpt (see picture 2) we can appreciate that the content was

useful and relevant as undergraduates reflected on different aspects related to the topic.

Picture 2

Students' Artefacts, Lesson 2, activity 6

6. Listen to the audio "Interviewing a candidate". Then answer these three questions according to your beliefs and perceptions.

Understanding both Electoral Systems!   **Have you say!**

Useful expressions bank

I think...   From my point of view...   I disagree...
I believe...   Colombians are/aren't aware...   I am in disagreement...

1. Do you think Colombians perceive voting as a serious responsibility? Why?

   I think colombians are aware of the electoral system. Because, everybody vote in spite of there are corrupt candidates.

2. Do you think the electoral system in Colombia is simple or complex? Why?

   I I believe the electoral system is simple. Because, in colombia there is not States.

3. Do you think the candidates in Colombia are the most suitable for that position? Why?

   Yes, I believe candidates are very inteligent, and they have a lot expenence, but lots of them luch of proffesional ethical.

Graph 4

Students' artefacts – Self-assessment survey

**The cultural content was
meaningful and reflect
situations of my context**

■ Need Improvement
■ Neutral
■ Totally Agree

Source: Personal Creation

This evidence from the self-assessment showed that the content presented was relevant

for undergraduates in their EFL learning (see Graph 4). Additionally, expressing their opinions

regarding the Colombian electoral system was really useful. This topic was relevant for

undergraduates as this particular situation was actually affecting their lives. These reflections

portrayed undergraduates' awareness of the relevant content presented in the lessons. In this

sense, providing content that is pertinent and useful encourages undergraduates to be engaged in

the lessons and use the language while expressing their thoughts and ideas. Based on Tomlinson

(1998) insight, we can assert that materials are more effective if we focus on students' interests

and motivation to use the language. The following excerpts from the field notes illustrate the

previous statement:

> The students reflect on the content of the materials. GP says that the topic helped
> him to learn the differences between both countries. In addition, he also says that the
> vocabulary presented is new for him. (sic)
> **Teachers' field notes – Lesson 2**

> LC talks about the materials. She says that the materials were useful and relevant.
> She is able to contextualise the vocabulary because the topic is interesting for her.
> **Teachers' field notes – Lesson 4**

These experts are samples of how relevant and useful were the lessons for undergraduates. They were aware of the fact that the content gave them chances to use the language and explore the usefulness of the lesson. Finally, we relied on a survey and directly asked undergraduates for their perception on the relevance of the content after each lesson. Graph 5 demonstrates that most of undergraduates perceived the content as relevant.

Graph 5

Survey on students' perceptions – Lesson 4

**The content of the lesson deals
with relevant cultural information
regarding Colombia and The USA**

■ Need Improvement   ■ Neutral   ■ Good

Source: Personal Creation

To sum up, relevant and useful content plays an important role for this study, as it encouraged undergraduates to take part in the lessons, interact with the language included in those, and express their ideas using the English language. In this regard, Núñez and Téllez (2015) assert that "teachers should develop contextualised materials that respond to their students' needs. Materials that address learners' genuine interests, knowledge, experience and understanding of language use create effective learning environments" (p. 58). By doing so, customized lessons

contributed to EFL learning among undergraduates in terms of how they were willing to be part of the lessons and express their viewpoints regarding what they understood as relevant for them.

Provide a variety of activities, attractive presentation and appealing content. This sub-category reviews three different components of designing materials: variety of activities, attractive presentation, and appealing content in terms of generating a positive impact on EFL learning. First, in this study, we provided a wide range of activities in each lesson to attract undergraduates' attention and interests. To this respect, Rico (2005) claims that "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" (p. 106). For instance, Picture 3 exemplifies this particular situation as it presents a variety of matching activities as a way to introduce vocabulary.

Picture 3.

Students' Artefacts, Lesson 1, 3 and 4, matching activities
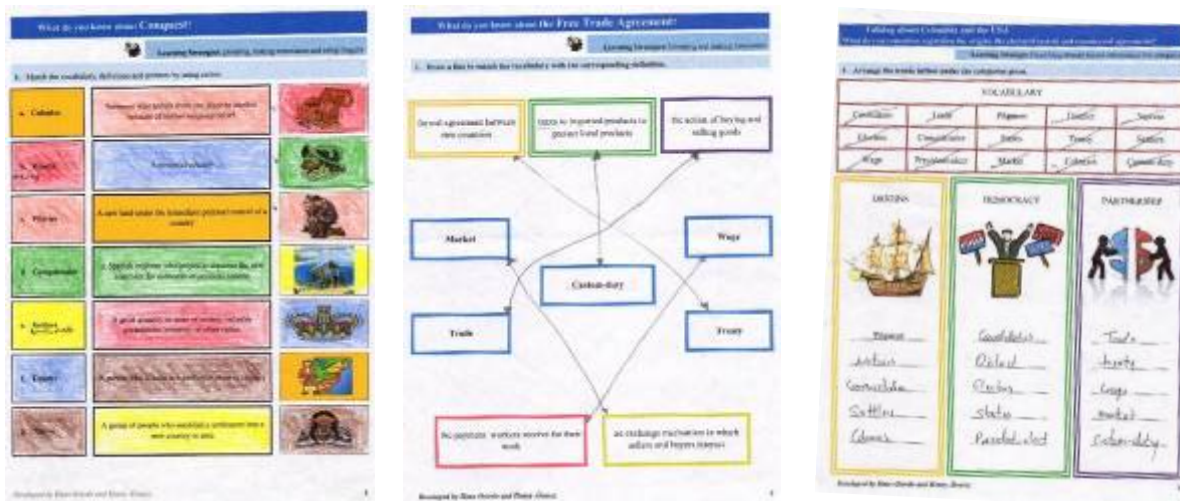
We designed vocabulary matching exercises differently in each lesson to engage undergraduates in their development. Concerning this fact, we kept in mind Garcia's analogy in

relation to the need for language planning and language preservation; her language garden

analogy focuses on the idea that "if we travelled through the countries of the world and found

field after field, garden after garden of the same, one colour-flower, without variety of shape, size

or colour, how dull and boring the world would be" (as cited in Mejía, 2002, p.52). In the same

line of thought, Tomlinson (1998) explains that variety in activities occurs when you change

what is usually done in the classroom by giving different instructions, changing sources, among

others. Based on these insights, we deduced that lessons without variety will be demotivating and

dreary for students. The following excerpts from the field notes evidence the previous statement:

> JA says that the materials give different examples of the language: texts, audios,
> examples for the activities.
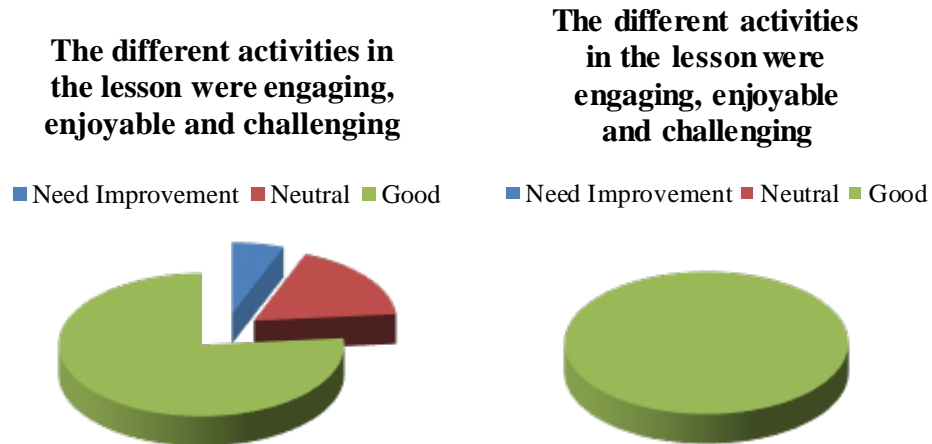> ***Teachers' field notes – Lesson 2***

> GP expresses that the materials had many and different activities. GP says "in each
> lesson we work on different skills and the good thing is that at the end we have to
> present a product" [*sic*]
> ***Teachers' field notes – Lesson 4***

These excerpts demonstrate that undergraduates were aware of the variety of activities

presented in the lessons. As stated by Harmer, materials "must have attractive layout/ design and

be interesting by including a variety of pleasing, challenging and motivating tasks…" (as cited in

Nuñez et al., 2009, p.43). The information obtained from the surveys demonstrated this issue,

which also contributed to engage the majority of undergraduates in enjoyable and challenging

activities (see Graph 6).

Graph 6

Survey on students' perceptions – Lesson 2 and 4

The different activities in the lesson were engaging, enjoyable and challenging

■ Need Improvement ■ Neutral ■ Good

The different activities in the lesson were engaging, enjoyable and challenging

■ Need Improvement ■ Neutral ■ Good

Source: Personal Creation

The second aspect in this sub-category deals with attractive presentation of the lessons. Following Núñez et al. (2004) vision, attractive colours, diverse activities, imagery to represent the activities, well distributed information, clear language and examples ensure an appealing layout and attractive presentation. Additionally, Barnard and Zemach (2003) states "(…) layout should always be carefully considered; an otherwise excellent text and activity can be ruined simply by a badly designed presentation on the page" (p.317). To this respect, undergraduates expressed their opinions regarding the layout and the presentation of the lessons, as evidenced in these transcriptions from the field notes.

> After finishing the matching exercise, GP expresses that "this material looks estético" [*sic*]
> **Teachers' field notes – *Lesson 1***
>
> According to GP, the material design is understandable and according to the topic. The colours and the images help him to understand.
> **Teachers' field notes – Lesson 3**

Appealing layout is an important aspect to attract students' attention and interest. As asserted by Lamb (2011) "visual appeal is key not only in its ability to grab the interest of your reader but also to help the reader remember the details of your message" (p.14). We also found further evidence of undergraduates' perception regarding the presentation in the surveys on students' perceptions conducted after each lesson (Graph 7). This data provided valuable insights about the layout of the materials since the majority of the undergraduates considered the layout as appealing.

Graph 7

Survey on students' perceptions – Lesson 1, 3 and 4

**The material is appealing and has a nice layout**
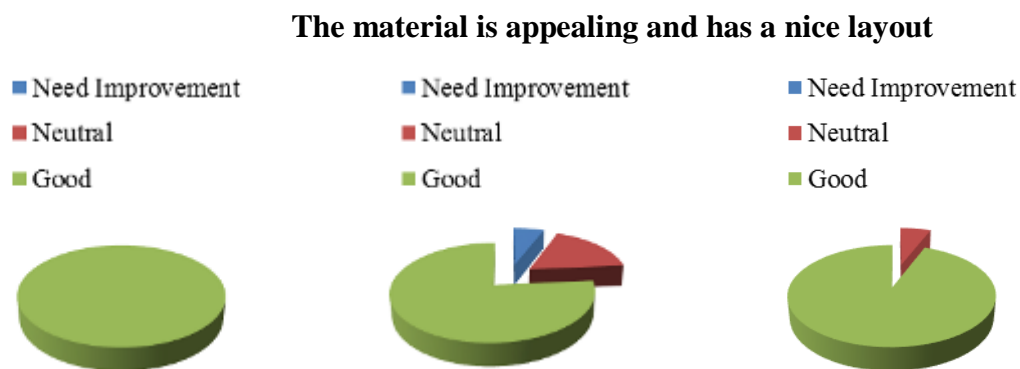
Source: Personal Creation

The third aspect in this sub-category is appealing content. The information gathered in the self-assessment of the artefacts provides information in relation to undergraduates' perceptions of content, which evidences that they considered content as motivating for their learning (see Graph 8). In fact, the lessons followed the content-based teaching approach, as conceived by Chamot and O'Malley (1994): content-based classes are more motivating for students because they feel like they are developing other skills related to other subjects instead of learning just a foreign language. With this idea in mind, the lessons offered the possibility to

contribute to undergraduates' learning by means of appealing content, where undergraduates felt

they were not only learning a language lesson, but learning interesting cultural topics.

Graph 8

Students' artefacts – Self-assessment survey

**The content motivated me to take part
of the lessons**

■ Need Improvement ■ Neutral ■ Totally Agree
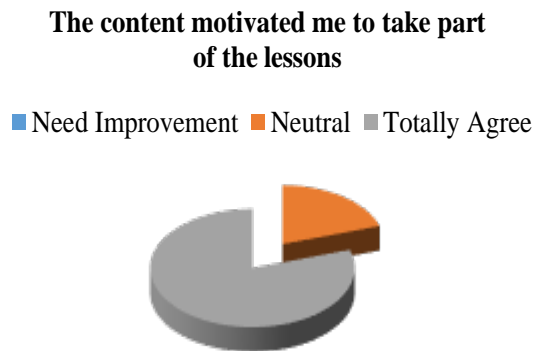
Source: Personal Creation

As undergraduates perceived the content as relevant, they also got motivated to take part

of the lesson and participated by sharing their ideas and opinions. To this respect, Tomlinson

(1998) claim that "the content is appealing when it has got topics of interest to the target learners,

topics which offer the possibility of learning something new, engaging stories, universal themes

or local references" (p.7). This can be seen in the following excerpts from the field notes

developed during the lessons:

> According to LC the topics reflect her personal and learning interests. She says they
> are necessary for her life as an active citizen with duties and rights.
> **Teachers' field notes – Lesson 4**
>
> GP talks about the importance of the topic because he says "it helps me to
> understand vocabulary and it helps to understand grammar easily".
> **Teachers' field notes – Lesson 1**

As can be evidenced in the previous excerpts, undergraduates considered the content as

relevant for their learning. Based on Núñez and Tellez (2009) "effective materials make learners

feel comfortable and confident because both the content and type of activities are perceived by

them as significant and practical to their lives". This sub-category highlights the relevance of the materials so as to be affective and more conductive for language learning, which was done by offering variety of activities to break up with the monotony of the classes, attractive presentation to catch students' attention, and appealing content to relate what is being learnt with students' realities, lives and interests.

Facilitate students' self-investment. This sub-category is featured by the opportunities undergraduates had to achieve and complete the learning goals by consciously using learning strategies proposed in the customized lessons. To this respect, we want to pinpoint that the lessons favour the overt-model of strategy instruction proposed by Chamot et al. (1999), in which students are informed about the name, use and the benefits of applying learning strategies. Moreover, Rutherford and Sharwood-Smith (1988) claim that effective materials offer the necessary resources to help students to develop self-discovery. By consciously applying learning strategies, students become more aware of the learning process and also more independent as they are the ones that foster their language learning, maximising thereby the use of customized materials (lessons). This can be evidenced in the students' artefacts (see Picture 4).

Picture 4

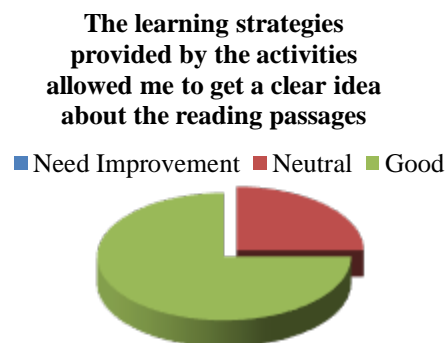*Students' Artefacts, Lesson 2, learning strategies*

As can be seen in Picture 4 learning strategies were informed during the development of

the lessons in each one of the activities. This was done to encourage undergraduates to

consciously use the learning strategies to achieve learning goals. There are evidences in which

undergraduates are consciously applying strategies during the different lessons.

> Students express their opinions about the learning strategies in the lessons. ML says
> that "the materials offer learning strategies" and YB expresses that "the learning
> strategies give clues for the audio exercise".
> ***Teachers' field notes- Lesson 1 and 2.***

The previous excerpts exemplify that undergraduates achieved what was proposed in the

lesson by keeping in mind the learning strategies suggested. In relation to this concern, Oxford

(1990) states that language learning strategies allow "participants become aware of and familiar

with the general idea of language learning strategies and the way such strategies can help them

accomplish various language tasks" (p. 202). We agree with Oxford (1990) in the previous

statement because undergraduates noticed the learning strategies given in the lessons and this

contributed to develop the learning tasks. Evidences of this insight can be found in Graph 9.

Graph 9.

Survey on students' perceptions – Lesson 1

**The learning strategies
provided by the activities
allowed me to get a clear idea
about the reading passages**

■ Need Improvement ■ Neutral ■ Good

Source: Personal Creation

This data gathered from the survey on the students' perceptions, conducted after Lesson 1 showed that that the learning strategies given helped them to make discoveries and complete the goals by themselves. In this sense, Nuñez and Téllez (2009), drawing on Tomlinson's principles for MD, explain that self-investment and self-discovery facilitate a more efficient use of the learning resources. In essence, this sub-category contributes to answer our research question as it makes undergraduates do a more effective use of the resources offered in the customized lessons and subsequently foster the learning process.

Offer communicative opportunities. This sub-category deals with the opportunities that undergraduates had to use the language for communicative purposes during the implementation of the customized lessons. They provided a variety of chances and activities to help undergraduates communicate by using the target language. This can be seen and evidenced in the following extracts taken from students' artefacts (see Picture 5).

Picture 5

Students' Artefacts, Lesson 4

As we can see, undergraduates acknowledge that the customized lessons offered plenty of instances to communicate with the class and the teacher during the lessons. Following Rico's (2005) ideas, "materials will focus on the communicative abilities of interpretation, expression and negotiation" (p. 105). Concerning this fact, during the plenary session (see Picture 04) undergraduates had the opportunity to recall concepts from previous lessons to express their own ideas and opinion.

Furthermore, Tomlinson (2011) proposes different ways to engage students in communication. One of them is involving students into post-listening and post-reading, in which students used the learned information to communicate and express purpose. During the intervention, after the reading and listening tasks, undergraduates gave and shared their opinions regarding the activities previously mentioned. This is observed in the following excerpts from the field notes.

> Students talk about the consequences of FTA:
> MA: "The USA helps Colombia because of the Amazonia. They have other interests"
> DC: "FTA is a kind of business between both countries"
> YB: "FTA will make little businesses disappear"
> WJ: "FTA will make raw materials cheaper" [*sic*]
> **Teachers' field notes – Lesson 3**

The information presented above refers to an activity in which undergraduates had to participate in a plenary speaking activity. Regarding communicative opportunities provided in the lessons, we agree with Gilmore's (2007) ideas who states that the objective of materials "is to produce learners who are able to communicate effectively in the target language" (p. 6). The information of the survey on student's perceptions (Graph 10) ratified that undergraduates were able to communicate their thoughts and ideas.

Graph 10

Survey on students' perceptions – Lesson 4

**The plenary motivated me
to participate and share my
ideas.**
■ Need Improvement

Source: Personal Creation

The objective was to encourage undergraduates to express their thoughts and

understanding of the topics and the content developed during the four customized lessons. In this

regard, Tomlinson (2011) asserts that "using language for communication involves attempt to

achieve purpose in situations in which the content, strategies and expression of interaction are

determined by the learners" (p. 16). To achieve this, the content and the activities presented

encourage undergraduates to use language for communicative purposes. We also kept Ramírez's

(2004) words in mind who explains that materials need to offer "exposure to real language which

is attained by giving students opportunities to use language in real-life communicative activities"

(p. 6). The aforementioned issues lead us to conclude that offering communicate opportunities is

a fundamental concern of our research question since communicating in the foreign language is

the main purpose of communicative language teaching and learning.

To sum up, designing and implementing principled customized lessons is fundamental to

maximise the contributions they give to EFL learning among undergraduates. As stated by Núñez

and Téllez (2009), "the degree of acceptance by learners that teaching materials have may vary

greatly according to the novelty, variety, presentation and content used in them" (p. 186). In

addition, the authors further claim that appropriate input helps to achieve the content goals. The previous statement represents a great deal for this study. Thus, implementing customized lessons informed by SLA principles increases their contribution to undergraduates' EFL learning, as shown in the data presented above.

Fostering cultural knowledge and understanding. This second category allowed us to answer the research question due to the contribution of the cultural content in undergraduates' EFL learning. Following Byram's (1998), Crawford-Lange and Lange's (2010), Kramsch's (1998), Goldstein's (2015), Gladstone's (as in Álvarez and & Bonilla, 2009) ideas, language and culture go hand in hand as a determinant factor in human interaction because language is the means in which culture is expressed and perpetuated. In this sense, exploring the relationship between language and culture help recognize different cultural codes, ideas, beliefs, behaviours, among others implicit in the use of the language. Hence, these features portrayed realities and interests of undergraduates which greatly contributed to their motivation during the intervention.

To achieve a more meaningful communication, both language and cultural content are fundamental. As affirmed by Kramsch (1998), language is linked to culture when it is used for communicative purposes. With this idea in mind, there are two important factors to consider in this study in terms of cultural content: first, undergraduates wanted to know more about the culture of English-speaking countries, in the case of this study the USA; and second, they wanted to express their own cultural reality using the foreign language. Similarly, for Castro (2001) and Tomalin and Stemplasky (1990), culture-oriented lessons result in effective and more meaningful language learning. Thus, including culture for communication purposes significantly boosted motivation during the development of the lessons. Thus, the sub-categories that emerged were

drawn upon two main concerns; first, expressing cultural knowledge and second, developing

cultural understanding.

Expressing cultural knowledge. This sub-category entails the opportunities

undergraduates had to express what they knew and learnt regarding the cultural aspects in the

lessons. According to Crawford-Lange & Lange (2010) "cultural themes are provocative

concerns or issues related to the values of either the native or target culture or both. The stronger

the relationship to the learners' situation, the more powerful the theme will be" (p. 259). In this

sense, the lessons proposed different topics related to the following cultural aspects: colonization,

electoral system and economy in both countries, Colombia and the USA, with the idea of

motivating undergraduates to take part in the lessons. Picture 6 presents the different cultural

content offered in the lessons.

Picture 6

Students' Artefacts, Lesson 1, 2, 3 and 4, cultural content
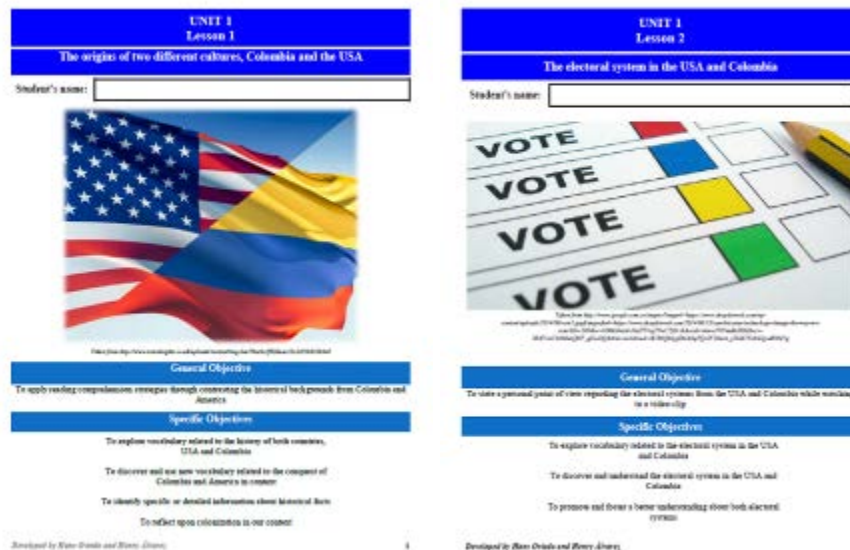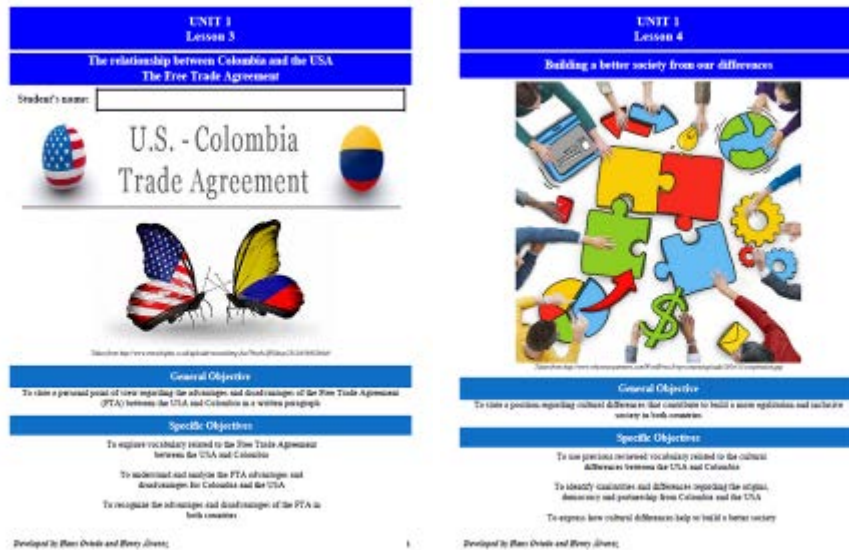
The presentation of these topics gave undergraduates the possibility to express their opinions regarding cultural knowledge in both ways, as something they have already known and something that is new for them. In this regard, expressing cultural knowledge provides a reference which allows to deal with cultural differences, which in Sercu, Bandura, Castro, Davcheva, Laskaridou, Lundgren and Ryan's (2005) words argue that knowledge about ones' own culture and the culture of others is the reference to understand the process of interaction in different social levels. Thus, understanding interaction between cultures is one of the first conditions to achieve successful communication. One of the first points of expressing cultural knowledge is the ability to express specific and general cultural knowledge (Byram, 1997). The following excerpts from students' artefacts show the knowledge undergraduates have regarding their cultural realities.

> **Do you think Colombians perceive voting as a serious responsibility? Why?**
> MA: from my point of view we don't perceive voting as a serious responsibility because we don't have faith in the changes candidates could realise in our country. [*sic*]
> **Students' artefacts – Lesson 2, activity 6**

Do you think the electoral system in Colombia is simple? Why?
YB: The electoral system is simple but this doesn't mean this is bad, the bad thing in the Colombia electoral system are the candidates with their bad intentions. [*sic*]
Students' artefacts – Lesson 2, activity 6

Do you think the candidates in Colombia are the most suitable for that position? Why?
YN: Yes, I believe candidates are very intelligent, and they have lot experience but lots of them lack of professional ethical. [*sic*]
Students' artefacts – Lesson 2, activity 6

In the previous excerpts undergraduates express their cultural knowledge regarding a specific topic, in this case, Colombian electoral system. Undergraduates felt encouraged to express this cultural knowledge using the target language. Furthermore, expressing cultural knowledge not only means to express knowledge about ones own culture, but it also refers to be able to express knowledge about others' culture. In this sense, we present the following information gathered in the field notes.

The teacher asks the students about what they know in relation to this topic:
JM: "In the USA, states are autonomous"
YB: "The USA has two political parties, while in Colombia there are many"
DC: "In the USA, people do not elect the president directly" [*sic*]
Teachers' field notes – Lesson 2

The students report and reflect about historical facts:
DC: "Spanish conquistadors came to steal gold and wealth"
WJ: "In Colombia, they came from Spain, in the USA they came from England"
[*sic*]
Teachers' field notes – Lesson 1

From the previous excerpts from the field notes and the quantitative data gathered in the surveys (Graph 11) we can see how the majority of undergraduates were able to express their opinion about the knowledge they had regarding the topic. This information revealed the impact that knowledge regarding both cultures contributes to communicate in the target language.

Graph 11

Survey on students' perceptions – Lesson 1

**The lesson allowed me to express
my opinion regarding the culture
of Colombia and the USA**

■ Need Improvement ■ Neutral ■ Good
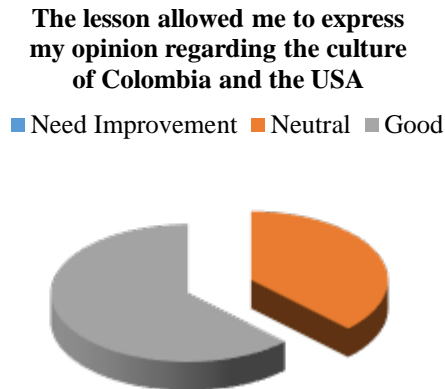
Source: Personal Creation

To conclude, this sub-category is relevant for this study as expressing cultural

knowledge represents the capacity to use the target language to express what undergraduates

knew about their own and the culture of the target language. As expressed by Goldstein (2015),

culture is bounded to language. In this sense, we can say that undergraduates used the language to

express their cultural knowledge in relation to the topics presented.

Developing cultural understanding. This sub-category is featured by the possibilities

the lessons offered to develop cultural understanding in undergraduates by interpreting, relating,

and communicating cultural differences and similarities. In this sense, we can help

undergraduates to create relationships between their own and the culture of others by comparing

them (Sercu et al., 2005). Hence, students can be benefited from creating this relationship in

terms of recognizing and valuing their own culture as the basis for understanding and respecting

the cultures of others. The following are evidences from students' artefacts (see Picture 7).

Picture 7

Students' artefacts, lesson 1, activity 3
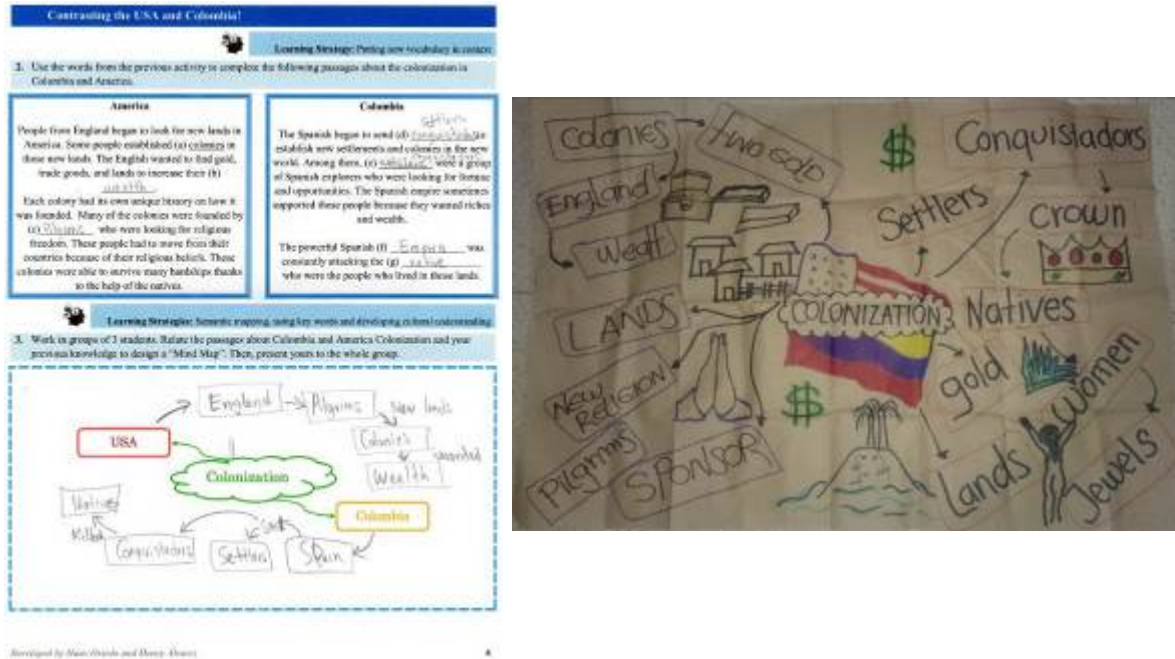
Picture 7 demonstrates the previous statement as undergraduates were relating not only

cultural differences and similarities in relation to colonization, but also behaviours and beliefs

regarding these aspects. According to Rico (2011), achieving intercultural communication is to

consciously create relationships between cultural aspects such as: differences, similarities,

beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, skills and language. Indeed, this will contribute to undergraduates'

awareness on the cultural aspects previously mentioned. Further evidence from these statements

are presented in the following excerpts selected from the field notes.

> Students share their comic strips from the last activity, the students explain:
> YB: "This is a real story, Starbucks. Long lines to buy a coffee when the people sell
> the same coffee for 500 pesitos. People in Colombia lack personality" [*sic*]
> **Teachers' field notes – Lesson 1**

> The teacher asks students about their knowledge regarding the FTA:
> JA: "There is a military agreement. The USA send army, soldiers to fight to FARC"
> DC: "The USA helps Colombia to fight drug trafficking"
> JA: "Colombia needs dollars" [*sic*]
> **Teachers' field notes – Lesson 3**

The previous excerpts exhibit how undergraduates compared and looked for similarities in relation to the cultural content presented in the lessons. Based on Crawford-Lange & Lange (2010) integrating culture into the EFL classroom allows students to transform their cultural understanding by interacting with new linguistic situations related to cultural aspects. The authors further state that this is possible when students are consciously expressing their own understanding of the cultural content presented. Regarding these aspects, information from the surveys on students' perceptions reveals that undergraduates reflected on cultural aspects developing understanding of the culture from the USA and relating it to their own culture (see Graph 12).

Graph 12.

Survey on students' perceptions – Lesson 2

Cultural content of the lesson allowed me to reflect on cultural issues in relation to both countries

■Need Improvement ■ Neutral ■ Good
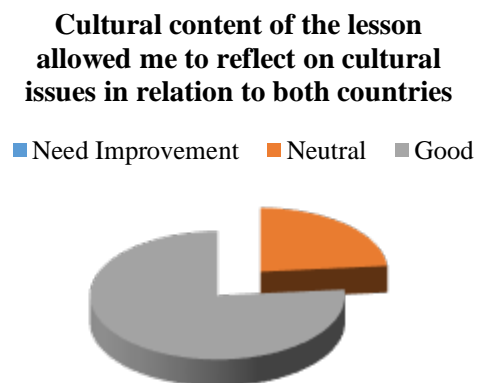
Source: Personal Creation

To sum up, this sub-category is a response to our research question in the sense that the lessons provided opportunities to develop cultural understanding in undergraduates. To this respect, Byram (as cited in Rico, 2011), asserts that "even the exchange of information is dependent upon understanding how what one says or writes will be perceived and interpreted in

another cultural context; it depends on the ability to decentre and take up the perspective of the listener or reader" (p. 133). Therefore, to be able to achieve successful communication, one needs to be aware on the fact that language carries not only information but cultural background that must be respected and valued.

This category greatly contributes to answer our research question as it helps to understand how undergraduates, through cultural content, made progress in their EFL learning. This was achieved because undergraduates were relating their knowledge about their own and the cultures of others to reach different learning goals. In other words, the duo made of culture and language, included in the customized lessons, was fundamental as language served as a basis to express cultural knowledge and to develop cultural understanding. To this respect, Gómez (2015), based on Tudor's (2001) ideas, asserts that the cultural aspects explicit in the use of the language should be immersed in the lessons. Additionally, we can say that including cultural content in the customized lessons significantly contributes to EFL learning, as Crawford-Lange & Lange (2010) state "this integrated manner of teaching language and culture supplies a content for language use" (p. 261). Thus, we observed that the lessons motivated and helped students learn to respect and value their own and the culture of others. This means that for students to achieve a more successful and meaningful communication, the material offered should be the most suitable to achieve both, cultural goals and language learning goals.

Addressing learning styles and learning strategies. In this category, the main basis to support our findings is the fact that the activities presented in the customized lessons cater for undergraduates' learning styles and provide learning strategies to reach English learning goals. To this respect, Keefe (1979) characterizes learning styles as "cognitive, affective, and

physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment" (p.4). This aspect is fundamental as our undergraduates have different learning styles and the activities proposed were developed following these ideas. Moreover, Oxford (2003) asserts that "L2 learning strategies are specific behaviours or thought processes that students use to enhance their own L2 learning" (p. 8). Having Oxford's (2003) ideas in mind, learning strategies are important in EFL learning as undergraduates become more conscious about the use and application of them in the lessons.

   Considering learning styles in EFL learning. This sub-category represents how the lessons address the different learning styles. Concerning this aspect, Oxford (2003) claims that "learning styles are the general approaches -for example, global or analytic, auditory or visual - that students use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subject" (p. 2). This means that each student learns in a different way according to specific behavioural and biological traits. To this respect, Dunn and Grigs (1988) assert that "learning style is the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others" (p. 3). Having these ideas in mind, Picture 8 shows a set of activities presented in the lessons that aimed to fit undergraduates' different learning styles.

Picture 8

Students' artefacts, different lessons, learning strategies

Learning Strategies: Semantic mapping, using key words and developing cultural understanding

3. Work in groups of 3 students. Relate the passages about Colombia and America Colonization and your previous knowledge to design a "Mind Map". Then, present yours to the whole group.

Let's represent your thoughts!

Learning Strategy: Semantic mapping

5. Draw a comic strip that reflects how colonization is still present nowadays in both cultures. Keep in mind the main elements in a Comic Strip.

The USA Electoral system!

Learning Strategy: Using an audio to complete a passage

2. Watch and listen to the audio about "Electing a US President" and fill in the gaps with the correct word from the box.

Economic Agreements between Colombia and the USA

Learning Strategy: Checking previous knowledge and getting the idea

2. Read the following passage. Then think of 4 advantages and 4 disadvantages of the FTA and write them down using key words.

Reflecting and stating a position about the FTA

Learning Strategies: Following a model to write an opinion paragraph

4. Write a paragraph. Make sure you include a clear topic sentence, at least two supporting ideas and a conclusion.

The previous excerpts from the customized lessons showed the different learning styles addressed via the activities proposed. According to Dunn and Grigs (1988) and Ehrman and Oxford (1990) there are different dimensions that entail the different learning styles which significantly intervene with the learning of a foreign language. With these ideas in mind, the different activities are situated to suit undergraduates' different learning styles. Furthermore, we found evidence in the field notes in which addressing learning styles contributed to complete undergraduates' learning goals.

> Students talk about the importance of images. MM and JL say that it is easier to complete the exercises with images. In addition SG and GP think that mind maps are helpful to organize ideas.
> *Teachers' field notes – Lesson 1*

Teacher asks students about the activities:
DC: "It is difficult to learn these concepts in English. The audios, the images and the activities helped me to understand"
ML: "We completed the exercises using the context (filling the gaps activity). Then we check with the audio. It was faster"
MA: "In my case, I like to listen to music. For this, I liked this class" *[sic]*
Teachers' field notes – Lesson 2

Achieving the learning goals is possible by taking into consideration that all students learn differently. According to Núñez and Téllez (2009), one of the most important factors to attain the goals of a course is to tune the activities to suit students' different learning styles. Based on the authors, the activities were designed to contribute to the achievement of learning goals in undergraduates by taking into consideration the different learning styles. In this regard, the surveys on students' perceptions catered this concern (see Graph 13).

Graph 13

Survey on students' perceptions – Lesson 1 and Lesson 2
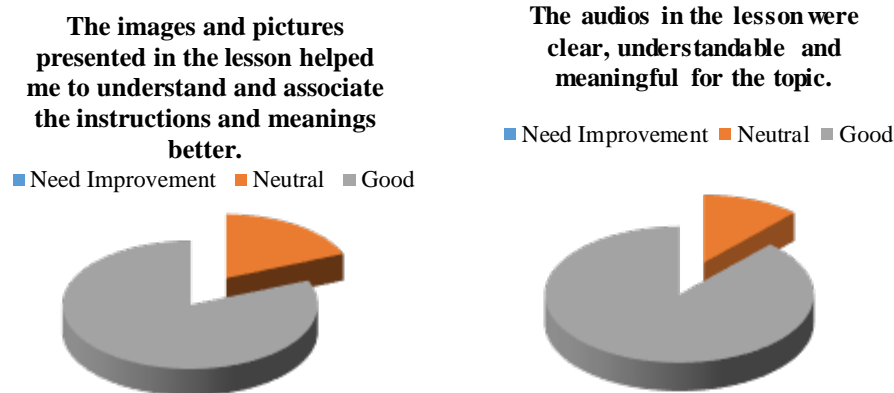
Source: Personal Creation

To sum up, this sub-category was related to our research question as learning styles was considered a fundamental issue to achieve good results in EFL learning of undergraduates from the ELT programme. Regarding this concern, Núñez et al. (2004) explain that "materials should

explore students' personalities, learning styles, language development expectations, likes, dislikes, needs and the contexts they are embedded in" (p. 132). In this sense, the customized lessons presented contributed to address undergraduates' learning styles and consequently help to improve their EFL learning.

Applying learning strategies in EFL learning. This sub-category is featured by the opportunities undergraduates had to develop the diverse activities presented in the customized lessons throughout the conscious use of the learning strategies. To this respect, Oxford and Ehrman (1995) define second language learning strategies as "specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques [...] used by students to enhance their own learning" (p.8). Having Oxford and Ehrman's (1995) ideas in mind, the different activities proposed in the lessons were thought to be developed following specific learning strategies according to the goal of the activity. Graph 15 demonstrates how the learning strategies helped a great part of undergraduates to achieve learning goals. Even though some of the undergraduates were neutral about these learning strategies, there was not any negative perception regarding this aspect.

Graph 14

Students' artefacts – Self-assessment survey

The learning strategies provided allowed me to complete the tasks and activities

■ Need Improvement   ■ Neutral   ■ Totally Agree
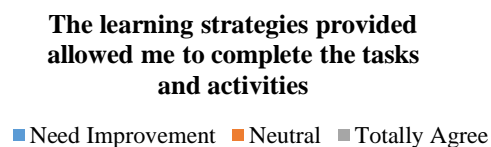
Source: Personal Creation

For this study, making undergraduates reflect and become aware of their own process was essential as they realized the importance of the use of the learning strategies. This process reflects that undergraduates were becoming reflective regarding their learning. As stated by Ormrod (2004) this process entails "people's knowledge of effective learning, and cognitive processes and their use to enhance learning" (p.358). During the intervention, undergraduates accomplished the learning activities and achieved the learning objectives through the use of those learning strategies. The following excerpts from teachers' field notes exemplify how undergraduates became aware of the learning strategies and consciously applied them to develop the activities.

> Students talk about the learning strategies provided in the lessons:
> ML: "Learning strategies tell us what to do in the activities"
> SG: "Nice strategy to use mind maps and the learning strategy semantic mapping"
> DC: "We remember the vocabulary from the previous lessons. We use similar learning strategies, so we feel familiar with the topics in the lessons" [*sic*]
> ***Teachers' field notes – Lesson 1, 2 and 4***

We also confirmed the information previously presented by means of the surveys on students' perceptions that reflect how undergraduates completed the different activities by applying the learning strategies consciously (see Graph 16). To this respect, Oxford (1996), claims that learning strategies are "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more transferable to new situations," (as cited in Richards & Lockhard, 1996, p. 63). The application of these actions discussed by the author significantly contributed to the development of the activities.

Graph 15.

Survey on students' perceptions – Lesson 2, Lesson 3 and Lesson 4

The learning strategies provided by the activities allowed me to express my opinion from a video and an audio about the electoral systems in Colombia and the USA

The learning strategies provided by the activities allowed me to express my opinion in a written paragraph.

The learning strategies provided by the activities allowed me to express my opinion in a plenary session

- Need Improvement
- Neutral
- Good

- Need Improvement
- Neutral
- Good

- Need Improvement
- Neutral
- Good

Source: Personal Creation

The main purpose of this sub-category is to make undergraduates become aware of the use of the learning strategies. Concerning this fact, Chamot and O'Malley (1994) affirm that "students who use strategic approaches to learning will comprehend spoken and written language more effectively, learn new information with greater facility, and be able to retain and use their second language better than students who do not use learning strategies" (p.11). One of the objectives of these lessons was to contribute to EFL learning among undergraduates by making them more reflective about their learning processes.

To sum up, this category helps to answer our research question in the sense that both learning styles and learning strategies represent two important aspects in EFL learning among our undergraduates. Addressing learning styles represents the fact that all the students learn differently. By catering these differences in their learning styles, undergraduates' learning is boosted. Furthermore, the application of learning strategies contributed to EFL learning as it

enables undergraduates to become independent leaners by reflecting and applying the different

strategies to achieve their learning goals. Having these ideas in mind, these two factors represent

a great deal for this study as they indeed improved undergraduates' learning significantly.

Along this chapter, we presented the stages and procedures of the data analysis.

Moreover, the information gathered through three different instruments and supported with

evidence and pertinent theory, allowed us to state the research categories and sub-categories that

emerged from this analysis. Therefore, it was possible to show how the development and

implementation of customized lessons contributed to EFL learning among undergraduates from

the ELT programme at Universidad de la Amazonia. In the following chapter, we present the

conclusions, pedagogical implications of the findings, and the limitations of the study.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

In this chapter we present the most important findings followed by the pedagogical implications this study had in our teaching practices, and its limitations. In doing so, we present the contributions we found for each one of our three theoretical constructs: materials development, culture and EFL learning. These results and implications are based on the research question how do the development and implementation of customized lessons with cultural content contributed to EFL learning among undergraduates from the ELT programme at Universidad de la Amazonia?

Designing and implementing materials anchored by principles is an essential endeavour to maximize students' interaction in the target language. Núñez and Téllez (2009), Nunez et al. (2004) and Tomlinson (2010) explain the benefits that MD principles have for students and teachers alike. As great concern for this study we selected four MD principles as basis for the design of the customized lessons.

First, the content is relevant and useful to the learner. For our study this principle contributed to encourage undergraduates to take part in the lessons as they were related to their realities and interests, and provided useful language to communicate during the lessons. Second, provide a variety of activities, attractive presentation and appealing content. This principle entails three different elements that aim to achieve impact to foster materials' effectiveness. Variety of activities engages students as they break up with the routine and the repetition of the same classroom activities. This principle deals with catching undergraduates' attention by offering an appealing layout. Appealing content is related to the importance the content had in undergraduates' lives. The third principle, refers to students' self-investment. Here the lesson

provided a set of strategies to help undergraduates to achieve learning goals by themselves. The last principle in this category is to offer communicative opportunities that allowed undergraduates to take advantage of the opportunities provided in the lesson to express and communicate their thoughts, ideas and opinions in the target language.

Fostering cultural knowledge and understanding is the second main finding of our research study. To this respect, as argued by different scholars, language and culture cannot be perceived separately. Consequently, the lessons should be planned and designed under this line of thought to motivate students and encourage them to communicate in the target language. Based on this information, two main sub-categories contributed to answer our research question. Firstly, expressing cultural knowledge. As claimed by Álvarez and Bonilla (2009), Byram (1998), Byram and Risager (1999), Goldstein (2015), Kramsch (1998), Rico (2015), culture is surrounded by language as it is the main means to communicate between cultures. For this reason, expressing cultural knowledge is conceived as the capacity undergraduates had to express their thoughts in relation to their own and others' culture in the target language. Consequently, this becomes essential to develop cultural understanding as undergraduates benefit in terms of recognizing and valuing their own culture as the basis for understanding and respecting the cultures of others. Secondly, developing cultural understanding was necessary as undergraduates had opportunities to become aware of the fact that language is not only a way to communicate a message but also a means to understand and reflect on the different cultures.

Finally, the third main concern in this research study is addressing both learning styles and learning strategies. Chamot and O'Malley (1994), Núñez and Téllez (2009), Oxford (1994), Oxford (1999), Oxford and Ehrman (1995) and Tomlinson (1998) agreed in the importance of addressing learning styles and providing learning strategies to achieve better results in the EFL

learning of undergraduates. Firstly, considering learning styles refers to students' specific learning traits that intervene in the learning processes. Taking into consideration that all students learn differently, catering these learning specific needs represents a great deal for the undergraduates. Secondly, the application and conscious use of learning strategies is a fundamental endeavour to achieve better results in EFL learning as undergraduates became more reflective about their learning processes by applying the learning strategies proposed in the lessons.

To sum up, the literature review and the three research categories that emerged in this research greatly helped us to answer our research concern. The three categories are tightly related and provided valuable insights in relation to the designing of the customized lessons, the cultural content and EFL learning of undergraduates from the ELT programme at Universidad de la Amazonia.

The development of this project let us the opportunity to explore how from our profession as English teachers we can build a better society. We embark on the MD journey with the idea of experiencing a transformation in our teaching practices. Following the MD path invites us to reflect on our teaching context and students' needs. Creating these customized lessons represented the opportunity to be involved in the systematic process of adapting and creating materials to have great contribution in our undergraduates' EFL learning. Furthermore, this project also allowed us to explore the relationship between culture and language and how this is indeed a great deal for language learning. Regarding students' EFL learning, we can assert that taking into account learning styles and providing learning strategies allowed undergraduates to become aware of their learning preferences and how this influences their EFL learning.

Having developed this research study contributed to our ELT community in different aspects. The most important implication this study had on our undergraduates was the fact that these lessons contributed to both, having culture as an essential aspect to express ideas and thoughts and taking part of the different learning activities that helped undergraduates to improve and develop a better EFL learning. This research study sought to contribute to the ELT community from Universidad de la Amazonia in the sense that the finding of the current study may help teachers and students in making wise decisions when planning, designing and implementing the lessons in the EFL classroom.

Limitations

There were several issues that hindered the development of the project. In spite of having developed an intervention schedule, during that time the whole ELT programme was working on the accreditation process, and undergraduates didn't attend classes for two weeks. This delayed the intervention and made it difficult to cope with the deadlines proposed. Another important hindrance was time, while developing the intervention phase, undergraduates sometimes took more time than expected to develop the activities; this situation made us extend the intervention to the next day. In addition, developing the lesson was a time consuming process that involved a constant adjustment process to fit time and undergraduates' expectations.

Further Research

Our research study posted different issues regarding MD, culture and EFL learning. There is an increasing need to continue exploring the importance of developing customized EFL materials with cultural content and its implementation in the language classroom. In this sense, these can be further research questions: How do teacher-designed materials focused on cultural

aspects promote undergraduates' cultural awareness? or, how do teacher and student-created

materials focused on deep cultural issues foster undergraduates' intercultural awareness?

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Appendix A

Likert Scale Survey

Likert Scale		
#	Literature	Our Research New Statements
1	Commercial textbooks fail to engage and motivate learners. Duarte & Escobar (2007)	I found English textbooks interesting and motivating.
2	English textbooks used in Colombia are not intellectually stimulating and limit learners' creativity. Muñoz (2009)	The use of English textbooks encourages me to reflect and create things in English.
3	Lessons from a course book can result in ineffective lesson hours. Ocak et al (2010)	Using textbooks make my learning time more effective.
4	Learners need visual and audio sources to learn new vocabulary. Ocak et al (2010)	Audiovisual materials (pictures, videos, audio recordings, etc.) help me to learn new vocabulary.
5	Learners' native cultures affect how they perceive foreign cultures and languages. Castañeda (2012)	Talking about my own culture motivates me to learn English.
6	Risks and benefits of Implementing L1 culture into L2 language learning materials. Meraji and Zamanian (2014)	Talking about American culture motivates me to learn English.
7	Learners need the training in the use of appropriate strategies to foster reading comprehension.	I use a lot of strategies (taking notes, asking for clarifications, cooperating with peers, translating, etc.) to learn more effectively.
8	Create and select materials to foster learners' motivation. Duarte & Escobar (2007)	Materials used by the teacher motivate me into English classes
9	Selection of appropriate materials (published, adapted, created) for English lessons. Duarte & Escobar (2007)	Materials adapted by the teacher are appropriate for my language learning
10	Customized/adapted language learning materials foster learners' motivation and language learning. Duarte & Escobar (2007), Muñoz (2009), Bautista (2012), Castañeda (2012), Meraji and Zamanian (2014)	Teacher provides appealing materials that fit my interests.

Developed by Henry Álvarez & Hans Oviedo G.

UNIVERSIDAD DE LA AMAZONIA
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM
BASIC ENGLISH I GROUP A – NIGHT

Project: *The Contribution of Customized Lessons with Cultural Content to EFL Learning among Undergraduates from Universidad de la Amazonia*
Master of Arts in English Language Teaching
INSTRUCTION

Read each one of the statements and mark with (***X***) just one option according to your situation.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. English course-books are interesting and motivating.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. English course-books encourage me to reflect and create things in English.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Course-books make my learning time more effective.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Audiovisual materials (pictures, videos, audio recordings, etc.) help me to learn new vocabulary.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Talking about my own culture motivates me to learn English.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Talking about foreign cultures motivates me to learn English.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Using strategies (taking notes, asking for clarifications, cooperating with peers, translating, etc.) help me to learn more effectively.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Materials used by the teacher motivate me into English classes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Materials adapted by the teacher are appropriate for my language learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Teacher provides appealing materials that fit my interests.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Developed by Henry Álvarez & Hans Oviedo G.

Appendix B

Consent Letter

Universidad Surcolombiana
Facultad de Educación
Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés
Carta de consentimiento informado

Título del proyecto de investigación:

The Contribution of Customized Lessons with Cultural Content to EFL Learning among Undergraduates from Universidad de la Amazonia

Nosotros, Hans Humberto Oviedo Gómez y Henry Alberto Álvarez Guayara, estudiantes de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés, nos encontramos realizando una investigación como requisito de grado. El objetivo de la investigación es demostrar la contribución de materiales personalizados en el aprendizaje del inglés a través de contenido cultural.

Para el desarrollo de este estudio requerimos de su participación mediante la respuesta de cuestionarios, encuestas y grabaciones audio-orales.

Su participación es voluntaria y si desea retirarse no tendrá consecuencias negativas de ninguna naturaleza. El informe final de la investigación no hará referencia a los nombres de los estudiantes ni a ninguna característica que los identifique. La información recolectada y los análisis correspondientes solamente se utilizarán para responder a los objetivos del proyecto. Copia del informe final reposará en la Universidad, la cual ha sido informada sobre el desarrollo del proyecto.

Fecha: _____

_____
Nombre del estudiante

_____
Firma

Appendix C

Lesson 1. The origins of two different cultures, Colombia and the USA

UNIT 1
Lesson 1

The origins of two different cultures, Colombia and the USA

Student's name:

Taken from http://www.travelsights.co.uk/uploads/resized/img-3ae79ea9c2f02deac25c2c91b83266a9

General Objective

To apply reading comprehension strategies through contrasting the historical backgrounds from Colombia and America

Specific Objectives

To explore vocabulary related to the history of both countries, USA and Colombia

To discover and use new vocabulary related to the conquest of Colombia and America in context

To identify specific or detailed information about historical facts

To reflect upon colonization in our context

Developed by Hans Oviedo and Henry Álvarez   1

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS	
Research Question	How do the development and implementation of customized lessons with cultural content contribute to EFL learning among undergraduates at Universidad de la Amazonia?
Pedagogical Intervention	The development and implementation of customized lessons with cultural content to EFL learning.
Material Development (M.D) Framework	Nuñez and Tellez (2009) Essential Components in the process of creating and adapting didactic learning and Núñez, Téllez, and Castellanos (2012) A framework for MD
Contextualized Principles for MD	• The learner must perceive materials as meaningful and useful. • Achieve impact thorough novelty, variety, attractive presentation, and appealing content. • Materials enable students to develop self-investment. • Materials should offer plenty of opportunities to communicate in the target language. Based on Tomlinson, 1998
Theory of the nature of the Language	*Culture and ideology perspective:* The visions of theory of the nature of language underlying this unit are the linguistic, functional and self-expression. In addition, the culture of a particular social group is represented by the language this group holds. In the same line of thought, Brown (2001), Tudor (2002), Stevick (1989) and Norton (1997), as cited in Tudor (2001), state that "learning a language implies learning the culture of the language" (p. 1). Language is determined by socio-cultural issues. The inclusion of culture in both, programme design and teaching, determines learner's capability to use language in meaningful and contextualized situations.
Theory of Language Learning	*Analytical Learning:* As stated by Nuñez (2011), Using analytical learning to develop this unit will foster the use of deductive analysis. With this idea in mind, Learners pick up language features and develop language knowledge on their own. In the same line of thought, Tudor (2001) adds that the use of analytical learning promotes the development of the cognitive skills necessary for language learning. In addition, the use of this language learning theory in this unit, as stated by Tudor (2001) will contribute to perceive language as a communicative system.
Teaching Approach	Content-based Instruction.

What do you know about Conquest?

Learning Strategies: grouping, making association and using imagery

1. Match the vocabulary, definition and pictures by using colors.

a. Colonies	Someone who travels from one place to another because of his/her religious belief	
b. Wealth	A powerful country	
c. Pilgrim	A new land under the immediate political control of a country	
d. Conquistador	A Spanish explorer who helped to discover the new continent for economic or political reasons	
e. Settlers	A great quantity or store of money, valuable possessions, property, or other riches	
f. Empire	A person who is born in a particular place or country	
g. Native	A group of people who establish a settlement into a new country or area	

Contrasting the USA and Colombia!

2. Use the words from the previous activity to complete the following passages about the colonization in Colombia and America.

America

People from England began to look for new lands in America. Some people established (a) colonies in these new lands. The English wanted to find gold, trade goods, and lands to increase their (b)

_____.

Each colony had its own unique history on how it was founded. Many of the colonies were founded by (c)_____ who were looking for religious freedom. These people had to move from their countries because of their religious beliefs. These colonies were able to survive many hardships thanks to the help of the natives.

Colombia

The Spanish began to send (d) _____ to establish new settlements and colonies in the new world. Among them, (e) _____ were a group of Spanish explorers who were looking for fortune and opportunities. The Spanish empire sometimes supported these people because they wanted riches and wealth.

The powerful Spanish (f) _____ was constantly attacking the (g) _____ who were the people who lived in those lands.

Learning Strategies: Semantic mapping, using key words and developing cultural understanding

3. Work in groups of 3 students. Relate the passages about Colombia and America Colonization and your previous knowledge to design a "Mind Map". Then, present yours to the whole group.

USA

Colonization

Colombia
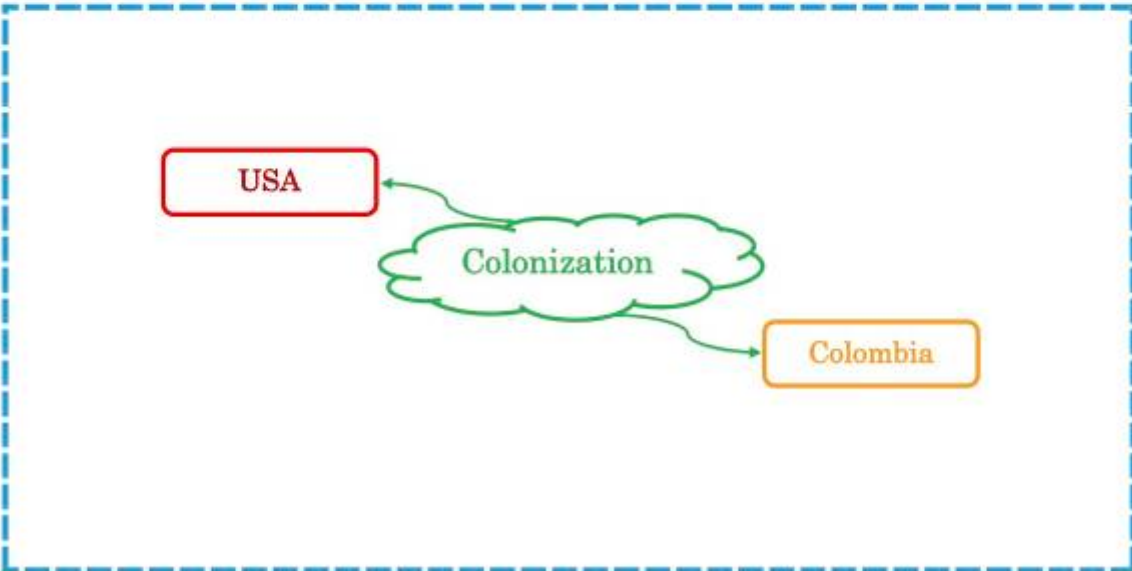
Reflecting on **How to express Facts!**

What is a Historical Fact?

A historical fact is something that was true and it is relevant for a country or a culture.

Example:

Pilgrims were people looking for new land
Conquistadors traveled from Spain

Because all these historical facts happened a long time ago, it is important to use the appropriate words to express that it happened in the past.

For example: traveled expresses that the action happened in the past while travel expresses that the action is currently happening.

Learning Strategies: Overviewing a linking previous knowledge and reasoning inductively

4. Using the explanation above complete the chart writing down historical facts regarding the given elements from each country. Use information from the previous readings and your own knowledge.

Fact about	USA	Colombia
Origin		
Settlers		
Purposes		
Natives		

Let's represent your thoughts!

The Comic Strip

A **comic strip** is a sequence of drawings. The drawings are organized in panels. The panels are related to each other.

Comic strips are designed to show humor or short narrative.
Comics often use text in Balloons to express the narrative, dialogues and ideas of the characters.

Types of text in a Comic Strip

Dialogue balloon	Expresses conversations or dialogues between characters
Thought Balloon	Expresses character ideas and thoughts
Narrative	Expresses someone else is narrating the events on the panel
Onomatopoeia	**BANG** — Imitate sounds of the actions in the panels
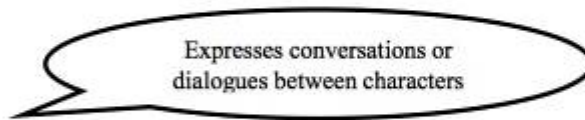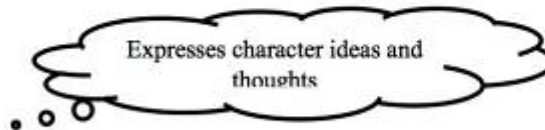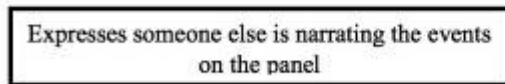
Let's represent your thoughts!

Learning Strategy: Semantic mapping

5. Draw a comic strip that reflects how colonization is still present nowadays in both cultures. Keep in mind the main elements in a Comic Strip.

Developed by Hans Oviedo and Henry Álvarez

Images taken from

➢ https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/6/65/Crown_of_Saint_Edward.svg/2000px-Crown_of_Saint_Edward.svg.png

➢ http://images.clipartpanda.com/investor-clipart-bag-of-money.jpg

➢ http://www.vromansbookstore.com/sites/vromansbookstore.com/files/Treasure-Hunt.jpeg

➢ http://www.clipartsupply.com/media/catalog/product/cache/1/small_image/135x135/9df78eab33525d08d6e5fb8d27136e95/A/R/AR28-CONQUIST-01-RQ.png

➢ http://images.clipartpanda.com/dock-clipart-free-vector-docks-clip-art_110162_Docks_clip_art_medium.png

➢ http://13colonies.mrdonn.org/colonial_southern_states.gif

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➢ http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_oW9mFkVnCM4/TO2yYdo-VmI/AAAAAAAAATQ/dpGHmaTnrhI/s1600/pilgrims%202.gif

➢ https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/d/df/Crossbuster_symbol.svg/973px-Crossbuster_symbol.svg.png

➢ https://images.duckduckgo.com/iu/?u=http%3A%2F%2Ftimhutchinson.files.wordpress.com%2F2009%2F04%2Fviking-settlement-copy2.jpg&f=1

Texts adapted from

➢ http://www.ducksters.com/history/colonial_america/pilgrims_plymouth_colony.php

➢ http://motherearthtravel.com/history/colombia/history-3.htmp

➢ http://www.iexplore.com/travel-guides/central-and-south-america/colombia/history-and-culture

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➢ http://flipbuilder.com

Appendix D

Lesson 2. The electoral system in the USA and Colombia

UNIT 1
Lesson 2

The electoral system in the USA and Colombia

Student's name:
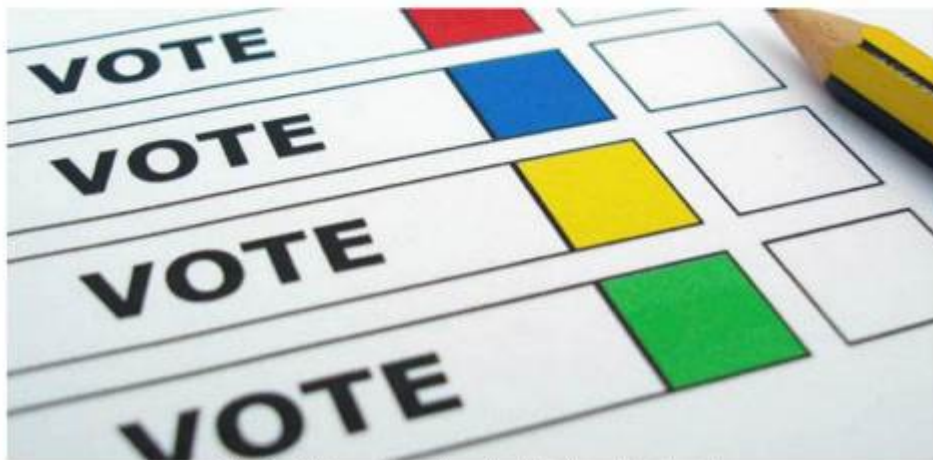
Taken from http://www.google.com.co/imgres?imgurl=https://www.deepdotweb.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/vote1.jpg&imgrefurl=https://www.deepdotweb.com/2014/06/15/can-bitcoins-technology-change-the-way-we-vote/&h=290&w=600&tbnid=XuE7Vog7YwC7jM:&docid=Anwei7t1lnzkMEM&ei=-3RKVovCM8ibmQHF_gKwDQ&tbm=isch&ved=0CB8QMygEMARqFQoTCMarn_yZbkCFchNJgod8b811g

General Objective

To state a personal point of view regarding the electoral systems from the USA and Colombia while watching to a video-clip

Specific Objectives

To explore vocabulary related to the electoral system in the USA and Colombia

To discover and understand the electoral system in the USA and Colombia

To promote and foster a better understanding about both electoral systems

Developed by Hans Oviedo and Henry Álvarez 1

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS	
Research Question	How do the development and implementation of customized lessons with cultural content contribute to EFL learning among undergraduates at Universidad de la Amazonia?
Pedagogical Intervention	The development and implementation of customized lessons with cultural content to EFL learning.
Material Development (M.D) Framework	Nuñez and Tellez (2009) Essential Components in the process of creating and adapting didactic learning and Núñez, Téllez, and Castellanos (2012) A framework for MD
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Theory of the nature of the Language	*Culture and ideology perspective:* The visions of theory of the nature of language underlying this unit are the linguistic, functional and self-expression. In addition, the culture of a particular social group is represented by the language this group holds. In the same line of thought, Brown (2001), Tudor (2002), Stevick (1989) and Norton (1997), as cited in Tudor (2001), state that "learning a language implies learning the culture of the language" (p. 1). Language is determined by socio-cultural issues. The inclusion of culture in both, programme design and teaching, determines learner's capability to use language in meaningful and contextualized situations.
Theory of Language Learning	*Analytical Learning:* As stated by Nuñez (2011), Using analytical learning to develop this unit will foster the use of deductive analysis. With this idea in mind, Learners pick up language features and develop language knowledge on their own. In the same line of thought, Tudor (2001) adds that the use of analytical learning promotes the development of the cognitive skills necessary for language learning. In addition, the use of this language learning theory in this unit, as stated by Tudor (2001) will contribute to perceive language as a communicative system.
Teaching Approach	Content-based Instruction.

What do you know about the Electoral system?

Learning Strategies: Grouping, making association and using imagery

1. Match the vocabulary, definition and pictures by using a different highlighter.

District		Represents the quantity of electors a specific area has
People who are able to vote in a specific district, they are also known as voters	**Candidates**	
	Are autonomous territories that belong to a country	**President-elect**
Electors		Are people who want to become president
	States	Winner of the Election Day

The USA Electoral system!

Learning Strategy: Using an audio to complete a passage

2. **Watch and listen to the audio about "Electing a US President" and fill in the gaps with the correct word from the box.**

| counted | states | president | responsibility |
| together | candidate | vote | system |

PART I

Every four years Americans who are 18 or older have a big (i) responsibility . Our votes decide who becomes the (a) _____ of the United States. Unfortunately, the US election (b) _____ isn't that simple.

It's easy to imagine every US citizens vote being counted (c) _____ on Election Day, but this is not the case. Elections are not decided by the total or popular vote, but individual (d) _____.

Let me explain… it starts with your (e) _____ on Election Day. Your vote for president and the vice-president, you get one choice. Then all the votes in your state are (f) _____. The candidate with the most statewide votes becomes the (g) _____ your state supports for president.

Learning Strategies: Reporting and developing cultural understanding

3. **After reading the passage above, complete the following information. Then answer the three questions according to your beliefs and perceptions. Share your answers.**

STATEMENT - REASON

Voting is a big responsibility because…

✍ _____

_____

US election isn't simple because…

✍ _____

_____

To become the president of the US, the candidate needs to…

✍ _____

_____

How Americans elect their president!

Learning Strategies: Making associations and grouping

4. **Watch and listen to the video. Arrange the statements from "a" to "e" according to the order you hear them.**

a. Then on the following January 28th the president elect is sworn in as the next president of the United States.

b. That candidate receives all the collectors from your state.

c. So, let's recap… your vote helps your state choose a single candidate. | 1

d. And it all starts with your vote, make it count!

e. The candidate, who can win enough state to reach 270 total electors, wins the national election and becomes the president elect.

Colombian Electoral system!

Learning Strategies: Using an audio to complete a passage

5. **Now, listen to the audio "Colombian Electoral system" and fill in the gaps with the correct word from the box.**

faith	population	~~democracy~~	votes
problems	vice-president	political	constitution

COLOMBIAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Voting is fundamental for (i) _democracy_ . However, Colombian electoral system has several

(a) _____ that make it ineffective, even though voting is a big responsibility for

every citizen, more than 50% of the Colombian (b) _____ that are able to vote

don't do it.

According to the Colombian (c) _____, Colombians under 18 years old that

have registered their I.D to vote are able to do it for president and (d) _____.

To win the elections the candidate has to win the majority of the (e) _____ of all the population registered.

The reason why people in Colombia don't vote is that they have lost (f) _____ in the political parties and candidates, as they have been ruling over this country for more than 100 years, and Colombians continue facing the same social, economic and (g) _____ problems.

Learning Strategies: Developing cultural understanding

6. **Listen to the audio "Interviewing a candidate". Then answer these three questions according to your beliefs and perceptions.**

Understanding both Electoral Systems!   **Have you say!**

Useful expressions bank

I think...   From my point of view...   I disagree...
I believe...   Colombians are/aren't aware...   I am in disagreement...

1. Do you think Colombians perceive voting as a serious responsibility? Why?

_____
_____
_____

2. Do you think the electoral system in Colombia is simple or complex? Why?

_____
_____
_____

3. Do you think the candidates in Colombia are the most suitable for that position? Why?

_____
_____
_____

Images taken from

➢ http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/92-195-x/2011001/geo/fed-cef/fed-cef-eng.htm

➢ http://www.clipartpanda.com/categories/balloting-clipart

➢ http://www.clipartsheep.com/variety-of-royalty-free-printable-united-states-and-canada-jpg-maps-clipart-176727.html

➢ http://mayorvanjohnson.com/uploaded_images/vote2-765029.jpg

➢ http://es.aliexpress.com/popular/barack-obama-car.html

Audios and videos taken from

➢ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ok_VQ8I7g6I&spfreload=10

➢ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RD7QM6_VH3Y&spfreload=10

Appendix E

Lesson 3. The relationship between Colombia and the USA. The Free Trade Agreement

UNIT 1
Lesson 3

The relationship between Colombia and the USA
The Free Trade Agreement

Student's name:

U.S. - Colombia
Trade Agreement

Taken from http://www.travelsights.co.uk/uploads/resized/img-3ae79ea9c2f02deac25c2c81b832b6a9

General Objective

To state a personal point of view regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the Free Trade Agreement
(FTA) between the USA and Colombia in a written paragraph

Specific Objectives

To explore vocabulary related to the Free Trade Agreement
between the USA and Colombia

To understand and analyze the FTA advantages and
disadvantages for Colombia and the USA

To recognize the advantages and disadvantages of the FTA in
both countries

Developed by Hans Oviedo and Henry Álvarez   1

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS	
Research Question	How do the development and implementation of customized lessons with cultural content contribute to EFL learning among undergraduates at Universidad de la Amazonia?
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Theory of Language Learning	*Analytical Learning:* As stated by Nuñez (2011), Using analytical learning to develop this unit will foster the use of deductive analysis. With this idea in mind, Learners pick up language features and develop language knowledge on their own. In the same line of thought, Tudor (2001) adds that the use of analytical learning promotes the development of the cognitive skills necessary for language learning. In addition, the use of this language learning theory in this unit, as stated by Tudor (2001) will contribute to perceive language as a communicative system.
Teaching Approach	Content-based Instruction.

What do you know about the Free Trade Agreement?

Learning Strategies: Grouping and making association

1. **Draw a line to match the vocabulary with the corresponding definition.**

formal agreement between two countries	taxes to imported products to protect local products	the action of buying and selling goods

Market		**Wage**
	Custom-duty	
Trade		**Treaty**

the payment workers receive for their work	an exchange mechanism in which sellers and buyers interact

Economic **Agreements** between Colombia and the USA

Learning Strategy: Checking previous knowledge and getting the idea

2. Read the following passage. Then think of 4 advantages and 4 disadvantages of the FTA and write them down using key words.

Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

A good example of the partnership between Colombia and the USA is the Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The purpose of this agreement is to open the markets in both countries to eliminate the barriers of international trade of goods and services. This agreement was signed in October 12th, 2011. As it sounds, this agreement would bring great advantages for both countries. However, some analysts consider or think it will also bring disadvantages.

COLOMBIA

Advantages	Disadvantages
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

The USA

Advantages	Disadvantages
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

FTA Advantages and Disadvantages

Learning Strategies: Analyzing and making associations to identify advantages and disadvantages

3. **Read the following statements and identify if they are advantages or disadvantages for each country. Put a tick "✓". Underline those that are similar to the ones you stated in the previous activity.**

STATEMENTS

STATEMENTS	👍	👎
a. The FTA opens for Colombia the world's largest market in goods and services.	___	___
b. The FTA brings stability to Colombia by raising the number of exports and by providing more jobs.	___	___
c. The FTA makes 99% of Colombian products in the United States duty-free.	___	___
d. Products from the United States are cheaper (they do not need to pay custom duties as well).	___	___
e. U.S.–Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA) is going to support more American jobs, increase U.S. exports, and give advantages to US	___	___
f. U.S products are cheaper than Colombian because most of American exports are duty free.	___	___
g. The FTA would push Colombia to lower minimum wage	___	___
h. The FTA will make traditional customs such as medical knowledge, natural recourses, and agricultural practices illegal.	___	___
i. The FTA will allow multinational corporations to exploit natural resources.	___	___
j. The FTA support only large-scale agro-export industries. Small farmers and producers lose money.	___	___
k. There is not guaranteed that Colombian exports have an advantage because the USA currently has FTA with other countries.	___	___
l. Cultural and ethnical groups lose their status as the FTA requires changes in the constitution to be able to exploit their lands.	___	___
m. The FTA causes unemployment on the USA.	___	___

Reflecting and stating a position about the FTA

Learning Strategies: Following a model to write an opinion paragraph

4. Write a paragraph. Make sure you include a clear topic sentence, at least two supporting ideas and a conclusion.

Do you remember...   ## What is a topic sentence?

A topic sentence is very useful for organizing a paragraph because it states what the entire text is about. A good topic sentence should be a general sentence that presents the topic clearly.

What are the supporting ideas?

Supporting ideas are the back-up sentences for the topic. A good supporting idea should be a specific sentence that helps to support the topic in detail. Its possible with an academic source.

What is a conclusion?

A conclusion is the closing idea that reflects a complete summary of the paragraph.

You may need to use some of these expressions...

To give your opinions	To list your ideas	To conclude your paragraph
• I'm sure that···	• Firstly, Secondly, Thirdly	• In short ...
• I'm convinced that···	• Next	• To sum up, ···
• As I see it, ···	• To begin with	• In conclusion,
• I think that···	• In the first place	• All in all,...
• I consider ···	• Then	• On the whole,...
• Personally, I believe ···	• Lastly	• To summarize,...
• In my opinion,...	• Finally	• In brief,...

To contrast...

However   In contrast   On the other hand   Another difference   But   Yet

Opinion Paragraph

Even though **Colombia and The USA** are both countries, they **are different in many ways**. For example, each country was founded by different people with different reasons. Pilgrims founded the USA looking for religious freedom, while conquistadors were looking just for wealth. Another difference is the way both countries choose their representatives, The USA electoral system is really complex, but Colombian system is simpler and direct. To sum up, Colombia and the USA are different countries regarding colonization, population, electoral systems and culture.

Title here

✎ *Write your paragraph here*

Images taken from

➢ http://news.hwgroup.com.ar/MD_upload/news_hwgroup_com_ar/Archivos/Image/News%20III%2049/2_

Brainstorming_-_Las_8C_del_%C3%A9xito_organizacional%5C'.jpg

➢ http://www.travelsights.co.uk/uploads/resized/img-3ae79ea9c2f02deac25c2c81b832b6a9

➢ https://encrypted-

tbn3.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcTB8Bj6XfrQs5xeuv03_jORipbgb8VGZS6od2ew9EhiEMm6zWZ

HQLqBmOI

Readings adapted from

➢ http://natisita.blogspot.com.co/2012/01/united-states-free-trade-agreement-with.html

➢ http://lrs.ed.uiuc.edu/students/fwalters/compcont.html

Appendix F

Lesson 4. Building a better society from our differences

UNIT 1
Lesson 4

Building a better society from our differences

Student's name:

Taken from http://www.wkysens-partners.com/WordPress3/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/cooperation.jpg

General Objective

To state a position regarding cultural differences that contribute to build a more egalitarian and inclusive society in both countries

Specific Objectives

To use previous reviewed vocabulary related to the cultural differences between the USA and Colombia

To identify similarities and differences regarding the origins, democracy and partnership from Colombia and the USA

To express how cultural differences help to build a better society

Developed by Hans Oviedo and Henry Álvarez

1

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS	
Research Question	How do the development and implementation of customized lessons with cultural content contribute to EFL learning among undergraduates at Universidad de la Amazonia?
Pedagogical Intervention	The development and implementation of customized lessons with cultural content to EFL learning.
Material Development (M.D) Framework	Nuñez and Tellez (2009) Essential Components in the process of creating and adapting didactic learning and Núñez, Téllez, and Castellanos (2012) A framework for MD
Contextualized Principles for MD	• The learner must perceive materials as meaningful and useful. • Achieve impact thorough novelty, variety, attractive presentation, and appealing content. • Materials enable students to develop self-investment. • Materials should offer plenty of opportunities to communicate in the target language. Based on Tomlinson, 1998
Theory of the nature of the Language	*Culture and ideology perspective:* The visions of theory of the nature of language underlying this unit are the linguistic, functional and self-expression. In addition, the culture of a particular social group is represented by the language this group holds. In the same line of thought, Brown (2001), Tudor (2002), Stevick (1989) and Norton (1997), as cited in Tudor (2001), state that "learning a language implies learning the culture of the language" (p. 1). Language is determined by socio-cultural issues. The inclusion of culture in both, programme design and teaching, determines learner's capability to use language in meaningful and contextualized situations.
Theory of Language Learning	*Analytical Learning:* As stated by Nuñez (2011), Using analytical learning to develop this unit will foster the use of deductive analysis. With this idea in mind, Learners pick up language features and develop language knowledge on their own. In the same line of thought, Tudor (2001) adds that the use of analytical learning promotes the development of the cognitive skills necessary for language learning. In addition, the use of this language learning theory in this unit, as stated by Tudor (2001) will contribute to perceive language as a communicative system.
Teaching Approach	Content-based Instruction.

Talking about Colombia and the USA
What do you remember regarding the origins, the electoral system and commercial agreements?

Learning Strategy: Classifying already known information into categories

1. Arrange the words bellow under the categories given.

VOCABULARY				
Candidates	Trade	Pilgrims	District	Natives
Electors	Conquistador	States	Treaty	Settlers
Wage	President-elect	Market	Colonies	Custom-duty

ORIGINS	DEMOCRACY	PARTNERSHIP
Pilgrims		

Discussion

Learning Strategy: Reasoning and analyzing in relation to cultural aspects

2. Work in groups of 3 people. Select one of the ideas below, share your thoughts with your group, discuss their contribution to build a more inclusive, democratic and egalitarian society in both countries.

The Colonization processes experienced by both countries

Natives as important members of the society

Voting as a right of all citizens

Clarity in the electoral systems allow selecting suitable representatives

Commercial partnership

To build a democratic, inclusive and egalitarian society citizens should:

Recognize and respect our culture and the culture of the others

Promote understanding and respect

Cooperate with other cultures to make better societies

Know their differences to accept others

Let's share our thoughts!

Learning Strategy: Reflecting and reasoning on how cultural differences help to build a better society

3. Share how the different aspects discussed in the previous activities (colonization, democracy and partnership) contribute to build a more inclusive, democratic and egalitarian society.

Plenary session...

What is a **Plenary session**?

The plenary session is an assembly where people meet to share ideas about a topic.
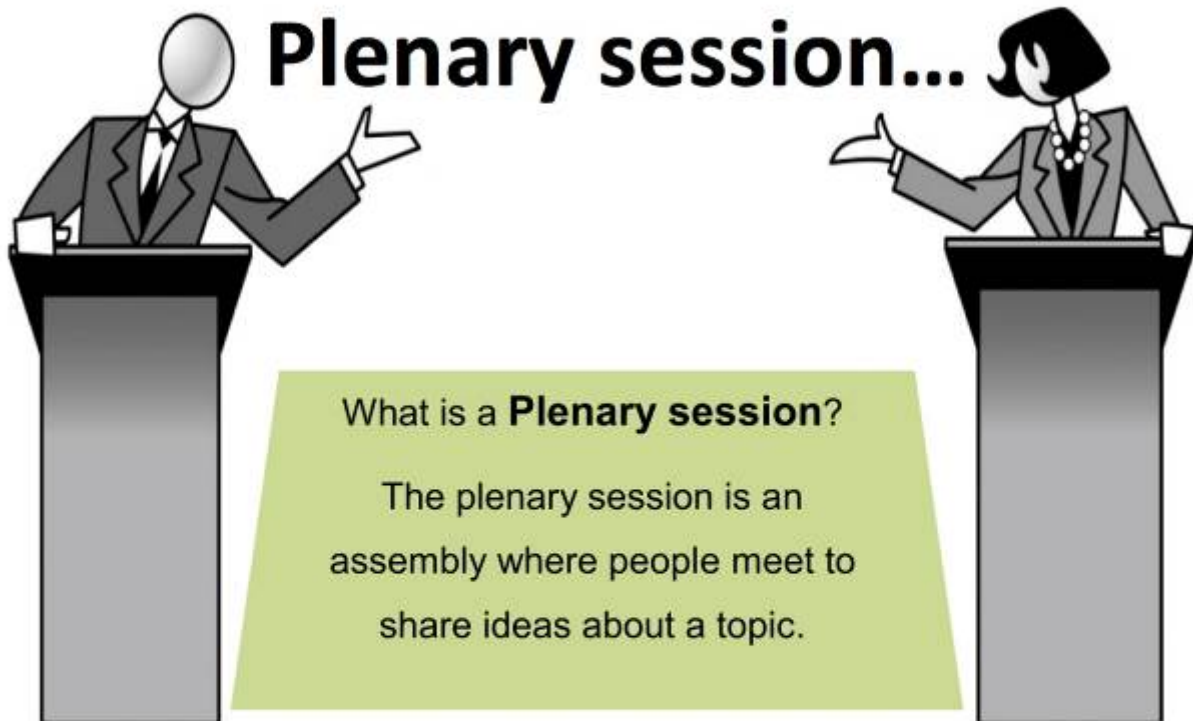
How to support your ideas?

(**Modes of argumentation** based on Núñez & Tellez, 2012)

-Providing facts.

-Identifying cause and effect relationships.

-Providing true examples.

-Making analogies.

Speaking Guide

Write no more than 3 words in each line to support your participation in the plenary.

ORIGINS

➢ _____

➢ _____

➢ _____

➢ _____

➢ _____

DEMOCRACY

➢ _____

➢ _____

➢ _____

➢ _____

➢ _____

PARTNERSHIP

➢ _____

➢ _____

➢ _____

➢ _____

➢ _____

Images taken from

- https://vinotoroteca.wordpress.com/2011/10/07/¿sabias-que-fue-un-toresano-quien-puso-el-nombre-de-la-pinta-a-una-de-las-carabelas-de-cristobal-colon/

- http://assimilationsystems.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/disagree-and-agree-keys-for-online-poll-or-voting_Gy6I1zvd-760x760.jpg

- https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiw8Lfn_6fJAhXMKiYKHa10AFkQjRwIBw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fvinotoroteca.wordpress.com%2F2011%2F10%2F07%2F%25C2%25BFsabias-que-fue-un-toresano-quien-puso-el-nombre-de-la-pinta-a-una-de-las-carabelas-de-cristobal-colon%2F&bvm=bv.108194040,d.eWE&psig=AFQjCNHM6BRvGu3S2v1aUPeDvWIsnwMx8w&ust=1448417995483026

- https://vinotoroteca.wordpress.com/2011/10/07/%C2%BFsabias-que-fue-un-toresano-quien-puso-el-nombre-de-la-pinta-a-una-de-las-carabelas-de-cristobal-colon/

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- http://natisita.blogspot.com.co/2012/01/united-states-free-trade-agreement-with.html

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The Contribution of Customized Lessons with Cultural Content to EFL Learning among Undergraduates from
Universidad de la Amazonia
Teacher Researchers: Henry Alberto Alvarez & Hans Humberto Oviedo
M.A in English Language Teaching
Universidad Surcolombiana

Self-assessment

Dear student, your opinion is highly important for the assessment of this research study. Please, accomplish the following chart according to your experience during the lessons. Mark with a " " in the option that best fits your perceptions about the aspects presented.

Statement	Need improvement	Neutral	Totally agree
1. The content of the lesson motivated me to take part of the class.			
2. The cultural content was meaningful and reflect situations of my context.			
3. The lesson allowed me to understand the cultural differences between two countries.			
4. The cultural content motivated me to learn English.			
5. The lesson provided meaningful and motivating activities.			
6. The activities presented a variety of options that suit my learning styles.			
7. The learning strategies provided allowed me to complete the tasks and activities.			
8. The activities made me feel comfortable and active to perform in class.			
9. The lesson provided opportunities for interaction and language use.			
10. Taking part in this lesson contributed to my English learning.			

Designed by Hans Oviedo G & Henry Álvarez Guayara

Appendix G

Survey on Students' Perceptions – Lessons 1, 2, 3 and 4

The Contribution of Customized Lessons with Cultural Content to EFL Learning among Undergraduates from
Universidad de la Amazonia
Teacher Researchers: Henry Alberto Alvarez & Hans Humberto Oviedo
M.A in English Language Teaching
Universidad Surcolombiana
Survey on Students' Perceptions

The origins of two different cultures, Colombia and the USA - Lesson 1

Dear student, your opinion is important for the improvement of this research study. Please, accomplish the following chart according to your experience in this lesson. Mark with a "✔" in the option that best fits your perceptions about the aspects presented.

Statement	Need improvement	Neutral	Good
1. The lesson is appealing and has a nice layout			
2. The content of the lesson deals with relevant cultural information regarding Colombia and The USA			
3. The images and pictures presented in the lesson helped me to understand and associate the instructions and meanings better.			
4. Cultural content of the lesson allowed me to reflect on cultural issues in relation to both countries			
5. The different activities in the lesson were engaging, enjoyable and challenging			
6. The level of complexity of the learning activities proposed in the lesson were properly sequenced from the simplest and gradually moving to the most complex			
7. The learning strategies provided by the activities allowed me to get a clear idea about the reading passages			
8. The lesson helped me to understand and express historical facts correctly			
9. The lesson allowed me to express my opinion regarding the culture of Colombia and the USA			
10. This lesson contributed to my English learning because it allowed me to use a variety of tools and strategies to reflect about specific cultural issues and topics			

Designed by Hans Oviedo G & Henry Álvarez Guayara

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Survey on Students' Perceptions

The electoral system in the USA and Colombia - Lesson 2

Dear student, your opinion is important for the improvement of this research study. Please, accomplish the following chart according to your experience in this lesson. Mark with a "✔" in the option that best fits your perceptions about the aspects presented.

Statement	Need improvement	Neutral	Good
1. The lesson is appealing and has a nice layout			
2. The content of the lesson deals with relevant cultural information regarding Colombia and The USA			
3. The images and pictures presented in the lesson helped me to understand and associate the instructions and meanings better.			
4. Cultural content of the lesson allowed me to reflect on cultural issues in relation to both countries			
5. The different activities in the lesson were engaging, enjoyable and challenging			
6. The level of complexity of the learning activities proposed in the lesson were properly sequenced from the simplest and gradually moving to the most complex			
7. The learning strategies provided by the activities allowed me to express my opinion from a video and an audio about the electoral systems in Colombia and the USA			
8. The audios in the lesson were clear, understandable and meaningful for the topic.			
9. The lesson helped me to understand the electoral systems from Colombia and the USA better.			
10. The lesson allowed me to express my opinion regarding the culture of Colombia and the USA			
11. This lesson contributed to my English learning because it allowed me to use a variety of tools and strategies to reflect about specific cultural issues and topics			

Designed by Hans Oviedo G & Henry Álvarez Guayara

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The relationship between Colombia and the USA - The Free Trade Agreement - Lesson 3

Dear student, your opinion is important for the improvement of this research study. Please, accomplish the following chart according to your experience in this lesson. Mark with a "✔" in the option that best fits your perceptions about the aspects presented.

Statement	Need improvement	Neutral	Good
1. The lesson is appealing and has a nice layout			
2. The content of the lesson deals with relevant cultural information regarding Colombia and The USA			
3. Cultural content of the lesson allowed me to reflect on cultural issues in relation to both countries			
4. The different activities in the lesson were engaging, enjoyable and challenging			
5. The level of complexity of the learning activities proposed in the lesson were properly sequenced from the simplest and gradually moving to the most complex			
6. The learning strategies provided by the activities allowed me to express my opinion in a written paragraph.			
7. The model provided in the lesson helped me to get a clear idea about the structure of a paragraph.			
8. The information provided allowed me to state an opinion regarding commercial relationships between Colombia and the USA			
9. The lesson allowed me to express my opinion regarding the culture of Colombia and the USA			
10. This lesson contributed to my English learning because it allowed me to use a variety of tools and strategies to reflect about specific cultural issues and topics			

Designed by Hans Oviedo G & Henry Álvarez Guayara

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Building a better society from our differences - Lesson 4

Dear student, your opinion is important for the improvement of this research study. Please, accomplish the
following chart according to your experience in this lesson. Mark with a "✔" in the option that best fits your
perceptions about the aspects presented.

Statement	Need improvement	Neutral	Good
1. The lesson is appealing and has a nice layout.			
2. The content of the lesson deals with relevant cultural information regarding Colombia and The USA.			
3. Cultural content of the lesson allowed me to reflect on cultural issues in relation to both countries.			
4. The different activities in the lesson were engaging, enjoyable and challenging.			
5. The level of complexity of the learning activities proposed in the lesson were properly sequenced from the simplest and gradually moving to the most complex.			
6. The learning strategies provided by the activities allowed me to express my opinion in a plenary session.			
7. The plenary motivated me to participate and share my ideas.			
8. The activities during the lesson helped me to express my ideas to contribute to build a more egalitarian and inclusive society in both countries.			
9. The lesson allowed me to express my opinion regarding the culture of Colombia and the USA.			
10. This lesson contributed to my English learning because it allowed me to use a variety of tools and strategies to reflect about specific cultural issues and topics.			

Designed by Hans Oviedo G & Henry Álvarez Guayara

Appendix H

Teachers' Field Notes Form

The Contribution of Customized Lessons with Cultural Content to EFL Learning among Undergraduates from Universidad de la Amazonia

Teacher Researchers: Henry Alberto Alvarez & Hans Humberto Oviedo

M.A in English Language Teaching

Universidad Surcolombiana

Observer			
Date		Intervention	
		Time	

Principled lesson	Cultural perceptions	Reflecting on learning

Field note