Implementing sociolinguistic and intercultural competences through the use of authentic materials in a 5th grade public school

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Dedicatory

Firstly, I give all the glory to God, who saved me and rescued me throughout his son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit that now dwells in me and allows me to have Christ’s mind. It is dedicated to my family specially my wife and mother who had been supporting and encouraging me to become a better person. I give thanks to all the people who were involved directly or indirectly in my process. Also, I want to mention the ILEX institute staff which gave me the opportunity to be part of their great teaching team.

Dedicatoria

Primeramente, le doy a Dios toda la gloria, quien me rescató y me salvo por medio de su hijo Jesucristo, y el Espíritu Santo que ahora mora en mí y me permite tener la mente de Cristo. Dedicado a mi familia, especialmente mi esposa y mi madre que han estado ayudándome y dándome ánimo para ser una mejor persona. Agradezco a todas las personas involucradas directa o indirectamente en mi proceso. Quiero también mencionar al personal del instituto ILEX quien me ha dado la oportunidad de ser parte de su gran equipo de profesores.
Abstract

This classroom project aims at implementing and developing sociolinguistic and intercultural competences through the use of authentic materials in the English language classroom. The project departs from the idea that language is not isolated but integrated with culture, and the effort to change traditional practices for more meaningful ones. Thus, the communicative competence includes other aspects such as sociolinguistic and the intercultural competences which allow that learners use language in context and to become representatives of their cultures and be aware of other cultural identities. The participants were 36 young learners between 10 to 12 years old, from a 5th grade from a public school in Colombia. In the methodology classes were planned based on the school’s curriculum, embracing authentic materials as the tool for exposing English language learners to the related social and intercultural practices. The strategies used were implicit teaching, comparing and contrasting as well as teaching content from other subjects. This project encouraged learners to understand and produce language focusing on meaning rather than grammar rules. The activities provoked wonder and motivation in learners; moreover, they were able to connect previous knowledge to the school’s curriculum and to real world issues. Nevertheless, it was noticed that to design this type of activities could be time demanding, and that constant reflection in language learning theory is required to improve the effectivity of further results.
Resumen

Este proyecto de clase se enfoca en implementar y desarrollar competencias sociolinguísticas e interculturales por medio del uso de materiales auténticos en las clases de lengua inglesa. El proyecto parte de la idea que el lenguaje no es separado sino integrado a la cultura, y de la necesidad de cambiar prácticas tradicionales por unas más significativas. Así, la competencia comunicativa incluye otros aspectos tales como las competencias sociolinguísticas e interculturales que permiten que los estudiantes usen el lenguaje en contexto y se vuelvan representantes de su cultura y estén más abiertos a otras identidades culturales. Los participantes fueron 36 jóvenes entre los 10 y los 12 años de quinto grado en una escuela primaria pública en Colombia. En la metodología las clases fueron planeadas con base en el currículo de la escuela, abordando materiales auténticos como la herramienta para exponer a los estudiantes de inglés a las prácticas relacionadas con lo social y lo intercultural. Se incluye el uso de estrategias de enseñanza implícita, comparación y contraste, además la inclusión del contenido de otras materias. Este Proyecto incentivo a los estudiantes a producir y entender el lenguaje enfocándose en el significado más que en la gramática. Las actividades provocaron asombro y admiración; además, ellos fueron capaces de conectar conocimientos previos al currículo escolar y al mundo real. No obstante, se evidencio que diseñar este tipo de actividades puede ser desgastante en relación al tiempo, y que es necesaria una constante reflexión en teorías del aprendizaje de la lengua para mejorar la efectividad de los resultados.
Introduction

This classroom project strives on the search to implement communicative methodologies in language classrooms by incorporating sociolinguistic and intercultural aspects through the use of authentic materials. Concepts such as the ‘sociolinguistic competence’ and ‘intercultural competence’ have been around for quite a long time. Those concepts exposed that real language use occurs in real world contexts, and that grammatical knowledge is not enough to communicate. Nevertheless, these types of competences are still left aside in most language classrooms due to many facts. First, the reasons and arguments to implement this classroom project will be introduced; second, a short explanation about the theoretical views of the experts will be introduced; third, the methods, design and context will be disclosed; finally, the results and reflections will be presented.

It is a tendency to use traditional approaches in language teaching, overlooking social and cultural components. The challenge is understood as an absence to include intercultural competences and it is evidenced in a lack of authenticity in the language classroom. The last creates a necessity to work in projects that motivate students to use language in context and to expose them to social and intercultural practices. Although the policies of bilingualism in Colombia keep raising the standards, in most language classrooms there is a lack of spaces to include authentic language and intercultural practices (Bonilla 2012, Linares 2011, Barletta 2009). Therefore, there are many advantages about implementing fresher approaches in language teaching. The project was based on including a more complete design for learners to be exposed to social intercultural practices throughout the use of authentic materials. By including the use
content methodologies and leaving aside the overuse of grammatical structures it is possible to expose learners to these competences.

In the theory, it is a detailed timeline which includes the most important definitions of the project. To start, Chomsky (1965) first coined terms such as ‘competences’ and ‘performance’ in the search to study linguistic issues. In the 1970’s communicative methodologies and the ‘communicative approach’ were born (Campbell and Walles, 1970, Hymes, 1972); from those terms coined by the first academics a variety of terms were developed. For instance, the ‘sociolinguistic competence’ (Graham 1997, Meyerhof 2006), refers that language does not uniquely depend from grammatical abilities but from its use in certain contexts. In a more specific view, experts created the ‘intercultural competence’ a more narrow concept which goes further, and explains that a certain context is not enough, and that it is necessary to have the skills to interact in unknown contexts. Therefore, in this project, the intercultural competence became an effective platform to build sociolinguistic competences.

In this project there is an emphasis in the term ‘intercultural competence’ defined as the "ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities." Byram et al.(2002). The term has to do with the ability to have a shared understanding of cultural beliefs, values and behaviors; also to recognize their own identity and culture, and to properly interact with others using the appropriate communicative skills. Byram et al. (2002) explain that authentic materials are the best sources to teach intercultural practices; they are materials designed for social purposes. The inclusions of content based methodologies are also suggested with intercultural curriculums for language teaching and educational purposes. (Coyle et al. 2010). To conclude the theory, in the related studies two similar projects were included, which
were performed in different contexts. Those were very useful to start planning a design and to support the use of the internet and the mass media as a great source of authentic materials.

The methods are as follow, the study took place in a recognized primary public school in Pereira, where English is taught as a subject around two hours per week, and the school has a well-organized curriculum. The English level of the learners was an elementary level; besides the learners, other participants were the in-service teacher and I as teacher practitioner and implementer. The design was based on strategies to promote the development of the mentioned competences and includes authors that focus on clear strategies to implement the competences. For instance, comparing and contrasting strategies, connecting content with curriculum and other specifics. In the resources, it is shown the kind of pedagogical materials and devices used. In the reflection section, theory was connected with the practice, and Gibbs (1998) model was used to categorize the main stages of reflection. Also, an organized process was employed to compare the theory to the practices, using reflective questions, drafts and journals; concluding in specific categories such as professional growth, student´s responses, intercultural and linguistic outcomes.
**Justification**

As a future language teacher in Colombia, it is necessary to consider creating English language projects related to our own context, connecting the classroom with real world issues. The English language is becoming a requisite not only in public schools of the country but also as an influential language to communicate around the world. Although the policies of bilingualism keep raising the standards, it is an issue that most language classrooms lack of spaces to include authentic language and intercultural practices. Therefore, this project was aimed to implement a fresh approach in language teaching. The project was based on exposing learners to social intercultural practices by exposing learners to authentic materials and content, leaving aside the overuse of grammatical structures.

Nowadays English does not belong to a specific society since it is a language used by many cultures and groups. Due to the diverse intercultural values of the English language, it has become the universal language which goes away from any specific Anglophonic nation. The UNESCO (2005) claims that the universality in researches and scientific debates have been imposing English as the language in dominance. This influential position raises many controversial attitudes in the fields of humanistic, social sciences, information technologies and many more areas since the English language is the vector which restricts many other languages.

There is a need to prepare learners for a more intercultural approach of the language and not only knowledge of grammatical rules. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) has introduced the ‘Intercultural competence’ as one of the vital aims of language teaching. Byram et al. (2002) illustrate the significance: “emphasizing that language learners need to acquire not just grammatical competence but also the knowledge of what is 'appropriate'
language.” (p.9) In that sense the Council of Europe has developed a project designed to bring intercultural practices into the classroom which was relevant to this classroom project since it is a practical guide in ‘developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching’.

Integrating tasks that promote intercultural awareness in classrooms, not only enlarge students’ knowledge of a foreign culture, but also give them consciousness of their own. Byram et al. (2002) explain that teaching intercultural aspects, benefits learners to acquire the competences needed to produce language in a proper way; also they can understand people from other cultural identities. In that sense, including activities to promote cross-cultural awareness could also reinforce receptive and productive skills and possibly help students to achieve proper interaction. As a result, learners could understand more about other cultures and not forget what their cultural roots and identity are.

Even though scholars have coined ideal terms like the ‘intercultural’ and ‘sociolinguistic’ competences; reports from our context reveal that in reality most of English teaching persists about teaching only grammatical forms and structures. Bonilla (2012) states that “In the case of teaching, it has long been thought that teaching English is teaching the language itself, so teachers center their attention on language forms and functions, overlooking social and cultural factors generated by this interrelationship.” (p.184); this explains common mistakes of the teachers who fail to bring sociocultural awareness to the language classroom and continue to use only the grammatical side of the language in their classroom practices.

In spite of all the attempts from scholars, the reality shows that most teachers in Colombia still have a very traditional approach. Barletta (2009) identifies challenges to teach the intercultural dimension among in-service teachers in Colombia. One of the main problems is that
in this context most teachers are not well prepared for the issue since teaching based on structure prevails. Moreover, there are misconceptions about communicative teaching, not forgetting that the teaching of culture is not a priority. Furthermore, she explains in her article that not many textbooks deal with the challenge of appropriately teaching culture. The challenge is conceivable as a gap in making a move from solely teaching the structure of the grammatical competence, to include the teaching of social and intercultural competences.

There is plenty of evidence that Colombian classrooms lack of authentic spaces to teach language for real life; besides, in our context most teachers do not use sociocultural content to teach the target language. Linares (2011) reports the words of Watson, an expert in bilingualism, and a magister in educational policies who criticizes that point, “The reality is that teachers are not well prepared, therefore students reject them and find in the internet real ludic spaces in English through music and arts…”, she implies the necessity to bring learner’s interests to the classroom. The expert also explains how students find their own context in sources like authentic songs, TV programs, internet, movies, etc. Besides, it is mentioned that learners find their own cultural context by using more urban manifestations of authentic English. The problem is that in classrooms, students usually receive input of the same standard variant, regularized and full of grammar norms.

Although Colombia has strong policies of bilingualism in schools there is not a real context to learn communicative competences. Moreover, the implementation of bilingualism is not as easy as just implementing the policies as mentioned by Watson “the policies are a misconception since there is not a real need or a real life context that request students to use the language.” Linares (2011). Therefore, the policies need to work together with ‘projects’ which motivate students to use English and allow teachers to bring real life context to the classrooms.
Those are the basis for a necessity to explore with implementations of educational practices that can be meaningful and contextualized for learners.

Furthermore, It is acceptable that most of the texts and activities in Colombian schools are not using materials or ‘texts’ that can show the social reality or context of other cultures. According to Morales & Beltrán (2006), many authors do not give consideration to the difference between of authentic and edited materials. Most of the written texts are usually edited and not authentic since a publishing house creates them and the listening exercises involve natives in unreal situations. In that sense, it is convenient to explore on implementing materials that include sociocultural knowledge and not isolated language activities. It can benefit students to find insights of different world views. Perhaps, learners start to understand the world’s multicultural views and identities and could learn not to stereotype others with a perceived identity.

The project is viable since many authors agree that exposing students to authentic materials is a way to bring the real world to the classroom and to give students an enriching exposure to other cultures and their own social context. (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Martinez, 2002; Vahid, 2011; Gilmore, 2007). An appropriate reason of practicality is that all these authors suggest that the regular use of authentic materials combined with culture teaching activities could be a way in which students learn a foreign language more significantly. For that reason, in this project using authentic materials is the instrument in which learners are more connected with the intercultural side of the language.

This proposal is innovative since learners are exposed to different types of input, particularly contextualized content according to their needs. The plan is to use significant input
in the classroom that is leveled and aligned with the school curriculum and Ministerio de Educacion Nacional (2006). Based on that position, the use of authentic materials it is also related to the use of content based materials as an educational source. Coyle et al. (2010) argued that authentic materials are appropriate to teach intercultural understanding which could be used together with other subjects. In respect to developing intercultural experiences, the same author explains as recommended approaches the inclusion of the class ethos, the curriculum linking to other classes, the content of the unit, and the connections to the real world. Nevertheless, in the current project, communicative methodologies based on content, such as Content Based Instruction (CBI) and Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), were conveniently incorporated.

It is important to mention that at the end of the implementation there are four basic areas of reflection. Those areas are professional growth, students’ responses, linguistic outcomes and intercultural outcomes. The main instruments of reflection in this project are a personal journal notebook as a draft with the notes and the analysis of the teaching done or “On Action” by breaking down and interpreting the recalled information; for that journal, Gibbs (1988) model of reflection was chosen. These reflections reveal the pertinence of the four areas in relation to the experts’ works, and the potential strengths and challenges of the project.

The inclusion of meaningful content related to real world issues and curriculum connections was pertinent to create lessons in which learners were able to create connections among language, content and intercultural knowledge; also, the assistance of the in-service teacher was key to develop the lesson plans and to work in discipline issues. However, it was time consuming to design lessons and transform them in to the required activities which contained the necessary input. It was noticed that learners were highly motivated and that they
were able to grasp and use language correctly without focusing on structure. Finally, it is important to include more strategies like pre-teaching vocabulary, modeling and the inclusion of activities that involve different learning styles.

In conclusion, the concept of ‘intercultural competence’ involves the idea that language is not isolated from, but a part of culture. The teaching of intercultural competences can create awareness and empathy towards other cultures and identity of the own culture. In our context, there is a necessity to work in the implementation of strategies for cross-cultural awareness in the classrooms. The project is based on students’ needs to be skilled representatives of their own culture and learn how to interact better with other cultures and to widen their knowledge about the world. The vehicle selected was authentic materials and content added to the school’s curriculum as a source of input to cultivate learners’ communicative competence. The use of authentic materials concerns to this project since teaching ‘real world’ issues require actual records of social interaction. The use of constant reflection favored the improvement of the results which were mostly positive and consistent with the theoretical views. However, there is always place for further improvements due to the novelty of the project.
Theoretical Framework

The concepts that frame this project are the teaching of sociolinguistic and intercultural language competences, and the use of authentic materials. The terms sociolinguistic and intercultural have been coined by experts to explain the relation between language and culture as integral components of the communicative competence. Many experts agree on the importance of teaching cultural and social aspects when teaching a language, and even more important they agree that it is part of the communicative competence.

The sociolinguistic competence goes together with grammatical, pragmatic, and strategic domains, all shares of the communicative competence. Meyerhoff (2006) points out that the sociolinguistic competence intertwines with pragmatics and supersedes grammatical or structural competences, therefore going beyond the lexical and syntactic. The fact is that real communication occurs in real contexts and the grammatical side of the language itself is not enough to properly communicate. Therefore, Meyerhoff (2006) refers to the importance of teaching the sociolinguistic competence together with linguistic competences.

The definitions of the concepts are rather ambiguous since they are compound terms; therefore, it is significant to review the evolution and background of them. Although the first focus of the project was the implementation of the sociocultural competence, there was a necessity to also include the intercultural competence. Savignon (2007) cited the works of (Byram, 1997, Savignon, 2002; Savignon and Sysoyev, 2002), the author aims to explain the similarity of terms sociocultural and sociolinguistic; “So dominant has become the view of culture and language as integral, one to the other, that the term sociocultural has come to be substituted for the term sociolinguistic in representing the components of communicative
competence” (p.212). It is important to determine that the term sociolinguistic is very broad and will be used as an umbrella concept. In that sense the notion intercultural competence deals more with effective communication among cultures and gives the project a more narrow perspective.

To analyze the evolution of the terms and the theoretical bases of ‘competence’ and ‘sociolinguistics’ the works of Canale and Swain (1980) are mentioned together with Graham (1997); and more current definitions like the one from the Council of Europe (2001) and Meyerhoff (2006). To define intercultural competences the Council of Europe (2001), Byram et al.(2001) and Fantini (2006). Therefore, the terms are analyzed and defined based on the works of the subsequent authors.

What is ‘competence’ in linguistics?

The evolution of these definitions have been examined more in more detail by Canale and Swain (1980); stating that the term ‘competence’ was first introduced by Chomsky (1965), who introduced abstract terms in modern linguistics, indicating a “methodological necessity to study the language through idealized abstractions”. Therefore, the term ‘competence’ was defined by Chomsky as it “refers to a linguistic system (or grammar) that an ideal native speaker of a given language has internalized”. He claimed that the term ‘competence’ as “the speaker-hearer knowledge of the language” and ‘performance’ as “the actual use of the language in concrete situations”.(p.3). For the author the term competence is related exclusively to an internalized knowledge of ‘grammar”; however he did not provide place for the sociocultural characteristics when using a language.
The ‘sociolinguistic competence’ an umbrella concept

In the search for a comprehensive idea for the use of the language in real life, Canale and Swain (1980) identified the work of scholars like Hymes (1972) and Campbell & Wales (1970) whom proposed a broader notion that of ‘the communicative competence’. The experts concluded that the ability to understand and produce language is not only knowledge of grammatical abilities but also appropriate use of the language in a certain context. Therefore the concept of a more integral competence, which involves social interaction, was born. The notion of the contextual or sociolinguistic competence, the experts described as the ‘knowledge of the rules of language use’.

In relation to this concept, this study points a variety of perspectives which agree and associate to certain extent. Currently there are more clear definitions performed by diverse applied linguists and experts in the field. First we will expose a concrete definition written by Graham (1997); who defines the sociolinguistic competence as principally concerned with the ability to produce and understand language which is proper for certain social situations. Graham (1997) explained that this competence “also implies knowledge of the rules of discourse, which govern the way in which language structures can be combined to produce unified texts in different modes for instance, speeches, academic articles, or operating instructions. (p.13). He also explained how this competence even includes the use of cohesion and coherence.

Therefore, this definition is not different from the forepart, since it is rather generous and ambiguous. The definition given by the Council of Europe (2001) states that “refers to the
sociocultural conditions of language use. Through its sensitivity to social conventions (rules of
politeness, norms governing relations between generations, sexes, classes and social groups,
linguistic codification of certain fundamental rituals in the functioning of a community)” CEFR
(p.13). As it is stated the social conventions have to do with a wide variety of characteristics and
skills.

One of the most current definitions is even broader, Meyerhoff identified it simply as:
“The skills and resources speakers need to deploy in order to be competent members of a speech
community using language, not only grammatically but appropriately in different contexts,
domains or with different interlocutors.” (2006, p.96). Based on the previous contributions, it is
concluded that the sociolinguistic competence is a broad term which mainly concerns on how
appropriately use a language and perform in a certain context.

Therefore, a person who has a proficiency level on the sociolinguistic competence of the
target language integrates not only the grammatical competence, but also knowledge of
appropriate behaviors and social conventions in a different social setting. Failure to follow
sociolinguistics rules restricts communication. Therefore, according to the mentioned authors the
sociolinguistic competence helps users to produce and understand language in suitable contexts.

The ‘Intercultural competence’ in language teaching

The sociolinguistic competence alone does not directly deals with the challenges of
becoming a foreign language user. The Council of Europe points out that “The linguistic and
cultural competences in respect of each language are modified by knowledge of the other and
contribute to intercultural awareness, skills and know-how.’’ CEFR (2001, p. 43). In that sense, to be aware of social rules of certain context is not enough, it is also necessary to be open to a variety of contexts, these are intercultural competences. Therefore, to learn a second language does not mean stop being competent in the mother tongue, but to strive developments and enhancement to represent the culture and become open to others. Thus, the sociolinguistic competence is difficult to bridge unless there is a significant amount of intercultural awareness since in order to internalize the new language it is necessary to be open to the cultures linked to that language.

To better interpret the intercultural dimension, the CEFR (2001) explains that intercultural awareness refers to “Knowledge, awareness and understanding of the relation (similarities and distinctive differences) between the ‘world of origin’ and the ‘world of the target community’ produce an intercultural awareness.” (p.103). The last includes awareness on both cultures and worlds to enrich intercultural knowledge. Also, Byram et al. (2002) describes the intercultural dimension which aims to develop learners, who are skilled mediators, to recognize and participate with complex identities, instead of relying on perceived stereotypes. The intercultural dimension has to do with understand and respect for individuals, it is the foundation of social interaction. The authors explain that this dimension helps learners to acquire linguistic and intercultural competences.

The definition of the intercultural competence is more specific than the one for the sociolinguistic competence. According to Byram et al. (2002) intercultural competence is the “ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own
individuality.” (p. 11) Therefore, this competence strictly has to do with understanding one’s own culture as well as properly interacting with representations of others cultural expressions.

The view of the following author has a specific definition which is alike to the former. He describes the intercultural competence as “... a complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself.” Fantini (2006, p. 13). This definition is comparable to the one from Byram (2002) since it also refers to various individual skills and characteristics necessary to maintain proper communication with unrelated cultural groups to one’s culture and language. Moreover, the author emphasizes on intercultural interaction with effectiveness and appropriateness.

Finally, Byram et al. (2002) explain some dimensions of the intercultural mediator which are attitudes, knowledge, skills, and values; besides, the attitude of curiosity and openness towards other cultures. In that sense, the knowledge about the target social norms or rules includes believes, values and behaviors; and of how others can perceive those from our own culture. Therefore, it can be concluded that the concept of intercultural competence is a more narrow and applicable concept since its essence is awareness of both the target and the own culture.

**The role of ‘authentic materials’ in the project**

In order to satisfy the characteristics which require a competent intercultural speaker in our context, it is necessary to search for materials that can show the reality of language. There
are many arguments in favor of the use of authentic materials include that: “They provide
cultural information about the target language” and “exposure to real language”; “relate more
closely to learners’ needs” and “support a more creative approach to teaching.” Richards (2006,
p.20). Therefore, is important to explore the definition and characteristics which comply with the
applicability of this project.

First it is essential to know that most scholars concur while defining authentic materials. The first author presents a shared and recognized definition. Peacock (1997) cited the works of Little et al.(1989:25) which they called a “commonly accepted definition as materials produced ‘to fulfil some social purpose in the language community’ that is, materials not produced for second language learners.” These types of materials show the sociocultural reality of a language community, although they are not produced for classroom purposes.

Other perspective is given by Martinez (2002) pointing out that it “would be material designed for native speakers of English used in the classroom in a way similar to the one it was designed for.” While comparing various authors some slight differences were discovered while considering definitions about authentic materials. In this project authentic materials are defined as types of input used by natives to connect socially, therefore materials used in the native and pure forms of the language.

The important fact here is that the use of selected authentic material can be adapted for class purposes. The characteristics show that this type of materials can be used as a guide for real life communicative purposes helping learners to develop the sociolinguistic and intercultural competences.
Language acquisition through authentic input

Authentic and authenticity is supported by several studies; Krashen’s (1981) theories argument about the need to provide contextualized input and how this was a major challenge for language teachers. Intake is, where language acquisition comes from, that subset of linguistic input that helps the acquirer acquire language. This being a very difficult task, one could also say that the major challenge facing the field of applied linguistics is to create materials and contexts that provide intake, Krashen (1981). The author explained that the major function of the second language classroom is to provide input for acquisition.

Later on, Krashen’s (2003) theory points out that language input hypothesis explaining that language needs to be acquired and not learned. He also pointed out the linguistic formula \( i + 1 \) input hypothesis, meaning that the input needs to be to some extent more advanced than the student’s current level. Furthermore, Krashen (2003) argues that there is not a particular order to learn a language and that the learning process is limited when students are uncomfortable or with fear. To sum up, his hypotheses approves need to give learners a higher level of contextualized input to acquire the language. Thus, in this project the contextualized input are the authentic materials which are not created but adapted to the lesson needs.

When students are exposed to authentic listening materials, they can learn formal or informal styles, and listen to different dialects. Martinez (2002) states that while listening authentic materials “students are exposed to real discourse” and that “language change is reflected in these materials”. He states that authentic materials “bring learners closer to the target language culture with the materials of native speaker. Books, articles, newspapers, and so on also
contain a wide variety of text types, language styles not easily found in conventional teaching materials.” Authentic materials can be part of the answer for an effective teaching of the culture and current language.

The cultural issues, social practices and behaviors are represented in authentic texts. Mishan (2003) explained the pedagogical arguments to use authentic texts are the culture that represents the norms and behaviors of the society’s target language. Besides, they represent language that is in current use explaining that today’s news, artist and previous knowledge from the material can easily be contextualized and are interesting to learners. According to Byram et al. (2002) the best materials used to promote intercultural competences are authentic texts or material with an intercultural perspective. In relation to that he mentions that “Sources of information used in this approach are authentic texts, including audio recordings and a variety of written documents and visuals such as maps, photographs, diagrams and cartoons.” (p.23). The activities can be varied as understanding and using the target language by contrast and analysis through a critical approach.

To conclude, the concept of authentic materials include real world topics, and can wake learner’s curiosity and they have many other advantages. Besides, the important fact here is that by critically using this type of materials in class intercultural and social awareness can be promoted in the language classroom.
As mentioned before, Communicative Language Teaching and communicative methodologies began changing more traditional approaches which were based mostly on grammatical competences. According to Richards (2001), theories developed from CLT such as Content Based Instructions (CBI), strongly support the use of authentic materials to develop syllabus and a content curriculum based on their academic needs. Another related approach used for this project is Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) which was suitable to incorporate due to the viability of teaching content through authentic materials.

According to Brown (2007) CBI is a method in which learners get both language and content without focusing solely on language. Students will be able to achieve meaningful tasks through the use of language. Some of the benefits about using content are the increase on learner’s motivation and the strength of knowledge in other subjects. Some of the characteristics of teaching content are the use of authentic texts, the use of interactive communication, educational language and the teaching of culture. It is important to clarify that Richard and Rodgers (2001) explained how this content can be selected depending on the students’ academic needs. The authors explain that the inclusion of authentic content materials as materials used in native-language instruction, however not originally produced for language teaching purposes. These types of authentic texts are compatible with the school’s curriculum and allow teachers to develop syllabus relevant to the learners needs.

In that sense, CLIL can also help to integrate culture in the acquisition process using curriculum connections as language input. According to the Coyle et al. (2010), “the use of
appropriate authentic materials and intercultural curricular linking can contribute to a deeper understanding of difference and similarities between cultures, which in turn impacts on discovering ‘self’.” (p.55). The authors explain how to plan a unit or framework using CLIL the four C’s need to be included. Those are Content, Communication, Cognition and Culture. Although the last C, of culture is mentioned as ‘the forgotten C’, it is placed as vital to foster understanding towards other cultures and discovering one’s self.

To conclude, the field sociolinguistics evidence that the grammatical side of the language is not enough to establish communication, language learners need the ability to use that language in contextualized situations. Therefore, learners need to be exposed to the cultural norms of language. Specifically this can be done by acquiring intercultural competences. These competences are the abilities to appropriately interact and be open to other cultures and to understand one’s own cultural views. In that sense authentic materials are a backbone to implement this project since they are a great source of cultural information and can be combined with content based and communicative methodologies which can make the classroom a more contextualized language learning environment.
Related studies

First related study

There are a few related studies that connect culture and language and use authentic materials as a mean; however, the contexts are different. The first related study is called “Using Authentic Multi-Media Material to Teach Italian Culture: Student Opinions and Beliefs” by Joynt (2008). She conducted an investigation which expected to show students beliefs of cultural aspects in learning a foreign language and to understand their responses towards how authentic media materials impacted their experience in an elementary Italian classroom.

In addition, the author of this study points in discussion of how foreign language instructors could present cultural components via authentic materials in classrooms. Furthermore, based on students’ beliefs and responses, it was found that authentic materials could potentially influence in motivation, opportunities for self-directed learning and contextualization of the target language.

Joynt (2008) highlights from the theory of Rogers & Medley (1988) the necessity to expose students to authentic materials; “If students are to use the second language communicatively in the real world tomorrow, then they must begin to encounter the language of that world in the classroom today”. Furthermore, the main purpose of Joynt (2008) research was to incorporate participants full of interest in learning the Italian language and culture. The participants were an Italian language class at the research Public University in the southwestern United States.
There were 20 enrolled students and one non-enrolled auditor. The typical age of the students ranged from 18 to 24. The classroom had a similar seating capacity and plenty of software and hardware technology.

In order to have this research implemented Joynt (2008) states three main questions to take into consideration in her research study which are:

1. How do students respond to the use of authentic multimedia materials in the beginning Italian classroom?

2. How do students view authentic multimedia as a tool for enhancing their knowledge of the Italian culture?

3. Based on students perceptions, what type of cultural knowledge was gained from the use of authentic multimedia materials?

In order to have better results, Joynt (2008) used a qualitative research design and the focus of the research was placed in students’ perceptions and beliefs toward the incorporation of Italian cultural awareness. In order to collect the data the researcher used individual interviews, observation and open-ended surveys.

The researcher first organized data according to two topics, issues related to cultural knowledge and issues related to language learning; from these topics the data was organized into several categories and themes that emerged from participant’s responses.

The main finding accounted in this study was that participants reported that cultural knowledge motivates them to study the target language and also improves their linguistic rules of discourse. Those aspects were connected with the following two sub-findings:
1. Students indicated that they wanted a larger cultural component in the syllabus.

2. They felt that authentic media provided cultural images which motivated and encouraged them had a meaningful impact.

This article highlights information that is relevant to this classroom project idea since we expect to develop intercultural competences. In addition the author highlights the importance of using internet based authentic materials in a language classroom as a medium to contextualize the students’ language. In that sense it concerns to this project since most of the material for this implementation’s activities can be found on the internet. A characteristic to imitate is that the research separates the findings in issues related to language and issues related to culture. The findings of the mentioned research are highly relevant to our classroom project idea. Given the fact it was establish that cultural knowledge and motivation was increased for students to learn a target language.

However, there are aspects from these studies that do not relate to the participants, context and scenario; first the use of computers cannot be probable inside the public schools classroom; their classroom was equipped and furnished with plenty of technological tools which is out of our classroom context and resources. Besides, the population of the presented thesis is different to the prospect participants expected for the implementation of this classroom project.
Second related study

The second related study is called “Audiovisual news, cartoons, and films as sources of authentic language input and language proficiency enhancement” by Bahrani & Sim (2012). The authors conducted an investigation to incorporate authentic sources of potential language input for second language acquisition. The objective was to discover the effectiveness from exposing learners to news, cartoons, and films as three different types of authentic audiovisual programs. The aim was to improve the language proficiency of sixty low level language learners from eighteen to twenty three years old.

In order to collect some data and achieve some findings, the aforementioned research enrolled sixty low level language learners.

The research questions were:

1. To what extent, does exposure to audiovisual news improve low level language learners’ language proficiency?

2. To what extent, does exposure to cartoons improve low level language learners’ language proficiency?

3. To what extent, does exposure to films improve low level language learners’ language proficiency?

The use of authentic input included different channels, both British and American news English programs to focus in both dialects like the BBC and CNN channel. Moreover, various cartoons like ‘Shrek 1’, ‘Ice Age 1’, and ‘Toys’ and movies like ‘Matrix’ and ‘Final
Destination’. The cartoons and movies were selected with the sole reason that they were known interesting stories.

The researchers employed a quantitative method of data collection a pre-test and a post-test to find out if there was any improvement. The quantitative statistic indicated that progress was made in language performance.

After including a careful data collection analysis the finding was that language proficiency improved significantly with the cartoons and movies input. However, the input from the news report was not comprehensible for low level learners, due to the high amount of incomprehensible input. On the other hand cartoons and movies create a relax atmosphere (low affective filter), increasing motivation and language development.

As a conclusion the author declares that the audiovisual mass media programs can be utilized as valuable pedagogical input; on the other hand Bahrani & Sim (2012) found that “more caution should be given to the selection of the type of audiovisual program follow level proficiency learners.” He also points out that cartoons and films possess good stories which motivate learners to absorb language and had significant improvement in the acquisition of the language.

Conclusion of the related studies

This study has many similarities to my implementation since the types of material used are audiovisuals. The current project similarly included stories, movies and cartoons exposing and motivating students to language and cultural awareness. As an insight the authors also
agreed in the results that these types of materials were helpful to expose learners to real language and make them aware of the target culture. Furthermore, the mentioned participants were low level language learners similar to the level of the participants of my project; nevertheless, there is an evident age difference from young adults in the aforementioned projects and the younger learners from the present project.

The organization of the related studies and structure of the research was used to start planning a well-structured design. The two mentioned studies draw relevant information related to this classroom project. As a conclusion the internet and the mass media are great sources to provide cultural information and a tool to make language learning more meaningful and contextualized and exciting.
**Methodology**

This part of the project reflects the structure and design of the project and it contains five different sections of the methods used. In the context and setting section it is explained the physical aspects such as type, size, capacity of the school and other details of the English curriculum. In the participants section it is mentioned the number of students, age, English level and language aptitudes of learners; also, it includes other specifics such as the in-service teacher and the implementers’ roles. The design section was outlined by the main strategies that made this project possible as well as the authors who were taken as a foundation for the implementation. In the resources section it is explained the technological devices used and the types of authentic and educational content. Finally, in the last section it is well described how reflection was used to shape this project using connection between theory and practice, detailing the model of reflection used and the instruments employed.

**Context and setting**

This classroom project took place at a public primary school, a branch of ‘larger school X’. This school has a morning and an afternoon shift; this study took place in the afternoons. It is located in a middle class neighborhood near two universities in an urban area. It is a one floor school building with seven classrooms, one for each grade and two extra rooms for preschool. It also has a teacher’s room and a computer lab room with a small library. At that time, the school’s population was about one hundred and eighty students per shift. There were five in-service teachers, one for each primary grade from 1\textsuperscript{st} to 5\textsuperscript{th} grade. There was also a coordinator who
shared instructions with and from the school’s directives; she supervised the teachers and also took charge of logistic and disciplinary issues of the primary school. This school is known for having an above the average academic level compared to most public schools from the area.

As a subject, English was taught by the same in-service teacher in charge of the grade. Also, English classes were scheduled fifty minutes twice per week. The English curriculum was well organized and divided into four academic terms per year; each term included different general and specific competences, content and objectives. The language standards from the curriculum given were aligned with Ministerio de Educacion Nacional (2006), including A1 and A2 levels. The curriculum competences were framed similarly to those from the Council of Europe (2001), competences of knowledge (savoir), as content of topics, the know-how (savoir-faire) as skills to achieve, and the behavior (savoir-être) as comportment and values required.

The school’s general competences were based on grammar structures and its contextualization to the real world. The competences in the third term included cultural identification, acknowledgment, sharing and respect for others. In that sense the institution recognizes the importance of teaching cultural competences. Moreover, the contents of area included a variety of language functions, expressions, meanings, standards and contents organized by terms. The curriculum of the school was well organized and implies the use of significant competences; nevertheless the sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences were not included explicitly in the curriculum.
Participants

The participants were a 5th grade group of thirty six students between the ages of ten to twelve years; thirty males and six females. In general their level of English varied from A1 to A2 elementary levels. Nevertheless, it was noticed that most students have strong language aptitudes and from the beginning were able to follow the instructions. They were significantly motivated towards the language and got easily engaged in activities. Learners were sometimes noisy and distracted; in those occasions, body language strategies were commonly used by the in-service teacher to recover their attention, rather than speaking loudly or shouting at them. A variety of learning styles was evidenced; most learners enjoyed to draw and to color in their notebook (artistic). Some others were very active since they got up their chairs and walk around (kinesthetic) or liked to play games and sports that involve movement. Most students were always attentive to answer questions elicited by teacher (verbal).

The contribution of the in-service teacher was crucial to develop this project. First, she was a great source to understand and monitor learner’s profiles since she knew better the group. Second, classroom management issues were addressed in conjunction with her support. Third, it is important to mention that a lot of the ideas for creating cross-curriculum activities came from continuous communication with the in-service teacher. Finally, she allowed me to have total autonomy and empowered me about guiding the class, designing lessons, assessing learners and implementing in general.

As a novice teacher and a practitioner, various duties were performed. First, as a novice teacher with responsibilities and compromise towards the school practices in relation to many
aspects like punctuality, being an effective language teacher, and a role model for learners. Also, as a designer to create and implement lesson plans aligned with frameworks and the researched theory. Finally, the main role was to constantly reflect in the practices to improve or highlight the pertinence of the implementation.

**Design**

This classroom project is about the inclusion of classroom strategies to promote the development of the intercultural and sociolinguistic competences which is supported by many authors (Byram et al. 2002, Coyle et al. 2010, Savignon & Sysoyev 2005). One of the backbones for this project is Byram et al. (2002) since the authors develop a clear method to include the intercultural dimension in language teaching. In their study, it is explained that it is possible to start from the themes of the curriculum to a more intercultural approach. It is also necessary to use a variety of contexts and examples of gender, race, etc. and vocabulary that includes cultural diversity. Moreover, to present critical and contrasting views, it is suggested the inclusion authentic materials and texts. The authors also explain that stereotypes and prejudice should not be allowed since they are based on feelings not on reasoning, therefore they need to be adressed as ideas and not take it personal.

In my experience, as a learner and as an English Language Teacher, the use of intercultural related authentic materials has been helpful to acquire the English language. Coyle et al. (2010) argue the importance to include authentic materials and link them to intercultural curriculums to have a better understanding between cultures and to discover the “self”. Also,
Mishan (2003) explain that use of these materials represent language in current use and can easily be contextualized according to learners’ interests. For instance, it could be helpful to contextualize the language learnt, and could motivate students to acquire, understand and produce real language. In this regard, young learners could start acquiring the communicative part of the language and not only isolated language structures.

Firstly, the authentic input was used to feed learner’s receptive skills, and then allow them to produce. This strategy was based on Krashen (2003) language acquisition hypothesis and the focus was to provide learners with authentic input. In that sense learners could acquire the language by subconscious process rather than using direct grammar teaching. The interaction was focused on meaning rather than form and learners used and produced language implicitly. The use of authentic materials and the inclusion of content became the channel to expose learners to the relation among education, language, culture and society. Moreover, students were exposed to authentic input like accents, dialects; turn taking, formal and informal styles. Furthermore, strategies to identify and compare social patterns like habits and expressions were used. The overall purpose was the search to change traditional methods of teaching and to bring a more social and communicative model to the classrooms.

The project could also help students to contextualize their language background knowledge since for this type of population is appropriate to teach inductively; therefore learners discovered and contextualized the known grammatical rules. Thus, the use of implicit teaching activities could be effective as Harmer (1998) suggests with the use of interactive games, video aids, guessing games, music, etc. The purpose is to amuse students without explicitly teaching grammar rules stimulating first their receptive skills, and then allowing them to use language.
Therefore, activities based on subconscious language acquisition stimulate receptive and productive skills, allowing learners to acquire and discover the language by themselves.

The strategy of comparing and contrasting was used to increase intercultural competences. Savignon & Sysoyev (2005) point out that learners can discover their cultural identification and get to compare it to other cultures confronted by their own analysis. The authors propose exposing students to authentic materials with the purpose to identify cultural patterns as language, food, stories, etc. Thus, the strategy includes explaining, exploring social evidences in order to obtain more awareness of cultural differences. The aim of the strategy is that learners analyze products and practices of both cultures sharing perspectives by means of language use; then learners could enhance communicative and intercultural competences.

Another strategy was to use connections among the topics, the curriculum, the real world and the inclusion of CLIL, to give students a more holistic view of knowledge. Coyle et al. (2010) explain how intercultural practices can include a variety of perspectives to the ethos of the classroom, the content of the curriculum and the connections to the real world. Also, it was pertinent as mentioned by the authors to participate as a team with the institution teachers to create a ‘shared vision’ to integrate content from other subjects into the English class. The local situation and needs of the context was considered to design pertinent lessons and to integrate subjects from the school’s curriculum.
Resources

In order to perform this implementation, some technological devices were supplied by the practitioner, such as video projector and laptop computer. Also, the school provided an amplifier speaker which was very helpful. The school wireless internet signal was sometimes used to connect to the internet. Those resources were essential tools to incorporate authentic materials in the classroom. Those materials were audiovisual cartoons, stories, movies, interactive games, Power Point Presentations, and web sites. As well as other educational content based videos to implement CLIL strategies such as culture related materials, science, mathematics, history, etc. On the other hand, pedagogical materials were also designed to complement the content with activities and to promote language development. For instance worksheets, text books, board games, realia, table grids, posters, flashcards, images and word search games. It is important to mention that learners were asked to constantly use their notebooks to perform tasks and that the blackboard was often helpful.

Reflection

The aim of reflection was to find ways to connect all the theory (technical rationality), and the real practice (tacit rationality), terms coined by Schön (1987). The reflections for this project were based on Gibbs (1998) model of reflection following the stages of description, self-awareness, evaluation, analysis and conclusions. For instance, reflection “in action” was used to improve or change a practice at the moment of teaching. With the analysis of the teaching done
“On Action” reflection was broken down and interpreted using the recalled information. First, it was a description of the events and feelings involved then an analysis and evaluation of the events, (what went well? what didn’t?); finally a conclusion and an action plan was written (what to do different? and what to keep doing?).

The main instruments of reflection were formats in the back of the lesson plan and a journal notebook as a draft. In these reflective logs experiences were written the same day the lesson was performed (dates and the lesson number included). Furthermore, a second draft was written in the back of the lesson plans on a reflection format with a more shaped reflection, finally the reflections were analized again and compared to the related theory. There in the final journals, it was recorded both satisfactory and problematic experiences. Finally, procedures and techniques were improved based on the reflections since it was compared theory related to professional growth, student’s responses and linguistic and intercultural outcomes.
**Results**

During this implementation strengths and challenges have been identified in different areas. First, in the area of professional growth is discussed the relevance of the inclusion of CLIL and the constraints to use authentic material; also, the advantage of having a great communication with the in-service teacher resulting in improvement of discipline issues, and cross curriculum planning. Second, in the area of student’s responses, it is explained the effect of motivation and the need to include kinesthetic activities in the classroom. Then, in the area of linguistic outcomes it is mentioned that learners’ accomplished implicit use of the language; however, it was noticed the need to include more teaching strategies to increase language profit from the materials. Finally, a reflection about the intercultural outcomes mentions particular responses and as a challenge discusses the inclusion of assessment in the project.

**Professional growth**

Although it was not the aim of the implementation, the inclusion of CLIL in this project became essential, especially in topics where students needed reinforcement. It was reasonable to include content topics like the food pyramid and the digestive system, teaching decimals, fractions and other math related topics which are connected to the real world. For instance, the following is a reflection from one of these implementations:

*September 17th of 2014 _Implementation 6*

*What went well?*
“The use of pictures of dollar bills was exciting for students, they compared and contrasted dollars to pesos and learnt about some cultural issues like the name of some US ex-presidents stamped in the bills and performed exchange mathematical operations.”

As planned, content was connected to cognition, using HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) and LOTS (Lower order thinking skills), problem solving activities and their own creativity. Coyle et al. (2010) argued that using the proper materials and curriculum connections throughout content can contribute to the discovery of the real world and the intercultural competences. Therefore, activities like comparing money (pesos vs. dollars and ‘counting money’) were beneficial to the process since they allowed learners to analyze and comprehend new knowledge and connect previous knowledge to their real lives (appendix 1).

In respect to the same area, the main challenge was the time and effort required to select and plan the activities. In that sense the problem was not only to select the right class of materials but to take the time to properly adapt it for the lessons. Since authentic materials are not very common in our context the internet was the main source to search for material. For instance, while planning lesson #1 about prepositions it took me a long time not only to find the proper videos that connected with the lesson, but also downloading, and editing the video and adding subtitles of the language required (prepositions such as on, under, over). Furthermore, the designing of multiple choice tasks to assess the language learned during the activity required time, together with the lesson planning. (Appendix 2) Although the web contains a great amount of the interesting authentic content in English, it takes time to find appropriate material and to transform it into the required tasks and design a coherent plan, which can be overwhelming. However, it is truth that by planning well with this type of authentic videos they can be exploited
to show the social part of the language, like gender stereotypes even new words but it requires a good amount of planning.

Another aspect of professional growth was the constant communication and work with the in-service teacher. To share views and create an association with the institution teacher, facilitated the construction of that a shared vision to work in disciplinary issues, plan lessons according to the learner’s needs and to integrate content from other subjects into the English class. Classroom management tactics were learnt which worked well to improve discipline issues. For instance, a strategy used was to stay quiet and not continue with the class until students were quiet; other was to lift the right hand making closing it in a fist until every sat down and stayed quiet. The following is an extract from a reflection that can give the reader a better picture:

*September 8th of 2014_Class reflections 3*

*What didn’t go well?*

“While most students were participating and answering questions a few students got loud, and I had to keep telling them to stay quiet so I could listen the others. At one point I felt that I was not managing the class properly but begging students to stay quiet.”

*What to do different next time? What to keep doing?*

“The discipline issues can be managed, also working together with the head teacher and using methods which students are used to like the discipline board (red points for bad behavior green for good behavior). Brown (2007) explains that independently of all you students qualities
there will always be some type of discipline problems. Also, I think that independently of all your efforts to plan a good class, there are events that cannot be predicted.”

Moreover, the constant communication with the in-service teacher aided the process of lesson planning to have clear objectives coherent with the school’s curriculum. In that sense, through class observations to the in-service teacher and her sharing of the curriculum it was noticed possible cross curriculum topics were learners could use some reinforcement. The result was having a coherent language lesson which included English standards from Ministerio de Educacion Nacional (2006), and the use Content Language Integrated Learning together with the school’s English curriculum. In that sense, the lesson planning performed took into account student’s needs with the advice from the in-service teacher.

**Students’ responses**

A positive characteristic found as a pattern in my reflections was the motivation showed by learners while implementing activities related to the real world. For instance, in an activity while watching Sesame Street learners showed great motivation. The following is an extract of my reflection notebook after the mentioned activity was performed:

*September 1st 2014_ Implementation 1*

**What went well?**

“First, students were asked if they like to watch Sesame Street series. While watching, students were enthusiastic motivated with the puppets, animations and action going on in Sesame
Street. This was evidenced since they were focused on the task, laughed, sang the songs and bob their heads together when the characters sang and moved”.

In relation to that, there are many authors who support that appropriate use of authentic materials can increase motivation in the language classroom (Tamo 2009, Martinez 2002). The result was that students were amazed with the authentic videos, they laughed, expressed admiration and the ability to wonder. Moreover, it was found that cultural related and authentic materials lowered the affective filter which makes the learning process much simpler.

Nevertheless, some learners showed disengagement and low participation during productive skills activities (speaking and writing). On the contrary, all learners participated while performing kinesthetic activities. This could be due to the fact that some of my students were more kinesthetic. According to Kolb’s (1984) learning styles theory, kinesthetic learners benefit from physical experiences. As written on my last reflections:

November 19th of 2014_Implementation 10

What didn’t go well? What to do different?

“Students wanted to play games and I did not prepare any kinesthetic games. I believe I was afraid to get discipline issues while moving to much around but not matter what, I still had those types of problems... the challenge is to implement more techniques that include games and kinesthetic activities since they love to play ”

There were few times that kinesthetic activities were used and they went really well, since all learners were participating. Activities with authentic materials can also involve kinesthetic skills, for instance, while playing a video song learners were asked to mimic their
daily routines and sing as well. The song became one of their favorite activities since all the learners joyfully performed the actions and sang about the daily routines, and asked me to repeat the song in different occasions.

**Linguistic outcomes**

It was noticed that the activities were suitable for increasing language understanding and production without focusing on grammar rules. For instance, while performing an exercise from the story of ‘Goldilocks’ most learners were able to correctly arrange the structure of random words to create sentences related to the story. As evidenced in an activity of writing and drawing by giving learners an unarranged set of words of a sentence (i.e. went, she, inside); they were able not only to organize sentences with the correct structure but to draw those parts of the story (Appendix 3). Also, while performing content activities based on Christopher Columbus, an educational video and a part of the movie ‘The road to El Dorado’, implicit language learning evidence was noticed. In the assessment part (Appendix 3), they answered questions based on the video information in written and oral language without focusing on structure.

The material was interesting to learners since there were stories, movies and interesting content leveled to their knowledge and age. In this respect, Hill and Flynn (2006), explain how motivation “plays a role in learning complex language structures”. Therefore, it was observed that learners were able to use structures implicitly producing language correctly without focusing on grammar. As relevant, while performing authentic activities that engage and motivate learners, they could focus on meaning and learnt language implicitly.
Although the level of the video was carefully chosen for the context, a concern is that authentic videos had a lot more language that could have been exploited. Thus, by including certain teaching strategies such as pre-teaching vocabulary and the use of modeling the language competences could have increased. Nevertheless this was noticed since the first reflections and highly improved by reflecting on what to do different in the subsequent implementations. The following was a reflection from my first implementation which stimulated a change in my practices.

*September 1st 2014_ Implementation 1*

*What did not go that well?*

“I did not use enough pre-teaching vocabulary strategies; therefore I believe that learners could not recognize other words from the Sesame Street video than the prepositions. Also, I need to use more models in order to clarify complex language to perform the activities...”

*What to do different next time? What to keep doing?*

“The use of modeling before performing the exercises needs to be implemented. I need to include strategies for pre-teaching vocabulary like images or posters.”

Some authors support this idea, “When teachers choose to use authentic materials they should be very careful in selecting level appropriate materials and linguistically profitable ones” (Allwright 1990: 136, cited by Pegrum, 2000). Even if using the appropriate level of authentic materials, it was a duty to pre-teach vocabulary and use models to accomplish more language profit and to improve language production in further activities.
**Intercultural outcomes**

It was appropriate to include activities which relate language proficiency and intercultural perspectives since they created wonder and curiosity in learners and empowered them to use the language implicitly. For instance, learners were exposed to intercultural issues by comparing elements of typical foods. In an activity two other videos from the webpage *buzzfeed.com* were shown. The first video was about ‘breakfasts around the world’, and the other video was about kid’s favorite foods in the United States. Finally, learners were asked to create a list of typical plates common to our culture for which most learners were willing to participate and give their opinion about their favorite typical foods. In that sense, the inclusion of cultural information aligned with learners’ language level can be relevant to understand and produce language by letting them explore and identify other’s ways of thinking as well as their own.

On the other hand, it was challenging to know whether students really broadened their intercultural competences. Thus, it is to consider that by exposing learners to intercultural facts and social routines, a teacher can only create the conditions to acquire the competences. In respect to assessment during the implementation, the procedure was to assess the four basic language skills through a range of performances to generalize language proficiency. This was done mostly based on formative and summative types of assessment and the inclusion of dimensions of criteria for oral and written skills as mentioned on House (2011) and the Council of Europe (2001); however, an equal range of performances was not used to evaluate intercultural competences. Therefore, it can be examined if the exposure to intercultural topics can only feed learners’ curiosity and inclinations or if it really guarantees awareness of cultural rules. The following is a reflection evidenced in a reflection journal after a related event:
What didn’t go well?

“One of the videos showed kids from different races eating typical foods from the United States. Suddenly, a student said that a black boy with long braids from the video looked like an ugly girl. Although, it was not in my plan, it was a chance to clarify that all kids around the world are equal, and that we need to respect others. Finally, he accepted and everybody else in the group agreed...”

This sporadic event brought to the table the belief about the limitations to teach and assess intercultural competences in this project. Byram et al. (2002) agrees that to assess the intercultural competence is difficult especially when it comes to assess not the knowledge, but to assess the ability to “make the strange familiar and the familiar strange” (Savoir être). Besides, to assess if learners act based on the acquired knowledge (savoir s’engager) and the most challenging is to see if learners have changed their attitudes to others, becoming more tolerant.

In respect to the teaching and assessment of intercultural competences it could be helpful to establish ‘criteria’ to grade not only linguistic but intercultural skills and to use rubrics to assess the intercultural competences. In that sense, authors like Bennett et al. (2008) and Deardorff (2011) have created criterias to evaluate intercultural competences. The authors identify an easy way to evaluate performance by using illustrative descriptors of intercultural knowledge. For example, referencing scales for cultural self-awareness and worldvies, also, intercultural skills as empathy and understanding of cultural differences, even rubrics for assessing attitudes such as curiosity and openness.
In conclusion it was evidenced that it is possible to work in intercultural and sociocultural aspects and that it is appropriate to use of authentic resources to create intercultural awareness in the classroom. Nevertheless, it is crucial to combine the proper ingredients. For instance, having a class that integrates, cultural views, using authentic materials aligned with the correct topics from the curriculum and leveled to the language objectives and content is a great formula for further teaching practices. It is also important to mention that to find authentic materials on the web, it is necessary to have a clear pedagogical purpose aligned with the objectives of the curriculum. Some good authentic input can be found in: movies, cartoons, social media extracts, interactive games, songs, etc. It is also essential not to overload students with them but combine them with other activities and learning styles.
Limitations of the project

Since it is a small school, the recreational field is next to the classrooms and sometimes other groups played soccer there, in such a way students were exposed to other student’s noise. The weather is usually warm at that time in the afternoon, in the afternoon which can also be a distractor.

Moreover, it was noticed that and in some occasions, learners got distracted by watching outside through the ventilation bricks intertwined in the classroom walls. Furthermore, the English class took place after the break so extra time was required for them to sit in their places. Consequently students take extra time to sit in their places and can get noisy and distracted, which always causes delays during the class.

Finally, the lack of access to technological resources in the school affected some of the activities for this project. Even though there is a room allocated as the library with a video projector and computers, classes were not allowed in that room unless they are used for Information Technology classes and the designated classroom did not have a video projector.

Although, the curriculum of the school is well organized and implies the use of significant competences, there were competences and skills that the curriculum did not include. The curriculum explicitly determined the use of lexical and grammatical structures and it did not include sociolinguistic competences. The teaching of English at school is mostly oriented on the teaching of grammar. Although productive skills are explicit on the English curriculum, receptive skills are not a priority.
Conclusions

The field sociolinguistics explains that the grammatical side of the language is not enough to establish communication. Young language learners prefer to focus on meaning rather than structures. By exposing learners to the intercultural norms of language throughout to contextualized authentic input allows them to use and produce language. Also, learners can explore other cultures and compare them to their own, at the same time presenting language in an appealing fashion. The exposure to cultural facts and language brought reality and motivation to the classroom. According to Tamo (2009) some of the advantages of using authentic materials are positive effects on learner’s motivation and student’s exposure to real discourse.

Students can be exposed to diverse stylistics varieties of language, different accents and other sociocultural characteristics of the language. In that sense, Mishan (2003) compares authentic materials as agents of socio-cultural facts. If the authentic materials are properly leveled to the activities, and strategies of pre-teaching vocabulary and modeling are used it is possible to obtain language profit. Respectively, the use of authentic materials and intercultural input is especially motivating for learners besides being a great source of cultural information. Although Richards (2001) points out that authentic materials are difficult to understand, but instead it was noticed a great ability from students to grasp meaning from them.

The process of combining communicative methodologies, content and strategies of language teaching makes the classroom a more contextualized language learning environment. Planning a class that integrates, CLIL, emphasizing in cultural facts and authentic materials with the correct topics can be very successful in many aspects of language teaching and learning. To sum up, sociolinguistic and intercultural awareness in the teaching practices can show learners
the reality of language and other cultural views. By including intercultural practices learners can become more effective and interactive and it makes the class more interesting, as Snow (2007) observes:

“...intercultural communication should be included in language courses because it can enhance student’s ability to understand and interact effectively with people from other cultures and more effectively express themselves to foreign audiences. Study of culture can also make courses more interesting...” (p.199)

For further implementations, an action plan could be based on the practical view of Byram et al. (2002) to develop the intercultural dimension in the classrooms. Also, testing language skills is always important since they are the focus of learning but also assessing of intercultural skills could help in these types of projects to have more clear results. The assessment could be done by the inclusion of checklist ratings and auto evaluations. This could allow teachers and students to start realizing what interests in other cultures, abilities to change perspectives, acceptance to other cultures and knowledge they have.
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### Appendixes

1. **Lesson plan #6 and reflections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY/STAGE/ACTIVITY/TIME</th>
<th>PROCEDURE/TEACHER AND LEARNER ACTIVITY</th>
<th>ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS AND PLANNED SOLUTIONS</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm up Engage 10 min</td>
<td>Video song about money and changing to get a stronger idea. Then a video about fractions to introduce the topic. Facilitator explain students vocabulary about restating a message if they do not understand. I don’t understand. What do you mean? Could you explain that again, please? Facilitator shows a picture of dollar bills and they compare the price from 1 dollar ($1.974$) This can be used to compare and contrast money. Comparing and contrasting Pesos vs. dollars prices and culture related vocabulary like the names of the ex-presidents that appear in the coins is shown. Students interact with facilitator thru PPT presentation where he explains how to count coins and their values in cents. Students are given worksheets about adding a shopping list with decimal points.</td>
<td>Pre-teaching of vocabulary could be challenging. Use of images and gestures, also use of comparison of similar words.</td>
<td>Need to use more spelling. The lesson involves money, numbers, decimals, percentages. It was also explained the names on some US expresident from the coins and bills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What went well?

In this implementation, the strengthen of cultural competences was included by teaching names of ex-presidents like Abraham Lincoln, and students also stated names of Colombian president and ex-presidents. Moreover students recognized currency exchange rates from pesos to dollars and the variations. Moreover, CLIL was implemented thru an educational video (money, fractions, decimals and percentage). These topics are actual topics from mathematics, and students were pleased to review and learn about the topics in a different way.

The use of authentic materials like the pictures of dollar bills was exciting for students, they compared and contrasted dollars to pesos learn about some cultural issues like the name of some US expresidents and performed exchange mathematical operations.
## Lesson plan #1, designed worksheet and pictures of video

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage</td>
<td>- A video-song will be played with the sole purpose of introducing the prepositions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- With a tennis ball and a small box teacher will explain the in, on, under, and over prepositions. Facilitator will ask students if they have watched Sesame Street then he will ask them if they would like to watch it in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- They will watch a video twice of sesame street where the characters represent the movements. Questions about the names of the characters are asked to engage students, then a pre-presented listening of words from the video will be presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Facilitator will do a PPT presentation where students can orally answer according to what they understood in the video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Students will work with a multiple choice worksheet designed to review the topic, then in their notebooks they will write sentences and drawings similar using the prepositions learnt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Time management issues, since I have to introduce myself to the students, it is a possibility I make the presentations shorter. Not understanding of some of the words from the video.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activate</td>
<td>Pre-teaching of vocabulary and focus on the necessary input for the class even if they do not understand all.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1- Where is the clown?
The clown is ____ the cat.
\[\text{a)\over\text{b) under\text{c) over\text{d) on}}\]

2- Where is the rabbit?
The rabbit is ____ the hat.
\[\text{a)\over\text{b) under\text{c) over\text{d) on}}\]

3- Where is the house?
The house is ______ the hat.
\[\text{a)\over\text{b) under\text{c) over\text{d) between}}\]

4- Where is the dinosaur?
The dinosaur is ______ the tree.
\[\text{a)\over\text{b) under\text{c) over\text{d) behind}}\]

5- Where is the bird?
The bird is ____ the branch.
\[\text{a)\over\text{b) under\text{c) behind\text{d) on}}\]
3. Notebooks with pictures of activities

- She went inside.
- She sat on the chair.
- She set the table.
- She cooked dinner.
- She bought apples.

- She went to the supermarket.
- She bought apples, bananas, and cereals.

- She walked in the street.
- She saw a woman.
Christopher Columbus content based task

1. Where was Christopher Columbus born?
   - He was born in Genoa, Italy.
2. Why did the king and the queen help Columbus?
   - Because they wanted gold and spices.
3. When do we celebrate Columbus Day?
   - We celebrate Columbus Day in October.
4. What was the name of the ship?
   - The name of the ship is the Santa Maria.
5. What did Columbus bring to the king and queen?
   - Columbus brought gold and spices.