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# A multimedia material for effective transcultural learning

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Rosario Heins. Corozos. 1998. Acrílico y lápiz sobre lienzo, 100 x 70 cms

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<p>El objetivo de este artículo es presentar los resultados de una investigación que analizó las características de una material multimedia que pudiera relacionarse con el aprendizaje transcultural de los estudiantes de inglés, nivel 7, en el Instituto de Idiomas de la Universidad del Norte (Barranquilla, Colombia). Se utilizó un enfoque cualitativo con diseño de estudio de casos para lograr los objetivos del estudio, empleando técnicas como observaciones de clases, entrevistas y encuestas a profesores y estudiantes y análisis de documentos.</p>	<p>RESUMEN</p>	<p>The aim of this paper is to present the results of a research, which analyzed the characteristics of a multimedia material that could actually be related to transcultural learning for level 7 students at the Language Institute, Universidad del Norte (Barranquilla, Colombia). A qualitative approach with a case study design (level 7 of English in the undergraduate program) was used to accomplish the objectives of the research. The techniques utilized were class observations, surveys and interviews to students and professors, and document analysis.</p>
<p>PALABRAS CLAVE: Aprendizaje transcultural, análisis de necesidades, Tecnología de Información y Comunicación (TIC).</p> <p>FECHA DE RECEPCIÓN: 15 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 2006 FECHA DE ACEPTACIÓN: 10 DE OCTUBRE DE 2006</p>	<p>ABSTRACT</p>	<p>KEY WORDS: Transcultural learning, needs analysis, Information and Communication Technology (ICT).</p>

## 1. Introduction

The primary function to learn English is considered to be to prepare the speaker to share and communicate aspects of his/her own culture and to know cultural aspects of the language he/she is learning as well. Culture should be a key component in the English class because it includes crossing boundaries and transcultural encounters (McKay, 2002, Internationalization Working Committee, 1994). Moreover, it is necessary to include the culture in language learning as an important motivating factor (Richards, 1995; Kramsch, 1993). It promotes understanding among people at an international level, understanding of our own culture and prepares the students of a second language to adapt more easily when they visit other countries (Adaskou, Britten, & Fahsi, 1990).

However, English as an international language does not belong exclusively to English speaking countries (McKay, 2002). Therefore, it is necessary to teach the culture of these countries and the culture of non- English speaking countries (McKay, 2004). Here is where the Universidad del Norte considers that the student is a citizen of the world and needs to assimilate other cultures to be prepared to have a better international development in his/her professional life (Oficina de Planeación, 2004).

According to the Universidad del Norte in a globalized, multicultural, and scientific world it is necessary to strengthen the obligatory learning of several languages. Furthermore, the learning process will include the assimilation of other cultures to prepare the student to face international commitments. This task is developed by the Instituto de Idiomas, but, at the same time, it is every University professor's commitment (Oficina de Planeación, 2004).

The study of other languages has helped the students to see closely the applicability of it since the culture is the "lens" through which the world is seen. Therefore, this means that the study of a foreign language, as a way to express someone's feelings and thoughts, can be learned by students in a meaningful way (Bibikova & Kotelnikov, 2004; Spradley, 1980; Andocilla & Rasero, 2004; McKay, 2004). For this reason when a culture is taught it should be related to everything a human being is connected to: what people do (cultural behavior), what people know (cultural knowledge) and what people use (cultural artifacts) (Spradley, 1980). On the other hand, according to Andocilla & Rasero's study (2004), the more a professor gets closer to cultural contents related to the student's daily life, the more the student learns in a meaningful way. Moreover, if these cultural contents are shared with people from other cultures and these people, at the same time, share their own culture with the student, the result

will be a comprehensible, profound and significant knowledge of the language taught (McKay, 2004).

Yet it is necessary to be in the vanguard of the cutting edge technology related to college English teaching since this technology implies an important motivating factor (Warschauer, 2001; Teeler and Gray, 2000; Rey & Rosado, 2000). It is outstanding how multimedia material could be a motivating tool when the student learn a new language (Warschauer, 2001). The students find it easy to do new activities using new technology. The new technology let the students be autonomous when they are studying, help them to complete research assignments, and let them have access to a huge amount of information. Besides, it includes most of the learning styles that are possible to study a language (auditory, visual, kinesthetic, tactile, individual, group, etc.) (Reid, 1984). It also lets them get the latest in information (Teeler & Gray, 2000). Educators have found that multimedia materials are useful, motivating and appropriate tools as a complement for their virtual and personal classes (Rey & Rosado, 2000; Teeler & Gray, 2000; Hardisty & Windeatt, 1990; Pallof & Pratt, 2001; Porter, 1997; Danc & McGivern, 2000).

On the other hand, the combination of culture and technology is unavoidable. It is almost compulsory to use new technologies connected to culture in order to succeed around the

world (Marzio, 2000). Having a cultural component in ILT could promote international understanding. Moreover, it could promote a better knowledge of our own cultural identity, facilitate visits to foreign countries and motivate students to improve in every area of their lives (Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi, 1990).

Last year the Instituto de Idiomas, through a research carried out among professors and students, assessed the impact of the implementation of transcultural activities these last two years. The results of the survey were very positive. The students' attitude towards foreign cultures has changed substantially. The changes in their attitudes have improved the learning process of the English language. On the other hand, the proposed activities are promoting autonomy in the students because they feel highly connected to the new foreign people they are meeting through chats, videoconferences, e-mail, in class, etc. Therefore, the students want to continue studying autonomously to improve their English skills in order to have a better communication and to know more about the others' culture and share more about theirs (Richards, 1995).

However, the assessment process of the implementation of the transcultural objectives and activities has found an outstanding constraint that requires a closer research. Getting new materials to achieve the goals proposed by the Instituto de Idiomas

has not been an easy task. Mainly the multimedia material which sometimes has not been adequate for some of the English levels has been the most difficult to find. Some of the software acquired by the resource center of the Instituto de Idiomas has been useful for the English level, but sometimes the English level of the students is not high enough to be able to understand the cultural activity the software requires. Some other times the cultural topic to be taught according to the program is not found in any of the multimedia materials the Instituto de Idiomas has. Therefore, the professors need to spend time on internet searching for websites to locate an adequate culture activity that sometimes does not achieve the objective of the program.

As a result, the purpose of this research was to analyze the characteristics of a multimedia material that could actually be related to transcultural learning for level 7 students of English at the Instituto de Idiomas in the Universidad del Norte.

Specific objectives were:

- Identify the characteristics that an educative multimedia material should have.
- Identify the characteristics that an educative material with cultural content should have.
- Establish the relationship among the characteristics of an educative multimedia material and an

educative material with cultural content.

- Establish the relationships among student-material, professor-material and professor-student-material.

## 2. Methodology

It was necessary to establish a theoretical basis related to education and culture in language teaching and learning (Spradley, 1980; Andocilla & Rasero, 2004; McKay, 2004; Coleman, 1996). In addition, it was required to set up the theoretical framework of the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) applied to the English class (Warschauer, 2001; Teeler and Gray, 2000; Rey & Rosado, 2000).

The context in which education and learning of a foreign language using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and transcultural contents takes place requires the understanding of the different interactive processes that occurs inside and outside of the classroom (Marzio, 2000). Among the different factors connected in teaching transcultural contents using ICT are affective, cognitive and cultural factors (Marzio, 2000; Richards, 1995).

Consequently, a qualitative approach with a case study design (level 7 class of English in the undergraduate program<sup>1</sup>) was

<sup>1</sup> Universidad del Norte has a language institute which is called Instituto de Idiomas. For the undergraduate

used to accomplish the objectives of the research (Buendía, Colás & Hernández, 1998; Cohen & Manion, 1994). The techniques utilized were class observation, interviews and questionnaires to students and professors, and document analysis of the multimedia material of the Instituto de Idiomas (Goetz & Lecompte, 1998; Cohen & Manion, 1994; PereMarquez, 2003). This context (English level 7 students of the undergraduate program) was chosen because in the past some research, related to transcultural needs, had already been done with level 7 students.

This level focuses on a balanced development of the four linguistic abilities: Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing. The student has the opportunity to reinforce vocabulary and grammar knowledge seen in previous levels. They also have the possibility to increase their knowledge in these areas. On the other hand, students have the opportunity to improve their transcultural approach to other countries.

The specific objectives of culture, which were the ones that concern this research mainly, are to:

1. Explain their own culture to foreigners and nationals.

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students of Universidad del Norte, the institute offers a special English program, which consists of 8 levels. The English level concerned to this research is the seventh.

2. Describe the customs of people of different cultures.
3. Express their point of view concerning situations of plagiarism and cheating during exams and term papers.

The number of students was 20 from different programs: Business Administration, Mass Media Communication, Mechanical Engineering, System Engineering, Electronics Engineering and Industrial Engineering. Half of them were male and the other half female.

For gathering data (See Appendix Table 1), it was necessary to apply the techniques used by the ethnography: class observation, questionnaires, interviews and documentation (Buendía, L., Colás, P. Y Hernández, F., 1998; Goetz & Lecompte, 1998; Cohen & Manion, 1994; Hutchinson & Waters 1987).

### 3. Results

In order to interpret the gathered information in, data were analyzed through hermeneutics, using the categories obtained from the literature and the emerging categories. It was also required to identify the characteristics of multimedia according to the material to be designed; user's interface and the hypermedia structure. It was important to take every factor related to a good multimedia material into account: easy installation, easy

surfing, interactivity, content quality, content relevance, etc. (Pacheco, 2005; Marqués, 1995; Salinas, 1994; Díaz, Catenazzi & Aedo, 1996)

Data analysis was submitted to triangulation (Patton, 2002). In this research data triangulation (students, teachers and documents), investigator triangulation (researchers) and methodological triangulation (class observations, surveys, interviews and document analysis) were used. Therefore, it was possible to obtain different points of view to guarantee the applied analysis method.

### 3.1. Class observation analysis results

Six 50-minutes class hours were observed. From these, two were dedicated to students' free topics presentations, two hours to a transcultural movie, one hour to the discussion of the movie, and one hour to a cultural exchange with a foreign visitor.

The analysis of results of this class observation focuses on the cultural topics presented in the development of the classes observed. This was mainly concerned with the evaluation of people's character and appreciating things (Martin & Rose, 2003). Besides, there are some other emerging categories related to knowledge and personal experiences. At the same time it was possible to view some traces of the possible characteristics of cultural material (Knight, 2005; Gorsky,

2005) and multimedia material designed (Torrandell, 2005; Pacheco, 2005) that were necessary for the data collection.

#### 3.1.1. Kinds of attitudes

Among the categories suggested by Martin & Rose (2003) for discourse analysis related to appraisal<sup>2</sup>, the subcategory of judging people's character and appreciating things were the ones that most represented the interactions in these class observations. Findings show:

- **Judging people's character:**  
Students tend to evaluate people's character by judging their personal and moral behavior. These judgments can be positive or negative, and at the same time students can judge explicitly (direct) or implicitly (implied). One example of a positive explicit judgment can be seen when one student expresses admiration of British people saying "**People with good manners...**"(70, Observation 3)<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, students tend to judge negatively when they

<sup>2</sup> Concerned with evaluation of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the form of values are sourced and readers aligned.

<sup>3</sup> In examples, the first figure means the turn a person or a group of people use to express their thoughts orally. The second figure represents the number of the transcribed observation hour.

criticize explicitly about German people saying they are **"not friendly, Nazis, Nazis..."** (159, Obs. 3).

- **Appreciating things:** On the other hand, students are inclined to appreciate things positively and negatively as well. These include their attitudes toward foreign cultures, college program selection, fashion, family, values, social life, etc. For example, they appreciate positively family relationships, relationships among people from different cultures, especially via internet, and speaking. Here are some instances:

**You talk with your "familiares", your friends and your work partners. Eh, you need support..** (116. Observation 2). – [Related to the support a person who wants to quit smoking should have.]

**Ok. There are many difference...there are many, there are many difference ways to meet new people and improve our social life. We are going to show two of them. For example, What do you do when you move to other neighborhoods and don't know how approach to new neighbors? EEehh.. in these cases you can make relationships two... two of the next steps. Approach people, have a party and involve in your community...community?** (185.

**Observation 1)** – [A student referring to how to meet foreign people.]

**Other, other way to meet new people is por internet. Eeeh the way more popular is ...eeeh.. the chat and where... where you can meet other people in other countries...and other cities. Eeeh.. mmm...Also you should...also you can get a good experience in this situation because you can meet people very interesting eeeh..but you can interchange ideas** (197. Observation 1)

- **Values:** Though students speak about values, it is not always precise the clear meaning of values in the context of the class observations, but it seems that these values are associated to their cultural and family background. Even though sometimes students speak about "world values", it seems that they are not clear about them. There is a positive appreciation of all these values. Some examples are evident in the following statements:

**Choosing the right career is an involved process that is basing on a number of things including your interesting, your personalities, skills, and world relate values.** (49. Observation 1).

- **Negative appreciations:** it is evident the negative appreciation students have about the English and French cultures:

-[Related to England]...the monarchy, and the queen, the typical that we are..we saw are very bori...boring. And they want to show something more funny.(84. Observation 3)

In addition, they feel annoyed because of the way foreign countries see their country (Colombia) (Jánica, 2004. P. 9). They think the stereotypes about Colombia are erroneous and that the information foreigners receive about the country is not very reliable.

-(t): So what do you think about the stereotypes? If this is the stereotype that people have about us, what...what do you think about stereotypes? Do you think that they have they are true, they are false?... (9. Obs. 3)  
 -(s): False (10. Observation 3),  
 -(s)...sometimes...sometimes (11. Observation 3) – [Answers given by students when they were asked about the stereotype foreign countries had about Colombia]

### 3.1.2. Personal experiences

This emerging category was represented in samples categorized as positive and negative personal experiences such as the next ones:

- *Positive:*
- For example I, I have one cousin that she lives in Boston and she

ehh, she ... didn't know anything about English, but when he decide to live with her ... ehh she, she had the, the opportunity to try English. And now he live there ... emm, about thirty four years ago. And now she speak English very well. Emm (6, Observation. 2)

- *Negative:*
- It's different here because you are...you think what the people think about me...(252, Observation. 3) – A girl explaining why she could not have sex in public places here as in Europe.

### 3.1.3. Knowledge

Prior knowledge is another emerging category which includes the knowledge or lack of knowledge students could have about geography and cultural topics. Even though this category is connected with mere data, input students have acquired or have not, it is necessary to consider it as an important factor in transcultural contexts. This aspect is significantly important because it is necessary to establish if the students are able to situate and contextualize the new transcultural information they are receiving (Delval, 2000). Otherwise it would be necessary to teach some geography and cultural context to help students understand the new information they are given.

Some examples of prior knowledge students positively have are:

-(t)Ok. ...Let's see. Number one. What is the capital of England? (22. Observation3)

-(Ss) London! (23. Observation 3)

-(t)Slovakia! Capital of Slovakia? (174. Observation 3)

-(Ss) Bratislava! (!75. Observation 3)

But sometimes students have lack of knowledge when they are asked about geography or transcultural topics:

-(t) So Great Britain...What countries that include? (36)

-(bs) Eh...eh...Ireland. (37)

-(t) No...(38)

-(t) You know what? That in Germany (160)

-(s) Joseph Mazingher...(161)

-(t) Ratzinger!... (162.

**Observation 3)** – [Related to the students' knowledge about the Pope's name]

### 3.2. Survey analysis results

#### 3.2.1. Students' survey analysis results

A considerable amount of students that were in the class observation participated in the survey applied to level 7 (Figure 1). There were 19 students: 9 females and 10 males, age 18-23 (Figure 2). Their majors are various, including Electronic Engineering, Industrial Engineering, System Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Business Administration, Mass Media Communication, and Law (Figure 3).

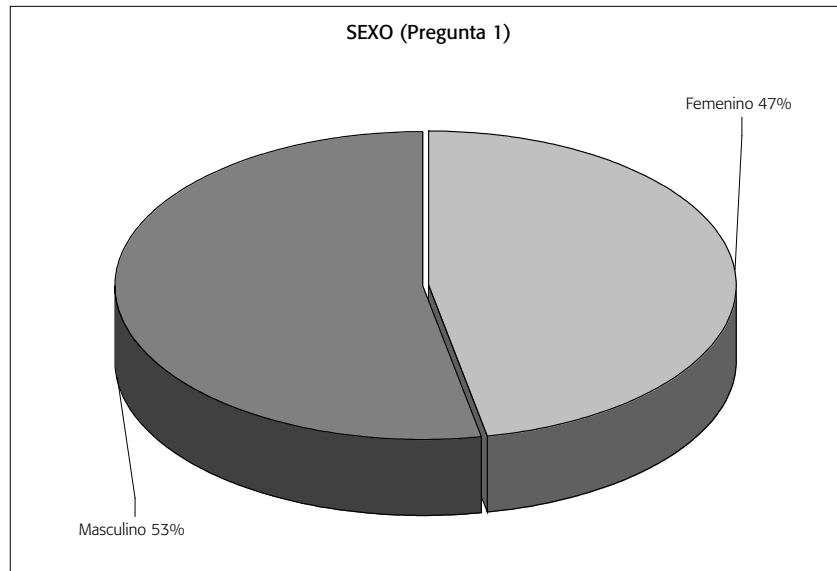


Figure 1. Students' survey: gender

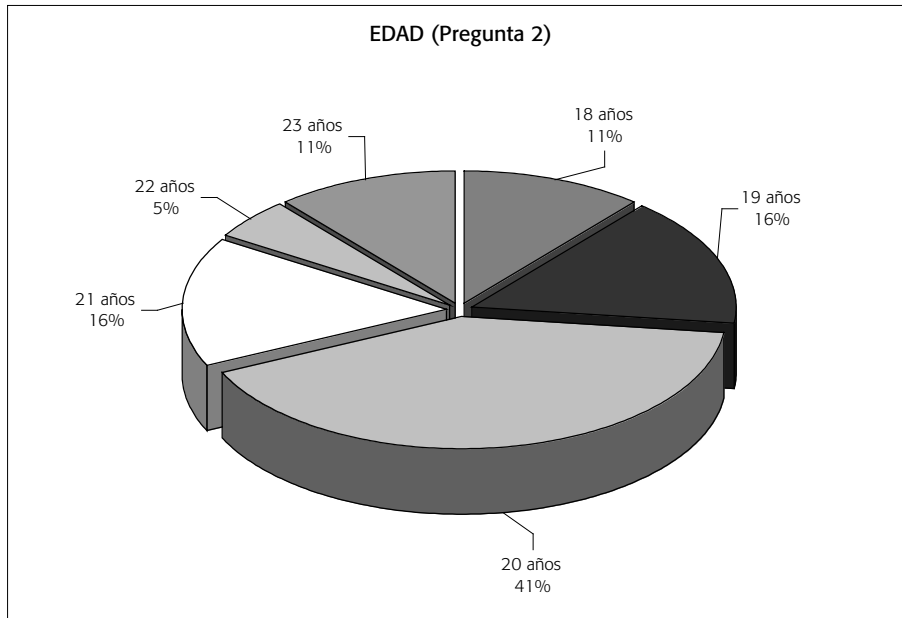


Figure 2. Students' survey: age.

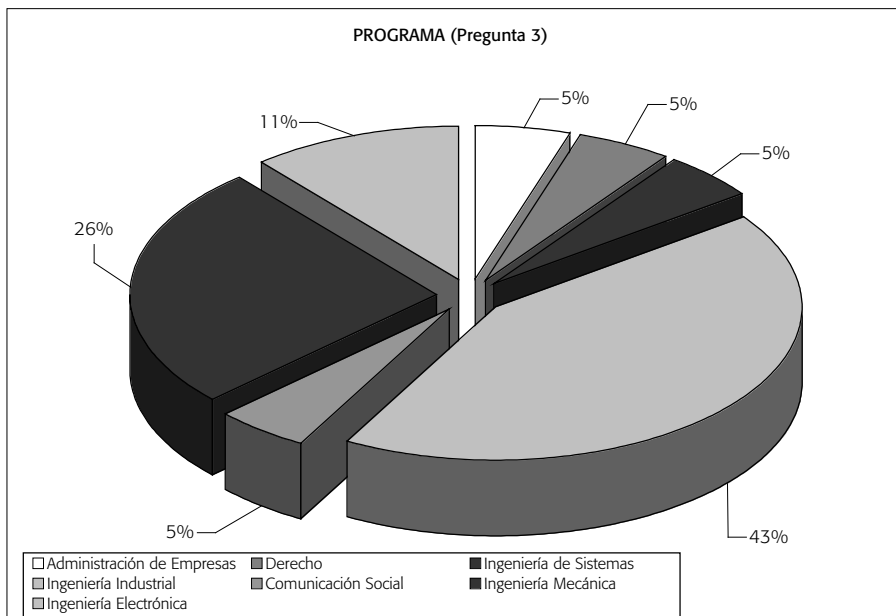


Figure 3. Students' survey: programs.

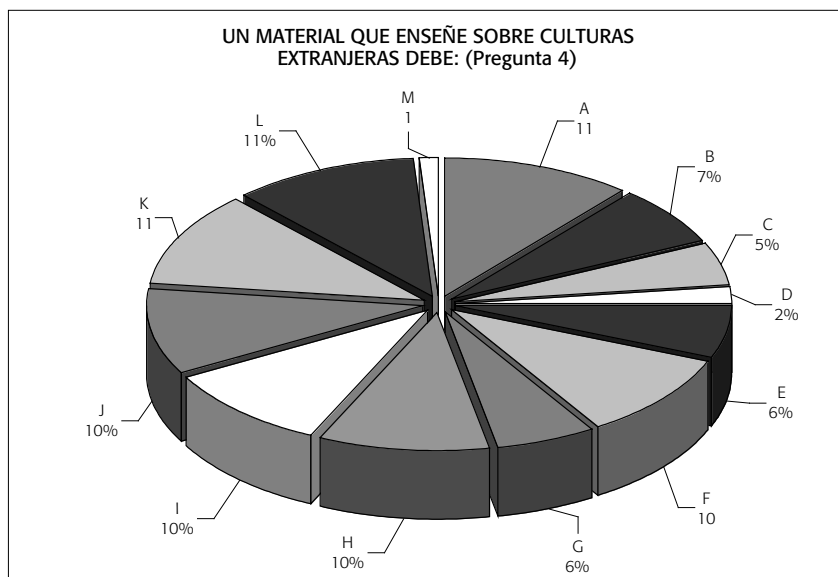
- Main characteristics of foreign cultural Materials

Most of students mentioned that a transcultural material should:

- have topics associated to their own culture related to foreign cultures (Figure 4, letter A). This is essential if the students are expected to come across new cultures. They have to identify themselves with their own culture to be ready to face a new culture (Jánica, 2004; Richards, 1995).

networker will learn twice as fast about local conditions and cross-cultural issues,.." (Marx, E. 2001; P. 72).

- have advice or suggestions for travelers or people in contact with other cultures (Figure 4, letter L). This is an important issue for Universidad del Norte students, they are getting prepared to face new challenges in national and/or international settings, and therefore they have to acknowledge the information that would facilitate them these new challenges (Oficina



**Figure 4.** Students' survey: Transcultural material characteristics.

- facilitates students the opportunity to contact people from other cultures (Figure 4, letter K). Students seem to appreciate very positively the contact with new people. These days "A good

de Planeación, 2004; Richards, 1995; Adaskou, Britten, & Fahsi, 1990).

- be attractive to students' sight (Figure 4, letter H) . According to Torrandell (2005) and Pacheco

(2005), the multimedia material must have a very high level of visual quality.

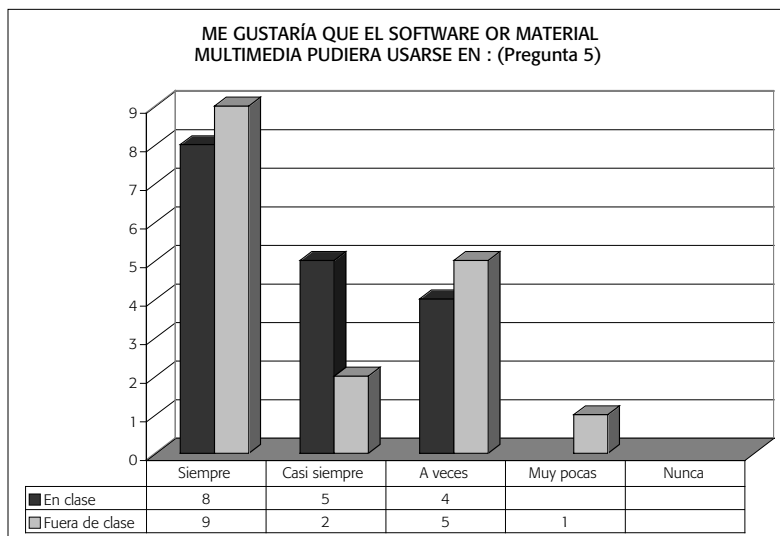
- be interactive (Figure 4, letter I). For the experts, this is another requirement for a multimedia material: interactivity (Salinas, 1994; Gutierrez, 1996; Díaz, Catenazzi & Aedo, 1996).
- have its content related to their ages and context (Figure 4, letter J). They also expect the material to train them to conduct themselves in a culture different from theirs (Figure 4, letter F). These last two aspects are relevant to the students' needs. They need to feel confident about the context where they expect to perform (Cortes, 2004).
- give general information about English speaking countries (Figure 4, letter B). Although just a few students would like to know information about non English speaking countries (Figure 4, letter C). This causes concern because it seems that it is necessary to raise students' awareness of the varieties of English (Takagaki, 2005) and the use of English as an international language (McKay, 2004) in order to show them the multilingualism and the functions of English as an international language (Takagaki).
- be varied and let students express their opinions (Figure 4, letter E). Variety (Figure 4, letter G) is one of the main points to take into account to design the content, activities and hypermedia of the

multimedia material (Torrandell, 2005; Pacheco, 2005; Salinas, 1994; Gutierrez, 1996; Díaz, Catenazzi & Aedo, 1996). Likewise, the possibility the material gives the student to express their opinion is important for them to feel they can stand their ground and start valuable transcultural exchanges (Hooks, 1994; Gomez, 2004).

- have information about their own country (Figure 4, letter D). This is another feature worth taking into account when designing the material. It is necessary to consider the possibility not to include an extensive amount of material devoted to Colombia. However, at the same time it is necessary to have a certain amount of material about the students' own country in order to help them understand their own context and culture to be ready to acquire an international understanding. Moreover, the understanding of one's culture and foreign cultures facilitates the learners' visits overseas or the contact with foreign visitors (Adaskou, Britten & Fashi, 1990).

### 3.2.2. Frequency and place of the software use

textbook Cutting Edge (Cunningham & Moor, 2000) and multimedia



**Figure 5.** Students' survey: Transcultural material usage frequency.

An important amount of learners always prefers to use the material during the class time and out of the time class, with little variations in preferences (Figure 5). The amount of students who are interested in using the software in class is exactly half of them. The other half prefer to use it out of the class period. The variation is the frequency in use, but most of them would like to use it as frequent as possible.

### 3.2.2 Professors' survey analysis results

One of the aims of the survey applied to the professors of the English levels 7 and 8 was to gather data related to the appropriateness of the

materials in the pedagogical practice and their relevance in a transcultural level using a communicative approach. The second aim is to establish the main characteristics that a transcultural multimedia material should have according to the professors' preferences (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Buendía, Colás & Hernández, 1998).

Six professors answer the questionnaires: Four women and two men (Figure 6). Three of them are Colombian, two are British and one is a New Zealander (Figure 7). Their average ages are between 26 and 50 years old (Figure 8). Their educational level is three with Masters and three with college titles and specialized ELT courses abroad.

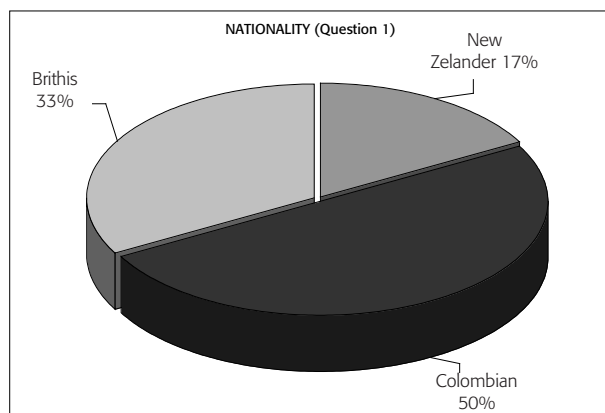


Figure 6. Professors' survey: Nationality.

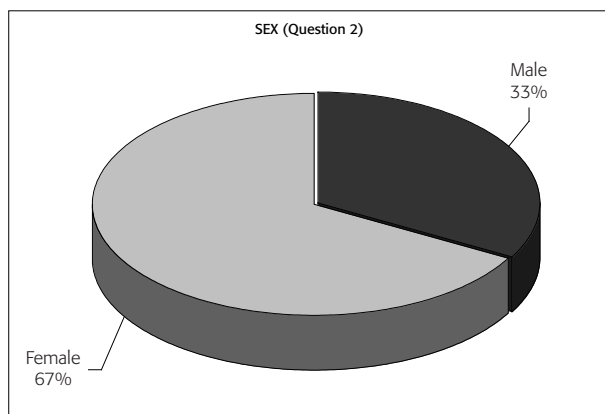


Figure 7. Professors' survey: gender.

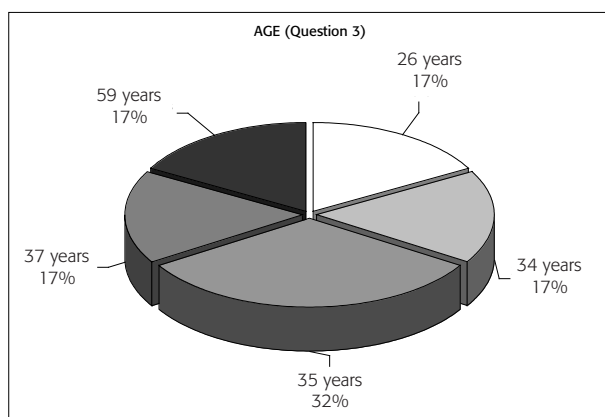


Figure 8. Professors' survey: age.

This survey results are:

- Sections of the student's book to be used to teach world cultures

The level 7 teachers identify specific pages and sections of the textbook from modules 1, 2 and 6 (Figure 9).

- Multimedia material used to improve transcultural awareness

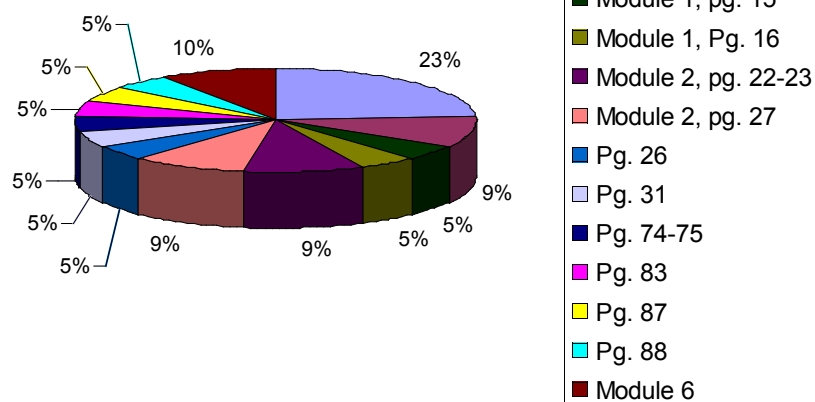
Results are shown in Table 3:

**Table 3:** Professors' survey: multimedia materials for transcultural awareness.

Material	Quality		
	Excellent	Good	Regular
CNN	1		
www.queendom.com	1		
Ellis		2	
BBC News	1		
ImdB website	2		
Cutting Edge online	1		
4Tests.com	1	1	
Longman TOEFL		1	

**WHICH UNITS OR SECTIONS OF OUR TEXTBOOKS COULD BE USED OR HAVE BEEN EXPLOITED TO TEACH WORLD CULTURES?:**

(Question 5)



**Figure 9.** Professors' survey: units and sections of the textbook for teaching culture.

- Characteristics of the multimedia material

Some teachers want the multimedia material should be surfed in a linear way (finishing an activity before the program allows users to enter the next activity (Figure

10, letter A); others the material can be surfed freely without any constraint (Figure 10, letter B). One of the professors is inclined to have the two previous characteristics (Figure 10, letter C). This last one option is the most suggested (Pacheco, 2005).

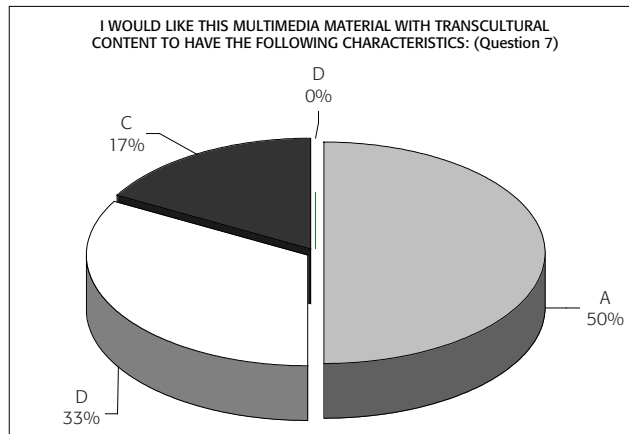


Figure 10. Professors' survey: multimedia material characteristics.

- Some other characteristics for the multimedia material with transcultural content.

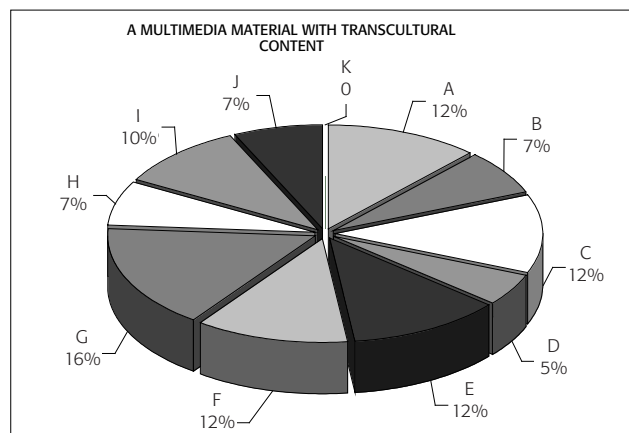


Figure 11. Professors' survey: other multimedia material characteristics.

Results are related to Figure 11. The transcultural multimedia material should include: Colombian cultural aspects (letter A), information about English speaking countries and non English speaking countries (letters C and B), suggestions for the students to face a foreign culture (letters E and J), attractive material (letter F), interactive activities (letter G), space for the students give their opinions (letter D), relevant content according to students' age and context (letter H) (Jánica, 2004; Torrandell, 2005; Pacheco, 2005).

- Use of the multimedia material

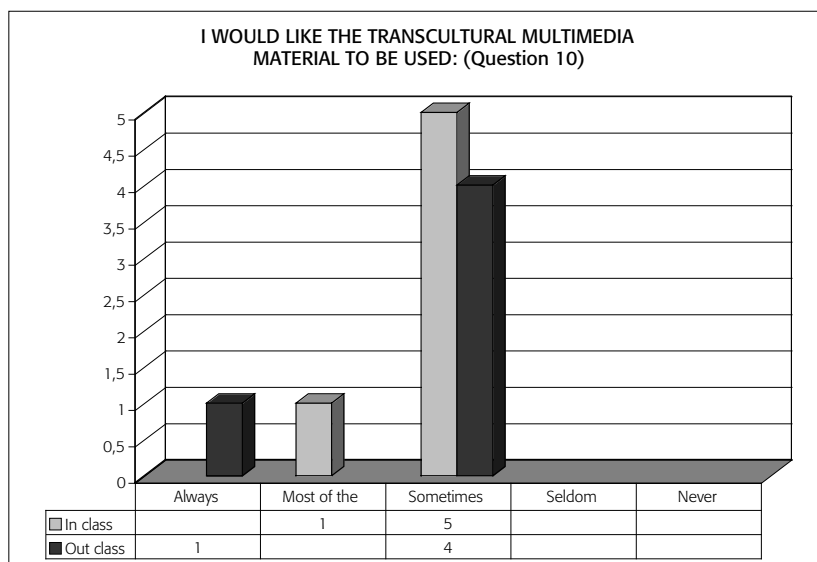
The majority of the teachers would like to use the material sometimes in class and sometimes out of the class. Only one of them prefers to use it

always out of class and one most of the time in class (Figure 12).

### 3.4. Students' interview analysis

The interviewees are two students from the Industrial Engineering program. One is 18 and the other is 19 years old. They attended the English level 7 class observed. According to their answers, the best and easy way to meet people from other countries is through Internet, chats and videoconferences. The ICT helps the student's learning process because it includes activities that are connected to their multiple intelligences they have (Silver & Strong, 1998; Wingate, 2001; Lazear's, 1991; Kezar, 2001).

Regarding these students' transcultural awareness, interviewees



**Figure 12.** Professors' survey: other multimedia material characteristics.

opinions are divided: one of them considers it very important, but the other thinks it is not important, because the person only needs to go to the country and get adapted to the new setting. Actually, the latter answer is one that concerns this investigation. In a previous survey, it was exposed that the students were more aware about transcultural knowledge, but at the same time, it was found that a low percentage of the learners needed to raise it (Jánica, 2004). Besides, it is very clear the way some students lack cultural awareness at not being conscious of the challenges that knowing a new culture encounters (Marx, 2001; Cornes, 2004; Adaskou, Britten & Fahsi, 1990).

Both learners agree about the importance of having contact with people of foreign cultures in order to learn a new language, because in this way they can improve their speaking abilities and vocabulary, and at the same time they can shows foreign people Colombia good things, its people, its culture. Both students strongly agree that they would like to have some space in internet where they were allowed to show the outsiders the Colombian reality. They say that in this way foreign people would realize how Colombians really are. They say they would like to show them pictures, videos, messages, etc. The students also agree that they are inclined to do it through websites where videos are posted, chats and e-mails. One student would also be

interesting in having a website where he could post messages, but the other student would not.

### 3.5. Professor's interview analysis

The main objectives of interviewing the level 7 teachers were to gather information related to identify the characteristics that an educative multimedia material and an educative material with cultural content should have. In addition, to find out the adequacy of the present class materials and multimedia materials in the pedagogical practice and its relevance in a transcultural level based on a communicative approach.

The level 7 professor interviewed is the same one whose class was observed for six hours. She has been a level 7 teacher for more than four years, and an Instituto de Idiomas professor in different levels and programs for 10 years. Therefore, she is very familiar with Instituto de Idiomas and level seven.

The suggestions the teacher proposes in order to implement a good multimedia material with transcultural content for level seven are various. First, she says that the fact of designing a multimedia material is very attractive for students (Warschauer, 2001; Teeler and Gray, 2000; Rey & Rosado, 2000) because these last generations of students are very visual and connected to computers (Ferro, 2000; Gomez, 1999). Therefore, only this element of technology raises the

students' motivation (Warschauer, 2001; Teeler and Gray, 2000).

However, because of the experience she has with students she states that actually they are not so easy to please. Consequently, they should have the option to choose the topics according to their age, personal interests and characteristics (Hopper & Hurry, 2000; Simpson, 2005; Hearn, 2005).

Yet, related to the transcultural content of the material, the teacher thinks Barranquilla students are short of cultural awareness. They have very defined traditional stereotypes of the North American and European people. For this reason the possibility for them to see videos, texts, audios, and other types of options in a multimedia material that let them really know about the cultural differences as they really are (Cortes, 2004; Marx, 2001) will be an excellent opportunity for them to compare some other people's cultures with theirs. The idea is to start comparing the cultures for the students to see how different, but at the same time how similar foreign people are with them (Bibikova & Koteinikov, 2004). Then, exactly here, according to the teacher interviewed, is where different kinds of activities could be designed; activities that involve speaking and non English speaking countries such as Asian countries, Arabian countries, etc (McKay, 2004).

The professor also has some specific ideas about possible activities that could be implemented according

to the modules and topics the level 7 program contains. She thinks that the multimedia material to be prepared should be closely connected to the course objectives and contents. The material should be a complement to the syllabus of the course as well. She suggests topics such as the wars in Europe, the First World War, the Second World War, the Asian development, the Feminist movement, the Hippies era, etc to teach Past, Present and Future Topics

The professor concludes that the main purpose of contrasting cultural thoughts and ideologies in different topics that are going to be designed in the multimedia material is that the students have the opportunity to apply all this knowledge in their professional and daily life in a long term (Cortes, 2004; Marx, 2001).

### 3.6. Document assessment analysis

The document analysis was made adapting the PereMarquez Ficha Samial called Ficha de Catalogación y Evaluación Multimedia (2003. See Appendixes 13 and 14). This analysis format was used to revise, at a pedagogical, technological and cultural level, the multimedia materials that the Instituto de Idiomas has according to the objectives of the level. At the same time, it was also useful to observe the interaction student-material, professor-material, and professor-student-material. A significant number of eight different software materials (American

Language Academy, 1998; ELLIS, 2003; Gray & Evans, SF; Kindersley, 2000; Microsoft, 2004; Syracuse Language System Inc., 1996; Syracuse Language System Inc., 1996b; Addison Wesley Longman Inc., 2000) were chosen to be assessed according to the frequency of usage by the Instituto de Idiomas teachers.

Among the multimedia materials (MMs) assessed, six are related to English training programs and two related to reference material (encyclopedias). The editions are various. The publishing houses are two from England and six from the United States. The acknowledgement of the publishing house mother country would indicate the transcultural point adopted by the material used. Most of the MMs are not updated, the nearest date is 2003. It is important to have the state of the art technology and content for current students that like to have the cutting edge of the ICT (Ferro, 2000; Gomez, 1999).

The educative level of the software assessed varies from six years old to adults. The typologies are chiefly exercising programs, database, book, simulator and game. The didactic strategies are guided exploration and free discovery. The functions are to exercise skills, to instruct, to inform, to motivate, to explore, to entertain, to experiment/solve problems, and to evaluate.

The navigation maps of the MMs are easy to surf. The activities used in the programs are various such

as multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching, etc. Activities based on videos, listening, texts, images, etc. Only one material does not have any didactic activity. The variety and quality of the activities are essential in the interactivity and attractiveness of the material to be designed (Torrandell, 2005).

Additionally, aesthetic and technical aspects must be considered in the evaluation of the MMs. The audiovisual setting was graded as excellent. The multimedia elements, contents, originality, the innovative use of technology and the general design were ranked as high. The navigation (viability, efficiency and speed adequacy) of the programs is between excellent and high. The interaction (types of dialogues, data access, and result analysis) is between excellent and correct. The general design and technical assessment of the MMs is high. These results are meaningful because the challenge of the creation of a new multimedia material is enormous because of the high quality of the state of the art technology the MMs at Instituto de Idiomas has. Besides, it is necessary to improve the quality of the materials in order to accomplish the goals related to the expectations of the learners nowadays (Ferro, 2000; Gomez, 1999).

One last important feature that should be considered is the pedagogical aspects. Aspects such as motivation capacity, user adequacy, applicative and creative approach

of activities and the possibility of cooperative work were ranked as high in general terms. The cooperative work is essential to be improved if the educator needs to raise cultural awareness and tolerance among the students while they are exchanging transcultural information of their own backgrounds (Gacel-Avila, 1999). Self-learning is spread out among high, correct and low. This is other aspect that should be improved because autonomy is one of the principal factors for the students to have democratic values as part of human values (Kelly, 1995). The pedagogic aspect of the MMs is essential in the achievement of the objectives of the software to be implemented (Moss, 1997). The general pedagogical assessment is correct. However, it is worth mentioning that the MM encyclopedias scored very low and the training MMs scored high or high/correct.

#### 4. Conclusions

Relationship among the characteristics of an educative multimedia material and an educative material with cultural content.

This section summarizes the conclusions related to the relationship among the characteristics of an educative multimedia material and an educative material with cultural content.

- The material should facilitate the students the opportunity to contact people opening a space for the students to participate exchanging their personal experiences with their classmates and foreign students (Warschauer, 2001).
- The software should provide a space ,connection or link which let the students explain foreign people their thoughts about Colombia (Jánica, 2004).
- The MM should have reference material, activities and topics related to the knowledge of the students' own context and culture before being prepared to face other cultures (Knight, J. 2005) .
- Advice or suggestions for travelers or people in contact with other cultures are essential in the designing for the students to succeed in transcultural exchanges (Koteinikov & East-West, 2004; Marx, 2001).
- General information about English speaking and non-speaking countries (McKay, 2002) is required to be included in the design of the MM.
- Activities to raise students' awareness of the varieties of English (Takagaki, 2005) and the use of English as an international language (McKay, 2004) .
- The software should also contain information about the most opposite cultural differences such as certain words, expressions or behaviors that are totally contrasting with the Colombian culture.

- The didactic objectives of the software program should be mainly related to training in English to enhance the English skills of the learners closely connected to the course objectives and contents.
- The didactic strategies should be guided exploration and free discovery at the same time.
- The material should allow the students to use internet, chats, e-mails and videoconference to meet new foreign people.
- It should have English language as the area of knowledge.
- The typologies should be chiefly exercising programs, database, book, simulator and game.
- The site map should be easy to surf.
- Part of the material could be connected to internet and other part could have transcultural materials and activities of its own.
- The installation of the software programs in network should be trouble-free to facilitate the learning process.
- The material has to be designed with contents related to the students' ages and context.
- The students should have the option to choose the topics according to their ages, personal interests and characteristics (Hopper & Hurry, 2000; Simpson, 2005; Hearn, 2005).
- Variety is one of the main points to take into account to design the content, activities and hypermedia

- of a transcultural multimedia material (Torrandell, 2005; Pacheco, 2005; Domínguez, 2004, Salinas, 1994; Gutierrez, 1996; Díaz, Catenazzi & Aedo, 1996).
- The transcultural multimedia material should raise students' motivation through the activities implemented, contents, the use of technology, etc. (Warschauer, 2001; Teeler and Gray, 2000).
- Aesthetic and technical aspects must be considered in the design of the transcultural MMs.
- The pedagogical aspects should be some of the main factors to be considered in the design of the MM with transcultural content. (Pacheco, 2005).
- The multimedia material with transcultural content should be updated all the time.

Relationships among professor-student-material.

The relationships among professor-student-material found in this research were:

The main interaction is between student- material. This indicates that autonomy in this transcultural multimedia material is essential (Comes 2004; Gorsky, 2005, Dominguez, 2004). Besides, the use of the ICT facilitates the self-learning process through oral and written interactions (Torrandell, 2005; Pacheco, 2005). This leads the teacher to be a tutor or coordinator letting the transcultural learning process be student's centered.

Nowadays there is a growing and motivational interest in using ICT activities as supplementary material for the regular classes (Rey & Rosado, 2000; Salinas, 1994; Gutierrez, 1996; Díaz, Catenazzi & Aedo, 1996; Torrandell, 2005, Pacheco, 2005; Domínguez, 2004). Besides, the cultural component is highly motivating for language learning (Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi, 1990; Bibikova & Kotelnikov, 2004; Spradley, 1980; Andocilla & Rasero, 2004; McKay, 2004). If we combine the ICTs and the cultural component as part of our English classes, we may have the solution of a large number of motivational learners' problems in front of us (Ferro, 2000; Ferro, Roa, A. & Abello, 1998).

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## Appendix

**Table 1:** Methods, techniques and objectives for collecting data.

TECHNIQUES	INSTRUMENTS	OBJECTIVE OF THE INSTRUMENTS
Observation	Observation protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the characteristics that an educative multimedia material should have.</li> <li>Identify the characteristics that an educative material with cultural content should have.</li> <li>Establish the relationship among the characteristics of an educative multimedia material and an educative material with cultural content.</li> </ul>
Survey	Questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify the characteristics that an educative multimedia material should have.</li> <li>Identify the characteristics that an educative material with cultural content should have.</li> <li>Establish the relationship among the characteristics of an educative multimedia material and an educative material with cultural content.</li> <li>To identify adequacy of the present class materials and multimedia materials in the pedagogical practice and its relevance in a transcultural level based on an communicative approach (professors).</li> <li>To revise, at a pedagogical, technological and cultural level, the multimedia materials that the Instituto de Idiomas has according to the objectives of the level.</li> <li>To analyze the interaction student-material, professor-material, professor-student-material</li> </ul>
Interview	Interview format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the characteristics that an educative material with cultural content should have.</li> <li>Identify the characteristics that an educative multimedia material should have.</li> <li>Establish the relationship among the characteristics of an educative multimedia material and an educative material with cultural content.</li> <li>To identify adequacy of the present class materials and multimedia materials in the pedagogical practice and its relevance in a transcultural level based on a communicative approach (professors).</li> <li>To analyze the interaction student-material, professor-material, professor-student-material</li> </ul>
Document analysis	Analysis format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the characteristics that an educative multimedia material should have.</li> <li>Identify the characteristics that an educative material with cultural content should have.</li> <li>Establish the relationship among the characteristics of an educative multimedia material and an educative material with cultural content.</li> <li>Establish the relationships among student-material, professor-material and professor-student-material.</li> <li>To revise, at a pedagogical, technological and cultural level, the multimedia materials that the Instituto de Idiomas has according to the objectives of the level.</li> <li>To identify adequacy of the present class materials and multimedia materials in the pedagogical practice and its relevance in a transcultural level based on a communicative approach (professors).</li> </ul>