Beyond Cultural Stereotypes, a New Window to Experience Intercultural Communicative

Competent Encounters through a Task-Based Didactic Unit

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Pontificia Universidad Javeriana

BEYOND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

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Abstract

Getting to know a foreign culture for the first time implies awareness not only of the language but also of the cultural background in which it is situated; this comprises beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that belong to the target culture, as well as the avoidance of cultural misunderstandings in social contexts. The Low Advanced English level program in the Bachelor Degree in Modern Languages at Universidad Javeriana encourages the development of tasks that promote Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC); however, it is also necessary to strengthen the use of experiences in which students are encouraged to reflect critically and realize that communication with foreign cultures is not just about learning a language. It also involves comprehending different perspectives and behaviors that are different from ours.

The purpose of this qualitative research was to identify the role that a didactic unit framed within an ICC approach and based on the Task-based Learning and Communicative Approaches could have in the development of some tasks of this level. The didactic unit, called "Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters", was designed based on the methodological route by Jolly and Bolitho (1998) for the design and elaboration of materials as well as on a preliminary needs analysis with former Low Advanced students. Data was collected by means of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with 16 Low Advanced English students in the second semester of 2019. After the application of three of the unit tasks and the subsequent data analysis, it was found that this material was a source of opportunities for cultural learning, cross cultural understanding and cultural awareness, as well as a tool for increasing motivation and learning new vocabulary. The data confirmed that this material contributed to the development of ICC

through the use of meaningful communicative tasks and that the didactic unit had positive

acceptance by the students as it allowed them to reflect about new cultural aspects and

encounters that they could face in the future.

Keywords: Material Design, Didactic Unit, Culture, Intercultural Communicative

Competence, Task-based Approach, Communicative Approach.

Resumen

Conocer una cultura por primera vez implica ser consciente no solo de la lengua sino también del trasfondo cultural en el que ella se sitúa; este trasfondo comprende las creencias, actitudes y comportamientos que pertenecen a la cultura meta al igual que la evasión de malentendidos culturales en contextos sociales. El programa del nivel Avanzado Bajo de la Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas de la Universidad Javeriana promueve el desarrollo de actividades que fomentan la Competencia Comunicativa Intercultural (CCI); sin embargo, también es necesario fortalecer el uso de experiencias en las cuales se incentive a los estudiantes a reflexionar críticamente y a darse cuenta de que la comunicación con culturas extranjeras no sólo se trata de aprender un idioma, sino también de comprender diferentes perspectivas y comportamientos que son diferentes a los nuestros.

El propósito de esta investigación cualitativa fue identificar el rol que podría tener una unidad didáctica estructurada según los enfoques de la Competencia Comunicativa Intercultural, el Aprendizaje Basado en Tareas y el Enfoque Comunicativo en el desarrollo de algunas tareas en el nivel mencionado. La unidad didáctica, llamada "Tejiendo Conocimiento y Encuentros Culturales", fue diseñada con base en la ruta metodológica de Jolly y Bolitho (1998) para el diseño y elaboración de materiales y el análisis preliminar de necesidades con los estudiantes de dicho curso. Los datos fueron recolectados mediante cuestionarios y entrevistas semiestructuradas con 16 estudiantes en el segundo semestre del 2019. Después de la aplicación de tres de las tareas de la unidad y del análisis posterior de datos, se encontró que este material fue una fuente de oportunidades para el aprendizaje cultural, la comprensión transcultural y la

consciencia cultural. También fue una herramienta para incrementar la motivación y el aprendizaje de nuevo vocabulario. Los datos confirmaron que este material contribuyó al desarrollo de la CCI a través del uso de tareas comunicativas significativas y que la unidad didáctica tuvo una aceptación positiva de los estudiantes pues les permitió reflexionar sobre nuevos aspectos culturales y encuentros que podrían enfrentar en el futuro.

Palabras Clave: Diseño de Materiales, Unidad Didáctica, Cultura, Competencia Comunicativa Intercultural, Enfoque de Aprendizaje Basado en Tareas, Enfoque Comunicativo

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Résumé

Connaître une culture pour la première fois implique la conscience de la langue ainsi que du contexte culturel dans lequel elle se situe; ceci comprend les croyances, les attitudes et les comportements qui appartiennent à la culture visée, aussi que l'évasion de malentendus culturels dans des contextes sociaux. Le programme du niveau Avancé Bas de la Licence en Langues Modernes de l'Université Javeriana encourage le développement d'activités qui promeuvent la CCI (Compétence Communicative Interculturelle); cependant, il est aussi nécessaire de renforcer des expériences dans lesquelles les étudiants sont encouragés à réfléchir avec critique et à se rendre compte que la communication avec des cultures étrangères implique non seulement l'apprentissage d'une langue, mais aussi la compréhension de perspectives différentes et de comportements qui sont différents aux nôtres.

Le but de cette recherche qualitative a été celui d'identifier le rôle qu'une unité didactique structurée selon les approches de la Compétence Communicative Interculturelle, l'Apprentissage Basé sur des Tâches et l'Approche Communicative pourrait avoir sur le développement de quelques tâches dans ce niveau. L'unité didactique, qui s'appelle « En Tissant de la Connaissance et des Rencontres Culturelles », a été dessinée selon la route méthodologique de Jolly et Bolitho (1998) pour le dessin et l'élaboration du matériel ainsi que l'analyse préliminaire de besoins des étudiants du cours mentionné. Les données ont été collectées à travers des questionnaires et des entretiens semistructurés qui ont été mis en œuvre avec 16 étudiants pendant le deuxième semestre de l'année 2019. Après avoir mis en œuvre trois des tâches de l'unité et après l'analyse des données, il a été possible de trouver que le matériel a été une source

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d'opportunités pour l'apprentissage culturelle, la compréhension transculturelle et la conscience culturelle. En plus, le matériel a été un outil pour augmenter la motivation et l'apprentissage de nouveau vocabulaire. Les données ont confirmé que ce matériel a contribué au développement de la CCI à travers l'usage de tâches communicatives significatives et que l'unité didactique a été acceptée par les étudiants, car elle leur a permis de réfléchir à de nouveaux aspects culturels et des rencontres qu'ils pourraient affronter à l'avenir.

Mots clés : Dessin de Matériaux, Unité Didactique, Culture, Compétence Communicative Interculturelle, Approche Basée sur des Tâches, Approche Communicative

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CHAPTER 1

1.1. Introduction

English, from an intercultural communication perspective, is in constant change, and new terms

and expressions are introduced into it every year. A study by Mair (2016) states that, due to

globalization and social media, different English varieties are taking place around the world, and

people have been incorporating new vocabulary into their linguistic repertoire. In addition, a

high number of companies and educational institutions are currently (and increasingly)

demanding that their employees or students speak English. Such a fact, plus other ones, makes

this language the one of global communication.

Nowadays, the English language is gaining importance around the world. As Crystal

(2003) points out, there are several international institutions related to science, sports and

politics, which have no restriction in using English as a lingua franca (an equal language for

communication). In addition, as Dumitrescu (2018) shows, the English language has been

demanded in specific places for economic, technical and political discourses as well as

interpretations to ensure efficient communication among foreigners. Furthermore, cultural

manners and behaviors come together with learning a language, and due to globalization, it is

necessary to learn how to communicate with people from other cultures using appropriate codes

that go beyond language.

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The exercise of sensitizing English learners in intercultural communication is thus very important. As Friedman (2014) states, by means of intercultural communication, we can acquire knowledge about behaviors that foreigners may show, which we, as students, may perceive as aggressive or inappropriate. Intercultural communication can contribute to acquiring or improving abilities to use language, both in writing and speaking; however, and more importantly, it can help to overcome misperceptions that students may have about others and open the doors to new cultures.

Intercultural communication and cultural self-awareness are, therefore, topics that could contribute to improve the understanding of the English language and cultural behaviors. As a matter of fact, being able to understand other cultures can help students develop or strengthen their cultural self-awareness. This concept can be understood as the "(…) individual's metacognitive understanding of culture's influence on the self" (Wan & Lu, 2018, p. 823). Therefore, it is important to address this topic because it can help learners in multicultural contexts so that they share and interact with a variety of people from different cultures and backgrounds without creating conflicts (Lestinen, Petrucijová, & Spinthourakis, 2004). As posited by Wan and Lu (2018), cultural self-awareness contributes to an individual's own sensitivity towards the understanding of some aspects of a foreign culture since cultural experiences shape features of their self. Consequently, we can say that cultural self-awareness encourages us to reflect deeply upon the different ways in which culture shapes our life and how other people's values and customs can be internalized in new learning experiences.

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Keeping in mind what Wan and Lu (2018) affirm, a material has been designed for the Low Advanced English level in the Bachelor Degree in Modern Languages at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (PUJ). The purpose of this resource is to include, in a thoughtful and critical way, topics and experiences in which students become more acquainted with cultural aspects from different places and communities around the world.

According to the Faculty of Language and Communication curriculum and syllabus (2019), in the English program of this level, which is the last of seven in the B.A. (Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages Teaching), three main objectives are proposed in order to (re)shape and understand students' intercultural conscience and at the same time acquire a high level of proficiency in their communicative skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The first objective focuses on developing an intercultural conscience that allows students to reflect, from a critical perspective, upon their own cultural richness and that of others; the second one is related to contributing to the students' communicative skills so that they can perform appropriately in other contexts; and the third one is about giving students lexical and grammar-based tools to be used in different academic or social purposes. In order to achieve these objectives, which are included in the course program, students are provided with activities and get familiar with topics that contribute to the development of their Intercultural Communicative Competence (from now on: ICC) and their communicative skills through active work and interaction.

One important aspect of the Low Advanced English level is that it uses material that has been designed based on authentic sources like YouTube videos, magazines, journal articles and podcasts. This material includes pedagogical activities designed by the teachers to contribute to

the teaching and learning processes. However, although there are materials in this English level which have helped students to experience and understand both culture and interculturality, it is important to continue fostering such areas so that students can perform appropriately in communicative contexts with foreign cultures.

This research has a qualitative focus, and its main objective is to design a didactic unit based on activities that promote the development and reinforcement of cultural awareness, which includes ICC as well as topics about behaviors and cultural beliefs. The didactic unit proposed here is intended to be used by students in the Low Advanced English level in the Bachelor of Modern Languages at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

The methodological path proposed by Jolly and Bolitho (1998) was considered to design the program of the thematic and linguistic components of the didactic unit. This methodological route was also taken into account to analyze students' needs and establish the objectives of the research; it also guided the physical and pedagogical realization of the material as well as its evaluation. Moreover, in order to provide a reliable pedagogical foundation as well as opportunities for understanding and intercultural communication, the Task-based Learning Approach was chosen.

It is important to mention that, for the development of this didactic unit, a preliminary exploration was conducted about the problems that students of the Low Advanced English level usually experience regarding communicative aspects. This was performed by means of a questionnaire that worked as a needs analysis (See Annex 1). Based on this exploration,

different activities were identified to promote the development of communicative and intercultural skills in the level.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Intercultural communication is an essential factor in our profession as future modern languages teachers. This profession involves constantly developing interactive and communicative activities with the students inside the classrooms, thus encouraging the development of cultural understanding by means of an appropriate use of non-verbal gestures and expressions of politeness, for example.

This project emerged from personal observations as a student of the B.A. When I took the Low Advanced level, I had the opportunity to study a high number of cultural topics, as stated in the Advanced English course program (Annex 2), which were the core contents of this subject. Additionally, we used a variety of pedagogical materials to understand topics related to culture such as videos, texts, pictures and more. Nevertheless, through personal examination of the cultural practices that were fostered in the Low Advanced English level, I realized that we should be faced with more situations in which we could reflect about our own culture and that of others and be more prepared for real-life encounters with people from other cultures. These situations might include dealing with attitudes, beliefs and behaviors in meetings, parties and other contexts.

Based on my personal experience and on some conversations with my partners in the English classroom, I noticed that, at some point in our lives, we had cultural misunderstandings when we travelled to a foreign country. Therefore, acquiring enough knowledge about how we

can communicate with foreigners and express our opinions was an issue of relevant nature. As human beings, we may have prejudices about some cultures without having enough experience, and sometimes, we reject the culture and make derisive comments about it. Hence, as students and future teachers of Modern Languages, we need to see these aspects from a critical point of view in which we do not judge anyone but look for opportunities to respect and interact with people from different backgrounds.

In order to validate my perspective regarding the need for more topics that can boost the Low Advanced English students' Intercultural Communicative Competence, I considered that it was necessary to apply a needs analysis in the form of a questionnaire to thirteen students that had already finished this level (Annex 1). I asked eight questions related to the skills covered this English course and to intercultural communication.

The data collected showed important information. Although the cultural topics included in the Low Advanced course were very meaningful, students felt that they were not interculturally competent enough. They also answered that it was important for them to see aspects related to cultural differences and how to perform real conversations with foreigners. Moreover, they affirmed that some other aspects of intercultural competences should also be fostered in this level, such as politics, food habits, economics, and globalization, among others. Topics related to intercultural behaviors were also mentioned, such as respect, values, beliefs, cooperation and identity of our own culture.

In terms of communicative skills, the Low Advanced English students affirmed that listening and speaking were difficult for them to perform within the English class. Due to the fact

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that these abilities are very frequently used in communicative interactions, and that students claimed to have problems with them in the English class, I decided to work on them too in the didactic unit. Although improving listening and speaking abilities was not the main goal of the material, it was indeed considered that sharing our ideas and interests inside a group is a pivotal part in conversation, as is being able to express ourselves appropriately, without causing uncomfortable situations. Consequently, I considered that it was necessary to create a number of activities that could reinforce effective and appropriate intercultural communicative topics. These could include, for example, greetings, manners and politeness, which can help us as future modern languages teachers in cases of working abroad or having multicultural students in our classes.

In general, the topics that are addressed in the Low Advanced English level are relevant to understand the meaning of culture and what it entails; besides, the materials that are used – videos, articles, pictures, Power Point presentations and games– are very helpful. Nevertheless, the Needs Analysis showed that topics like Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), along with the characteristics and abilities that this involves, should be more deeply explored in class. ICC was considered by the questionnaire's respondents as an opportunity to understand not only the language but also certain foreign communities; this became an important aspect to consider in order to enrich the Low Advanced English course, by specifically focusing on cultural aspects such as behaviors, traditions and world perspectives.

It is important to remark that this proposal is not a criticism whatsoever of the practices and ways to address the topics of the Low Advanced English level because the study is not

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intended to change any methodology, topic or pedagogical material. On the contrary, it is an opportunity to enrich the Low Advanced English course and contribute to it by specifically introducing a number of important aspects in the didactic materials that are used in the subject. A didactic unit based on ICC could strengthen the student's cultural knowledge and improve their communicative skills by focusing on tasks that can help them when experiencing real life situations with different cultures.

1.3. Research Question

In light of the above, the design of the didactic unit is based on the following question:

What is the role that a didactic unit framed within an Intercultural Communicative Approach and based on the Task-based Learning Approach can have in the development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Low Advanced English level of the B.A. in Modern Languages Teaching at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana?

1.4. Objectives

In order to answer this question, the following objectives were proposed to guide the research:

1.4.1. General Objective

To identify the role that a didactic unit framed within an Intercultural Communicative Approach and based on the Task-based Learning Approach can have in the Low Advanced Level course at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

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1.4.2. Specific Objectives

The following objectives are based on the methodological path proposed by Jolly and Bolitho, in Tomlinson (1998) for the development of materials to teach a foreign language:

1.4.2.1. To identify the needs that Low Advanced students have in the development of intercultural communicative abilities for them to be able to understand and interact with other cultures.

1.4.2.2. To explore the role of materials used in class in the development of Intercultural Communicative Competences in Low Advanced English students.

1.4.2.3. To identify what kind of materials foster the development of Intercultural Communicative Competences in Low Advanced English Classes at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

1.4.2.4. To develop a pedagogical material that includes tasks that foster Intercultural Communicative Competences.

1.4.2.5. To design and produce the material to be used by teachers and students in the Low Advanced English class.

1.4.2.6. To apply the material with the students.

1.4.2.7. To evaluate the material based on agreed objectives.

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1.5. Rationale of the Study

ICC helps to understand foreign cultures and communicate with the people who live in, and English classes are an appropriate means to achieve such understanding. This research study aims to contribute to the development of ICC in students of the Low Advanced English level of the B.A. in Modern Languages teaching at PUJ through a didactic material. Even though most topics addressed in the Low Advanced English level are related to culture, it is also necessary to further prepare students for cultural encounters in the future by teaching them to comprehend others and avoid misunderstandings that may occur in real life. At this point, creating a didactic unit that stimulates the development of ICC in students acquires a high value due to the fact that it could be a contribution to the English program. This unit focuses on the Low Advanced English level because it is at that point in the B.A. that a high number of cultural topics are more explicitly studied by learners, and thus activities that address cultural contexts can be developed in order to have a close experience with foreign cultures inside the classroom.

The benefits of this proposal are several. To begin with, ICC is defined as "the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriately effective communication behaviors that recognize the interactants' multiple identities in a specific environment" (Chen & Starosta as cited in Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). As previously mentioned, it is more meaningful if students can understand and reflect not only about the language, but also about different behaviors to interact successfully either when they teach a class or when they travel around the world. For this reason, ICC needs to be developed in the English class both as an academic topic

and as a way to prepare students for the future encounter they may have with people from different cultures.

With the creation of this didactic material, this research project aims to promote the development of ICC by focusing especially on the abilities of listening and speaking. This is to be done through pedagogical tasks (based on Nunan, 1989) that include activities related to understanding cultures and expressing points of view about them. It is essential to mention that the implementation of this didactic unit could also help teachers to use different kinds of tasks in their classes to promote students' learning and active participation because they are designed to motivate and catch the students' attention. The idea is to make learners feel motivated and skillful enough to interact with others and create their own critical perspective about culture.

1.6. Previous Research

Four national and four international articles illustrate previous research connected to this study. The first international study is titled "Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence through Short Stories: A Qualitative Inquiry," by Rezaei and Naghibian (2018). This qualitative study was conducted with 13 undergraduate students from the Department of Science and Engineering at Sharif University of Technology in Tehran. Such students voluntarily decided to register in the short story course. Even though the students' first language was Persian, their English level was averagely enough to understand read and produce written texts. During the initial stages, it was found that intercultural understanding was seen as the least important aspect inside a classroom, and that the students had bad conceptions not only about the American culture but also about their own.

The researchers found a challenge. Due to the fact that Iranian students had their own beliefs and traditions, Iranian teachers looked for appropriate materials and topics that did not affect students' identities. The researchers introduced fourteen sessions to their syllabus in which topics related to culture were worked on by the students using short American stories that gave Iranian students the opportunity to contrast their own culture and the American.

This research has several important aspects to highlight. Firstly, the authors explained how they developed each activity with the students. Secondly, they explained how literature texts like novels and poems can have a positive impact on students' understanding of culture by bringing new attitudes and beliefs into class, which students did not know before. Last but not least, the article explains clearly the materials and tools used by teachers and students during the implementation of the activities inside the classroom.

A vital contribution from Rezaei and Naghibian's study to this research can be found in the procedure and results of the research. The authors showed that using short literature texts do help to improve the intercultural communicative competence inside the classroom; students affirmed that these short stories helped them to think more critically about their own culture and the foreign culture, realizing that both cultures have problems of discrimination and none is superior or inferior to the other. The study also contributed to this research by demonstrating how reading texts can have a positive impact on students' way to perceive life. Given these facts, it can be said that the study was essential to introduce reading tasks inside the didactic unit. Such tasks contain curious aspects that are not easily seen in a culture and that are difficult to

understand. Hence, students could be more interested in learning more about it and avoiding prejudices.

The second international study is called "Developing intercultural communicative competence for the year abroad experience" by López-Rocha and Vailes (2017). This study was developed as a pilot program with 240 students of French and Spanish who enrolled in a 4-week ICC program in Bristol University in the United Kingdom. This program was developed to prepare students that would be spending one year abroad and did not know how to deal with cultural encounters and uncomfortable situations.

This research has important points to acknowledge. First, the authors explained how the program was designed and what activities were developed by the students. Second, the concepts of culture and ICC were introduced to the students in order to provide them with knowledge that arose awareness of different behaviors and attitudes that exist in a variety of cultures around the world. The purpose was to help learners to differentiate such cultures. The second part of the trial focused on cultural shocks and experiences lived by the students before. In the last part, the class focused on discussing topics such as conceptions of the self and how misconceptions could change behaviors and attitudes in communities.

The results of López-Rocha and Vailes's study have an important value to this research. They showed that students increased their intercultural awareness and improved their confidence to deal with intercultural shock and adaptation matters. In addition to this, participants affirmed that these sessions should be mandatory for people that would be traveling abroad, because doing so could reduce levels of anxiety and fear. These outcomes were vital to choose what kind of

topics could be introduced in the didactic unit and how it could calm students' concern about facing cultural shocks. Besides, this study was vital to my research as it showed how important it is for English teachers to provide spaces in which students can discuss issues related to cultures that are familiar to them or that have never seen before. This kind of spaces facilitates learners' understanding of curious and deep aspects that foreign cultures have.

The third study, developed in Rosario, Argentina, is called "Intercultural communicative competence in teaching sociocultural contents of Spanish as a foreign language. Analysis of history teachers' lesson plans" by Pozzo (2014). In such a study, 26 teachers were evaluated in terms of how they applied ICC in their Argentinian history classes. One of the main objectives of this research was to know how professors taught aspects about their native culture and what kind of methodologies they used in order to do so.

This research has a number of important aspects to pinpoint. First of all, to know about how the activities would be organized, the researchers took three lesson plans randomly to analyze the topics and steps followed by the teachers to develop in the classroom. Secondly, the students who participated in the Argentinian history course were foreigners of different countries around the world who had been a few months in Argentina, so teachers had a lot of topics and material to prepare classes. Finally, the sessions were developed in Spanish language to help students improve in this language.

In this study, there were a number of limitations that raised awareness on the possible need of new resources. Firstly, there was no evidence that ICC was implemented in the lesson plans; in contrast, the topics were superficial and did not include aspects related to attitudes,

beliefs or managing cultural shock. Secondly, the lesson plans always followed a repetitive routine that did not catch students' attention and decreased their motivation and interest to participate. Finally, the activities were only centered on discussing Argentinian aspects instead of recognizing multicultural identities inside the classroom.

These negative results were taken into account for the design of the didactic unit as they showed that interaction is one of the main promoters of the development of ICC. It would be difficult not to introduce this aspect in the class. Finally, this research highlighted that cultural mediation is another aspect that should not be forgotten. Students could face cultural conflicts in the future; therefore, they must have the right tools to deal with such conflicts based on tools that they could receive in classroom exercises.

The fourth international study that supports my research is called "Promoting Indonesian university students' critical intercultural awareness in tertiary EAL classrooms: The use of digital photograph-mediated intercultural tasks" by Kusumaningputri and Widodo (2018). In this study, which was developed in the University of Java in Indonesia, 66 students participated in a Critical Reading course. The course lasted seven weeks, and researchers introduced digital photograph tasks into their ICC classes.

This research has important aspects to highlight. First of all, when introducing images to the class, teachers told students to follow a four-task process during the activity: (O-D-C-E) Observing, Describing, Comparing/Contrasting and Evaluating. The activity was very attractive because students could be more creative and assertive when developing these tasks, and they never got bored. Second, teachers demanded that students bring pictures about a specific topic to

investigate and explain in class; by doing so, students could develop a sense of curiosity and autonomy that allowed them to learn more about the foreign culture. Finally, students could have a close experience of ICC because the class allowed them to analyze and express their opinions about the pictures.

Four aspects from such a study were helpful to support my research. Firstly, the results showed that using photographs allowed students to experience a close cultural encounter in a more realistic context. Secondly, since this activity invited students to critically analyze and reflect upon aspects related to their own culture and others', it was a good idea to show students that culture is about diversity and not rejection. Thirdly, the activities showed that students could gain cultural knowledge by doing these pedagogical exercises instead of having routine-based lessons. Last but not least, all of these outcomes were helpful for this study, thanks to which it was possible to use several photographs that gave students a clear idea of how foreign cultures use different ways to express themselves. It helped learners to avoid comparing cultures and to think that these are as important and valuable as ours. Furthermore, the mentioned research was essential for the present study because it clarified how several images can be included in order to provide explanations and to make the comprehension of traditions and behaviors easier for students.

In terms of the national studies considered for this research, the first one is called "Implementing Critical Thinking Tasks to Foster English Learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence in a Genre-based Learning Environment" by Gómez-Rodriguez (2018). This article focuses on explaining genre-based learning as a communicative approach, which helps learners

to develop ICC inside the English classroom by performing critical thinking tasks. Such tasks

helped learners to understand different cultures by analyzing and contrasting attitudinal and

behavioral aspects.

There are two aspects to be pointed out in this article. The first one is that this study

intends to perform activities that can be developed inside the classroom by fostering critical

thinking skills. Such skills help learners to improve their ICC without necessarily meeting a

foreign person or travelling around the world. The second one is that the research shares two

texts that could be used by students through the application of three main critical thinking skills:

discovering, interpreting and relating. Such skills could help students in their cultural awareness

as they could start comprehending and identifying different assumptions that they had.

Gómez-Rodriguez' article is relevant to this study in multiple ways. To begin with, it

proves that critical thinking is a topic that can expand students' intercultural knowledge, which

can help them to assume different perspectives to understand a new culture that was possibly

misunderstood before. In addition to this, genre-based learning can be a useful approach because

it allows students to understand texts that give them a brief experience of living and behaving in

a different culture. The contribution of this study is the demonstration that documents and texts

can be used to help students discover a number of deep aspects about other cultures that are

difficult to perceive and are not showed in movies or videos. This research demonstrated how

important it is to be critical at the moment of understanding a culture. Therefore, a number of

tasks were included in the proposed didactic unit in order to demand students to comprehend and

analyze carefully not only traditional topics such as food, clothing and traditions, but also challenging aspects like attitudes, power relationships and emotions without judging or rejecting.

The second national study to be mentioned is "Implementing an Instructional Design on Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) with Foreign Language Students Aimed at Joining the Corporate World" by Serna (2019). This research consisted of implementing instructional designs to integrate and promote ICC inside communicative language classrooms. Six professors from EAN University in Bogotá participated in this research through the implementation of the instructional design inside their courses (French, Italian, English, German and Portuguese) to evidence that ICC could be implemented in learning thanks to instructional design activities.

There are two aspects that evidence the development of ICC in that research. The first one is that the instructional design was carefully elaborated to integrate topics and activities that could reinforce students' participation and interaction while also teaching them language and communication skills. The second one is that the researchers worked on six main components to promote a different environment in which students could express themselves: language integration, oral production, fieldwork activities, and a final product project. With these components, students could learn language and cultural insights through the final projects that the teacher proposed to them as research topics.

The results of such a study support my research. It gave me tools and options to create tasks in which students could integrate and use their communicative abilities in the class, due to the fact that activities focused on discussions and debates promote their language production. In
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addition to this, the final projects in which students had to research allowed them to reinforce their critical thinking skills, which in turn gave them the opportunity to increase their ICC. They had to analyze and comprehend a number of situations related to cultures and social contexts. Finally, this research contributed to my research as it demonstrates that in order to promote ICC, it is not necessary to talk to a foreigner, but to experience situations inside the classroom, which lead students to reflect about their own culture and others'.

The third national research that was relevant to this study is called "Guía didáctica para el docente de ELE como mediador intercultural. Experiencias para compartir" by Camacho and Torres (2014). This project was developed inside a Spanish as a foreign language classroom at Universidad Javeriana. Its origin lies on the fact that teachers experienced how students made bad comments about Colombian people and even foreign cultures while also creating stereotypes about them. In order to confront the situation, the researchers had the idea of creating a didactic unit that promoted intercultural mediation and that could guide teachers to act as intercultural mediators in order to be able to live different possible cultural encounters.

There are three main aspects that are helpful in this research. First of all, during the piloting of the didactic unit, the researchers explained to the students the difference among concepts related to critical incidents experienced before such as prejudices, stereotypes, cultural shock and misunderstandings. Second, every activity was developed based on the dimensions of ICC: attitudes, knowledge, skills, proficiency and awareness. All of these helped teachers foster ICC while doing the activities. Last but not least, all the activities were frequently centered on

the use of the language and were based on the Communicative Approach, which promotes students' interaction.

The results of such research were relevant to this study. They showed that during the development of the didactic unit with the students, teachers perceived the critical reflections of the students when interacting with other cultures inside the classroom. In addition to this, the didactic unit helped teachers to understand how they can act in cultural encounters as intercultural mediators who promote understanding and reflection on foreign attitudes that are difficult to accept. This research supported my project, as it provided the steps to create a didactic unit that promotes ICC. Its design and cultural contents should be carefully thought and chosen in order to foster language learning while providing learners with new cultural and lexical knowledge. Above all, this research was useful to know how the proposed material should be adapted to the students' needs and how the tasks could be designed for the students' cultural learning and language use.

It is important to consider an action research study by Rico (2012), titled "Language Teaching Materials as Mediators for ICC Development: a Challenge for Materials Developers". Promoted by Universidad Javeriana, this study was conducted with students of Spanish as a second language in a university in the United Kingdom. In this research, the teacher observed students' perspectives about the influences of a didactic material (a book with activities related to culture and language) and how this material was adapted. A high number of intercultural aspects were evaluated by the researcher; for instance, whether the material (coursebook) used by

students helped them to develop ICC and what methodology could be used at the moment of using this kind of materials, among others.

There are a number of aspects to discuss regarding this research. For example, the fact that the coursebook was centered on explaining historical events and festivities that students should learn about at the beginning in order to understand a culture. The results showed that activities were not developed to know how to negotiate intercultural encounters, but how to express opinions in social meetings. Another important aspect is that not every activity to understand cultural behaviors should be developed based on a book; teachers should include cultural contexts in their activities such as understanding values and traditions that could be contrasted with students' native culture.

This study, which was based on material design, was essential to sequence and design the didactic unit proposal of this research. Firstly, it shows how important it is to create materials that include not only grammatical aspects but also topics related to foreign cultures, such as symbols, behaviors and important information on how society works, as well as how to face a misunderstanding. Secondly, this article was also useful to analyze and reflect about topics of inclusion, identity and adaptation. Lastly, this research proved that intercultural communication materials involve more than teaching students how to talk to a person; it also implies negotiation of cultural meanings, behaviors and messages that can be understood only within a particular context. For my research, I took into account that materials must not prepare students to absorb the target culture; they should instead teach students to sympathize with new cultures and understand them.

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All of the studies presented above were essential for the development of the didactic unit in terms of pedagogical aspects. One of them was looking for methodologies and topics that can get students to better comprehend concepts related to ICC. Furthermore, these studies were essential since they explained how necessary it is for them to be prepared as future teachers to foster ICC among students and how to promote cooperation and education among foreign students.

In Chapter 1, the introduction of this research was presented. Also, what would be discussed and analyzed in this study was described. The statement of the problem and the research question were presented as well. After them, the general and specific objectives were listed. The rationale of this study was explained as well as previous research that served as the basis for the development of this research. The following chapter presents the theoretical framework in which the researcher developed the main constructs that supported this study.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that supported my study. The key constructs of are defined and characterized. Firstly, the definition of a didactic material and a didactic unit as well as their characteristics will be mentioned. Secondly, ICC, as well as some concepts related to it, will be addressed. Thirdly, the Task-based Learning Approach and Communicative Approach will be described. Finally, concepts related to critical thinking, which was essential to develop the activities of the didactic unit, will be defined.

2.1. Didactic Materials in the Learning of Foreign Languages

To begin with, it is necessary to understand what materials are. Tomlinson (2003) states that all objects and tools that can facilitate the language learning of an individual are materials. In the same line of thought, McGrath (2002) defines a material as something that "(…) could include 'realia' (real objects such as a pencil, a chair or a bag) and representations (such as a drawing or a photograph of a person, a house or a scene)" (p. 7). Brown (1995) complements this definition by affirming that a material is "(…) any systematic description of the techniques and exercises to be used in the teaching classroom" (p. 139). Examples that could illustrate this author's view of materials are activities and different procedures without using objects, technology or any other prop. For this research, the most convenient definition is the one proposed by McGrath, because it considers any object or representation that could be useful to teach something. Given the fact that this research focuses on teaching authentic language in real cultural encounters, it is helpful

to use pictures and videos in which students can make their own perceptions and express themselves by using this kind of material.

Due to the fact that this didactic unit focuses on ICC, it is also vital to refer back to Rico (2012), who states that experiential learning can be considered a material and a road to teach about culture. It means that students must be close to real life situations in which they experience astonishment, fear, insecurity and rejection because that is what having an intercultural encounter is about. In this sense, it is also necessary to reinforce critical thinking so that students reflect on their own culture and that of others around them. They can do so by using different activities and materials like texts, songs, role-plays and films that help them to work their language skills.

In addition to this, ICC materials should include activities that help students to use their linguistic skills to communicate and interact with others in order to get a close exposure to the target culture. When using materials to learn a new culture, it is important that students have some knowledge about how the language is used inside that culture and the cultural meanings of some expressions. Corbett's words (2003) clearly summarize this idea: "Learning materials have to incorporate aspects of the home culture and the home language" (p. 4). Both language and culture are connected, and if teachers do not reinforce linguistic skills in students, it may be difficult for them to interact with the target culture.

2.1.1. Characteristics of Materials

Material development is not an easy task for researchers or teachers. Therefore, a prudent time must be taken to design it. Tomlinson (2011) establishes a few principles that materials should have. First of all, materials should have an effect on students: catch their interest so that they

learn by using such materials. Furthermore, materials are those that make students feel confident with learning and asking questions to the teacher. Second, instead of implementing pressure over students and causing low self-esteem, the learning material must provide confidence and encourage the learner to investigate and explore about the topic. Third, when designing materials, teachers need to understand that they should motivate students, having potential to increase their self-confidence and the ease to interact with others while expressing their ideas in a foreign language instead of feeling anxiety and fear. Oxford (2005) raises awareness on this issue through the following statement: "Self-esteem is vulnerable when the learner perceives himself or herself as very competent in the native language and totally inadequate or limited in the target one" (p. 62). Finally, during the creative moment, teachers should be aware of the importance of creating materials that do not affect students' interests and motivation.

Materials also introduce learners to topics about the foreign culture. Students are provided with genuine language so that they can learn real expressions and accents that some textbooks do not teach. However, it is not enough for students to learn topics about the foreign culture by using materials that contain typical activities to reinforce grammar, long reading texts, or listening exercises with songs. Given the fact that language and culture are closely related to each other, it is necessary to comprehend cultural contexts and social behaviors beyond a foreign language because misconceptions could be the result of a social encounter in which the learner lacks cultural background. It is then essential that teachers "make the foreign language 'real' by introducing its culture, using authentic materials, inviting native speakers, and arranging native-speaking pen friends for their students" (Dornyei, 1996 as cited in Schumann, 1997, p. 187). It

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would be more interesting for the students to hold meaningful interactions with others or use

materials that can relate them to genuine communication and cultural aspects that could be useful

for them in the future.

2.1.2. Authentic Versus Adapted Material

Keeping in mind the importance of supporting tools in the processes of teaching and learning, it

is also important to make a comparison between two types of materials: authentic and created.

According to Richards (2001), authentic materials are those that were not created for academic

purposes; these include videos, pictures and other resources that can be helpful to boost students'

experiences and learning processes. This type of material can be very useful because it usually

has unique features and introduces cultural references that may be difficult to find in textbooks

or other resources that are specifically designed to teach. Some dialectal variations, or jargon, for

instance, can be learned easily through authentic materials like readings, dialogues and audios

that may help learners understand the meaning of some words or expressions.

In this respect, the same author states that authentic materials "provide authentic cultural

information about the target culture. They can be selected to illustrate many aspects in the target

culture, including culturally-based practices, beliefs and both linguistic and non-linguistic

behavior in curriculum development in language teaching" (p. 253). Based on these ideas,

authentic resources used in a class can help teachers to foster cultural aspects that other resources

cannot (or not solidly). In addition, they can contribute to prepare students for real-life

experiences in which they could face intercultural patterns in society. Authentic material can

increase students' motivation because it can relate to their interests and catch their attention

meaningfully, instead of putting pressure on the people who are making an effort to learn.

On the other hand, created or adapted materials are developed specifically for educational

purposes. They are very useful for teachers because their content has been adjusted to the

requirements of the class or the level, with grammar structures and vocabulary that the learner

can identify and understand more easily. Richards (2006) asserts that "(…) they are generally

built around a graded syllabus and (…) can also be motivating for learners" (p. 21). Hence,

adapted materials are intended to help students understand a topic in depth and make it easier for

the teacher to address and explain a topic in a, methodologically speaking, organized and

structured way.

Both authentic and adapted types of materials were considered in my study to create a

didactic unit that could suit to students' needs and interests. Created materials in the form of

worksheets are planned taking into account abilities and skills that students need or want to

practice. This material can enrich students' participation and motivation in their classes based on

their preferences at the same time that they learn about a new culture of their interest. On the

other hand, authentic materials such as videos or texts can facilitate students' understanding of

cultural behaviors, manners and beliefs thus contributing to enrich their ICC.

2.2 Didactic Unit

A didactic unit, as defined by García (2009), is a group of activities that are carefully selected by

the teacher to be part of the learning process of the student, and whose contents are sequenced

step by step to make sure that the student can learn from all the activities until he or she can

achieve the goals proposed. This idea is complemented by Area (1993), who affirms that a didactic unit is centered on a specific topic, and it could vary on its length, relevance and organization.

As posited by De Pablo (as cited in Area, 1993), there are two aspects that must be considered by an author at the moment of creating a didactic unit. The first one is that it must contain objectives that will be achieved at the end of the unit, and all kinds of activities must be described in terms of methodology and assessment (not to mention the fact that coherence and organization inside the unit must be followed because, in some cases, teachers evaluate something that students did not study in the didactic material). The second one is that it is important to know students' diversity (their abilities, likes and dislikes, capacities, etc.) so that the didactic unit can appropriately and accurately focus on such range of individual skills, interests and academic level.

2.2.1 Functions of a Didactic Unit

The didactic unit, being well structured and designed, must accomplish a number of functions that are essential for the learning process of a student. Such a unit is the main tool used as a guide for teachers and students to explain and learn a subject. García (2014) proposes several functions of a didactic unit. According to this author, it must:

> Be a motivating resource that awakes the students' interest and participation in class, guide and facilitate the student learning process for a better comprehension of the knowledge, integrate all the resources and tools that students can use to support their learning process, introduce activities that serve as a dialogue between students and

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teachers, be the appropriate scaffolding thanks to which students can reach the

development of all their competences inside the didactic unit and offer suggestions

and helpful techniques about how to address the text and other studying materials.

(p. 2)

All of these functions were taken into account to design my didactic unit. Both resources

and linguistic tools were integrated in order to create the activities that students would develop to

have a better comprehension of the foreign language and foreign cultures.

2.2.2. Structure of a Didactic Unit

Designing a didactic unit involves several components that the teacher should take into account.

According to Marote (2013), when writing a didactic unit, the teacher should keep in mind what

and how the students will learn during the development of the course, which involves time

managing for every class, as well as the different learning needs and difficulties that pupils may

have. Díez (2007) complements this statement by affirming that all knowledge that students learn

must be programmed and sequenced in order to give them a step series that helps them to

improve their learning process by marking goals and objectives to be achieved.

According to the previous author, there are seven fundamental aspects that a didactic unit

should contain: the first one is unit description, which refers to the title, the activities and session

numbers that will be put into practice. The second one is objectives, which is about determining

what the students will learn exactly during the development of the didactic unit. In this aspect, it

is necessary to look for the most suitable topics and lessons to achieve the objectives. The third

one is learning contents and is based on all the contents that will be included during the

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development of the didactic unit. The fourth one is the activity sequence. In this respect, it is

necessary to adjust all the activities to meet students' needs and organize the activities in a way

that it is possible to follow a dynamic and creative learning process. The fifth fundamental

element is called materials and is related to the specific resources and tools that students use

during the activities. The sixth one is timing and space, based on aspects related to the

organization of time and the space in which the didactic unit will be developed. The seventh and

last step is evaluation; it refers to the activities that will lead to the assessment and evaluation

which include methodologies and instruments used inside the didactic unit as well as exercises

that let students evaluate their own learning process.

The activities proposed in such didactic unit must be sequenced to achieve a final task. In

other words, this final task is expected to be reached by following a series of tasks that can help

students to improve their linguistic and communicative skills inside the English classroom. All of

these tasks are framed within the concept of ICC to raise a sense of awareness and

comprehension of different cultural attitudes and behaviors in students, as well as the reasons to

understand and respect other cultures.

2.3.Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Becoming competent in ICC goes beyond the mere fact of knowing about the target culture. It

actually involves understanding that culture and searching for ways in which others can be

perceived without creating stereotypes or misconceptions. In other words, it is "the ability to

negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriately effective communication behaviors that

recognize the interactants' multiple identities in a specific environment" (Chen & Starosta, 1996,

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as cited in Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). Such definition is relevant for my research because a very important aspect that must be addressed in the learning process is the avoidance of judgments towards other cultures. As my study intends to motivate students to understand cultural meanings, such as gestures and manners, it is relevant to bear in mind the fact that the wrong representations that people create of others (for example, the image we may have of Muslim people) can be changed through a negotiation of meanings, which in turn can be reflected in more respectful behaviors.

In addition to this, Byram (1997) affirms that being competent in ICC is having the ability to negotiate meanings through the use of the foreign language. In order to do so, it is vital to have dialogues in which people are conscious of the respect and tolerance that must be considered at the moment of interacting with other cultures. In this sense, it is not mandatory for the individual to acquire the language of a native speaker; what truly matters is that people use appropriate ways to express themselves in an interaction without affecting the others' cultural values and identities and act as an intercultural mediator among situations of people from different cultures. In other words, an intercultural learner is the one who is sensitive enough to try to use words that have a valuable meaning in a communicative context, instead of just imitating a native accent, as stated by Boye (2016):

> Language learners are conceived as intercultural speakers, who do not aim to match the sociolinguistic competence (or pronunciation) of mother tongue users and, instead, are able to explore the intricacies of how using a foreign language affects their communication and their sense of self. (p.31)

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In this aspect, individuals use their linguistic abilities to communicate with others, keeping in mind how their own discourse could be used to negotiate new meanings and ideas while also being open-minded and eager to learn new linguistic connotations that have a different significance in another culture. Thus, language is not seen as an exclusively academic subject, but as an intercultural one to communicate and learn new perspectives. Byram (1997), who developed the model of ICC, proposed five dimensions to understand how a person can be competent in ICC and how this competence could be evaluated in an educational learning situation. The following is a model that contains the five skills that the author designed to teach and assess ICC:

	Skills Interpret and relate (*savoir comprendre*)	
Knowledge Of self and other; of interaction; individual and societal (*savoirs*)	**Education** Political education Critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*)	**Attitudes** Relativising self Valuing others (*savoir être*)
	Skills Discover and/or interact (*savoir apprendre/faire*)	

Figure 1. Factors of Intercultural Communication (Byram, 1997, p. 34).

In this chart, *savoirs* relate to the knowledge of social groups and how the interaction process among them takes place. It also includes how social institutions or communities are perceived by the student. *Savoir s'engager* refers to evaluating, in a critical way, different perspectives and practices from the student's own culture and from the foreign one. *Savoir*

apprendre/faire is associated with acquiring new information of cultural practices between different cultures and with having the ability to apply the information learned during communicative interactions. *Savoir comprendre* is related to interpreting and learning from a new experience and having the ability to explain such experience. *Savoir être* is about keeping in mind the role of equality and taking advantage of opportunities to enable a relation with the foreign culture without comparing or underestimating it.

The same author affirms that these five dimensions help teachers and students to know how their process in the development of ICC is, how they can identify differences and similarities between their own culture and the other, and how to use them appropriately to negotiate meanings. Such dimensions are also useful to raise interest in acquiring knowledge and skills that can be helpful to avoid stereotypes and misunderstandings in a community.

Learning to communicate and to interact with foreign cultures comes with a process of understanding traditions and values that are not similar to those of the native culture. For that reason, foreign language classrooms should offer intercultural education as a subject that helps not only to understand a language, but also the culture(s) that it represents. As Corbett (2010) affirms, intercultural education is a space in which learners can analyze and discuss cultural beliefs and aspects that are different from theirs. In addition to this, one of the main objectives of this kind of education is that the learners can have a clear understanding of cultural values while identifying a way to show respect to new beliefs in order to integrate people from different cultures inside a classroom.

Last but not least, ICC, according to Byram (1997), focuses not only on negotiating communication but also on respecting and appreciating other people's values and beliefs. Even though we may not agree with them, it is vital to overcome the different stereotypes that interfere with having intercultural communication with other people. The relationship between ICC and Intercultural Competence is that both imply the complexity of dealing with different real situations. Both are in constant transformation and invite us to negotiate meaning. As Dervin (2016) stated, we are called to recognize the diversity in people no matter their skin color, religion or language. People can differ in different aspects, but they can also learn from each other in intercultural encounters.

Based on my academic experience as a modern languages student, I noticed that one of the main issues that foreign language learners usually face in their process is understanding cultural behaviors. People may feel that a certain behavior or belief is normal in their culture, but it does not mean that it is usual in another. Learning a language entails the implication of "understanding the impact of situational, social and historical contexts on people's cultural behavior" (Barrett, 2013, p. 13). In this sense, it becomes extremely important to learn about the national history of the foreign country, its myths and beliefs, how foreigners perceive our culture, and how we perceive theirs, among others. As said at the beginning, to understand a new culture is not easy for so many people. However, it is quite necessary, as it reduces cultural barriers and stereotypes. Consequently, being interculturally sensitive allows people to respect and value those cultural aspects that could be seen different from us. It promotes the comprehension and tolerance that are missed in intercultural encounters.

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2.3.1. Intercultural Sensitivity

Based on my extensive reading and investigation, there are high levels of rejection, racism and

other issues in different social contexts around the world. For that reason, it is important that

teachers introduce topics that involve aspects of intercultural sensitivity in their classroom in

order to change misconceptions and stereotypes. Bennett and Bennett (2004) created the

Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) to understand how the process of

cultural differences occurs. Figure 2 below shows the stages that a human being undergoes when

dealing with a new culture and their progress from denial to cultural acceptance.

Denial	Defense	Minimization	Acceptance	Adaptation	Integration
"I don't think there's any other way."	"My Way is the best."	"What we have in common is much more important."	"People's values and behaviors are different."	"I'm adding new behaviors to be more effective."	"I can move in between cultures."

Ethnocentric Stages   Ethnorelative Stages
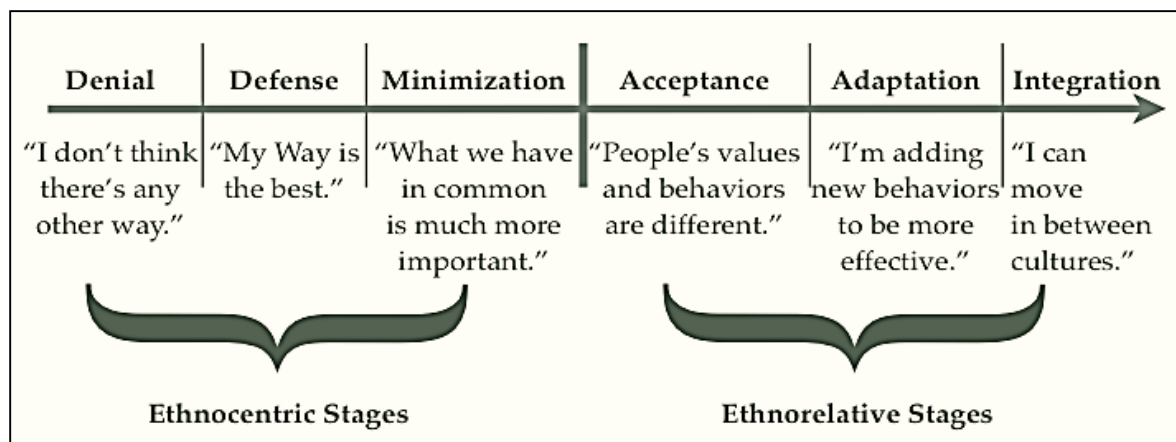
Figure 2. Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Guenthner, 2017).

There are two phases involved in the process. The first one is the ethnocentric one, in

which learners assume that their culture is the only one that exists in the world. The second one

is the ethnorelative one, which focuses on the existence of one's own culture and others' as part

of the world.

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In the first stage of the DMIS, *denial*, the individual does not accept the existence of other cultures, lives in constant isolation and only interacts with people of their own community. The second stage is *defense* context, in which people judge other cultures and see theirs as the only superior among the others. In addition to this, the individual tends to discriminate and denigrate others. Then comes *minimization*, when humans see other cultures in a positive way; this means that even though they are from different cultures, they accept each other as equals and reduce their prejudices and judgments of the new culture. Bennett (2015) states that "in minimization, there is a growing openness to people from other cultures because difference is no longer seen as threatening" (p. 522). In this sense, the individual is an open-minded person that can comprehend the existence of different beliefs and values and accepts them.

The next phases mentioned are part of ethnorelativism, which suggests a positive conception about other cultures. The first stage here is called *acceptance.* In it, the learner recognizes the existence of different cultures, respects their values and beliefs and shows interest in learning more about the other culture as well as in living real life experiences. Next is *adaptation,* in which a person makes an effort to understand the culture's behaviors and live according to their point of view. Here, learners would not be abandoning their culture; instead, they would be acquiring more cultural background that lets them to acquire skills and attitudes to coexist. The last stage is *integration,* in which a person has already understood all the stages that a culture entails and is able to coexist and work with a different cultural community while avoiding misunderstandings.

Since ICC is based on the effective communication and understanding of other cultures, this model of intercultural sensitivity is relevant to my research as It strongly suggests being sensitive in order to comprehend other cultures by showing empathy towards other people's situations and acknowledging them as humans no matter their religion, worldview and values. Also, the DMIS was relevant for my study as it worked as a guide to create experiential activities that helped students to reflect on the possible rejections or judgments that they could have towards other cultures without knowing them or without understanding their values and beliefs. Moreover, this model can be used for teachers to be intercultural mediators with foreign students. Teachers could identify the different stages of rejection and acceptance that could be found in a classroom, known as intercultural conflicts, in order to create activities and methodologies that help students to reflect about their own attitudes and perceptions about foreign cultures. By doing so, teachers can promote the avoidance of stereotypes and misconceptions about foreign cultures.

2.3.2. Intercultural Education

Intercultural education is a subject that has gained visibility in the last years as a way of teaching people to deal with cultural encounters with an appropriate attitude, and it has been promoted in educational institutions with activities that enrich students' interests. Byram (2008) affirms that activities developed within intercultural education should be emotional, as they make the students reflect on their behavior. As a matter of fact, the task should have experiential activities that help groups to create strategies and plans, which they could use when dealing with difficult situations with a foreign community. In sum, the author insists on the fact that the more complex

the intercultural activity is, the more appropriate it will be for the students to reflect on it and be

critical.

In order to shed light upon this matter, Byram (1997) establishes five attitudes in the

process of language learning that teachers and students should promote in the process of learning

a new language and interacting with foreigners. The first one is how willing a person is "(…) to

seek out or take opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality" (p.50). The

second one refers to the "interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar

and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices" (p.50).

The third one has to do with the "willingness to question the values and presuppositions in

cultural practices and products in one's own environment" (p.50). The fourth principle can be

described as the "readiness to experience the different stages of adaptation and interaction with

another culture during a period of residence" (p.50). The last principle refers to how ready

learners are "to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non-verbal communication

of interaction" (p.50). This principle implies critical thinking skills and learners' ability to

reconsider the labels of "right" and "wrong". By embracing these attitudes inside the classroom,

it is easy for teachers and students to participate actively with an environment of interculturality.

Students will be more interested in the activities that reflect a realistic environment of cultural

practices, and the teacher will be able to see different opinions and perspectives that students

have about cultural matters and the way in which they are developed in the classroom. All of

these attitudes were taken into account for the design of my didactic material, as they established

the importance for students of being open minded when having intercultural encounters and comprehend new cultural attitudes and values never seen before.

2.3.3. Intercultural Conflicts

Some concepts that are essential to keep in mind when designing the activities of the didactic unit will be mentioned here. Due to the fact that some people may have misconceptions about the following terms, it is important to differentiate and explain each one of them.

The first one is stereotypes, which are frequently the cause of intercultural conflicts. As Apedaile and Schill (2008) state, it is a method that humans use to reduce the information that is received. In this sense, it is what humans use to classify different groups of people in social contexts. In addition to this, the term also refers to "the cognitive derivations, or generalizations that people construct in order to help interpret their environments" (Vejar, 2019, p.8). In this sense, such generalizations in society make people live uncomfortable situations with foreigners when they try to classify/label people that had a different background.

The second term related to intercultural conflicts is prejudice. This occurs when people do not have enough knowledge about a person or situation and create bad opinions about them. This term is also about "a subjective attitude, opinion, or feeling formed without prior knowledge, thought, or objective reason" (Apedaile & Schill, 2008, p. 47). Therefore, prejudices may be caused by innocent lack of knowledge or background about a culture or by a narrow and subjective standpoint about it.

The third concept is cultural shock. As Nguyễn (2017) states, it is when people try to match the old patterns of their culture with the new beliefs of the foreign culture, resulting in an uncomfortable situation, thus making the understanding of different beliefs difficult. People that experience cultural shock may experience high levels of stress, confusion and fear due to the lack of comprehension of the new patterns of the target culture.

The last term related to intercultural conflicts is cultural conflicts or misunderstandings. When interacting with a new culture, there can be a high number of misunderstandings among cultures. They can be a result of not having prior information, or simply because the individual does not deeply know beliefs and values about the other culture yet. As Griswold (2013) states, these conflicts go beyond the mere aspect of economic and political opinions; such conflicts involve subjects like religious beliefs, identity and values among families and friends. In most cases, conflicts are caused when people from different cultures do not know each other's cultural backgrounds and act as if they were interacting with someone of the same community.

2.4.Culture

Nowadays, the concept of culture has many variations because it involves different social, historical and emotional aspects. Nevertheless, based on the researched literature, I consider that one of the most accurate definitions is the one that Hinkel (1999) proposes. The author affirms that culture is: "(…) the way of life of people, the social constructs that evolve within a group, the ways of thinking, feeling, believing and behaving that are imparted to members of a group in the socialization process" (p. 3). In this sense, the author explains that every community has a different procedure of perceiving and feeling some aspects, and that is what makes their identity

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and culture different from others. In addition to this, Kramsch (1998) explains the concept of culture by comparing it with nature. Bearing this in mind, the author explains that nature is born and grows defining some future aspects that will stay forever in the process of growing up. The same happens with culture: it is something that grows with a human from the very beginning and defines their behavior, identity and way to appreciate life.

However, not all cultural aspects, like beliefs and assumptions, are easy to define when people first meet a foreigner. There is a whole process to discover such aspects. Hall (1976 A) explains that if someone wants to understand the behavior of another person, he/she must know the entire background of such a person. The author called this the "hidden culture" (p.57), which involves the whole process of knowing the other person. In addition to this, the author points out that there are internal and external factors that are related to a culture, which is known as the Iceberg Theory. In the following illustration, the image of an iceberg is shown to explain the two aspects mentioned by Hall (1976 B) when interacting with a new culture.

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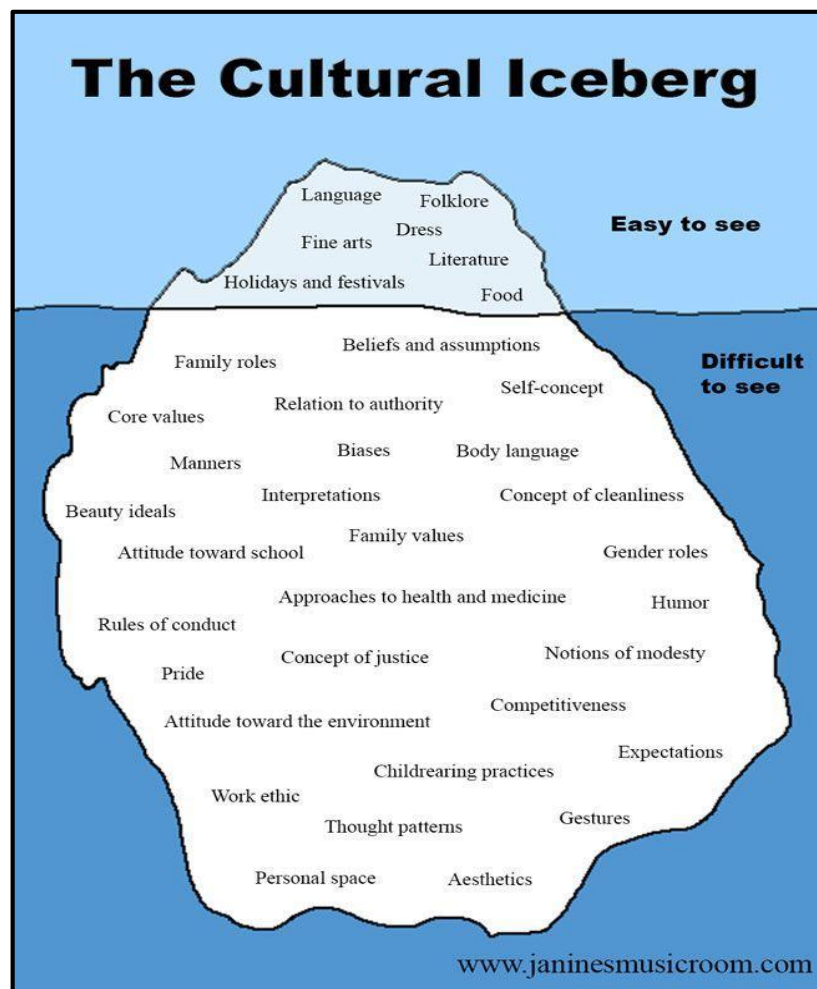
Figure 3. The Cultural Iceberg (Hall, 1976-B). Retrieved from:

https://www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/Domain/125/iceberg_model_3.pdf

In the illustration, two types of culture can be seen: the surface culture and the deep culture. In first place, the surface culture, which is located at the top, is related to aspects that can be easily perceived, such as customs, food, rituals, dress code, language, celebrations and music. They are located in the range of visible aspects. In second place, the different aspects that are difficult to perceive when meeting a new person can be located in the deep culture section. These

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aspects include attitudes, beliefs, values, notions of self, perceptions, learning styles rules and assumptions.

Getting to know a new culture involves all (or most of) those hidden aspects mentioned before. Moreover, the term "culture" involves several characteristics that make difficult to explain an exact definition of it. Being part of a culture demands that the individual be in contact with the society that is around to communicate with others and form social relationships that increase their cultural identity. Reeves-Ellington and Yammarino (2010) highlight it when they state that "culture is a form of knowledge gained through engagement with people; it is characterized by openness and is ever-evolving" (p. 17). In this sense, it is through having contact with others that culture can be formed. People act as a community that forms strong boundaries and establishes their principal meanings as well as symbols to exchange them. Therefore, people can communicate effectively.

Understanding a culture entails a deep process of understanding different symbols, patterns and attitudes that characterize a foreign community. For that reason, knowing such foreign language is highly convenient. Language is part of what characterize a culture. Laker (2001) raises awareness on this issue: "as well as being things and items, symbols can be found in actions and language. Hand gestures, facial expressions, body language and head movements sometimes have specific meanings in different cultural contexts" (p. 2). Consequently, every culture has specific characteristics that differentiate them from other cultures and that can be initially challenging to understand. This topic is reflected in my research as authors affirmed that understanding a new culture means coexisting with others and using those symbols and patterns

learned to establish different ways of communication to build their own identity. Therefore, the creation of my didactic unit is convenient so that students explore several aspects (gestures, non-verbal language and symbols) that a culture involves and that teach them to appreciate and value the cultural diversity of foreign communities.

2.5. Task-Based Learning Approach

Richards and Rodgers (2014) provide meaningful insights about this approach. According to them, Task-based Learning is based on the process of doing several activities that invite the learners to use their language to communicate with others and experience real life situations that help them to practice their communicative skills. The task is primarily centered on activities that have to do with the exchanges of language meaning rather than language rules like grammar or patterns to follow. The activities that are created within these tasks can focus on solving language understanding problems and also on promoting a pedagogical way to facilitate second language learning.

A task, according to Willis (1996), is a goal-oriented communicative activity with a specific outcome where the emphasis is on exchanging meanings, not on producing specific language forms (p. 36). Even though some theorists emphasize the mere process of writing activities inside a task, the exchanging of messages that contain meaning will be a correct way to teach the students not only grammar, but also communicative subjects that reinforce their communication in real life.

In addition to this, Nunan (1989) defines a task as a short part of the class in which learners manipulate, interact and produce in the target language. It increases students' attention

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in meaning rather than form. This theory was taken into account for my research because it promotes the idea that students can see the use of learning a language by interacting with each other and participating in tasks that give them the opportunity to put their linguistic skills (listening and speaking) into practice. This approach increases students' motivation to participate and increase the confidence to interact with others.

Nunan (1989) states that a task has six components that make the lesson easily understandable by the learner: goals, input, activities, teacher's role, learners' role and settings. The following picture clearly presents the components of a task according to Nunan (1989):
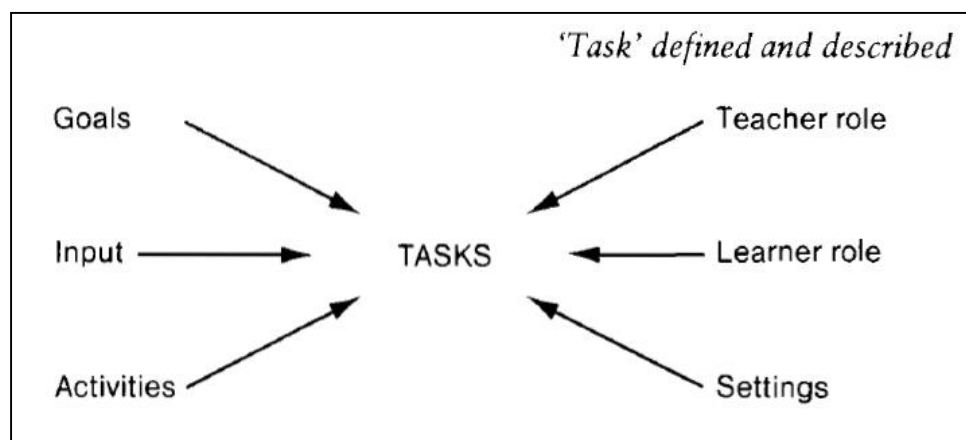
Figure 4. A framework for analyzing communicative tasks (Nunan, 1989).

The first component is *goals*, which is based on the aims that the teacher wants the student to achieve at the end of the class. Clark (1987) further complements this by adding that it is the organization of goals for school language learners. According to this author, there are four categories to consider in this respect: the first one is communicative goals, which are related to

exchanging information, attitudes and feelings. The second one is sociocultural goals, which

enable the student to have knowledge about historical roots of the target language speech

community and cultural traditions while understanding their community. The next component is

how-to-learn goals. In this category, students learn how to work individually and in groups as

well as how to plan their work in order to achieve their own objectives. The fourth and last one is

language and cultural awareness. In it, the student must understand the functions of language in

daily life, how it changes and the relationship between language and culture.

The second component is *input*, which is related to the first piece of knowledge that is

given to the student to use it during the development of the activities and to contextualize what

the class will be about. The third one is called *activities*, which focuses on what the learners will

do with the input acquired at the beginning of the class. The fourth one is *teacher's role*. The

teacher is seen as a facilitator that guides the student to understand the topic and solve questions.

The fifth one is *learners' role*, which refers to the fact that students should not act as receptors

but as individuals that can make good contributions to the class and exchange knowledge (among

themselves and with the teacher). The last component is *setting*, which is based on how the class

will be organized, and whether the task must necessarily be developed inside or outside the

classroom, in groups or in pairs.

All of these components were essential to my research since they were used and

implemented in the design of the didactic unit to establish the goals that students would achieve

at the end and how the tasks inside the unit would be sequenced. Last but not least, the activities

and settings of the unit were developed in a way that could meet students' needs and context

based on the preliminary questionnaire applied in the second semester of 2018 (Annex 1) and the needs analysis that was carried out at the beginning of the course. All of these components were understood in this research as main steps that served as a guide to integrate all the tasks. To do so, it was necessary to identify what kind of input students would receive in every session, how the class would be set and what the role of students and teachers in the development of the tasks would be.

Robinson (2007) contributes to this field of study by stating that in order to create and sequence tasks, it is necessary to observe all students' behaviors because these will lead to identifying their needs and classifying the tasks. Once they are observed, it will be easier to describe their performance in class. Then, theoretical information is the second part of creating a task to finally classify their ability requirements. Robinson's (2007) contribution to this research is based on the following statement:

> Clearly, L2 learners differ in their strengths and abilities drawn on during information processing (such as working memory capacity), and these differences, as well as differences in the information processing, demands of pedagogic tasks themselves, will affect the outcomes of pedagogic task performance for individuals. (p.10)

It is vital that, at the moment of designing a task, teachers take into account students' abilities to create activities that could be developed according to their strengths and without pressure. In this sense, this research focused on identifying students' abilities and strengths to develop tasks that could meet their needs and that could motivate them to participate and to

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continue learning inside the class. This should provide students with the tools to learn and

process new information and internalize it so that they could produce output that showed that

they understood the topic.

However, when designing tasks, teachers should decide what direction they want the task

to follow. Littlewood (2004) states that tasks have two dimensions: The first one is related to

focus on form and meaning while the second one is based on focus on meaning. A chart that

describes the continuum process from form to meaning can be found below. In this chart, the

author explains the first dimension of the process.

Focus on forms		←	→	Focus on meaning
Non-communicative learning	Pre-communicative language practice	Communicative language practice	Structured communication	Authentic communication
Focusing on the structures of language, how they are formed and what they mean, e.g. substitution exercises, 'discovery' and awareness-raising activities	Practising language with some attention to meaning but not communicating new messages to others, e.g. 'question-and-answer' practice	Practising pre-taught language in a context where it communicates new information, e.g. information-gap activities or 'personalized' questions	Using language to communicate in situations which elicit pre-learnt language, but with some unpredictability, e.g. structured role-play and simple problem-solving	Using language to communicate in situations where the meanings are unpredictable, e.g. creative role-play, more complex problem-solving and discussion

Figure 5. The continuum from focus on forms to focus on meaning (Littlewood, 2004).

On the left side of the illustration, *non-communicative learning* can be found, which is

centered on the structure of language that includes substitution exercises, drills, and discovery

exercises. In the next column, *pre-communicative language practice* can be seen*, which is based

on form because of its question-and-practice answer. However, it also focuses on meaning, as the student has to pay attention to the meaning of the words that the teacher is using to develop the activity. In the third column, *communicative language practice* refers to the development of activities that focus on language and demand that the students make use of the language learned by asking for information to others while completing questionnaires or diagrams. The fourth point of the process is *structured communication,* which is mainly centered on communication of meanings by using information-exchange activities and role-playing tasks. The last point is *authentic communication,* which emphasizes the communication process of the message by using activities related to discussions and problem solving tasks. Such activities engage learners into the exchanging of complex information and meanings that require all their attention.

The five points of the process correspond to the development that the learner reaches when focusing on form at first sight by only learning the structure and grammar of a language. By so doing, skills to explore meaning and to be able to exchange messages in an interaction are developed. These aspects were taken into account to design the didactic unit, as it was centered on creating tasks that contained activities related to the use of authentic language, which can be unpredictable in communicative exercises like role plays, discussion and problem solving tasks.

The second dimension is task involvement, which is related to creating activities that motivate the student to participate. It is the personal connection that students establish with the task and how this can help them to have a high level of task involvement. Apart from the task, there are other factors such as teachers' attitude, class environment, class methodologies and dynamics that contribute to the students' attention and personal involvement process. Keeping

this in mind, when developing the didactic unit, all the tasks aimed at motivating the students to participate and to feel identified with some of the activities proposed. The class environment was another factor that was taken into account as the teacher always tried to use methodologies that could catch students' attention and could make them feel confident enough to speak and share their points of view.

The Task-based Learning Approach was chosen to design my didactic unit as it involves communicative situations to be solved. Moreover, it focuses on the negotiation of meaning, which leads the students to interact, participate and use language all the time in the tasks. As Willis (1996) states, this approach is not about doing a high number of tasks in one class. In fact, it promotes three important aspects: exposure, use and motivation. Exposure needs to be fostered, as learners need to experience real-life-communication activities. Use is also important, because learners are in constant preparation and guided by the teacher to use the language during the whole task. Motivation is essential, because the task is organized and developed based on students' skills and academic level. In my research, the Task-based Approach is considered as a vision of teaching that involves a series of activities that have a solid communicative purpose to be put into practice. In this case, the negotiation of meaning is one of the main purposes of the tasks in the didactic unit. Moreover, in this research, tasks reflect the principle that learning takes place by doing something specific that can increase students' motivation and improve their communicative skills.

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In this chapter, the theoretical framework was carefully explained. The concept of didactic materials was defined. Moreover, the concept of didactic unit, its functions and how it is structured were presented. The key constructs of this research were provided: Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), some of its characteristics, the definition of culture and the Task-based learning approach with its six components. In next chapter, the methodological framework, the type of research and data collection procedures for the development of the research process will be described.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, the methodological bases of my research will be presented. In first place, the type of research will be mentioned, followed by the instruments used to collect data, the description of the participants and the context where the research was carried out. Next, Jolly and Bolitho's methodological route (1998), which was used to guide this didactic unit, will be described. Finally, the physical design of the material will be presented.

3.1. Type of Research

This research is qualitative. It observed and explored the role that a didactic unit framed within an Intercultural Communicative Approach and based on the Task-based Learning Approach can have in the development of the Intercultural Communicative Competence in the Low Advanced English level of the B.A. in Modern Languages Teaching at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. The Language Department's research line to which this study ascribes is the second one: Languages, Learning and Teaching because this research proposed the design of a material that fosters ICC through different tasks that can teach learners how to comprehend the different attitudes and beliefs that a foreign culture has. This is to be done through pedagogical tasks that increase students' recognition of diversity and appreciation of foreign cultures that can seem new and difficult to comprehend.

The qualitative paradigm was essential to this research because, as Croker (2009) affirms, in this type of research, it is vital to be in constant observation of how participants are dealing with a problem that occurs in a particular context; it is important to notice their reactions and the

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solutions that they are proposing to settle the situation. In addition to this, the author emphasizes the fact that the main focus in qualitative research is to try to comprehend how participants see and perceive problematic situations. Based on the researched sources for this study, it was possible to state the following. Given the fact that this type of research offers many ways of data collection, in my personal experience doing this research, it becomes easy for the investigator to collect the information and to recreate participants' points of view by not forgetting any of their different perspectives.

As a complement of the above, Johnson and Christensen (2014) state that during data collection, researchers are able to comprehend different experiences and appreciations around them. With those experiences, researchers can create new knowledge from their study, use it to explain the case and lead it to a better understanding of the experiences lived before. In this sense, the researcher aims at building new assumptions that look for an explanation. Moreover, Beuving and De Vries (2015) affirm that qualitative research refers to the explanation of social reality by using the language as a road that can help readers to understand phenomena. This statement is essential for this research because it implies that in qualitative research language is paramount as a tool to understand a problem, and in this case, to share knowledge about different cultures, which leads researchers to expand their studies to cover different cultural problems while using the language as the main road to comprehend cultural aspects.

3.2. Researcher's Role

My role during the development of this research was twofold. I was, first of all, a material designer who was in charge of creating the didactic unit. In this role, I was in charge of creating

appropriate activities that could suit the characteristics of the Low Advanced English course regarding appropriate pedagogical foundations and linguistic traits. I also looked into the theoretical constructs so that the tasks could be suitable based on the main objective of the research. Finally, I designed the tasks keeping in mind an appropriate layout and distribution of contents to make the unit more attractive. However, given that this work required a more professional approach in terms of design, I resorted to the help of a graphic designer who was in charge of giving the material the touch that it needed to be usable by the teacher in the Low Advanced English level.

In second place, based on Jolly and Bolitho (1998), more specifically in the students' use of the material, I was also a participant observer. According to Burns (1999), such a role is based on entering specific contexts inside a classroom and getting a complete involvement in the activities and actions that students are doing. Since I was applying some of the tasks that were designed, I became not only an observer but also a participant who was close to all students' behaviors and reactions towards the activities. I observed how the tasks related to ICC were developed and what topics were being helpfully taught for students to understand other cultures.

Finally, taking into to account the study and research ethics, no harm or judgment was made to the students involved. In addition to this, as Johnson and Christensen (2014) stated, privacy is an ethical issue of which researchers must be aware, and for that reason, I used a consent form (Annex 4) that students were asked to sign, in which all their personal information, opinions and answers were promised to be kept private given the fact that all the data collected were only used for academic purposes, respecting their privacy rights.

3.3. Participants and Sampling

The type of sampling used in this research was non-probabilistic. As Ungvarsky (2019) affirms, this is a method that consists of choosing people to participate in a project and focuses on searching for specific aspects that only the participants can achieve. This method is popular when doing all the research and data analysis as the researcher can get general insights of what the group thinks about a specific topic.

This sampling category was chosen because it was the most adequate to use in this research to gather the information, and also because it possesses a clear step-by-step process to follow when choosing the participants and selecting the frame in which the information would be collected. El-Masri (2017) proposes two steps to gather information. The first one is to identify the target population. In this research, the chosen population was sixteen students of Low Advanced level English from the B.A. in Modern Languages, because this level addresses a high number of topics and activities related to different cultures and English varieties in a more explicit way, compared to lower levels. Furthermore, these students were the most appropriate sampling category given the fact that their English level is C1, as stated in the course program (See Annex 2), which allowed for better comprehension of complex topics and increased production levels during the development of the activities. Another reason that supports this choice is that this course is taught by Teacher Pedro Chala, the advisor of this research, who was willing to facilitate time of his class to develop the intercultural tasks included in the didactic unit proposed in this research. The research participants were sixteen students who were taking the Low Advanced English level of the Modern Language program at Universidad Javeriana in

the second semester of 2019. This group was formed by five men and eleven women from eighteen to twenty-two years old.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

The main instrument that was used in this research in order to collect data was the questionnaire. As mentioned in the Statement of the Problem section of this paper, in the second semester of 2018 a questionnaire (See Annex 1) was used to gather information about the views that former Low Advanced students held of the activities and materials that are used in the level. Then, as the research process started, another questionnaire was used as a needs analysis (See Annex 3) in the second semester of 2019 to collect certain information about students' preferences for the class. Finally, as the research moved on, and some of the tasks were applied with the students, a questionnaire was also used in the second semesters of 2019 to collect their impressions regarding the tasks that were developed (See Annex 5).

According to Lavrakas (2008), a questionnaire is a combination of questions that are formed to follow a step-by-step process to collect data. An essential characteristic of this data collection instrument is that it presents standardized questions, which facilitates the process of gathering information and discovering students' preferences.

Another aspect related to questionnaires is that they allow the researcher to have a brief vision of participants' opinion and position about a topic, which is the center of the research. In other words, through the use of questionnaires, it was possible to identify participants' experiences and perspectives in the Low Advanced English level. As a matter of fact, it was a

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practical way to get students' honest opinions given the fact that they did not have to share personal information on the questionnaires.

3.5. Data Collection Techniques

The first questionnaire (See Annex 1) was conducted with 13 students that had already finished the Low Advanced English level. They gave their impressions regarding the activities that were developed in the course when they took it, the topics that were dealt with and the ones that they could suggest. They also suggested activities that could be done regarding interculturality and that could help students reflect about intercultural experiences. The questionnaires were applied both in physical and digital formats, and they were stored for later analysis.

The needs analysis was answered by 16 students from the Low Advanced English level on July 19th, 2019. This questionnaire was intended to identify what kind of topics, based on Hall's (1976) cultural iceberg model, Low Advanced students would be interested in dealing with. These topics were included in the didactic unit. In order to apply the questionnaires and tasks inside the classroom, the researcher obtained the permission from the teacher in charge of the course and the students. Consent forms (Annex 4) were signed by students to allow the researcher to develop tasks inside the classroom and to collect their data. The information collected through these questionnaires provided the researcher with new ideas and aspects about different tasks that could be included in the didactic unit as well as the best methodology to promote ICC.

Finally, three tasks designed in the didactic unit were applied in the Low Advanced English level on three specific days: July 25th, August 9th and September 9th, 2019. At the end of

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every task, a questionnaire (See Annex 5) was filled by students to know their experiences in the

development of such tasks, their personal opinions and how the tasks in the unit could be

adjusted according to their needs. All the information obtained from these forms allowed me to

know whether the tasks design was appropriate for students' expectations, and whether it

allowed them to live real life experiences that stimulated different emotions and reactions in

them to reflect and think about how they could act appropriately when facing intercultural

encounters.

3.6. Research Process and Unit Creation

As the general objective of this research was to identify the role that a didactic unit framed

within an intercultural communicative approach and based on the Task-based Learning

Approach can have in a Low Advanced Level course at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, it is

important to describe the unit elaboration process. In order to achieve the specific objectives of

this research, the methodological route proposed by Jolly and Bolitho (1998) for the design of

the material was used. It served as a guide that was followed step by step, which is shown and

explained below.

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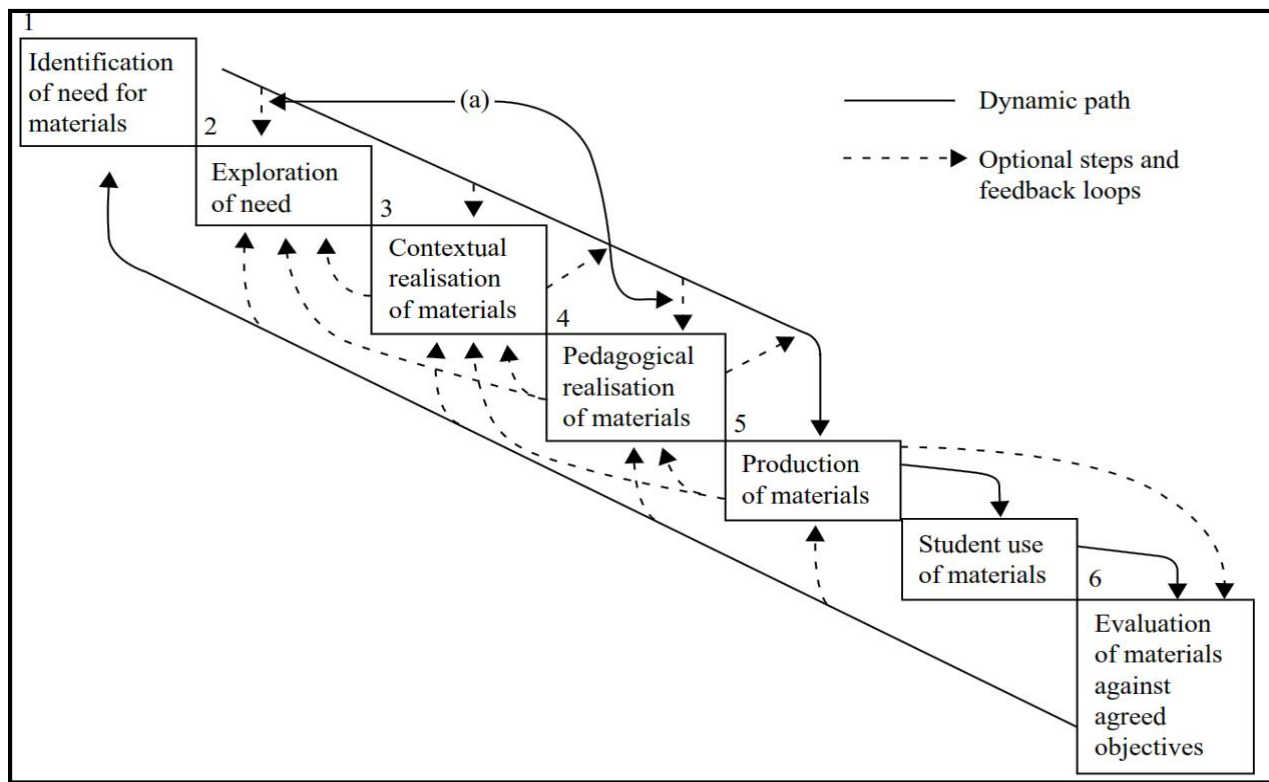
Figure 6. A Framework for Materials Writing. (Jolly & Bolitho, in Tomlinson, 1998).

3.7. Identification of Needs for Materials

The methodology proposed by Jolly and Bolitho (1998) starts with identifying needs for the design of materials. In the case of my study, my own personal experiences and observations while taking the Low Advanced English level were a point of departure to identify which materials were used in the classes to foster ICC and how those materials and activities were implemented. As I observed and took that course, it was possible for me to realize that it was necessary to implement ICC topics in a way that could make students think critically and reflect on how they could better understand new cultures. In the second semester of 2018, I also

inquired thirteen students (Annex 1) who had already finished the level about aspects that could be considered to implement in a supplementary material for the course. They were asked to mention which topics and activities could contribute to the Low advanced English program.

The answers provided showed that, in first place, the students found listening and speaking as the most difficult linguistic abilities for them. In second place, the preferred activities that they like to do to learn were listening songs, watching movies, participating in games, competitions, debates and activities that involve body movements while learning interculturality and writing about topics that they like. In third place, the topics in the Low Advanced level related to intercultural content that caught their attention were: body language, facial gestures, beliefs, world English, non-verbal communication and accents. In fourth place, the topics that students identified as the ones that can contribute to enrich the program were: non-verbal language, perspectives of life, politeness, traditions, slangs, history and food habits. All of these aspects were taken into account to see which topics caught students' interest. Based on their answers, such topics will be included and carefully sequenced in the material.

3.8. Needs Exploration

The following step to develop the material was exploring the needs related to cultural and linguistic aspects. Based on the information obtained in the needs identification step, Low Advanced English materials were read and analyzed in detail in order to see which of them dealt with ICC topics. Doing so would allow me to appropriately include new ones in the material. In order to choose the linguistic abilities to focus on, students were asked through a questionnaire (Annex 3) which abilities they felt that needed to reinforce the most. The results showed that

listening and speaking were the ones that needed most attention. Therefore, all the tasks in the

material were designed to contain tasks in which learners had to listen and understand some

aspects of the audiovisual material to reinforce listening skills. Then, a brief discussion or

activity related to role-play was provided for students to practice their speaking skills.

3.9. Contextual Realization of Materials

In this respect, the contexts that were investigated to be included in the material were topics and

communicative functions that would be implemented in the didactic unit. To decide which topics

could be included in the didactic unit, students were asked in the needs analysis to choose from a

list based on Hall's (1976) cultural iceberg. The contexts chosen for the development of this

didactic unit were organized in the following seven sections: beliefs and religions, authority,

understanding mandalas, body language, attitudes towards the environment, interpretations, and

aesthetics. The objective of sequencing the sections in this way was to address a variety of

cultural topics that awake students' interest to participate and investigate about these cultures and

also to foster ICC with different tasks. These contexts were considered for the unit as they were

deemed appropriate to engage students in real life contexts that get them to reflect about other

beliefs and attitudes.

3.10. Pedagogical Realization of Materials

The fourth step was to develop the pedagogical material, including tasks that foster Intercultural

Communicative Competence. In this step, all the activities were designed, including their

corresponding instructions, taking into account the Communicative Approach and the Task-

Based Learning Approach. To begin with the creation of the activities, the Communicative

Approach (which was born at the end of the sixteenth decade of the past century) was used

because it focuses on learning a language through the exchange of meaning, keeping in mind that

communication is a whole process that involves not only vocabulary and grammar rules, but also

the actual practice of ICC aspects in real contexts. For that reason, the activities proposed in the

material focused on presenting a situation or a context to have a better communicative purpose at

the end of the activity.

These activities included role-plays, competitions and problem solving activities that

improve students' communicative abilities. This decision was based on the idea upon which

Richards & Rodgers (2014) claim to help students raise awareness. Giving students the space to

learn gives better chances for learning, as they are exposed to real communication and, at the

same time, they are practicing accuracy and fluency. For that reason, in this didactic unit,

students were exposed to real language tasks that allowed them to practice their listening and

speaking skills. Brown's definition (2007) of Communicative Approach is also relevant to the

design of these activities: "it is an approach to language teaching methodology that emphasizes

authenticity, interaction, student-centered learning, task based activities, and communication for

the real world, meaningful purposes" (p. 378). Based on this definition, the activities planned on

the material focused on students' exchange of meaning, in which they could experience real life

situations that require them to put their interaction and communication into practice. This is

confirmed by Savignon (2002), who stated that one of the main parts of Communicative

Language Teaching is the communicative competence, which involves meaning negotiation and

consists of being aware of sociocultural aspects of the target language that is being learned. In

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that sense, the Communicative Approach was a tool for the development of the tasks inside this material as it does not only provide opportunities to practice their communicative skills but also to raise awareness of the foreign culture that they are comprehending.

The other approach that was used in the didactic unit was the Task-Based Learning Approach. According to Nunan (1989), it refers to a sequence of activities that have the mission of facilitating the process of learning a language and the communicative purpose of putting into practice the authentic use of the language. The author states that every task contains six components: goals, input, activities, settings, teacher's role, and learner's role. All the tasks in the didactic unit were designed and developed taking into account these components, which helped to guide the students in their learning process and contextualized their work throughout the development of the tasks proposed.

Input was carefully chosen when designing the material. Tomlinson (2010) affirms that giving contextualized input helps learners to acquire enough information of how the target language is used and, as a result, students can put all the information received to practice it inside or outside the class. In this material, all the tasks contain specific input that helps students to get either acquainted with or immersed in context so that they can later apply in conversations all the information that they gain through the development of the activities.

The second component refers to the activities inside the tasks that were designed and organized in a creative way to catch students' attention. The intention was for them to participate and to be in constant use of the target language, which in this case meant using English all the time. As Tomlinson (2010) affirms, it is necessary that the activities engage the student

affectively and cognitively. If the students do not feel any positive emotion during the activity, it would be difficult for them to acquire something from the language activity.

All the activities were designed according to the students' preferences based on their answers to the questionnaire that was applied at the beginning of the semester (See Annex 3). It was necessary to take into account that those activities would have a communicative purpose and contribute to the development of ICC in every task. This was intended to contribute to students' development or improvement of their communicative skills and intercultural competence so that they can use them inside and outside the classroom.

The third component is settings. This part was adapted according to what students answered in the questionnaire (See Annex 3). Given the fact that most of the students answered that they felt better when working in couples or in groups, some activities were planned to be performed in groups to interact with others and participate in discussions, competitions and role-plays. Some other activities were also designed to be performed individually to give the students the freedom of working by themselves.

The final components are the teacher's and the learner's roles. The former is in charge of guiding the student in the learning process as well as in the acquisition or reinforcement of intercultural competences. The teacher acts as an intercultural mediator who has the mission of creating an environment of tolerance and respect towards other cultures with different perspectives. The latter is in charge of participating actively in all the activities proposed in which they can enrich their knowledge. Moreover, learners are expected to develop autonomy by being aware of the topics and intercultural aspects that they will develop during the task. They

are also expected to be conscious of their process while they use this material. Students are to

participate actively during the task. They should have the appropriate attitude by showing respect

when developing the tasks with the teacher and other students without judging any belief or

attitude inside the classroom. They are invited to value and comprehend the different cultures

that will be explored inside the material.

This material is different from others that are used in the Low Advanced English level in

the B.A. in Modern Languages Teaching as it is focuses more on developing tasks that lead

students to use language for communicative purposes like negotiating meaning and improving

their communication skills, mainly listening and speaking. Furthermore, this material was

designed to foster ICC inside the English classroom by implementing experiential activities that

allow the students to comprehend aspects related to culture that are difficult to interpret such as

behaviors, attitudes and beliefs. This didactic unit aims at helping learners to overcome

stereotypes and misconceptions that may be present at the moment of getting to know a new

culture and that can be changed in a positive way so that students are more sensitive when they

live intercultural encounters in real life.

The pedagogical decisions were based on the students' needs found in the questionnaire

(See Annex 3). Based on their opinions, it was possible to identify what to take into account to

design the material. In first place, the type of activities was decided. Since students pointed that

the most difficult abilities for them were listening and speaking, all tasks include a concrete

listening or speaking exercise. Although the central focus of the unit is not language

development, these skills are considered important for students to put into practice their abilities

to communicate and negotiate meaning. It is important to mention at this point that the videos and readings for the activities were chosen keeping in mind that the English level in Low Advanced is C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This is intended to account for coherence with the course program.

For the elaboration of the material, the approaches mentioned before were considered (Communicative Approach and Task-based Learning Approach). They propose aspects that help students to exchange information and, at the same time, negotiate meanings and develop their communicative skills. In addition to this, the Task-based Approach contains specific aspects that guide the design of this material such as: students' manipulation of the resource, interaction and production of the target language. The several stages that this approach proposes indicate how to design and develop the tasks with the aim that students practice their communicative process and foster ICC inside the English class.

The instructions in the worksheets of the didactic unit are carefully and clearly stated so that learners can understand the main purpose of every task at the very beginning. By so doing, students have a brief idea of what the class will be about. In addition to this, at the beginning of every task in the unit, one can find the communicative, language awareness and cultural awareness goals as well as sociocultural goals based on Clark (1987). This design has the purpose of informing the learner what aspects will be achieved at the end of the class.

For every class of the material, an image is introduced so that the learner can identify at first sight the cultural aspect to be studied. All the tasks were created with the purpose of giving concrete information to the learner about the culture that will be covered. Moreover, in every

session, specific vocabulary related to the target culture is included so that the learner can be in contact with new information while using and practicing linguistic skills. In Chapter 4, which includes the instructional design, the characteristics of the approaches and how they were applied in the material, are explained in detail.

3.11. Physical Production of Materials

The format chosen for the physical production of the material was the form of a book. It can be used by learners as a guide that helps them to be focused while the teacher is guiding the activities. In addition to this, the didactic unit can be a flexible material that can be adapted for students' needs and adjusted according to the goals that the teacher has established for the class.

The physical production of the material was based on the book Aula Internacional 2 by Corpas, Garmendia and Soriano (2013). It served as a guide to design the cover section. This book was an important resource and model to follow as it is organized in a way in which it is easy to know the final tasks and the communicative and lexical aspects that will be developed at the beginning of every section. For that reason, at the beginning of every section of this didactic unit, the final tasks and goals are established so that the student and teacher can be aware of what they will be doing during the whole process.

For the digital design and configuration of the material, which included the size, the colors, and physical appearance and cover page of the material, the program Adobe illustrator CC2017 was used. Then, the material was printed in bond paper of 90gr. A graphic designer was hired during this stage; he was in charge of creating the graphic content and editing it based on

the instructions given to him by me. The images inside the didactic unit were taken from online websites and referenced at the end.

Once the topics, the tasks and the contextual use of the language were established, all the contents of the unit were created in Word. Then, they were sent to the graphic designer. He took fifteen days to design the whole unit. Meanwhile, he sent three submissions of the advancements of the design in order to inform all the adjustments and corrections that were necessary to make before the final production.

3.12. Students' Use of Materials

The sixth step consisted of the students' use of the material. In this stage, three of the tasks from the unit were applied with one Low Advanced course composed of sixteen students (See Participants and Sampling above) in the second semester of the year 2019. These tasks were chosen based on the students' answers in the questionnaires and the resources that were available to create those tasks. The English professor allowed between 20 and 30 minutes at the end of the class for the development of each task.

After each task, a questionnaire was applied (Annex 5) to identify the most significant aspects that the students learned in that session and thus be able to answer the research question. The findings indicate that the unit was a tool to foster cultural learning, learning information and motivation. These categories and their corresponding subcategories (cross cultural understanding, cultural awareness and learning vocabulary) will be presented and described in Chapter 4 of this paper.

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3.13. Evaluation of Materials Against Agreed Objectives

During the development of the material, every student had the opportunity to evaluate the activities, the topics that caught their attention and the vocabulary that they learned. The book Aula Internacional 2 was used as a guide to implement the evaluation of every section at the end of the tasks: Students' answer a few questions and share their opinion. At the end of every task, (Annex 5) a piece of paper was given to the students in which they had to answer eight questions related to aspects that caught their attention, the moments when tasks were developed and their general opinion about the tasks.

In this chapter, the methodological framework was presented. Besides, the type of research of this study was described. Furthermore, the methodology used for the creation of the material based on the model of Jolly and Bolitho (1998) was carefully explained to give a brief explanation of every step. The following chapter presents the data analysis, findings of the present research, the procedure used for the data collection as well as the categories and subcategories that emerged from the analysis.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In order to create a didactic unit that could foster de development of ICC in the Low Advanced English level, it was necessary to collect data based on students' preferences and experiences that they had with the three tasks that were applied. In this chapter, I included a description of the approach that I used to analyse the information, the method of analysis on which my study is based and the process that I carried to gather the information as patterns, codes and the development of different categories. Finally, I expose the categories that were originated based on data analysis and findings.

4.1. Procedures of Data Analysis

During the process of data collection, I used three folders to organize the questionnaires that were applied during the development of the study**.** At the beginning of the process of analysis, the grounded theory method was the basis of this process. As Glaser and Strauss (2017) affirm, this method is based on gathering data from social research, and then, extracting different codes from participants' answers that form a single category, which finally could help to generate theory about the research. I used inductive analysis, which according to Patton (2002), is related to finding patterns, themes and categories in the data collected. In this research, interaction played a key role in the data collection.

In addition to this, due to the fact that the main objective of this research is to identify the role that a didactic unit framed within an Intercultural Communicative Approach and based on the Task-based Learning Approach can have in a Low Advanced Level course at Pontificia

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Universidad Javeriana, the perspective that I used to support my analysis was emic. According to Markee (2012), it focuses on using participants' perspectives and points of view as the main point of departure to analyze inside a research. For that reason, all students' opinions were considered since they were the main data of the analysis.

In order to compare, organize and classify all the data, I used a coding scheme. According to Patton (2002), it is a tool that helps to classify the information in order to have a better understanding of it. For that scheme, three colors were used: purple, green and orange. In my opinion, they are attractive for the eye. One can frame, differentiate and remember each category and subcategory in order to avoid confusions. I circled the students' answers that were the most repetitive, and I made a few notes next to them to highlight that these were the most outstanding data that could corroborate the main categories of my research.

During the data collection process, a number of themes were identified and coded, which according to Taylor and Gibbs (2010), are the fundamental basis to analyze information. These authors affirmed that coding data makes the process of identifying new patterns that require further research easier. After codifying all the information (Patton 2002), new categories were associated, based on the patterns that they had in common while grouping those that presented similarities. According to Dey (2005), categories are an important source, as they are created and modified to be confronted with the data collected. They define the relation between the category and the data. Once the phase of creating categories was finished, I continued with the process of assigning and grouping those categories and creating subcategories that allowed me to organize the data collected in a sequence.

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After establishing the main categories, I defined how these categories were related to the subcategories. According to Schutt (2011), refining new information is a process developed during the investigation that occurs after the first observations are established, when the researcher collects more data to organize the information. This author's statement guided me to use the data collected before and after the research in order to establish the categories and subcategories of this study. As a matter of fact, it allows the creation of new hypotheses that can solve the main question of the research, which was not possible without the data. In addition to this, to establish those relations, the researcher used a hierarchical analysis, which according to Johnson & Christensen (2014), is labeled in different levels that make it different from its meaning, characteristics and functions.

Three categories (cultural learning, motivation and learning information) lead to three additional subcategories (cross-cultural understanding, cultural awareness and learning vocabulary). The answers showed inside the categories were all taken exactly as students expressed them. The letter "S" means "students" and is used to classify which students answered the question.

The hierarchical organization of the categories and subcategories will be mentioned below. They will be explained in detail while being related to students' answers.

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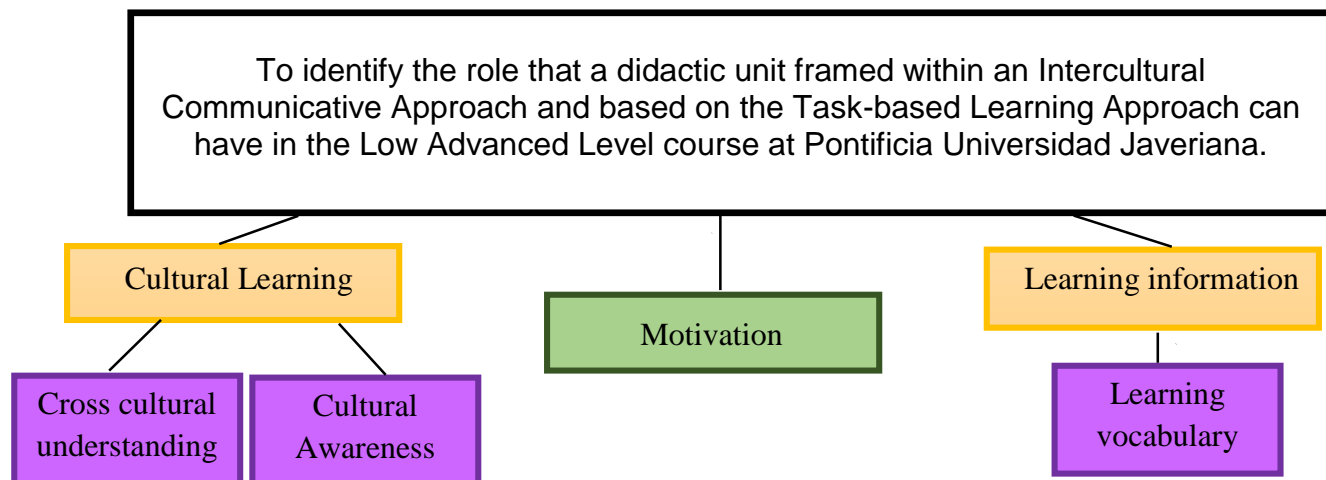
Figure 7. Categories of Analysis.

4.2. Categories of Analysis

The general objective of this study was to identify the role that a didactic unit framed within an

Intercultural Communicative Approach and based on the Task-based Learning Approach can

have in the Low Advanced Level course at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. The next categories

and subcategories shown in the preceding picture represent the hierarchical organization that was

developed based on the three specific objectives of this research.

4.3. Cultural Learning Category

This category involves some aspects that students could discover about the different cultures

seen in the tasks of the didactic unit that they did not know before. Getting to know a foreign

person is getting to know a whole background of their culture, which requires students to be

open-minded in order to understand the reasons why foreigners have certain attitudes or why

they see matters in life in a different way.

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In this category, students identified some aspects that they learned about a different culture

during the activities proposed in class. In such activities, they had the opportunity to know about

curious and different aspects of certain communities, behaviors and places. The findings are the

following:

> S3: "Understanding other religions, cultures and the choices of the people that belong to them" [August 9th -2019]
>
> S4: "The religious reasoning and logic behind the use of the hijab" [August 9th -2019]

As evidenced in the presented extract, students could learn that women of some religions

like Islam are not forced to be part of it, as if it were an oppressive system. Furthermore, students

experienced a different perspective of this topic: women are often judged and discriminated by

the use of their clothes. In this extract, it is shown how group tasks helped learners to

comprehend that it is a choice that women make as part of their identity and way of living. This

can be also seen in Lehmann's et al. (2010) affirmation, according to which cultural learning

takes its place when a person is observing or interacting with others. In this sense, while students

were listening to different testimonies of women who suffered discrimination and the reasons

why they belonged to their religion, they were developing understanding about the topic and

learning historical aspects about which they did not know before; for example: the difference

between "arab", "muslim" and "islam".

In addition to the above, whenever students are interacting with foreigners (as future

teachers or language users) who belong to this religion, it will be easy for learners to understand

them and build a more favourable environment for them since a background of their culture,

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attitudes and perspectives about God will have been acquired. Based on these extracts, it can be

seen that tasks helped students to experience others' perspectives and have a deep

comprehension of how other cultures see religion as a way of living and expressing oneself. In

the following extracts, I present two testimonies that I found relevant to support this category:

> S6: "Culture itself, it is good to always know about cultural aspects". [July 25th - 2019]
>
> S12: "How they loved their religion". [July 25th -2019]

Based on these comments, it was evidenced that students could identify a number of

meaningful aspects towards which their perception changed; for example, being part of a

religion, using clothes (hijab or burka) that are not usually seen in specific countries and even

coloring or drawing (a mandala) as a way of meditation and connection with oneself. In addition

to this, it is evidenced that students learned different topics that they had never seen before in the

English program. They affirmed that those topics were very meaningful for their cultural

learning process. They confirmed the importance of knowing enough cultural aspects. In addition

to this, Tomasello et al. (1993) affirmed that cultural learning is understanding something as the

other person sees it; it is to engage in what the human is assimilating in order to participate in

their perspective with an open mind. Based on this statement, two of the student's testimonies

were significant and related to this aspect:

> S5: "The effect of mandala in the healing process". [August 9th -2019]
>
> S7: "That the use of the hijab is now a choice" [July 25th -2019]

These extracts showed that students could comprehend a number of ethical and religious

values about other cultures. As a matter of fact, this extract demonstrated that some students

were not concerned about the meaning of religion for Muslim women. Given the fact that

religion is one of the most important topics of cultural discussion around the world, it is

necessary to be careful when talking about it. For this reason, a task about religion was included

inside the English lesson, and as the students' comments showed, students could appreciate and

comprehend the high value of identity that religion gives to specific cultures around the world.

As this didactic unit is based on the Intercultural Communicative Competence, it is essential that

students have some background of what a culture involves whenever they live a situation with

foreigners.

4.4. Cross-cultural Understanding

Understanding a culture is difficult at the first time due to the fact that it entails a whole

process of discovering new ways of thinking and living while accepting the differences and

opinions that exist among communities instead of rejecting them. Besides, cross-cultural

understanding goes beyond the superficial meaning of dressing, food, ceremonies and skin color.

According to Koleski and Zion (2005), to understand a culture, it is necessary to explore the

thoughts, attitudes and values that belong to a particular community. In addition to this,

understanding a culture is to accept the diversity that exist between communities' way of

thinking instead of rejecting them. This aspect can be reflected in two of the students'

testimonies that I found pertinent to support this category:

> S3: "How certain signs have different meaning in other culture" [September 6th-2019]

> S10: "The many reasons why women wear hijabs, because is not only a religious practice, but it can be activism" [August 9th -2019]

In this aspect, it is evidenced that students express that they could discover new thoughts and attitudes different from them and discuss them. This let them realize that other cultures embrace different behaviors. Besides, the student's answers affirmed that they learned new opinions people from other cultures had and the importance of respecting them and differentiating them. To understand a culture, it is essential to learn about its people's background experiences, because they are the main cause of evolution for a culture, which is in constant change. This is supported by Pujiyanti & Zuliani (2014), who affirmed that cross-cultural understanding involves different cultural experiences that we must internalize as a basis to choose our own attitudes and perceptions of the world and to break stereotypes and misunderstandings. One of the students' answers in which this statement can be reflected is the following:

> S4: "That we are all different and we have to respect others as we are religious cultures" [July 25th-2019]

Here, one can see that students understood that the existing differences among people help to realize that individuals may practice a specific religion. Hence, it is vital to show respect towards their choice and be aware of the fact that many people identify with their own beliefs. Moreover, learning how to integrate with others and respect their point of view is important as it can be reflected in Corbett's (2010) affirmation, according to which cross cultural understanding is when learners can have a clear understanding of cultural values while identifying a way to show respect to new beliefs in order to integrate people from different cultures inside a classroom.

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4.5. Cultural Awareness

In this category, it is important to keep in mind that the name is centered on people's behavior and attitudes that could be different from ours. According to Constantine et al. (2015), cultural awareness is when the individual is aware of the fact that there are different foreign behaviors and attitudes that differ from theirs. Based on this aspect, after applying the didactic unit to the students, I found two relevant comments that emerged to support this category:

S1: "That the other people learn about it and respect it" [July 25th -2019]

S2: "People should not be discriminated regarding their religion" [August 9th -2019]

Students' answers showed evidence that the tasks help them to increase their intercultural awareness in relation of respect the other as a human no matter their religion or ethical thoughts; in other words, to tolerate the other as a part of a community. In addition to this, these aspects created an ambiance on critical reflections through which students realise the importance of the inclusion of people from different cultures no matter their beliefs, attitudes or religion. Finally, as Brislin and Landis (1983) mentioned, cultural awareness involves that the individual must understand how their own culture is influencing them before beginning to comprehend other cultures. In this respect, students should understand their own values and beliefs first, and then, they should try to understand the other cultures without any judgments. This was evidenced through student's comprehension and understanding of some of the foreign cultures that they saw inside the classroom.

S8: "How the Italians make gestures for everything. It's important to know, so when I go, I will understand" [September 6th -2019]

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As shown in these comments, it can be seen that students are aware of the important fact that behaviors and attitudes existing in communicative processes may differ from theirs. In fact, it is evidenced that students' willingness to learn more about cultural topics increases their knowledge and interest to keep on exploring and expanding their knowledge about it. Furthermore, it is evidenced that students presented an interest and awareness of how other cultures are different from theirs when communicating and expressing their attitudes and values. This can be related to Bennett's (2004) concept of "minimization", which is when humans see other cultures in a positive way. Even though they are from different cultures, they accept each other as equals and reduce their prejudices and judgments. This was evidenced in how students see the way of communication of Italians as interesting. Although they use many hand gestures to communicate, the students made a good effort to continue the communication process and accepted it as part of their cultural knowledge.

4.6. Category of Motivation

In this category, the main focus is related to identifying whether the tasks enriched students' motivation and in what ways they felt motivated. As Levin and Nolan (2007) affirmed, the motivation occurs when the person is engaged to pursue an objective and is persistent in maintaining a good behavior that leads him/her to achieve that goal; in this case: learning something new. Since the tasks were carefully planned and developed to enrich students' motivation, there are some answers that were significant to this collective data:

> S14: "We were all interested and we participated in the activities" [September 6th - 2019]

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S15: "It was interesting to hear Italian people talk about their gestures" [September 6th -2019]

Keeping in mind these answers, this evidenced that most of the students had pertinent reasons such as curiosity and interest that kept them motivated in the process of ICC learning, a positive aspect is that some tasks motivate the students to participate and reduce their levels of anxiety and pressure. This result showed that using different kinds of materials that may catch students' attention, can facilitate the students' learning process with a foreign language, as they are not only learning but also enjoying the activity. As Ushioda (2014) affirms, the motivational aspect occurs when the student has a deep engagement in learning the subject inside the classroom, which induces them to continue receiving and maintaining a comfortable behavior with others. This can be evidenced in the didactic unit as most of the tasks increased students' motivation and raised their interest in the cultures addressed in such activities. For this reason, they continue learning curious characteristics and facts about those cultures. This statement be reflected in the following comments:

S4: "Different idioms are important" [September 6th -2019]

S5: "It was very interesting with the explanation" [September 6th -2019]

S8: "We learned the different gestures that Italians use to speak" [September 6th -2019]

These comments showed that students had the willingness to continue learning as they found that the tasks had something new that raised their curiosity, not only in academic terms but also in their own lives. This can be evidenced in Tomlinson's (2011) affirmation, according to which teachers need to understand, when designing a material, that they should motivate students, having the potential to increase their self-confidence and the ease to interact with others

while expressing their ideas in a foreign language. Another aspect that I found pertinent here is that it is important to take into account that activities should increase in students the willingness to continue learning when creating a new material. Learners need to be given something that could serve as a tool for their future jobs or future encounters with foreigners or individuals from different cultures. Some of the student's comments that are pertinent in this respect are:

> S2: "Because I love to know about other cultures and languages" [September 6th - 2019]

> S11: "They are fun and essential. They relate to interesting and important cultural knowledge" [September 6th -2019]

Based on these utterances, the data showed that the tasks applied to the students were able to increase students' attention, motivation and they were involved in the topic and the whole class environment. Moreover, the material allowed students to learn a topic in a different way while maintaining a positive attitude to receive new information. In this respect, one can refer to Peacock's (1997) statement, which indicates that authentic materials increase students' engagement in the target activity, their concentration by doing the task proposed and their confidence to express their point of view.

4.7. Learning Information Category

Learning new information inside the English classroom is helpful in many significant ways. As a matter of fact, students are not only learning grammatical structures, but also cultural knowledge that they can internalize to apply in their future communicative processes. This can be evidenced in the following students' answers:

> S7: "Because I believe I´m not wasting my time as long as I´m learning something new [September 6th -2019]

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S9: "It helps to improve my knowledge" [September 6th -2019]

S13: "That there are differences between the use of the burka, hijab etc. I thought it was all the same" [July 25th -2019]

These answers allow me to affirm that the students gained new knowledge that influenced them in a positive way to keep researching about the topic and learning new cultural aspects that could be supportive in their future. In addition to this, some of them discovered new information about those cultures that were misunderstood by them and that had a special meaning that maybe they did not recognize. Richards and Rodgers (2014) affirmed that during the learning process in which students are engaged, they have the role of monitoring and saving new information into the internal system to then apply it in their output field for real communication with others. In this aspect, students' answers showed that they were engaged most of the time with all the new information that they were receiving. Besides, this confirmed that students were interested in new topics that catch their attention and introduce to them new cultural aspects that are different from those in the program. Below, there is another extract that shows how helpful it was for students to learn new information during the tasks applied in the English class. Then, such an extract will be analyzed in light of the theory.

S10: "Learning about other cultures. It´s an essential part of learning a language" [September 6th -2019]

In this aspect, I want to emphasize that this student recognized the importance of learning about a culture when learning a foreign language, especially, inside the classroom. Furthermore, the student is raising awareness about the fact that cultural topics should not be left behind to only learn the language because both are essential. I want to highlight that behind every language, there is a unique culture that needs to be explored and handled with respect. With this

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extract, it is evidenced that some aspects about culture can be learned and discussed with new

materials and inside the classroom. In this respect, Richards' (2001) affirmation makes sense

when he says that authentic materials "provide authentic cultural information about the target

culture". They can be selected to illustrate many aspects in the target culture, including (…)

beliefs and non-linguistic behavior in curriculum development in language teaching" (p.253).

Based on this, it is evidenced that authentic materials give students several tools that can be

useful for them to learn new information about cultures as they can be adjusted to students'

needs and capacities to acquire new information and contribute to their linguistic and cultural

knowledge.

4.8. Learning Vocabulary

In this category, the data showed that students could learn some aspects related to vocabulary,

about which they affirmed could be used to interact with others. As Farahani and Jamalipour

(2015) stated in their research, vocabulary is one of the main tools that people use at first when

communicating and is also one of the main strategies that people apply when it comes to learning

a new language. This could be evidenced in students' answers:

> S1: "We learned some different gestures that the Italians use to speak" [September 6th -2019]
>
> S3: "The different words to describe the hijab and its variations" [July 25th -2019]
>
> S11: "The meaning of all colors" [September 6th -2019]

In this aspect, the study showed that the students felt confident for cases in which they

could experience cultural encounters, because they have some background vocabulary studied in

the activities that makes the process of communication easier than not knowing the specific

vocabulary (if any) to express themselves with foreign cultures. Based on this affirmation, it was observed that students found the vocabulary useful as a resource that allows them to understand more aspects about the foreign culture.

Moreover, such resource allows students to understand and comprehend words, gestures and manners that are strange for them, but to which they can get used by practicing and using new vocabulary to understand a culture. In this sense, Ihejirika and Ogbonna (2009) affirm that part of the success that a person can achieve in their process of learning a new language depends completely on the amount of words that the individual possesses in their vocabulary. This confirmed the fact that using the vocabulary of different cultures inside a class can allow students to understand more facts and aspects about the foreign culture and memorize them in a dynamic way, rather than learning several texts in simple words. Such a statement is proven in the following utterance:

> S6: "We interact with other people and we put what we learnt into practice" [September 6th -2019]

Another aspect that I found relevant in this data analysis is that when students are surrounded by vocabulary, they can easily be familiar with some facts about the culture that it represents and, thus, get closer to its understanding. This was evidenced in students' comments and also in every task that was carefully designed with the purpose of constantly presenting vocabulary in games, role-plays, among other ways, in which students could interact with each other, memorize words for a competition or learn them to express an opinion. As Tomlinson (2011) expressed, it is necessary to provide pupils with genuine language so that they can learn real expressions and accents that some books do not cover. There are several resources that can

talk about specific cultures, but the real expressions are often forgotten and should be also presented. As it could be evidenced in students, they could learn how Italian people communicate with genuine expressions.

In chapter 4, the analysis of the data collection was presented as well as the findings of the present research. After them, the categories that emerged from the analysis were mentioned, explained and supported by the extracts collected from the instruments used in the development of this study. In this sense, the role that a didactic unit can have in the Low Advanced English students is being a source to increase students' cultural learning, cross cultural understanding and cultural awareness as well as a tool to increase motivation and learning new vocabulary. In the following chapter, I will present the instructional design based on the data analysis and the implications of the findings.

CHAPTER 5

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

This chapter presents the material proposal that was designed about the research process. First, the conception of language that guides this project as well as how it is learned will be specified. Then, the conception of classroom as well as the roles of the teacher, the learners and the materials will be included. Finally, the criteria used for the design of the didactic unit will be shown framed within the Communicative and the Task-based Learning Approaches.

5.1. Vision of Language

Language has many conceptions that make it difficult to be defined by just only one definition. However, Kramsch (2004) states that language is the exchange of meanings in which learners express their vision of the world. The author explains that it is a communicative system in which learners share their experiences and try to communicate with others. In addition to this, Stevick (1989) states that every language possesses two aspects: the message (in the form of narratives, descriptions, emotions, rejection and more) that we transmit to another person and the different symbols, speech sounds and sign language. In this sense, the author emphasizes on the fact that there are several aspects inside the language itself that allow people to communicate and understand each other in every context.

In contrast with the definition mentioned above, Tudor (2001) affirms that language is not simply a language system. It involves the expression and transmission of different emotions and feelings that make that the communicative process a wide process of understanding others. In

addition to this, the author states that a language will always contain aspects of a culture that make a person understand how others see the world and their attitudes.

In this didactic unit, language is conceived as a tool that allows students to have an experience of how others perceive the world and choose appropriate attitudes and behaviors to communicate with others. As Searle (2009) affirms, language is social, because it is used for establishing social relationships among communities, and it is a need that every human has: expressing their emotions and feelings. Without language, there would be no communication between individuals, and the interpretation of reality that every community makes would be difficult to understand.

Thus, this didactic unit conceives language as an instrument that contributes to students' understanding of a foreign culture by getting them to address contexts that can enrich their cultural knowledge. Given the fact that language plays an important role in understanding a culture, it was essential to include role-plays, game competitions, discussions, and videos as part of the material. These can also provide linguistic contexts so that students can get a brief vision of what the target culture is about and so that they can improve their communicative skills while learning and reflecting about new aspects of other cultures. Following Nunan's (1989) principles of Task-based learning, the didactic unit was designed with sequenced tasks in which students are initially given linguistic input in the form of vocabulary, videos and pictures at the beginning of the task, which is important for language production in the final task.

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5.2. Vision of Language Learning

Since the main focus of this research is to help students to approach the behaviors and beliefs of foreign cultures, the vision of learning that is held in this research study is experiential. Beard and Wilson (2006) affirm that experiential learning is based on the interaction of the internal thoughts of an individual and the external events around. In this sense, people are always aware of what surrounds them and how new discoveries can be internalized with their previous knowledge. This is what, precisely, experiential learning entails. In addition to this, the authors affirm that this learning conception is a transformative process in which the learner takes what is new and important of his/her experiences to build and create new points of view in his/her future opinions and perspectives.

One important aspect of experiential learning, as Kolb (2015) states, is that the role of a teacher is not about giving new knowledge to the students. It is about acting as a mediator between old beliefs that students have and new theories and beliefs that could redefine what they had in their previous experience. This vision of experience is about cooperating with old background ideas and the social context. In addition to this, the author also affirms that the more resistance the student presents to understanding new concepts, the more difficult the experience of learning inside the classroom could be; for that reason, this process is about relearning and redefining ideas and opinions.

Two aspects were taken from Kolb (2015) for the design of this didactic unit. The first one is that it is essential for the teacher to provide the student with material that could make it easy to process and assimilate new ideas. The second one is that introducing emotions when the

experiential process is beginning can have a high impact on how the learner will develop the task in the classroom. Therefore, it is important to connect the lesson with the learners' emotions and feelings, so that their attention is effectively caught. By doing so, they are more likely to use in the future the new information that they are learning. Such a statement makes sense when considering Beard and Wilson's (2006) words: "Experience is a meaningful engagement with the environment in which we use our previous knowledge (itself, built from experience) to bring new meanings to an interaction" (p. 21). In this sense, this didactic unit focuses on giving enough real life experience to students about intercultural encounters so that they, as future teachers, can manage different situations that can be hard to face when there is no knowledge about new cultures. Keeping in mind the aforementioned aspects, this didactic unit intends to provide students with tasks in which they can interact with others and have a close experience of different cultural beliefs and attitudes.

Having reached this point, one can state that learning a language involves constant practice and use from the beginning to the end. For that reason, the research was focused on two approaches that reinforce students' language learning in the Low Advanced English level. The first one was the Task-based Approach, as it implies the use of language learning tasks that stimulate learners to make use of the language; the second one was the Communicative Approach, as it proposes the negotiation of meaning in real life contexts and not only inside the classroom.

5.3. Task-based Approach

The Task-based Approach was one of the bases to design this didactic unit because it focuses on sequenced activities that use the language to reinforce the learner's communicative skills. This approach emphasizes on interlinking activities with real life situations in which students must use the language to communicate something. All the sections in this didactic unit contain tasks in which students have to use the language as an outcome to interact with other students while putting into practice the input that is provided as well as their knowledge of the world.

In addition, this didactic unit was inspired by Ellis's (2003) framework to design task-based lessons. Based on this framework, each of the classes proposed in the didactic unit shows three steps to design a task: the pre-task, in which the ability is planned and regulated; during task, where the main and final task is developed; and post task, which focuses on communication and reflection activities about the task. Chapter 2, which comprises the theoretical framework, presents a more thorough definition of a task and one of its main components following Nunan' s (1989) ideas.

Some important aspects in this research are the cultural elements and the design that was elaborated by following the Task-based Approach. In terms of the material design, this approach is evidenced on the different parts of the unit that will be described and explained below. At the very beginning of every task, the final task is announced so that learners are aware of what they will accomplish at the end of the unit. In addition to this, the main goals that the students will achieve are also mentioned at the beginning to make students conscious of their autonomous learning process.

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Figure 8. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.

In the previous image, every task of the didactic unit has, at the beginning, the main goals that will be achieved during the development of the task. This organization of goals for school language learners was established by Clark (1987) and was chosen in this didactic unit to raise awareness about the main purposes of the development in the task. The purpose was for learners

to have an idea of what they are going to learn and to relate every activity from the beginning to the end, as everything would be interconnected. These goals were mentioned and explained in chapter two. They belonged to the first of six components of a task. Another reason why those goals were established in every unit is that both students and teacher could remember easily the main topic worked in the task and the main steps to follow at the moment of performing them in class. In this sense, instead of looking page by page, they could find it always at the beginning.

Three fundamental aspects of the task based on Ellis (2003) are also considered in the didactic unit. Firstly, the pre-task presents the input or contextualisation of the topic. Secondly, the during-task is a brief performance in which students use the information learned. Last but not least, the post-task is about the outcomes or the learners' linguistic production.

Figure 9. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.

In task 1 of the didactic unit, it can be seen how the pre-task started with some questions that are giving students an input. In this case, it is about the differences between the terms Arab, Muslim and Islam. I found convenient to begin with these words because in the questionnaires

applied for this research, some students tended to confuse these terms. Thus, it was pertinent to differentiate them in first place before talking about a culture or religion, which, according to my experience as a learner, is meaningfully helpful. Then, to have a better comprehension of those words, I included images that help learners to differentiate the words and to easily remember them.

Once the pre-task is settled, the during-task is implemented by using a matching game. It helps students to memorize and learn vocabulary in a pedagogical way. It makes students learn with visual resources and put into practice what they learn from an oral presentation about the information given.

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Figure 10. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.

As shown in the previous picture, every task contained activities related to central concepts. Such concepts are introduced through vocabulary, so that students can describe or exchange information about the topics while using new words. Every task contains vocabulary activities to facilitate the students' process of learning and using new concepts in their conversations.

Figure 11. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.

As shown in the first task in the previous picture of task 1, some of the post-tasks of the didactic unit are based on problem-solving activities. They encourage learners to manipulate and produce language based on the previous vocabulary and activities done before. Then, they are to

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come up with outcome to the class and put their communicative skills into practice. In this picture related to Muslim women, students are encouraged to participate in a problem-solving situation of a girl that cannot use her hijab inside an educational institution, so students must create and propose a solution. At the same time, they reflect about intercultural boundaries and stereotypes that suppose an obstacle in the interaction with people who have a different religion.

Figure 12. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.

Another aspect of the Task-based Approach that was taken into account was the development of mini-tasks inside the didactic unit developed as the result of processing and comprehending the language. In this picture, there was a listening activity in which students had to match the information given by understanding the vocabulary and meaning required to be organized. As students showed in the questionnaires that they had difficulties with listening and speaking abilities, every task contained activities of short listening passages or videos that could improve those aspects.

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Figure 13. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.
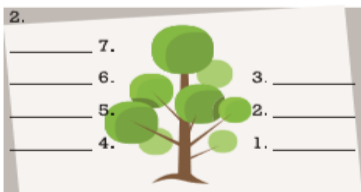
Another aspect based on the Task-based Approach is that some tasks were designed to encourage students to practice their linguistic skills by using the information given at the beginning. By so doing, they were to interact with others, exchange information, different ideas and opinions. The use of communicative aspects that help learners to feel confidence to express something in the target language is promoted. For example, in the previous image of task number five of the didactic unit, there is a text in which students have to highlight the information that caught their attention in order to express their opinion about the Jainism topic with others and practice speaking with others.

Figure 14. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.

Furthermore, to catch the students' attention and increase their participation, some competitions and games were introduced along the didactic unit. They were the main focus of the tasks, which resulted very engaging. As an example, in the previous image, there is a small competition about compound words in which students have to make decisions and discuss the use of compound words in the target language and to complete the trees. The group that writes the highest number of compound words on the trees wins. This task was about the German culture, as students expressed in questionnaires that they would like to talk about this culture in class. Besides, to make tasks motivating for students, every task was planned to have competitions and games. Learners did something different from the activities to which they were used.

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Figure 15. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.

Finally, the Task-Based Approach in this unit can be evidenced in the inclusion of an input-based activity at the beginning of each task. This is done so that students can be surrounded by contexts that remind them the vocabulary that they will be using as well as cultural encounter situations that take place in real life, such as misunderstandings. As evidenced in the two pictures, students are shown two videos about rejection, prejudice and identity (topics that students chose in the questionnaires), and then they are asked to write a letter, trying to find the best solution based on human identity and religious beliefs. The activity intends to promote the use of vocabulary seen at the beginning so that learners put it in practice by discussing cultural shock situations that took place in real life.

5.4. Communicative Approach

According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), the Communicative Approach started with the end of the functional theory of language, which is related to the use that people give to the language (discussing, apologizing, complaining, offering) to interact with others. This theory was mainly centered on structure and the meaning of language; however, British authors like Firth (1957) state that this is not the correct use that someone should give to the language because such a use does not depend only on meaning, but on more aspects. These aspects are related to comprehending language in different contexts as well as finding suitable words that inform others that the meaning was understood.

The linguistic issue, however, is just one aspect of the matter, as it also involves acquiring an understanding of which sentences or parts of them are appropriate in a particular context (Widdowson, 1978). Bearing this in mind, the need for an approach that mainly focused on the use of language in communication arose, and this is how the communicative approach emerged with new conceptions, including using the four language skills to give more confidence and autonomy to the students at the moment of communicating.

There are a number of activities that could be developed in the Communicative Approach. As presented by Littlewood (1981), some of them are social interaction activities (like simulation and role plays), which add functional aspects to the communication process. Some other activities can also be mentioned, such as identifying pictures, discovering identical pairs, following directions, reconstructing story sequences, discovering locations and exchanging information to solve a problem. All of these activities become communicational situations in

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which the conversation meaning is less predictable and learners must improve their skills to express their ideas. By so doing, they are able to take the conversation to a more interactional level in which they can speak naturally without feeling insecure or under pressure.

In this proposal of a didactic unit, the communicative approach is reflected in different aspects. In the first place, this material does not focus on imparting grammatical rules to the students. Instead, it is mainly centered on creating opportunities for learners to communicate and make mistakes naturally. Secondly, there are tasks that focus on students' negotiation of meaning, which gives them an exposure to real and authentic language to be used in every task for the improvement of listening and speaking skills. In addition to this, tasks have been designed to let students interact with each other and vary the use of the language according to different contexts presented in the unit. Finally, this unit gives the learner the space to communicate by using the target language in real conversations about real life situations. In the following pictures, the way how the Communicative Approach was evidenced in the didactic unit is presented.

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Figure 16. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.

    For the communicative aspect of the material, all the images and landscapes inside the

didactic unit were introduced with the aim that the students had a close exposure to those places.

By seeing such images, the students could increase their curiosity to understand specific aspects

which learners probably did not know before. Moreover, the images were implemented in the

didactic material to make learners feel the sensation of traveling around the world and learning

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about different cultures. For example, in the previous picture, there is a whole landscape of the

famous German flag, buildings and places that help to give the learner a context about the culture

to be discussed in class. As it can be seen, all the images, patterns and symbols of every task are

interrelated to the topics of the didactic unit and the activities that will be developed inside every

task, so the learner will be conscious all the time about what culture will be explored that day.

Figure 17. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.

In the previous image, there are different symbols and landscapes about the Japanese

culture. They give the learner a brief idea about what culture the task will be talking about. All of

these symbols and pictures were introduced with the purpose of encouraging the learner to

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discover and comprehend more aspects about those foreign cultures and to continue searching

for more cultural information.

Figure 18. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.

Given the fact that the Communicative Approach mainly focuses on the negotiation of

meaning and learners are immersed in real life communication situations, some tasks based on

meaning negotiation were implemented as well as the didactic unit. The purpose is that learners

could put into practice their linguistic skills (listening and speaking). The previous image shows

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a task in which students have to use Italian hand gestures to maintain the conversations and

negotiate meaning. In a few terms, this is a helpful task for the unit as learning is not only about

negotiating meaning but also about discovering a foreign culture and the way that culture

communicates with others. Since cultures have different ways to communicate and such ways

have several meanings, students are encouraged to produce the same hand gestures of that

foreign culture by creating and performing a dialogue that implies the use of the gestures studied.

In addition, based on the communicative graphic references presented inside the didactic unit,

the student can find different images, colors, symbols and patterns that make the experience

more enjoyable for the student as in the following pictures.

Figure 19. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.

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As it can be appreciated in the previous picture, there is the design of a big mandala that students are asked to color based on the symbolic meaning of every color. Meanings are the same that Tibbetan Buddhists consider. The cultural experience of students becomes more personal, as they can be creative and use any color that they want to customize their drawing. For the communicative aspect, students are asked to explain to their partner why they use those colors and exchange ideas about the topic, which makes the experience more communicative and cultural at the same time.

The didactic material was divided into seven sections with the intention that every task contained specific vocabulary, listening and speaking exercises. Thanks to this design, the learner had to use all the vocabulary learned and put into practice the two oral abilities: listening and speaking. All the tasks in the unit present real life situations that allow the student to learn new cultural information and use a brief part of vocabulary. Besides, these tasks are also meant to awaken different feelings in the students so that they can approach a new culture from a more intercultural perspective. As Rico (2012) states, this kind of activities must include emotions of fear, surprise and astonishment so that they can reflect and think about the new culture. In this sense, tasks allow students to build tolerance and peaceful attitudes to interact with foreign cultures. Finally, the vocabulary and the topics chosen are intended to guide students to use their communicative abilities in specific contexts.

Based on the Communicative Approach, I also decided to include a high number of visual resources like images and vocabulary highlights in the texts. The purpose was to provide visual context and get students to become familiar with certain aspects of the culture that is being

approached. Additionally, in order to get students to reflect upon a real life context in which they have to reflect about how they could solve an intercultural conflict, a final task was proposed.

5.5. Students' Role

The students' role in this didactic unit is essential, as they are considered the main subjects in their learning process. According to Nunan (1989), the learner has the responsibility to interact with others and try to negotiate meaning as much as he can. In addition to this, the author affirms that one of the main responsibilities of the learner is to look for the best strategy to organize and learn new information that he receives. As this independent learning is based on personal reflection of personal learning styles, Richards and Rodgers (2014) affirm that one of the best actions of teaching is giving the students the tools that they can use for handling their autonomous learning and achieving better results when producing language.

In this material, students are required to be active and participate constantly during the development of the tasks. In addition to this, the material intends to promote motivation among students and facilitate their improvement in communication skills. Moreover, learners are conceived as reflective subjects who are aware of their main purposes for learning, the contents they talk about and the learnings they will keep to themselves when the class ends.

Students are also considered autonomous beings who are aware of what specific contents they will learn. They must have the willingness and discipline to practice and do the tasks proposed to achieve the initial objectives. As Kamil (1982) affirms, being autonomous means making critical decisions by oneself and developing the confidence to discuss and maintain one's points of view. In this sense, students are the ones who are in charge of their own learning

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process and are guided by the material to learning new information and develop intercultural

skills. Learners must also be aware of the main goals of the tasks and the class that they are

taking. Thus, at the beginning of every section, the goals that students are expected to achieve in

the final task are explicitly shown.

Figure 20. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.

In the previous image, the goals and the final tasks can be seen. They were mentioned in every task at the beginning in order to increase students' interest and awareness about the content that they will learn in the didactic unit as well as how this content will give them new knowledge about the different cultures that they will study in the following tasks of the didactic unit.

Being autonomous means that students constantly reflect about all the knowledge that they are discovering in connection with the aims of the tasks and make decisions as to how to feel about the new cultures. This is why this material focuses on students' critical reflection by asking them to fill an evaluation at the end of every task in which they express what they could take from all the knowledge acquired during the ICC tasks developed inside the unit.

Figure 21. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.

In the previous image, it can be seen how the intention is to support students' autonomous learning and deep reflection. These were the aspects seen in the task that helped them to reinforce ICC and to see if those aspects increase their vocabulary with new expressions. Due to the fact that every task has different vocabulary related to a specific culture, it was not mandatory to memorize it but to know some words that the target culture uses to communicate and negotiate meaning.

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5.6. Teacher's Role

According to Nunan (1989), the teacher's role in the Task-Based Approach is not about power, authority or control but about facilitating interaction among students. When developing tasks, teachers are to motivate learners to take risks and participate. For that reason, in this didactic material, the main purpose for the teacher's role is to motivate students to communicate with each other expressing their viewpoints about the different topics in the communicative activities proposed. Likewise, Breen and Candlin (1980) state that the teacher has three main roles: making the communicative process more accessible to learners, acting as a guide that clearly explains what learners have to do to achieve the goal of every task, and observing and monitoring the communicative process.

Thus, the teacher's main roles in the development of the unit tasks are that of a guide in the students' learning process and that of a facilitator who provides students with enough tools and resources that help them to develop their intercultural and their communicative skills. According to Littlewood (1981), the more creative the activity is, the less necessary it will be for the teacher to intervene in students' performance. Hence, all the tasks in the unit were created with the intention of catching students' attention and motivating them to keep participating. In addition to this, the teacher can also be a supervisor in which he/she provides advice and tools when students cannot understand a topic or opens discussion and mediates when they do not agree with a different point of view.

Finally, keeping in mind the environment of the class, Juan and García (2013) affirm that the teacher's role must focus on creating an atmosphere that promotes the communicative

competence. Then, the teacher who uses this unit must also take into account emotional factors among the students, as they could create tension in the class. For that reason, some activities in the tasks were created for students to work in teams, in pairs or in groups, and cooperate with each other while exchanging different ideas. These activities are intended to create a relaxing ambiance in which students can put into practice their communicative skills while also cooperating with or supporting each other.

5.7. Role of the Materials

As well as the student´s and the teacher´s, materials accomplish an important role in the class. They are a tool that helps teachers to provide support in some activities, and they also give students the confidence of learning and discovering more information by themselves. According to Mishan and Timmis (2015), materials give students the experience of being exposed to real language and serve as roads of new vocabulary and information that the teacher sometimes cannot provide. Moreover, the authors affirm that materials can give information about other cultures and be used as a guide for both students and teachers to understand or explain a topic.

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Since materials are vehicles to learn a new language, it is necessary that they be developed based on students' needs, interests and skills. Small (1997) states that using materials that motivate students can make them find difficult classes more interesting and enjoyable. Complementing this aspect, Mishan and Timmis (2015) state that affective factors (such as emotions, attitudes, feelings and moods) are important when designing or creating materials because they can change students' attitudes when learning new information.

Figure 22. Weaving knowledge and cultural encounters.

It the previous picture, the way in which students' needs were taken into account can be deduced. The suggestions that they expressed in the questionnaires were explicitly considered as it is suggested in the methodological route of Jolly and Bolitho (1998). As mentioned before, in this questionnaire, students expressed which cultures they would like to know about and some subjects to know when visiting another country. In this case, one of the most repetitive answers was the Japanese culture, as it was never seen in the English program. Therefore, it was included in the didactic unit.

In addition to that, the art topic was also mentioned in the students' questionnaire. Consequently, it was to be included in the didactic unit. For that reason, this task, as shown in the image, focuses on students' learning about "Haiku" poem. It is a poem characterized to belong only to the Japanese culture. After the steps and vocabulary to write a haiku were mentioned at the beginning, students had to produce their own poem based on anything that they like. Thus, the role of the material is based on motivating students by considering their needs and including topics that awake their interest to learn and to make the class more enjoyable.

Krashen (1982) establishes three affective categories that can make students more confident in communicative activities and performances in another language. Motivation is one of the most paramount aspects to consider when designing materials for second language learning as it increases students' interest to continue learning the lesson. The second one is self-confidence. If learners have self-confidence, they will perform the process of acquiring a new language with more success; therefore, correcting mistakes will not be a problem for them. The last one is anxiety. One of the main responsibilities that a teacher and a material have is lowering

class anxiety levels so that students show less fear of making mistakes. All of these aspects are essential when using a material to teach a new language, and that is the main role of this didactic unit: to be a motivating tool for students to interact based on real life cultural aspects and invite students to share their opinions about them.

The material created in this research intends to foster ICC by the use of tasks that promote students' communication and the development of their intercultural skills. Furthermore, the material aims at motivating students to continue learning and participating in the discovery of different cultural aspects that may not have been seen before. In addition, this material is planned to be a tool through which students are expected to reflect critically about how they can approach foreign cultures that have perspectives of life different from theirs.

The material has two main characteristics to keep in mind. First, the unit is very flexible. On the one hand, regarding time, each of these sections is relatively easy to be dealt with, so each part can be developed in 20 or 30 minutes maximum in sessions that can also be developed twice a week. Keeping this in mind, the whole didactic unit can be used in a four-week term and be easily articulated with the Low Advanced English program. On the other hand, it is not necessary to cover the didactic unit in order. The material can be used any time that the teacher or the students require it, and teachers can choose to use the part that they find convenient. Inside the English classroom, teachers can use the unit either as a supportive tool for their class or as the main foundation of work with the students.

Second, the didactic unit is culturally rich, as it is structured based on Hall's (1976) cultural iceberg topics (beliefs, authority, attitudes towards the environment, interpretations and

aesthetics) as mentioned in Chapter 2. At the beginning of each part, the teacher and student can

find the communicative, language awareness, cultural awareness and sociocultural goals that will

be developed. It is suggested that the teacher first reads and explains the instructions to the

students when developing the tasks so that they clearly know what to do.

This chapter presented the didactic material to foster ICC and improve communicative

skills. The language conception used as a basis to develop the unit was described, as well as the

two pedagogical approaches that support it: the Communicative Approach and the Task-based

Approach. The roles of students, teachers and materials were also defined. In the next chapter,

the conclusions of this research, the limitations and advice for further research are presented.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents the conclusions and implications of this research based on the objectives proposed. Firstly, the conclusions will be mentioned based on the methodological route that was followed for the design of the material. Secondly, the implications of the research will be discussed based on the process of creating the didactic material. Thirdly, the limitations that emerged during the research will be mentioned, and finally, the suggestions for future research will be described.

6.1. Conclusions

This research project sought to identify the role that a didactic unit framed within an Intercultural Communicative Approach and based on the Task-based Learning Approach can have in the Low Advanced Level course at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Through the design and application of some of the tasks from the unit, it was possible to find that the unit had the positive role of being a source of cultural information for learners, which gave room to cross-cultural understanding and cultural awareness. It was also an important tool for motivation and vocabulary learning.

Since students were immersed in tasks that contained ICC activities, it was evidenced that this didactic unit allowed learners to increase their cultural knowledge. They learned new aspects that were not usually seen in English class and that expanded their knowledge about the foreign cultures that were covered in the three tasks of the unit. Cross-cultural understanding was another matter in which learners deepened their comprehension. They affirmed they could

understand a number of attitudes and values that seemed to be very different and distant from their perspective. In addition to this, according to the students, dealing with new attitudes and behaviors from other cultures was not easy for them. For that reason, cultural awareness was another aspect that was reinforced with these tasks. Learning new information was a helpful aspect because students reinforced their vocabulary related to foreign words and also historical and religious information that they did not know. Motivation increased during the application of the three activities. This is a vital element that, as teachers, we should never forget when teaching a lesson.

Regarding the first specific objective, a questionnaire was applied to find information from students who had already taken the Low Advanced English course. The purpose was to identify the needs that Low Advanced students have in the development of intercultural communicative abilities for them to be able to understand and interact with other cultures. The main aspects that were mentioned by these students had to do with topics that could contribute to interculturally enrich the program through the exploration of a variety of countries and a more experiential perspective to address the issues.

As to the second specific objective, the contents and resources proposed in the English program and used in the classes were carefully examined. This objective had to do with the exploration of the role of materials used in class in the development of Intercultural Communicative Competences in Low Advanced English. In first place, all of the topics related to ICC were carefully chosen and taken into account to see how the program was sequenced and how it introduced those topics. In second place, all the activities related to ICC such as speaking

projects, conversations and readings were analyzed to see if students were experiencing real life activities that help them to deeply comprehend how other cultures have different beliefs, values and behaviors. Finally, it was identified that some of the main objectives of the English program focused on how students could develop intercultural awareness that promotes the understanding and respect of their own culture and the foreign ones. However, although there are materials in this English level, which have helped students to experience and understand ICC, some intercultural aspects could be fostered so that students may learn about cultural diversity, comprehend and learn more about different ways of perceiving life.

The third specific objective was based on the contextual realization of the material. In this aspect, a questionnaire was applied to the students in which they decided which linguistic abilities were the most difficult ones and needed to be reinforced. Due to the fact that students answered that those skills were listening and speaking, the three tasks applied inside the didactic unit were specifically designed for learners to practice these skills in a way that does not create extra pressure but motivation to continue learning.

The fourth objective was the pedagogical realization of the material. In this aspect, all tasks were designed taking into account the Task-based Approach by Nunan (1989) and the Communicative Approach that emerged at the end of 1960s. After this aspect was developed, the next step to follow was to decide which topics would be covered, the quantity of units and the appropriate vocabulary to introduce inside those units. The tasks were, thus, created based on the two approaches aforementioned. All the units inside the didactic material were developed with the aim that the students use the new vocabulary in conversations, competitions and role-plays,

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which allowed them to internalize the new information. All the tasks inside the unit were varied in terms of creativity and pedagogy, as the idea was not to repeat any activities so that the whole didactic material did not become boring or predictable.

The fifth specific objective was the physical production of materials. This was designed by the researcher and produced by a graphic designer who was in charge of locating all the images, colors and words in the right place. The design was based on the book Aula Internacional 2 by Corpas, Garmendia and Soriano (2013). At the beginning, this book established the final task that would be developed as well as the goals that would be achieved by the end of the class. This characteristic influenced all the sections of the didactic material. They were organized in a way in which the goals and tasks that the students would achieve were always presented from the very beginning.

The sixth specific objective concerned the students' use of the materials. This was developed by the three tasks promoted at the beginning of the course, which showed how the activities were developed inside the English classroom and how the teacher and students performed the tasks that were designed inside the didactic unit. All the three tasks were applied to be performed between 20 and 30 minutes. With the teacher's permission, they contained games, role-plays, discussions, videos and more aspects that contributed to the student's use of the material.

The seventh and last objective was the evaluation of the material. In this respect, at the end of the three tasks developed, every student had the opportunity to evaluate the activities and topics during the task as the teacher gave them a framework of specific characteristics that help

students to evaluate the material and to express their opinions about the three tasks proposed

before. This allowed the researcher to have a brief perspective of what students thought about the

tasks and identify opportunities to change and improve for future uses.

This didactic unit was designed to contain different series of tasks that can contribute to

the development of ICC. Moreover, they could also serve as a support for the teacher in cases in

which it is necessary to explain aspects related to intercultural experiences. The teacher acts as

an intercultural mediator in the eventual cases in which activities get tense or there are cultural

shocks inside the classroom. This didactic material can also be readjusted to serve as a

complement for the teacher's class and readapted according to students' abilities. This didactic

unit was designed to serve as a guide for the students in which they can find diverse information

about cultures and varied tasks that motivate them to participate in class.

Inside the didactic unit, the theoretical and pedagogical foundation based on the

researcher's application and the advisor's contributions can be reflected. It was possible to create

and sequence the tasks in a way that could be comprehended by students and serve as a guide for

teachers. The pictures inside the didactic unit were included by the researcher and the designer

from websites that were referenced at the end of the unit. After the design of the material and

once corrections were finished, the next step was to print and to bind the pages.

6.2. Implications

Reflections in this section are based on four different contexts: the field of Applied Linguistics,

specifically regarding material development to foster ICC in Latin America, B.A. programs in

Colombia, the B.A. in Modern Languages Teaching at Universidad Javeriana, and the researcher, as a future teacher of Modern Languages.

This material supposes a contribution to the field of Applied Linguistics as it promotes the development of materials with the proposal of fostering ICC activities inside the English classroom. In addition to this, the material becomes meaningful support for the development of ICC among the students as it increases the appreciation of diversity in foreign cultures and allows students to overcome stereotypes and misconceptions that they had been having about other cultures.

Another implication for the field of Applied Linguistics is that this material is a contribution to support the learning of a target language. Its activities have enough vocabulary related to different countries, which can awake students' interest to learn another language apart from English. At the same time, they can learn about a foreign culture in a very creative and didactic way.

For Latin America, this research implies that students and people, in general, increase their interest to travel to another country and give themselves the chance to know about cultural aspects that can be necessary to communicate with foreigners, such as: gestures, social distance, attitudes, manners and more. They could be open to the possibility of appreciating their own culture without forgetting the importance of other cultures. In general terms, this material does not focus on giving more credit to one culture than the other; this material implies that people be aware of the several beliefs and values that cultures have and how important it is to deal with

those aspects with respect and tolerance to avoid stereotypes that prevent people from establishing social relationships.

Regarding Colombia, conducting this research implies the development and promotion of projects that focus on cultures around the world. In other words, this material can be useful to help students change the way they interpret the attitudes and behaviors of other cultures in a positive way. Moreover, this didactic unit can inspire the creation of other materials that could foster ICC among students by referring to a wide variety of cultures. Given the fact that there needs to be more research and materials related to ICC, this didactic unit could serve as main support for teachers and researchers who want to create or explore methods, projects and resources that promote the development of ICC.

As to the Faculty of Communication and Language at Universidad Javeriana, this research supposes the promotion of the development of more materials that foster ICC and that consider different languages to learn apart from English due to the fact that there is a low number of didactic materials that foster ICC inside the university. This material could be a contribution for the design and creation of new ones that prepare students to intercultural encounters and real life situations that make them reflect about what it implies to comprehend a new culture.

The University could implement this material with the objective of testing how positively it increases students' motivation and participation. Foreign students are constantly participating in international exchanges at Universidad Javeriana and it could be an appropriate context to test the material. Doing so can lead students to a better understanding of foreign cultures and also to the possibility of seeing how communicative skills can be improved with the use of this material.

Once the results are analyzed, it could be decided if some changes could be done inside the material based on pedagogical and intercultural aspects.

For me, as a researcher and as a future teacher, this study implies the efforts to develop more research based on the aim of fostering ICC and how to design materials that could be adapted to students' needs and teachers' lesson plans. Furthermore, this material implies the implementation of more testing evaluations in different groups like children, adults and foreigners to prove the effectivity of the material and to design more didactic materials that can be adapted to these populations.

Another implication is the possible invitation to students and teachers to participate, research, design and promote didactic materials that promote the development of ICC through different strategies, methodologies and projects that foster individual active participation in intercultural topics. Conducting this study implies the need to consider the development of more tests in other English levels to foster research in foreign cultures. This study regarded the Low advanced level, but the other courses would be important to consider as well.

This research was a helpful resource to have a close understanding of what materials design is about, its main process and the important elements that people must keep in mind before creating one: students' needs and a main purpose. This research also taught me that through a didactic unit, it is possible to foster ICC by using different tasks that help learners to improve their communicative skills.

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6.3. Limitations

During all the process of creating the material, some limitations emerged, which affected the production of the material. The first limitation was time. It was not possible to create more tasks in the didactic material due to the lack of time. Every task that was designed required a high amount of time to choose an audio that could meet the students' English level, that was interesting and dynamic and that was related to the topic that was seen in class. For that reason, more tasks were impossible to be created; there were no videos related to the topic and the time that is required to design one task is needed to find the appropriate one with all needed characteristics. This delayed the production of the didactic unit.

The second limitation concerned money. It was difficult to design more activities due to the high costs that creating this material involves. All the physical production of the material and the design demanded high costs that made the continuation of the creation of more tasks impossible. All in all, the program that the designer used for the creation of the didactic unit demanded high costs that increased the impossibility of the task continuation design.

The third limitation was the application of the material. In first place, it was planned that all the tasks inside the didactic unit would be implemented, but due to the lack of time of the students and the teacher, only three tasks were applied to the students. However, this allowed me to know how topics and activities inside the tasks were assimilated by students as well as which aspects could be changed inside the didactic unit for it to improve.

Finally, during the development of the evaluation at the end of every activity, students showed a lack of motivation to answer the questions related to their opinions and ideas about the

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tasks developed. As a matter of fact, some students' answers were incomplete, because they had to go to another class and this supposed a difficulty for the analysis. However, it was possible to collect the necessary number of students' answers, so this facilitated the analysis of which activities needed some improvements or changes.

It was possible to apply some tasks to the students and identify their opinions and perspectives about the material. Doing so helped me as a researcher to arrange and change a number of aspects based on the design: the methodologies used to apply the tasks and the time proposed for the implementation. This helped me to decide which elements of the didactic unit were positive to foster ICC and which should be improved or changed for a better comprehension and use.

6.4. Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the positive effects that this material had in the Low Advanced English level, I suggest that the production of more didactic materials that foster ICC be supported in the future. This can become a useful guide and tool that allows teachers to prepare their classes while adapting activities to the students' skills and needs. In addition to this, another aspect that could be suggested for future research is whether students changed their perceptions about foreign cultures with the use of the material and if their levels of motivation and participation increased during the application of the didactic unit.

To finish, one aspect that could be researched in depth is whether this unit could be applied in different English levels in order to discover to what extent students accept the invitation to explore the diverse cultures that the didactic unit proposes. Moreover, a possibility

to be considered is whether the development of ICC could be seen from a different perspective beyond the pedagogical one; for instance, a moral, political and ethical view. This would imply a number of discussions such as how ICC is connected with human rights and how others respect others' beliefs and ideas without using violence as a tool to solve conflicts.

Another aspect that could be explored is if the didactic unit could be applied for the learning of different languages, not only English. This could be a supportive tool that can enrich students' linguistic skills as they are learning a different language, and at the same time, they are practicing how this language is used inside the communities with the use of the didactic material.

Future research related to ICC could serve as a way to foster new educational perspectives related to teaching cultural aspects that were never seen before. It is important to mention that this didactic unit included a number of curious and important aspects related to culture, but there are a high number of aspects about foreign cultures that could be also included in didactic materials, because they can be a contribution to students' cultural knowledge.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Needs Analysis

Pontificia Universidad Javeriana
Facultad de Comunicación y Lenguaje
Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas con Énfasis en Inglés y Francés

Dear Student,

This inquiry looks to gather pertinent data, for the realization of my research project at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, (PUJ) in the Modern Languages degree. The objective is to identify the role that a didactic unit, based on the task-based approach to learning, and framed within an intercultural communicative perspective, can have in the students of Low Advanced English level at the Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas of the PUJ.

Based on the aforementioned information, I appreciate your collaboration to answer the questions that you will find in this questionnaire. The answers and ideas that you expose will be treated with discretion, responsibility and will be used only for academic purposes.

Cordially,
Luisa Fernanda Robles Vega
Estudiante de LLM Inglés y Francés
luisa-robles@javeriana.edu.co

-- -

INSTRUCTION:

Answer these questions according to the experiences that you have lived at the Low Advanced English Level.

      Language Learning

1- Based on the four linguistic abilities, which one is easier for you to put on practice at the moment of doing an activity? Please number these possibilities from 1 to 4, where 1 is the hardest and 4 is the least difficult.

      __ writing
      __ reading
      __ speaking
      __ listening

Why? _____
_____

BEYOND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

2- ¿How do you prefer to learn English? Write an X under the most appropriate option for you and justify your answer.

Option	Justification
Individually	
In couples	
In groups	

3- What kind of activities do you like to do for learning English?
__ Listening to songs
__ Reading texts
__ Doing dramatizations or role games
__ Watching movies
__ Participating in games and competitions
__ Other(s). Which? _____

Intercultural communicative competence

4- Intercultural communication competence is "(…) the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriately effective communication behaviors that recognize the interactans´ multiple identities in a specific environment" (Chen & Starosta, 1996, p.358).

Based on the definition mentioned before, do you consider that the students of the Modern Languages degree have a high Intercultural communicative competence?

Yes ___   No ___

Why?_____
_____

5- Which one of the topics seen in the course of Low Advanced Level related with intercultural content caught more your attention? Please make a list and explain your choices.

-
-
-
-

Reasons: _____
_____

BEYOND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

6- Taking into account the materials that have been used in the Low Advanced Level course, which of these you think that have contributed the most to the development of your intercultural communicative competence?
_____
_____

Why?_____
_____

7- Do you consider that there is an intercultural topic (or topics) that could contribute to enrich the program of the Low Intermediate Level course?

Yes___   No ___

Which one(s)? _____
                    _____

8- In what way(s) do you think that this or these topics can contribute to enrich the program of the Low Advanced Level course?
_____
_____
_____

9- On the following table, chose one number in the scale, where 1 is the highest degree and 4 is the lowest degree of agreement based on the following statement:

The different topics addressed in the last English level helped me to spread my knowledge of:

Topic	1	2	3	4	Justification
History					
Language					
Culture					

BEYOND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

Annex 2: Fragment of the English program

PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD JAVERIANA
FACULTAD DE COMUNICACIÓN Y LENGUAJE
LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS MODERNAS CON ÉNFASIS EN INGLÉS Y FRANCÉS

SUBJECT PROGRAM	
Subject: LOW ADVANCED / ADVANCED ENGLISH II	
Department: Languages	

Number of credits: Low Advanced (5 credits); Advanced II (3 credits)		**Subject ID:** 6143
Academic term: 1930		**Hours per week:** 10

	NAME	**ELECTRONIC MAIL**
TEACHERS	Rafael Diaz Morales	**rafael.diaz@javeriana.edu.co**
	Pedro Chala	**pchala@javeriana.edu.co**
	Andrés Hernandez	**andres_hernandez@javeriana.edu.co**
	Hans Luyckx	**hluyckx@javeriana.edu.co**

DESCRIPTION
This is the seventh level in the English Program of the B. A. in the teaching of Modern Languages -English and French- offered by the Faculty of Communication and Languages at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá. Considering the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Learning, Teaching and Assessment, students are expected to reach a **C1.2** level of proficiency in the English language upon finishing Low Advanced / Advanced English II. In this course, students consolidate their communicative skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) to organize their discourse and adapt it according to the level of formality of the context. Students are expected to express their ideas with fluency, clarity and spontaneity both orally and in writing, developing and supporting their ideas and opinions, and using appropriate compensation strategies when necessary. Regarding intercultural awareness, students are expected to examine, understand and (re)define themselves as cultural subjects by means of the analysis of a range of social, cultural, scientific and pedagogic topics.

FORMATION OBJECTIVES

General objectives:
- To encourage the education of an intercultural awareness which can allow students to value their own cultural richness and that of the foreign language speakers from their perspectives as language users, analysts and educators.
- To contribute to the consolidation of the students' communicative skills so they can perform appropriately and effectively in different communicative contexts addressing a variety of topics.
- To provide students with lexical-grammatical tools which can allow them to use the foreign language in a natural and flexible manner keeping in mind different academic, social, professional and leisure purposes.

Expected Learning Outcomes (ELO):
- **Culture:** To explore the value of culture and language within the current globalized society by means of the analysis and comparison of cultural expressions.
- **Listening:** To identify general and specific information that is implicit or explicit in demanding oral texts dealing with both abstract and concrete topics related to the contents of the course.
- **Speaking:** To express concrete and specific ideas in a variety of communicative situations related to the course topics in a clear, fluid and spontaneous way keeping in mind context appropriateness.

BEYOND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

- **Reading:** To identify general and specific information –implicit or explicit in written texts– related to the author's purpose, intentions and opinions.
- **Writing:** To produce problem-solution argumentative essays in a clear, structured, concise and detailed manner about topics of personal interest, and demonstrating an accurate use of mechanisms of organization, articulation, cohesion and support of ideas.

MINIMUM KNOWLEDGE CONTENTS (TABLE OF CONTENTS)

Low Advanced / Advanced English II students are expected to reach the learning outcomes mentioned above while addressing the following topics, tasks, and competences:

TOPICS	OBJECTIVES
Definition of Culture	To build the concepts of culture and intercultural awareness based on reflection and experience
World Englishes	To identify relevant characteristics of and differences among some varieties of English
Types and Stereotypes	To analyze cultural beliefs, principles and behaviors influencing both individuals and societies
Verbal and Non-verbal Patterns	To determine the importance of verbal and non-verbal patterns in different cultures
Family Values and Relationships	To discuss points of view with regards to different types of relationships in society
Culture in the ELT Classroom	To apply strategies on how to manage culture in the classroom by means of a class project

VOCABULARY	SPEAKING	LISTENING
Topics **First Term:** ● Language and Culture (Intercultural Competence) ● World Englishes (Standard and non-standard variety, Dialect, Accent, Sociolect, Jargon, Slang, Idiolect, Register), National stereotypes **Second term:** ● Taboos and social issues ● Personal relationships, families **Third term** ● Faith and superstition ● Nonverbal communication **Strategies** ● Using context clues to infer meaning ● Identifying and using word forms ● Recognizing and using synonyms and paraphrases ● Detecting and using commonly confused words ● Identifying and using idiomatic expressions ● Distinguishing between literal and figurative meanings	● Giving clear, detailed and well-structured descriptions and presentations of complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion ● Sharing and discussing knowledge and personal beliefs about a given topic ● Telling and encouraging others to share anecdotes ● Agreeing and disagreeing with other people's opinions ● Conducting a debate and responding appropriately to complex and controversial questions ● Sharing predictions and opinions on a wide range of topics even if they are new ies ● Presenting well-structured oral arguments ● Using and checking understanding of new words and expressions ● Recognizing and using figurative language ● Paraphrasing and reacting to quotes ● Adding details and examples to support main ideas	● Filling charts and graphic organizers ● Completing paraphrased texts with literal and nonliteral information ● Answering different types of questions: open-ended, true-false-NG, and multiple choice ● Designing a listening project including pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening activities ies ● Listening for details in extended speech in abstract and complex topics, even if accent is unfamiliar ● Identifying and understanding idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts ● Listening for gist in extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships between ideas are implied and not signalled explicitly ● Identifying attitudes and points of view in complex interactions in discussion and debate, even on abstract, complex unfamiliar topics ● Making inferences about a speaker's intention ● Organizing and synthesizing information ● Relating information to one's viewpoints

BEYOND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

READING	WRITING	GRAMMAR
s will work with a wide range of complex texts likely to be encountered in social, professional, or academic life ●Identifying main ideas and summarizing them ●Relating supporting details to main ideas ●Organizing and synthesizing information from texts ●Identifying finer points of detail including attitudes as well as implied and stated opinions ●Interpreting quotations ●Restating ideas from a text ●Identifying author's purpose/intention ●Identifying types of discourse ure Book: To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee ies ●Making predictions ●Scanning for details ●Inferring information not explicit in the text ●Locating specific informati on in the text	**Topics** **First Term:** ●Problem-solutions essay overview ●Introduction (hook, contextual information, thesis) ●Fallacies **Second term:** ●The body ●Quoting and referencing **Third term** ●Conclusion ●Peer-, self- teacher and out-of-class assessment **Strategies** ●Organizing texts in a clear and well-structured way talking about relevant and complex subjects ●Expanding and supporting points of view with subsidiary ideas, reasons, and relevant examples ●Writing in a natural, personal and convincing style, appropriate to the reader in mind ●Editing and proofreading ●Avoiding fallacies ●Using rhetoric strategies ●Focusing on structure: introduction, body, and conclusion ●Writing a thesis statement, topic sentences, concluding sentences and final thoughts	**Topics** **First Term:** ●Recycling grammar topics: tenses, aspects, conditionals, gerunds and infinitives, articles, quantifiers, wish clauses ●Noun phrases ●Subject-verb agreement (all tenses and aspects) **Second term:** ●Subjunctive in present and in past (all cases) ●Passive voice: all tenses (Including forms after gerunds and infinitives) ●Present and past participles as adjectives (including reduced relative clauses) **Third term** ●Emphatic structures (inversion) ●Paired conjunctions (not only… but also, both… and, as well as) ●Parallel structure **Strategies** ● Trying to find out why I make grammar mistakes. ● Focusing on using grammar rules correctly when speaking or writing. ● Noticing a new grammar rule when they exist in a listening or a reading text.

BEYOND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

Annex 3: Questionnaire

Pontificia Universidad Javeriana
Facultad de Comunicación y Lenguaje
Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas con Énfasis en Inglés y Francés

Dear Student,

This inquiry looks to gather pertinent data for the realization of my research project at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (PUJ) in the Modern Languages degree. The objective of my research is to identify the role that a didactic unit, based on the task-based approach to learning, and framed within an intercultural communicative perspective, can have in the students of Low Advanced English level at the Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas of the PUJ.

Based on the aforementioned information, I appreciate your help answering the questions that you will find in this questionnaire. The answers and ideas that you expose will be treated with discretion, responsibility and will be used only for academic purposes.

Cordially,
Luisa Fernanda Robles Vega
Estudiante de LLM Inglés y Francés
luisa-robles@javeriana.edu.co

INSTRUCTION:
Answer these questions according to your interests and experiences as a language learner.

1- Based on the four linguistic abilities, which one is easiest/most difficult for you to put into practice? Number these possibilities from 1 to 4, where 1 is the hardest and 4 is the easiest for you.
　　　__ writing
　　　__ reading
　　　__ speaking
　　　__ listening

Why? _____
_____

2- How do you prefer to learn English? Write an X over the most appropriate option for you and justify your answer.

Option	Justification
a-Individually	
b-In couples	

BEYOND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

c-In groups	

3- What kind of activities do you like to do for learning and/or practicing English?
__ Listening to songs
__ Reading texts
__ Doing dramatizations or role games
__ Watching movies
__ Participating in games and competitions
__ Other(s). Which? _____

4- What kind of movies or T.V series do you like to watch? Mention them and explain your choice(s)
-
-
-
-
_____
_____

5- What kind of curious or new aspects related to foreign cultures would you like to see in the Low Advanced English classroom? Mention them below and then explain your choices.
-
-
-
-
_____
_____

6- If you had the opportunity of getting to know a new culture, which one(s) would you like to know about? Explain your choice(s).
_____
_____

7- Below are some aspects to know when visiting another country, choose three of them you consider most important and explain why you chose them.
-Family Values__   -Concept of cleanliness__   -Interpretations__
-Self-concept__   -Relation to authority__   -Concept of justice__
-Attitudes toward the environment__   -Work ethics__   -Notions of modesty__
-Humor__   -Gestures__   -Competitiveness__
-Beauty Ideals__   -Gender roles__
_____
_____
_____

Adapted from: https://co.pinterest.com/pin/307792955776274079/

BEYOND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

Annex 4: Consent form

CONSENT FORM

Dear Low Advanced student,

    I am currently doing a research project at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. My research project is titled "BEYOND CULTURAL STEREOTYPES, A NEW WINDOW TO EXPERIENCE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENT ENCOUNTERS THROUGH A TASK-BASED DIDACTIC UNIT," and its main objective is to identify the role that a didactic unit framed within a intercultural communicative approach and based on the task-based learning/ approach can have in the development of culture in the English classroom in Low Advanced English level students of the B.A. in Modern Languages at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

    You are kindly invited to participate voluntarily in the research. The following information will help you to make a decision whether to take part or not.

    You will be asked to take part in communicative tasks every week during the ordinary development of classes. These tasks will include sharing your own opinions and feelings regarding issues that concern us socially and culturally. Furthermore, there will be interviews with you throughout the course; for this end, and if you consent, I will use a video camera or a voice recorder so that your responses can be kept for a detailed analysis. It is important to mention the original programme for Low Advanced will not be changed. The communicative tasks will take some time during the classes, but the topics of the class will be dealt with according to what is stated in the course programme.

    The findings in the project will be presented at professional events as part of the research degree requirements and possibly published in academic databases. In both cases, your identity will be kept confidential, and the recordings and samples of your texts and conversations will be used strictly for academic purposes and only with your consent.

    I would appreciate your permission to include quotes from your texts and answers in the interviews, surveys or questionnaires in academic events as well as in the paper(s) I intend to submit for approval in my Bachelor's Degree and later publication. Your real name will not be used in reports or articles if you do not agree with it. If you would prefer that I use a fictitious name to protect your privacy, please write your name choice here: _____.

Statement of consent: I have read the information provided above, and I consent to take part in the study.

Your signature: _____
Your full name: _____
Date: _____

In addition to my agreement to participate, I also consent to having my interviews in the feedback sessions recorded _____ video-taped _____ (Mark with an X the option that you would prefer)

Thanks a lot for all your help and consideration.

Cordially,

Luisa Fernanda Robles Vega
Student of Modern Languages
E-mail: luisa.rv97@gmail.com

Annex 5: Task evaluation

Pontificia Universidad Javeriana

Beyond cultural stereotypes, a new window to experience intercultural communicative competent encounters through a task-based didactic unit

Interpretations: Compound Words.

Date:_____

What can you take from this task?

Complete the following statements with aspects that caught your attention in the activities that were developed in this session. In all cases, justify your answer.

STEM	COMPLETION	JUSTIFICATION
The most important aspect to me in this session was…		
What I learned through the development of the activities was…		
Something that caught my attention was…		
After the development of the activities, I want to know more about…		
The activity that I liked the most was…		
My participation in the debates, interactions and discussions carried out in the task was…		
The skills that I used the most in the activities developed were…		
¿What is your general opinion about the activities?		