

PROMOTING CULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH THE USE OF SONGS IN SIXTH
GRADE STUDENTS IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL FROM RIONEGRO

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Dedication

Queremos dedicar este trabajo de grados, principalmente a nuestras familias por todo el apoyo y ayuda que nos han brindado en el transcurso de estos años en los cuales no todos los momentos han sido fáciles y aún así, han estado ahí para animarnos y no dejándonos desfallecer.

A nuestros padres, por estar ahí desde el día uno hasta el último. A Victoria y Yesid, Olga y Juan, Gladys y Fabián, QEPD.

A nuestros amigos por ser esas personas que estuvieron ahí y seguirán estando para sacarnos una sonrisa, compartir momentos para despejar la mente o salir de la monotonía. Y a nuestros compañeros por brindarnos esa ayuda que en algunos momentos del pregrado fue necesaria cuando hubo momentos de dudas o inquietudes en estos años de aprendizaje.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to show the contributions of using songs to promote cultural awareness in an EFL class with high school students. In the educational field, specifically in the Foreign language teaching, many reviews could emerge that criticize the conceptions teachers, parents and students have about the way we are learning or teaching a foreign language. Our topic of interest was the use of songs in the EFL classroom to encourage cultural awareness. This project was carried out using a qualitative methodology and under the parameters of an action research. Eleven students, one cooperating teacher (CT) and three pre-service teachers were involved in this project which was developed in a public institution in the municipality of Rionegro. Students belonged to sixth grade.

For collecting the data instruments such as semi-structured interview, questionnaires, workshops, observations, among others were used. Data collected were analyzed by the investigators and three categories emerged from it: Cultural awareness, Teaching English to young learners, and using songs in the classroom.

After compiling, analyzing and discussing the information some conclusions emerged. One of them was that the students looked more interested in learning English. Another conclusion was that students seemed to be aware of the differences between cultures, specifically in terms of families around the world. Finally, we found that this kind of approach could be adapted to many contexts, since it has a wide range of materials to be chosen that contain many expressions and reflect part of the culture of different countries.

Key words: Cultural Awareness, English teaching, EFL, songs

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part of the paper describes some of the most relevant studies carried out in fields that keep a close relationship to our interest in the investigation. The research projects that we included here are from some cities of our country, including Bogotá, Medellín and Tunja. These studies were undertaken between 2010 and 2019.

The first study, proposed by Osorno (2018) shows interesting findings regarding the encouragement of cultural critical awareness in English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL) classes through the use of a content-based approach with rock and roll music as content. He worked with a ninth group of 19 students between 14 and 16 years old. It was a qualitative study where the data was collected through workshops handed out by the students. Osorno discovered that “students got conscious despite their different preferences, with this musical and cultural approximation they have learned to be tolerant.” (Osorno, 2018, p. 23). Osorno (2018) also found that the students learned not to judge the differences of others at first, understanding that each of us come from different contexts and cultures and that this is what makes us all behave differently. It is also important to note that music motivated the learning of the second language, which generated an ideal environment for students to be in one way or another immersed in learning English.

In 2010, Reina carried out a research project focused on how English teachers create authentic listening activities based on English songs, how students’ listening skills can be fostered and how these activities can be culturally meaningful and motivating for them. This article presents an action research study applied in a second level EFL course at a university in Tunja. The research had a qualitative approach in which the perceptions of the students were compiled through interviews and workshops during the lessons. As a major conclusion from the research, Reina

highlights that the use of songs motivates students to attend classes. He also agrees that it is possible to say that songs are the most suitable type of authentic material to develop listening comprehension. Finally, another conclusion is that learning language and culture through songs is much more attractive for students. The author suggests that more importance should be given to the link between songs and culture because “we know that competence in speaking with native speakers is far more than a question of knowing the grammar and lexis and being able to operate them in real time” (Reina, 2010, p. 126).

The last study reviewed was undertaken by Garay and Segura (2018) through a project based on the use of hippie songs and lyrics for cultural awareness. The project was carried out with ninth graders in an urban school in Bogota. This investigation is a qualitative study that looks to connect language teaching to cultural awareness by using hippie songs. The research emerged when Garay and Segura noticed that many students had difficulties expressing and understanding themselves. They focused this project on hippie songs because they reflect a point in history with high cultural content. The researchers also wanted to contribute a pedagogical reflection as a way to understand a second language. As relevant findings, Garay and Segura considered that teaching a second language is not only to teach how it is structured, but also to show some expressions that belong to the culture. An important aspect to highlight is that they found songs as a way to reflect the culture because they are directly interrelated. The lyrics of the songs are important regarding aspects that are typical to a society. Garay and Segura could also see that students could understand the hippie movement as a cultural expression, as well as the relevance of culture when learning a second language.

We believe that thanks to the relevant information provided by these three studies, our research was largely enriched. They showed us that the language has to do not only with grammatical structures, but also knowing the cultural aspects.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Currently, the world is changing. Human beings around the world are connected. In a linked world, English plays a vital role. The English language is spoken in many countries and many people think about teaching English from the four basic abilities such as speaking, reading, listening and writing. Knowing or learning another language means to know some background characteristics as Cakir (2006) says, the understanding of a foreign language not only has to do with the comprehension of grammar or lexis, there are also other important characteristics as the culture. As music is a relevant fact of each country, we related those two components, songs as a way to raise cultural awareness in the EFL Classroom. We wanted to develop our investigation project in this way because as Trehub, Becker and Morley (2015) say, each person in the world sings or has a particular kind of music they enjoy, but this music is reflected from their cultures, also it has some specific speech components.

Our question here was how we could count or measure the culture or the abilities of our students. Knowledge is important, so getting good grades as well. For those reasons we wanted to include in our project songs that reflect not only expressions or grammatical forms, but also cultural content which is an interesting topic to get students' interest.

The relevance of this project has to do with the extra motivation students need especially in the language area. Through songs, we promoted cultural awareness, and showed how culture acts in different ways depending on the context. The music could reflect culture, expressions, feelings,

thoughts, among others. In addition to this, music proposes a way to enjoy learning. Many people enjoy music and there are several kinds of music which are available to learn and know the culture and how it influences our lives.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can the use of songs promote students' cultural awareness in an EFL public high school classroom?

JUSTIFICATION

This section has the purpose to show the reasons why the project is important not only for us, but also for other fields such as the foreign language teaching domain. Cakir (2006) says that the culture is part of the language and vice versa. Taking that into account, it is essential to develop and understand how cultural awareness could make the difference during this time when the language, as Wang says (2011) is shaped, influenced and reflects the culture. He argues that “the gap of cultural differences is one of the most important barriers in English teaching and study” (p. 223).

In the field of foreign languages, this project could contribute to the teaching of the language from a non - traditional perspective, encouraging future teachers not only to teach features of English such as grammar, but to go further and teach students that a language has more aspects like culture and that this culture is what makes the language vary and drive the speakers behave in a certain manner, which is often different for us. Taking into account the above, we believe that it is important to teach students to respect, understand and deal with these differences.

Talking about the context and the participants, the implementation of these techniques could increase the confidence of students more easily because they learned cultural expressions

and realities while listening to music in the foreign language classroom. Thanks to this, they could be more interested at the time to learn a language that is not theirs, in this case English, since they could be influenced to go further and understand how to interact better with cultural expressions and structures that allow them to be comfortable in the EFL classroom.

As researchers and student-teachers, this project gave us the opportunity to do a well-elaborated investigation for the first time, which leaves us with many learnings and contributions to different perspectives that would strengthen our practices in our near future as teachers. It allowed us to explore new ways of teaching culture and to get out of the traditional paradigms of which many teachers and students are tired.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To promote cultural awareness through the use of songs in 6th graders in a public school in Rionegro, Antioquia.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To design and implement English lessons that correspond to the topics and necessities of the curriculum in order to include songs with cultural awareness content.
2. To describe how students, identify and relate the expressions in the songs taking into account the cultural content in them.

CONCEPTUAL REFERENCES

In this section, we will talk about the terms that are the fundamental basis of our project to better understand the concepts of cultural awareness, using songs in the EFL classroom and teaching English to young learners.

Cultural Awareness

According to Tomalin and Stempleski (2013), cultural awareness is the term used to describe sensitivity to the impact of culturally-induced behavior on language and communication. Many times what is incorrect in other cultures is right in ours. For Baker (2011), cultural awareness can be defined as a conscious understanding of the role culture plays in language learning and communication (in both, first and foreign languages). He also assures that “many of the approaches agree on the importance of a systematic framework for teaching culture and language together, in which the relationship between them is explicitly explored with learners” (p. 4). As teachers, we have the responsibility not only to teach our students to value and show their culture to the world, but we must also help them develop attitudes that lead them to be conscious and respectful to others' culture.

Using Songs in the EFL Classroom

As Lopera (2003) highlights it, the use of songs has been highly recommended to encourage motivation and make students improve their knowledge of the foreign language.

First, music has to do with social contexts. Second, it may change students' moods. Third, it provides stimulation and entertainment as well as challenge and pleasure. Fourth, music may be associated with happiness because it brings people's remembrances and dreams.

Finally, most teachers agree that music is a powerful tool to learn English. (Lopera, 2003, p. 136).

When using songs in the EFL class, we gave our students an experience and we were letting them have fun. Thanks to this, we believed that interactive and cooperative learning could be promoted, which increases the desire to learn the language. On the other hand, it was important to select the songs well taking into account their message, the needs and the likes of the students. Şevik (2011) points out that songs have a high pedagogical value which helps students to develop communicative skills and to give them more opportunities to show their abilities in the target language. Thus, songs are relevant when learning the target language since they encourage learners to use and practice authentic language outside the classroom.

Teaching English to Young Learners

For Bland (2019), children are cognitively stimulated when offered opportunities for developing language-learning strategies, their curiosity and interest in languages are awakened. The potential benefits of TEYL are the crucial point that the teaching must be appropriate to the social, psychological, emotional and cognitive needs of children This is why we agree with Nunan (2011), who describes some details and believes that we must know about how to reach a good process when teaching English to young learners. In his own words, teaching English to young learners has two main purposes: to provide the care necessary to meet their needs so that they can thrive and focus on learning and to provide instruction, for giving them good educational experiences to meet the developmental stages of the individual child.

METHODOLOGY

Ryan (2018) argues that the researchers cannot be separated from their values or beliefs while doing an investigation, so collecting, interpreting and analyzing data are inherent processes to be informed. The following section then will include the perspective in which our project was enlightened, the approach and the type of research. Ethical considerations as well as the description of the participants, the data collection methods and instruments will be described. Finally, the manner in which the data were analyzed is displayed in this section.

Research Paradigm

According to Lorenzo (2006) interpretivist paradigm is based on some arguments such as, claiming that there are essential structures in consciousness of which we obtain direct knowledge, through a certain kind of reflection; it delves into the different reasons for the events. It does not seek for generalization, reality is dynamic and interactive; the individuals themselves construct the action interpreting and valuing reality as a whole in such an analytical-descriptive way and the subject is a communicative individual who shares meanings.

Research Approach

As this project looks to encourage cultural awareness with students from 6th grade, the approach was a qualitative research, which consists of observing what our sixth graders do and how they behave and react when they are approached to different cultural songs of a specific English context. As Bricki & Green (2007) manifest “Qualitative research is characterized by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspects of social life, and its methods which (in general) generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis” (p. 2).

Type of Research

According to Burns (2010), in an Action Research (AR), the teacher is involved in the process since they explore their context making part of the project as well. That's why we are convinced that an AR could be the most appropriate type of research to propose in the methodological design, because as researchers we were involved in the process with the participants. Going deeper, we were the ones who analyzed the context and design an action plan while the research is evolving. We are solving our own doubts and writing down some conclusions and findings in order to get and comprehend students' beliefs. This goes in accordance with what Kemmis and McTaggart (2014) say, "AR approach is an understanding of relationships between researchers and researched, theory and practice, and theorists and practitioners" (p. 4).

In the process of undertaking an AR design, it is vital to comprehend the different stages that the process itself entails. Kemmis and McTaggart (2014) propose four steps in which the AR cycles may adapt for proposing new actions in the field.

The first moment of AR is intended for the planning, in which the researchers, having identified an issue or problem, are able to make a plan regarding their field of knowledge. In this part, an action plan was designed in order to have all the activities clear before starting the process. That action plan was created following the needs we had as researchers because it needed to follow the way the schools were working considering the parameters that had to do with the pandemic.

Then the researchers will have to ask themselves what could be the level of improvements that would be possible at the time of implementation and the type of investigation could be developed as well. This stage is reflected in our project as the approximation to the context, getting

acquainted with the participants and the problem that was proposed to be solved. We designed 4 lesson plans which converged with the topics suggested in the curriculum of the school.

The second phase includes the taking of action according to the plan that was designed in the first step. The observation as a gathering information tool took place in all the lessons. The four lessons were given according to what was planned in the beginning, hence it presented important information that was collected. It is important to highlight that in this stage we achieved our goal because it gave us many ways to gather information and it showed the way we were traversing. Additionally, in this third stage, we realized how important it is collecting information by using good tools. Finally, this stage also gave us the opportunity to know if the process was going where we were looking for.

Finally, in order to complete a full cycle of AR, it is necessary to reflect on the different effects the investigation had and the researchers have to decide whether it is necessary to start another cycle of AR taking into account the participants, context, among others, that would be changed.

In the last stage a meeting was developed to see where we were and what came next. We agreed that for time reasons it was necessary to keep going researching in this kind of field. Our process finished here, but the topic is open for more people interested to know more about it. Many of the effects of this investigation agreed to the literature review and the concepts we wanted to find in the beginning.

Participants

Participants were a group of 6th graders from Institución Educativa Concejo Municipal El Porvenir, which is located in the municipality of Rionegro, Antioquia and belongs to the public context. There were 11 students, 6 boys and 5 girls, who were between 11 and 13 years old. The process was carried out with the accompaniment of a cooperating teacher who counts on wide experience to teach EFL in the context. Young learners were chosen because, according to Bland (2019) they are cognitively stimulated when offered opportunities for developing language-learning strategies, their curiosity and interest in languages are awakened.

Ethical Considerations

Keeping in mind that this research was developed with young learners, it was necessary to keep parents in touch about what the project is about. Then, we informed them about all the activities and information we collected through consent forms that were designed in order to get permission to observe their English classes and behaviors. Many strategies were used to protect confidentiality about participants' identities. We also clarified in the consent form that the information collected during the investigation will be only used for academic purposes. The participants had the right to abandon the process when they felt uncomfortable or simply when they did not want to participate. The information collected will be stored in secure resources and it will not be spread with people different from the ones contemplated from the beginning.

Data Collection Methods

In order to collect the information on how to promote cultural awareness through the use of songs with our participants, we proceeded with the following methods for data collection and their corresponding instruments.

Non-participant Observations

Marshall & Rossman (1995) define observation as "the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study" (p. 79). This will allow us to describe the way in which the students are being involved in the process of cultural awareness through the implementation of the songs and the lesson plans. Non-participant observations seem to be the most suitable ones to proceed in this case since there is no intention to intervene while monitoring the lessons.

To compile the information observed in the lessons, taking field notes served as a way to write down details so we could recapitulate everything that was seen in the classroom. As Johnson (2012) points out "field notes help you notice details you might not otherwise have noticed" (p. 3). We made out 4 observations and these were taken on the days Wednesday, Sept. 15th; Tuesday, Sept. 22nd; Wednesday, Sept. 29th and Tuesday, Oct. 5th, 2021.

Semi-Structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview can be understood as a way of collecting qualitative data in which the participant or participants can be asked questions, taking a guiding list and formulating others as the interview is undertaken (Mertler, 2017). We consider that this data collection method could be useful for our investigation since the voice of the cooperating teacher should be heard.

For this, we carried out an interview that compiled the perspective of the teacher related to how the evolution of the project had promoted the cultural awareness of the participants through the use of songs in the EFL classroom. In this research process, a semi-structured interview was made to the Cooperative Teacher on Tuesday, Oct. 5th, 2021.

Journals

As the research design chosen was an AR, it is necessary to consider the perspectives and reflections of the person or people involved in the actions. In this case, we believe that keeping a journal can provide us with a different source of information to the data collection process. These tools helped us collect and save some significant reflections (Burns, 2010). The journals were filled out after every intervention in the action plan for the AR, for a total of 4 journals analyzed during the investigation with dates as of Sept. 15th, 22nd and 30th and Oct. 12th, 2021.

Surveys

Mathers, Fox & Hunn (2007) define the surveys as “a flexible research approach used to investigate a wide range of topics. Surveys often employ the questionnaire as a tool for data collection.” (p. 5). In this research project we carried out a questionnaire, which was composed of 5 questions according to what was seen in the time of the classes seen in the implementation and was directed towards the students and it was delivered on Oct. 5th, 2021.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After gathering the information from the different sources and agents, contrasting and analyzing the data, it was possible to see that the initial categories that were proposed as the concepts guiding this project remained as such: Cultural Awareness, Teaching English to Young

Learners (TEYL) and Using Songs in the EFL Classroom. In this part of the paper, we will describe the major findings that emerged during the codification and analysis of the information in the project, as well as the discussion of these ones and the literature reviewed both in previous studies and main concepts.

Cultural Awareness

In this category, we could see that there was an openness from the CT related to the importance of the topic of culture in the EFL classroom.

Talking about cultural awareness, the CT mentioned that it is a relevant issue to consider when teaching a foreign language since *“la cultura es la que crea el idioma¹”* (Interview to the CT, Oct. 5th, 2021). He also said that he noticed a positive change in the disposition of students to learn because during the classes they were interested in "learning familiar and cultural elements in different parts of the world" (Interview to the CT, Oct. 5th, 2021). On the other hand, he highlighted the importance of using songs in the classroom since "cultural factors are found in a song" (Interview to the CT, Oct. 5th, 2021).

In the observations, students manifested different thoughts related to cultural awareness. Among them, what we noticed was that through the identification of information, some interesting topics emerged such as the identification of family members that they already knew. For example, as reported in the observations, many of them showed that they knew some basic words about family as father, mother, son, among others. However, many of them showed that they did not know much information about how to say the family members in English. For those who already had previous knowledge, they looked interested in knowing more when they found a new word

¹ Culture is what makes the language. This translation was carried out by the researchers.

that was unknown. On the other hand, for those that did not have apparently much previous knowledge, they started to know better and get new words for them. The comparison between families around the world was quite encouraging for them because they looked more interested to know better and deeper the facts that there are differences between cultures, and as the activity was distributed in teams, they could be focused just in one topic in the beginning, but by presenting their interesting facts, they could be involved and involve their classmates in the topic, which we assume was not a difficult activity for them and as the observations showed: *“Ocurren algunos hechos chistosos que hacen que los estudiantes recuerden mejor lo que cada uno ha mencionado”*² (4th Observation, Oct. 5th, 2021). They looked encouraged and aware that the song showed a different reality for them. Some of them just prove what they think (fathers are not good at acting as housewives).

After analyzing the questionnaires given to the students, we found that 6 out of the 11 students stated that they had found similarities and differences regarding families around the world and their own. For example, participant 3 said: *“Si, la familia en Africa es muy numerosa como la mia. Que las familias del mundo tienen religions diferentes a las de nosotros”*³ (Questionnaire to the students, Oct. 5th 2021). Other three participants’ answers are not clear, and participants 8 and 9 stated that they have not found any similarity or difference, participant 8 said that he did not remember and participant 9 said he was not very sociable. 9 out of the 11 students agreed that it is important to know how families are made up in the world and to learn about other cultures since they considered that it might be very useful when leaving the country and traveling to other regions. As participant 8 said: *“Si usted va a ir a vivir o a visitar otro pais debe conocer tod acerca de sus*

² Some funny things happen in the classroom, which makes students remember better what they have mentioned. This is a translation carried out by the researchers.

³ Yes, the family in Africa is very numerous like mine. That the families of the world have different religions than ours. This is a translation carried out by the researchers.

*familias en caso de que le pregunten*⁴” (Questionnaire to the students on Oct. 5th, 2021). For his part, participant 3 said that “*Conocer las familias alrededor del mundo es importante para saber su historia, su pasado y sus culturas*⁵” Participant 1, on the other hand, stated that “*No es importante porque uno no tiene que saber porque sirve muy poco*⁶”. Finally, participant 9 manifested an ambiguity since he said: “*Si y no porque otras familias no te daran nada pero al mismo tiempo si, porque puedes ver lo que pasa con los demas*⁷”.

According to what the findings revealed in this first category, we could say that regarding the culture, much of what the students and the CT expressed go along with the perception that Baker (2011) has about culture, when he says that cultural awareness plays a special role in the development of the conscience of communication, as the cooperating teacher holds when he said that culture makes the language (Interview to the CT, Oct. 5th, 2021). Also, we think that the role of the teacher represents a crucial feature in education.

Our findings showed that many students felt motivated and enjoy learning (4th Observation, Oct. 5th, 2021); so, this highlight closely showed that our implementation agreed to what we were looking in the beginning given that most of the participants (including researchers, CT, and students) looked like interested in moving forward in the topics addressed. As all the students came from different familiar contexts it helped the research exercise owing to what Osorno (2018) found in a research project he carried out, in which he stated that people behave differently on account of all of them coming from different contexts. He also says that music motivated the learning and

⁴ If you are going to live or visit, you have to take into account everything about their families, or also in case they ask you. This is a translation carried out by the researchers.

⁵ knowing about families around the world is useful for “knowing their stories, their past and their cultures. This translation was carried out by the researchers.

⁶ it is not important since one does not have to know because it is of little use. This translation was carried out by the researchers.

⁷ Yes, and no, because other people's families will not give you benefits, but at the same time they will, because you can see what happens with others. This translation was carried out by the researchers.

generated an ideal environment in which students could find another way to learn a foreign language. According to this part we noticed that our findings seemed like they were going in a good concordance with the review of the previous literature, since they showed us what we wanted to see when implementing.

Given the observations we noticed that the students got the point when the song was shared, most of them could connect the cultural content to the song and the topic we were addressing. Through the questionnaire, we noticed that most of the participants gave some value not only to the cultural content, but also to the differences and similarities between families around the world.

Teaching English to Young Learners

When referring to TEYL, the CT mentioned that culture can generate multiple teaching aids for the student to learn or adhere to learning much faster. Thanks to this, he emphasized that students "showed more initiative, desire to participate, desire to speak in the language." (Interview to the CT, Oct. 5th, 2021). On the other hand, he said that today's kids have different ways of learning, thus, we have to think of new ways to bring knowledge to them so that it is attractive to them and what better way than songs. He also pointed out that thanks to the activities we carried out in the classes, he was able to observe results such as attention, intention, desire to learn more, and some kids who were unwilling to participate, dared to do so.

Analyzing the logs, we could notice that the teacher acted as a main character in this research project, because all the things we implemented went through him. Also, his participation was noticeable. We could remark that students were more engaged in the process (1st log on Sept. 15th, 2021), the teacher was a main character here. In the logs, we noticed that when the process was going forward the students were more participative. Also, through facing their fears in the classroom, they got more confident (3rd log on Sept. 30th, 2021), especially with one student who

was so shy at the very beginning, but when the process advanced he showed better disposition to receive the classes. Plan B was useful in one class. While the teachers were giving the lesson the time was running out, so they used many tasks to get the goal of the class. The observations showed that he was always compromised with the process and ready to solve doubts at every moment (1st Observation, Sept. 15th, 2021). Through the activities and the ways that they were addressed, students seemed more interested especially in writing and learning the topic being taught. Students' concentration looked better as well, they appeared more concentrated as the classes went by (4th Observation, Oct. 5th, 2021). The information gathered showed that when using this method, the students were more used to working cooperatively every time they talked to each other to solve doubts. Also, they found a way to work individually by using the dictionary to look for the words they didn't know and as the teacher was busy helping all the students, some of them found a way to know those words using the dictionary so they became more independent. Also, in the observations, we found that the teacher was always available to help the students with all their doubts and to correct them each time they were wrong by pronouncing words or with ideas as well. Both the Cooperating teacher and the pre-service teacher gave special value to all the efforts students did in the classroom; with this they looked like being more confident to participate no matter if they made mistakes (3rd Observation, Sept. 5th, 2021).

When analyzing the information that emerged from the questionnaires carried out with the students, they were asked for their opinion about the classes where the topic about the family was seen. In the different answers, it was evident that the students enjoyed the classes, as they stated that they found the classes entertaining and educational. An example of this is given by participant 11, who expressed his liking for the teacher's explanation during the implementations (Questionnaire to the students on Oct. 5th, 2021).

One of the most encouraging aspects to keep in mind taking into account our findings is that students were compromised with the activities. The use of songs seemed to be very useful at the moment to catch students' attention which agrees with Bland (2019) who says that children's attention is caught when there are different strategies that awaken their interests and curiosities. Also, our findings are in the same way with Nunan (2011) who establishes that the teacher must be well prepared to offer good strategies that found the children's knowledge development, because students looked like interested and more conscious about the topic we addressed (observations)

Using Songs in the EFL Classroom

One hundred percent of the students stated that they have learned something through classes in which songs were implemented to encourage cultural awareness. Some of them say that they learned about pronunciation, (participants 1, 3 and 10), (Questionnaire to the students on Oct. 5th, 2021). Others learned about information from families in different parts of the world, (participants 2, 4, 5, 7, 9 and 11). And others learned new vocabulary (participants 1, 6 and 8). It was also noticed that, when using songs in the classroom, it is necessary to choose them thoroughly because the level can be advanced for them, so it is going to take more time and effort to reach the goals or implement the activities according to the schedule proposed.

In this part, students showed more aspects that were determined through the uses of songs. For example, they could see not only the members of the family in other countries and how they are composed, but also the reality that some people can live in other parts of the world. Finally, the CT refers to using songs in the EFL classroom saying that *“los dispositivos audio y visuales son de las mejores formas para llegar al aprendizaje, una de las formas más didácticas o más*

*comprensibles, o aprendibles para ellos*⁸". (Interview to CT on Oct. 5th, 2021). He stood out that thanks to the use of the songs, he noticed a great improvement in the students' readiness for classes.

Through the findings in this category we could say that cultural awareness was closely connected to the use of songs which concurs to what Reina (2010) says, when we use songs language learning and culture become more attractive to students. Students found that using songs inside the classroom helped them to be tolerant, they could see the cultural differences from one region or country to another. This last information converges to what Osorno (2018) states when he says that the cultural approximation through the use of songs gives the students tools to be more conscious about it. For us it was so meaningful to realize that in this part our findings showed many relations to what we wanted to see from the very beginning when we proposed to generate a cultural awareness. The use of songs creates a link between culture and language, also, it comes up with interesting tools and approaches since students could notice which were some differences from one culture to another. Our findings are in accord to what Garay and Segura (2018) support, they say that it is outstanding to find a way to reflect the culture in the classroom since nowadays students need to know more expressions and cultural items rather than just structures. Finally, through the observations we noticed that some students had some fun supporting that "music may be associated with happiness because it brings people's remembrances and dreams" (Lopera, 2003, p. 136).

CONCLUSIONS

After the analysis, we can deduce that songs in the EFL classroom are tools that support teachers to practice a different way of teaching and getting out of the ordinary, from an "old" and monotonous type of teaching. By focusing on the cultural issue, we wanted to highlight how

⁸ audiovisual devices are the best way to approach students today since they have new ways of learning and they need to be more captivated when it comes to learning. This translation was carried out by the researchers.

necessary it is inside the classroom to learn or reinforce the cultural background that we faced in our classes. Also, working with songs is essential to have a clear theme that also corresponds to the level of the students. It is quite valuable to start thinking about the teaching of English more from a cultural point of view and less from a structural one.

On the other hand, we faced some big and entangled challenges such as the lack of time, as first, we could just work with only a song because with the schedule proposed the idea was working with more than two, but if we had done it, other steps like coding and results would be affected, and the steps after it. Next, we started too late because the school schedule was delayed due to the pandemic and teachers and school managers had to work on several adjustments since students returned to classrooms in face-to-face classes after a long time.

Additionally, choosing the songs was not easy. It took us a lot of time, because of the age of the students, and the topics they were working with. After having selected the topic, there were a lot of songs but not according to the level of English that students had nor for their age, even the song chosen was a bit difficult for them at the time of practicing in the classroom and at home. Also, the students' answers written in the questionnaire were not as accurate as expected, and we watched a lot of isolated responses to the principal purpose the questions had inside. The reason should be their age or their thoughts and they did not understand or comprehend well the questions they read.

Lastly, something that should be considered is related to how valuable it would be that future researchers select the material they will work with carefully. Because knowing the students you are working with, and the context they are in, is something completely ignored by teachers at the time of teaching classes. Information such as the age or the English level that students have determines the rest of the research process. And also, the topics that schools have in the agenda for

lesson planning must be taken into considerations. To end, this paper has demonstrated that through the implementation of this research project, cultural awareness has been promoted, since acceptance of the differences and the introduction of how families are composed in different continents cultures such as Africa, North America and Europe has been satisfactory thanks to the use of songs in the English classes in 6th grade students of Institución Educativa Concejo Municipal el Porvenir school. This project could be implemented in all types of EFL classes since the songs can be selected according to the age and likes of the students, in the same way it could be modified according to the curricular needs of each grade.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1 - Consent form (format)

	CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS UNIVERSIDAD CATOLICA DE ORIENTE.
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La siguiente investigación tiene como propósito promover y/o motivar la conciencia cultural que se puede adquirir a través del uso de canciones en el idioma Inglés con los jóvenes de sexto grado del Instituto Educativo Concejo Municipal el Porvenir en el municipio de Rionegro. La información será recolectada por medio de observaciones, entrevistas, trabajos de clase, entre otros.

Sr(a) Acudiente, por favor lea atentamente el siguiente documento que tiene como objetivo explicarle el uso y confidencialidad de sus datos, así como sus derechos y compromisos con respecto al trabajo final de investigación. Si tiene cualquier duda consúltelas con los investigadores relacionados a continuación:

- ❖ Daniel Quintero: Correo: danielquinterolope@hotmail.com; Tel: 319 309 1104
- ❖ Felipe Rojas: Correo: piperoco07@hotmail.com; Tel: 312 285 3860
- ❖ Isis Noreña: Correo: isinore99@hotmail.com; Tel: 310 727 6510

USO Y CONFIDENCIALIDAD DE LOS DATOS.

Toda la información concerniente a su evaluación y observación, incluyendo cualquier grabación de audio, video o reporte escrito, son confidenciales y no serán divulgadas ni entregadas a ninguna otra institución o individuo sin su consentimiento expreso. Toda la información manipulada será con fines académicos.

El proceso de observación e investigación requiere de su compromiso de asistencia, puntualidad y participación y además de su colaboración en diligenciar una serie de documentos y/o pruebas, con información personal que será utilizada por el/la estudiante de lenguas extranjeras para la evaluación e informe del trabajo final de Investigación.

DECLARACION DE CONSENTIMIENTO.

Yo, _____, identificado(a) con cédula de ciudadanía número _____ de _____, acudiente de _____, manifiesto:

- 1) Mi aceptación del proceso de evaluación y observación ofrecido por los investigadores de la Universidad Católica de Oriente y que me ha sido explicado y entendido por mí y cuyas condiciones generales me han sido aclaradas.
- 2) Que la información que le brindo a los investigadores es verdad y corresponde a mi realidad, ya que sobre dicha información se plantean las respuestas al proceso de observación.
- 3) Que he leído y comprendido íntegramente este documento y en consecuencia acepto su contenido y las consecuencias que de él se deriven y accedo a lo anteriormente mencionado.

Fecha _____ Firma _____

Appendix 2 - Non-participant observation (format)

OBSERVACIÓN NÚMERO	
FECHA:	
NÚMERO DE ESTUDIANTES	
DOCENTE COOPERADOR	
PRACTICANTE	
OBSERVADOR	
DURACIÓN	

OBSERVACIÓN

ATENCIÓN PRESTADA A LA CLASE

WARM UP:

HONESTIDAD A LA HORA DE RESOLVER LA ACTIVIDAD

PARTICIPACIÓN EN CLASE

DISPOSICIÓN PARA LA REALIZACIÓN DE LA ACTIVIDAD

Appendix 3 - Semi-structured Interview

1. ¿Cree usted que la cultura es un tema importante a tener en cuenta cuando se enseña una lengua extranjera, en este caso el Inglés? Si, no y ¿Por qué?
2. ¿logró observar algún cambio en la disposición de los estudiantes para aprender cuando se aborda este tipo de metodología? Mencione alguno de ellos.
3. ¿Qué opinión tiene respecto al uso de las canciones? ¿Cree usted que las canciones si pueden contener o pueden traer implícitamente ese contenido cultural o esa apertura que se da hacia otros mundos, hacia otros países, en este caso o otras lenguas, ósea, otros lugares que nosotros podríamos como percibir desde acá a través del uso de las canciones?
4. ¿Con qué otro elemento cree usted que podrían los chicos aprender respecto a la cultura de otros países?
5. ¿Qué le hubiera añadido usted a estas cuatro clases de implementación?, ¿Qué cree usted que le faltó?
6. ¿Usted qué otro tema consideraría bueno a trabajar para este tipo de aprendizaje?

Appendix 4 - Journal (format)




Week #

Date:

<p>What did I learn during this week in my practicum?</p> <p>What challenges and difficulties did I face during this week? (in & out the class)</p> <p>What will I do differently? What activities did I enjoy the most? Was my lesson plan effective) Why? Why not?</p> <p>(Write minimum 200 words) Record minimum 2 minutes</p>	
<p>Feedback from others Announce the comments and recommendations I received (Cooperating teachers, advisor, class time – teacher, classmates and discussions-)</p> <p>(Write minimum 100 words) Record minimum 1 minute</p>	

Appendix 5 - Questionnaire (format)



Nombre: _____ Institución: _____

La siguiente es una entrevista que pretende recolectar información acerca de su proceso en el proyecto de investigación llevado a cabo. Lea atentamente las preguntas y responda con total sinceridad. De presentarse alguna duda por favor infórmela al estudiante investigador a practicante.

Questionnaire for students.

1. ¿Qué tal te parecieron las clases donde se habló del tema de la familia?

2. ¿Crees que aprendiste algo sobre este tema? Sí, no. ¿Qué aprendiste?

3. ¿Sabías algo sobre las familias en otras partes del mundo antes de la clase? Sí, no. ¿Qué sabías?

4. Luego de las clases, ¿Encontraste semejanzas y diferencias entre las familias alrededor del mundo y la tuya? menciona algunas de ellas.

5. ¿Crees que es importante conocer cómo están conformadas otras familias en el mundo? Sí, no. ¿Por qué?
